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AN OVERVIEW OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

I. Introduction

1. The decision of the 176th session of the Executive Board on the Report by the Director-General on the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Overall Review Committee for Major Programmes II and III (176 EX/Decision 7) requested the Director-General *inter alia* to take appropriate steps in order to allow for informed decision-making regarding UNESCO's core functions and competencies in the field of science.

2. In response to this request, and in order to facilitate the examination of the Implementation Plan for the Sciences proposed by the Director-General, the present document provides a short overview of United Nations programmes and initiatives in the natural, social and human sciences with special attention to fresh water, ocean, energy, the ethics of science and technology and human rights.

3. Science and technology (S&T) related programmes and activities are distributed widely within the United Nations system and reflect the complexity and diversity of its numerous bodies. These include:

- organizations which report directly to the General Assembly and whose governing bodies are subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly, i.e. the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT);
- intergovernmental functional commissions, i.e. the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) and the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), which report to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC);
- specialized agencies established by governments under their own treaty or convention with independent governing bodies and secretariats, i.e. UNESCO, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO);
- international financial institutions established under their own protocol or convention with their own governing bodies, i.e. the World Bank¹ and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), established to finance the 1992 global environmental conventions and protocols and implemented through a partnership between UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank; and

¹ The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA).

- educational and training entities, i.e. the United Nations University (UNU) and the United Nations Institute for Research and Training (UNITAR).

4. Activities include high-level scientific advice; assessment and monitoring; promoting norms and standard setting; research and development; technical assistance and technology transfer; education and research training; capacity-building in-country; S&T diplomacy and “flagship reporting”, i.e. the United Nations Environment Programme’s Global Environmental Outlook and the United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Reports.

5. While many United Nations programmes and activities related to S&T appear similar, they reflect the specific mandates of each organization and substantial differences in budgetary resources. Vast efforts and resources are being devoted to environmental assessments, water management and land-use planning, biodiversity conservation, monitoring climate change, promoting renewable energy resources and energy conservation. Many of these programmes are technical assistance in nature or form part of large United Nations-wide or international global monitoring consortia. A small number of organizations conduct research in-house related to their specific mandates.

6. UNESCO plays a major role in the United Nations system in:

- ocean sciences, ocean services and ocean observations, through the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC);
- freshwater research and education, through the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) and the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education; and
- ethics of science and technology.

7. Relatively little activity takes place within the United Nations system in the areas listed below. While UNESCO’s current science portfolio does address them to a certain extent, as is outlined in the text of this report, the Overall Review Committee for Major Programmes II (Natural sciences) and III (Social and human sciences) called for the significant strengthening of UNESCO’s efforts in these areas:

- programmes addressing research in the basic and engineering sciences;
- regional and country-specific science policy advice, including how to improve S&T advisory mechanisms in governments and how to integrate research and education in national planning;
- promotion of science education at the primary level, including teacher training;
- building scientific research capacities at the university level, both in the basic and engineering sciences;
- support of activities linking science, education and culture;
- programmes at all levels of the population aimed at public understanding of science;
- networks for centres of research excellence in developing countries; and
- support of activities incorporating the natural sciences with social and human sciences.

II. The natural sciences

8. The **Commission on Science and Technology Development (CSTD)** and the **Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)** provide policy advice through the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). During 2006-2007, the CSTD examined the theme “Promoting the building of a people-centred, development-oriented and inclusive information society”. The CSD’s thematic cluster for 2006-2007 is “Energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution and climate change”. The United Nations Secretariat’s Division of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) provides the Secretariat for the CSD.

9. The **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**, in addition to providing the Secretariat for the CSTD and UN-Biotech (the United Nations-wide coordinating mechanism for biotechnology-related activities), carries out S&T policy activities, particularly in the area of technology transfer. It has completed three national S&T reviews for Colombia, Jamaica and Iran. In 2005, UNCTAD launched a Network of Centres of Excellence Programme, which sponsors training courses in biotechnologies and information and communications technologies involving several international partnerships.

10. There are numerous United Nations-wide programmes and initiatives, as well as multilateral S&T-related activities with major United Nations involvement. United Nations-wide coordinating mechanisms include UN-Water, UN-Energy, UN-Oceans and UN-Biotech. Examples of other activities with major United Nations involvement include: the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment (GPA), the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Protection (GESAMP), the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS), the Integrated Global Observation Strategy (IGOS), the World Climate Programme (WCP) and the Land Degradation in Drylands project (LADA). The Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) provides the ocean component observations of the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) and is led by UNESCO through the IOC. The intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations (GEO), created in 2003 outside the United Nations system, is leading a worldwide effort to build a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) over the next 10 years. GEO has its own Secretariat hosted by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in Geneva, Switzerland, and cooperates closely with the earth observations programmes of the United Nations.

11. **UNESCO** is the only United Nations organization with a specific mandate for science. Its Natural Sciences Sector (SC) hosts a number of key international and intergovernmental programmes and bodies, including the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP), the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), and the International Basic Sciences Programme (IBSP), which supports centres of excellence in developing countries. UNESCO also carries out other capacity-building programmes in space education, basic sciences and engineering, renewable energy and natural disaster mitigation. The Open Initiative on Use of Space Technologies to Monitor Natural and Cultural Heritage of UNESCO sites, a collaboration launched with the European Space Agency, now involves numerous international partners. Another important role for UNESCO is the provision of advice to developing countries on the formulation of national policies for science, technology and innovation. Scientific activities are also carried out through UNESCO’s regional bureaux and field offices. Two of UNESCO’s category 1 institutes and centres are science related: the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education in Delft, Netherlands, and the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste, Italy. Fifteen of UNESCO’s category 2 centres are science related, including 12 in the area of water. In addition, science activities are supported through the UNITWIN-UNESCO Chairs Programme.

