

Hundred and seventy-first session

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Item 59 of the provisional agenda

CROSS-SECTORAL ACTIVITIES IN TECHNICAL CAPACITY-BUILDING

SUMMARY

This item has been included in the provisional agenda of the 171st session of the Executive Board at the request of the United States of America.

An explanatory note together with a proposed decision are attached.

Decision proposed: paragraph 10.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

1. Capacity-building in basic and applied sciences, engineering and technology is a critical aspect of reducing poverty and establishing sustainable economic and social development in developing countries.
2. According to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, capacity-building “encompasses a country’s human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional, and resource capabilities. A fundamental goal of capacity-building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation among development options, based on an understanding of environmental potentials and limits and of needs perceived by the people of the country concerned”.
3. The issues outlined above are at the heart of the goals of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, for which UNESCO will assume the lead role. More broadly, all of the goals outlined in the Millennium Declaration entail capacity-building.
4. To that end, a unit has been established in the Natural Sciences Sector to coordinate the Sector’s capacity-building efforts. The unit will sponsor initiatives that contribute to capacity-building in developing countries, and that enhance capacity and develop and promulgate educational materials at all levels.
5. However, fully meeting these capacity-building needs requires cross-sectoral approaches. For example, the capacity-building unit within the Science Sector should develop closer links with the Communication and Information Sector to best utilize information technologies in developing countries. Educational activities to which the Education Sector could contribute might include: the development of training materials and programmes in science and engineering to train trainers for developing countries; the support of workshops for educators (e.g. on curriculum development, best practices and quality assurance); and the development of appropriate collaborations with industry.
6. In these cross-sectoral activities, particular emphasis would be placed on building capacities in developing countries to address elements of the goals for sustainable development outlined in the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations, including safe drinking water and poverty reduction.
7. Cross-sectoral activities in capacity-building should be encouraged. All of UNESCO’s sectors currently have some capacity-building activity. Cross-sectoral activities in capacity-building would afford the opportunity to see where there are synergies and overlaps. In addition, this would be a means of identifying potential new synergies and improving coordination, with a reorientation of current efforts as required. A fully coordinated effort would make it easier to set meaningful benchmarks for success, and track results.
8. We would invite the Director-General to submit a report to the 174th session of the Executive Board on progress achieved on these pilot activities, so that the Board can at that point draw conclusions on increasing relevant cross-sectoral cooperation.
9. Refocusing UNESCO’s capacity-building efforts, and enhancing cooperation among UNESCO’s sectors, will help ensure that the Organization’s programmes have enduring impact.

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Item 59 of the provisional agenda

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ADDENDUM

CORRIGENDUM

Paragraph 10: Proposed draft decision

(i) add the following Member States:

China, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Japan, Jordan, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Turkey and United Republic of Tanzania.

(ii) and replace United Kingdom by United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Proposed draft decision

10. Following the inclusion of this item in the provisional agenda of the 171st session of the Executive Board at the request of the United States of America, the draft decision hereunder is presented by the following States Members of the Executive Board:

Afghanistan, Australia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, India, Jamaica, Yemen, United Kingdom, United States of America.

The Executive Board,

1. Recognizing that in order to most effectively leverage its programmes, UNESCO should operate in a cross-sectoral manner and foster work structures conducive to cross-sectoral collaboration,
2. Stressing that technical capacity-building in basic and applied sciences, engineering, and technology is a critical aspect of reducing poverty and establishing sustainable economic and social infrastructure, and that this capacity-building includes education, science, and communication and information elements,
3. Recalling that the Medium-Term Strategy of UNESCO for 2002-2007 (31 C/4) includes a strategic objective on “Enhancing scientific, technical, and human capabilities to participate in emerging knowledge societies”,
4. Further recalling that the approved Programme and Budget for 2004-2005 (32 C/5) includes regular budget and extrabudgetary funds for capacity-building in science and technology for development, and states that the overall strategy of UNESCO in the engineering sciences and technology is to promote human and institutional capacity-building, particularly in developing countries,
5. Noting that the 170th session of the Executive Board outlines the priorities for the Natural Sciences Sector as follows:
 - (i) the principal priority shall be water and associated ecosystems;
 - (ii) the other priorities shall be:
 - oceans;
 - capacity-building in the basic and engineering sciences, the formulation of science policies, and the promotion of a culture of maintenance;
 - promoting the application of science, engineering and appropriate technologies for sustainable development, natural resource use and management, disaster-preparedness and alleviation, and renewable sources of energy;
6. Taking into consideration the above mandates,
7. Welcomes the establishment of a unit within the Science Sector to coordinate activities in capacity-building focused on:
 - (i) Basic science and mathematics education – activities to include development of training materials and programmes in science and mathematics;

- (ii) Engineering – activities to include strengthening of the existing engineering programme, including training educators for developing countries, support of workshops for educators in curriculum development, best practices, and quality assurance, and development of appropriate collaborations with industry;
 - (iii) Water-related efforts – activities to include enhancement of the current hydrology effort as it relates to capacity-building efforts in engineering and water sciences to address water-related needs;
8. Requests the Director-General to develop cross-sectoral activities within UNESCO to emphasize building capacities in developing countries, and mainly, Least-Developed Countries (LDCs) and post-conflict countries to address elements of the goals for sustainable development outlined in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, including safe drinking water and poverty reduction;
 9. Invites the Director-General to utilize existing budgetary resources to accomplish the development of these cross-sectoral capacity-building activities and to develop benchmarks and an evaluation process;
 10. Further invites the Director-General to take the necessary measures for the development of a cross-sectoral capacity-building programme and to submit a report to the Executive Board on progress at its 174th session.