REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON UNESCO’s ACTIVITIES IN SUDAN

SUMMARY

As a follow-up to 33 C/Resolution 66, the Director-General presents to the Executive Board this report summarizing progress achieved since the 33rd session of the General Conference in implementing assistance for the reconstruction and reconciliation in Sudan, as part of the United Nations joint efforts, and requests the Executive Board’s authorization for the establishment of a UNESCO National Office in Sudan, with main premises in Khartoum and an antenna in Juba.

Decision proposed: paragraph 22.
INTRODUCTION

1. In 33 C/Resolution 66 “Strengthening of cooperation with the Republic of the Sudan”, the General Conference called for intensified efforts by UNESCO in support of national reconciliation, reconstruction and development in Sudan, following the signing of a Consolidated Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005. In particular, the General Conference invited the Director-General “…to take the appropriate measures to reinforce cooperation with Sudan during the phase of peace-building and rehabilitation, including the mobilization of budgetary and extrabudgetary resources, as well as the strengthening of UNESCO’s presence in Sudan”.

2. The present document reports on progress achieved in implementing the provisions of 33 C/Res.66 since the 33rd session of the General Conference (Autumn 2005). Part I of the document provides information on the progressive reinforcement of assistance extended to Sudan in the new context created by the CPA, notably through the UNESCO antenna set up with premises in Khartoum and Juba, as the Director-General informed the Executive Board at its 174th session (174 EX/INF.8, para. 42).

3. Mindful of the magnitude of needs which are to be addressed to assist the Sudanese authorities and people in ongoing reconciliation and reconstruction efforts, and encouraged by the positive achievements reached by the Organization in Sudan so far, the Director-General proposes the establishment of a UNESCO National Office in Sudan. This proposal reflects the Organization’s commitment to fully assist Sudan during its post-conflict transitional period and to contribute to the overall joint United Nations efforts to this effect. It is in line with UNESCO’s decentralization strategy, which beyond the two-tier system of cluster and regional offices, supports on an exceptional basis country-level presence, in the form of national offices in countries with specific needs: E-9 countries, countries in post-conflict situations and in transition. Underpinning this proposal, Part II of the document suggests a series of strategic orientations for assistance in UNESCO fields of competence, within the framework of the overall United Nations response to Sudan during the post-CPA six year interim period.

CONTEXT

4. On 9 January 2005, the Government of the Republic of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), formally ending Africa's longest civil conflict. The CPA is a framework and basis for power sharing, wealth sharing, and regional security in Sudan. It envisions an interim “one State, two systems” arrangement until 2011, when the Southern Sudanese population will vote on whether to remain unified with the North. The “one State, two systems” is based on the creation of a largely autonomous government for Southern Sudan (Government of Southern Sudan – “GoSS”), as well as a share for Southern Sudan representation in a Government of National Unity (GoNU). Since the signing of the CPA, both the GoNU and the GoSS were established. In March 2005, the Sudanese authorities issued a Framework for Sustained Peace, Development and Poverty Reduction, which presented recovery and development requirements for Sudan for the six-year interim period with a focus on the critical first two years (2005-2007). For the initial two-years period, recovery needs amount to $7.8 billion, of which $2.55 billion was requested from the international community. The framework was the outcome of the Joint United Nations/WB Assessment Mission (“JAM”), which had been carried out in close consultation with the Sudanese authorities and the international community. In April 2005, at the Oslo Donor Conference on Sudan, the international community expressed its commitment to the implementation of the CPA, by pledging more than $4.5 billion for 2005-2007 (out of a total need of $4.1 billion). At least $2 billion was reported as development assistance in response to the needs documented in the JAM report. In July 2005, Sudan’s National Assembly approved the
Sudan Interim Constitution. Subsequently, in December 2005, the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan was approved by the Legislative Assembly of Southern Sudan.

