UNESCO

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

REFLECTION ON THE FUTURE ROLE OF UNESCO

OUTLINE

By 33 C/Resolution 64, the General Conference, at its 33rd session, adopted this resolution, at the initiative of ASPAC, among others, requesting the Director-General, in consultation with the President of the General Conference and the Chairperson of the Executive Board, to lead a global consultation on the long-term future role of UNESCO – using the modalities, *inter alia*, of the then forthcoming regional consultations on documents 34 C/4 and 34 C/5, with the Permanent Delegations, the National Commissions, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with UNESCO, youth constituencies, including delegates to previous youth fora, and other United Nations bodies, in particular the United Nations bodies. It further requested the Director-General to prepare for this global consultation a succinct and engaging discussion paper identifying issues, trends and challenges of relevance for the future role of UNESCO. The present document provides information about the activities undertaken by the Director-General and transmits, in the annex, to the members of the General Conference for information, the discussion paper prepared by the Director-General.

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1.   At the initiative of the Asia and the Pacific Group, the General Conference, at its 33rd session, adopted resolution 64 entitled "Reflection on the future role of UNESCO". In this resolution, the General Conference, *inter alia*:

"6.   Requests the Director-General, in consultation with the President of the General Conference and the Chair of the Executive Board, to lead a global consultation on the long-term future role of UNESCO – using the modalities, *inter alia*, of the forthcoming regional consultations on documents 34 C/4 and 34 C/5 – with the Permanent Delegations, the National Commissions, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with UNESCO, youth constituencies, including delegates to previous youth fora, and other United Nations bodies, in particular the United Nations University;

7.   Further requests the Director-General to prepare for this global consultation a succinct and engaging discussion paper identifying issues, trends and challenges of relevance for the future role of UNESCO, including themes identified at the 33rd session of the General Conference and taking into account the recommendations contained in the report of the Task Force on UNESCO in the Twenty-First Century (160 EX/48);

8.   Requests the Director-General to draw on the results of this ongoing global consultation in the preparation of his vision and proposals for the Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013, and to present a brief report on the implementation of this resolution to the General Conference at its 34th session."

2.   The present document provides information about the activities undertaken by the Director-General in the implementation of this resolution. The discussion paper prepared by the Director-General is contained in the annex.

3.   The Director-General undertook a number of initiatives to promote a debate of the subject in general and more specifically of the issues raised in the discussion paper:

- The background paper was presented to the five regional consultations of the Director-General with National Commissions on the preparations of documents 34 C/4 and 34 C/5. The reports on these consultations address in detail the views expressed by representatives of National Commissions at the various meetings (extenso reports on the regional consultations are contained in document 175 EX/22 Part I A).

- The participants in the past youth fora were invited by email to comment on the paper and several responses were received.

- The document was submitted to the Executive Board at its 175th session (175 EX/INF.9 Add. – as contained in the annex) in the context of its thematic debate on the subject of "UNESCO as a specialized agency of the reforming United Nations system: Challenges, roles and functions at the global, regional and country levels". The various aspects were addressed both by invited guest speakers and by Members of the Board. The summary by the Chairperson on the conclusions of this thematic debate is contained in document 34 C/INF.19.

- The discussion document was also provided to governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations together with the questionnaire on the preparation of documents 34 C/4 and 34 C/5.

- The document and conclusions emanating from regional consultations informed the preparation of the preliminary proposals by the Director-General for documents 34 C/4 and 34 C/5 as well as the debates by the Executive Board thereon.

- The President of the General Conference organized a series of presentations and discussions for Permanent Representatives of electoral groups on the outcomes of the regional consultations with National Commissions, including the discussion paper on the future role of UNESCO.

- In addition, members of the Secretariat briefed several electoral groups about the contents of the discussion document in conjunction with the document containing the then preliminary proposals by the Director-General on documents 34 C/4 and 34 C/5.

- The Director-General also invited the Rector of the United Nations University (UNU) to comment on the document, which he did on the occasion of the annual UNESCO/UNU Conference on Globalization, held in Yokohama in August 2006 (see relevant statement in the publication on "International Conference – Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities for Science and Technology, 23-24 August 2006, Yokohama, Japan").

4.   All these activities informed the drafting of the proposed Medium-Term Strategy by the Director-General (draft 34 C/4), submitted to the Executive Board at its 176th session.

ANNEX

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Hundred and seventy-fifth session

Item **45** of the provisional agenda

**THEMATIC DEBATE: UNESCO AS A SPECIALIZED AGENCY OF THE
REFORMING UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: CHALLENGES, ROLES AND
FUNCTIONS AT THE GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND COUNTRY LEVELS**

Reflections on the Future Role of UNESCO: Some Key Issues, Trends and Challenges

SUMMARY

This document is a reference document for the thematic debate at
the 175th session of the Executive Board on 4 October 2006. It is a
revised version of the discussion paper dated 11 May 2006 prepared
by the Director-General for the global consultation on the long-term
future role of UNESCO pursuant to 33 C/Resolution 64 of the
General Conference: this version takes into account observations
made during the consultative process for documents 34 C/4 and
34 C/5 and reflects in more detail UNESCO's latest proposals on the
United Nations reform.

24 August 2006[*]

**Reflections on the Future Role of UNESCO:
Some Key Issues, Trends and Challenges**

Discussion paper prepared by the Director-General
for the global consultation on the long-term future role of UNESCO
pursuant to 33 C/Resolution 64 of the General Conference

Background

1.   At the initiative of the Asia and Pacific Group, the General Conference, at its 33rd session, adopted resolution 64 entitled "Reflection on the future role of UNESCO" (see full text in the annex). In this resolution, the General Conference, *inter alia*:

"6.   <u>Requests</u> the Director-General, in consultation with the President of the General Conference and the Chair of the Executive Board, to lead a global consultation on the long-term future role of UNESCO – using the modalities, *inter alia*, of the forthcoming regional consultations on documents 34 C/4 and 34 C/5 – with the Permanent Delegations, the National Commissions, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with UNESCO, youth constituencies, including delegates to previous youth fora, and other United Nations bodies, in particular the United Nations University;

7.   <u>Further requests</u> the Director-General to prepare for this global consultation a succinct and engaging discussion paper identifying issues, trends and challenges of relevance for the future role of UNESCO, including themes identified at the 33rd session of the General Conference and taking into account the recommendations contained in the report of the Task Force on UNESCO in the Twenty-First Century (160 EX/48);

8.   <u>Requests</u> the Director-General to draw on the results of this ongoing global consultation in the preparation of his vision and proposals for the Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013, and to present a brief report on the implementation of this resolution to the General Conference at its 34th session."

2.   The General Conference, in its resolution 64, also reiterated certain key principles for determining the future role of UNESCO, including:

- the continuing relevance of UNESCO's Constitution, 60 years after its adoption, and the need to re-read the Constitution in this regard to address the challenges of the twenty-first century;

- the need to be guided by the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000 and the 2005 World Summit Outcome document;

- the desire of maintaining the vitality and effectiveness of the Organization and of enhancing its capacity to contribute to international cooperation in its domains – education, science and culture, as well as communication and information – and to the national development of Member States;

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[*]   Revised version of the discussion paper dated 11 May 2006: this version takes into account observations made during the consultative process for documents 34 C/4 and 34 C/5 and reflects in more detail UNESCO's latest proposals on the United Nations reform.

- the special role accorded to the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, especially as standard-setters, policy advisers, policy advocates and builders of human and institutional capacities in Member States.

3.   In preparing the present discussion paper, due attention was paid to a host of resources, including: the deliberations of the 33rd session of the General Conference; the report of the Task Force on UNESCO in the Twenty-First Century (160 EX/48);[1] the UNESCO World Report on "Building Knowledge Societies" (2005); other sectoral reports, including the various issues of the EFA Global Monitoring Report; relevant meetings held on the future of UNESCO by the Social and Human Sciences Sector; and reports emanating from United Nations system organizations or independent commissions.

