7th UNESCO/NGO Collective Consultation on Higher Education

UNESCO, 27-29 November 2000

Summary Record
Recommendations

As a result of the debates in plenary sessions and in the working groups, several recommendations for action to be taken by UNESCO and its partners in the implementation of the WCHE follow-up strategy were formulated.

General recommendations

1. In view of the complexity of the WCHE follow-up strategy, participants agreed on the need for UNESCO to create a special fund to ensure the implementation of the activities foreseen.

2. Following the presentation in plenary of the UNESCO/ACU-CHEMS study on Accountability and International Co-operation in the Renewal of Higher Education, participants were unanimous in stressing the social role of higher education. A number of participants contributed comments which endorsed the need to devise more clear and reliable instruments to evaluate the implementation of the WCHE principles. These views reiterated that sustainable human development must and can be assessed and that UNESCO is the agency best placed to carry out this task.

3. The necessity to provide adequate funding to support access to higher education, student mobility and preparation to an international environment was stressed by student representatives.

Working Groups

Working group 1 "The ITs' Impact on Systemic and Institutional Renewal" recommended to UNESCO to look at the following issues:

4. cost (cost in terms of human resources - to bring about reforms in university curricula; cost in terms of how the ITs will be used; cost and speed of access to information)

5. library resources (UNESCO should take on the international issue of copyright and intellectual property)

6. the necessity to involve students in boards taking decisions regarding IT
7. evaluation of courses - difficult to work our criteria sustainable for all countries, but UNESCO could help prepare a Charter of evaluation.

Working Group 2, "Institutions and Citizenship - Higher Education and the Knowledge Society", agreed that, given the diversity and disparity of higher education institutions, the increasing demand for access to higher education (particularly in the South), and the inequalities in access,

8. higher education should be a priority to UNESCO and to its Member States, and governments should take measures aiming at increasing the budget allotted to higher education.

With regard to the recognition of the social role of higher education, participants agreed that

9. UNESCO and IAU should establish a working group who would be entrusted the task of drafting a declaration on academic freedom and the social recognition of the role of the university.

Also, participants in this working group suggested that, in recognition of the importance of the cultural and linguistic diversity,

10. UNESCO and its partners work on the management of this diversity in higher education.

Working Group 3, "The Teaching Profession: Changing Roles and New Approaches to Training", made recommendations both to teachers and to UNESCO.

11. Teachers should strive to promote a new quality in information and knowledge which would allow students to master the scientific, social and cultural knowledge and thus serve the ideals of sustainable development and responsible citizenship. This with the purpose of stressing the public service role of higher education and its contribution to building a culture of peace.

12. The Working Group recommended to UNESCO to support social recognition of those teachers who successfully combine teaching and research. Teachers should become socially pro-active - this will guarantee the perenniality of the profession. The teacher-researcher must be a guarantee of excellence in training. Universities must be closely associated with research that gives priority to local/community needs.

13. Every effort must be made to safeguard and strengthen the status and conditions of higher education teaching personnel. To this end, the 1996 Recommendation on this subject and current projects with NGOs to carry this work forward deserve appropriately generous support.
14. Given the widespread use of IT and its growing role in the teaching and learning process, it has become urgent to advance research into the practical implications of this new reality. In this respect, key areas are: on one hand, the training of teachers at all levels with emphasis on staff development at the tertiary instruction; and on the other hand, the potential of IT as a component of curriculum renovation and of the pedagogical process per se.

Summary Record

General Rapporteur: Professor Vincent Hanssens, FIUC
Rapporteurs: Professor Louis-Philippe Laprévote, IAUPL, Miss Barbara Schimmer, IFMSA

- Plenary 1 – Round Table: Information Technology - Revolution or Solution

Traditional providers of education have begun to significantly extend their use of the New Information Technologies (IT) in order to allow wider access to tertiary education and training. The purpose of this round table was to further discuss how this approach – which reflects the advent of the era of technology - could help Member States to provide adequate access to quality education and training in order to meet the growing demand for entry to the post-secondary sector from learners with extremely varied profiles and previous educational experience.

Auriol Stevens, Editor in Chief of the Times Higher Education Supplement gave the keynote presentation to open the session. This covered aspects of institutional management, teaching, learning and research, and focused on two main issues: the cost and funding of IT usage, and the need for solid international quality standards for this mode of delivery.

