



Conférence générale

32e session
Document d'information

Генеральная конференция

32-я сессия
Информационный документ

inf

Paris 2003

General Conference

32nd session
Information document

المؤتمر العام

الدورة الثانية والثلاثون
وثيقة إعلامية

Conferencia General

32ª reunión
Documento de información

大会
第三十二届会议
资料性文件

32 C/INF.6
30 September 2003
Original: French

PROGRESS REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE UNIVERSAL FORUM OF CULTURES – BARCELONA 2004

OUTLINE

Source: Document 32 C/5, paragraph 04015.

Background: In accordance with 29 C/Resolution 26 which placed the Barcelona 2004 Forum under the auspices of UNESCO, the Director-General reports to the General Conference on the progress made in the preparation of the Forum with less than a year to go before it takes place.

Purpose: This document covers the period that has elapsed since the 29th session of the General Conference. During this period, the Organization has lent its intellectual assistance to guiding the activities of the Barcelona 2004 Forum, which will take place from **9 May to 26 September 2004 in Barcelona (Spain)**.

Decision required: This document requires no decision.

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to the decision taken by the General Conference at its 29th session (1997) to make UNESCO the main partner of the Universal Forum of Cultures – Barcelona 2004, and following the establishment of the Forum's Organizing Consortium, made up of the Spanish Government, the Autonomous Government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya) and Barcelona City Council, UNESCO has been involved in the process of bringing the Forum to fruition. Its specialists have taken part in the various thematic advisory committees and in the definition of its programme on the basis of the Framework Agreement signed by the Director-General with the Consortium on 26 March 1999. A high-level joint committee has been overseeing the cooperation between UNESCO and Barcelona 2004, which was boosted by the Director-General's visit to Barcelona during his official visit to Spain in 2001.

2. This report presents the concept behind this groundbreaking event, the nature of its programme and contents, its international outreach, the role that it may play in raising public awareness of the major questions posed by a changing world, and its impact on improving knowledge of UNESCO's ideals among the general public.

II. The Barcelona 2004 Forum: a new concept

3. By embarking on this large-scale initiative, with a **€300 million** budget financed in equal amounts by the three public bodies concerned, the Spanish authorities set out to devise, in close cooperation with UNESCO, a new kind of international event aimed at the general public: the **6 million visitors expected** will be invited to make an active contribution, through dialogue, reflection, debate and exchanges, to a celebration of cultures on the threshold of the new millennium. The Forum is to focus on **three core themes** – “**cultural diversity and the dialogue of cultures**”, “**sustainable development**” and “**conditions for peace**” – lying at the heart of the concerns of UNESCO and of the United Nations system as a whole. The aim is to promote these three major objectives so as to help to identify shared ethical values with a view to globalization with a human face.

4. In the light of the changes around the world since the end of the cold war and in line with the new worldwide phenomena – globalization, the emerging information society, the growing importance of cultural factors in international dynamics – the Forum aims to be a meeting-point and a place for dialogue between the various protagonists of the international system, political decision-makers and civil society, opening to the general public an arena of experience and awareness of cultural diversity, sustainable development and the conditions for peace. The United Nations Charter, UNESCO's Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted by UNESCO in 2001, underlie all the principles and values adopted by the Forum: individual rights and freedoms, democracy, respect for minorities and cultural identities, interfaith dialogue, the recognition of linguistic diversity, the encouragement of creativity, the defence of biodiversity, and encouraging society to assume responsibility for sustainable development.

5. The contents of the Forum are translated into events tailored to different kinds of public. “Dialogues”, meetings and congresses are being organized and various renowned figures will participate; those wishing to attend must register ahead. Exhibitions and interactive installations will be staged across the city of Barcelona. The Forum Plaza will host a wide variety of events, performances and multicultural experiences aimed at all kinds of audience, offering people a unique opportunity to celebrate cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue and to become familiar with best practice in various fields. Throughout the nearly five months of the Forum, thousands of artists, intellectuals, politicians and social leaders, scientists, economists and experts in environmental

protection will interact with the public “for a better understanding of a world that is home to 6 billion human beings who speak 6,000 languages, belong to different ethnic groups and creeds and, nonetheless, need to learn to live together”.

