

# sources

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## THE REAL PRICE OF WATER





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# DISTRACTING FEAR



UNESCO/FABIAN CHARAFFI

## JACQUES ATTALI

● Served as Special Adviser to former President François Mitterrand (1981-1991) and presided the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (1991 to 1993).



UNESCO/FABIAN CHARAFFI

## BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI

● Former Egyptian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, served as Secretary-General of the United Nations from January 1992 to December 1996. He currently heads the *Francophonie*, a gathering of the world's francophone countries.

// They may come from vastly different horizons and disciplines, but most “intellectuals” who are regulars to UNESCO repeat the same message: we cannot go on this way. Their alarmist discourse is so well-argued that it is difficult to pluck out the weak points. What is certain is that it stands in sharp contrast to a quasi-universal chant

often heard beyond the Organization’s walls, a lofty one that sings of a radiant future with a few obstacles along the way that will inevitably be overcome. Such a dissonance can be disarming, except if...

During a recent *21st Century Talk* organized by UNESCO, Jacques Attali and Boutros Boutros-Ghali wondered whether we were in fact “ready for the 21st century”. No question can

be addressed until peace is established, and multinationals, as major global actors, are included in the management of world affairs, according to Mr Boutros-Ghali. For Jacques Attali, since “the prolonging of current trends is impossible,” something that will be “revolutionary, brutal or mastered” is inevitable.

As the reasoning goes, we are living under the fictitious notion that “democracy and the market will ensure an irreversibly stable order”, while in fact, they are “contradictory and

self-destructive values”. Democracy relies on borders within which States can exercise their sovereignty, while the market climbs over these. Both are based on individualism, which explains the current “vindication of precariousness”. Finally, the new technologies are leading to increasing solitude within the framework of growing interdependence.

*We are living under the fictitious notion that “democracy and the market will ensure an irreversibly stable order”.*

Hence, according to Attali, the emergence of three social groups: a “super-class” of “voluntary nomads” who have “all the tools for *con-*nexity and creation”. At the other end of the scale are “the nomads of destitution”, engaged in an endless pursuit to find work. Between the two is “a huge middle class living in the vain hope of joining the super-class and in the real fear of falling into a

global type of wandering”. This fear can only lead straight to an uprising, except if...

Entertainment in all its forms – games, sports, religions (multiplication of sects), movies, drugs – take on such an importance that they maintain “social order”. The recipe is as old as the world: bread and games, said the Romans. It can even be more effective when such entertainment is within reach inside one's home, around the clock.



René Lefort



# THE REAL PRICE OF WATER

Serious water shortages are predicted in 20-30 years. Avoiding this and ensuring a fair share of quality water for all will not come cheaply. But water is not an economic commodity like any other.

*Free water  
for individuals  
is never  
free water  
for society //*

**W**ater is everywhere. In our bodies, in the air we breathe, in the food we eat and in the countryside around us. It's part of our history and our religions. It may be free when it's flowing in a river or splashing against rocks, but it isn't as soon as people start using it. It costs money to make good quality water available from taps and then return it to the environment after being treated. And the consumer doesn't always pay for it directly when local authorities or the government are responsible for supply.

"Free water for individuals is never free water for society," says Lionel Robaux of the International Office of Water (IOW), especially since the cost of water has spiralled over the past few decades. Prices obviously differ from rich countries to poor. "The kind of widespread water supply infrastructure found in rich countries is only available to a tiny rich minority in poor nations. The poorest people have to get

water from commercial carriers at 10 to 20 times the price elsewhere," explains John Rodda, President of the International Association of Hydrological Science (IAHS).

"This is absurd," adds Andras Szollosi-Nagy of UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme, "when you think of the meagre resources of such people." The social and economic data about water is alarming. "Half the world's population still don't have sanitation systems and a quarter don't even have access to clean water," French President Jacques Chirac told the opening session of the International Conference on Water and Sustainable Development held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris from March 19-21. With a serious world water shortage predicted in 20-30 years, firm action is needed.

To end what Szollosi-Nagy calls the "ridiculously unequal access to water," it has been suggested that major distributors of "blue gold" be encouraged to invest in the poorest parts of the world so as to develop their infrastructure. But how



*Industry, and especially farmers – who consume 70% of all available water, mainly through irrigation – will have to cut back their usage.*

can these companies be persuaded when there is no money in it? One answer is to make water an economic commodity.

Give it a price, in fact. The saying goes that it is better to tax the poor because there are very many more of them. This means their needs are going to increase as their standard of living improves while richer people's needs have reached a ceiling. Daily water consumption in the United States averages 600 litres per person, compared with 200 in Europe and just 30 in Africa. So the water companies will get their future profits by supplying the poorest people.

The countries of the South are thus becoming a prospective market for the big water companies. Taxes have been lowered and laws passed to lure them to the remotest corners of the world. To the question of "if there's no profit, who's going to pay?", Sekou Toure, of the Côte d'Ivoire's High Commission for Water, replies that "making the state and private sector into partners will encourage businessmen to make the necessary investment. Then, if the customers in a town or neighbourhood can't pay for their water, the state will have to intervene and come up with the extra funding."

#### Economic realities

Another idea is to introduce two-tier pricing. Water for basic needs like drinking and washing would cost less than water for non-essentials such as swimming pools or washing cars. This way, investment in infrastructure to supply clean water would give the prospect of some return.

But the real question remains: will making water a commodity with a price tag have adverse effects? The fans of "monetarising water" say the price of water is a response to the economic reality posed by the need to create and maintain a supply network, including treatment of the water. They also say that if something has no clear value, it becomes devalued, and that putting a price on water will make people start valuing it and so waste less.

Robaux states that "industry and especially farmers," who consume 70% of all available water, mainly through irrigation, "will have to cut back their usage." Water shortages can be avoided by fighting waste and leakage and by protecting the environment. Waste of water is very common. John Rodda claims that in Britain, 20-30% is lost in London's modern supply network. In poor countries, the figure can reach 70%. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reckons that 10-20% of "blue gold" can be recuperated by improving irrigation techniques.



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In many poor countries, water bears 80% of all diseases.

Shortages are "not caused by excessive consumption," says Szollosi-Nagy. The geographical distribution of water is also skewed: ten countries have approximately 65% of all water resources, while those nations with less and less of it are those with the fast-growing populations. The problem, he says, is that "over the past 25 years, the amount of water available has fallen from 12,500 to 7,500 cubic metres per person per year, while consumption has doubled."

But only half of this increased consumption is due to population growth. This is apart from the fact that in many poor countries, water is often poisonous, bearing 80% of all diseases. In Africa, water contains a lot of fluoride, which can have serious effects on a child's physical growth. In Bangladesh, small amounts of arsenic in the water supply can lead to a slow death.

#### Infrastructure costs

The water is there, but it is badly managed, spoiled by pollution and hampered by lack of infrastructure. If nothing is done, by 2020 one and a half billion people will have no access to clean water. For this reason, says the World Bank, governments need to invest about \$600 billion over the next decade to support an infrastructure



## WATER FACTS AND FIGURES:

**RESOURCES** - Water covers 71% of the planet's surface, representing a volume of 1,400 million km<sup>3</sup>. 97.5% is too salty to be consumed or used for industrial or agricultural purposes.

Fresh water represents 2.5% of the water total.

**DISTRIBUTION** - Ten countries share 65% of the world's annual water resources.

1.5 billion people are without clean water. 50% of the world's population lives without adequate water purification systems.

**SHORTAGE** - It is estimated that the threshold of water stress is reached when rations are estimated at 1000m<sup>3</sup> per person per year. 200 million people live below this level.

**POLLUTION** - According to the World Health Organisation, 30 million people a year die from epidemics and contagious diseases carried by polluted water.

**CONSUMPTION** - Users pay \$366 billion a year, representing 1% of the global GDP, for water consumption and purification.

World water consumption has multiplied sevenfold since the beginning of the century. It has doubled over the last 20 years.

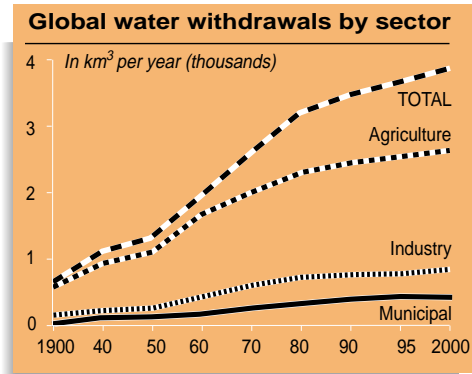
Agriculture (notably through irrigation) consumes 70% of fresh water resources. The industrial and energy sectors consume 22%, cooking and human hygiene 8%.

►► which can supply clean water to everyone.

Opponents of commercializing water point out that its price does not take into account those who cannot pay even a minimal amount for it.

"Water isn't just a commodity, it also has great social significance," says Szollosi-Nagy. This is why UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor appealed at the World Water Forum in Marrakesh last year for a new "ethics of water which shows awareness of the need for distribution, partnership and ultimately sharing." Water is not free, but access to it is a human right essential for life itself.

In some countries, water cannot be bought and sold because religion or the national constitution forbids it. "But this is not incompatible with water being a commodity," says Robaux, "because it isn't the water which costs the money but the handling of it - the distribution, transport



Source: *Nature & Resources* Vol. 34, No. 1.  
Infography: Alexandre Darmon.

and storage." There is no point in thinking of water as free or unprofitable because this would greatly limit investment in distribution in many poor countries where water is only available for an hour each day.

