

# A History of the Paris Chapter

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## **Establishment**

The Paris Chapter of the Group of 77 was created in 1969 in Paris at UNESCO headquarters. Its emergence may be considered as one of the most important developments in the Organization.

The Paris Chapter's membership of 133 countries consists of countries from all six Electoral Groups represented at UNESCO and constitutes the largest single group of delegates to the Organization. The first chairpersonship was held by Senegal representing the African Electoral Group. The first chairperson was Amadou Mahtar M'Bow who went on to become the Director-General of UNESCO. The chairpersonship has been rotated since the beginning from one electoral group to the next every biennium. To date, there have been fifteen chairpersons who were, in every case, the Ambassador/Permanent Delegate of his or her country accredited to UNESCO:

1969-71 H.E. Mr Amadou-Mabtar M'Bow (Senegal)

1972-73 H.E. Mr Gabriel Betancur-Mejia (Colombia)

1974-75 H.E. Mr Ahmed Derradji (Algeria)

1976-77 H.E. Mr Reza Feiz (Iran)

1978-79 H.E. Mr Issac Manda (Zambia)

1980-83 H.E. Mr Alfredo Tarre-Murzi (Venezuela) (during 1983 replaced when absent from Paris by H.E. Mr Gonzalo Abad Grijalva (Ecuador) and then H.E. Mr Joseph Antoine Emmanuel Guerrier (Haiti))

1984-85 H.E. Mr Aziz-AI-Hajj Ali Haidar (Iraq)

1986-87 H.E. Ananda W.P.Guruge (Sri Lanka)

1988-89 H.E. Mr Yahya Aliyu (Nigeria)

1990-91 H.E. Mr Guillermo Putzeys Alvarez (Guatemala) until June

1990 and then H.E. Mme Ruth Lerner Almea (Venezuela)

1992-93 H.E. Mr Musa bin Jafar bin Hassan (Oman)

1994-95 H.E. Mine Nina Sibal (India)

## **Structure**

As in other Chapters there is neither a written constitution nor rules of procedure inscribed. The Chapter functions smoothly on the basis of consensus arrived at through the methods of work and through convention.

The Group consists of the Bureau, the Plenary and Ad hoc Working Groups. The Bureau consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, the President of the four main constituents of the Group, i.e. the Electoral Groups III, IV, Va and Vb, one representative (from each of the above Electoral Groups) elected from among the members of the G77, the immediate Past President of the Group and the Chairman of the NAM. Previously, the Secretary was appointed for a period of three years, but now the term of office has been reduced to two years.

The links between the G77 Chapters are loose and their procedures are not uniform. For example, in Geneva, regional groups of the G77 covering Asia, Africa and Latin America meet separately to discuss and endorse decisions of the G77 as a whole. In New York, there is an Asian Caucus that is not confined to the G77 but includes Japan and China.

The move, however, is to steadily strengthen these links and introduce uniform procedures. For example, a uniform tenure of office of one year for all Chairpersons/Co-ordinators of the G77 has been introduced.

The G77 does not have the benefit of its own secretariat. In New York, with the support of the PGTF (Perreze Guerrero Trust Fund), one or two

representatives of G77 governments are delegated to assist the G77 in its work in logistical and organizational areas.

The biennial meetings of Chairpersons/Co-ordinators of the various Chapters of G77 have proved to be exceedingly helpful. Until quite recently it was essentially in UNCTAD that the G77 concentrated much of its work. Since UNCTAD 2 in 1968 full-scale Ministerial Meetings of the entire G77 have been held periodically to prepare for the global conference of UNCTAD. Not only did UNCTAD give adequate accommodation in the Secretariat for the G77 office but it also provided secretarial assistance.

In the late 1980s the Paris Chapter requested facilities from UNESCO. In 1993 the Director-General of UNESCO was kind enough to provide the Group with further separate office space and, since 1994, facilities for photocopying, etc.

## **Activities**

The Chapter has always been active in preparing for each session of the General Conference and the Executive Board of UNESCO. Its working relations with the UNESCO Secretariat are extremely cordial. The Group has constantly guided its membership on important issues so as to reach a consensual position to help the smooth functioning of the Organization. As regards the Medium-Term Programme and Budget for the 1986-87 biennium, for instance, the Paris Chapter advised its membership as follows:

The Delegations of the Group of 77 should always bear in mind the necessary complementarity between various forms of bilateral and multilateral co-operation so as to promote development and refute allegations which portray international co-operation within the United Nations system as being opposed to bilateral co-operation whereas it would only be judicious to harmonize both of them. The same could be said of the necessary balance between reflection and action on which consensus was reached by the Board.