4.   The paper restates the abiding relevance of UNESCO's mandate (Chapter I), describes emerging global trends (Chapter II), and identifies challenges most likely to influence the multilateral system at large and especially UNESCO (Chapter III). Chapters IV and V then place in context the reform of the United Nations system and the implications for UNESCO's future role and orientations.

I.   The abiding relevance of UNESCO's mandate

5.   This paper will demonstrate that UNESCO's mandate as set out in its Constitution remains as relevant as ever. The basic purposes and functions, as defined in Article I of UNESCO's Constitution are "to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations".

6.   The overarching goals for which UNESCO was established remain valid and relevant today, even though the context within which the Constitutional mission is being carried out, and consequently the priorities for action, continue to evolve and in the process open up new opportunities and challenges. Certain trends that were only emerging at the time of the Organization's foundation – or for that matter at the time when the current Medium-Term Strategy (31 C/4) was formulated – have since become more marked, while others have undergone a shift and certain medium- or longer-term processes are becoming more pronounced. UNESCO provides a platform where some of the global challenges can be discussed, if not tackled, on the basis of equality among Member States.

7.   The Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007 (31 C/4) stipulates that the Organization pursues its mandate by:

(i)   developing universal principles and norms, based on shared values, in order to meet the emerging challenges in its areas of competence and to strengthen the common public good;

(ii)   promoting pluralism, through recognition and enhancement of diversity together with the observance of human rights (with particular emphasis also on the right to education);

(iii)   promoting empowerment and participation in the emerging knowledge society through equitable access, capacity-building and sharing of knowledge.

8.   Throughout its activities, UNESCO performs a number of functions for the international community:

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[1]   Final Report of the Task Force on UNESCO in the Twenty-First Century, "Towards peace and security in the twenty-first century: The challenges and opportunities of the humanization of globalization" (document 160 EX/48, 11 October 2000).

- catalyst for international cooperation;

- laboratory of ideas;

- standard-setting;

- clearing house;

- capacity-builder in Member States.

The document will examine to what extent these functions remain valid in the present environment and the foreseeable future.

II. Some global trends

9. Among the trends impacting on UNESCO's mission directly and indirectly are the following:

10. The world's **population** is predicted to increase by about half in the coming 50 years to around 9.3 billion and to stabilize at approximately 10 billion by the end of the twenty-first century. According to some forecasts it may even well exceed the 10 billion mark. In many countries, because of rural–urban migration, rural populations have already ceased to grow and rural and urban population numbers on a global scale are forecast to be equal by 2006. Particularly in those regions and countries where population growth rates fall, an increase can be expected in per capita incomes, associated with a progressive fall in the number of people living in extreme poverty. While there will be a drop in the proportion of people living in poverty in many countries of Africa and parts of South Asia, absolute numbers are expected to grow, at least until 2030, if present trends continue.

11. The **processes of globalization**, affecting all societal spheres, impacting on national developments and driven by market forces, can be expected to remain the main driving force, if not a dominant mega-trend, entailing increased global flows and movement of information and communication, capital, goods and people worldwide. Yet, the unprecedented economic expansion taking place in the world today is accompanied by ever-increasing phenomena of exclusion, impoverishment and widening disparities. **Globalization** will bring about a **greater interdependence between countries from all regions**. Increasingly, the policies of some countries are likely to have an impact on other countries, creating a need for greater understanding of the nature of interdependence and of other peoples. Within each country, there will be an asymmetry between different elements of society, some who benefit and some who bear the brunt of sacrifices induced by globalization. **This will give strong impetus to efforts aimed at "humanizing globalization"**. If national decision-makers begin to perceive that the costs of openness – equated with globalization – exceed the costs of isolation, further globalization may well be halted. In any case, globalization will bring about a general decline in state sovereignty and in the ability to influence key parameters of state life traditionally under the control of national governments. This may be accompanied by a shift of power from states to inter-state networks and evolving new alliances and regional or subregional integration entities.

12. **New political and economic powers** are likely to emerge and impact the global political and economic structure and relationships, such as China (expected to eradicate poverty by 2050 and increase average life expectancy to 80 years), India, Brazil, Indonesia and countries endowed with strategic resources. In the process, old categories of international relations will become obsolete, such as East and West, North and South, developed/industrialized versus developing countries. Emerging regional and subregional integration organizations and trading blocs may mature into global players in their own right. They will enjoy a comparative advantage in harmonizing hitherto national policies and are capable of addressing a host of transboundary issues in an efficient manner.

13. **The fight against poverty** will continue to command centre stage and it will become more pronounced in all regions. There has been progress, but far from enough. Even in "winner countries" such as China, Brazil and India deep pockets of poverty will persist in rural areas, together with continued high numbers of illiterate people. According to the World Bank, the proportion of the world's population living on $1 a day or less was 22% in 1993 or 1.2 billion people. By 2001, the proportion had fallen to 17.8% or just over 1 billion people – predominantly attributable to Asia while there was regress in Africa the causes of which experts attribute to war, ravages of disease, an unfair trading regime, low investment flows and poor governance. If present trends persist, the poverty figures may have dropped to around 620 million people by 2015 or about 9% of world population. Success, yes – but still a staggering figure. Overall, the world is neither on track for meeting the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1 of halving poverty by 2015, nor other MDGs for that matter, most of which are directly linked to the poverty dynamics. As a result, countries can be expected to adopt policies with better focus and sectoral targeting. The battle against poverty will be extended to a more determined struggle against **lingering intra-country inequalities and fragmentations** to prevent a development of "segmented societies", drawing also on the potential of ICTs and the contribution of media, with their innate ability to capture the interests and needs of marginalized segments of societies and to focus on contributing factors to poverty like corruption or mismanagement. **Africa will continue to require special attention** in its battle against poverty, also in an effort to stave the emergence of failing states especially in the wake of conflicts. While the absolute number of Africans mired in poverty is much lower than those in other regions, the relative impact and burden of poverty in all its dimensions is more detrimental in view of the fragility of many economies and societies of the continent.

14. **Education will be under stress. Most of the EFA goals – two among them MDGs – may be missed in sub-Saharan Africa**, as well as in parts of South and West Asia and the Arab States. The MDG of universal primary education will be missed due to demographic pressures (growth of school-age population will outgrow enrolment), and the MDG of gender parity will equally be missed (growth rates for girls would have to be an unrealistic 3% per year). In 2005, 60% of 128 countries were missing gender parity at primary and secondary levels by 2005. The adult literacy goal is likely to be missed in a large number of (big) countries with high population growth (India would have to increase its literate population aged 15 and over by nearly 22 million annually until 2015 to reach the goal, Bangladesh and Pakistan would require 3.9 and 3.4 million respectively per year.

15. The **employment dynamics sends mixed, if not inconclusive signals**. In OECD countries, unemployment in 1993 stood at 7.8% of the work force and the latest figures for 2004 show a decrease to 6.3%. Yet, within rich countries an increase in inequality has occurred. From a global perspective, the expansion of the global labour force, especially due to developments in Asia, has held down income levels of unskilled labour in all countries. The spread of ICTs had a similar effect. Outsourcing leads to job gains in developing countries at the expense of industrialized countries. These trends are gradually spawning a rise in economic nationalism in many industrialized countries. In both industrialized and developing countries there will be, across the board, an increase in women's participation in paid jobs, which in turn is projected to buttress economic growth.