There is no point either in going to the other extreme and regarding it as a normal commodity. "Water cannot be reduced to just a matter of business," says Szollosi-Nagy. People die if they have no water or if what they have is dirty.

### No substitute

Some fear that commercializing water will lead to a nightmare situation where different quality water will be distributed to rich and poor people. "We have to see that doesn't happen," says Robaux, "by setting up checks and balances which can monitor its socially-acceptable use."

The problem is that infrastructure is more readily put in place than a democracy. But the international community is coming to realize this situation cannot last: in less than 20 years, infrastructure which should have lasted for 50 or 100 years has already collapsed. "Almost everything needs to be rebuilt," notes Robaux.

There's no substitute for water. Whether in short supply, polluted, unfairly distributed, wasted, inaccessible or argued over, it could lead to a serious crisis. Unless pricing leads to the recognition of water's international socioeconomic value and, as a shared resource, to its central role in cooperation between states.

*Cristina L'Homme*

# Water and wars: the price of peace

Water was at the source of the greatest civilizations which flourished in the valleys of the Nile (Egypt), the Tigris and the Euphrates (Mesopotamia), the Ganges (India), the Titicaca (Tiahuanaco), the Texcoco (Aztec) and the Huatanay (Inca).

Water has also caused many wars: when a river runs through several countries and the ones upstream do not care about the quality of the water which flows into those downstream, or when a catchment area or water table straddles several countries.

There are many examples, French President Jacques Chirac told the International Conference on Water and Sustainable

Development, noting that "the United Nations has identified 70 trouble spots linked with water, from the Middle East to the Sahel, from the arid zones of Latin America to the Indian sub-continent." River basins straddle national borders in 300 places around the world. "Things are a lot easier when a river forms a national frontier, like the Rhine does between France and Germany, because "each party lives on their own side of the river and they need to cooperate," says Lionel Robaux, of the IOW.

But some conflicts over water are latent. Turkey, for example, has built 22 dams on the Tigris and the Euphrates (the

## Last Resort Solutions:

The demand for water is driving research into ways of obtaining it from the oceans, but desalination remains an expensive option. In Spain's Canary Islands, distilled water costs about \$1 a cubic meter. Reverse osmosis (where pressure applied to a membrane containing salty water forces water out, leaving the salt behind) should remain a last resort solution, says *The Economist* (April 4) even though costs are going down. The installed desalination capacity worldwide in 1980 was about 7.5 million cubic meters per day. At the end of 1995, capacity was 21 million cubic meters per day. In California, an engineering consortium has come up with a 120-meter high desalination plant that saves on land costs and uses cheaper building materials, producing water for 50 cents a cubic metre.

Grand Anatolian Project, GAP), and is clearly in a dominant position when it comes to deciding how the water can be shared.

The scheme is expected to cut the flow of water into Iraq by at least a third. Iraq's economy depends heavily on these two rivers – for 95% of its industry and farming and 80% of its household needs. Water is also at the heart of Arab-Israeli negotiations: two-thirds of Israel's water comes from beyond the country's 1967 borders. Libya is pumping from non-renewable underground water supplies in the Sahara, causing concern to Egypt, Chad, Niger and Sudan.

### Military force

How to resolve these quarrels over water? Once upon a time they would be settled quickly by the dispatch of a few hundred troops. "This is what the Nile inhabitants (the Kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt) did 5,000 years ago to assure control of the river, from its two sources to the delta," says Robaux. "Last century, Egypt 'negotiated' an arrangement for sharing the water with Sudan which has never been revised, and today sees any new international agreement as a potential threat."

Failing military force, countries dependent on a single river have tried to sort things out by drafting international regulations and creating mediation facilities, with the aim of dividing up water fairly and so preserving world peace, as Jacques Sironneau notes in his book *L'eau, nouvel enjeu stratégique mondial* ("Water: the world's new strategic commodity").

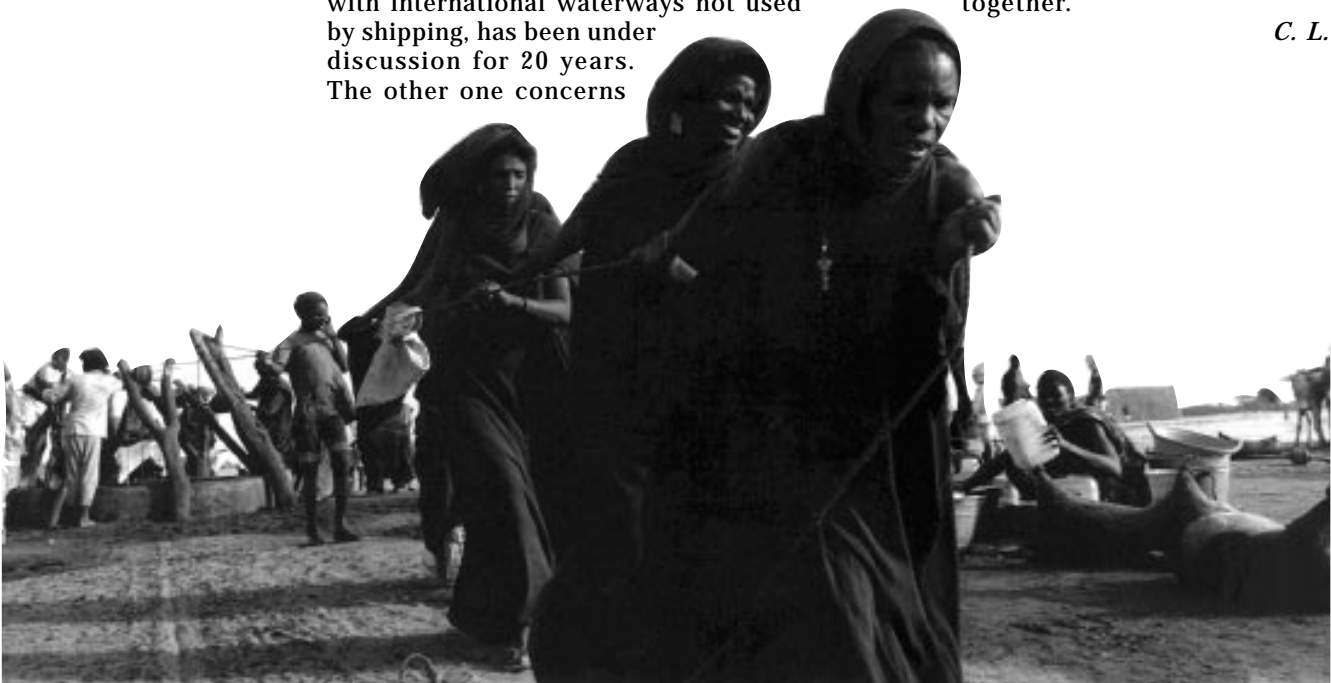
Two treaties are being worked on at the United Nations. One, which deals with international waterways not used by shipping, has been under discussion for 20 years. The other one concerns

*The United Nations has identified 70 trouble spots linked with water, from the Middle East to the Sahel, from the arid zones of Latin America to the Indian sub-continent.*

underground water. Perhaps we should look to the past for the key to the future of water. Four thousand years ago in Babylon, a conflict over water pitted the towns of Umma and Lagash, says Andras Szollogi-Nagy, of UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme. "The two sides signed a treaty which said that if one side violated the water rights of the other, the wronged party would be compensated with goods or slaves."

The commercialization of water in this instance enabled settlement of a political problem which could have led to war. The two towns did what people still have not managed to do 40 centuries later – treat water as an object of cooperation instead of conflict and use its unifying quality to bring nations together.

C. L.





From purification to distribution...

# Privatization: not foolproof

It was not a dry year, yet in 1995 in Yorkshire, United Kingdom, there was a serious water shortage. Tank loads had to be brought in to the region. Yorkshire Water, the privately owned operator was duly sanctioned by the industry regulator, the Office of Water Services (Ofwat). The company had to meet all costs involved and its prices were frozen for a year.

The “famous Yorkshire drought”, as an Ofwat spokesman calls it, remains an embarrassment during a decade of tug-of-war between consumer and business interests. The government set up Ofwat with privatization in 1989 as a non-ministerial government department to protect the consumer, ensure good quality service and to set price limits. “We believe Ofwat has not gone far enough to protect consumer’s interests,” says Linda Lennard, from the National Consumer Council. The NCC points to price increases claiming that since privatization to 1997/98, the average water bill has doubled, while in the privatized energy and telecom sectors, prices have been held down.

“Water quality has improved,” defends Ofwat’s Director-General, Ian Byatt, “and the providers have invested in infrastructure to make up for years of neglect. The new EC regulations are driving the spending which will continue on the sewage side to meet the bathing water and urban waste water directives.”

Ten water and sewage companies (including three “multi-utilities” whereby the parent group owns energy and telecom suppliers as well as water) service 75% of Britain. Eighteen smaller, water-only companies handle the rest. Combined, they invest over £3bn (\$5bn) a year in infrastructure, double the amount spent before privatization.

