

GHANA NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO



2011 ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER, 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ghana National Commission for UNESCO serves as the official link between the Government of Ghana and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

As outlined in its Mission, the Commission seeks to promote UNESCO's objectives and ideals in contributing to global peace, poverty alleviation, sustainable development and inter-cultural dialogue through Education, the Sciences, Culture, Communication and Information.

This report informs on the work executed by the Commission in 2011, in terms of output, financial performance, challenges and strategies to be adopted in overcoming the identified challenges. It also gives insight on some activities envisaged for 2012.

*Regarding Programme Delivery for 2011, the Commission undertook projects funded by UNESCO, aimed at promoting peace, education for all, poverty alleviation, sustainable development and inter-cultural dialogue through activities such as the **Platform for Engaging in Conflict Management and Peace-building: linking practitioners and academia in Ghana** (Tamale), **Workshop on integrated approaches to achieve Education for All Goals and Millennium Development Goal 2** (by the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education) and the **Gwolu Shea-butter Processing Project** (Gwolu). There was also the observation of the United Nations International Year of People of African Descent within which a three-day International Teacher Professional Development Workshop was held, with participants from Ghana, the Gambia, the United Kingdom and Trinidad and Tobago.*

Among others, the Commission also participated in international meetings such as the workshop on Education for Sustainable Development (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso), the 186th and 187th Sessions of the UNESCO Executive Board (Paris, France) and the 36th General Conference of UNESCO (Paris, France). These gave the opportunity to present the country's views and also the platform to share necessary experiences.

Projecting into 2012, the Commission expects to continue striding ahead in carrying out a training programme for the entire membership of the National Commission and our affiliated institutions, as well as Secretaries-General of the Member States of the Accra UNESCO Cluster Office.

Other training programmes include the Bio-ethics Working Methods activity, the training for the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) teachers for participation in the World Water Experiment, the training on the use of telescopes and the application of astronomy in everyday life.

The Commission will also launch the Global Monitoring Report on Education for All (2012) as well as organize the Model UNESCO Youth Forum to promote UNESCO's core ideals regarding peace, human rights and environmental protection.

Challenges of the Commission include the following: limited office space, inadequate financing of the office of the Permanent Delegate in Paris and administrative bottlenecks stemming from a legal suit. The Commission is negotiating with the Ministry of Education for the solution to these challenges.

Whilst expressing sincere gratitude to our Chairman, Hon. Mrs. Betty Mould-Iddrisu and our Vice, Major M. S. Tara (Rtd.) for their sustained efforts to overcome the challenges of the Commission, with special reference to financing the Permanent Delegation, we join hands with other agencies of the Ministry of Education to move our nation forward.

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1.0 PROFILE OF THE ORGANIZATION

1.1 Establishment

The Ghana National Commission for UNESCO started as a Committee for UNESCO Affairs in 1953. In 1958 when Ghana attained full membership of UNESCO, Cabinet approved the re-constitution of the National Committee under the new title Ghana National Commission for UNESCO.

1.2 Vision

To be a highly progressive National Commission that improves access and participation in programmes and activities within UNESCO's fields of competence in Ghana.

1.3 Mission

To promote UNESCO's objectives and ideals in Ghana as a contribution to global peace, poverty alleviation, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through Education, the Sciences, Culture, Communication and Information.

1.4 Functions

The National Commission for UNESCO is a sub-vented agency under the Ministry of Education. It serves as a link between UNESCO and Ghana. In furtherance of its primary objectives, the Commission performs among others, the following functions:

- Acts as an advisory body to the government in determining policy with regard to UNESCO and its programmes
- Serves as a liaison agency involving Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in UNESCO activities for the advancement of Education, the Sciences, Culture and Communication, with the aim of advancing mutual knowledge and understanding of UNESCO's work towards the common welfare of human-kind
- Disseminates information from and to UNESCO
- Exchanges information and experiences with its counterparts in Member States of the Organization
- Fosters close co-operation between state agencies and services, professionals and other associations, universities as well as other centres of research and education in the promotion of UNESCO's objectives and ideals
- Co-operates with Government delegation to UNESCO General Conferences and at other inter-governmental meetings convened by UNESCO, in the preparation of Ghana's position papers by preparing the contribution of Government to the work of these meetings
- Participates in the search for candidates for vacant UNESCO posts financed under the regular programme or from extra-budgetary resources, and in the placement of UNESCO Fellowship holders

- Participates in the planning and execution of activities entrusted to UNESCO which are undertaken with the assistance of the other sister agencies of the United Nations in Ghana.