12. Three key United Nations organizations involved in S&T-related activities are the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, together with their joint fund, the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

13. The **United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP)** priorities are in producing global, regional and national environmental assessments and in providing enhanced coordination with numerous environmental conventions and scientific advisory groups, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In addition to projects funded by GEF, UNEP's science portfolio includes: (1) the Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP), carried out in collaboration with UNESCO; (2) the Globio Programme (Global Methodology for Mapping Human Impacts on the Biosphere); (3) a drylands initiative to build national capacity for monitoring land degradation using science-based tools; (4) support to governments to prepare and implement integrated management of freshwater systems and their related coastal and marine environments; and (5) programmes to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency. UNEP serves as the lead agency for the Global Programme of Action for Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA). UNEP also manages 17 regional seas conventions dealing with the protection and assessment of the quality of the marine environment in coastal and marginal seas.

14. The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **World Bank** are among the largest multilateral sources of funding for economic and social development. UNDP's major focus is on development and in-country technical assistance. UNDP's water programmes deal primarily with water governance, development of waste management systems and providing access to municipal water supplies and sanitation. Its "biodiversity for development" portfolio involves mainstreaming commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) into national governance frameworks and supporting community efforts to conserve biodiversity. UNDP is active in land management programmes, especially drought-related and supports extensive energy-related activities through GEF (in energy efficiency, renewable energies and sustainable transportation).

15. The **World Bank**, with its mission of poverty alleviation and economic development, is by far the largest official source of funding for developing countries. In particular, it is the largest external funding source for education, biodiversity conservation and water supply and sanitation. As one of the implementing agencies for GEF and the Multilateral Fund for the Montreal Protocol (MFMP), the World Bank plays a key role in dealing with threats to the global environment, such as climate change, desertification, biodiversity loss, decline of coral reefs, depletion of the ozone layer and the degradation of international waters. The Bank accounts for nearly 50% of all external financing for water supply and sanitation and funds major programmes in water resources management (coastal and marine management, dams and reservoirs, groundwater, irrigation and drainage). Biodiversity-related activities include establishing and strengthening protected areas, sustainable use of biodiversity outside of protected areas, eradication of alien species and biodiversity conservation through improved management and sustainable use of natural resources in the production landscape. Other activities include the Rural Land Resources Management Programme and the Forestry Programme. Extensive support is provided for renewable energy and energy access, including rural and peri-urban electrification. In the area of climate change, the Bank supports numerous carbon finance initiatives. After the Hyogo Conference on Natural Disasters in 2005, the World Bank established the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, with the purpose of helping to mainstream disaster risk assessment and management into national development plans.

16. The **Global Environment Facility (GEF)** is a financial mechanism structured as a Trust Fund (\$3.3 billion budget for 2006-2010) which operates as a partnership involving UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank. GEF grants support to a wide array of projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters (transboundary water systems), sustainable land management, the ozone layer and persistent organic pollutants (POPs). GEF is the financial mechanism for the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). GEF has played an important catalytic role in developing energy markets in developing countries, particularly through its energy efficiency portfolio.

17. Twelve other United Nations specialized agencies and entities support S&T activities directly related to their more narrow mandates. These are the following.

18. The **Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO)** water, land and plant nutrition programmes provide policy advice and technical assistance related to the sustainable use of water for agriculture (irrigation) and food production. Its International Bioenergy Platform (IBEP) and its participation in the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) promote enhanced access to energy services from sustainable bioenergy systems, especially for rural agro-industries. FAO is the lead agency for the Land Degradation Assessment for Drylands (LADA) project. FAO and IAEA have a joint programme to use nuclear techniques and related biotechnologies for sustainable food security. FAO's Fisheries Division regulates fisheries beyond national jurisdiction (high seas) and maintains a global database of the status of marine fisheries, fish landing and fish products, including the output of fishing and aquaculture activities conducted in waters under national jurisdiction. FAO cooperates with the IOC through the "Codex Alimentarium" programme, where the Harmful Algal Bloom Programmes of IOC provides advice on the management of marine toxins of natural origin that can affect the safety of marine commercial products.

19. The **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** serves as a global focal point for nuclear cooperation and assists Member States in the context of social and economic goals in planning for and using nuclear S&T for various peaceful purposes, including generation of electricity. Its Water Resources Programme carries out research on isotope methodologies for improved water and geothermal resource management. Through its Marine and Terrestrial Environment Programme, IAEA carries out research to understand coastal contamination and serves as a clearing house for information on radioactive contamination in the marine and terrestrial environment. The IAEA Marine Environment Laboratory in Monaco is the only marine laboratory within the United Nations system. In addition to an IAEA-focused core programme, the laboratory responds to regular requests for technical assistance from other United Nations agencies and programmes, e.g. UNEP, IOC (UNESCO), FAO, WHO and WMO. IAEA's Division of Physical and Chemical Sciences carries out other research related to the nuclear sciences. IAEA also develops and transfers energy models tailored particularly to developing countries, in addition to training local experts and providing other technical assistance.

20. The **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** facilitates international cooperation in establishing networks of stations for meteorological and hydrological observations including marine meteorology and promotes the rapid exchange of meteorological information, including education and training programmes. WMO is a major sponsor of the World Climate Research Programme, (WCRP) together with IOC and the International Council for Science (ICSU). After 30 years of collaboration, in 2001 WMO and IOC established a single Joint Technical Commission of Oceanography and Marine Meteorology (JCOMM), composed of intergovernmental experts in the field of oceanography and marine meteorology, which advises the two organizations on a series of joint operational programmes.