16. Burgeoning **migration bolsters capital flows and fuels domestic tensions**. International migration is set to rise from 175 million today to 230 million people in 2050 (though this nominal increase translates into a relative decline from 2.9% of world population to 2.6%). Likewise, intra-state migrations are on the rise: urban-rural migration trends point to the likely emergence of a world with a large number of **semi-autonomous mega-cities** with millions of population (the percentage of population in urban areas is projected to increase from 48% in 2003 to 61% in 2030), which may affect the authority and control of central governments. The challenges of managing cultural diversity within nation states and the observance of human rights of migrants may trigger debates about migration policies in immigration countries. On the other hand, developed countries with a decreasing population may offer incentives to attract certain immigrants. Migration will increasingly become a major economic factor, as migrants' remittances

are already surpassing levels of official development assistance (ODA) by more than half. Likewise, the number of refugees and migrants leaving their homes due to environmental pressures is projected to rise considerably.

17.   Environmental problems by their sheer scale and gravity may impinge on human well-being and safety and may generate new forms of conflict. This may be due to the fact that the **competition for** scarce, if not dwindling and increasingly expensive **natural resources** is accelerating. Conflicts may occur over or involve land, water, mineral and energy resources – affecting predominantly developing countries –, aggravated by the impact of climate change (rising sea level, intense storms and hurricanes, continent-wide "dust bowl" effects, reduced food security). The danger is not seen so much with sudden degradations of the environment per se, but more with the consequences for human societies, that might entail famines or mass migrations. Poor countries in particular will find it exceedingly difficult to cope with the consequences of climate change. Global warming will increasingly have an impact on access to water, food security, flooding of large areas, and the health situation (e.g. the annual number of malaria cases is expected to rise from 50 million a year to 80 million by 2100). The use, availability and quality of water and related ecosystems will be of paramount importance. Currently, an estimated one billion people have no access to clean drinking water and 2.6 billion are without adequate sanitation. Water is recognized not only as a commodity, but as a glue that binds humanity together through complex interactions – it touches on every aspect of human existence and is the basis for sustainable development and existence. Scientific and technological solutions are only part of the equation – the other part comprises sustainable water management, good governance, cultural and biological diversity.

18.   The **effective management of risks related to global hazards and natural disasters** will become a global priority, as will be the necessity to set up early warning systems. Lessons from the tsunami tragedy and other natural disasters shall increasingly influence and condition future preparedness and readiness. Emergencies seem poised to become more frequent and larger in scale, which is partly due to the human-induced degradation of ecosystems, extremes in meteorological conditions and long-term changes in weather patterns, all of which may require fundamental adjustments in many regions of the world.

19.   **Technoscience will make further strident advances**. For the first time in history humankind will be capable of genetically modifying itself. The ethical, legal and normative limits and barriers of the scientific knowledge upon us must be addressed and defined in order to protect the principle of human dignity. While advances in science and technology, especially in the biological field, offer new hope for the development and well-being of societies and individuals, they raise at the same time novel and grave ethical questions. By developing the means and techniques to master biology through genetic tinkering and manipulation, the possibility is being created to control certain evolutionary factors and to domesticate the human race itself.

20.   The processes of globalization, especially the rapid increases in the number of people travelling over long distances and in the movement of goods across boundaries and oceans, introduce new, as yet unmanageable **new global security issues**. In particular, they accelerate the spread of diseases and epidemics – such as SARS or bird flu – which may cause new, rapidly multiplying global **health crises** in the form of epidemics. The devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe and parts of Asia may have an additional and unpredictable negative impact on economic growth in those countries affected – and on their human resource capacities for sustainable development.

21.   Globalization equally affects **cultural diversity**, which is closely linked to intercultural dialogue. Indeed, they are inseparable and mutually dependent. Globalization also impinges on **languages and multilingualism**. They are essential conditions for sustainable development in all environments, including cyberspace, education systems, cultural expressions and exchanges, at international, regional and national levels. It is estimated that there are over 6,000 languages spoken in the world today, with 96% of these languages spoken by just 4% of the world's

population. At least half of these languages are in danger of disappearing within several generations. Half of all languages can be found in just eight countries: Papua New Guinea (about 800), Indonesia (about 700), Nigeria (about 500), India (about 400), Mexico (about 300), Cameroon (about 250), Australia (250) and Brazil (230).

22.   **Threats to peace and international security will persist**. Apart from the spectre of conflicts over resources, failing states may become a threat to global security, spawning new conflicts and intensifying calls for humanitarian interventions. There may as well be an upsurge in violence in many countries, in particular among the youth. New environments for conflicts may open up also in space and cyberspace. Fanaticism and terrorism will continue to afflict societies on a global scale and in an indiscriminate manner.

23.   **Transnational organized crime** is likely to grow, especially within failed states. It may take the form of narco-trafficking, narcoterrorism, human trafficking, including of women and children for sexual exploitation, as well as illegal traffic – or destruction – of cultural property and may spawn tentacles around the globe, challenging the power of the state and insidiously penetrating all sectors of society and the economy.

24.   **The global phenomenon of ageing** may trigger new forms of poverty, especially in industrialized countries, such as **age poverty** or **poverty due to shrinking or insufficient social security nets or coverage**. The reproductive rates of most developed countries (such as European countries, Russia, Japan, Australia, and North American countries), but also of developing countries like China, Turkey or Algeria are dipping below the level of 2.1 children per woman, necessary to maintain long-term population stability. For one, China will have 400 million inhabitants over 65 by 2020.

25.   Changes are evolving within countries affecting the respective roles of the state, the private sector and civil society. The **power of non-state actors is predicted to rise**, such as in the form of multinational companies and the private sector at large, global socially- or rights-oriented NGOs, single issue pressure groups and civil society, mobilized via the Internet or through membership schemes, youth and women's groups, local government entities, professional associations and religious and faith leaders.

26.   The **rise of global religions and faiths** is injecting new forms of social interaction and politics beyond the realm of the nation state. Trends suggest that the proportion of Christians and Muslims with regard to world population will increase, as sects and new religions will continue to spread in all regions. Identities will be influenced by a diversity of ethnic, linguistic and religious factors, which may cause tensions, within and beyond national boundaries, if pluralism is not properly nurtured and managed at the national level.

27.   The **information and communication revolution**, comparable in its impact with the industrial revolution, is bringing about a substantial restructuring of societal arrangements, interaction and networking. It offers enormous new opportunities for social and human development and for poverty alleviation, not least facilitating the worldwide exchange of knowledge for the benefit of the greatest number, but it may equally be capable of causing new rifts and forms of exclusion. However, in the wake of technological innovations, new digital divides will arise. While Internet and mobile phone connections will be pervasive in high-income groups in all countries, the access divide will remain in rural areas, not serviced by privatized communication companies. Satellite communications will introduce a new dynamic. A content divide is equally emerging, as more and more information will be digitized and protected by DRM (digital rights management) structures. The possibilities for harnessing knowledge and promoting its sharing through ICT-enhanced media will continue to increase in line with the rapid evolution of ICTs. New challenges to freedom of expression will arise due to the transboundary flow of information, emerging security issues and the need to thwart the use of ICTs, especially the Internet, for terrorist purposes.

28. **South-South cooperation** is in the ascendancy. Overall, there has been an impressive growth in technical skills and institutional capacities in almost all developing countries. Apart from reducing the demand for long-term technical assistance involving large teams of internationally recruited experts, this has opened up exciting opportunities for expanding South-South cooperation programmes and facilitating an increase in cross-country training and collaborative research opportunities. It has also altered the mix of skills which countries will seek when soliciting assistance.

29. **Governance**, at both the worldwide and national levels, may need to be adjusted to cope with the complexity of the global problems, to find sustainable and coherent strategies and solutions and to deal with powerful national and multinational stakeholders. At the national level, demands will continue to seek improved governance through a strengthening of participation in democratic processes, the observance of the rule of law and the separation of powers, ensuring the independence of the judiciary, the adoption of effective measures against corruption, the promotion of transparency and accountability, a broadening of access to information and full respect for human rights. In this regard, pluralistic and independent media of high professional and ethical standards will be critical.