## Transnational ownership

The private French company Générale des Eaux (from May 1998 “Vivendi”) is a world leader in water distribution, supplying about 25 million people in France (over 40% of the population) and some 40 million in other parts of the world. The group has expanded rapidly in Europe over recent years. In the UK, the company wholly owns two water suppliers. It is a majority shareholder in three and owns minority interests in three others. Générale des Eaux also wholly owns water distributors in Hungary, the Czech Republic and Australia. 1997 net sales: FF42,402m (\$7.067m), with FF8,798m (\$1.466m) generated outside France.

The NCC argues too much of those costs are falling on present-day consumers. “We believe the companies should raise more money by loans to spread the cost over generations and that more of the burden should fall on shareholders,” states Linda Lennard.

“We need to introduce water meters that reflect supply and demand,” comments Byatt. “Most people still pay water bills based on the rateable value of their property. This means that if your property is valuable and you use very little water, you end up with a very high bill and if you have a low-value property and use a lot of water then your bill will be low. Only metering can really make sure that people pay for what they use.”

One company has supplied 30% of its customers with meters and introduced special tariffs for poorer households so they are not penalized by the system. Taking safeguards even further, the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott recently told parliament that water suppliers should be stripped of their power to disconnect customers who haven’t paid their bills.

The NCC is concerned that meters might encourage people to use less water than they actually need and warns that as the number of households opting for metering grows, less money will flow into the companies, coffers – which could encourage them to charge more to households still on unmeasured supplies.

Consumers are effectively hostage to their suppliers hence concerns over suppliers’ profits. A recent report by the Centre for the Study of Regulated Industries says that the internal rate of return to shareholders has been over 24% in real terms (excluding inflation) compared to 13% for the *Financial Times* All Share Index. “This is inappropriate for a low-risk monopoly industry,” stresses Linda Lennard.

Ofwat points out that companies are obliged under the terms of their licences to show how the dividends are obtained. “But the problem,” says Lennard, “is that the regulators have neither the power nor the resources they need to effectively control the industry. The companies have money and they control the information.”

In a March consultation paper, the British Department of Trade and Industry recognized that regulators need to have the resources it takes to do their job properly. It noted Ofwat was asking for standardized accounts from water companies to allow comparison within the sector – something consumer groups have also been calling for. The report said the regulatory process should be more open so that assumptions about the operators can be challenged and decisions explained. Wider public confidence would result.

●  
*Ann-Louise Martin  
with Paul Lashmar in London*

# " CULTURE " NOT " ECONOMISM "

Cultural diversity need not be swallowed up by globalization, provided governments fulfil their roles in this domain. Indeed, it could prove a powerful motor of economic growth and human development.

In its inequitable way, globalization is producing a culturally uniform and impoverished world ..." This alert from UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor touched a nerve at the opening of the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (see box p. 10), and revealed profound concern and confusion amongst the participants over what to do about it.

"Globalization is blind," said Jan Pronk, the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation. "Driven by economic benefits, it knows no frontiers and hardly recognizes any ethics. It threatens the basics of our freedom by a combination of global pressures and global neglect alike. The danger lies in our wish to belong to the modern era, absorbing the global trends without criticism or examination. Globalization can abolish our psychological defence and our democratic values if we are not more vigilant today."

Such is the danger now facing Asia in the wake of the economic crash there, pointed out Mr Mansuwan, Thailand's ambassador to Sweden. Ridwan Siam from Indonesia noted: "the backlash we are feeling has taken our pride from us and we are in a state of mourning."

"Globalization is imperialism in disguise," said Kunda Dixit of the Panos Institute in South Asia. He pointed a damning finger at the media. "Fewer and fewer people, for example, control information and this undermines the media's role as a pillar of democracy."

At the same time, all were conscious that the threat of cultural uniformity could not be dealt with by self-containment, which perhaps poses an even greater menace.

"Alienation and introversion can degenerate into hate of all that is other (while) irresponsible political leaders fill people with fear, which opens the door to loathing," said Pronk. Rather, he said, "we must opt for an open society which makes room for diversity, in which different cultures mix freely in

mutual respect." "We want more humanity, dignity and democracy," said Marita Ulvskog, the Swedish minister for culture. The goal then, said Pronk, must not be "to battle globalization" but to "guide it".

To a certain extent, pointed out many of the non-governmental participants, this is already happening in the market-place. Tourism for example, is the world's biggest growth industry. According to the World Tourism Organization, it has become the principle source of job creation in many countries, employs more than 100 million people worldwide and is responsible for approximately 7% of global capital expenditure. Global television, seen as a vehicle for American values by some, a potential door to the world's cultural diversity for others, is another example. Important international exhibitions, ballet and theatre troupes, along with opera

"The National Living Treasures" of Japan ►►



© PLANET/FRANCIS GIACOBETTI



Omnipresence?

companies, are more mobile than ever before, and allow millions of people all over the world to share great works of art from the furthest flung corners of the earth.

Rather than taking a back seat to those all-powerful “market forces” in these fields, governments must face up to the changes already visible and adapt their policies to take advantage of the situation.

“We must have a new vision of the state – not merely as an administrator or custodian of the historical heritage of the fine arts – in which it will participate in new cultural development trends stemming from the latest technologies,” said Néstor Garcia Canclini, a Mexican anthropologist. “Policies need to be coordinated with the private sector and voluntary associations to take account of

the innovations resulting from urban development, the industrialization of culture, and tourism, not as threats to traditional heritage, but as opportunities for revitalizing it and making it more widely known. The work of the state, above all through media education and regulations, and action by the media and voluntary associations, should seek to ensure that creativity, exercised with the responsibility of citizenship, is not confined to elites or environmental movements and grassroots minorities.”

In short, the best bet for the future and for “guiding” globalization, is to maximize the opportunities for human creativity: for all, by all.

*Fabia Midman in Stockholm  
with Sue Williams*

## A convert to the cause

Developing countries take heart: international funding agencies are starting to understand that culture and development go hand in hand, and that economic factors are not the only measure by which to judge success or merit.

That was the message delivered in Stockholm by Ismail Serageldin, the World Bank’s vice-president for special programmes, with a primary focus on the issues of culture and development. This newly created position is the first such post created at the Bank. In an interview with *UNESCO Sources*, he attributed this new direction mainly to the arrival of James D. Wolfensohn – “a long time champion of culture and development” – as the Bank’s president.

“(He) saw immediately that we must be proactively engaged in supporting people’s cultural identity through protection of the heritage and the promotion of present artistic expression, for so much of this is necessary for maintaining our identities

in a time of globalization and anonymity – and without identity there can be no development.”

Consequently, “the Bank has adopted a broad definition of culture as the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.”

### Measuring heritage

“The approach that we espouse is the one that encourages diversity, creates a space of freedom in each society for the minority expression and the contrary view, while promoting inclusion and social cohesion. It does not, however, sanction those claims of cultural specificity used as a mantra to legitimate the oppression of women and the perpetuation of intolerance and obscurantism.”

### The power of culture

Representatives from 146 countries and 100 non-governmental organizations, foundations and businesses attended the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, held in Stockholm (Sweden) from March 30 to April 2. The conference, a follow-up to the work of the UN/UNESCO World Commission for Culture and Development, adopted an Action Plan based on five objectives: to make cultural policy a key component for development strategy; to promote creativity and participation in cultural life; reinforce measures to preserve cultural heritage and promote cultural industries; to promote cultural and linguistic diversity in the information society; and to make more human and financial resources available for cultural development. It recommends further research on culture and development; the involvement of all sectors of society in cultural policy and cultural life; promotion of creative activities and protection of the interests of artists and creators in the market place, of free and independent media, and of cultural rights; and the increasing of all forms of cultural exchange to foster mutual understanding and peace.

Without identity there can be no development.

While the economic terms of any project obviously remain an important consideration, the vice-president recognizes that alone, returns on investment are “an inadequate framework to measure the benefits of heritage.” The Bank, he says, is now focusing more on “the intrinsic value” of heritage and culture.

“For Fez, for example, where we are working with UNESCO and the Moroccan government to revitalize the city’s historic heart, a study attempted to capture the added value of the historic heritage. Three different methods were used, in addition to the conventional estimation of added tourist revenues. The first sample was of tourists who had visited Fez, and an estimate of how much they would be willing to invest to upgrade the old town yielded a figure of some \$11m. The second sample involved tourists in Morocco who had not visited Fez, yielding an estimate of some \$33m (because the numbers are larger, even if the per person willingness to pay was lower). The last sample was of some Europeans who had never visited Morocco and who were not necessarily likely to do so

in the near future. Their estimates, if generalized to other European households, yielded a non-use value for the existence of the heritage in Fez at over \$300 million.

#### Garnering funds

“The purpose of such numbers is not that they would be translated immediately into some added revenue for the maintenance and restoration of the Fez heritage, but rather that there is a large intrinsic value that goes beyond what is actually measured or measurable by actual tourist revenues.”

Similar thinking provided the foundation for creating the Global Environment Facility (GEF) “which has provided more than \$3 billion of grants to poor countries to cover the incremental cost of protecting the global environment.”

“Perhaps we could hope to see a Global Cultural Facility that would garner funds on a much larger scale than those currently provided to the World Heritage Fund, which are a mere fraction of what is needed to address the major challenges of conservation that we face around the world.”

S.W.

