

Unclassified

EDU/EC/MIN(2006)7

Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Economiques
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

03-Jul-2006

English - Or. English

**DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION
EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**EDU/EC/MIN(2006)7
Unclassified**

Meeting of the Education Committee at Ministerial Level

REPORT ON THE CONSULTATIONS WITH BIAC AND TUAC

Contact: Abrar Hasan, Head of the Education and Training Policy Division
tel + 33 1 45 24 92 21; e-mail abrar.hasan@oecd.org

JT03211696

Document complet disponible sur OLIS dans son format d'origine
Complete document available on OLIS in its original format

English - Or. English

**MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL
CONSULTATIONS WITH BIAC AND TUAC**

27 June 2006

Points of Agreement

- Both Business and Industry and Trade Union Advisory Committees (BIAC and TUAC) of the OECD attach great importance to the development of higher education and research as key for the economic and social development of nations in a rapidly globalising knowledge economy but also for personal and cultural development. Both expressed their eagerness to contribute to the educational reform process. They argued for greater involvement of all stakeholders – students, parents, business, unions and teacher representatives and community leaders -- in having a say in decision making for the sector.
- Both bodies recognise the importance of increased investment in the higher education sector, which is needed not only for sustaining expansion but also to ensure quality in meeting individual learner needs and changing skill needs of the economy in a globalising and knowledge-based world.
- Both bodies support the introduction and implementation of the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines on quality assurance of cross-border higher education.

Points of Debate

- The key issue emphasised by TUAC is open access to all, with particular emphasis on lifelong learning. The key issue for BIAC is relevance of higher learning and research for individuals, industry and the economy. BIAC would also like to see more emphasis placed on vocational education at higher levels.
- In the governance area, BIAC insists on greater accountability and greater participation of stakeholders in governance structure. TUAC considers it important to involve students and academics in governance.
- In regard to quality of provision, TUAC feels that excessive reliance on contingent, short term contracts for teachers undermines quality and asks for greater security of employment. For BIAC quality of provision can be best achieved through stakeholder participation, through a system of quality assurance with the participation of stakeholders.
- Regarding financing of higher education and research, TUAC feels that fees have risen too far and should either be reduced or held at their present levels. BIAC feels that there is room for greater efficiency in the higher education sector and recognises a greater role for business

financing, but it believes that “students would be willing to pay more” if quality education was available.

- On research and development, BIAC asks for greater university-industry collaboration. TUAC cautions that increasing role of industry may subject public interest to short term commercial benefits of industry and may cause delays in dissemination of knowledge.
- BIAC favours competition on a global level whereas as TUAC is concerned that opening up of education services under GATS can be detrimental to quality provision.

Main Messages

- BIAC and TUAC seek to co-operate with the government and other stakeholders to assure high quality and relevant higher education and research that can make effective contributions to the economic and social well being of nations and meet development needs of the individual. They requested governments to explore with the two bodies what processes can be set up to better engage the two bodies in the process of higher education reform.
- Both bodies agree that there is need for greater investment in higher education and research and that governments alone may not be able to find the resources necessary resources. They recognise the need for greater private sector contribution though BIAC and TUAC have very different emphases – TUAC expects greater business support while BIAC considers that students can pay more if they have access to quality education that gives them economic benefits.
- Both bodies support the implementation of the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines.
- Both Bodies agree with the importance of reform in the governance procedure that supports university autonomy and empowerment to conducts its business within the context of transparency and accountability. They agree on the importance of peer reviews for guaranteeing quality standards and accreditation, though each emphasise different aspects of the governance process.
- The pressures put on the government by the social partners for educational reforms were welcomed by the Chair as a way forward in achieving educational reform.