Remarks from the panel of experts

Bernard Loing, International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) believed that a triple revolution is in progress: a revolution in educational methods, a revolution in the type of education service provider, and a revolution which has led to the creation of a world market in information.

He also described how the French have tackled the problem of access to IT in African Francophone countries where Internet access is not widely available. Using existing satellites and radios, a system has been developed for the wide delivery of educational programmes, which will be compatible with Internet technology in the future.

Pierre Fleischmann, IBM, discussed the use of the Internet as a tool for international co-operation, the sharing of expertise and knowledge, and the new forms of distance learning. He highlighted the need for universal access to IT, stating that policies need
to be elaborated so as to give every person equal opportunities for access to the Internet and the chance to learn.

Angie Garcia, Director of AIESEC International, focused on the importance of ensuring the widest possible access to E-learning and on the nature of the information content dispensed by IT. These were particular concerns for her NGO, whose primary constituents are students in Business and Economics; however, these issues were a recurrent theme during the course of the round table.

Ali Al-Mashat, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Iraq to UNESCO, stressed that, henceforth, information will be a fundamental element of higher education, along with teaching, training and research. He also placed special emphasis on the unique contribution made by universities to the evolution of society as a whole. These institutions and new educational innovations are important for Iraq which, for some years, has endured a critical situation in the field of education, due to the sanctions that have been in place for many years.

Raj Isar, Director for the Unit on Cultural Policies for Development, Culture Sector of UNESCO, underlined the problems posed by the universal nature of research and the expression of individual identity. Since the principle of co-existence characterizes diversity, how can this best be safeguarded? He warned of the dangers of unequal access to IT in an era where knowledge was expanding exponentially but where many remained excluded from this process. In order to avoid a "cyberghetto", it will be necessary to find a better equilibrium between different convergent forms and perhaps a certain harmonization and homogeneity will need to be imposed. However, such a framework must be flexible to ensure that the information highways show due respect for the reality of diversity.

General remarks

The NGOs were primarily concerned by the validity of distance higher education. Topics included the conditions of access, the risk of education becoming steered by the market environment, the dangers arising from the imposition of exogenous cultural models, and the threat of exclusion and of unequal development. It was considered that IT use has certain positive points - inter alia, greater personal freedom, the promotion of educational flexibility, the benefits resulting from the exchange of expertise and co-operative research, the opening of traditionally closed societies and different cultures, and the possibilities presented by lifelong learning.

In conclusion, like all technology, IT has many relatively positive aspects but the success of its widespread use will largely depend on judicious political intervention by the state and/or by international inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. In this regard, any effort to restrict IT use by the state should take into account public opinion which has become quite vociferous on this question.
• **Plenary 2 – Special presentation: Virtual Universities - Challenges Faced in Terms of Management and Training**

Brian Mueller,  
Chief Operating Officer,  
The University of Phoenix Online, USA

The purpose of this presentation was to demonstrate that virtual universities, such as the University of Phoenix Online, are essentially a service provider for adults who wish to continue their education in a flexible manner. Consequently, it is not expected that this mode of learning will ever replace the courses currently provided by traditional education providers. Rather, this will co-exist with the modes of learning already in use so as to give students more opportunities to study in their own time at their own pace. It was also highlighted that IT should not be limited to any particular domain. The speaker underlined the importance for educators to be situated outside the “university bubble” and so to be more open to the real needs of society.

Given the increasing popularity of IT learning with students and the success rate of course completion, why is this tool not used more frequently and why has its installation been so slow? It appears that, while the availability of adequate technical equipment is a major problem, more important issues are the lack of technical know how and the negative attitudes displayed by some academics. In fact, IT should cease to be regarded as a privileged dispenser of knowledge. This would help to facilitate their wider use as a tool to accompany the learning process. Any major change to systems of education delivery will provoke different forms of resistance - both personal and cultural. With regard to the latter area, the question of transposing a cultural context or another model on entire university structures (online or not) is a real one and merits close attention.

The future challenges for enhanced IT learning can be listed as follows: availability of technical equipment, the translation of essential content into culturally appropriate language, and an adequate service for the delivery of information.

Last but not least, the speaker issued a final challenge for further reflection: how does the IT mode of education impact on the learning process?