5. Among the key challenges of UNESCO in supporting Sudan’s efforts towards national reconciliation and reconstruction is its capacity to contribute to addressing the root causes of the conflict and reshaping the future of the country in line with the CPA, which calls for political inclusiveness, development opportunities throughout the country, as well as the promotion of human rights, governance and intercultural dialogue. For many years, development in Sudan has been highly uneven, with extreme disparities along regional, subregional, rural-urban, and gender lines. Moreover, basic social services, infrastructure and institutional capacities including in the field of education are inadequate, especially in Southern Sudan which was badly affected by the conflict. These challenges, as well as the following milestones of the immediate post-CPA interim period framed the debates at the 33rd session the General Conference on Sudan and constitute the context of UNESCO’s action in the country.

PART I – PROGRESSIVE STRENGTHENING OF UNESCO ACTION IN SUDAN

6. Prior to the signing of the Consolidated Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005, education, culture and science were the main areas of assistance to Sudan. In the field of education, UNESCO had, since 1995, assisted the Sudanese authorities in educational planning. A Master Plan for Basic Education in Sudan was devised, involving authorities from the North and the SPLM. Moreover, several UNESCO Chairs had been established to enhance, in particular, scientific higher education, research and networking. In the field of culture, focus was on the protection and promotion of the country’s movable and immovable cultural heritage. In 2003, Gebel Barkal and the sites of the Napatan Region became the first World Heritage site within Sudan. New impetus was given to the cooperation between Sudan and UNESCO following the Director-General’s official visit to the country in December 2003, notably through the launch of the first phase of an assistance project on “Building capacity to deliver quality education for all: a train-the-trainer programme for delivering in-service education for basic education teachers in Sudan” under Japanese Funds-in-Trust ($226,000).

7. In 2004 and early 2005, UNESCO cooperated in the preparation of the Joint United Nations/WB Assessment Mission (JAM) for reconstruction and development in Sudan (cf. para. 4 above). The Education Sector actively participated with the World Bank and UNICEF in the preparation of the cluster report on basic social services, where education was a substantial component. Communication, media development and needs in the field of culture were specifically addressed in the cluster on governance, rule of law and media. The Culture, and Communication and Information Sectors provided inputs respectively on cultural diversity and media development, for the preparation of this cluster report.

8. After the signing of the CPA, the Director-General reiterated the Organization’s commitment to support reconciliation, reconstruction and development efforts in Sudan, as part of the overall United Nations response in the country. Given the amount of operational efforts and following consultations with the Sudanese authorities, he decided to establish a temporary country-presence in the form of a UNESCO Antenna in Sudan with main premises in Khartoum and an outpost in Juba (Southern Sudan). The establishment of a separate presence in Juba is in line with overall United Nations policy of balanced representation respectively in Khartoum and Southern Sudan. It acknowledges and responds to the large autonomy granted to the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) by the CPA, which inter alia empowers the GoSS to receive international aid from donors. The Director-General also established an internal Working Group for Reconstruction and Reconciliation in Sudan, comprising the Organization’s senior management and currently chaired
by the Assistant Director-General for Africa. The role of the Working Group is to give substantive impetus and ensure overall coordination of the Organization’s activities in Sudan.

9. In parallel, within Sudan, UNESCO actively engaged in efforts led by the Special-Representative of the Secretary-General and conducted by the United Nations Country Team aimed at joint country-level programming. The objective was to prepare an integrated humanitarian, recovery and development United Nations 2006 Workplan for Sudan designed to help the country to begin to achieve sustained reconstruction and development and deepen the peace process. In order to respond to Sudan's diverse geographical needs, the 2006 Workplan employed a combination of regional and sectoral approaches in eight different regions (Southern Sudan, Darfur, Abyei, Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile, Eastern Sudan, Khartoum and other Northern States). For each of these regions the Workplan articulated a sectoral strategy, as well as specific projects developed to reach sectoral objectives. The Workplan also included projects with country-wide scope.

