

Hundred and fifty-ninth Session

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**RECENT DECISIONS AND ACTIVITIES
OF THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM
OF RELEVANCE TO THE WORK OF UNESCO**

SUMMARY

In accordance with paragraph 3 of 103 EX/Decision 6.1-6.2 and 124 EX/Decision 6.1, the Director-General informs the Executive Board of decisions and activities of the organizations of the United Nations system of interest to UNESCO that have been adopted or have taken place since the 156th session of the Board.

In accordance with paragraph 4(b) of 103 EX/Decision 6.1-6.2, the Director-General has decided to include in the agenda the sub-items mentioned in the introduction to this document. Other decisions and activities of relevance to UNESCO but do not require a decision by the Board are included in a separate document (159 EX/INF. 5) for information.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly adopted at its fifty-fourth session (first part) (New York, September-December 1999) 253 resolutions, among which several are of particular interest to UNESCO. This document therefore contains information on resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during that session which are of relevance to the work of UNESCO. It also contains information on changes in the organs of the United Nations system and their membership and major appointments to key posts.

2. In accordance with paragraph 4(b) of 103 EX/Decision 6.1-6.2, the Director-General has decided to include the following sub-items relating to questions that were the subject of a resolution of the General Assembly which, in his opinion, should be discussed by the Board, so that the Board may, if appropriate, adopt a decision providing guidance regarding UNESCO's contribution to their implementation:

- (a) Implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;
- (b) Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS);
- (c) United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All;
- (d) Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination; and the Convening of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance;
- (e) World Solar Programme (1996-2005);
- (f) Return or restitution of cultural property to its countries of origin;
- (g) Preparation for the special sessions of the General Assembly in 2000 and 2001 on overall review and appraisal of United Nations Conferences.

3. This document includes brief reports on these seven sub-items and the corresponding draft decisions for the Board to consider. It also includes Annex I containing information on changes in membership of the organs of the United Nations and major appointments to key posts, and Annex II containing a list of International Days, Years and Decades. Details on other resolutions are contained in an information document (159 EX/INF.5). This information document is produced in order to respect 116 EX/Decision 5.14 relating to the reduction of the volume of documentation, as well as to give the Board more time to deal with the sub-items in the main document.

Overview of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly

4. The fifty-fourth session, the last General Assembly session in the twentieth century, was not a particularly eventful session. The Assembly adopted the large number of resolutions that it adopts in the routine fashion at every session. The session was, however, significant for two separate but closely related factors, expressing a "fin du siècle" mood - a malaise - in the groping for answers and for a role for the United Nations in a fast changing world.

5. The first of these two factors relates to the comments of the Secretary-General in his opening statement in the general debate (and in his Annual Report on the Work of the Organization), referring to a needed balance between “State sovereignty” (still jealously guarded by the majority of Member States who feel that its sanctity is enshrined in the Charter), and “individual sovereignty” (an emerging concept gaining recognition and support in the light of the unfolding of bloody intra-State conflicts and massive violation of human rights).

6. The Secretary-General, in calling for “a willingness to think anew”, clearly questioned the classical interpretation of the United Nations Charter with regard to State sovereignty and non-intervention in internal affairs of Member States, visibly favouring “humanitarian intervention” by the United Nations and the international community, to “protect civilians from wholesale slaughter”. He underlined the difficulties in applying the principles of the Charter in a new era when “strictly traditional notions of sovereignty can no longer do justice to the aspirations of peoples everywhere to attain their fundamental freedoms”.

7. The response to these comments was predictable and strong: non-aligned countries, Russia and China, did not accept any watering down of State sovereignty and would not accept any intervention in internal affairs. The United States and European powers supported the principle of “humanitarian intervention” even if that runs counter to State sovereignty. One European delegation argued that “respect for human rights is more and more mandatory, and respect for sovereignty less and less stringent. (...) Nothing in the present Charter shall authorize a Member State to terrorize its own people”. The debate was of course far from being conclusive. It would no doubt continue in the General Assembly and other forums.

8. The second related factor is the deep-seated fear and preoccupation reflected in the general debate of plenary and in the work of the various General Assembly Committees on the issue of globalization, particularly its negative impact in most of the developing countries and the resulting marginalization of the weaker and least developed among them. To balance this tendency, developed countries argued that the benefits of globalization far outweigh the risks. The debate on globalization in the General Assembly, though not focused, was an apt prelude to the Seattle World Trade Organization controversial and abortive ministerial meeting on launching a new round of trade negotiations.

9. Two observations are in order here: the General Assembly is clearly, in its debates and resolutions on globalization, groping for answers to a very complex problem. Furthermore the debate in the Assembly (and elsewhere) is still focusing predominantly on the economic and trade dimensions of globalization (liberalization of trade, integration of national economies in the globalized economy, and the strains this causes in many countries). However, despite passing references here and there, there was no real focused discussion on the process of globalization as a whole, including its (no less important) social, cultural and political dimensions; the role of, and need for, preserving and promoting cultural diversity to counterbalance the uniformity brought about by globalization, a uniformity that affects not only modes of consumption and production, but also individual and societal values and perceptions. It is in this area (yet unexplored) that UNESCO has, and can play, a needed role as the debate no doubt expands to cover all dimensions of the process of globalization. UNESCO is particularly suited to complement the efforts of other United Nations system organizations because of its particular mission and vocation, as well as its relevant domains of competence (education, culture and social sciences).

7.1.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

10. By resolution 54/224 concerning **Implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States**, the General Assembly calls upon governments, the regional commissions and organizations and other intergovernmental organizations to support the efforts of the small island developing States, taking into account those areas identified in the review document for priority action, and urges them to take the action necessary for the further implementation and effective follow-up of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States adopted in 1994.

