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INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR SCIENCE AND HIGH TECHNOLOGY

Note by the Secretariat

Summarizes developments with respect to the Centre since the adoption of resolution GC.7/Res.12.

Introduction

1. In a letter dated 1 June 2001, the Director-General was requested by the Permanent Representative of Italy to the International Organizations in Vienna to include an item on the International Centre for Science and High Technology (ICS) in the provisional agenda of the General Conference. The letter is reproduced in the annex to the present document. Accordingly, the Board adopted the provisional agenda of the ninth session of the Conference, including item 14.

2. The present document should be considered as an interim progress report. An addendum will be issued upon receipt of further views to be submitted by the Italian authorities.

I. BACKGROUND

3. In resolution GC.7/Res.12 the General Conference took note of the ending of the Institutional Agreement between the Government of Italy and UNIDO regarding the International Centre for Science and High Technology. As requested by the Conference in the same resolution, a progress report was submitted to the Board at its nineteenth session (IDB.19/7). As a follow-

up to these developments, correspondence was exchanged in early 1998 between UNIDO and UNESCO on the subject. On 8 May 1998, a meeting was held in Rome in order to reach a solution agreeable to all parties concerned. Following these preliminary initiatives, the activities of ICS continued de facto to be managed and executed under UNIDO responsibility, with the endorsement and agreement of the Italian authorities, through annual consultations in steering committee meetings.

4. In his statement to the Board at its twenty-third session, the Permanent Representative of Italy referred to the achievements of ICS under excellent UNIDO management.

5. In the past three years the ICS programme has become more consistent with the mandate and the new initiatives of UNIDO, particularly in regard to the international technology centres and the technology foresight programme. Based on this closer collaboration, the Italian Government proposes to bring ICS under full UNIDO authority as indicated in the letter from the Permanent Representative.

For reasons of economy, this document has been printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies of documents to meetings.

II. RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

6. From January 1998 to date, the following achievements and commitments were realized through the ICS work programmes:

- More than 65 training courses conducted in specific technical areas to strengthen national capacities in dealing with and mastering advanced technologies;
- More than 60 workshops or awareness-building seminars held to review state-of-the-art of technological innovation and methodologies;
- More than 35 high-level expert group meetings conducted to review and assess technological needs and priority demands;
- Fifty medium-term training fellowships granted to train young experts and involve them and their institutes in specific projects;
- More than 3,000 experts, technologists, industrialists, researchers and decision-makers involved as lecturers or participants;

- Project proposals developed and under promotion, through UNIDO, with international donors;
- Publications, guidelines, training packages prepared and distributed to institutions in developing countries.

7. Among the most visible achievements of the ICS programme during this period has been the technology foresight initiative for Latin America. With the backing of the Italian authorities, it is in its third year of operation. Results expected in 2002, in the form of a productive chain approach in selected industrial areas, will provide the benchmark for similar UNIDO programmes in other regions.

8. The ICS programme for 2002-2005 will entail a budget of \$11 million and will be discussed at the next ICS Steering Committee meeting. As originally agreed in resolution GC.4/Res.14, paragraph 1, ICS will be "... financed exclusively by additional voluntary contributions with no legal or financial obligations to UNIDO."

Annex

LETTER FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY

The Permanent Representative of Italy
to the International Organizations
Hoher Markt 8-9
1010 Vienna

Vienna, June 1st 2001

Dear Director-General,

I refer to the Agreement between the Italian Government and UNIDO General Conference, signed on the 9th of November 1993, concerning the institutional duties of the International Centre for Science and High Technology (ICS) in Trieste.

I also refer to the Resolution GC.7/Res.12, adopted by the UNIDO General Conference on the 4th of December 1997, which acknowledges the end by mutual consent of the above-mentioned ICS Institutional Agreement between the Italian Government and UNIDO, as well as the intention of the Italian Government to participate in a three-party Agreement together with UNIDO and UNESCO, with the intention of regulating the activities of ICS in the future.

As you know, the Italian Government had expressed in the past its intention to move the ICS from UNIDO to UNESCO with the purpose to rationalize all the scientific Institutions operating in Italy under the aegis of the United Nations. This purpose was based upon the sole principle of harmonization with similar Institutions working within the framework of UNESCO and was aimed at creating the conditions, in the area of Trieste, for an effective integration between training and research activities in the interest of Developing Countries.

The new opportunities arising from the continuous and fruitful collaboration established in the last three years between the Italian Government and UNIDO, as well as the outstanding achievements due to the excellent policy pursued by UNIDO, have created a new scenario that requires a review of the previous intention to put an end to the ICS Institutional Agreement.

As a matter of fact, according to the Italian Government, the Agreement is still in force since, given the strengthened collaboration between Italy and UNIDO, resolution GC.7/Res.12 has not been followed by concrete steps, such as, in particular, those foreseen by Article X (entry into force, duration, amendments). According to the Italian authorities, resolution GC.7/Res.12 may be considered as a “merely internal act of UNIDO” that could be superseded by a new resolution of the General Conference, without prejudice of the validity of the Agreement itself.

I would be grateful to you if the Italian request could be put in the agenda of the next General Conference of UNIDO.

I take this opportunity, dear Director-General, to renew the assurances of my highest consideration.

[Signed]

Vincenzo Manno