21. The **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** has the mandate to improve the safety and security of international shipping. In this context, IMO manages 32 conventions and agreements related to the protection and preservation of the marine environment and conducts monitoring programmes to prevent and mitigate marine pollution from ships. IMO, through its regular safety protocols and mandatory communications system with ships, facilitates the work of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), a marine service under JCOMM that provides safety warnings to all vessels over 100 tons on extreme sea-weather conditions under the authority of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS). IMO also cooperates with the World Bank, FAO, UNEP and IOC in programmes to prevent and mitigate the effects of the introduction of allochthonous flora and fauna through shipping, by promoting guidelines and good practices for the management of ballast water from ships.

22. The **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)** promotes industrial development, focusing on least developed countries, particularly in Africa, on agro-based industries and on small- and medium-sized enterprises. Its water management and energy-related services concentrate on introducing environmentally sound technologies to prevent discharges of

industrial effluents and providing renewable energy resources for the rural poor. UNIDO manages a significant portfolio of Large Marine Ecosystems projects under GEF.

23. The **World Health Organization (WHO)**, with its global health mandate, targets its water and sanitation activities on drinking water quality and hygiene, water-related diseases and waste water, including the UNICEF/WHO Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation. It also collaborates with UNEP to support action by developing country policy-makers on environmental threats to health. WHO's programme on Indoor Air Pollution focuses on research and capacity-building for policy-makers to reduce disease from indoor air pollution from household solid fuel use. WHO also collaborates with UNEP on climate impact assessments and response strategies to reduce health vulnerabilities; and funds research and training in tropical diseases.

24. The **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)** runs major programmes for addressing the urban water crisis in Africa and Asia through improved water demand management. Its Urban Energy Programme conducts field studies and sponsors expert group meetings to develop policy options and management tools for access to urban energy services.

25. **UNICEF**, the United Nations advocacy agency for children's rights, operates a Water, Environment and Sanitation Programme, which supports government programmes on a global scale to provide a minimum level of water supply and sanitation for those most in need.

26. The **United Nations University (UNU)**, as the "think tank" for the United Nations system, operates several research training centres and programmes, as well as a network of cooperating institutions, including the UNU Network on Water, Environment and Health, the UNU Institute for Natural Resources in Africa and the UNU Geothermal Training Programme. Their research and capacity activities address a wide variety of scientific issues, including global water problems, biodiversity, land degradation and climate change.

27. The **United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)** carries out a broad range of training programmes in multilateral diplomacy and social and economic development for United Nations diplomats and national officials involved in United Nations activities. Among these are a training and capacity-building programme in chemicals and waste management and a programme in climate change, addressing the capacity constraints of developing countries to implement national policies in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

28. The **International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)** was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 as a successor to the International Decade on Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR 1990-2000). A number of United Nations entities are active in the ISDR and, more generally, in the field of natural disaster reduction. UNDP deals with reconstruction projects following disasters and finances some disaster prevention projects at national and local level. WHO works on disaster preparedness in the health sector. WMO is concerned with operational hydrology, including warnings against cyclones and floods. FAO is active during disasters in the field of food supply. UNEP operates a centre on environmental emergency. UNICEF works on warning, prevention, preparedness and recovery activities for care of children and women in disaster-prone areas. UNESCO's international scientific programmes on water, earth sciences, ecology, oceanography and engineering address understanding and mitigating the risks of earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, landslides, drought and windstorms. In addition, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) has the lead within the United Nations system for the establishment of an Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System, which is being implemented in coordination with WMO and UNISDR.

29. The **International Seabed Authority (ISA)** is an autonomous international organization established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1994 Agreement relating to the implementation of its Part XI. The Authority is the organization through which States

Parties to the Convention shall organize and control activities in the seabed beyond national jurisdiction (the “Area”), particularly with a view to administering the resources of the Area. A principal function of the Authority is to regulate deep seabed mining and to ensure that the marine environment is protected from any harmful effects which may arise during mining activities, including exploration. The Authority also has the responsibility to promote and encourage marine scientific research in the international seabed area and to disseminate the results of such research and monitors the current status of scientific knowledge of the deep-sea marine environment as part of its ongoing development and formulation of the Central Data Repository.

II.A Fresh water

30. The world faces a growing water crisis, with 6 million to 8 million deaths occurring each year from water-related disasters and diseases, according to the first World Water Development Report (WWDR). Given its critical importance, several international time periods have been dedicated to water, from the UNESCO-led International Hydrological Decade (1965-1974), the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990), the International Year of Freshwater (2003), to the current International Decade for Action “Water for Life” (2005-2015) and the International Year of Sanitation (2008). In addition, water has been a key topic of several major international conferences and summits, including *inter alia* the 1977 United Nations Conference on Water, the 1992 International Conference on Water and the Environment (ICWE), the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). A specific freshwater target was included in the Millennium Development Goals (“Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water”) and there is a wide recognition that addressing freshwater issues is essential to accomplish all MDGs.

31. **UN-Water**, the inter-agency coordinating mechanism for United Nations activities related to fresh water, consists of 24 United Nations agencies and other bodies and operates under the authority of the Chief Executives Board (CEB). UN-Water is responsible for two major periodic publications: the World Water Development Report (WWDR) and the Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation reports on the status of water supply and sanitation. UN-Water also organizes the annual United Nations World Water Day (22 March) and coordinates the International Decade for Action “Water for Life” (2005-2015).

32. The **Inter-agency Task Force on Gender and Water** coordinates gender-mainstreaming in water-related United Nations policies and planning. The Task Force meets about twice a year and unites gender and water focal points from 18 United Nations bodies, five non-United Nations entities and two observers.