11. *The United Nations General Assembly special session for the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States* convened in New York, from 27 to 28 September 1999, for an overall review and appraisal of the Barbados Programme of Action, adopted in 1994. The seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had been designated as the preparatory body for the special session.

12. The special session adopted a “State of Progress and Initiatives for the Future Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States” which identified the following six priority problem areas in need of urgent attention over the next five years: (a) Climate change (adapting to climate change and rising sea levels, which could submerge some low-lying island nations); (b) Natural and environmental disasters and climate variability (improving preparedness for and recovery from natural and environmental disasters); (c) Freshwater resources (preventing worsening shortages of freshwater as demand grows); (d) Coastal and marine resources (protecting coastal ecosystems and coral reefs from pollution and over-fishing); (e) Energy (developing solar and renewable energy to lessen dependence on expensive imported oil); (f) Tourism (managing tourism growth to protect the environment and cultural integrity).

13. In addition to the six priority areas needing urgent attention, the state of progress and initiatives also recommends the following means of implementation: sustainable development strategies; capacity-building; resource mobilization and finance; globalization and trade liberalization; transfer of environmentally sound technology; vulnerability index; information management: Small island developing States network; international cooperation and partnership.

UNESCO action

14. Of the 41 small island developing States (SIDS), 38 are UNESCO Member States, including two Associate Members. The other three are non-UNESCO Member States. “Small island” activities have been carried out by UNESCO for many decades, a sample of which was presented to the United Nations Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados, 1994) in the form of the 131-page “Island Agenda - An overview of UNESCO’s work on island environments, territories and societies”. UNESCO’s policy regarding SIDS has, in addition to previous years, been further substantiated both through an increase in activities, generally, and the initiation of ongoing consultation processes, in particular. The first consultation processes “**Focus on the Pacific**” and “**Focus on the Caribbean**” were successfully launched at UNESCO Headquarters, on 1 November

1997 and 10 October 1998 respectively. The overall objective is to address the specific needs of SIDS and cooperate in elaborating their own agenda for peace and development, in UNESCO's fields of competence.

15. To ensure efficient implementation of follow-up activities, action plans have been drawn up. Within the structure of "Focus on the Pacific" and as part of a subregional strategy, an intersectoral project entitled "Human Development for Sustainable Living Conditions in the Pacific" has been included in the Programme and Budget for 2000-2001. Similarly, the intersectoral project, "Caribbean People: Tapestry of the Past, Fabric for the Future - Special Project on Human Development for Sustainable Living in the Caribbean", submitted by the Caribbean subregion at the launch of "Focus on the Caribbean", has been incorporated.

16. In addition, UNESCO organized the "**Indian Ocean Forum 2000**" in Mauritius, from 29 to 31 March 1999. This Forum was aimed at enabling participating countries, i.e. Comoros, France, Madagascar, Mauritius, Maldives, Seychelles, as well as international and subregional organizations, to establish a more extensive cooperation, to jointly develop a subregional strategy and to identify some national and subregional projects for integration into UNESCO's programme and budget. Among the proposals and recommendations made were, the creation of an "Institute for the Study and Promotion of Interculturalism" in Mauritius, and the establishment of a UNESCO Chair for the study of intercultural relationships and learning processes at the University of La Réunion. An agreement of cooperation between UNESCO and the Indian Ocean Commission was signed on 3 December 1999.

17. Recognizing the particular importance of intersectoral action for coastal regions in general, and for SIDS in particular, UNESCO's General Conference at its 28th session established the **intersectoral Coastal Regions and Small Islands (CSI)** initiative. Sustainable island living, planning for changing coastlines, traditional knowledge and management practices, poverty alleviation and freshwater security are among the major foci of CSI actions involving the programme sectors, the intergovernmental/international scientific undertakings (MOST, MAB, IOC, IHP, IGCP) and WHC. The combination of field pilot projects, interlinked UNESCO Chairs and a web-based discussion forum is proving to be effective in elaborating, teaching, exchanging and field testing wise practices for sustainable island living.

18. UNESCO participated in the *Meeting of Prospective Donors and Representatives of Small Island Developing States* which was held in New York, from 24 to 26 February 1999, to review the mobilization of financial resources for the follow-up of the 1994 Barbados Conference on SIDS. A wide range of project portfolios that had been submitted for consideration by donors was discussed. It also participated in the United Nations General Assembly special session for the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States referred to above.

19. UNESCO continues to address the majority of the Barbados Programme of Action priority areas and implementation means, including the six problem areas prioritized last year by the special session (climate change, natural and environmental disasters and climate variability, freshwater resources, coastal and marine resources, energy, tourism). It is doing so through several (joint) programmes and activities, including: the Global Ocean Observation System; Planning for Changing Coastlines; International Tsunami Warning System; International Strategy for Natural Disaster Reduction; Groundwater Recharge and Contamination Studies; Community Knowledge of Water Resources; Global Coral Reef

Monitoring Network; Island Biodiversity and Participative Conservation to promote Biosphere Reserves; Integrated Biodiversity Strategies for Islands and Coastal Areas; Coastal Marine Productivity Network; People and Plants; World Solar Programme; Communication and Education for Sustainable Coastal Development; World Heritage Natural and Cultural Sites; Youth and Leadership for a Culture of Peace.