10. UNESCO’s participation in the United Nations 2006 Workplan preparation process resulted in the definition of a selective number of priority areas of clear added-value for early assistance by the Organization in the field of education, communication and culture. Priority areas of assistance were identified and agreed upon with Sudanese authorities (GoNU and GoSS), following a series of missions by programme specialists respectively from ED, CLT and CI in Autumn 2005. Given the nature of the assistance – primarily up-stream technical assistance and policy advice, as well as institutional and professional capacity-building – and because of the limited presence of UNESCO within Sudan, all projects proposed within the United Nations 2006 Workplan were of a nation-wide scope. The UNESCO projects concentrate on the following priorities:

**Education**

- Development and expansion of flexible, alternative learning/training opportunities for adults and adolescents;
- Reinforcement of the efficiency, performance and management of basic education;
- Curriculum reform and development and teacher training and the didactic of discipline.

**Culture**

- Strengthening respect for cultural diversity towards intercultural dialogue and reconciliation.

**Communication**

- Development of a regulatory framework for Sudanese media;
- Capacity-building for the Sudanese media;
- Development of civic and social education through community media programming.

The United Nations 2006 Workplan for Sudan was released to donors in late November 2005.

11. In order to further secure close consultation and ownership by Sudanese authorities and stakeholders of UNESCO assistance to Sudan, a National Workshop on the UNESCO Contribution to Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development was organized from 14-16 March 2006 in Khartoum, in cooperation with the Sudanese National Commission for UNESCO. The objective was to reinforce stakeholders’ awareness on UNESCO fields of
competence and priority areas of assistance in Sudan; to strengthen dialogue, networking and partnership with United Nations agencies, donors, NGOs and professional organizations, and to discuss concrete cooperation opportunities. The meeting was opened in the presence of H. E. Mohamed Ibrahim Hamed, Minister of Education of the GoNU. Workshop discussions were structured around the Organization’s sectoral fields of competence with, as an overarching theme, peace-building and reconciliation. The workshop resulted in a series of recommendations on the needs, priorities and modalities of action for future action by UNESCO and its partners.

12. Progressively, UNESCO became increasingly involved in emerging aid coordination mechanisms established by the Sudanese authorities in cooperation with the donor community and United Nations agencies. Both in Khartoum and in Juba, the UNESCO Antenna is respectively assisting the GoNU and the GoSS in the preparation of their national budget for 2007-2008, in the fields of education, culture and communication.

13. As per July 2006, and in the context of the above-mentioned United Nations Workplan projects, several operational activities were completed and/or ongoing. In view of the primarily up-stream nature of UNESCO’s assistance, emphasis at this early stage of the reconstruction process was put on in-depth analysis of the situation on the ground and of existing legal and policy frameworks, with a view to formulating larger-scale advisory and capacity-building projects. In addition, special attention was given to high-visibility events mobilizing the authorities, civil society partners and local communities around key UNESCO messages and standards, such as education for all, freedom of expression and cultural diversity. The UNESCO Antenna in Sudan thus catalysed and contributed to the celebration of this year’s World Press Freedom Day (3 May), World Day of Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (21 May) and the EFA week in Sudan.

14. In the field of education, several studies were launched with a view to contributing to a comprehensive sector-wide analysis. A field study on alternative learning opportunities and language policy is being conducted nationally and in Southern Sudan. This survey will notably feed into the launching in Sudan of a LIFE – literacy for empowerment – initiative. Two LIFE workshops, one in Khartoum and one in Juba, are scheduled to take place in the late summer. In preparation for the launching of a LIFE initiative in Sudan, UNESCO in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) in Southern Sudan, also started a pilot programme for intensive functional literacy development (IFLD), a programme that gives literacy skills in 48 days. The two-month initial phase conducted by UNESCO started in July 2006 and will be followed by a second phase implemented directly by the Ministry. Six hundred persons in all will be trained in the IFLD methodology.