1.5 Permanent Delegation

The Permanent Delegation is the official Government representation to UNESCO in Paris. Ghana's Ambassador to France is the country's Permanent Delegate to UNESCO. The Permanent Delegation has its offices in the premises of the Ghana Embassy.

1.6 The Secretariat of the Commission

The Secretariat serves as the main channel of communication between the Government of Ghana and UNESCO. It operates under the supervision of the Chairman of the Commission. The Secretariat, headed by the Secretary-General, has 14 members of staff. The Secretariat is located within the Ministry of Education, Accra.

1.7 Specialized Committees

There are five Specialized Committees responsible for Education, Natural Science, Social Science, Culture, Communication/Information and Legal/Administration comprising nine (9) members each. Members of the specialized committees are selected from governmental and Non-governmental organizations.

1.8 National Committees

The National Committees are organs established to liaise with the intergovernmental councils/committees established by UNESCO for specific international programmes. Ghana currently serves on five (5) such committees: the Man and Biosphere (MAB), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Committee (IOC), International Hydrological Programme (IHP), the Management of Social Transformations (MOST), the Information for All Programme (IFAP) and the National Bio-ethics Committee.

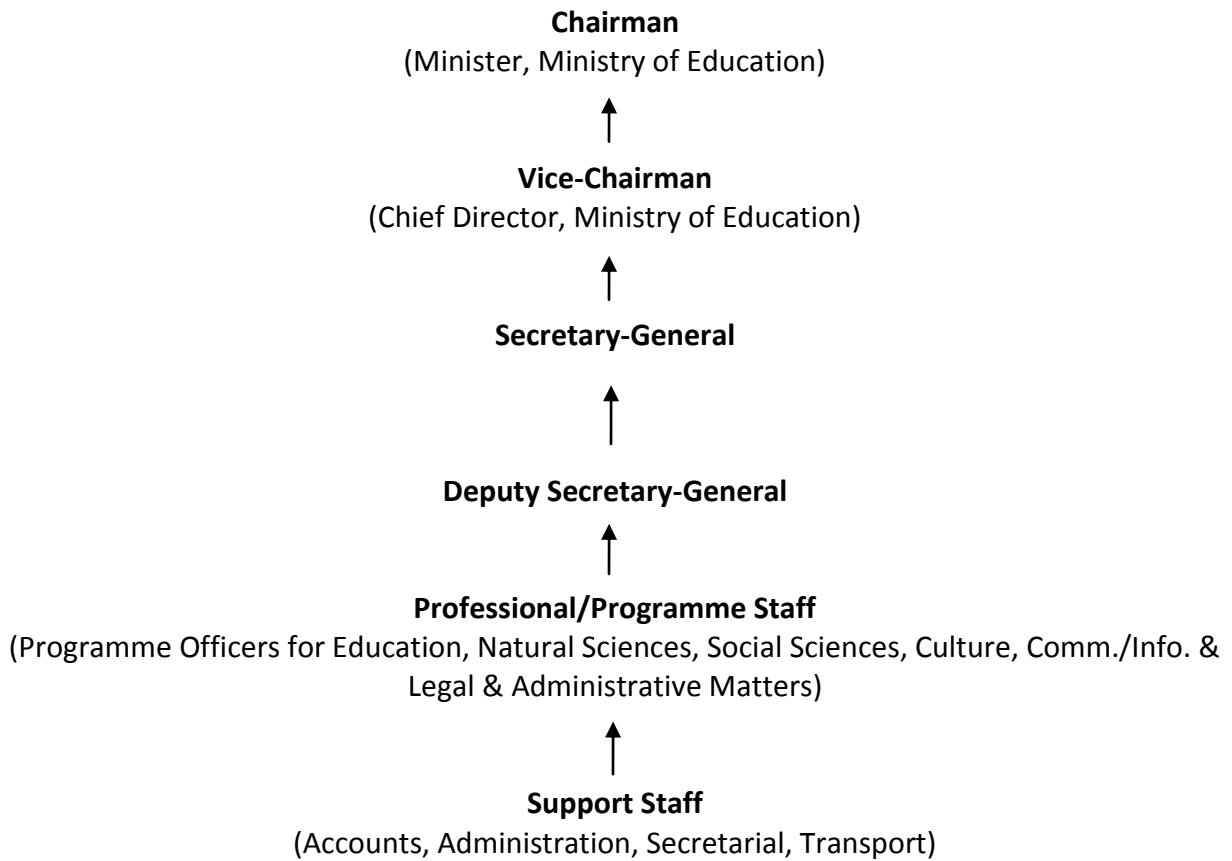
1.9 The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Commission coordinates the activities of the Secretariat and the Committees. It takes decisions for the effective and efficient operation of the National Commission. It consists of the following members:

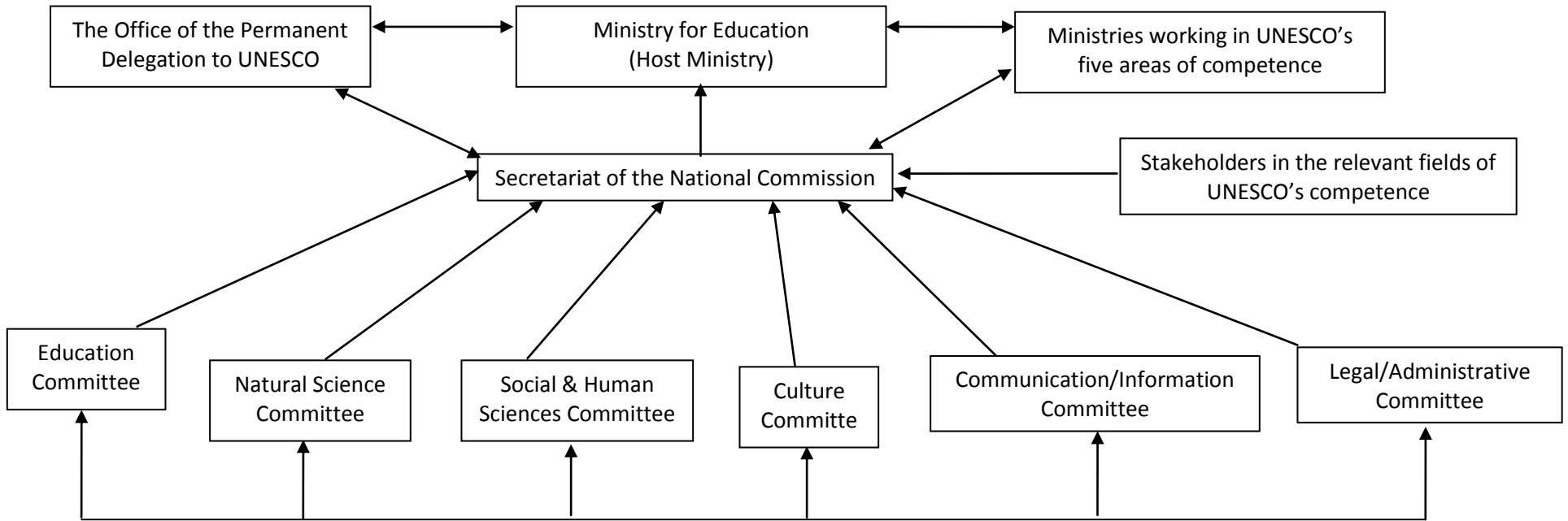
- The Chairman of the Commission
- The Vice Chairman of the Commission
- The Secretary-General to the Commission
- The Chairmen of the 5 Specialized Committees
- The current or Former member of the Executive Board of UNESCO

GHANA NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



2.0 PROGRAMME DELIVERY

2.1 The Gwolu Shea butter Processing Project

With the instrumentation of the Commission and Ghana's Representative on the Executive Board, UNESCO approved an amount of \$10,000 dollars towards the acquisition of a processing plant for Gwolu. The project was carried out with the UNESCO Cluster Office in Accra in May and June, 2011.

2.2 Workshop on Education for Sustainable Development

The UNESCO Regional Bureau of Education in Africa (BREDA) organized a workshop on processes, learning, monitoring and evaluation of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for the Africa region in March, 2011 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The workshop, in which Ghana participated, sought to ascertain the status of activities of the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Africa.

The workshop concluded that the lack of effective strategies to better inform, sensitize and promote the added value of the ESD programme in Africa constitutes a major impediment for many countries including Ghana.