## Africa's cultural revival

Ubuntu is a South African word for “humanness”. It means, “I only exist because of my ties to others”, and it is an expression of community life and collective responsibility.

It is also the name of an international movement, launched in Stockholm, which has set itself the task of promoting African culture, and through it, development. Everything remains to be done, explains Damien Pwono (Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire), Ubuntu’s honorary president.

“In the colonial period, African culture was perceived as something negative. In the fight for independence, it was used as a rallying point. After independence, politicians used it to create a sense of national unity. But as soon as this unity was seen as being achieved, that was it. Development planners, seeing progress only as roads, electricity and dams used to see culture as an impediment, and disdained local knowledge, skills and values in favour of scientific knowledge coming from the West.

“The Ubuntu movement wants to build on the strength of African culture and foster its relationship with other sectors, and especially with economic development. For example, take Congolese and Zairean music, which is popular everywhere now. But the production centre of this music now is in Paris. No one in Africa really knows what the

economic impact of this music is or could be, because no one has ever been interested in finding out. It is only considered as entertainment. But people make a living out of it. Book production is another much neglected area.

#### Creating events

“We want to reinforce the structures that exist in these and other areas. Africa now has the professionals who can do the work – in music, film, television and publishing. And they are starting to organize themselves through professional groups. The next step is to create the events that will boost their cause. For example, along with the FESPACO film festival in Burkina Faso, there is now a new international Southern African Film and TV market in Capetown. The Zimbabwe Book Fair, which is getting stronger every year, is another example.

“We are also looking to involve Africans who live in other parts of the world.

“Ultimately we could be seen as a sort of network that – promotes research, documentation and dissemination of knowledge on African culture. We must show governments, funding bodies, professionals, and the public at large, the importance of culture in Africa, and the need for commitments towards development.

N. D-K.



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Protecting the urban heritage and promoting socio-economic development are not incompatible: mayors of historic cities in China and Europe recently shared their experiences.

# CITIES: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

In Harbin, modern buildings surround the historic centre.



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Forty years ago, China's leading architect, Liang Sichen, suggested that the old city of Beijing should be left intact and a new, modern city built in the capital's western suburbs. The government rejected the proposal and began to tear down the city's ancient walls, that had been such an integral part of its history for more than 500 years.

Now, original bricks are being sought out and recycled to restore the small section of wall that remains. Alas, even this has been overwhelmed by the modern buildings that have mushroomed in the capital over the past decade.

## Valuing historic buildings

"We didn't realize until recently that without the context of the surrounding environment, we would not be able to understand the role, architectural motives and artistic value of historic buildings," said Wang Jinghui, the deputy director-general of the ministry of construction's department of urban planning. Wang was speaking to participants at the International Conference for Mayors of Historic Cities in China and the European Union, organized by China, UNESCO and the French city of Chinon. The

event was held in the city of Suzhou from April 7-9 (see box p. 14).

He was describing the situation for virtually all of China's historic cities, which have suffered irretrievable losses in the course of urbanization and the liberalization of the economy.

"Conservation measures have also been made difficult by (...) what has been dubbed a 'culture of spiritual conservation and material destruction'" said Minja Yang, from UNESCO's World Heritage Centre. "This is why there are so few vestiges of architectural and urban heritage. As in many cities, rich and poor, the discovery of cultural treasures in the course of major public works has often been hushed up, thus ensuring the destruction of potentially invaluable sources of knowledge and wealth."

Various methods of reconciling conservation with the needs of modernization have been tried over the past decade or so. There are now 187 cities covered by protective legislation, including the ancient capitals of Beijing and Lhasa, traditional industrial cities such as Zigong in Sichuan province known for salt-making, and ex-colonial cities like Shanghai and Harbin, and towns with intact ethnic features such as Lijiang, built by the Naxi people in Yunnan province, which has

*A city is not a museum. Rather, the newly built should not violate the layout and scale of the old city.*

been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Rather than trying to save everything old, conservationists and planners concentrated on single features within historical centres – a few blocks of buildings, the original layout of a city, or certain traditional features. In some cases, such as Suzhou and the World Heritage site of Chengde in Hebei province – the imperial summer resort of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) – city residents, factories and government departments have been relocated. A special fund was established in 1997 for the conservation of historical districts, which has been used to restore blocks of old buildings in some ten cities.

However, these efforts have met mixed success. For the start, China has seen the number of its cities increase from 230 in 1980 to 660 today, and over the same period, some 70 million people migrate from rural to urban areas, seeking better living standards and the comforts and advantages of modernity. Such growth obviously imposes certain priorities.

“Unlike our European counterparts,” explains Wang, “infrastructure in (our historical) cities has not been renewed, and in most protected areas, houses are run down and the environment is unpleasant.” He claims local governments are under pressure from residents who want their living conditions improved and access to transport, telecommunications, electricity and

plumbing – and real-estate managers, who prefer replacing old buildings with modern highrise blocks. Two thirds of Beijing's traditional houses known as Sinheyuan (a compound with houses around a square courtyard), for example, have thus disappeared.

Another problem is that some cities tear down original buildings and replace them with copies. “They mistakenly take this as protection of historic features,” said Wang.

### Shifting visions

However, the goal is not to “keep historic cities unchanged” reminded Chen Weibang, the construction ministry's urban planner. “A city is not a museum. It has to keep growing to meet the needs of its residents. Rather, the newly built should not violate the layout and scale of the old city.”

This nonetheless represents a major shift in vision. “What we hope,” said Wang Jinghui “is that in the process of the huge construction movement and renewal of historic cities, the completeness of the city does not get lost. We hope that with the modernization of these cities, the historical heritage, eco-environment and natural beauties can be preserved and the traditional community lifestyle extended. What we want to construct is a beautiful future that co-exists with our history.”

*Zhou Xiaoxue  
Suzhou*

## Suzhou, the Oriental Venice



While the mayor of Chinon (France) warns of a citizen's revolution against the loss of the traditional features of historic cities, the mayor of Suzhou in China is dealing with complaints from residents who want to quit their old houses to live in modern buildings with better facilities.

Suzhou, on the delta of the Yangtze River, is 2,500 years old. Its traditional gardens, waterways, and riverside houses with white walls and black tiles have earned it the title of “the Oriental Venice”.

Conservation work began there in 1986, when there were some 360,000 people living in the 14-sq. km of the historic centre. The old homes there, originally designed for one family each, often accommodated many more. To make maximum use of the space available these residents undertook their own renovations.

“That speeds up the aging of old buildings, and makes restoration difficult,” said Qiu Xioxiang, the director of the Suzhou city



## MAYORS TO MAYORS

Some 125 people, including the mayors of 15 historic Chinese cities and seven European ones met in Suzhou (China) from April 7-9 under the auspices of UNESCO's World Heritage Centre to exchange ideas and experiences on the preservation and social and economic development of such centres. Twelve of the cities represented, including seven in China, are inscribed on the World Heritage List. The mayors adopted a 13-point declaration committing them to the development of conservation policies for the preservation of historic urban neighbourhoods, on the basis that these neighbourhoods constitute the collectivity's cultural memory and provide inhabitants with a sense of historical continuity, which is one of the foundations of sustainable social and economic development. The declaration also appealed for support from the private and public sectors. The French group L'Oréal, which sponsored the conference, rose to the occasion with a grant of \$24,000 for the safeguarding of four classic Chinese gardens in Suzhou, inscribed on the World Heritage List last year.

© GAMMA LIAISON/FRANCIS LI



Traditional park in Suzhou.

►► bureau of urban planning. During a recent tour of some of these old homes he recalls rotten floors that gave way as he walked, and plastic sheeting and basins used to catch rainwater from leaky roofs.

"The residents kept asking us when were we going to demolish the houses and build new ones for them. It's hard to imagine that such poor housing conditions still exist after ten years of working to solve such problems," he said.

### Relocating factories

The programme, which was aimed at improving housing without damaging the traditional features of the old town, saw new developments opened on the city outskirts. According to Shen Changquan, the deputy mayor of Suzhou, the city has invested between 5 and 6 billion RMB yuan (approx. \$700 million) in building 53 residential areas over the past ten years, complete with shops, hospitals, banks and recreational centres. Some 35,000 residents were moved out of the historic centre, and another 60,000 are destined to be relocated over the next decade.

Apart from civilian inhabitants, 27 city government departments and 130 factories have also been shifted. Over the next three years, one third of the remaining 96 factories will also move. The aim is to leave only those pollution-free industries with traditional characteristics, such as silk and musical instrument manufacturing.

Some 800 lanes and 163 bridges have been restored, 35 km of waterways have been dredged, and "protection labels" have been slapped on more than 200 historical structures and over 500 trees, Shen said.

"It is the houses with the best traditional features that are in the poorest condition," said Qiu Xiaoxiang. Various methods are used to conserve these buildings.

For large compounds, built by wealthy people and now each housing perhaps a dozen families, the city restores the external features and improves internal facilities with

costs divided between the central government, the city government and the residents themselves. "Which means that residents can enjoy better living conditions by paying only one third of the price of the work," Qiu said.

The city has also transformed four hectares by restoring large buildings from the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties and building new houses in the traditional style. "But, only rich people can live in such houses, which are sold for about one million yuan (\$122,000) each," said Qiu, adding that this changed the social profile of the area.