III. Programme and contents

6. Under the name of **Dialogues**, some 40 international meetings of various formats (from one to seven days and from 50 to 8,000 participants) will bring together around 55,000 specialists from all over the world. The full programme of events can be consulted on the Internet (<http://www.barcelona2004.org>). Some of the events will be multilateral meetings taking place within the framework of the Forum – UN-Habitat’s World Urban Forum, the World Youth Festival, the World Volunteer Conference – but most of the “dialogues” are meetings specifically designed for the Forum, jointly organized with national, international, governmental and non-governmental organizations and academic and research institutions. Throughout the Forum’s 141 working days, the “dialogues”, starting out from four introductory debates (“The world today”, “Shared memory”, “The role of Europe in the world” and “Culture and urban development”), will tackle in succession a host of issues relating to cultural diversity, the media, science, knowledge and sustainable development, freedom, security and peace, education, urban affairs, new protagonists and new dynamics, all adding up to a global agenda capable of bringing the outcomes of the Forum to the attention of the international organizations. Participating in the dialogues will be a large number of figures of international stature such as Mikhail Gorbachev, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Joseph Stiglitz, Anthony Giddens, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Francis Fukuyama, Manuel Castells, Ted Turner, Aminata Traoré, José Saramago, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Baltasar Garzon, Angelina Jolie, Zinedine Zidane, etc.

7. On this occasion, UNESCO is organizing, from 6 to 8 September 2004, an **interdisciplinary conference on “New forms of ignorance, new forms of literacy”** focusing on ignorance of diversity, ignorance of the Other, ignorance of the future and ignorance of ethics. The UNESCO conference will be preceded by a high-level round table in which Heads of State, ministers of education and prominent figures from the media and the private sector as well as from the non-governmental organizations will take part. Its aim is to identify specific types of “literacy” training, and its final declaration is intended to put forward a response to these issues and lay down the intellectual and ethical bases for countering the emergence of new forms of ignorance in the twenty-first century.

8. UNESCO specialists are involved in the organizing committees for 13 other “dialogues” presented by other bodies who judged that the Organization’s experience might be particularly useful. These are the introductory dialogue “The world today” (12-13 May) and the following dialogues, which are, in chronological order: “Information, power and ethics in the twenty-first century” (17-19 May), “Communication and cultural diversity” (20-23 May), “Global audiovisual communication and cultural diversity” (30-31 May), “Energy and sustainable development” (2-3 June), “Water, a strategic resource” (31 May-1 June), “Listening to the sea” (7-11 June), “Tourism, cultural diversity and sustainable development” (3-5 July), “Poverty, microcredit and social development” (15-18 July), the World Youth Festival (8-14 August), “Cultural rights and human development” (23-26 August), the World Urban Forum (13-17 September) and “Human rights, emerging needs and new commitments” (18-21 September).

9. Events during the Forum also include four major exhibitions – “Voices” (illustrating linguistic diversity), “Inhabiting the world”, “Crossroad cities” and “The Xian terracotta army” – which will be shown on the Forum premises. Nineteen other exhibitions will at the same time be presented by different Barcelona-based cultural and scientific institutions; these will cover various subjects related to the core themes of the Forum, including “The human condition: the human image in the

arts”, “Art and Utopia”, “Confucius”, “Treasures of pre-Columbian Mexico”, “Heritage and interculturality” and “Picasso, war and peace”.

10. The meeting-place *par excellence* is the Forum’s **Plaza**, the **320,000 m²** of which will host exhibitions, workshops, games, interactive installations, performances, street markets, themed food-tastings, etc. The Plaza has been designed as a living example of fair-trade projects, ethical investments, responsible consumption, renewable energies, recycling, sustainable tourism, etc., while giving the general public an opportunity to express their ideas on the future and to leave their mark on a variety of media – graphic, audiovisual, literary, sound, and so forth – in such a way as to make the visitor the real protagonist. UN-Habitat is coordinating “Best practices and the city”, and a large number of NGOs are putting on a “Solidarity fair”. UNESCO will be showing a selection of masterpieces of the intangible heritage, and an exhibition about its “Design 21” project, the aim of which is to provide encouragement to young stylists from every country.