The 1984-90 period was crucial for UNESCO, mainly because during this period there was tension generated due to the withdrawal of three countries from the Organization, and fear was expressed that more countries would follow. This withdrawal adversely affected the Programme and Budget of

UNESCO and reduced its programme in developing countries. The G77 associated itself closely with the situation and advised its membership to work more closely with competent NGOs to implement UNESCO's programmes. The Group made its members aware of the classification of UNESCO programme activities according to three established priorities, in view of the withdrawal of a Member State and the notice of withdrawal given by two other Member States. At the same time it encouraged the membership not to adopt a passive or resigned attitude, but on the contrary to work with determination and confidence to make use of their freedom of appreciation and to commit themselves firmly to their goals.

By virtue of its large and wide-ranging membership covering four electoral groups almost in their entirety the G77 functions as a major consultative group offering insight on issues which periodically arise and considers and co-ordinates views and options which reflect thinking from all parts of the world. It has contributed studies and dialogue and from time to time publishes its views on major issues discussed in various United Nations Organizations views which at times present viable alternatives. For instance, during the earthquake catastrophe in Mexico, the G77 co-ordinated with members of the United Nations staff associations and had collection boxes in its Organizations for material support and financial aid. The Group also made a bold statement during the Falklands conflict and when Israel annexed the Golan Heights. With regard to the Falklands conflict it demanded an immediate cease-fire and the urgent adoption of measures leading to a just and lasting solution to the conflict based on respect of the principle of territorial integrity and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

The Paris Chapter has always gone beyond being merely an interest group only looking after its own to one which helps to sustain the mandate of UNESCO and the high quality of its programme as well as efficient and effective operations. Even with the formidable position it occupies and the power and strength it has, the Group has never exercised a 'tyranny of the majority' and has rarely used its collective voting power. The Group always recognized the fact that the decisions could only be acted upon with the support of the industrialized nations.

The activities of the Paris Chapter are mainly carried out within the fields of competence of UNESCO and have had a great impact on peace-building in the world through the means of education, science, culture and communication.

UNESCO is a specialized agency of United Nations. Created in 1946 it aims to promote international collaboration and world peace under the purview of its mandate in education, science, culture and communication. The

Organization is geared to assist, support and implement national efforts of Member States for the elimination of illiteracy and the extension of education and knowledge among people.

## **THE MEMBER STATES OF THE GROUP OF 77**

(As at 15 April 1999)

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1. Afghanistan
2. Algeria
3. Angola
4. Antigua and Barbuda
5. Argentina
6. Bahamas
7. Bahrain
8. Bangladesh
9. Barbados
10. Belize
11. Benin
12. Bhutan
13. Bolivia
14. Bosnia and Herzegovina
15. Botswana
16. Brazil
17. Brunei Darussalam
18. Burkina Faso
19. Burundi
20. Cambodia
21. Cameroon
22. Cape Verde
23. Central African Republic
24. Chad
25. Chile
26. China
27. Colombia
28. Comoros
29. Congo

30. Costa Rica
31. Côte d'Ivoire
32. Cuba
33. Cyprus
34. Democratic People's Republic of Korea
35. Democratic Republic of the Congo
36. Djibouti
37. Dominica
38. Dominican Republic
39. Ecuador
40. Egypt
41. El Salvador
42. Equatorial Guinea
43. Eritrea
44. Ethiopia
45. Fiji
46. Gabon
47. Gambia
48. Ghana
49. Grenada
50. Guatemala
51. Guinea
52. Guinea-Bissau
53. Guyana
54. Haiti
55. Honduras
56. India
57. Indonesia
58. Iran (Islamic Republic of)
59. Iraq
60. Jamaica
61. Jordan
62. Kenya
63. Kuwait
64. Lao People's Democratic Republic
65. Lebanon
66. Lesotho
67. Liberia
68. Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
69. Madagascar
70. Malawi
71. Malaysia
72. Maldives
73. Mali

74. Malta
75. Marshall Islands
76. Mauritania
77. Mauritius
78. Micronesia (Federated States of)
79. Mongolia
80. Morocco
81. Mozambique
82. Myanmar
83. Namibia
84. Nepal
85. Nicaragua
86. Niger
87. Nigeria
88. Oman
89. Pakistan
90. Palestine
91. Panama
92. Papua New Guinea
93. Paraguay
94. Peru
95. Philippines
96. Qatar
97. Romania
98. Rwanda
99. Saint Kitts and Nevis
100. Saint Lucia
101. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
102. Samoa
103. Sao Tome and Principe
104. Saudi Arabia
105. Senegal
106. Seychelles
107. Sierra Leone
108. Singapore
109. Solomon Islands
110. Somalia
111. South Africa
112. Sri Lanka
113. Sudan
114. Suriname
115. Swaziland
116. Syrian Arab Republic
117. Thailand

118. Togo
119. Tonga
120. Trinidad and Tobago
121. Tunisia
122. Turkmenistan
123. Uganda
124. United Arab Emirates
125. United Republic of Tanzania
126. Uruguay
127. Vanuatu
128. Venezuela
129. Viet Nam
130. Yemen
131. Yugoslavia (cannot participate in the activities of G-77)
132. Zambia
133. Zimbabwe