*Remarks from the panel of experts*

**Tarek Shawki, Communications Specialist, UNESCO, Cairo**

Dr Shawki opened his presentation by concurring with the statements of Mr. Mueller that "IT should be considered as a tool to be used in creative ways to the individual’s advantage", and he shared the view that "IT was more suitable for adult education rather than undergraduate learning". He then introduced the concept of "knowledge norms" which will need to be developed as the new standard for judging skills and competencies. This is because, in the current environment, it is difficult to assess the quality of a degree especially when it is awarded concurrently from several institutions.
He then discussed the activities of the UNESCO office in Cairo. The office has ascertained that IT is still not sufficiently used by Egyptian students and believes that faculties need to improve their IT skills to remain a central part of the educational process, whether this is face-to-face or on-line. With this in mind, the UNESCO office in Cairo has developed “The International Grid for Learning Programmes”, to help faculties educate via IT. The programme consists of workshops and training kits. These are available on the web via the Web Resource Portal, CDs, videos, and are also in print. All materials presented in the workshops are available to faculty, administrative staff and the public through an “International Computer Driver’s License” which is a competency program arranged in modules. In addition to producing the kits, the office has also been involved in creating electronic libraries, and is signing collaborative learning agreements with foreign institutions to introduce open learning programmes into Egypt. Finally the office has been involved in the establishment of two open learning institutions.

Ninnat Olanvoravuth, Secretary General, Association of the South East Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAIHL) commented on certain problems facing distance learning which will certainly affect the success and impact of IT use in the future. He focused his remarks on South Asia where poverty reduction and improving the equality of educational opportunities continue to present massive challenges. Furthermore, he referred to the recent meeting, in Malaysia, of the WCHE Follow-up Committee for the Asia/Pacific Region which stressed that the introduction of innovative approaches must take into account the reality of varied socio-economic and cultural contexts.

First and foremost, cost and satisfactory access to computer technology must be addressed. Initially, it was thought that the breakthrough WTO agreement on IT, which proposed zero tariffs on IT products by January 2000, would facilitate lower costs and lead to greater access to these. However, in fact, this has not been the case, and because of the very expensive investment involved, many developing South Asian countries are being excluded from widespread access to technology.

With regard to the adaptation of educational models to local realities, Dr Olanvoravuth acknowledged that the Phoenix model was interesting and that its emphasis on “the educator as facilitator” rather than a teacher was clearly proving popular with a certain profile of learner. However, it could not be assumed that this was automatically suitable for other cultural contexts where the educational traditions were markedly different. One reason why IT has not been embraced easily by South Asian countries is precisely because the "facilitator" method cannot easily be replicated in a system where the student is used to receiving “spoon fed” information and is then expected to learn and regurgitate facts. As students have not fully adapted to this new style of distance teaching, consortia between Thai and certain universities in the USA (for example, the National University of Technology/Stanford linkage) have not been wholly successful.

Another associated factor is that, in many instances, proficiency in the English language is not strong enough for students to gain a proper understanding of course material taught by the e-learning approach. Often, the course content was not self-
explanatory and, although on-line help was available, it was not always adequate to resolve students’ problems. Furthermore, live lectures from the USA had also proved to be a difficulty as computer screen technology is still not of a sufficiently good quality for students to thoroughly absorb the lesson. Because of these numerous problems related to the basic understanding the educational material, Thailand remains very cautious about accrediting overseas courses and, up to now, not a single private distance learning course has yet been accredited by the Thai Ministry of Education. In this speaker’s view, the accreditation of overseas courses and the assurance of their quality standards constitute a key issue to be faced by governments and educators alike in the future and the complexity of these issues cannot be underestimated.

Another important area mentioned was lifelong learning and the updating of skills to remain competitive and to cope with innovation in a rapidly changing world. This point was clearly illustrated during the Asian economic crisis when many highly skilled individuals tried to turn to the other sectors for employment only to find either that their training had become obsolete or that they did not possess the ability to adapt their qualifications to new work environments.

Adriana Padovan, Vice President of the European Law Students Association, gave her view on IT from a student perspective. Ms Provan believed that generally students enjoy using IT because it saves time, effort and sometimes money. Nevertheless students do not think that technology will ever replace the role of a higher institute of learning. This is because students benefit socially from campus life and interaction with other learners, as it is part of their socialization and maturation processes. These types of interaction are important in shaping the individuals thoughts, character, and critical thought processes. She also noted that IT could never have the same impact as a well delivered lecture, which inspires and opens a forum for debate. As an example she cited the presentation of Mr. Muller where IT was used exclusively as a tool for delivery.