33. UNESCO’s freshwater activities are focused on: (1) the International Hydrological Programme (IHP); (2) the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP); and (3) the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education. The IHP, created in 1975, is the only intergovernmental scientific and educational programme dedicated to fresh water in the United Nations system. It is currently in Phase VI (2002-2007), called “Water Interactions: Systems at Risk and Future Challenges”. Phase VII (2008-2013) will be devoted to “Water Dependencies: Systems under Stress and Societal Responses”. Reinforcing IHP action are 12 water-related regional and international centres, which operate under UNESCO auspices. The WWAP, launched in 2000, is a United Nations initiative hosted and led by UNESCO, bringing together 24 United Nations agencies to provide an up-to-date global overview of the state and uses of fresh water, critical water-related problems and societies’ coping mechanisms and publishes the WWDR (in 2003 and 2006, with a third report planned for 2009). The UNESCO-IHE in Delft, Netherlands, formerly the IHE Institute for Water Education, was transferred to UNESCO in 2003. It is now the largest postgraduate water education institute in the world and the only body of the United Nations system accredited to confer academic degrees in water resource management.

34. **Other United Nations programmes and initiatives.** Due to the relevance of fresh water to an extremely wide range of issues, several United Nations bodies have started programmes, initiatives and activities to address water challenges. Each of these bodies tends to focus on a particular field, and their scope, resources, aims, modes of operation and levels of implementation differ substantially from one another. For instance, these United Nations bodies cover specific water aspects that are related to their fields of operation, from irrigation and food production (FAO), to water supply and sanitation among different target groups and using different approaches at different geographic levels (WHO, UNEP, UNDP, UNICEF, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Regional Commissions), international water agreements (GEF, United Nations Regional Commissions and UNEP), public health impacts and water-borne diseases (WHO, United Nations Regional Commissions), industrial uses (UNIDO), urban water services (UN-HABITAT), floods (UN-ISDR), isotope methodologies for improved water and geothermal resource management (IAEA), secretariat for the CSD and UN-Water (UN-DESA), the atmospheric part of the hydrological cycle (WMO), assessment, dams, integrated management plans, and rainwater harvesting (UNEP). The World Bank accounts for nearly 50% of all external financing for water supply and sanitation in developing countries. Areas of lending include: dams and reservoirs, irrigation and drainage, river basin management, groundwater management and watershed management. The World Bank is also the implementing agency for the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP), a partnership of donors, governments and NGOs which focuses on water supply and sanitation in poor rural and peri-urban areas.

35. **Joint activities:** Examples include: the Joint UNESCO-WMO Liaison Committee on Hydrological Activities, the Joint International Isotopes in Hydrology Programme with UNESCO and IAEA, the UNICEF/WHO Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, and the International Flood Initiative with UNESCO, UN-ISDR and UNU. Coordination of country-level activities is strengthened by United Nations Country Teams, in a process that is being reinforced as part of the One United Nations reform, and by other mechanisms, such as joint IHP National Committees that operate in conjunction with WMO Hydrological Advisers in a number of countries.

II.B Ocean science and marine resources management

36. The **Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC)**, established in 1960, is the specialized body of the United Nations for coordinating programmes in marine sciences and services. The Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) and the International Oceanographic Data Exchange (IODE) programmes contribute to enhancing the observational and monitoring capacities of national agencies to produce and distribute oceanographic data necessary to forecast and mitigate damage from natural hazards and pollution and to protect life and property on coasts and at sea. The Ocean and Climate and Harmful Algal Blooms programmes address climatic and ecological changes that may induce or represent additional marine hazards to coastal communities. The Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM) programme promotes a more proactive approach to marine hazards through mitigation tools, such as long-term strategic planning of the coastal zones, the definition of standards for zoning and setbacks, and the improvement of public awareness in this field. IOC's capacity-building programme involves institutional and human capacity-building in marine sciences, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean region. Another specific programme activity deals with the implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) concerning marine scientific research and transfer of marine technology.

37. IOC established the Pacific Tsunami Warning System in 1965, following the major tsunamis in Chile (1960) and Alaska (1964). After the December 2004 tsunami, UNESCO, through the IOC, was given the mandate by the international community to coordinate the establishment of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System. It formally came into existence in June 2005 with the establishment of an Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Early Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/IOTWS) to govern it, for which IOC provides the Secretariat. As of July 2006, an initial system has been operating in the Indian Ocean. Similar regional tsunami early warning and mitigation systems are being developed in the North-eastern

Atlantic, Mediterranean and Connected Seas Early Warning System (ICG/NEAMTWS) and in the Caribbean and adjacent seas (CARIBE-EWS).

38. The IOC collaborates with numerous United Nations organizations and serves as Coordinator and Implementing Secretariat of UN-Oceans, the inter-agency coordinating mechanism for United Nations activities relating to coastal areas and oceans. Other examples of cooperation include the WMO/IOC Joint Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology (JCOMM), the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), together with WMO, UNEP and ICSU, and the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), co-sponsored by IOC, WMO, UNEP and ICSU. IOC hosts the technical secretariat for the GCOS-GOOS-WCRP Ocean Observations Panel for Climate (OOPC), which involves close cooperation with WMO and UNFCCC secretariats and programmes. IOC, in collaboration with FAO, UNEP and WMO, participates in the Inter-agency and Planning Committee for the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the implementation plan for a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). IOC together with UNEP, FAO, WMO and several other international scientific organizations and programmes, is a partner in IGOS (Integrated Global Observing Strategy) and also in GTOS (Global Terrestrial Observing System).

39. Collaboration with IMO takes place through the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)/IOC/IMO Working Group on Ballast of Ships and Other Ship Vectors; and with FAO and WHO in support of governments' efforts to manage the public health and economic impacts of harmful algal blooms.