To that end, the National Commission has constituted a National Committee to look at the issue of Education for Sustainable Development with the assistance of the UNESCO Cluster Office.

2.3 The 186th and 187th Sessions of the Executive Board

The Executive Board prepares the work of the General Conference and sees to the execution of the work of the Organization in between sessions.

Ghana successfully participated in the two sessions of the UNESCO Executive Board meeting in Paris, in 2011. Held from 27th September to 6th October, 2011, the 187th meeting of the UNESCO Executive Board dwelt on the preparation of the agenda for consideration by the 36th General Conference of UNESCO.

Pertinent issues discussed included the performance of the last-but-one lap of the 2008 – 2013 Medium-Term Strategy, i.e. the 34 C/4; expectations of the 2012 – 2013 biennium budget and programme, priority Africa as well as the EFA 2015 goal and beyond.

Other topics discussed included UNESCO's reform process and the hosting of the Multi-Sectoral Regional Offices (MSRO), accepting Palestine as a member of UNESCO and the Obiang Nguema Mbasogo International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences.

Further discussion on the Prize was referred to a special working group.

2.4 The 36th General Conference of UNESCO

The 36th General Conference of UNESCO was held in Paris from 28th October to 11th November, 2011.

The General Conference consists of the representatives of the 195 UNESCO Member States and Associate Members. Meeting biennially, the General Conference determines the policies and main lines of UNESCO's work. It approves the budget and programme of the Organization and elects members of the Executive Board and other inter-governmental committees, as well as the Director-General.



A section of the delegation from Ghana, led by Hon. Mrs. Betty Mould-Iddrisu, Minister for Education and Chairman of the Commission

Among the important issues discussed was the attainment of the 2015 deadline for the internally agreed Education for All deadline; proposal sent from the Executive Board regarding the location of the Multi-Sectoral Regional Offices (MSRO) and the particular focus on Africa, and the admission of Palestine which eventually culminated in the withdrawal of funding by the USA.

Other salient features included the adoption of the 2012 – 2013 Programme and Budget which gives priority to sustainable development, the development of a culture of peace and non-violence with a special emphasis on gender equality, Africa, youth, Education for All, the Least

Developed Communities (LDCs), the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), and the most vulnerable segments of society.

The Minister for Education and Chairman of the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO, Hon. Mrs. Betty Mould-Iddrisu, met the Director-General of UNESCO, Dr. Irina Bokova, in a private meeting on Tuesday, 1st November, 2011.

2.5 UN International Year of People of African Descent (IYPAD)

Within the framework of the International Year for People of African Descent and the Transatlantic Slave Trade Project of UNESCO (TST), the National Commission hosted twenty-six (26) students and teachers from Trinidad and Tobago during the July- August vacation period for ASPnet Schools. They were in Ghana on a “*journey to their roots*” and visited The Greater Accra, Central, Volta and Ashanti Regions. This was made possible through a joint collaboration between the National Commissions of Ghana and Trinidad and Tobago.



The visiting team from Trinidad and Tobago with the Ghana ASPnet National Coordinator

2.6 UNESCO Associated Schools (ASPnet) International Teacher Professional Development Workshop, Accra - Ghana, 11th – 13th August, 2011

Within the framework of the International Year for People of African Descent and the Transatlantic Slave Trade (TST) Project, the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO and the ASPnet International Coordinating team in UNESCO, Paris, organized a three-day teacher professional development workshop, targeting participants (secondary school teachers) from the three (3) regions involved in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The participants were drawn from Ghana, The Gambia, the United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago, Denmark and the United States of America.



Prof. J. R. Anquandah, University of Ghana, leading a session during the Workshop

The Workshop provided a platform of exchange among teachers on school projects implemented during the recent academic year and also provided training activities on selected themes, which will strengthen the quality of education on the Slave Trade (such as teaching issues on the TST through drama and arts, building international school partnerships in the TST, teaching the TST from an African perspective).

2.7 The Seventh Session of the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC) held at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 5 - 6 September, 2011

The Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC) comprises 36 elected members from the Member States of UNESCO whose mandate is to consider proposals of the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) and make input to reflect the concerns of Member States for the consideration of the Executive Board.