At the same time, the city is trying to solve its transport problems. To the "surprise" of French architects who have been cooperating with Suzhou city authorities on the issue, the construction of a wide boulevard running through the heart of the old city has been undertaken. "It is profoundly modifying the organization of the historic heart," says Philippe Jonathan of the Paris-Villemin school of architecture.

"The experience of Europe's historic cities is that the car is both a factor of destruction and added value. Opening up an old centre to cars usually leads to greater investment there. But this also inevitably leads to the departure of part of the local population, and with them, part of the city's memory."

Some of the transport problems, suggests Jonathan, could be resolved by the restoration and improved use of the city's canal system, which he says provide Suzhou with "an exceptional chance", especially given the proximity of the Grand Canal and the city's railway station.

"Transport policy can kill off heritage," he reminded, "it can also save it and even reinvent it."

Z. X.



© GAMMA/A. BERG

Shanghai: This former colonial city is China's largest port.

# Putting people and culture first



In Strasbourg, tramways have alleviated traffic and opened up more pedestrian space in the historic centre.

© CUS

*Breathing new life into heritage and identity is also a means of giving new impetus to citizenship*

Yves Dauge is the mayor of historic Chinon, one of the cities on the chateaux circuit in France's famous Loire Valley. He is also an advisor to UNESCO's World Heritage Centre, and one of the main organizers of the Suzhou meeting. In this interview, he explains the European approach to safeguarding historic cities.

## **Why did you push for a meeting of "mayors to mayors"?**

We mayors have a different perspective to conservationists and historians. Our main preoccupation is a city's inhabitants, their well-being and their problems – infrastructure, housing, jobs – which gives us a common language.

## **How do the Europeans protect historic city centres?**

In Europe we use the historical value of cities as an element of development - a support for low-cost housing or economic development for example through tourism. We don't cut ourselves off from a city's history. We continue it, and through it affirm our identity.

People live in the historic neighbourhoods, and we restore their homes with them – modernizing them and making them more comfortable. A local population must be maintained if we are to prevent these neighbourhoods from becoming soulless promenades with shops full of trashy goods; an option which would mean passing up a remarkable chance to use our heritage to improve our citizen's well-being.

## **What are some examples of cities where this approach has been taken?**

At the Suzhou meeting, Roland Ries, the mayor of Strasbourg explained how the centre of that city has been modernized, notably by the construction of a tramway to discourage cars and turn the space over to the residents and their activities. Barcelona's mayor, Joan Clos, told how damaging and dirty industries had been moved out of the historic centre there and replaced by tertiary activities – services and the like – thus maintaining its function as a place of employment.

In Chinon, I wanted to revive our exceptional heritage in the city centre by developing low-cost housing there. We had to undertake restoration, provide more light, improve comfort and establish infrastructure. It was expensive, but in the longer term it's proved a winner with people, improving relations between people and their quality of life.

## **What have you learned from the meeting with your Chinese counterparts?**

China is going through the urban expansion that we experienced during the 1950s and 60s. The tendency here is to build new cities on the outskirts of protected historic neighbourhoods. It's generally believed that people are badly housed in the older quarters, that they lack the comfort and modernity of the huge apartment blocks in the new development areas. As a result, the older centres are left to die off, with only a few gardens or individual buildings eventually remaining. We made these same mistakes: killing off historic centres and then trying to make museums out of them.

At the same time, in a country with more than a billion inhabitants, the problem is altogether of a different scale. Nonetheless, each city has its own history, its own identity, and can be modernized without denying its past. Breathing new life into heritage and identity is also a means of giving new impetus to citizenship in a world, where cities are all being built on the same banal 'international model' and are difficult to tell apart.

The Chinese mayors who came to Suzhou have recognized that we cannot ignore the culture of our cities or their inhabitants. ●

*Interviewed by N. K.-D.*

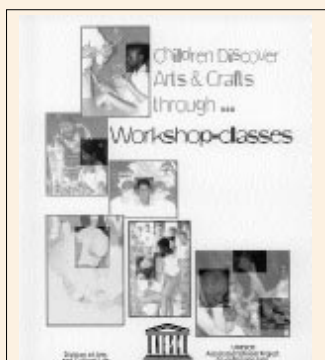




## EDUCATION

### LEARNING ARTS AND CRAFTS THROUGH WORKSHOP-CLASSES

Under the guiding hand of local craftsmen, in Guatemala, 25 pupils aged between 10 and 12 immersed themselves for six months in Mayan art, learning traditional weaving and wood-work techniques. In Jordan, 24 girls aged between 13 and 14 learned traditional pottery, weaving and basketry from the town of Salt. The students are part of the Associated Schools



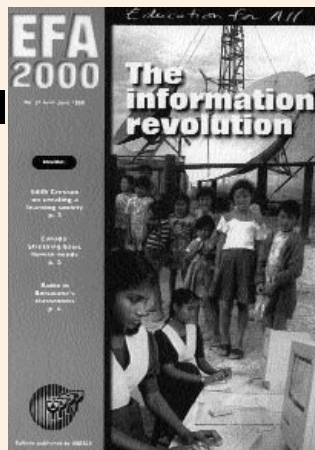
Project which is designed to build bridges between crafts-people, children and teachers. More than 4,000 schools in 136 countries are now involved in this UNESCO-sponsored effort as the brochure "Children Discover Arts and Crafts Through Workshop Classes" explains. The Organization hopes to convince the various

ministries, schools, crafts-people and other decision-makers of the efficiency and impact of this drive to upgrade arts and crafts, so as to initiate similar projects throughout the world.

●●● To find out more  
Associated Schools Project  
Co-ordination Unit

### Media and Education

Journalists and teachers from 10 African francophone countries met in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) March 29-April 4 for a second workshop on the media and education in Africa. It followed-up on the Yaounde workshop (November 1997) which launched the Network of African Education Journalists (RAJED), and was organized in cooperation with the World Association of Newspapers (WAN). Teachers were trained in using newspapers as a pedagogical tool in the classroom, education journalists visited classrooms; they were also encouraged to provide schools free of charge with unsold copies of their newspapers. A basic text determining the mandate and functioning of RAJED was adopted by members.



### EFA 2000

The April-June issue of EFA 2000 explores the new trends concerning information technologies and education but warns that beyond the proliferation of electronic media, there is a real world made up of hunger and distress in which the majority of humans still live. In an interview, Huguette Labelle, president of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) explains why meeting basic human needs is a cornerstone of Canada's foreign aid policy. This issue of EFA 2000 also considers the use of radio in the teaching of English in Botswana. The project was mooted at a time when English was declared the medium of instruction from Standard Two onwards. Key success factors: an insistence on using local skills, story lines and talent.

### Literacy

"The best way to eradicate illiteracy in adults for the future consists of teaching the maximum number of school age children how to read and write today," declared the decision-makers and specialists attending a regional forum on literacy in Africa, organized by UNESCO March 16-20 in Dakar (Senegal). It's estimated that one out of two Africans is illiterate compared to a global average of one out of four. Delegates addressed the critical questions facing the continent: the synergy between mother tongue and language of instruction, the need to understand women's learning requirements, the need for improved vectors between the formal and non-formal education sectors, the preservation of traditional cultures, links with the international community, the role of African institutions in training and research and a better use of new technologies. A Burundi delegate drew attention to the need for peace education. "If we don't put the accent on peace education," he said, "all literacy investments will be wasted."



## SOUND AND VISION

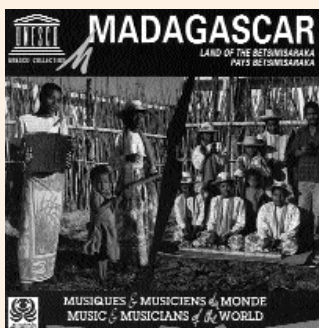
### Madagascar

**Land of the Betsimisaraka.**

*UNESCO/AUVIDIS, 1998.*

*Price: 120 FF*

The Betsimisaraka ("those who are many and united") are Madagascar's third largest ethnic group; a few thousand strong they inhabit a narrow strip of land on the east side of the island. The geographical location has exposed



the Betsimisaraka to Indo-asian, Arab and European cultures across the oceans. This multi-cultural influence was probably encouraged by the development of Tamatave, Madagascar's largest port and the regional capital of Betsimisaraka. As on the rest of the island, music here plays a predominant role in social and religious events. Hear on

this disc the 'antsondina' – a six holed bamboo flute, the 'pitikalinga' earth bow played by children and adolescents, the 'valiha' – a kind of zither, the 'kaiamba' rattle and the 'bingy' drum to name just a few indigenous instruments. The lyrics, based on proverbs, ancestral beliefs, are often humorous and sprightly.



## PEOPLE



## POPULATION

### CENSUS MONTH

The first census of the Cambodian population for more than 35 years was carried out in March, following a three-month Information and Education Campaign implemented by UNESCO with funding from the UNFPA (United Nations Fund for Population Activities). Comic strip booklets, posters and teaching manuals were distributed to every village in Cambodia, with the aim of bringing as much information about the 1998 census to people through as many means possible. A popular festival was organized around the theme of the Census, with performances by some 150 Khmer artists.