Jaime Lavados Montes, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Chili to UNESCO emphasized that personal experiences constitute an important element in the learning process. Such experiences would be difficult to assimilate through an on-line system of education. Moreover, he pointed out that totally virtual institutions (such as the University of Phoenix Online) are not the only option available. Many dual mode systems and institutions are already in place in numerous contexts. Ultimately the choice of system used for delivery will be governed by three main factors: the subjects offered, the technical expertise available, and by public demand.

• **Special Presentation: The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)**

Rudolf Adlung,
Trade in Services Division, The World Trade Organization
The purpose of this presentation was to explain structure and operation of the General Agreement on Trade in Services, under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and its relevance for education services.

The GATS entered into force in January 1995. While allowing for a significant degree of country- and sector-specific variation, it applies to all WTO Member economies, some 140 at present. The creation of the Agreement was motivated by the increasingly important role of services in international trade, owing to structural changes in supply and demand, policy reforms in many countries, and the advent of new information technologies. The banking and telecommunications sectors are prime examples of services which, owing to these factors, have become dramatically more "tradable" over the last decade.

The GATS applies in principle to all services, except those provided in the exercise of governmental authority. Such "governmental services" are further defined in the Agreement to include all services that are provided neither on a commercial basis nor in competition with one or more suppliers. Typical examples are police and fire protection services as well as the provision of health care or education at non-market conditions. The co-existence of such facilities with private entities in the same sector would not affect their exemption from GATS. Also, the commercial/institutional status of the relevant bodies (e.g. public sector agencies or publicly-funded private entities) would not be relevant; what matters are the conditions under which they supply their services to the ultimate user.

Apart from these few exceptions, the GATS imposes some basic, horizontal obligations on all government measures affecting trade in services. These obligations include in particular most-favored-nation (MFN) treatment, which is tantamount to a prohibition on Members to discriminate on nationality grounds between foreign suppliers of like services. Although there is no requirement to provide for market access and/or national treatment in any individual service sector, a Member government must extend any restriction or benefit that is used vis-à-vis one foreign supplier to all other foreigners that may want to operate in that sector. Thus, while the Agreement would not prevent a Member from reserving access to a services market to nationally-owned suppliers, or to limit subsidies and other trade benefits to such suppliers, the Member is obliged to treat all foreigners on a par. Exemptions from the MFN requirement could have been sought at the date of entry into force of the Agreement; their duration is limited to ten years in principle.

All WTO Members are required to submit a schedule of specific commitments under the GATS, which lays down market access and national treatment obligations in the sectors explicitly listed. (The GATS' concept of market access relates to the absence of quota-related barriers and some other specified restrictions, while the national treatment definition captures any discrimination, de facto, between foreign and domestic services and service suppliers.) Such specific commitments have a potentially wider policy impact than tariff concessions in the area of goods as they may cover four modes of supply. Apart from traditional cross-border trade, these are consumption of services abroad, the commercial presence of foreign companies and the presence of foreign natural persons as service suppliers in a Member's territory. Examples in education
services are distance learning programmes offered by foreign-based institutions (cross-border trade/mode 1), students attending universities abroad (mode 2), cross-border branching of foreign universities (mode 3), and courses taught by foreign teachers (mode 4).

The policy implications associated with the Agreement's broad modal coverage are counterbalanced by a high degree of scheduling flexibility. The GATS neither prescribes a minimum content of country schedules, in terms of sectors included, nor are Members required in any listed sector to grant full market access and national treatment across the four modes. Commitments have frequently been qualified by mode-specific limitations, in particular for mode 4, or else individual modes have been fully excluded from coverage. Within the same schedule, these limitations and exclusions may vary widely from sector to sector, reflecting the relevant Member's national policy objectives and constraints. A relatively frequent limitation, relating to national treatment, provides for the exclusion of foreigners from domestic subsidy programmes.