20. In the light of the foregoing information concerning the implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 159 EX/28, sub-item 7.1.1, dealing with UNESCO's contribution to the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados, 1994) in general, and the General Assembly special session for the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, in particular,
2. Taking note of resolution 54/224, as well as of the Declaration and review document that resulted from the special session and were adopted by the General Assembly,
3. Recalling 156 EX/Decision 9.1.2,
4. Reaffirming its commitments to the goals of the Barbados Plan of Action and the importance of intersectoral and inter-agency follow-up to the six problem areas (climate change, natural and environmental disasters and climate variability, freshwater resources, coastal and marine resources, energy, tourism) prioritized by the United Nations General Assembly special session as in need of urgent attention over the next five years,
5. Taking into account the Focus on the Pacific, Caribbean and Indian Ocean islands processes that the Organization has started during the previous biennium, which also require an intersectoral approach,
6. Mindful of UNESCO's unique intersectoral potential to bring together, among others, decision-makers, local communities, cultural heritage experts, educators, social and natural scientists,
7. Recognizing the particular significance of traditional systems of knowledge for small island states, and taking into account the pertinent recommendations from the World Conference on Science (Budapest, 1999) and commitments made at the 30th session of the General Conference of UNESCO to establish an intersectoral project in this domain,
8. Invites the Director-General:
 - (a) to enhance actions to address the six priority problem areas of the Barbados Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States, through the relevant activities of all programme sectors and through intersectoral pilot

projects and UNESCO Chairs concerning “wise practices” for sustainable island living;

- (b) to continue to ensure that the Focus on the Pacific, Caribbean and Indian Ocean islands processes, as well as follow-up to the World Conference on Science recommendations concerning traditional knowledge, are carried out in an intersectoral manner;
- (c) to ensure that in the preparation of the next Medium-Term Strategy those programme elements of the Organization that are geared towards the needs of small island developing States, including the intersectoral Coastal Regions and Small Islands (CSI) platform, are further strengthened;
- (d) to pursue efforts to seek funds from appropriate funding agencies and mechanisms for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, and to assist small island developing States in their national efforts to obtain extrabudgetary funds;
- (e) to report periodically to it on progress made by UNESCO, especially in an intersectoral manner, and at the United Nations system level in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States.

7.1.2 HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS/ACQUIRED IMMUNODEFICIENCY SYNDROME (HIV/AIDS)

21. By resolution E/1999/36 “HIV/AIDS” adopted in July 1999, the Economic and Social Council recalled that the critical spread of the AIDS epidemic was a major obstacle to development calling for substantial, high-level mobilization and a multisectoral approach for improved prevention of an epidemic affecting sectors of social and economic life. In that context, the resolution welcomed the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, with UNESCO as one of the seven co-sponsors. Operative paragraph 9, in particular, urges the organizations concerned to submit to their governing bodies the necessary measures planned to complete the development of their strategies, as the tool to integrate AIDS-related activities into their operational activities and steps taken to prepare their contribution to the Medium-Term Strategy.

UNESCO action¹

22. The fight against AIDS, particularly in Africa, is a key issue for the United Nations. Mr Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations opened the session of the Security Council for 2000, chaired by the United States Vice-President, Mr Al Gore, and attended by Dr Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS, declaring the first month of the new era the **Month of Africa** and devoting the first meeting to AIDS, **today’s number one problem**. On that occasion, the Secretary-General said: “But within that international obligation the fight against AIDS in Africa is an immediate priority (...) Not that AIDS is a purely African problem. There are many countries outside Africa, especially in Asia and Eastern Europe, where it is spreading at an alarming rate”. Over 33 million people now live with the AIDS virus,

¹ An information note on UNESCO’s contribution to the world struggle against AIDS is available to the Members of the Executive Board.

including some 5.6 million infected in 1999 alone. Dr Peter Piot, Executive Director of the UNAIDS Programme, has told the Director-General that the impact of the epidemic is likely to increase the next 10 years.

23. UNESCO is taking part in this major mobilization of the United Nations system in several ways. Since 1 January 1996, pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between six (seven since 1999) United Nations agencies, a Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has been established to coordinate and promote joint and concerted United Nations action to combat AIDS. UNESCO is one of the seven co-sponsors. The UNAIDS Programme is a new mechanism for cooperation within the United Nations involving seven agencies globally, regionally and nationally. The establishment of this common platform has certainly helped to stimulate the mobilization of the various agencies in fighting AIDS. The introduction of a programme and budget shared by the UNAIDS Secretariat and the seven co-sponsors for 2000-2001 also reflects the resolve of each agency to fit its AIDS-prevention work into a single framework, which can be seen as a positive step forward. UNESCO's response is fully in line with the Secretary-General's concern that AIDS should be considered a major global problem and consonant with a desire to join in this common effort.

24. UNESCO has, in this context, promoted a multidisciplinary approach designed to incorporate AIDS-prevention work in its various fields of competence. At country level, UNESCO takes part in and sometimes chairs UNAIDS theme groups, developing notable programmes (Brazil, India, Côte d'Ivoire, Argentina, Haiti, Kazakhstan, etc.).

25. The budget of the projects financed from extrabudgetary funds through UNAIDS in 1998-1999 amounted to approximately \$2.6 million spread over 32 activities carried out at Headquarters and in the field. A similar amount of funds for UNESCO's AIDS-prevention work has already been negotiated by the AIDS coordinator at UNESCO for 2000-2001.

26. The solution to AIDS continues to lie in the development of a preventive vaccine and calls for universally available treatment. In this area, UNESCO promotes research in cooperation with the World Foundation for AIDS Research and Prevention, headed by Professor Luc Montagnier, which sets up research centres and develops scientific cooperation networks between countries of the North and the South to step up basic research. UNESCO obviously also maintains scientific cooperation with the HIV Vaccine Initiative coordinated by UNAIDS and WHO.

27. For the years 2000-2001 the activities already conducted by the Organization will be strengthened under the UNAIDS Common Programme. They come under the five major headings of education, basic research, social and human sciences, human rights, and public information and awareness activities, all of which will be supported by coordination and back-up machinery to ensure good communication and the respective role in carrying out a diversified transdisciplinary programme, through:

- (a) **Education strategies for AIDS prevention:** UNESCO will promote education strategies to Ministries of Education, specialized institutes and non-governmental organizations. UNESCO will also promote the integration of preventive education in the existing secondary school programme.
- (b) **Comprehensive policy of communication:** UNESCO will continue to implement its expanded network of community media addressing AIDS. It will encourage

journalist training, and help to develop specific programmes on AIDS with networks of local radio stations.

