

Context

In November 2006, Ministers of the INCP Contact Group met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on the margins of the Network's 9th Annual Ministerial Meeting. During this meeting, Ministers discussed the success of the Network since its creation in 1998, particularly efforts to advocate for the development, advancement and rapid entry into force of the *UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. Ministers noted that the INCP can and will continue to play a significant role throughout the implementation phase of the Convention as well as explore new cultural policy areas that will help guide the future activities of the Network.

However, Ministers also recognised the importance of reviewing the administrative structure of the Network in order address key problematic areas such as: the inconsistent levels of participation and intellectual contributions, lack of geographical representation, and the absence of appropriate funding for INCP meetings. As such, Ministers mandated Contact Group officials, with support from the Liaison Bureau, to re-examine existing administrative guidelines and to provide a series of recommendations for their consideration at the next Ministerial Contact Group Meeting being held in Seville in September 2007.

In an effort to fulfill this mandate, officials of the Contact group met in Switzerland and Spain to review INCP guidelines. These meetings allowed Contact Group officials to focus on the key administrative challenges that will need to be addressed in order to ensure the future viability and sustainability of the Network. Discussions on these aspects were also undertaken during the INCP Mid-Year Officials' Meeting held in Madrid in April 2007, allowing for an inclusive exchange of ideas with a larger number of INCP officials.

This executive summary highlights the various areas discussed by Contact Group Officials and sets forth proposals for Ministerial Consideration.

Key Administrative Challenges and Recommended Options

A. Level Participation and Sustainability of Engagement in INCP Activities

Since its creation in 1998, the INCP has been successful in increasing its membership level to include 69 countries from all geographical areas of the globe. However, in recent years, ensuring consistent participation and geographical representation at INCP meetings has been a significant challenge. Members have participated in INCP activities in a sporadic fashion and many have become altogether disengaged. This is sometimes due to budgetary constraints, particularly for developing countries.

Recommendation:

- It is proposed that a letter be issued to each INCP member country detailing their respective involvement with the Network. The proposed letter would request that existing members confirm their continued interest in remaining active participants.
- In an effort to increase geographical representation it is proposed that, revised administrative guidelines reflect that whenever possible, meetings be held in underrepresented regions.
- It is also recommended that revised administrative guidelines note that, whenever possible, the participation of members from developing countries be sponsored.

B. INCP President and host of the Ministerial Meeting

Presently, no INCP member country has been confirmed as the next president and host of the ministerial meeting.

Recommendation:

- It is proposed that, immediately following the 10th Annual Ministerial meeting, a call letter be sent out to all INCP member countries inviting them to inform the Liaison Bureau of their interest in assuming the presidency of the Network, for the next two years. All interested INCP member countries would be required to submit their response to the Liaison Bureau within six weeks following the call letter.
- The proposed letter would enumerate the responsibilities of hosting the ministerial meeting from both a logistics (i.e. appropriate meeting venue, hospitality, transportation and security), content and financial perspective.
- In their responses, interested parties would be required to demonstrate the feasibility of hosting the meeting. As well, members would be required to submit proposals for the thematic of the meeting.
- Following this process, the Liaison Bureau would submit all responses to Contact Group Officials for their consideration and decision.

C. Frequency and length of Ministerial Meetings

INCP Ministerial Meetings have been held on an annual basis since 1998. While each ministerial has been very successful and has helped maintain the momentum of the work undertaken by INCP officials (particularly with respect to the UNESCO Convention), in recent years, the number of international engagements for Ministers of Culture has significantly impeded their ability to participate in INCP Ministerial Meetings.

Recommendation:

- In order to accommodate for the growing number and the timing of international engagements at the ministerial level, it is proposed that the INCP Ministerial Meeting be held on a bi-annual basis.
- In an effort to encourage ministerial presence, it is proposed that the duration of the meeting be a maximum of two days.
- Also, in order to maintain the momentum around the work of the INCP it is proposed that the INCP Working Group on Cultural Diversity and Globalization (WGCD&G) be assigned a mandate for two years instead of customary one year period.
- It is also recommended that the WG develop a calendar of projected meetings covering the two-year period.

D. Funding of INCP Activities

Given its informal nature, all financial contributions by member countries to help cover costs related to the organisation of INCP officials' level meetings (WGCD&G and Contact Group meeting) are made on a voluntary basis. In coordinating the preparation of these meetings, the Liaison Bureau regularly encounters challenges in identifying member countries willing to host or contribute towards defraying the costs of logistical requirements (i.e. room rental, simultaneous interpretation services and hospitality).

Recommendation:

- In order to allow INCP member countries an adequate amount of time to assess the possibility of hosting a meeting or contributing financially towards logistical requirements, it is proposed that a calendar of upcoming meetings be established and circulated to all INCP members.
- It is also recommended that Contact Group member countries, proactively volunteer to host meetings and assist the Liaison Bureau in identifying other INCP Member Countries who may be willing to host meetings or contribute financially towards logistical requirements.

Next Steps

1. On behalf of Contact Group officials, the Liaison Bureau submits the above recommendations for Ministerial consideration and approval.
2. Request a two-year mandate to develop new administrative guidelines based on proposals set forth in this document, with a view to continue efforts to strengthen the viability and sustainability of the INCP.