40. Collaboration with the World Bank takes place through a Joint Working Group on Coral Bleaching and Local Ecological Responses; with UNDP through GEF funded projects in the areas of integrated coastal area management, fishery management and coastal aquifers; and with UN/OLA/DOALOS in discussions on the "Legal framework, within the context of UNCLOS, which is applicable to the collection of oceanographic data". In coordination with UNEP's GRIDArendal, IOC is working to promote awareness among African countries with respect to the delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf.

41. **Other joint United Nations activities.** Cooperation in ocean science, marine resources management, development of ocean services and observations has a long history in the United Nations. In 1969 United Nations cooperating agencies signed a Protocol, deposited in UNESCO, creating the Inter-Secretariat Committee on Scientific Programmes Related to Oceanography (ICSPRO) to support programmatic and financial coordination for the Long-term and Expanded Programme of Oceanic Exploration and Research (LEPOR) endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1968. ICSPRO consisted of the Executive Heads of FAO, UNESCO, WMO and the IMO. These initial agencies were later joined by the IAEA, UNEP, UN-DESA, UN-DOALOS and UNDP. ICSPRO was chaired by the Director-General of UNESCO and the IOC served as its Secretariat.

42. The ICSPRO group created the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Protection (GESAMP), to provide regular independent scientific advice to the agencies in technical areas. GESAMP conducted the first Global Assessment of the Ocean as an input to the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. The third global assessment of the ocean "A Sea of Troubles" was published by GESAMP in 2001. Currently, eight United Nations agencies (UNESCO-IOC, IMO, FAO, WMO, IAEA, United Nations, UNEP and UNIDO) support GESAMP. IMO currently serves as its Secretariat.

43. In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) adopted Agenda 21 as the programme of action for global sustainable development for the 21st century. Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 specifically deals with the protection of the oceans and the protection and rational use and development of their living resources. In order to coordinate action in support of Chapter 17, in 1993 the Administrative Committee on Coordination of the United

Nations (ACC) created the Sub-committee on Oceans and Coastal Areas of (ACC SOCA) for which IOC provided the Secretariat.

44. After the transformation of the ACC into the United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB) and following recommendations from the Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, the **UN-Oceans** network was established in October 2003 to continue the functions of SOCA. The creation of UN-Oceans also responded to the specific request of governments at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to “establish an effective, transparent and regular inter-agency coordination mechanism on ocean and coastal issues within the United Nations system” (WSSD Joint Plan of Action, para. 30c).

45. Active members of UN-Oceans include: FAO, IMO, UNESCO, IOC, WMO, World Bank, IAEA, UNDP, UNEP, UN-DOALOS, UN-DESA, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the International Seabed Authority (ISA). It has held five formal meetings, most recently on 21 and 22 May 2007 hosted by UNESCO-IOC in Paris. The Coordination (Chair) of UN-Oceans is served by UNESCO-IOC and the Deputy Coordination by UN-DESA.

II.C Energy

46. A number of United Nations programmes and initiatives address key energy issues, such as (1) energy security; (2) the development of environmentally sound energy supplies; (3) access to reliable and affordable energy services; (4) energy efficiency and energy management; and (5) the choices of energy sources, with their trade-offs, including nuclear, conventional, renewable, low carbon sources and innovative energy technologies. The main types of activities include: (1) development of legal and regulatory frameworks; (2) policy support; (3) capacity-building and training; (4) advocacy and public information; (5) enhancement of scientific and technological knowledge; (6) information gathering and dissemination; (7) financing and investment; (8) market development and technical services; and (9) technology development, deployment and transfer.

47. **UN-Energy**, consisting of 20 United Nations entities (including United Nations regional economic commissions), is the United Nations inter-agency coordinating mechanism for energy-related issues, formed under the auspices of the United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB) in response to the request by the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD). Recent publications include: *Energy in the United Nations: An Overview of UN-Energy Activities* (2006) and *Sustainable Bioenergy: A Framework for Decision-Makers* (2007).

48. The **United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)** has been examining “Energy for Sustainable Development, Industrial Development, Air Pollution and Climate Change” as its thematic cluster during 2006-2007.

49. **UNESCO’s** energy-related activities include: (1) institutional and human capacity-building; (2) dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge; and (3) assistance to countries in developing national policies pertaining to renewable energy and energy management and conservation. The Global Renewable Energy Education and Training Programme (GREET) provides training programmes at different levels including for policy-makers, university teachers and technicians. UNESCO also acts as a forum for discussions on energy and in this context has convened two conferences at ministerial level, the 2006 Regional Ministerial Conference on Renewable Energy in Central Asia and the 2007 Ministerial Conference on “Energy in a Changing World”. In addition to expertise in the regional bureaux and field offices, the UNITWIN-UNESCO Chairs Programme has established 12 Chairs related to renewable energy, which aim to develop local competencies, provide technical assistance and facilitate networking and information exchange.

50. **Other United Nations programmes and initiatives.** As is the case of fresh water, other United Nations programmes and initiatives in energy reflect the differing mandates, resources and modes of operation of the United Nations entities involved. UNDP focuses on (1) strengthening

national policy frameworks; (2) promoting access to rural energy services; (3) promoting clean (low emissions) energy technologies; and (4) increasing access to investment financing for sustainable energy. UNEP addresses energy policy development and finance mobilization. The World Bank provides loans and credits to help countries develop energy infrastructure, including support for renewable energy and energy efficiency development. UNIDO addresses both supply-side issues that deal with the provision of energy for industrial applications; and demand-side issues, including the improvement of industrial energy end-use efficiency. The IAEA serves as the global focal point for nuclear cooperation, assists Member States to use nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes. IAEA also develops and transfers energy models tailored for developing countries and trains local experts. FAO promotes bioenergy production aimed at rural agro-industries. WHO carries out research and capacity-building to mitigate health effects of indoor air pollution from household solid fuel use. UN-HABITAT conducts field studies and sponsors expert group meetings to develop policy options and management tools for access to urban energy services.