11. The programme of **entertainment** includes a set of events involving more than 3,500 performers, over 100 theatre companies, 60 musical groups, 16 concerts of popular music from around the world and three international circuses. Other top-level artistic events representing different cultures will also take place during the Forum in a number of Barcelona’s public and private cultural arenas. Among the internationally renowned artists taking part will be Rostropovich, Barenboim, Jordi Savall, Hogwood and the Pina Bausch and Baryshnikov ballets, as well as Bono, Khaled, Youssou N’Dour, Sting and Carlinhos Brown of the Bahia (Brazil) Carnival. The Festival of the Sea will bring together a unique concentration of tall ships and will include a large number of activities relating to sea sports.

12. An international sponsorship group comprising eminent figures representing different cultures and sensitivities in the arts, sciences and letters and whose individual careers are in keeping with the core themes of the Forum will bring a global outlook to this gathering.

13. Among the measures for ensuring the international outreach of the Barcelona 2004 Forum are promotional activities targeted at those potentially interested, agreements made with tour operators, the launching of the **Virtual Forum** (Internet) and the creation of the **Forum Channel** (television), which for the whole duration of the Forum will transmit live the feature “141 answers for 141 nights” in which acknowledged experts will discuss with viewers the major issues being dealt with in the various dialogues.

14. **The intellectual legacy of the Forum** will consist of the set of conclusions and documents stemming from the various dialogues and other international meetings. A final document structured around the three core themes (cultural diversity, sustainable development, and conditions for peace) will sum up both the outcomes of the dialogues and those stemming from all the activities, experiences and inputs of the Forum as a whole. The Barcelona 2004 Consortium, in response to submissions from many countries and organizations, is also considering whether it would be appropriate to set up a foundation to which its heritage and the experience acquired in organizing this major event could be bequeathed. It would be prepared to involve UNESCO therein, should the Organization judge that appropriate.

IV. The role of UNESCO

15. Being particularly closely associated with the Forum, UNESCO has from the beginning advised the organizers and collaborated closely with them on the conceptualization of all its programmes and activities, without any costs to the Organization being incurred at any point. UNESCO has also taken responsibility for organizing one of the most important of the dialogues (“New forms of ignorance, new forms of literacy”), one of the exhibitions (Design 21) and a display

(Masterpieces of the intangible heritage). It has also agreed to link up with other partners to organize 14 dialogues particularly relevant to UNESCO's priorities. It is collaborating actively with many events by providing iconographic and audiovisual materials, and is lending its support to the Forum's communication efforts. More than 50 members of the Secretariat, from Headquarters or the field offices, have thus participated as specialists in the conceptualization of the Forum, firstly by taking part in the work of the thematic committees and then by collaborating with the services of the Consortium, whether it be to provide an intellectual contribution to the organization of the "dialogues", to help prepare some of the exhibitions or to help promote the Forum. The Organization's six official languages will be those used by the Forum on all its signs. Its working languages will be English, French, Spanish and Catalan.

16. The Director-General plans to attend the Forum's inauguration ceremony, which will be presided over by H.M. King Juan Carlos I of Spain and the highest authorities of the Generalitat and the Barcelona City Council, and he will also attend the opening of the conference "New forms of ignorance, new forms of literacy" which UNESCO is organizing.

17. In pursuance of the resolution adopted by the General Conference at its 29th session, which placed the Forum under UNESCO's auspices, the Organization has also ensured that the 1928 Convention defining the role of the International Exhibition Bureau has been respected, so as to avoid any risk of confusion between the Forum and Universal Expositions. This has not prevented plenty of scope being given to all cultures, whether in the context of the dialogues, in which all the public figures participate in a personal capacity, or in that of the exhibitions, performances and other events taking place on the Plaza, so as to respond as faithfully as possible to the expectations aroused by this, the first ever convening of a Universal Forum of Cultures.

18. Given the great effort made by the Spanish authorities to create public awareness of the problem areas lying at the heart of UNESCO's concerns and constituting major political, economic, social and cultural issues for the twenty-first century, and mindful of the positive fallout in terms of the Organization's visibility which may be expected from UNESCO's participation, **the Director-General joins the organizers of the Barcelona 2004 Forum in most warmly inviting all the Member States to promote, in their respective countries, the widest possible participation in the Forum, especially by the members of their scientific and intellectual community and by all significant figures from their communities and their cultures.** The Barcelona 2004 Forum can provide the necessary information to ensure the widest participation by all at this appointment that Barcelona is making with us for 2004.