30. **Flows of official development assistance (ODA) are increasing, but are not sufficient to reach the MDGs**. At the international level, following the *Monterrey Consensus* that emerged from the International Conference on Financing for Development in March 2002, the *Gleneagles Communiqué*, issued at the end of the G8 meeting held in July 2005, put on record the commitments of many developed countries – including the 25 countries of the European Union, as well as Japan and Canada – to double aid within five years. During their September 2005 meetings, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank both reached agreement to cancel the debts owed to them by 18 developing countries and opened up the prospect of extending similar arrangements to many more of the poorest countries. This would mean that current levels of $80 billion would indeed grow until $128 billion by 2010. However, the 2010 target ODA level of 0.36% of GNP (currently at 0.26) would only be marginally above that of 1990. According to the OECD-DAC Development Cooperation Report 2005, ODA would have to double from $69 billion in 2003 to $135 billion in 2006 to fully finance the MDGs, rising thereafter to $195 billion by 2015. This goes well beyond existing commitments and calls for long-term and targeted commitments by donors. Also, current trends like directing ODA to select post-conflict countries and heavily favouring bilateral and tied aid as well as global funds (not administered by the United Nations) are likely to gain ground, thereby further eroding the financing base of multilateral organizations.

31. **The United Nations reform process will go on unabatedly and will intensify**. While the quest for United Nations reform has been on the international agenda for decades, it has arguably now reached a level of urgency, being pursued at the highest levels of government and seen as a once-in-a-generation necessity. Apart from persistent efforts to bring the multilateral structures in line with new power and economic realities of a changed world, such as through better **international governance** and in particular a reform of the United Nations Security Council, the bulk of initiatives is seeking to ensure that the international development system will deliver with requisite quality on the promises of 2000 (United Nations Millennium Declaration) and 2005 (United Nations World Summit Outcome document). Concretely, this will mean realizing efficiency gains by streamlining the uncoordinated proliferation of programmes, pruning duplication and waste and enhancing the impact of operational action at the country level, yielding measurable results and preventing and resolving conflicts. This means that the character of the United Nations system will be transformed from one that has been created to preserve peace and promote international cooperation in the wake of major conflagrations and economic depression to one that will derive its legitimacy from international cooperation pursuing MDGs and ensuring human security. Structural and governance reforms creating a group of entities around major themes may affect the present balance between specialized agencies, United Nations funds and programmes as well as the Bretton Woods institutions. Overall, the future role, comparative advantages and niches of all these entities will need to be re-articulated and confirmed. In that process, special attention must be paid to instilling a balance and productive linkage between normative and operational activities – which

are the hallmark and strength of specialized agencies. The outcomes of these reform efforts are very difficult to predict, as Member States are either beginning or are in the middle of negotiating major proposals. Yet, the creation of new special-purpose mechanisms, such as Global Funds, outside the United Nations system, or resort to regional mechanisms may impact on the future role of the United Nations system as well as the magnitude of development funds channelled through it. Likewise, the considerable growth in institutional capacities and skills in many developing countries will require many United Nations organizations to change their approaches and menu of assistance in significant ways.

III. Challenges to the multilateral system and especially UNESCO

32. The perceived global trends and developments will pose immediate challenges to, but also opportunities for the multilateral system in general and to UNESCO more specifically. Some of the trends described may well have been apparent six years ago, when the last Medium-Term Strategy was adopted. Yet, this time the emphasis and urgency is on the need to define more precisely the particular challenges in order to lay the foundations for concrete action. UNESCO needs to make timely and proactive contributions to tackling these challenges – preferably ahead of the "international activity curve". The present chapter therefore sets out the principal challenges and outlines some directions for UNESCO's future actions, newly to be initiated or sharpening current activities.

Fighting poverty

33. In the development sphere, **the fight against poverty** will not only become the central focus, but it will define in specific terms programme action by all multilateral organizations. The persistence and deepening of poverty globally can and must be tackled through a better understanding of the multiple dimensions of poverty and a better focus on areas, some often neglected in traditional poverty paradigms, that can be tackled through action by the Organization, such as education, science, especially the role and application of local and indigenous knowledge, approaches aimed at preserving cultural diversity, or the poverty-reducing potential of ICTs, including through a promotion of good governance and free and independent media. UNESCO has prepared itself increasingly, also through interdisciplinary action, to contribute to the attainment of the MDGs. One of its major contributions thus far has been the management of the EFA process and the building of requisite capacities in Member States. The publication of the annual EFA Global Monitoring Report (fed almost exclusively by UNESCO's own statistical arm UIS) has internationally been recognized as a landmark accomplishment for policy development (and a reference point for MDG monitoring) and it is likewise a starting point for capacity-building. UNESCO education institutes play a unique role in fine-tuning and providing advice and training to beef up national capacities. However, much remains to be done, especially in terms of localized goals/action, and UNESCO must bring its competence to bear more visibly and effectively in delivering concrete solutions. UNESCO will be challenged to further reinforce its work in favour of women and girls, sub-Saharan Africa, the disadvantaged and marginalized populations (rural and urban poor, people with disabilities, migrants, victims of conflicts and natural disasters).

34. The needs of the **urban and rural poor** will be a growing concern. Uncontrolled urbanization in some developing countries means that, increasingly, there are few or no institutions and infrastructures to service the new urban populations (including in education, science, culture, communication). For similar reasons, rural areas run the risk of a similar acute neglect. There will be a need to address the specific needs of those populations, with an emphasis on urban management issues and rural deprivation.

Fostering peace and dialogue

35. New approaches may be needed to **contribute to peace** in a growingly unpredictable, unstable and segmented world. In the current international environment, the emphasis has shifted away from the concern with disarmament in previous decades and has turned towards

emphasizing the value of dialogue and understanding in a world of diversity and new ignorances. Given this growing international recognition of the critical contribution of dialogue to peace and reconciliation, UNESCO will need to position itself effectively to bring to bear the full potential of dialogue at all levels, especially through its educational, cultural and communication programmes. Through international cooperation, efforts will need to be intensified to portray and instil a positive meaning of tolerance as a bedrock for a **culture of peace**, in the fight against racism and discriminations of all sorts, and to help prevent the outbreak of conflicts in various fields. UNESCO continues to be committed to the promotion of a **culture of peace** in various ways and through all its major programmes. UNESCO will increasingly need to respond to crisis situations and their aftermath, including natural and human-made disasters due to environmental stress and intervening in weak/fragile states, especially those emerging from acute and violent conflict. The **combat against terrorism** has moved to the top of the international agenda. UNESCO has outlined an approach detailing how it can contribute to this campaign (General Conference Resolution, 2001) and is following a long-term dissuasion approach through its domains. Relevant activities include the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples aimed at redefining the logic, purpose and modalities of such dialogue; the promotion of quality education, reform of curricula and revision of school textbooks and materials; programmes seeking to redress exclusion and an elucidation of the root causes of new forms of violence in its socio-psychological context; programmes promoting the role that media and information systems can play in furthering intercultural understanding; identification and tackling of new ignorances that cause new gaps and potential conflicts; and the need to promote and protect cultural diversity. In the context of the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples broader adherence to religions and beliefs will introduce new dimensions, to which UNESCO will have to respond.