III. The social and human sciences

51. **UNESCO.** The mission of UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences Sector (SHS) is "to advance knowledge, standards and intellectual cooperation in order to facilitate social transformations conducive to the universal values of justice, freedom and human dignity". Its activities address: ethics (see III.A), human rights (see III.B), social transformations and philosophy. SHS is also responsible for the *International Social Science Journal* (ISSJ), UNESCO's flagship social science periodical.

52. The **Management of Social Transformations Programme (MOST)**, launched in 1994, is the only United Nations programme tasked with contributing to public policy development through research in the social sciences. It promotes the development and use of social science knowledge that contributes to better understanding and management of social transformations, focusing on improving the linkage between research and policy-making, including the dissemination of research results, best practices and capacity-building. MOST underwent a thorough evaluation of its first phase (1994-2002). Its mandate in Phase 2 is to build more efficient bridges between research, policy and practice. Some of the new themes for this second phase are: the fight against poverty (in Latin America and the Caribbean); the role of the state in social development (in the Arab region); human security (in the Asia-Pacific region); aging populations (in Europe, including Eastern Europe); sustainable social development (in the small island developing States of the Pacific and the Caribbean; and processes for regional integration (Africa).

53. **UNESCO's Programme on International Migration** is carrying out activities in the fields of: (a) increasing the protection of migrants through participation in an international campaign, together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the ILO, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) and several NGOs, to encourage States to adhere to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families; and (b) promoting research and training for policy-makers for improved national policies for sending, receiving and transit countries. In addition, UNESCO and the IOM launched in 2006 a joint project on immigration, history and memory, which will help to set up and develop museums in receiving countries, devoted to the history and culture of immigration and to the process of the integration of migrant communities.

54. **UNESCO's Urban Development Programme** focuses on the following themes: urban policies and the right to the city: local democracy, urban governance, citizenship and integration of migrants; urban development and social transformations; social sustainability of historical districts: an integrated approach to urban revitalization; urban governance and participation; and urban professionals capacity-building.

55. **UNESCO** and **UN-HABITAT** signed a cooperation agreement in 2005. A joint working group has been set up, focusing on "Urban Policy and the Right to the City", which met in 2005 and March 2006, with a view to creating regional observatories. At the third session of the World Urban

Forum in Vancouver in June 2006, UN-HABITAT and UNESCO organized a joint session entitled “Urban Policies and the Right to the City: Towards Good Governance and Local Democracy” to discuss their cooperation on this topic. UN-HABITAT, UNESCO and the International Social Science Council (ISSC) have joined efforts in promoting international comparative research on public policy and legislation that combine urban development with social equity and justice.

56. **Philosophy.** The SHS Sector’s activities in philosophy consist of: (1) encouraging international studies in philosophy through stimulating and coordinating the activities of philosophical associations, universities and publishers, including the international exchange of professors and students; (2) promoting interregional philosophical dialogue; and (3) pursuing and expanding the celebration of World Philosophy Day (16 November).

57. The **United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)** is an autonomous United Nations agency, located in Geneva, Switzerland, engaging in multidisciplinary research on the social dimensions of contemporary problems affecting development. Its core funding comes from a small group of countries and its annual operating budget is approximately \$4 million. Under its 2005-2009 research agenda, UNRISD is focusing attention on social policy, poverty reduction and equity. Research is organized under six programme areas: social policy and development; democracy, governance and well-being; markets, business and regulation; civil society and social movements; identities, conflict and cohesion; and gender and development.

58. The **UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research’s (UNU-WIDER)** mandate is:

- to undertake multidisciplinary research and policy analysis on structural changes affecting the living conditions of the world's poorest people;
- to provide a forum for professional interaction and the advocacy of policies leading to robust, equitable and environmentally sustainable growth; and
- to promote capacity strengthening and training for scholars and government officials in the field of economic and social policy-making.

59. Research is conducted by a small Helsinki-based resident research staff, external project directors, each located at their university or institute, and over 300 network members around the world. The current research programme covers three thematic areas: (1) poverty, inequality and human development; (2) globalization, finance and growth; and (3) new initiatives in development economics.

60. The **United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA)** Development and Analysis Division carries out the following functions:

- monitoring and analysing global economic trends and prospects and formulating advice for global macro-economic policy coordination;
- analysing long-term development trends and preparing policy advice on the international development agenda; and
- serving as the Secretariat for the Committee for Development Policy, which provides inputs and independent advice to ECOSOC on emerging cross-sectoral development issues and on international cooperation for development, focusing on medium- and long-term aspects.

61. The **United Nations World Economic and Social Survey (WESS)** provides objective analysis of pressing long-term social and economic development issues, and discusses the positive and negative impact of corresponding policies.

62. The **World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP)** is the United Nations annual analysis of current developments in the world economy and emerging policy issues, containing a forecast of short-term global and regional economic trends. It reviews major developments in international trade and discusses the net transfer of financial resources of developing countries.

III.A Ethics of science and technology

63. **UNESCO** is the leading United Nations organization for activities in the field of ethics of science and technology. UNESCO'S Bioethics Programme was created in 1993. The General Conference of UNESCO has adopted three key instruments in the field of bioethics: the Universal Declaration on the Genome and Human Rights (1997), the International Declaration on Human Genetic Data (2003) and the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005). The Bioethics Programme provides the Secretariats for three international bodies in the field of bioethics:

- the International Bioethics Committee (IBC), established in 1993;
- the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC), established in 1998;
- the Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics, established by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2003.