A group of 181 Khmer journalists attended a five-week training course conducted by the Cambodian Communication Institute under the supervision of UNESCO in a further attempt to get the message across. Radio and television are important communication vectors in Cambodia, with 80 and 65% penetration respectively. Television and radio spots, documentaries, talk shows and even two 1998 Census Karaoke songs were broadcast every day until the end of the census.

### Peace Prize

President Fidel Ramos of the Philippines and Nur Misuari, Chairman of the Moro Liberation Front have been named laureates of the 1997 Felix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize. The prize, named after the former president of Côte d'Ivoire and awarded by UNESCO annually, honours



President Fidel Ramos

### IN HONOUR OF CITIES

The UNESCO Cities for Peace Prize was awarded March 31 for the second time during the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development in Stockholm, Sweden (see page 9). In the Arab region, the Prize was awarded to Tunis (Tunisia) and its mayor M'Hamed Ali Bouleymen, who is trying to fight the concrete jungle that makes city dwelling unhealthy for children, notably by creating parks and gardens. In Africa, Harare (Zimbabwe) and its mayor Solomon Chirume Tawengwa, were honoured for



Fighting the concrete jungle in Tunis.

people, organizations and institutions which have contributed significantly to the promotion, research, safeguarding or maintaining of peace. The announcement was made at UNESCO by former US Secretary of State and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Henry Kissinger, president of the international jury. He praised the prize-winners for the agreement they reached to end the 26-year-long conflict in Mindanao, in the Philippines, in September 1996 and highlighted the ability of the accord involving Moslems and Christians to "contribute to an understanding between religions which is so important to peace."

an initiative in favour of street children and unemployed youth. The prize for Asia and the Pacific went to Olongapo (Philippines) and mayor Katherine Gordon, for campaigns to prevent urban violence and pollution. In Europe, Pecs (Hungary) and mayor Zsolt Pava won the Prize for fighting against exclusion, and work with refugee education. The Prize was awarded for the first time during the International Congress on Cities and Education for a Culture of Peace in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1996.

In the face of the recent forest fires in the Brazilian state of Roraima, the Director-General deplored the inability of humans to combat such disasters: "We should be able to mobilize immediately technicians, aeroplanes and equipment, just as we have - alas - been able to do to wage war. While the Amazon forest and the island of Kalimantan (Borneo) are burning, it appears that we are prepared for traditional wars but not for the new ones which are threatening humanity...At the dawn of a new millennium we should invest differently; we must make new choices to face new challenges." Exploitation of the Amazon already poses a serious threat to ecosystem survival in the region.

"I wanted to make this visit to convey UNESCO's message of education for peace, and to make an appeal to women," declared UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Princess Maria Teresa, the hereditary Duchess of Luxembourg during a one-day visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina, March 31. "Let us build the defences of peace in the minds of our children, so that we may look into their eyes and say: I tried to leave you a better world." Princess Maria Teresa went to a number of sites where UNESCO is contributing to the reconstruction effort, including the city of Mostar and Sarajevo's school for the blind. She also visited NGO's participating in the project 'Knitting Together Nations' which brings together Bosnian craftswomen.



## BOOKS

### Adult Education for Indigenous Peoples

**Reflecting Visions: New Perspectives on Adult Education for Indigenous Peoples, edited by Linda King. UNESCO Institute for Education, 1998.**

**224 pages, 110FF.**

Divided into three parts, this book deals with the new international context of adult education for indigenous peoples. Policy issues are examined in the light of experiences in Guatemala, Honduras, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Chile, Mexico, Belize, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Indigenous people from Australia, Belize, Mexico and Bolivia present their visions of adult education. The book concludes with a call for indigenous peoples to "take greater control over their education at both the national and international levels. This is critical to future generations' survival as indigenous people."

### Understanding the Indian Ocean

**Perspectives on Oceanography by T.S.S. Rao and Ray C. Griffiths. IOC Ocean Forum, UNESCO Publishing, 1998.**

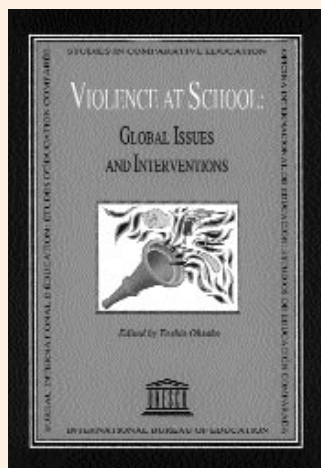
**187 pages, 240 FF.**

This book describes the oceanography of the Indian Ocean from earliest times to the present, and suggests a possible framework for the future, into the next millennium. Subjects examined include the geological origin and evolution of the Indian Ocean, general hydrography, circulation and water masses, nutrient distribution and biology in the region as well as historical lore. Statistics, graphs and colour photos complete the presentation.

### Violence at School

**Global Issues and Interventions, edited by Toshio Ohsako. UNESCO: International Bureau of Education, 1997, 127 pages, 65FF.**

Violence affects the efficiency of education by interfering with the individual's learning ability, social behaviour and quality of life. Without peace in the minds of the pupils and teachers, the school will fail to produce the human resources nations need.



This book brings together a number of national experiences in violence management, principally from developing countries.



## SCIENCE

### Solar Forum

Some 40 African countries participated in the first African solar forum in Bamako, Mali from March 25-28, as part of the World Solar Programme. The forum followed the 1996 World Solar Summit in Harare (Zimbabwe) which stressed that renewable energy sources tend to be the most suitable for remote, thinly populated areas. More than 600 solar energy

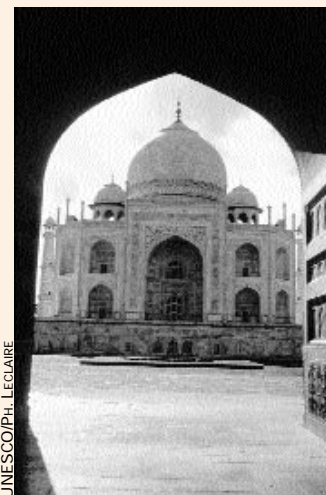
### CULTURAL OR NATURAL: A UNIFIED APPROACH

How should the notion of "outstanding universal value" as specified in the World Heritage Convention be interpreted? Fifty experts from around the world met in Amsterdam (Netherlands) from March 25-28 to debate such questions. They stressed that the Convention should be seen as a holistic document which unites cultural and natural heritage and to that end proposed a unified set of evaluation criteria for the inclusion of sites on the World Heritage List. The experts urged that the Convention ensure recognition of interactions between people and the "natural" environment. They also recommended the strengthening of management, monitoring and local participation in conservation to guarantee the Convention's credibility. These conclusions will be presented to the World Heritage Committee in Kyoto (Japan) November 30-December 5.



## CULTURE

### Heritage partners



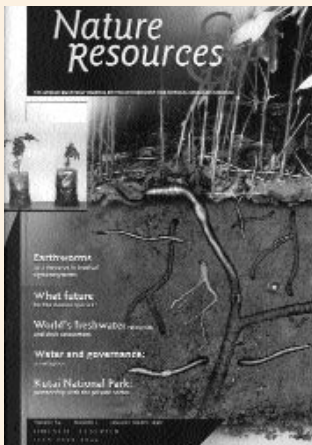
A three-year programme to restore the Taj Mahal, a world heritage site, was launched by UNESCO, the Rhône-Poulenc Foundation of France and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in New Delhi, on April 9. Although many agencies have been contributing to the conservation of the Taj Mahal, specialists say air pollution has discoloured the facade leaving it in need of constant cleaning. Recent monsoon rains have also contributed to erosion of the white marble exterior. The first stage of the preservation programme is based on the use of certain products to repair damage and help protect the mausoleum from future deterioration. The second stage is the transfer of technological know-how to Indian researchers. This will be done at a new conservation laboratory funded by Rhône-Poulenc in Agra.



## PERIODICALS

### Nature and Resources

"We forget the relationship between government and water at our peril as, more generally, we tread a dangerous path if we ignore the relationship between government and the common good," writes Kader Asmal, the South African Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry in this issue of *Nature and Resources* which assesses the world's water resources and related management issues. From water to soil, the quarterly examines tropical earthworms and the development of techniques for improving agricultural performance



using these "ecosystem engineers" and low-quality organic residues. *Nature and Resources* also covers the first in the 21st century debate series at UNESCO in Paris.

### INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

What is governance? How is it related to issues such as economic development, the market and the welfare state as well as to political questions of democracy and participation? What is the significance of the frequently used term 'good governance'? Number 155 of the ISSJ (now in its fiftieth year) analyses the term which "refers to

a complex set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government", from its genesis to post cold-war flight to uses and abuses of the concept. In its 'open forum' section, the ISSJ presents a specialist view of the state and economic development theory. In a separate article, civil service reform in the countries of the West African Monetary Union comes under the spotlight.

### The Courier

"Progress, risk and responsibility" is the theme of *The Courier's* May issue with a lead story on "Science and Social Responsibility" asking: "who should determine the priorities and choices of science and technologies and on the basis of which social goals? How can we define democratically the risks which can be considered as "acceptable"? What is the level of responsibility and solidarity which can be expected from individuals and groups in relation to both present and future generations?" It is within this context that *The Courier* examines energy availability and distribution, the ethical and legal obligations of business to communities in case of accident (witness Bhopal, Chernobyl) and developments in the field of genetics. The "fact file" concerns the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights. The issue concludes with Marcel Marceau, interviewed on his silent art.