Among the large services areas, education has drawn the lowest number of specific commitments to date. About two-thirds of WTO Members have not scheduled any segment of the sector. The European Community is among those relatively few Members that, while explicitly confining its commitments to "privately funded education services", guarantees relatively liberal market access and national treatment conditions for all major sub-sectors (primary, secondary, higher and adult education services). Barring some exceptions for France, Italy, Greece and Spain, the EC schedule provides for unimpeded cross-border trade, consumption abroad and commercial presence in these areas. All country schedules, as well as additional GATS-related information, are accessible via the WTO website (www.wto.org).

Specific commitments, including any relevant limitations and exclusions, apply in principle for an indefinite period. However, they do not constitute a straitjacket. The Agreement provides for certain exception clauses - for example for health and security reasons, and it allows Member to downgrade, against compensation, any existing commitment.

The new round of services negotiations formally began in February 2000. It provides an opportunity for broad-based improvements in current country schedules. Although the negotiating Guidelines and Procedures have not yet been finally established, the relevant GATS Articles – referring inter alia to the concept of progressive liberalization – already contain important benchmarks. Given the flexibility of the Agreement, it is impossible to predict, however, what new commitments, if any, will be negotiated by Members that have not currently undertaken broad and/or deep commitments in individual services. It is for each government to balance the advantages associated with specific commitments – in terms of improved inflows of foreign capital, skills and expertise – with any attendant losses in policy discretion.

Whatever the outcome of the new round, it will not affect governments' ability to maintain or introduce domestic regulation for quality and similar purposes. The
Agreement protects Members' sovereign right to operate technical standards as well as licensing, qualification or certification requirements for services and service suppliers.


**Komlavi Seddoh, Director of the Division of Higher Education at UNESCO,** explained the WCHE Follow-up Strategy. He encouraged NGOs to work in partnership with UNESCO in this field and stressed that their ongoing input is essential to the success of the World Conference. He gave a short report on the meeting of Higher Education Partners held on 14 June 2000 and summarized the projects, which have been undertaken in co-operation with IGOs and NGOs and by the various regional committees. Excellent collaboration has been established in numerous areas and with a wide range of partners. The report of the 14 June meeting, distributed at the 7th NGO Consultation, contains full details of this co-operative action.

**Josep Maria Vilalta from the Universidad Politécnica de Cataluña** gave a presentation of the work carried out by this institution as part of the WCHE Follow-up. Special focus has been given to studies and seminars on university management, assessment and research. In these areas, consulting activities have been undertaken. The Universidad Politécnica de Cataluña, with the support of UNESCO and the United Nations University, has developed the Global University Innovation Network known as GUINI. This is intended to function as a forum for international debate, to act as an agent of innovation in higher education, and to offer an Internet service to all the organizations interested in university policy and management. Its main purpose, however, is to help monitor the application of the Declaration and Framework for Priority Action adopted by the World Conference on Higher Education.

**Ahmadou Lamine Ndiaye, Senegal,** presented his report on the African Regional Committee for the WCHE Follow-up. One principal objective expressed during the course of his presentation was the real need in African universities for strengthened staff development so that professors and lecturers would teach better.

He also emphasized the importance of distance education and of the promotion of cultural exchanges between French and English speaking countries. Other topics addressed included the participation of women in higher education, the role of universities as “forecasting” institutions, the development of centres of excellence, the need for a student forum in Africa, and a call for adequate funding to help the African Committee implement the WCHE objectives.

**Marja Karjalainen of the Socrates-Erasmus Office of the European Commission** spoke about changing the landscape of European higher education by concentrating on mass student mobility and changing degree structures. The Erasmus programme now covers 29 countries and 100 000 students and thus gives an institutional basis for student mobility and degree recognition. Erasmus requires that universities recognize
a European policy statement on mobility and the ECTS (the European credit transfer system). Also, they should promote joint curriculum development and intensive programmes, which can be thematic in nature.

This speaker also discussed the Bologna Declaration which aims to create a coherent status for European higher education through the design of common degree structures, quality assurance procedures, and the removal of barriers to mobility in the region.

Positive aspects of lifelong e-learning, including its importance for active citizenship, social inclusion, employability, and personal fulfillment were also covered.

General remarks

To conclude the session, various NGOs (JECI/IYCS, IFMSA, OUI, IAUPL, IFSA, AAU, PRELUDE, AEGEE, and CRE) presented reports on their organizations' particular progress with regard to the WCHE Follow-up Strategy, which gave their perspective of the current status quo. Some of the highlights from their various presentations are outlined below:

- **JECI/IYCS** discussed an information and communication technology training programme, which has been developed in order to foster peace in the Middle East.