64. In addition to carrying out UNESCO'S role as an intellectual forum and standard-setter, the Bioethics Programme advises Member States on setting up national bioethics committees and on defining national standards and/or legislation in the field. The Programme also promotes education and awareness-raising in bioethics, for example through UNESCO Chairs in bioethics at the university level.

65. The Ethics of Science and Technology Programme was created in 1998 with the establishment of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST). COMEST is specifically mandated to be an international advisory body and an intellectual forum for exchanging information and encouraging the scientific community to examine fundamental ethical questions. The COMEST Secretariat is located in SHS, and the Sector carries out much of its work on the ethics of science and technology through COMEST.

66. The Sector helps to develop regional networks, builds capacity and promotes ethics in science education, also providing educational materials. Three areas in particular are focused on enhancing the capacities of Member States: the Ethics Education Programme, the Global Ethics Observatory, and the Ethics around the World Programme (a conference series). The Global Ethics Observatory, officially launched in 2005, is a freely accessible online system of databases with worldwide coverage in bioethics and other areas of applied ethics in science and technology.

67. The **United Nations University (UNU)** Institute for Advanced Studies (UNU/IAS) carries out research through its Biodiplomacy Initiative on bioethics in the following areas: (1) governance of human cloning; (2) integration of traditional medicine in national health care systems; (3) bioethics education; and (4) global priorities in bioethics research.

68. The **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** has designated "Ethics in Food and Agriculture" as a priority area for interdisciplinary action and established an internal Committee on Ethics in Food and Agriculture to guide the Organization'S actions in this regard. FAO'S Director-General has also established an independent advisory Panel of Eminent Experts on Ethics in Food and Agriculture. In addition, FAO has also launched two publication series entitled the "FAO Ethics Series" and "Readings in Ethics", which complement the Reports of the Group of Eminent Experts.

69. The **World Health Organization (WHO)** in 2002 launched its Ethics and Health Initiative to provide a focal point for the examination of the ethical issues raised by activities throughout the

Organization, and to develop activities regarding a wide range of global bioethics topics, from organ and tissue transplantation to developments in genomics, and from research with human beings to fair access to health services. Strategic areas of focus include: (1) population/public health ethics (management of health surveillance data, ethical issues in cancer prevention and treatment, mental health and substance abuse); (2) professional ethics; (3) ethics of health systems (equitable access to treatment and care for HIV/AIDS, ethics of long-term care); (4) ethics of human subjects research; and (5) biotechnology ethics (organ and tissue transplantation, implications of human stem cell research, GMOs for pharmaceuticals, human research and food).

70. The **United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics**. On the initiative of the Director-General of UNESCO, the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics was established in March 2003 in order to coordinate activities in the field of bioethics. With UNESCO acting as Permanent Secretariat, the Committee is composed of intergovernmental organizations both within and outside the United Nations system that have developed bioethics programmes or which carry out specific activities focusing on bioethics, including its human rights aspects and other related issues. The United Nations agency members of the Committee are: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the United Nations University (UNU). The Committee has nine Associate Members, including the African Union, the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Committee's initial work focused on preparations for the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005). At its sixth meeting in November 2006, the Committee dealt with the topic of intellectual property and bioethics, deciding to draft a document summarizing the current state of knowledge on the subject.

III.B Human rights

71. Virtually every United Nations body and specialized agency is involved to some degree in the protection of human rights. The United Nations Charter states that Member States have the obligation to "promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all..."² More recently, the Secretary-General's report "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme of Work for Reform (1997)" designates human rights as an issue cutting across all United Nations work. A brief overview of several United Nations programmes and initiatives on human rights is contained below, a more comprehensive United Nations-wide study being beyond the scope of the present document.

72. **UNESCO** has a long history of involvement in human rights, stemming from its Constitution, which specifies that one of the main purposes of the Organization is further respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. UNESCO has built its human rights programmes on its constitutional authority to carry out programmatic activities, convene conferences, adopt normative instruments and advise the United Nations on matters in its fields of competence. UNESCO was actively involved in the elaboration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), as well as many other international human rights conventions. In October 2003, the 32nd session of the General Conference adopted the UNESCO Strategy of Human Rights, which has two objectives: (1) to affirm the commitment of UNESCO to the cause of promoting and protecting human rights; and (2) to identify priority areas of action with the view towards increasing the visibility of UNESCO's work in the field of human rights.

73. UNESCO functions as a "laboratory of ideas" to strengthen awareness of human rights issues; acts as a catalyst for regional, national and international action in human rights and fosters collaboration worldwide to protect human rights. Through the Social and Human Sciences Sector (SHS), UNESCO supports efforts to identify obstacles to the full exercise of human rights, such as:

² United Nations Charter, Article 55.

the impact of nationalism, religious intolerance, discrimination against minorities, and forms of discrimination arising from illnesses such as HIV/AIDS.

74. An important partner for UNESCO's activities in the field of human rights is the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR). In 1994, UNESCO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UN OHCHR, which was renewed in 2004, calling for close cooperation and mutual consultation on a number of areas, including the elaboration of strategies on education, human rights education, cultural rights and diversity, freedom of expression, access to information and academic freedom, rights of women and gender equality, and human rights and bioethics. Since 2005, UNESCO and the UN OCHR have been collaborating in the preparation of the Draft Plan of Action for the first phase (2005-2007) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-ongoing).

75. The **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**, a department of the United Nations Secretariat, is mandated to promote and protect the enjoyment and full realization, by all people, of all rights established in the Charter of the United Nations and in international human rights laws and treaties. The mandate includes preventing human rights violations, securing respect for all human rights, promoting international cooperation to protect human rights, coordinating related activities throughout the United Nations and strengthening and streamlining the United Nations system in the field of human rights. In addition to its mandated responsibilities, the Office leads efforts to integrate a human rights approach within all work carried out by United Nations agencies.