This year's meeting was to consider the work of the IBC during the 2010 - 2011 biennium, consisting of three thematic areas:

- i. The principle of respect for human vulnerability and personal integrity (Article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Bioethics and Human Rights)
- ii. The issue of human cloning and international governance; and
- iii. The issue of traditional medicine and its ethical implications

Ghana was able to rally the support of other members of the committee to urge UNESCO to follow the developments in the field of traditional medicine, anticipate emerging challenges and reconsider the issues raised as part of activities it will work on during 2012 - 2013.

2.8 Study on Ecological Mapping of the Songhor Ramsar Site

This study was commissioned by the Man and Biosphere (MAB) National Committee as a requirement for the nomination of the Ramsar site to a biosphere reserve.

In the survey, an inventory of the most significant natural resources was prepared. These were mapped together with the boundaries of the areas under exploitation and protection. Maps of population distribution, soils, geology, ethnicity, land uses and ecology were generated.

Indicators of ecosystem degradation were then determined. An assessment of community awareness on the need for ecosystem management was done. A stakeholder workshop was also organized for the validation of the initial results.

The results thereof formed part of a complete dossier sent to UNESCO MAB International Coordination Council which later approved the Songhor Ramsar Site for enlistment onto the World List of Biosphere Reserves.

2.9 Sub-Regional ASPnet Choral Contest

This competition was held in Lomé, Togo from 1st to 5th August, 2011. It involved the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) from Ghana, Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso and Nigeria.

The sub-regional competition is biennially organized by the Togo National Commission for UNESCO.

Ghana was represented by AngloGold Ashanti Schools. They won the second place, after the host nation, Togo.



The Anglo-gold Ashanti School team which represented Ghana, relaxing after the programme

2.10 Platform for engaging in Conflict Management and Peace-building: linking practitioners and academia in Ghana

This project was carried out in a 3-day seminar held in Tamale, Northern Region. The resource persons defined peace and dwelt on reasons why conflict affects development and therefore must not be allowed to prevail.

Using the case of the Bawku Area as a point of reference, some adverse effects of conflict situations, among others, were identified as follows: collapse of businesses, decline in BECE results owing to continuous closure of schools, lack of accessibility to health services; displacement of people, increase in divorce cases, insecurity, increase in crime, lawlessness and vindictiveness; reduced animal and crop production and decline in municipal revenue mobilization.

It was concluded that prevailing methods adopted to resolve conflicts were inadequate and emphasis was placed on developing an early conflict-warning systems for the benefit of the area in question.

2.11 Workshop on integrated approaches to achieve Education for All Goals and Millennium Development Goal 2

The Parliamentary Select Committee on Education conducted a workshop on adopting Integrated Approaches towards achieving the EFA Goals, added to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number 2.

The rationale was to find out how far Ghana had progressed in the EFA programme, which challenges had come up and how best to address them.

The conclusion was that in spite of the huge gaps discovered, the attainment of the goal was possible. Mind-sets need to be changed and stakeholders, especially politicians, should be more focused and proactive towards attaining these goals.

3.0 OUTLOOK FOR 2012

3.1 UNESCO Club Camp 2012 in Korea

The Ghana National Commission for UNESCO will sponsor two members (male and female) of UNESCO Clubs from two tertiary institutions in northern and southern Ghana to participate in the Camp.

The Youth Camp is geared towards exposing the participants to the challenges of the world which are a threat to peace, enabling the youth to share experiences on how similar challenges had been tackled.

The delegates would be expected to share the lessons learnt in their school clubs and develop activities aimed at peace-building in their communities.

3.2 Training for ASPnet School Teachers

2011 was the UN International Year of Chemistry and the observation of the year goes beyond 2011. A major activity for school children in the world is the World Water Experiment. This school activity will allow children to test for the quality of water in their environment and device methods of purification experiment. The results will be captured on a world water map and updated as time goes on.

UNESCO is assisting some deprived schools in Ghana with a tool kit that has all the equipment to conduct the experiment and there is the need to train teachers in using the kit in their schools. This training which will be conducted with the Science Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service will also serve as capacity-building for teacher beneficiaries.

Further, UNESCO has presented 100 telescopes for distribution to ASPnet schools in Ghana to whip up interest in the study of Astronomy for development among students. Schools' teachers would be trained in the use of the equipment as well as practical lessons on the application of astronomy in solving everyday problems.