- **IFMSA** has held a workshop on lifelong learning in the field of medical science, has increased student representation in the decision-making bodies of medical faculties, and has started to look at the evaluation of the medical education system. It also plans to organize a workshop on the role of new technologies in the future of medical education.

- **IOHE** presented a report on the interdisciplinary use of new technologies and on the role of women in higher education.

- **IAUPL** has conducted a seminar on conditions and evolution of teachers and professors in universities. Such topics as the globalization of higher education, Internet use, virtual delivery, curriculum reform, teacher evaluation, and the 1996 UNESCO “Recommendation on the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel” were discussed at this seminar.

- **IFSA** has been concerned with improving education and higher education in the field of forestry. It has held a number of meetings with the focus on distance learning and creating links to the world of work.

- **AAU** has collected data and performed studies on private universities in Africa, conducted a study on ‘Variants of University Education Provisions in Commonwealth Africa” and has developed a database on African theses and dissertations. In order to foster the development of African higher education, 23 grants have been awarded to researchers. AAU is also currently undertaking three projects:
developing Quality Assurance Systems in African universities, an AAU/FAWE gender project, and another which is addressing the roles of IT in African universities.

- **PRELUDE** has conducted two international meetings looking at the development of higher education in Greece and Viet Nam, and a seminar on Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development in the Western Mediterranean.

- **AEGEE** has been concerned with developing programmes and improving relations with European institutions, and has collaborated with Socrates to hold three regional seminars linked to mobility issues.

- **CRE** has been holding seminars, site visits, meetings and conferences which have focussed on improving quality in higher education, institutional evaluation and examining the impact of IT on university management and teaching.

- **Plenary 4 – Presentation of the study "Accountability and International Co-operation in the Renewal of Higher Education"**

This session opened with a presentation by David Provan (ACU/CHEMS) of the study on Accountability and International Co-operation in the Renewal of Higher Education. This had been commissioned after the WCHE by UNESCO to the Commonwealth Higher Education Management Service in order to assemble current indicators in use from a wide variety of sources including the UNDP, UNESCO's Statistics Institute, UN agencies, the World Bank, the OECD and diverse national and institutional systems. The purpose was to provide Member States and other stakeholders with concrete tools to measure their implementation of the key principles contained in the WCHE Declaration and Framework for Priority Action.

Mr Provan recalled the aims of the project and described how performance indicators were defined in terms of the measurement of goals and objectives. He insisted on the initial nature of the study which collected indicators currently available and then recommended those which should be created. A number of obstacles preventing efficient collection include the lack of statistical capacity and the need for government criteria to assess the effectiveness of new policies.

Future development should include more regular consultation and feed back, wider use of current indicators, the best design for national surveys and the formulation of new instruments.

**Arnold Mitchem, president of the Council for Equal Opportunity in Education**, commented on efforts sponsored by his organization and by the European Access Network (EAN) which, together, constitute a forum for access to education at all levels. Current projects include an initiative involving twelve francophone countries and a mobility programme for the disadvantaged. The speaker considered that success stories should be widely disseminated via websites and that more vigorous efforts are needed to increase funding for access projects.
Jan Sadlak, Director of UNESCO’s European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES, Bucharest), described the next phase of the study on Indicators. This would involve the comparison of collected data, which is a complex process given the material at hand. Furthermore, the rapid advent of IT meant that new and relevant indicators need to be defined. Thanks to Japanese funding, the project would continue with seminars in 2001 and 2002. Analysis would cover League Tables and their methodology as well as established journals and references. As results were obtained, these would be posted on Internet for wide consultation and comment.

Budi Tjahjono, International Movement of Catholic Students, insisted on the urgency for tools to assess the growing wealth/poverty gap and to take account of national realities. Indicators must demonstrate that higher education is serving society through its public service. For instance, the occurrence of public debate is proof that serious national or local reflection is taking place.

A number of participants contributed comments, which endorsed the need to devise more clear and reliable instruments to evaluate the implementation of the WCHE principles. These views reiterated that sustainable human development must and can be assessed and that UNESCO is the agency best placed to carry out this task.
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