- (c) **Cultural approach to HIV/AIDS prevention and care:** On the basis of local studies UNESCO is preparing proposals to facilitate the elaboration and improvement of national programmes of prevention of HIV/AIDS more appropriate to cultural values and behaviour patterns.
- (d) **Transfer of knowledge and scientific research:** UNESCO will continue to support the international network of research centres developed by the World Foundation for AIDS Research and Prevention. It will pursue research on social and cultural aspects of AIDS.

28. Furthermore, the Director-General will mobilize field offices, especially in Africa, to enhance participation in the UNAIDS Programme. He will call for more UNESCO technical assistance to Ministers of Education to reform education systems by taking the impact of AIDS on education into account and to improve the quality of AIDS-prevention messages. To that end, he will call on field offices to use all of UNESCO's skills in the fields of education, science, culture, communication and human rights to formulate multidisciplinary AIDS-prevention strategies in the subregions in cooperation with UNAIDS.

29. The Director-General will also request the AIDS coordinator to draw up, on the basis of activities undertaken at Headquarters and in the field, a UNESCO strategic plan of action to give the Organization a greater part in fighting AIDS. A strategic plan will be drawn up for UNESCO's action in Africa under the international partnership against AIDS in Africa formed by UNAIDS. The strategic plan of action will form part of the Organization's Medium-Term Strategy.

30. Consequently, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following draft decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 159 EX/28,
2. Recalling resolution E/1999/36 adopted by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations concerning coordination of the activities of the United Nations system under the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS),
3. Considering the growing need to strengthen UNESCO's contribution to the fight against AIDS in cooperation with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS),
4. Stressing that UNESCO, in a transdisciplinary perspective, can make a unique contribution, both specific and global, to the fight against AIDS and other endemic diseases by more closely linking its activities in the fields of education, science, culture and communication,
5. Considering the important role that scientific research must play in providing solutions for the eradication of these epidemics and, in particular, the need to develop scientific cooperation with and the transfer of technology to developing countries; considering also the ethical dimension and risks of new forms of discrimination and exclusion linked to the spread of these epidemics,

6. Takes note of the Director-General's efforts to strengthen UNESCO's contribution to the fight against AIDS in partnership with UNAIDS, other partners in the United Nations system and the World Foundation for AIDS Research and Prevention;
7. Urges Member States to give full moral and material support to the UNAIDS Programme and to UNESCO's participation therein, by involving their National Commissions and their intellectual and scientific communities in the fight against AIDS;
8. Invites the Director-General to:
 - (a) continue, in all the Organization's fields of competence, to give very high priority to activities designed to meet countries' specific AIDS-prevention needs, with special emphasis on the countries hardest hit by the epidemic, particularly in Africa under the International Partnership against AIDS in Africa;
 - (b) take appropriate measures to strengthen the coordination machinery for AIDS-related activities by strengthening UNESCO's financial and human resources to secure the Organization's effective contribution to UNAIDS;
 - (c) continue its cooperation with the World Foundation for AIDS Research and Prevention to promote research with the aim of permitting access to treatment for all patients and developing a preventive vaccine as rapidly as possible;
 - (d) draw up a global UNESCO strategy in these fields and include it in the Organization's Medium-Term Strategy and in the programme for 2002-2003.

7.1.3 UNITED NATIONS LITERACY DECADE: EDUCATION FOR ALL

31. In resolution 54/122, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General in cooperation with the Director-General of UNESCO to submit to its fifty-sixth session (September-December 2001), "a proposal for a United Nations Literacy Decade [2001-2010] with a Plan of Action for such a Decade, on the basis of the outcome of the [Dakar] World Education Forum".

32. A large number of Member States showed great interest in the question of launching a United Nations literacy decade. The General Assembly, two years ago, requested in resolution 52/84 the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director-General of UNESCO, to consider the desirability and feasibility of launching such a decade, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session. This led this year to the adoption of resolution 54/122 in which the General Assembly reaffirmed and recognized the vital role of literacy in meeting the new challenges and changing needs around the world. It once again requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director-General of UNESCO to submit to its fifty-sixth session, through ECOSOC, a proposal for the United Nations literacy decade and a plan of action for such a decade on the basis of the outcome of the World Education Forum held from 26 to 28 April in Dakar.

UNESCO action

33. UNESCO has accumulated wide experiences in promoting literacy around the world and is internationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to literacy. Under the auspices of the Organization, 8 September, International Literacy Day, is celebrated annually and international literacy prizes have been awarded since 1966. In the 1980s, UNESCO initiated the implementation of regional programmes to promote literacy with strong commitments of its Member States. The Organization played a leading role in mobilizing the world for literacy during International Literacy Year 1990 and at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien. As a result, the world has experienced an increase in awareness and support for literacy efforts. Today, there are over 3 billion literate people in the world, more than double the number in 1970.

34. Despite the achievements made in literacy in the past decades, the World Education Forum revealed that the demand for literacy has increased in recent years. Currently, one in five people over 15 in the world is illiterate, and one in four women is illiterate. In today's society, literacy concerns all people, in both developed and developing countries and in formal, non-formal and informal settings, because of its pertinence to sustainable development in the twenty-first century. As the world increasingly and rapidly transforms itself into an information society, literacy skills and competencies are of critical importance for individuals, communities and societies to meet the emerging changes and challenges. There is a pressing need to renew, redirect and restrengthen the efforts worldwide at every level to create a literate world. In consonance with the Global Framework for Action adopted by the World Education Forum, a decade for literacy will indeed generate impetus for concerted and sustained global action towards literacy, a cornerstone of learning throughout life for all.

