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Item 5.17 of the provisional agenda**DRAFT RESOLUTION**

submitted by NORWAY

supported by MOZAMBIQUE, ICELAND, JAPAN, UNITED REPUBLIC OF  
TANZANIA**Higher education and globalization: Promoting quality and access to the  
knowledge society as a means for sustainable development****Higher education and globalization: assuring quality of global higher education and  
promoting access to the knowledge society as a means for sustainable development**

The General Conference,

*Recalling* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states in Article 26, paragraph 1, that everyone has the right to education and that higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit,

*Further recalling* UNESCO's Constitution underlining that the States Parties to this Constitution, believing in full and equal opportunities for education for all, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge, are agreed and determined to develop and increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives,

*Considering* the United Nations Millennium Development Goal 8 that calls for global partnerships for development through the following targets:

Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory. Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – nationally and internationally (Target 12);

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This proposal was received by the Secretariat on 14 August 2003.

Make available the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communications technologies (Target 18);

*In compliance* with the Medium-Term Strategy adopted by the 31st session of the General Conference that “globalization must be made to work for all”;

*Conscious* of the fundamental importance of the global common good of humanity, one aspect of which is higher education as an element of sustainable socio-cultural and economic development as reiterated by the World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century;

*Acknowledging* the possibilities offered by new information and communication technologies to ensure universal access to higher education resources to reduce inequalities in the interests of social justice and economic well-being;

*Concerned*, however, that unregulated growth of higher education markets could weaken the sustainability of national higher education systems, particularly in less developed countries;

*Conscious* that assuring quality is essential for informing and safeguarding learners, especially in knowledge-importing countries, and that developing information tools are fundamental for empowering academics and students to benefit from the knowledge society;

1. *Urges* all Member States to:

- (a) develop policy frameworks that will facilitate active participation in the knowledge society, narrowing the knowledge and technological divide between developed and developing countries, maximizing the benefits and minimizing the threats of globalization, and to promote quality in and equitable access to higher education;
- (b) enhance national capacity for assuring quality and equity of higher education, using comparable criteria for national and transnational providers;
- (c) promote awareness of the advantages of international education that functions in synergy with sustainable higher education systems;
- (d) develop and widely disseminate information tools for learners on the recognition and quality assurance of higher education provision and on the access to study opportunities provided in the new higher education arena;
- (e) use existing international education agreements, such as UNESCO conventions, declarations and recommendations, as a value-based educational normative framework to respond to the challenges of globalization;
- (f) build upon and promote the standards of the relevant UNESCO conventions, as appropriate, when taking part in negotiations or international cooperation involving education issues.

2. *Invites* the Director-General to:

- (a) ensure that high priority is given to developing higher education systems as a strong contribution to reach EFA goals and to promote sustainable human development;

- (b) assist Member States in developing higher education policy frameworks that can narrow the knowledge and technological divide between developed and developing countries, maximize the benefits and minimize the threats of globalization;
  - (c) promote cooperation and common standards for capacity-building for quality assurance, qualifications-recognition and provider and course accreditation;
  - (d) build on and further develop existing standard-setting documents and normative instruments of UNESCO, in particular the World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century and the regional conventions on the recognition of qualifications in higher education;
  - (e) draft “guiding principles” for international quality assurance to cover the rights and obligations of providing and receiving nations, drawing on the competence of UNESCO and other international agencies;
  - (f) promote the development of information tools for students regarding access, qualifications recognition and quality assurance of higher education;
  - (g) develop a plan for building regional and global networks of information on quality assurance and accreditation among national education authorities and quality assurance agencies to provide relevant information including lists of bona fide institutions of higher education approved or accredited by the authority in each country;
3. *Invites* UNESCO partners: intergovernmental organizations, other United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to cooperate with UNESCO in the attainment of these objectives.