Promoting cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and multilingualism

36.   Given the importance of striving for a more open, creative and democratic world against discrimination, exclusion and fundamentalism, UNESCO will be expected to actively promote worldwide the **principles of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and the implementation of its Action Plan. The Declaration defines "culture" as "the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and** … encompass[ing], in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs". It draws on the conclusions of the World Conference on Cultural Policies (Mexico City, 1982), the work of the World Commission on Culture and Development (*Our Creative Diversity*, 1995) and the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (Stockholm, 1998). This recognition of the wider ambit of culture gives rise to a renewed interest in cultural policies based on the recognition of diversity within and among societies and designation of cultural diversity as the "common heritage of humanity". The Universal Declaration, together with its Action Plan, takes up the twin challenge of cultural diversity, namely: to ensure that individuals and groups have the capacity to construct a harmonious holistic existence, drawing on intercultural dialogue within and among societies, building cultural pluralism as a policy response to the reality of cultural diversity; and to protect and enhance the numerous forms in which cultures are expressed. In other words, it entails defending creative diversity so that it may remain the focus of dialogue among cultures. Cultural diversity derives its very wealth from dialogue. The UNESCO tasks, defined in its Constitution, to promote "the fruitful diversity of cultures" and to facilitate "the free flow of ideas by word and image" are thus mutually supportive, the free flow of ideas acting as fertile seed for cultural diversity and dialogue.

37.   The myriad cultural expressions in the world today, which reflect the wealth of imagination, knowledge and value systems, are both a challenge and an opportunity for a renewed dialogue leading to each person's integration and participation in society as a whole. The opportunity can be seized only if our response is premised on the recognition of creative diversity, one that respects the value of each cultural expression, as long as such expression is consistent with respect for human rights and fundamental values. It is clear that the key ideas that must guide UNESCO's commitment in the field of culture in the age of globalization continue to be based on the paradigm of a plural humanity, understood as dynamic processes constantly reinvented by the very inception

of dialogue with each other. This commitment extends from culture to cultural diversity through intellectual and moral solidarity, cooperation for development, intercultural dialogue and the preservation of cultural diversity as the common heritage of humanity.

38.   Action will include: implementation of the seven international conventions drawn up by UNESCO since the 1950s in order to preserve the many aspects of cultural diversity, viewed from the angle of both the heritage and contemporary creativity; fostering the exchange of knowledge with regard to cultural pluralism; advancing the understanding and clarifying the content of cultural rights; promoting through education an awareness of the positive value of cultural diversity; encouraging digital literacy and countering the digital divide; encouraging the production, safeguarding and dissemination of diversified cultural contents in the media and global information networks; respecting and protecting traditional knowledge; fostering the mobility of creators, artists, researchers, scientists and intellectuals; ensuring protection of copyright and related rights; consolidating cultural industries in the developing countries, and developing related cultural policies in accordance with the international obligations incumbent upon each State.

39.   **Linguistic diversity** requires special attention. It must be enhanced and preserved on a global scale. To that end, the recognition of the importance of languages and the development and the promotion of policies in favour of multilingualism will need to permeate all spheres of UNESCO's competence. The related strategy will have to be based on the acknowledgement of the vital interaction between linguistic, educational and cultural diversity, and the principle of equality of all cultures and languages. Of critical importance will be the mobilization of political decision-makers, civil society and private partners in Member States.

Injecting ethical principles into globalization

40.   The process of globalization and managing it is impossible without an **ethical underpinning based on shared values**. UNESCO has a unique role both in terms of conceptual approaches and of translating them into concrete frameworks, modalities and action. Human security transcends the traditional parameters of national security. The development at the regional level of ethical, normative and educational frameworks provides Member States with guidelines and best practice suggestions to tackle the manifold socio-economic problems which have already a compounded impact on the well-being of populations. In the process, UNESCO's contribution to the evolution and codification of ethics of science and technology, in particular bioethics will be of significant impact. Other areas with ethical significance are the comprehensive approach in the domain of heritage by expanding the concept from tangible to intangible heritage; the promotion of quality education introducing ethical dimensions, such as tolerance, respect for others, dialogue or respect for diversity and world heritage; the focus on the ethics of freshwater, which is most relevant especially in the WSSD follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2005 United Nations World Summit; the ethics dimensions of the information society, highlighted at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS); and the ethics of governance.

Harnessing science for sustainable development and peace

41.   **Science and technology**, especially from the perspective of **sustainable development, will play an increasingly central role to safeguard and enhance human security** (this may range from imparting and sharing knowledge about scientific and environmental processes to action through the scientific intergovernmental programmes and scientific networking) **and to empower countries building their knowledge base. Water and the oceans** have moved to the top of the international agenda and UNESCO is being recognized for its leadership role in these two fields. Pressures on the environment, natural resource base, biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods and ecosystems will increase and require more tangible contributions from UNESCO, in particular, through the provision of policy advice and capacity-building in science, technology and the environment. The resort to **renewable sources of energy** may grow due to environmental and price factors as well as the burgeoning global demand. The dramatic increase in the global demand for mineral and energy resources worldwide directs the spotlight also to the **earth**

sciences. UNESCO being the only United Nations agency to pursue geology and geophysics research and training, is in a position to develop the research and capacity-building tools required in these areas. As endorsed by WSSD, the improvement of **Earth Observation** is a prerequisite for the planning of sustainable, environmentally sound socio-economic development. Over the next ten years, a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) will be developed by a group of United Nations agencies, with UNESCO being a key player. The activities are interdisciplinary and integrated and cover the fields of water-ocean-environmental earth sciences as well as natural hazards.

42. UNESCO's natural sciences programmes will likely be called to respond (and to be more reactive in their response) to natural disasters, threats to the biosphere and biological diversity and diseases as well as to the use of renewable energy. Emergencies and natural disasters will draw on one of UNESCO's significant comparative advantages pertaining to **prediction, early detection, building capacities and preparedness for coping with disasters** and, where this is possible, prevention of **emergencies**, especially when dealing with threats that have transboundary or global dimensions requiring international solutions. Member States are increasingly recognizing that timely preventative action is often a great deal cheaper and less socially disruptive than allowing problems to build up to a scale that becomes life-threatening, requires enormously expensive interventions and induces massive economic losses. This recognition has to be translated into funding for preventative or preparedness measures on the necessary scale. Hence, integrated response plans need to focus not only on relief, recovery and reconstruction, but also on disaster preparedness and mitigation (e.g. post-tsunami response integrates plans for the establishment of an Indian Ocean Early Warning System and national capacity-building for its operationalization). It must furthermore be multi-hazard (landslides, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, drought) and identify potential disaster risk areas.

Contributing to the fight against HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases

43. Globalization is accompanied by the emergence and re-emergence of infectious diseases. **HIV/AIDS**, with its inter-generational and borderless nature, poses an exceptional challenge to development, progress and stability of societies worldwide and will require much more attention and action than in the past. While dimensions and dynamics of the pandemic were apparent already some six years ago, their full scope and impact have now crystallized in much sharper terms. Increasingly, the face of HIV/AIDS is a woman's face, with women having greater vulnerability to infection due to social, cultural and physiological reasons. Young women are the most affected group in the world: According to UNFPA, they represent 67% of all new cases of HIV among people aged 15 to 24 in developing countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, young women represent 76% of young people living with HIV. One of the most effective means against the spread of HIV/AIDS is preventive education at all levels – and here UNESCO has begun to make valuable contributions (EDUCAIDS) which may need to be expanded in line with the mushrooming crisis. This will necessitate innovative intersectoral approaches and a particular focus of the impact of the pandemic on women and girls. Likewise efforts to alleviate the impact of HIV/AIDS, to address the spiralling costs of HIV treatment and to intensify prevention efforts must be scaled up and refined. The resource needs are enormous: between $18 and $20 billion are estimated to be required by 2008 from domestic and international sources to finance scaled-up programmes of prevention, treatment and care. HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination must be tackled through awareness campaigns, policies and legislation. Additional measures must be taken to fight other infectious diseases, such as malaria or tuberculosis, through a strengthening of health systems and innovative delivery approaches.