15. With a view to reinforcing the efficiency, performance and management of basic education in Sudan, a series of studies were coordinated by the Antenna in cooperation with the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), including a comprehensive system needs assessment and analysis and a study on micro-planning, decentralization and local governance in the education system. Moreover, educational planners from the Federal Ministry of education and from the MoEST in Southern Sudan benefited from a specialized training in educational planning techniques, organized by IIEP in Paris (June 2006). Finally, discussions were under way with the European Commission and UNICEF regarding a partnership to develop an educational management information system (EMIS).

16. In the field of culture, an expert meeting on the identification of the intangible cultural heritage of Sudan (Khartoum, 21-22 March 2006) paved the way for concerted action for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage in Sudan. The meeting brought together the Sudanese authorities, leaders and representatives of local communities from different regions in the
country, as well as national and international NGOs and cultural experts. The meeting served to build a common understanding of ways to identify, document and safeguard intangible cultural heritage in Sudan and recommended a set of priority actions in this regard. A second important initiative was the realization of a Feasibility study for the establishment of a cultural centre in Southern Sudan. The study analysed opportunities for innovative institutional strengthening in the field of culture in Southern Sudan and recommended a community-based focus allowing for intercultural dialogue initiatives. The study will serve as a basis for cultural policy discussions with stakeholders in Southern Sudan. A contribution of $477,692 granted by Norway in June 2006 towards “Enhancing protection of cultural diversity in Sudan” will allow for further assistance in promoting awareness and respect for the country’s rich cultural diversity towards intercultural dialogue and reconciliation.

17. Acknowledging the positive combined role that culture and the media can play in fostering intercultural understanding, UNESCO in cooperation with the BBC World Trust Fund, organized a training workshop on cultural diversity and the CPA for broadcasters (Juba, 18-28 March 2006). The training served notably to identify human resources for the possible future setting-up of a network of community-based production of media programmes to facilitate intercultural dialogue.

18. In support to the implementation of the CPA commitment to press freedom, UNESCO facilitated a national dialogue involving authorities, Sudanese media organizations, NGOs, UNDP and the United Nations Assistance Mission to Sudan (UNMIS), through the organization of round tables in Khartoum and Juba on the development of media policy frameworks both nationally and for Southern Sudan. The round table in Juba resulted in an agreement on a draft regulatory framework for Southern Sudan, which is shortly to be submitted to the Legislative Assembly. UNESCO also initiated a small-scale capacity-building initiative for media professionals in the form of a training programme for newspaper managers and a workshop on media association building.

PART II – TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL OFFICE IN SUDAN

19. In light of the above, the Director-General believes that the specific context created by the post-CPA interim period in Sudan justifies the consolidation of the Organization’s presence in the country, by replacing the existing Antenna with a fully fledged National Office. Indeed, a permanent country presence is considered crucial for the Organization to firm up its contribution within its fields of competence, to the extensive challenges of the reconstruction and reconciliation process initiated by the CPA.

- Firstly, the CPA implementation is largely a country-led process. For any partner to assist and advise the Sudanese authorities in this process, its permanent day-to-day basis presence in the country is required. During their recent visits to Headquarters, H.E. Mr L. Akol, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the GoNU as well as H. E. Mr Hamed, Minister of Education of the GoNU and H. E. Mr Mr Huseein, Minister of Education, Science and Technology of the GoSS expressed their expectation of such assistance from UNESCO;

- Secondly, a large volume of assistance is to be expected during a relatively short period of time – the six-year interim period. Many challenges are connected with the delivery of assistance given the country’s size and diversity, its administrative, highly decentralized system of government, as well as issues of security and access. For UNESCO to contribute efficiently to deliver assistance, an in-country operational capacity is imperative;
• Thirdly, in Sudan, the United Nations is planning and monitoring its response in an integrated manner. This process is, again, country-led and carried out by the United Nations Country Team for Sudan, under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. As part of the overall United Nations response in Sudan, UNESCO efforts must be undertaken in the context of the United Nations joint planning and programming processes.