●●● To find out more UNESCO publications and periodicals can be purchased at UNESCO Headquarters and through national distributors in most countries. For further information or direct orders by mail, fax or Internet: UNESCO Publishing, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP. Tel. (+33 1) 01 45 68 43 00 - Fax (33 1) 01 45 68 57 41. Internet: <http://www.UNESCO.org/publishing>.



## EXHIBITION

### From Abou Simbel to Angkor

An exhibition tracing 50 years of conservation work on 40 prestigious world heritage monuments is presented by UNESCO at the United Nations in New York, April 14 - May 30. From Hue (Viet Nam) to San Francisco de Lima (Peru), Persepolis (Iran) and the sandswept towns of Mauritania, models, plans and photographs show certain conservation efforts from start to finish while documenting other ongoing ones. After the UN, the exhibition will move to the World Bank in Washington, then on to Savannah College in the state of Georgia (USA).



UNESCO/INRADVIC

Ramses II in transit.

### ART BEYOND BORDERS

"Peace through the universal language of art", is the goal of Art Beyond Borders. This series of exhibitions introduces artists selected to represent their countries in the International Museum of 20th Century Arts & Cultural Centre, known as Timotca, based in

California, (USA). The works from 40 artists were displayed at UNESCO in April, following up last year's inaugural exhibition at the United Nations in New York. The number of participating countries and artists will increase as the tour continues until its permanent installation in 2000 at the Timotca cultural centre, in Lisbon, Portugal. Says English art critic Edward Lucie-Smith: "There has still been a lack of opportunities to experience the variety of art now being made... This is a small beginning but a historically important one."



"Haiti, Fortress of Peace", by Préfète Duffaut

"IN BRIEF" compiled by: Christine Mouillère.

# TIME FOR REAPPRAISAL

**EDUCATION** *Delegates from 61 vastly different countries in the Asia-Pacific region seek to broaden the notion of learning, in light of the Delors report.*



© PANOS PICTURES/PAUL HARRISON

One, two, three: learning that starts on the home ground.

There is much to be learned from the people of even the smallest nations. O'Love Jacobsen is the minister of education on the tiny Pacific island state of Niue, population 2,300, and her views of education come down to family-sized dimensions.

Mrs Jacobsen – with “a bachelor in running a home, a degree in motherhood, and balancing that with being a cabinet minister” – was one of 650 delegates from 61 countries who met in Melbourne (Australia) from March 30 to April 3 to look at how the findings of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century presided by Jacques Delors (see box) could be put to work in the Asia-Pacific region. The conference focused on the four pillars of the commission's report, Learning to Know, Learning to Do,

Learning to Live Together and Learning to Be, and their relevance for the mass of humanity living in this part of the world; a region where administrative structures, such as education systems, are often inherited from past colonizing powers, or have been “imported”.

Mrs Jacobsen believes that by using outside yardsticks in the past to assess its students, Niue has set up an education system “designed to fail our children”, largely because of adoption of inappropriate Western educational ideals. What's wrong, she asked, with a child going to school “to learn to draw, to play a guitar under a tree?” In Niue, parents like many others everywhere else, often tell the most laid-back students: “learn English, learn your mathematics, or you won't get a job.”

Those parents, she explained, had been influenced by an education loaded in favour of the academically inclined. “What about the others, the ones we're losing to New Zealand to go on to the factory floor?” In contrast to Niue's population, New Zealand is home to 18,000 people of Niuean descent, whose forbears left the island seeking new opportunities.

The young people of the Pacific are being lured, said Bernard Dowiyogo, the Education Minister of Nauru, “to the attractions and employment available within the larger metropolitan areas.”

Many island states would agree with his charge that they “have to face up to the challenge of population loss of productive labour or they may simply end up as retirement villages maintained by repatriated funds from overseas employment.”

Professor John Waiko, from Papua New Guinea, noted that “our young people are attracted to courses that

they think will make them money. I think we should look at courses that improve culture, knowledge of history.” In other words, education focused on the whole person, aimed at providing a continuing interest – an education adapted to a world where jobs are no longer guaranteed, where regular career changes are becoming the norm and where adaptability and continued learning are essential survival tools.

## NO SAY, NO POWER

To this end, one of the key problems identified in the Commission's report – the danger of a growing gulf between the minority capable of finding their way in the emerging world, and those who feel they have no say and no power in society's future – struck a chord amongst delegates.

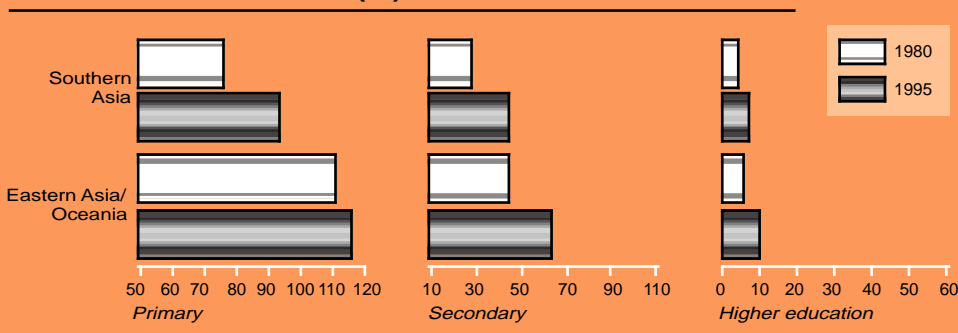
As opposed to the “brain drain” faced by many Pacific island states, problems of basic infrastructure complicate the issue for Asia. Dr H. Soedijarto,

## LEARNING: THE TREASURE WITHIN

●●● Delegates from 61 countries, including ministers from 25, met in Melbourne (Australia) from March 30 to April 3 to focus on the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century's report “Learning: the treasure within” and its relevance for Asia-Pacific peoples. The report recommends learning throughout life based on four pillars: *Learning to know* – “combining a broad general knowledge with the opportunity to work in depth on a small number of subjects.” *Learning to do* – “acquiring a skill as well as the ability to cope with different situations and work in teams.” *Learning to live together* – “understanding other cultures and learning to manage conflicts.” *Learning to be* – “the all-round development of each individual”.

The Melbourne conference resolved to apply the general principles of the Report “to the day-by-day working of our schools and our people; to use the agenda for education as means of broadening achievement and not mere rhetoric.” An action plan was drawn up to focus on the role of the teacher, the concept of citizenship, the application of educational research findings and issues for youth, including the renovation of links between education and the world of work.

## Gross enrolment ratios (%)



Source: World Education Report (Infography: A. Darmon).

Indonesia's Director-General of Out-of-School Education, Youth and Sports, said his government was going to enshrine in law the need for education to focus on a person's wholeness and "moral value". But the sheer numbers involved in education mean there are other priorities such as limited resources and facilities. Indonesia would support establishing the four pillars

of learning, Mr Soedijarto said, but wanted them to be implemented so that the quality of its 1.6 million school teachers was upgraded, learning technology was improved, the vocational prospects of its students raised, and parents brought more into the system.

Professor Thai Thanh Son, of Viet Nam's Hanoi University of Technology, a

vocational education expert, said the country's finances after more than 30 years of war did not allow for a sudden expansion in education. But with more than 500,000 young people leaving secondary school each year for tertiary education or training, new organizations and training systems were needed to cope with growing demand. Viet Nam's vice-minister for education, Dr

Vu Ngoc Hai, regretted that the "social position" of the teacher was not as high as it had been in his country. "Many students don't want to become teachers," he said. The Government was paying attention to this area, in the light of the Delors report. It was "trying for the educational system that UNESCO has proposed."

The minister also said that Viet Nam, while moving to develop education along the four paths, was "trying to structure the methods that we need". His words reminded delegates that the report's pillars are not a prescription. They will have to be fashioned for each nation's requirements, and the task may not be easy.

*Christopher Richards  
in Melbourne*

**COMMUNICATION** *In all parts of the world, public television seeks to redefine its mission and the way in which it is funded.*

# SURVIVAL TACTICS

A capacity for reappraisal is essential for survival. All over the world, public television is going through a process of self-criticism. It has to redefine what it stands for and the way in which it is funded if it is not to become a museum piece. This was the conclusion reached by the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) at its 18th session, held at UNESCO March 24 - 27, when it went into the question of the "political, technological and economic challenges to public service broadcasting".

In many countries of the South, public television was

for years funded and supervised by government ministries. It has, in the words of Maria Eugenia Fonseca, Director of the Foundation for Television Education (FETV) in Panama, "often been used as a vehicle for propaganda by authoritarian regimes." In these countries, the key problem of public television lies in its moral independence and its funding: "the state, which is often the main shareholder, should not have a right to scrutinize content," she declared. It is through funding that television will be able to develop its technological resources, reach out to the largest possible number of citizens and perform its task of upholding

## 700 PROJECTS

UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) was created in 1980 to respond to the needs of developing countries in the information and communication sectors. The aim is to help those countries catch up with industrialized nations and to encourage pluralism and independence in the media. This year the IPDC attributed \$2.4m to 53 communication projects across the world. Over the last 17 years, the Programme has provided \$77m for 700 projects in about 100 countries. The IPDC's next council session takes place in Paris, March 23-26, 1999. Project proposals should be in before June 30, 1998.

national identity, strengthening pluralism and expanding educational activities. Luis Alberto Maravi Saez of Peru's National Institute of Radio and Television goes so far as to compare television with water and electricity: "the government should ensure that the entire population has access to it and that the haves pay more than the have-nots."