Promoting gender equality

44. Given the unequivocal international commitment to **gender equality** and empowerment of women, as expressed in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document, UNESCO must further reinforce its work in favour of gender equality everywhere and at all levels of its programme. In Africa, one in two eligible girls is not enrolled in primary schools, and one in five of eligible girls is

not enrolled in secondary education. There is a need for a "mainstreaming +" approach to gender – including both activities targeting girls and women, and the mainstreaming of analysis, advocacy, policy development research and all levels of programme development. UNESCO will need to ensure that sectoral approaches, priorities and specific initiatives in all domains identify and address through concrete action the specific needs of women and girls.

Building knowledge societies

45.   In all domains, there will be a growing **focus on global knowledge exchange, networking, policy and advocacy**. Here UNESCO must capitalize on its comparative advantage – defined by its universality, its convening capacity, its mandate and advisory role in its areas of competence, its pluridisciplinarity and its ability to mobilize and interact with various constituencies – governmental, non-governmental and the private sector. UNESCO, as a global clearing house and knowledge broker, collects, generates, processes, standardizes, synthesizes, disseminates, transfers and applies knowledge in a continuous cycle. The introduction of ICT innovations will open up opportunities for accelerating the flow of knowledge, making it more widely available and, often, enriching it in the process. UNESCO must follow a two-track approach: exploiting traditional technologies to the fullest and taking full advantage of new developments, maximizing the potential of ICTs to contribute to the realization of the MDGs. Moreover, UNESCO must more proactively integrate ICTs to shape the way in which the Organization conducts its business on a global basis. It must become more than a mere broker of knowledge, rather it must position itself to contribute to a clearer understanding of the priorities for scientific knowledge and knowledge management. Worldwide, **knowledge societies** will continue to develop and grow. As a result, there will likely be fierce competition for knowledge within a global labour market, bringing about brain drain and outsourcing. In this setting, UNESCO needs to take and adapt specific action related to its core competencies, such as issues related to the freedom of expression, access to information and knowledge, quality education, literacy and linguistic diversity.

IV.   The reform of the United Nations system and its implications for UNESCO

46.   The United Nations reform process is likely to have a major impact on **UNESCO's action at the global, regional and especially the country levels**. In the 2005 World Summit Outcome document Heads of State and Government pledged to "enhance the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and credibility of the United Nations system" and called for reform in order to eliminate overlap and duplication in mandates and ensure stronger system-wide coherence and effectiveness. A primary objective of the United Nations reform is to ensure that all organizations, funds and programmes of the United Nations can make collective, strategic contributions in response to national and international development priorities, in particular internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs, the commitments of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document and to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The central objective is to enable the United Nations to unleash its substantive, collective potential and to demonstrate its continuing relevance and effectiveness in delivering concrete results.

47.   In an environment of potentially large increases in bilateral aid flows, the request for United Nations assistance and services in the area of policy advice, policy planning, policy dialogue, monitoring and evaluation and in capacity-building as a whole is likely to grow. United Nations organizations will be expected to respect fully national ownership of development strategies and programmes and national accountability for results and enhance overall effectiveness in aid delivery. There will be a continued, if not relentless emphasis on **effectiveness, efficiency, harmonization and results-orientation**. The pressure for formulating results-based targets, strategies and approaches and time-bound activities (including effective monitoring as well as mandatory sunset or review clauses) will be paramount. **Statistics and world-class analytical monitoring studies** are an increasingly important component of this function as all international activities are now being designed with reference to time-bound and measurable targets and deadlines. Although it may be easy to list criteria – for example relevance, efficiency and effectiveness – it will be far more difficult to agree on the way they should be applied.

48. The risk for United Nations institutions is mandate overlap or over-reach and a blurring of the image and profile of each institution. It is important for Member States to try to come to a common understanding of what is unique about the contribution each organization can make. In the past, there have been incidents of mission creep by some organizations, including the Bretton Woods organizations, which contributed to diminished efficiency and caused irritations or even discord among the organizations concerned. The present reform dynamics is of a calibre designed to tackle these deficiencies. In this context, there will be a premium for organizations capable of articulating, demonstrating and securing their core competencies.

49. UNESCO will need to define in a proactive manner its **roles, comparative advantages and scope of activities** in its areas of competence. This is particularly important in areas such as human rights, sustainable development, environment, or activities related to the digital divide which are being addressed by several United Nations entities and which trigger calls for a review and realignment of mandates, structure, governance arrangements and programmes. Moreover, **preserving the linkage and balance, complementarity and synergy between normative and technical/operational activities** is pivotal for allowing specialized agencies to fulfil their potential – at all levels and through upstream and downstream activities.

50. UNESCO is committed to ensuring a higher degree of **United Nations system-wide coherence** in order to reduce duplication and redundancies among the United Nations agencies, **especially at the country level**. The driving principle for United Nations reform should be responsiveness to the priorities and needs of the Member States the United Nations system serves. Accordingly, in addressing the call for improved coordination and coherence, the solutions should recognize and **draw on the full range of sectoral expertise, knowledge and resources available from within the entire United Nations system**. *One United Nations* should respect and capitalize fully on the diversity of the mandates and specialization available to Member States. *One United Nations* should also aim at harmonization, effectiveness and coherence. The achievement of the MDGs and other internationally agreed development targets need sector-specific development strategies just as they do cross-cutting development approaches.

51. **UNESCO's action will need to be clearly linked to the achievement of the common international agenda**, through focused strategic approaches in its fields of competence, raising the level of awareness and commitment given to education, science, culture, communication and information in international fora, in cooperation with all partners, including civil society. Of all the institutions in the United Nations system, UNESCO has the broadest and most varied area of competence and associated knowledge networks. While the breadth of UNESCO's mandate may be viewed as a weakness (in terms of dispersion of objectives and resources), it also constitutes a major asset at a time when interdisciplinarity is universally acknowledged as an essential tool for effectively addressing the complexity of the modern world. Nevertheless, under present constellations, the competition among United Nations agencies, funds and programmes will likely become more intense, relentless and less considerate of each other.

52. **Specialized agencies are custodians and depositaries of knowledge in their respective fields of competence**, based on a significant investment by Member States over many years in building up a wealth of information, experience, technical expertise and analytical capacity and a broad range of knowledge networks, which makes them well placed to provide evidence-based advice on policy and technology options, and to facilitate capacity-building and the transfer of knowledge.

53. At the **country level**, all measures need to be taken to allow UNESCO to be a full contributor to the common United Nations effort and to attain expected results and deliverables – in the context of the *One United Nations* agenda (one team, one leader, one programme). In its areas of competence, the Organization will need to assume leadership roles both globally and, resources permitting, at the country level in the framework of United Nations country teams and in broader joint assistance strategies of all external donors, concentrating on select and needy countries.

Increasingly, UNESCO is called to assume a role as facilitator and honest broker at country level for various stakeholders in its areas of competence.

54. Convinced that change is essential – in the sense of **re-engineering the Organization's programmes and its structure** – the Director-General has since 2000 initiated a broad-based reform which aims to equip the Organization to play an increasingly effective role in assisting its Members in the areas of its mandate, and in contributing to the broader effort by the United Nations system to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

55. Member States will likewise be called to adapt their practices, reform their participation and approaches to multilateral fora. They must adopt and pursue a consistent position vis-à-vis core issues, i.e. presenting and defending them consistently in all relevant international fora.

V. The future role of UNESCO

56. In the light of emerging global trends and new challenges, adjustments and/or reinforcements will be inevitable for UNESCO's future role, its orientations and action within the larger United Nations context. The recommendations of the **United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence** which are due by September 2006 are expected to chart the way for future reform measures affecting the entire United Nations system. Hence, this section will discuss in extenso UNESCO's views and approaches to the various dimensions of the system-wide reform effort.

57. Given the trends and challenges, it has been shown that UNESCO's **mandate** as set out in its Constitution is indeed **as relevant as ever**. At the present juncture, UNESCO is called upon to contribute in very specific and concrete ways, discussed above, to the overarching objectives of international peace and the common welfare of humanity by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture as well as through communication and information. This then lends legitimacy to UNESCO's indispensable role in world affairs today.