20. Building on early achievements, future activities by the Organization will progressively shift from the initial focus on assessments towards capacity-building and policy advice. Seed-funding will be provided for initial activities and will be expected to generate extrabudgetary funding for larger scale projects. Assistance will continue to be framed within the overall United Nations response to reconstruction and reconciliation efforts in Sudan. During the interim period, UNESCO will aim at promoting peace in Sudan through the fostering of an open and pluralistic society, along the following strategic orientations:

• Firstly, the strengthening of institutions of the GoNU and GoSS to enable them to better deliver services within UNESCO fields of competence – UNESCO will provide advice and capacity-building to line ministries, at the level of the GoNU, the GoSS and the country’s 25 States. Such assistance will aim at facilitating policy and legal reform to achieve: (i) greater equity in the Sudanese society; (ii) harmonization with current international standards within UNESCO fields of competence; (iii) an environment conducive to good governance, the respect of cultural diversity and democratic principles. Given its inter-sectoral mandate, UNESCO is well placed to facilitate inter-ministerial cooperation on cross-cutting issues, such as HIV/AIDS prevention and youth empowerment;

• Secondly, direct support to community reconciliation and reintegration through educational, cultural and media empowerment, directed at key groups to achieve peace and a stable society, such as internally displaced persons/returnees, women, youth, orphans. Through educational, cultural and media empowerment, UNESCO will aim at strengthening self-respect and confidence within and among communities affected by the conflict. Activities will seek to build mutual understanding, tolerance and respect. Focus will be on developing innovative good practices in this field, through selected pilot projects in areas such as: (i) the expansion and creation of alternative learning opportunities; (ii) intercultural dialogue for the safeguarding of cultural heritage and the development of living cultures; (iii) the use of pluralistic media to promote values of peace at the community level; (iv) peaceful management of natural resources;

• Thirdly, facilitating access to the global knowledge society for professional communities (academia, scientists, culture and media professionals, etc.) for which UNESCO bears special responsibility. During the conflict, professional communities suffered from physical isolation and limited access to global knowledge. UNESCO will support technical and managerial capacity-building of professional and research institutions within its fields of competence in Sudan and facilitate national and international networking to promote scientific partnerships.

21. UNESCO action will continue to focus on recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation as the Organization is not a humanitarian agency per se. However, given the highly dynamic nature of the situation in Sudan, flexibility and adaptability will be key so that the Organization can meet new emerging needs. In this context, UNESCO has been called upon to participate in the up-coming Darfur Joint United Nations/WB/AFDB Assessment Mission (D-JAM) following the partial signing of a Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) on 5 May 2006. The D-JAM is comprised of two parallel and coordinated tracks: a first track concentrating on the identification of urgent needs for returning populations covering a period of 18-24 months, and a second track focused on identifying
longer-term recovery, reconstruction and development needs. UNESCO’s participation in the D-JAM will focus on this second track.

Proposed draft decision

22. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

   The Executive Board,

1. **Recalling 33 C/Resolution 66,**

2. **Having examined** document 175 EX/25,

3. **Mindful** of the responsibilities entrusted to UNESCO in its fields of competence, within the United Nations’ integrated response and joint Workplan for the reconstruction of, and national reconciliation in Sudan,

4. **Emphasizing** the need to reinforce UNESCO’s activities in all its fields of competence so as to provide full support to the Sudanese authorities in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA),

5. **Expresses appreciation** for the initiatives taken by the Director-General and the initial results achieved in implementing educational, cultural and media activities;

6. **Invites** the Director-General to further strengthen the assistance of UNESCO to Sudan, particularly by building capacities in all parts of the country, and to further mobilize extrabudgetary contributions to this effect;

7. **Requests** the Director-General to give full support to the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan in their implementation of educational, cultural, scientific and media reform, in line with the provisions of the CPA;

8. **Authorizes** the Director-General to establish a UNESCO National Office in Sudan, with main premises in Khartoum and an antenna in Juba (Southern Sudan);

9. **Calls upon** Member States to provide extrabudgetary resources, for the Organization to upscale its assistance to reconstruction and reconciliation in Sudan.