35. UNESCO, as the leading United Nations agency in the field of literacy and basic education, should play a major role in responding in the process of preparing a draft proposal and plan of action for a United Nations literacy decade on the basis of the outcome of the World Education Forum as requested by the General Assembly. The plan of action will aim at encouraging, facilitating and stimulating action and initiatives derived from and taken by governments, civil society and the international community. The areas that the plan of action looks into include the following:

Ways and means for concerted action to place literacy high on the agenda at international, regional, national and local level, to mobilize grassroots communities, and to rally financial and material support, including resources from the private sector;

Support to mainstreaming women and girls, out-of-school youth and socially disadvantaged communities in literacy;

Approaches to literacy that respond to emerging needs with a sustainable impact;

Modalities for effective partnerships among governments, international agencies and civil society;

Measures for monitoring the processes and progress.

36. On the basis of the outcome of Dakar and the preliminary discussions in the Board at this present session and the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on Copenhagen + 5 (26-30 June 2000), the Director-General will prepare a plan of action and

submit it to the Executive Board at its 161st session and subsequently to the Secretary-General for consideration by the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session.

37. In the light of the foregoing, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 159 EX/28, sub-item 7.1.3,
2. Welcoming General Assembly resolution 54/122,
3. Reaffirming UNESCO's commitment to creating a literate world,
4. Authorizes the Director-General to prepare the draft proposal and plan of action for a United Nations literacy decade and submit it to the Board for consideration at its 161st session and subsequently to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly;
5. Invites the Director-General in elaborating the plan of action to take into account the comments and observations of the Board at this session and at its 161st session.

7.1.4 THIRD DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION; AND THE CONVENING OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE

38. Resolution 54/154 on this, deals in Part I with the implementation of the various international instruments to combat racism and racial discrimination, among which is the Convention against Discrimination in Education. It specifically underlines the importance of education in combating racism and racial discrimination and calls upon UNESCO to promote human rights and combat racism and racial discrimination. Part II of the resolution deals with the World Conference, to be held in 2001 in South Africa, for which the United Nations Commission on Human Rights is designated as a preparatory committee, open for the participation of several actors including the Specialized Agencies. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will act as the Secretary-General for the World Conference and is requested to prepare for the meetings of the Committee in consultation with the Specialized Agencies and other partners. Part III deals with observing the International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance which will also be in the year 2001.

UNESCO action

39. The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, to be convened in South Africa in late August/early September 2001 (exact dates and place to be determined), will be the main event within the International Year. The first special meeting of the preparatory committee for the World Conference took place in Geneva from 1 to 5 May 2000, immediately after the session of the Commission on Human Rights (20 March-28 April 2000). The United Nations attaches the utmost importance to the International Year and to the World Conference and, as the High Commissioner of Human

Rights declared, the success of the Conference will be an overriding priority in the field of human rights for the years 2000-2001.

40. UNESCO is actively involved in the preparation of both the International Year and the World Conference, as well as in the organization of regional preparatory meetings. The Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences has been designated UNESCO's Focal Point for all activities concerning the International Year and the World Conference, and the Division of Human Rights, Democracy and Peace will function as the secretariat.

41. An expert seminar, organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva from 16 to 18 February 2000,¹ in which UNESCO representatives participated, was the commencement of the active preparation for the Year. It discussed the following items: discrimination in the economic, social and cultural fields; discrimination against vulnerable groups; technical and legal aspects of racism on the Internet; common problems concerning availability of remedies for the victims of racism; examples of good practices of action taken by national institutes; and reinforcement of regional and international mechanisms. The expert seminar also adopted recommendations that draw attention to a number of goals, in which inter-agency cooperation is highly desirable. Among them, education for human rights as a major means to counter and eradicate discrimination is stressed.

42. The struggle against racist propaganda, especially on the Internet, is also among the priorities and UNESCO, with its long experience in the struggle against violence in mass media and on the Internet, must make a meaningful contribution in this context. The protection of cultural rights and cultural identity is also particularly important, especially bearing in mind that many participants during the expert seminar pointed out that discrimination on cultural grounds is now increasingly articulated, and is manifested mainly in the economic, social and cultural spheres.

43. Universal ratification of international instruments against discrimination has also been identified as a priority for the International Year and the World Conference.² UNESCO therefore takes advantage of this occasion to launch an appeal to Member States to ratify or accede to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), which until now has only 87 States Parties.

44. An Intersectoral Working Group has been established in the Secretariat to discuss all practical measures to ensure a visible and significant UNESCO contribution to the International Year and the World Conference and to mobilize public opinion. In this respect some preliminary discussions took place with the Senior Coordinator of the World Conference in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, who expressed interest in the preparation of a joint publication, in combined efforts to counter racism on the Internet, and in the promotion of intercultural dialogue as a means to counter racism. It is also evident that mobilization of UNESCO partners, especially National Commissions, UNESCO Chairs, UNESCO Clubs and Associated Schools, is vital for the success of our efforts.

¹ Expert seminar on remedies available to the victims of acts of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and on good national practices in this field.

² The issue of Human Rights: Major International Instruments. Status as at 31 May 2001 will be dedicated to the International Year and disseminated widely, including distributing it at the World Conference itself.