58. With respect to **core competencies**, UNESCO has several **clear advantages** on which it can build its future strategic location and interventions:

- its role as undisputed global specialized agency for education, natural sciences, human sciences, culture and communication, providing an indispensable link between normative and technical/operational functions;

- its designation and recognition as lead agency for complex, multi-stakeholder and long-term tasks (e.g. related to EFA through its Global Action Plan and the World Water Assessment Programme, the various decades for which UNESCO has been designated by the United Nations General Assembly as lead agency, and the promotion of freedom of expression and media and information development);

- its ability to develop evidence-based policies drawing on the statistical and analytical work of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and several flagship publications, such as the EFA Global Monitoring Report or the World Water Report;

- its role as leader, manager and guardian of global lists of sites, inscribed upon request of Member States, such as for World Heritage, Biosphere Reserves or Intangible Cultural Heritage.

59. The definition of core competencies must be translated into activities in which UNESCO must **attain, retain or reinforce capacity for excellence** in focused and conceptually well-defined key areas, both in the immediate and longer-term, coupled with an **identification of activities that could be terminated** if others can do them better. This will require a determination of areas that are shared – de facto or de jure – with many other multilateral institutions, where UNESCO can

only work in conjunction with other actors and where it must assert its own distinctive features, bringing its "added value" into play.

60.   In terms of **advocacy** and **global coordination functions**, the benchmark for effective United Nations system organizations is increasingly linked to their ability to contribute to the global agenda and development goals. UNESCO will need to intensify and solidify its efforts and timely performance with respect to several long-term initiatives – EFA (and in particular its Global Action Plan); quality education as a whole; education for sustainable development (ESD); literacy; water; dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples.

61.   As the **real world challenges are multi-dimensional**, UNESCO must increasingly develop and deliver its programme through **intersectoral action**. While interdisciplinarity has certainly progressed in recent years, much remains to be done to provide a critical mass and added value of genuinely interdisciplinary approach to many problems, that is, one that is more than a juxtaposition of sectoral efforts. UNESCO's mission is unique and the fields over which it distributes its actions can only be understood as parts of a holistic system.

UNESCO's comparative advantage

62.   UNESCO contributes to all the three areas identified in the World Outcome document – **development, humanitarian assistance and the environment** – by establishing competences in key areas.

63.   In all three areas, UNESCO believes that the linkage between the **global normative, policy, advocacy and monitoring functions, and operational activities** of the specialized agencies at country, subregional and regional levels, needs to be preserved. The linkage and interdependency between normative and operational activities is essential; there must be a "feedback" loop between the two. Indeed, normative work is not initiated in a vacuum; it is a response to on-the-ground experiences, which are then translated into universal principles or guidelines. These can only prove their viability and impact once they are translated into concrete action (at the operational level). The experience derived from implementation is then part of the feedback loop that informs (refines, modifies) the normative work – in a sense, a virtuous circle – and should not be broken.

64.   With regard to **development**, the very need for normative work arises from practical problems on the ground; similarly, for policy advice to be relevant and cogent, it needs to be continuously refreshed by up-to-date information and situation-specific knowledge.

65.   With regard to the **environment**, UNESCO has built up expertise in several key areas, such as freshwater and the oceans, which has been recognized by assigning to it lead roles in the United Nations inter-agency mechanisms United Nations-Water and United Nations-Oceans. Indeed, UNESCO with some 200 operational experts has today the strongest and most wide-ranging freshwater programme of all United Nations entities. The designation of the Organization as lead agency for the United Nations-wide World Water Assessment Programme is expression of this strength. This standing has been acquired as a result of the elevation of water as one of the principal priorities of the Organization over a period of three programmes and budgets, as well as through UNESCO's interdisciplinary approach to the question of freshwater management. UNESCO's action in freshwater is based on four interlinked pillars: (i) UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP); (ii) the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education; (iii) the United Nations system-wide World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) led by UNESCO in close cooperation with the other agencies linked through the United Nations-Water; and (iv) the rapidly expanding network of water centres established under UNESCO's auspices. These pillars support UNESCO's comparative advantage in several areas of freshwater management, and in particular in water education and capacity-building.

66.   UNESCO recognizes the importance of strengthening the coordination of **humanitarian assistance**, including OCHA. It is a particular concern to UNESCO that the transition from

humanitarian assistance to reconstruction and development is well coordinated and ensures coherence in the United Nations system's long-term role. UNESCO has a technical role to play and is regularly called upon by Member States, even during the earliest stages of post-conflict and post-disaster situations, to address the human, more than the physical, aspects of recovery and reconstruction, such as education, media capacity-building or cultural heritage protection.

The country level – the principal arena for United Nations reform

67. Both developing countries and contributors will insist that decentralized action be **well coordinated and integrated with that of other United Nations agencies, programmes and funds**, benefiting from UNESCO's involvement in global inter-agency activities and in United Nations country teams. Hence, action must increasingly be located at the level at which international cooperation can be carried out most effectively. It must demonstrate results and contribute to the achievement of the MDGs, manage effectively emergency/post-crisis situations, and strengthen relationships with United Nations organizations at all levels, enhance cooperation with regional and subregional bodies and cooperate with a broad range of other partners.

68. Indeed, the **country level will be the principal arena for demonstrating effectiveness of interventions and results, alignment with country priorities, harmonization with United Nations system organizations and other donors**. Nevertheless, pure upstream policy advice may decrease in importance at the expense of concrete **empowerment and capacity development**. Hence, the consolidation and broadening of UNESCO's decentralization function and the adoption of country programming approaches and modular contributions to national development plans will become critical.

69. This trend will require at least three approaches:

(a) **Putting national development strategies and plans at the centre of UNESCO's country-level action**: this will include involvement in national programming processes (including CCA/UNDAFs, PRSPs, Joint Assistance Strategies) and involvement in country-level United Nations programme cycle that is fully synchronized with the national planning cycle.

(b) **Strengthening national capacities** in education, science, culture and communications – meaning by that the strengthening of UNESCO's national counterpart capacities to manage and implement the national development process and to develop and adopt coherent and effective national policies. UNESCO institutes will need to play an important role in this process.

(c) **Increasingly using and strengthening national systems** (in particular in the area of sector reporting, monitoring and evaluation, annual performance reviews, progress reports) to reduce transaction costs.

70. The *One United Nations* approach at the country level, to which UNESCO is committed, implies that the programmes and activities should be developed in such a manner as to be inclusive of the mandates and missions of all parts of the United Nations system. UNESCO considers that, in order to be true to the *One United Nations* concept, the **Resident Coordinators** (RCs) must be perceived as **representative of the whole United Nations system**, and not as accountable solely to UNDP. This would avoid any conflict of interest for UNDP, as RCs would be delivered from their functions as Resident Representatives of UNDP and assume full responsibility for the diversity of competencies across all United Nations system entities. Ideally, the RC system should be attached to the office of the United Nations Secretary-General. As such, RCs would act and be seen as impartial, objective and neutral leaders, to which the entire United Nations Country Team would readily rally. Practically speaking, however, the RC system should at present continue to be managed by UNDP on the understanding that: (i) UNDP withdraws from the operational activities falling under the mandates of the other agencies; (ii) UNDP focuses primarily on issues of

governance, cross-cutting MDG work, early recovery and aid coordination; and (iii) competent agencies with sectoral expertise are asked to take the lead in thematic groups, who would maintain direct contacts with line ministers in accordance with their mandates (e.g. for education, culture, health and agriculture) while ensuring the overall coherency. UNESCO supports the activities of United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) along the principle of "managed pluralism".