## INVISIBLE REVOLUTION

Hence there is a need to set up finance mechanisms that allow a measure of flexibility: the payment of a license fee by people who have a television set is no doubt the sort of approach that can work in Japan (this is how the NHK is funded) or the United Kingdom (the same applies for the BBC), but in Latin America or Africa, the public would

turn its back on that kind of model because public television has always been free. In the opinion of Ed Moyo, Directory-General of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, it is also possible to “generate earnings and sell air time by becoming a commercial company while still being a public service”. This is true of Chile, for example, where TVN (the national television channel) has been turned into a company operating independently of the government. Its directors, appointed by consensus between the Executive and the Senate, are today politically irremovable.

The Panamanians, for their part, have set up a channel managed by a non profit-making foundation whose mission is the same as that of a public television service. It is a hybrid launched by the Catholic Church of Panama and various associations at a time when the television scene in Panama was completely private, unlike that in Europe.

#### TROUBLED IDENTITY

This small television channel experienced difficulties when it started up, as Fonseca explained: “FETV was initially rejected because people thought that it was a religious TV station”. Little by little however, it asserted itself by creating a “new taste”. It established an identity of its own based on “the development of a critical outlook”, favouring scientific documentaries and programmes on minorities (including one for the Chinese of Panama in their own language), and not showing sensationalist and violent series which, in the view of Maria Eugenia Fonseca, “undermine the morals of our countries”.

In Europe, public television operated for a long period as a monopoly before having to contend



Spot the public-television cameraman

© GAMMA/CH. VIUJARD

with fierce competition from private channels. According to Jean-Louis Missika, editor-in-chief of the French review *Medias-pouvoir*, this “invisible revolution caused European public television ratings to drop from 82% in 1982 to 46% in 1995”. The ratings war often tempted public channels to imitate their private counterparts, as in the case of Italy, France and the United Kingdom. Sooner or later, however, the question of identity crops up again. What is public television if it is just like

every other form of television?

To begin with, it had to seek out the reasons for the crisis of legitimacy which it was going through as a result of the development of funding sources (from which it was excluded) and the fact that, from the mid-1980s onwards, television had become one of the main vectors of advertising.

In addition, there was a change in the concept of public television. According to Jean-Louis Missika, it went from being a “blueprint of culture for all” to

an “economic activity” – a “product” which, as channels become theme-based, compartmentalizes viewers and makes them pay for the privilege. It should also not be forgotten that the development of technological resources, such as satellites and cable, was instrumental in stepping up the pace at which public television was sidelined in the first place.

#### NEW STRATEGIES

How can European public television build these factors into their new strategies? The slogan suggested by Jean-Louis Missika at least has the merit of being clear: “Do what the others don’t do. Or, if you do the same as the others, do it differently”. In other words, public channels should produce those things that the private sector cannot include in its schedules because of the commercial thinking behind it. Educational and general-interest programmes or programmes addressed to minorities attract little advertising and would therefore not be acceptable to a private channel. This leaves us with the case of Finland, where public television – on which there is no advertising – has found an indirect means of securing funding by taxing private television channels on the advertising they carry. The experience no doubt, would have caused an uproar anywhere else.

C. L.

The spectacular development of cable and video channels has upset public television’s traditional role.



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# THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR THE AGE OF REASON

**EDUCATION** *In a growing number of schools, philosophy is teaching children the art of dialogue and critical thought.*

Questions asked by children prove that philosophizing is an innate human trait," the German philosopher Karl Jaspers once said. "We often hear from the lips of children words that have philosophical depth," he added.

But the most commonly held view is that philosophizing is only for adults. Over the past 20 years though, the "Philosophy for Children" movement has slowly but surely been gaining ground and, this year, for the first time, the World Philosophy Congress, in Boston in August, will devote a session to it.

"What most schools teach is information," says Matthew Lipman, who is considered the father of the movement. "We are very suspicious of that in philosophy. Information is not judgement. Information is reasoning. Philosophy is needed to help children to reason, to discuss, and to help them make solid, reasonable judgement." Lipman set up the Institute for the Advancement of Children's Philosophy, the first such body in the world, at Montclair University in the United States, in 1974.

When he wrote 'Harry', the first philosophy textbook for children, in 1969, every publisher turned him down. It was a novel that coaxed children to question reality and to debate and discuss things. Today, 'Harry' has been translated into 20 languages and is used in schools in 40 countries.

"I wrote a book which attempted to portray what reasoning children sounded

and acted like. It's very different from television, where pictures on the screen reflect non-reflective children: they act, they feel, but they don't think particularly," says Lipman.

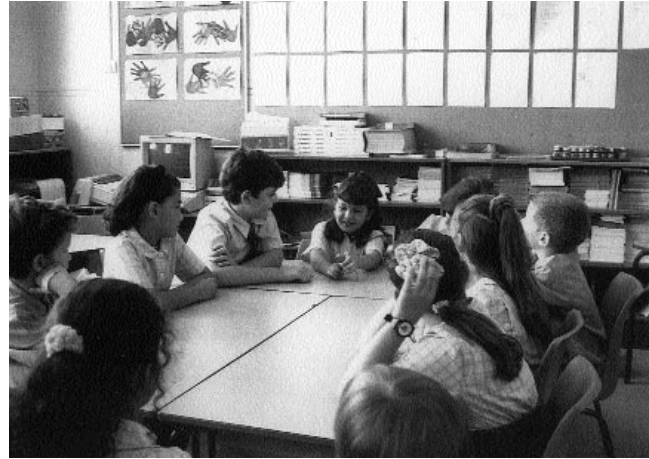
"The objective of this approach," writes Katalin Havas, of the Hungarian Academy of Science, "is not to acquaint the children with the works of philosophers" but to teach them how to "Think Together", to borrow the title of another famous textbook, written by the Australian professor of philosophy, Philip Cam.

## GROUP DISCUSSION

A large part of teaching is based on group discussion. It's important, says Cam, "to include the ability to ask appropriate questions, form plausible hypotheses, explore alternative possibilities and different points of view. On the social side, we may include the capacity to listen to others, express one's thoughts appropriately, contribute constructively to discussion, explore disagreements reasonably, and accept fair criticism of one's ideas."

Philosophy for Children is expanding rapidly, especially in Latin America. In Brazil, 180,000 children between five and 15 are learning it at school. Street children are a special target.

"When they learn they have a voice and can be heard with understanding by their peers, there is a decrease in aggressiveness," says Melanie Claire Wyffels, head of the Brazilian Centre for Children's Philosophy. In Russia, philosophy for children is now compulsory



Primary school children learn to ask the right questions.

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in primary schools. In China, the first training course for teachers of it was held last year. Teachers in Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Congo are becoming interested: they also see the subject as a way to revive traditional African thought.

But the discipline is still strikingly absent in some areas of the world. "Some societies are less keen on developing open-minded and inquiring citizens," says Cam. Others, suggests Lipman, hold philosophy in such high regard that they think it is not suited for children. But as two Chinese professors pointed out in a recent paper, "with its humanist concerns, philosophy for children also represents a remedy for a world beleaguered by modern technology." Adults seem to agree: proof is the unexpected success of such books as 'Sophie's World' and 'The Alchemist'. If adults need reasoning and guidance to understand the world and their own lives, don't children as well? ●

N. K.-D.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

●●● UNESCO brought together 19 professors of philosophy from 14 countries at headquarters from March 26-27 (see article), to discuss the promotion of "Philosophy for Children". The meeting was the first step in a long-term project of the same name being established by the Organization. The ultimate aim of this project is to develop children's thinking capacities through philosophy, and introduce them to the notions of dialogue and critical thought as early as possible in their school careers, through programmes adapted for their age.

next month's issue :  
**CHILDREN  
AND MEDIA VIOLENCE**  
EDUCATION  
IN AFRICA



on UNESCO's calendar

from 13 to 19 June

**SOCIAL QUESTIONS IN EUROPE**

In Bratislava, Slovakia, the second European Social Science Conference debates research priorities.

from 13 to 19 June

**NEW EGYPTIAN MUSEUMS**

In Aswan, Luxor and Cairo, the International Executive Committee Meeting of the Nubia Museum will review future actions and make plans for the establishment of the new Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo.

from 15 to 18 June

**BIOSPHERE RESERVES**

In Paris, the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves meets to study 240 of a total 352 reserves, the first of which were inventoried in 1976.

from 22 to 27 June

**WORLD HERITAGE**

In Paris, the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee meets to study new nominations. In 1997, 46 new sites were added to the List.

from 29 June to 2 July

**UNDERWATER TREASURES**

In Paris, government experts meet to discuss the draft Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage.

from 3 to 24 July

**SOLAR ELECTRICITY**

In Paris, the 10th anniversary session of the "Solar Electricity for Rural and Isolated Zones" summer school, which has hosted nearly 300 engineers from 50 countries over the years.

from 7 to 8 July

**SCIENCE NETWORKS**

In Paris, a meeting of the Global Network for Molecular and Cell Biology which gathers 81 research centres.

July 11

**WORLD POPULATION DAY**