45. In the light of the above preliminary information, the Board might wish to adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 159 EX/28, sub-item 7.1.4 concerning the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination; and the Convening of the World Conference against Racism and Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance,
2. Taking note of General Assembly resolution 54/154 in this regard and welcoming the General Assembly initiative to convene in 2001, in South Africa, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance,
3. Recalling the long-standing action of UNESCO in the struggle against racism and racial discrimination and its Convention of 1960 against Discrimination in Education as well as its Declaration of 1978 on Race and Racial Prejudice,
4. Reaffirms UNESCO's firm position against racism formulated in Article I of its Constitution which stipulates that human rights and fundamental freedoms are affirmed for the peoples of the world without distinction of race, sex, language or religion;
5. Appeals to Member States to ratify or accede to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960);
6. Invites the Director-General to ensure a visible and significant UNESCO contribution to the World Conference and to cooperate closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the preparation of the said Conference;
7. Requests the Director-General to submit to the Executive Board at its 161st session a UNESCO position paper containing concrete actions and initiatives on UNESCO's contribution to the International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

7.1.5 WORLD SOLAR PROGRAMME (1996-2005)

46. For the second time the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution in support of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (WSP). Resolution 54/215 commends UNESCO for this important development initiative, and in particular its programmes in education and training in new and renewable energies. It calls for a system-wide effort to implement the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 and encourages the Secretary-General of the United Nations to promote the mobilization of adequate technical assistance and funding. It also invites all governments to contribute to the WSP implementation. The resolution also requests the Secretary-General, in cooperation with UNESCO and UNEP, to submit a report to the fifty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly on the "concrete actions

taken for the implementation of the World Solar Programme, including promotion for mobilization of resources”.

UNESCO action

47. In line with this resolution, UNESCO considers the Global Renewable Energy Education and Training Programme as its major contribution to the World Solar Programme. As this WSP component corresponds fully to the mandate of UNESCO, numerous UNESCO Executive Board decisions and two resolutions of the General Conference called for high priority to be given to it. All efforts are being made by the Engineering and Technology Division of the UNESCO Science Sector to develop this programme and organize efficient fund-raising for its implementation. Further to the decision of the United Nations General Assembly, UNESCO will contribute to the preparation of the report of the United Nations Secretary-General to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. UNEP's participation in the preparation of the report has in the meantime been agreed upon between UNEP, UNESCO and United Nations officials.

48. The Executive Board may wish to adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having considered United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/54/215 “World Solar Programme 1996-2005”,
2. Recalling its previous decisions on the World Solar Programme 1996-2005,
3. Invites the Director-General to:
 - (a) continue all efforts by the Organization aimed at the effective implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 including promotion for mobilization of resources, with special emphasis being placed on the Global Renewable Energy Education and Training Programme;
 - (b) ensure full participation by UNESCO, in cooperation with UNEP, in the preparation of the draft report of the United Nations Secretary-General, on the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005, to the United Nations General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session;
 - (c) pursue all efforts aimed at efficient cooperation between governments, multilateral funding agencies and relevant parts of the United Nations system in the context of the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005.

7.1.6 RETURN OR RESTITUTION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY TO ITS COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

49. In resolution 54/190, which was adopted in the light of a report prepared by UNESCO, the General Assembly reaffirms the importance of the relevant conventions and protocols regarding the return or restitution of cultural property to their countries of origin. It commends UNESCO's work and efforts to encourage the linking of existing databases and identification system, to allow for electronic transmission of information in order to reduce illicit trafficking

of cultural property. The General Assembly requested the Director-General to submit a report at its fifty-sixth session (in 2001).

UNESCO action

50. In conformity with this resolution, UNESCO will continue to promote the return or restitution of cultural property and the fight against illicit traffic. This issue was discussed at length during the 30th session of the General Conference which subsequently adopted 30 C/Resolution 27 submitted by the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation (30 C/REP/14). It approved a “Fund of the Committee to be administered by it and financed by voluntary contributions for specific projects”. The International Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property, as well as the Object-ID checklist, have both been adopted and recognized as standards of professional practice which need to be used and promoted. The Director-General supports the efforts made by States and institutions to harmonize databases of stolen cultural property. The Secretariat is now preparing the eleventh session of the Committee to be held in the first semester of 2001.

51. The Commentary of the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (Rome, 24 June 1995) is going to be published in French for wider dissemination and better understanding of the spirit of the Convention to enhance national measures by States to curb illicit traffic in cultural property.

52. As of 1 January 2000, the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 had been signed. During the fourth meeting of States Parties to the Hague Convention (Paris, 18 November 1999), seven States stated that their national authorities are considering the provisions of this agreement with a view to becoming party to it. UNESCO will continue to encourage States to participate and will begin preliminary preparations for the commencement of the Intergovernmental Committee established by the Second Protocol.

53. In the light of the above information, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined the report of the Director-General on the return or restitution of cultural property to their countries of origin (159 EX/28), sub-item 7.1.8,
2. Takes note of General Assembly resolution 54/190 on the subject;
3. Authorizes the Director-General to submit, through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, the report requested in General Assembly resolution 54/190 on the return or restitution of cultural property to the country of origin.

7.1.7 PREPARATION FOR THE SPECIAL SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN 2000 AND 2001 ON OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES

54. Again this year and next year, the General Assembly is going to hold special sessions to review and appraise the implementation of the United Nations conferences that took place in the 1990s. The main objectives of these special sessions are to reaffirm the outcome of these conferences and not to renegotiate them, to identify progress made and constraints encountered as well as lessons learnt in the implementation of these summit outcomes at national, regional and international levels and finally, to recommend concrete actions and initiatives to further system-wide efforts towards the full and effective implementation of the declarations and programmes of action of these United Nations conferences.

55. Thus, in conformity with 156 EX/Decision 9.1.2 of the Executive Board, the Director-General wishes to inform the Board of new developments concerning UNESCO's contribution to the preparatory processes and the special sessions themselves, to be held in 2000-2001. More information on the follow-up and implementation of the United Nations conferences are to be found in document 159 EX/INF.5.

