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**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE STATUS
OF PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ITS EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

SUMMARY

This document has been prepared pursuant to 31 C/Resolution 40. It summarizes briefly the preparatory process and expected outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development being organized by the United Nations in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002. Information is provided on what UNESCO is doing to prepare for the Summit.

Decision required: paragraph 20.

Background

1. As decided in resolution 55/199 of the United Nations General Assembly, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002 (changed from original dates foreseen: 2-11 September 2002). The Summit will carry out a ten-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21, the action plan of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable development. The Summit is to focus on the identification of accomplishments and areas where further efforts are needed to implement Agenda 21 and other outcomes of the UNCED. It is to come forward with action-oriented decisions in areas where further efforts are required to address new challenges and opportunities for the future. The Summit will seek to ensure a balance between economic development, social development and environmental protection, seen by the General Assembly as interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development.

2. The Summit is expected to bring together one of the largest gatherings of world leaders, as well as representatives of civil society and the private sector. The total participation is estimated at 65,000 persons. The Secretary-General of the Summit is the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

Expected outcomes of the Summit

3. Three kinds of outcomes are anticipated:

- (a) a “political document” to be endorsed by the Heads of State attending the Summit;
- (b) an intergovernmental, negotiated “implementation document”, focusing on action;
- (c) a list of new multi-stakeholder commitments/partnerships for action in support of the implementation document (“type 2 outcomes”), expected to become one of the major outcomes of WSSD. These “type 2 outcomes” would consist of a series of commitments and action-oriented coalitions focused on deliverables and would contribute to translating political commitments into action.

The intergovernmental preparatory process

4. The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) acts as the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Summit. The Preparatory Committee has met three times: PrepCom 1 (New York, 30 April-2 May 2001), PrepCom 2 (New York, 28 January-8 February 2002), and PrepCom 3 (New York, 25 March-5 April 2002). PrepCom 4 will be held in Bali, Indonesia from 27 May to 7 June 2002. In addition, a series of subregional and regional intergovernmental preparatory meetings were held during the course of 2001.

5. PrepCom 3 ended with support for proposals to launch results-oriented partnership initiatives (“type 2 outcomes”) in Johannesburg and with a mandate given to the Chair of the PrepCom (Mr Emil Salim, Indonesia) to draft a new consensus document that will commit governments to take specific steps to promote sustainable development. Governments were not able to agree on a negotiated text based on the Chairman’s paper issued at the conclusion of PrepCom 2.

6. PrepCom 4 – part of which will be held at ministerial level – will be charged with producing the negotiated implementation document as well as the political declaration to be endorsed by the heads of state and government who will attend the Johannesburg Summit.

7. Information on the preparatory process was provided in two briefings for Permanent Delegations held at Headquarters, the first on 7 March by the Director-General, and the second on 8 April by Mr Emil Salim, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee.

8. Further information about the preparatory process and the Summit itself can be found at www.johannesburgsummit.org.

UNESCO's contribution to the Johannesburg Summit

9. The nature of the preparatory process had been such that UNESCO and the other agencies of the United Nations system have been led to adopt a flexible approach to determining how to most usefully contribute to the Summit. It was only at PrepComs 2 and 3 that the broad themes of the Summit began to become clear. It is for this reason that the Organization's specific contribution to the Summit was still being finalized at the time that this document was being written (mid-April 2002).

10. Sustainable development is an overarching concept that cuts across all UNESCO's major programme areas. For this reason, the Director-General established an intersectoral Task Force on Sustainable Development (DG/Note/02/02, 16 January 2002) to promote and coordinate UNESCO-wide preparation for the Johannesburg Summit. The task force is composed of the ADGs and DADGs of the programme sectors, as well as ERC, AFR and BSP. ADM and BPI are also involved. The Task Force is chaired by the Director-General and in his absence by ADG/SC, with DADG/SC serving as secretary. A formal meeting of the Task Force, chaired by the Director-General, was held on 26 February 2002, and a second formal meeting, also chaired by the Director-General, is foreseen for 29 April 2002. Informal meetings of sector focal points have been held regularly since the task force was established.

UNESCO's contribution to the preparatory process

11. A UNESCO position paper entitled "Enhancing Global Sustainability, Position Paper and Proposals by UNESCO to the third session of the Preparatory Committee for WSSD" was prepared and widely circulated at PrepCom 3 as well as to Permanent Delegations, National Commissions, and NGOs in formal relations with UNESCO (also available at www.unesco.org, a special link being provided on the home page). This position paper – based largely on the Medium-Term Strategy – highlights six areas of particular relevance for UNESCO action with regard to WSSD:

- (a) educating for sustainability;
- (b) promoting and applying science for sustainable development: science policies and capacity-building;
- (c) developing ethical principles and guidelines for sustainable development;
- (d) sustaining the world's freshwater and marine resources and their supporting ecosystems (including small island developing states);
- (e) ensuring sustainable development through cultural diversity;
- (f) contributing to sustainable development through the media and information and communication technologies.

Within the sections of the document on each of these themes, "proposed action by WSSD" and "action by UNESCO" is described.

12. Elements for action in UNESCO's fields of competence will be prepared by 30 April, at the request of the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, as input for the new consensus document he has been asked to prepare for PrepCom 4.

13. A side event on "Educating for Sustainability: Commitments and Partnerships for Johannesburg" was organized by UNESCO during PrepCom 2, in its function as task manager for chapter 36 of Agenda 21 and in partnership with IUCN, the International Association of Universities, Copernicus-Campus, University Leaders for a Sustainable Future, the Earth Charter, Planet ERE 2, UNESCO Conference of NGOs, and the CONGO Committee on Sustainable Development. The event was well attended, and served to highlight the essential role of education at all levels and in all its forms in achieving sustainable development, beginning with EFA, as well as concrete partnership arrangements and commitments that were emerging in preparation for the Summit.

14. Six round table side events were held during PrepCom 3, organized by UNESCO and its partners on:

- (a) Ethics of Science and Technology and Sustainable Development (COMEST);
- (b) Governance for Sustainable Development: Answers to Complexity (MOST);
- (c) Water: Crisis or Opportunities? The Choice is Yours (UNESCO and Green Cross International);
- (d) Governing Water Wisely: The World Water Development Report (inter-agency World Water Assessment Programme led by UNESCO);
- (e) Oceans, Coasts and Islands (IOC and others);
- (f) Ensuring the Sustainable Development of Oceans, Coasts and Islands (IOC and others).

15. A new portal for sustainable development is being developed on the UNESCO website, in order to allow those both inside and outside UNESCO to be better aware of what the Organization is doing in this field and to make available the vast resources of the Organization in this field. To date, information about UNESCO's programmes and resources is dispersed throughout different parts of the website.

Anticipated UNESCO presence at the Summit

16. The UNESCO delegation to Johannesburg will be led by the Director-General.

17. A consolidated UNESCO exhibition will take place during the Summit, in which all Sectors will participate.

18. Side events during the Johannesburg Summit are currently being considered. Further information is likely to be available at the time of the Executive Board meeting.

19. UNESCO intends to develop a small number of "type 2" commitments/partnerships for presentation in Johannesburg, and for approval as official outcomes of the Summit. More information will be available at the time of the Executive Board meeting.

Decision

20. In the light of the foregoing, the Executive Board may wish to consider the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 164 EX/46,
2. Takes note of its contents;
3. Invites the Director-General to report to the Executive Board at its 166th session on the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the implications for UNESCO's programmes in the future.