76. The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** and UNESCO have cooperated in the field of human rights since 1947, after signing an agreement providing for reciprocal representation, the creation of joint UNESCO-ILO committees and various other aspects. Examples of cooperation include the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning the Status of Teaching Personnel and the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education.

77. The **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** defines its human rights mandate with respect to the 1996 World Food Summit Plan of Action. Accordingly, FAO's Strategic Framework for 2000-2015 refers to the rights-based approach to food security. In 2002, FAO hosted the "World Food Summit: Five Years Later" which adopted a declaration "Reaffirming the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food" and confirming FAO's role in implementing the WFS Plan of Action within its mandate. The Summit invited the FAO Council to establish an Intergovernmental Working Group, with the participation of stakeholders, to elaborate a set of voluntary guidelines on the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

78. The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has also integrated a human rights-based approach in its work, its Constitution affirming health as a fundamental human right. A number of research and training activities have been launched or completed on health and human rights, including an annotated bibliography, a database of institutions, guidelines for human rights-based approach to tuberculosis and a publication series.

79. The **United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)**, created in 1975 following the 1975 first World Conference on Women, works in over 100 countries, pursuing its mandate to advance women's rights in the following three areas: (1) eliminating violence against women and girls by investing in protection and advocacy strategies; (2) assisting in the effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); and (3) enhancing the understanding of governments, advocates United Nations partners of the intersection between human rights, gender and HIV/AIDS to strengthen responses to the epidemic.

80. **UNICEF** has had children's rights and support for the Convention on the Rights of the Child in its mission statement since 1996 and uses a human rights-based approach to programme planning. UNICEF's mandate and mission includes women and advocacy of the CEDAW.

81. The **United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP)** justice sector is concerned with the independence, impartiality, and fairness of judges, legal literacy, legal aid, pro-poor laws and civic participation in legal and judicial reform. Key features of the work in the area of human rights and human security include: support for the development of national human rights action plans; application of the rights-based approach to programming; assistance for human rights initiatives involving civic education, awareness-raising campaigns, strengthening or creation of ombudsmen offices and extension of human rights institutions to the subregional level.

IV. List of acronyms

ACC – United Nations Administrative Committee on Coordination
ACC SOCA – ACC Sub-Committee on Oceans and Coastal Areas
CARIBE-EWS – Caribbean and Adjacent Seas Early Warning System
CEB – United Nations Chief Executives Board
COMEST – World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology
CSD – Commission on Sustainable Development
CSTD – Commission on Science and Technology for Development
ECOSOC – United Nations Economic and Social Council
FAO – United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
GBEP – Global Bioenergy Partnership
GCOS – Global Climate Observing System
GEF – Global Environment Facility
GEO – Global Ethics Observatory (SHS/UNESCO)
GEO - Group on Earth Observations
GESAMP – Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Protection
GEOS – Global Earth Observation System of Systems
GMDSS – Global Maritime Distress and Safety System
GOOS – Global Ocean Observing System
GPA – Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment
GRASP – Great Apes Survival Project
GREET – Global Renewable Energy and Education Programme (UNESCO)
GTOS – Global Terrestrial Observing System
IAEA – International Atomic Energy Agency
IBC – International Bioethics Committee
IBSP – International Basic Sciences Programme (UNESCO)
ICAM – Integrated Coastal Area Management Programme of IOC
ICG/IOTWS – Indian Ocean Tsunami Early Warning and Mitigation System
ICG/NEAMTWS – Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the North-eastern Atlantic, Mediterranean and Connected Seas Early Warning System
ICSPRO – Inter-Secretariat Committee on Scientific Programmes Related to Oceanography
ICSU – International Council for Science
ICTP – Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (UNESCO category 1 centre)
IGBC – Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee
IGCP – International Geoscience Programme
IHP – International Hydrological Programme (UNESCO)
IMO – International Maritime Organization
IOC – Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO)
IODE – International Ocean Data Exchange Programme of IOC
IOM – International Organization for Migration
ISA – International Seabed Authority
ISDR – United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
ISPs – International/Intergovernmental Programmes (UNESCO)

ISSJ – International Social Science Journal (UNESCO)
 JCOMM – IOC-WMO Joint Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology
 LADA – Land Degradation in Drylands Programme
 LEPOR – Long-term and Expanded Programme of Oceanic Exploration and Research
 MAB – Man and the Biosphere Programme (UNESCO)
 MDGs – Millennium Development Goals
 MFMP – Multilateral Fund for the Montreal Protocol
 OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
 SC – Natural Sciences Sector (UNESCO)
 SHS – Social and Human Sciences Sector (UNESCO)
 SOLAS – International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
 UNIFEM – United Nations Development Fund for Women
 UNCED – United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992)
 UNCLOS – United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
 UNCTAD – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
 UN DESA – United Nations Secretariat's Division of Economic and Social Affairs
 UN-DOALOS – United Nations Office of Legal Affairs/Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea
 UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
 UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme
 UNESCO-IHE – Institute for Water Education in Delft
 UN FCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
 UNIDO – United Nations Industrial Development Organization
 UN-HABITAT – United Nations Settlements Programme
 UNHCR - High Commissioner for Refugees
 UNITAR – United Nations Institute for Research and Training
 UNRISD – United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
 UNU – United Nations University
 UNU IAS – UNU Institute for Advanced Studies
 UNU WIDER – UNU World Institute for Development Economic Research
 WCP – World Climate Programme
 WCRP – World Climate Research Programme
 WHO – World Health Organization
 WIPO – World Intellectual Property Organization
 WMO – World Meteorological Organization
 WSIS – World Summit on the Information Society
 WSSD – World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002)
 WWAP – World Water Assessment Programme
 WWDR – World Water Development Report