56. By resolutions 54/23 (Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development); 54/142 (Preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on "Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"); 54/235 (Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s); 54/93 (Special session of the General Assembly for the follow-up to the World Summit for Children); 54/207 (Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda), the General Assembly invites the organs, funds and programmes, as well as the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations system, to contribute and to be actively involved in the preparatory processes of the above-mentioned special sessions.

UNESCO action

(a) **Special session of the General Assembly on "Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"** (New York, 5-9 June 2000)

57. This special session will review and assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, adopted in 1985, and the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. It will also consider future actions and initiatives for the year 2000 and beyond.

58. Since the last report, 156 EX/35 (paras. 66-70), on the preparation of this special session, the Organization has continued to participate in the preparatory meetings organized by the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for this special session. It has also contributed to a number of documents that will be before the special session, in particular the Secretary-General's report on review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. UNESCO will take an active part in the conference.

59. The Board will subsequently be informed of the outcome of the special session and of UNESCO's action in its implementation and follow-up.

(b) **Special session on the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development** (Geneva, 26-30 June 2000)

60. UNESCO has an important role to play in the Copenhagen + 5 process inasmuch as many activities, especially in education, but also in natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture and communication, contribute directly and indirectly to promoting social development and to implementing the Copenhagen Declaration.

61. During the preparatory process, UNESCO has participated in all meetings organized by the preparatory committee and by international non-governmental organizations.

62. For its part, UNESCO organized on 30 November 1998 an international symposium on "Rethinking development: do we need a new paradigm shift". The book published from this symposium and the special issue of UNESCO's International Social Science Journal No. 162 "Policy options for social development", as well as the recommendations of the Education for All Forum (to be held in April in Dakar) will constitute a valuable UNESCO contribution to the special session of the General Assembly.

63. The Director-General will personally attend the special session which he expects to address in plenary. It is worth mentioning that UNESCO will organize on 28 June 2000 a three-hour symposium on "Social capital formation in poverty reduction: which roles for civil society organizations and the State?" within the Geneva 2000 Forum organized by the Swiss Government (Geneva, 26-30 June 2000) and bringing together NGOs, parliamentarians, trade unions, business and industry, professional associations, academics, governmental and intergovernmental actors, civil society and the media, to debate on social development, which will take place during this General Assembly special session.

(c) **Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s** (Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Brussels, 2001)

64. As part of the preparation of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Brussels in the first quarter of 2001, UNESCO has already submitted, in the form of a document entitled *Bilan des actions réalisées par l'UNESCO à mi-parcours de sa stratégie à moyen terme*, its contribution to the report by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s.

65. The Organization has been taking part in the inter-agency consultations held in Geneva since July 1999 in order to take stock of the Conference preparations. Various measures have been taken to follow up the recommendations made at those meetings and those of the Consultative Forum, also on preparation of the Conference which was held in Geneva on 21 and 22 July 1999. Arrangements have been made so that UNESCO can take part in the next preparatory meetings for the Conference, namely: the meetings of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee in September 2000 and April 2001 and the three regional preparatory meetings for experts.

66. The field offices established in the LDCs have been mobilized to provide all the necessary help for the preparations at country level. To contribute to public information and awareness-raising activities concerning the aims of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, UNESCO began discussions with the Permanent Delegations and the Presidents of the regional groups at UNESCO. A booklet on the projects and

programmes carried out in support of LDCs since 1996 was published under the title: "The Least Developed Countries - A priority for UNESCO: Mid-Term Review 1996-1999".

67. As part of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the 1990s, UNESCO is pursuing its activities in support of LDCs in its areas of competence.

(d) **Special session of the General Assembly for the follow-up to the World Summit for Children** (September 2001)

68. Contrary to other special sessions of the General Assembly, this special session is aimed at providing an end-of-decade review of the implementation of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development adopted in September 1990 by the World Summit for Children and the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

69. UNESCO's contribution to this session will consist of improving early childhood indicators, which is likely going to be one of the main issues to be considered. It will also participate in meetings foreseen by the Preparatory Committee established in December 1999 for that purpose. The first meeting of the Committee will take place from 30 May to 2 June 2000.

(e) **Special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda** (2001)

70. UNESCO will take part in all meetings to prepare for this special session. For its contribution the Organization will emphasize the importance of education, culture, the social and natural sciences and communication for building human habitats and making them socially viable, with reliance on controlling and improving the physical and social environment.

71. In the light of the foregoing information, the Board may wish to adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having considered document 159 EX/28, sub-item 7.1.7, dealing with the General Assembly special sessions on the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations conferences in 2000 and 2001,
2. Taking note of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session and the information provided by the Director-General on UNESCO's contribution to the following special sessions:
 - (a) special session on the Fourth World Conference on Women: Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century (A54/141),
 - (b) special session for the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development (A54/23),
 - (c) Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (54/235),

- (d) special session for the follow-up to the World Summit for Children (54/93),
 - (e) special session on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (54/207),
3. Recalling 149 EX/Decision 7.1.3, Parts I and II; and 156 EX/Decision 9.1.2,
 4. Reaffirming its commitments to the goals of the Programmes of Action adopted by the United Nations conferences and stressing the importance of coordinated follow-up action to their implementation by the United Nations system, especially at the field level,
 5. Recognizing the importance of the special sessions of the United Nations General Assembly for the purpose of reviewing the implementation of the outcomes of these United Nations Conferences,
 6. Invites the Director-General to:
 - (a) ensure efficient UNESCO contributions and active participation in the preparatory processes and the special sessions themselves;
 - (b) continue to ensure that UNESCO's relevant programmes contribute fully to the United Nations system-wide coordinated action to ensure the implementation of the programmes of action of these conferences and further implementation of new orientations to be adopted by these sessions;
 - (c) continue to keep the Board informed periodically of new developments in the follow-up of the United Nations system conferences.

