

DG/86/28

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,  
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Address by  
Mr Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow

Director-General of the  
United Nations Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural Organization  
(Unesco)

on the occasion of the visit by Dr Manuel Pinto Da Costa,  
President of the Republic of Sao Tome and Principe,  
to Unesco House

during the 125th session of the Executive Board

Unesco House, 11 September 1986

Mr President of the Republic,  
Mr President of the General Conference,  
Mr Chairman of the Executive Board,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured and delighted that we should have with us His Excellency Dr Manuel Pinto Da Costa, President of the Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. Personally, and on behalf of Unesco's Member States, I welcome you most cordially, Mr President, to this House, which represents the cultures of the entire world.

Your visit, coinciding with the 125th session of Unesco's Executive Board in the year when the Organization celebrates the fortieth anniversary of its founding, shows clearly the importance that you attach to international intellectual co-operation. And I wish to stress how much all of us here appreciate this demonstration of interest, which we see as an act of faith in the 'objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind for which the United Nations Organization was established' and which it is Unesco's purpose - in accordance with its Constitution - to advance 'through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world'.

Mr President of the Republic,

As an early militant against the colonization of your country and a co-founder of the Sao Tome and Principe liberation movement (M.L.S.T.P.), you saw your people's efforts crowned with success, in 1975, when the country won its independence. But for you, as for Africa as a whole, this struggle will continue until two major challenges have been fought: first, the moral, political and economic mobilization that will make it possible to end the racist regime in Pretoria; secondly, a form of development that is in keeping with the real needs and aspirations of African peoples.

That is why your country is contributing its share to the anti-apartheid campaign while at the same time continuing its efforts to create a modern State equipped with the most up-to-date knowledge and know-how, so as to make steady improvements to your people's daily lives.

For this purpose, you rely on various types of regional and international co-operation and, accordingly, you set great store by the standing collaboration which exists between the five Portuguese-speaking countries; you likewise support the United Nations system, which you consider to be an irreplaceable forum for multilateral co-operation, in which all States have equal rights and which fosters the kind of exchanges that will contribute to progress and better conditions for great and small alike.

In particular, your approach resembles Unesco's in many respects. Like us, you are convinced that the way to progress for all peoples lies through recognition of their freedom and dignity, respect for their cultural and spiritual identity, and education which is firmly rooted in their own values while remaining receptive to modern science and technology.

It was in this spirit that co-operation between your country and our Organization began. In December 1984, a multidisciplinary Unesco team visited you to identify projects in all its fields of competence which would be in keeping with the aims pursued by your country since its independence, including exploitation of natural resources, development of communications and conservation of the nation's cultural heritage.

As a follow-up to the projects approved by Unesco under the 1984-1985 Participation Programme, the Organization has advised the national authorities on setting up a school textbook production plan.

Rest assured, Mr President, that in the future Unesco will spare no effort to support your people in their courageous striving, under your leadership, for ever greater freedom, justice and progress.

Your visit will in any case be a further milestone on the road of co-operation, to which you give as much energy and enthusiasm as you devote to your country, Mr President.