3.3 Model UNESCO Youth Forum

UNESCO approved an amount of \$26,000 to expand UNESCO Club activities in the country particularly school-based clubs. The Clubs promote UNESCO's core ideals such as Peace, Human Rights and Environmental Protection.

The activity will create the platform for the youth to explore new opportunities to develop and realize their full potential to give a pragmatic solution to the numerous challenges of today. It is therefore aimed at:

- offering the youth a platform to express their opinion about tolerance, cultural diversity and biodiversity
- recognizing the role of the youth in nation building through the conference medium
- sensitizing and exposing the Ghanaian youth to how UNESCO works with its Member States to promote the general welfare of humankind and
- making UNESCO more visible in Ghana.

The project activity will be carried out in March 2012.

3.4 An Assessment of Climate Change Impact on the Bia Biosphere Reserve

This is a UNESCO Participation Programme to be undertaken by the Environmental Protection Agency, in the first half of 2012.

The project represents the usual 10-year assessment of bio-sphere reserves. It is aimed at determining whether the flora and fauna discovered and preserved there 10 years earlier are still existent or whether they are depleted. The outcome can generate another project request.

3.5 Training Programme for the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO and its Stakeholders

The 36th General Conference of UNESCO adopted a resolution that has changed the programming cycle of the Organization. This will in turn change how Member States are to respond to the programme and activities of the Organization.

UNESCO will assist the Commission and its stakeholders with a capacity-building programme scheduled for March 2012, in this regard.

3.6 Launch of the 2012 Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR)

Owing to circumstances beyond control, the reports of 2011 and 2012 would be co-launched in the first quarter of 2012 towards impacting education policy in the country, where necessary.

The EFA GMR is an annual publication by UNESCO to assess Member States' achievement levels of the EFA goals. It also assists stakeholders to measure how far they are meeting their commitments towards the six EFA goals.

3.7 Training in Bio-ethics

UNESCO has enjoined its Member States, including Ghana, to set up National Bioethics Committees to discuss, inform and offer useful suggestions to opinion leaders, the general public and other practitioners in the area of Bioethics.

As a result, UNESCO in the effort to assist developing countries to develop guidelines which would be in tune with existing guidelines instituted the "Assisted Bioethics Committees" (ABC) project. The project targeted 12 developing countries, including Ghana. Our Committee was inaugurated in 2009.

UNESCO will be organizing a workshop in Ghana in February on developing Working Methods in Bio-ethics.

4.0 CHALLENGES

4.1 Adequate financial support for the office of the Permanent Delegate

The need to fully provide adequate financial support for the office of the Permanent Delegation is a source of concern.

The Permanent Delegation assists with the day-to-day execution of business at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris and runs a two-member staff in the office. The Commission caters for the Compensation for the staff as well as providing for Goods, Services and Assets.

4.2 Undue change of leadership

The change of the leadership of the Secretariat in the last two (2) years has had its own toll on the Commission, resulting in an uncalled-for legal suit which has lowered the image of the Commission in Ghana and UNESCO as a whole.

It is therefore important for the political leadership to appreciate the specialized nature of UNESCO's educational, scientific and cultural endeavours, which globally respect the need for continuity at the National Commission level as stipulated in the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO, adopted in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1978.

4.3 Expansion of office space

The Secretariat of the Commission is in dire need of expansion in terms of office space. As a matter of urgency, a documentation centre/library is required to house the numerous publications received from UNESCO and elsewhere, so that students and the general public can utilize the library for research. Also required is space to store items. Provision of these would eliminate clutter and would enable the Secretariat have a neater and a more decent presentation to benefit its quasi-international status.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND WAY-FORWARD

The current Minister for Education and Chairperson of the Commission has been understanding and forward-looking as far as our challenges are concerned and is offering the needed assistance.

The 2012 budget approvals have been encouraging. Three (3) computers have been forwarded to Paris to beef up equipment in the office of the Permanent Delegation. With the current budgetary approval, a car will also be purchased for the office in Paris.

In addition, we request that the Secretariat is provided adequate office space by the Ministry. An office building for the use of the Secretariat is recommended, whereby a conference hall, an ICT Centre, a documentation centre, a kitchenette and a guest house will be built to afford the Commission the desired dignity accorded a quasi-international organization.

We finally express our sincere gratitude to the Chairperson, the Vice Chairman and Chairmen of our Specialized Committees for their support throughout the year.

DECEMBER, 2011