ANNEX I

COMPOSITION OF THE UNITED NATIONS MAJOR BODIES AND APPOINTMENTS TO KEY POSTS AND LIST OF INTERNATIONAL DAYS, YEARS AND DECADES

1. Composition of the organs of the United Nations

The Security Council has 15 members. The five permanent members are China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.

The 10 non-permanent members of the Council in 2000 are Argentina, Bangladesh, Canada, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mali, Namibia, Netherlands, Tunisia and Ukraine.

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has 54 members, elected for a three-year term by the General Assembly. In 2000, the composition of the Council is as follows: Algeria, Angola, Austria, Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Fiji, France, Germany, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom, United States, Venezuela and Viet Nam.

The President for 2000 is Ambassador **Makarim Wibisono** of Indonesia.

2. Elections and appointments to posts within the United Nations system

On 13 September 1999, the Secretary-General reappointed **Carol Bellamy (United States)**, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), to a second five-year term as head of the agency.

On 9 November 1999, **Michel Camdessus (France)**, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), announced his resignation effective mid-February 2000. On 23 March 2000, the IMF Board of Directors appointed Mr Horst Koehler (Germany) as Managing Director.

On 15 November 1999, **Jacques Diouf (Senegal)**, was elected to a second six-year term as Director-General of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

On 27 January 2000, the Secretary-General recommended to the Security Council of the United Nations that **Dr Hans Blix (Sweden)** be appointed Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) to undertake the responsibilities of the former United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), which was charged with monitoring the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in **Iraq**. The choice having been approved, Dr Blix took up his functions on 1 March 2000.

On 22 February 2000, the Secretary-General nominated **Dileep Nair (Singapore)** to replace Karl Paschke (Germany) as head of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). The appointment is subject to the approval of the United Nations General Assembly.

3. **International Days, Decades and Years**

2000 - is the *International Year for the Culture of Peace* (A/RES/52/15) and the *International Year of Thanksgiving* (A/RES/52/16).

The observance of four new International Days has been decided upon by the United Nations system:

21 February as *International Mother Language Day* (UNESCO),

21 March as *World Poetry Day* (UNESCO),

12 August as *International Youth Day* (A/RES/54/120),

25 November as *International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women* (A/RES/54/134).

4. **Major conferences foreseen for 2000**

The tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was held in **Bangkok, Thailand, 12-19 February 2000**.

Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, **Vienna, 10-17 April 2000**.

Special session of the United Nations General Assembly on the Review of the Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Beijing Platform for Action, **New York, 5-9 June 2000**.

Special session of the United Nations General Assembly to review the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives, **Geneva, 26-30 June 2000**.

Millennium Summit of the United Nations, **New York, 6 September 2000**.

ANNEX II

LIST OF INTERNATIONAL DAYS, YEARS AND DECADES

International Days (observed by the United Nations system)

- **21 February** - International Mother Language Day (UNESCO)
- **8 March** - International Women's Day
- **21 March** - International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- **21 March** - World Poetry Day (UNESCO)
- **22 March** - World Day for Water
- **23 March** - World Meteorological Day (WMO)
- **24 March** - World Tuberculosis Day (WHO)
- **7 April** - World Health Day (WHO)
- **23 April** - World Book and Copyright Day (UNESCO)
- **3 May** - Sun Day (UNEP)
- **3 May** - World Press Freedom Day (UNESCO)
- **15 May** - International Day of Families
- **17 May** - World Telecommunication Day (ITU)
- **21 May** - World Day for Cultural Development (UNESCO)
- **25 May** - Africa Day
- **31 May** - World No-Tobacco Day (WHO)
- **4 June** - International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression
- **5 June** - World Environment Day (UNEP)
- **17 June** - World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
- **26 June** - International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
- **26 June** - United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture
- **11 July** - World Population Day (UNFPA)
- **1st Saturday July** - International Day of Cooperatives
- **9 August** - International Day of Indigenous People
- **12 August** - International Youth Day
- **23 August** - International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition (UNESCO)
- **8 September** - International Literacy Day (UNESCO)
- **16 September** - International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
- **Last Week September** - World Maritime Day (IMO)
- **3rd Tuesday September** - International Day of Peace (opening of the UNGA)
- **1 October** - International Day of Older Persons
- **5 October** - International Teachers' Day (UNESCO)
- **9 October** - World Post Day (UPU)
- **16 October** - World Food Day (FAO)
- **17 October** - International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- **24 October** - United Nations Day
- **24 October** - World Development Information Day
- **1st Monday October** - World Habitat Day
- **2nd Wednesday October** - International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction
- **16 November** - International Day for Tolerance (UNESCO)
- **20 November** - Africa Industrialization Day

- **20 November** - Universal Children's Day (UNICEF)
- **21 November** - World Television Day
- **25 November** - International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
- **29 November** - International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
- **1 December** - World AIDS Day (WHO)
- **2 December** - International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
- **3 December** - International Day of Disabled Persons
- **5 December** - International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development
- **7 December** - International Civil Aviation Day (ICAO)
- **10 December** - Human Rights Day
- **29 December** - International Day for Biological Diversity

International Years (proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly)

- **2000** - [International Year for the Culture of Peace](#)
- **2000** - International Year of Thanksgiving
- **2001** - International Year of Volunteers
- **2001** - International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance
- **2001** - United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations
- **2002** - International Year of Ecotourism
- **2002** - International Year of Mountains
- **2005** - International Year of Microcredit

International Decades (proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly)

- **1990-2000** - Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism
- **1991-2000** - Fourth United Nations Development Decade
- **1991-2000** - Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa
- **1991-2000** - United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse
- **1993-2002** - Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons
- **1993-2002** - Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa
- **1993-2003** - Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination
- **1994-2004** - International Decade of the World's Indigenous People
- **1995-2004** - United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education
- **1997-2006** - First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty
- **2001-2010** - International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World