71.   UNESCO attaches high importance to a continued and intensified participation in **country-level programming activities**, such as CCA, UNDAF and PRSPs. It needs to be recognized, however, that the specialized agencies should be able to contribute in accordance with their constitutional mandate and their core competencies, as captured in sectoral development strategies (such as for education, culture, health and agriculture). Such recognition should be based on the wealth of expertise, knowledge and networking power residing with specialized agencies, rather than on the volume of funding that the specialized agencies can contribute. **Thematic leadership** by representatives from specialized agencies within UNCTs would highlight and strengthen such contributions by specialized agencies and enhance overall United Nations system coherence at the country level.

72.   In order to demonstrate its commitment to the specific aspect of the *One Programme* objective, UNESCO is ready to step up its involvement, advocacy and resource allocation in UNDAF exercises. However, due to its limited resources, UNESCO needs to be selective in its decentralization policy and prioritize countries in need or in post-conflict situations.

73.   UNESCO's country-level presence is mainly ensured through the arrangements established within UNESCO's current decentralization scheme – such as through cluster, national and regional offices, as well as antennas or national UNESCO programme officers hosted by UNDP offices. But another important dimension of UNESCO, and one of its comparative advantages, is the existence of mechanisms at the national and local level, namely the global network of National Commissions for UNESCO as well as the network of associated NGOs and UNESCO Clubs that go beyond the "national office" concept.

74.   UNESCO supports the establishment of **United Nations system common premises and services** at the country level where they prove to be more cost-effective and result in improved country programme implementation. The differing conditions and variables in country circumstance require that each proposal is considered on a case-by-case basis. Harmonization and coherence do not necessarily equate with consolidation – there is a range of different models of successful cooperation at the country level, including in Jamaica, Jordan and Nigeria. It would be irresponsible to ignore the cost savings offered to the specialized agencies by national authorities through the provision of premises free of charge unless the benefits of common services greatly exceed the economies of these hosting arrangements. It is with these qualifications that UNESCO would be interested in participating in current models to share common services.

75.   UNESCO is also prepared to make arrangements for its participation as a **Non-Resident Agency (NRA)** in the CCA/UNDAF processes, initially on a pilot basis in a selected number of Member States. The specialized agencies believe that United Nations Resident Coordinators should adopt and support a fully participatory approach in exercising their responsibilities, especially for NRAs, which UNESCO Headquarters would seek to facilitate. Alternative arrangements need to be identified so that the scope of competencies of these NRAs can be present in as many countries as possible, without necessarily having permanent offices or staff. There are many possibilities available through the use of ICTs. Any United Nations reform at the country level should facilitate alternative arrangements put in place in both conceptual and strategic terms as well as in day-to-day operations and processes.

76.   In order to achieve *One United Nations* at the country level, it will also be essential to review the **inter-agency architecture**. UNESCO's membership of UNDG since 2001 has led to a better understanding of the need for more holistic and integrated approaches to global and national policy development. It has prompted UNESCO's involvement in a number of country-level activities.

Based on this experience and its appreciation of the potential of UNDG, UNESCO believes that it is **timely to revisit the processes and governance of UNDG** so as to ensure that it is fully reflective of the diversity and specialization of the mandates and expertise available throughout the United Nations system. A review could look at the possibility of establishing a mechanism for reconciliation in cases of conflict arising from the preparation of country-level programming documents, preferably under the auspices of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). The intention would also be to strengthen CEB's profile as the principal tool for United Nations system-wide coherence at the policy and operational levels.

77.   UNESCO also needs to enhance its **capacity to respond to immediate problems, including post-conflict and post-disaster situations** while at the same time, the Organization must maintain its focus on the longer-term implications of issues. In so doing it must also respond to the wish of its Members that it adapt to their evolving requirements for services, and achieve even greater efficiency and impact in the use of its resources.

Modalities for cooperation

78.   UNESCO's Member States will increasingly look to the Organization for **capacity-building** assistance to enable them to participate effectively in the evolving and increasingly complex international environment. The thematic focus of capacity-building activities will vary over time and necessitate different mixes, but one of the principal tasks will be to assist Member States in the complex and long-term process of acquiring, adapting, strengthening, and maintaining capacities related to themes of major and emerging significance, including key capacities like policy-making, planning and monitoring. An increased use of ICTs will buttress these efforts. In strategic terms, capacity-building will increasingly need to aim at the creation and operation of high-quality, self-sustaining institutions, which in turn are capable of integrating and offering training for individuals, and especially women, rather than supporting a large volume of individual and uncoordinated training. **New modalities of cooperation and knowledge-sharing**, most notably South-South cooperation, will become more important, as well as national ownership, alignment with national plans and the use and integration of national and local expertise.

79.   UNESCO will need to broaden and deepen its links beyond its traditional **partners** in the public sector, including regional and subregional organizations, and to engage more effectively with NGOs, the private sector, parliamentarians, chambers of commerce, local government entities, professional associations, religious leaders and other stakeholders. In this regard, the National Commissions play a key role, providing the link between cooperation upstream with governments and cooperation downstream with civil society and the private sector. How can the Organization's impact be amplified by developing and expanding alliances, partnerships and joint activities? How can such partnerships be used or extended to reach communities and individuals, in particular those who are still "excluded" from existing knowledge networks?

80.   In sum, across all programmes, action will need to:

- accentuate UNESCO's role as a knowledge, learning and capacity-building organization, with an important function in identifying, disseminating and promoting best practices;

- strengthen UNESCO's coordinating role in addressing major challenges, such as EFA, ESD, water, ethics of science and technology, culture of peace, freedom of expression and media development;

- amplify the Organization's impact by expanding alliances, partnerships and joint programmes with organizations having similar goals;

- enhance responsiveness, transparency and communication with Members and all stakeholders and excel in media advocacy;

- focus on resource mobilization activities to increase the Organization's crucial contribution to development in operational and normative terms.

81. In practical terms, implementing these approaches will call for:

- consolidating decentralization to regional, subregional and country levels;

- strengthening mechanisms for knowledge sharing and interdisciplinary approaches, taking full advantage of the potential of ICTs;

- providing flexible means of action;

- streamlining business processes, introducing greater delegation of authority and clarified accountabilities, and focusing on staff training and motivation;

- reinforcing monitoring, evaluation and oversight of all programmes.

82. The question may not be so much "what future for UNESCO", but "**what UNESCO for the future**". Faced with a complex, rapidly changing world, and a fiercely competitive environment, UNESCO needs to develop its responsiveness, flexibility and adaptability, advocacy, ability to build multi-stakeholders coalitions, and ability to mobilize and implement resources – at the global, regional and country levels.

ANNEX

General Conference 33 C/resolution 64
(adopted at the thirty-third session of the General Conference on 20 October 2005)

The General Conference,

Inspired by the continuing relevance of UNESCO's Constitution, 60 years after its adoption, and the need to re-read the Constitution in this regard to address the challenges of the twenty-first century,

Guided by the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000 and the 2005 World Summit Outcome document,

Desirous of maintaining the vitality and effectiveness of the Organization and of enhancing its capacity to contribute to international cooperation in its domains – education, science and culture, as well as communication and information – and to the national development of Member States,

Underlining the special role accorded to the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, especially as standard-setters, policy advisers, policy advocates and builders of human and institutional capacities in Member States,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Asia and the Pacific group for its timely and important initiative;

2. *Considers* it desirable for a thorough and broad-based reflection and review to be undertaken, in the context of UNESCO's Constitution, with a view to:

    (a) ensuring a succinct articulation of the core competencies of UNESCO in each of its domains;

    (b) providing a clear programmatic definition of UNESCO's place, orientations and functions in the United Nations system;

    (c) specifying the policy and programmatic lead roles that have already been entrusted to or should be asserted by UNESCO;

    (d) clarifying the position to be assumed and the contribution to be made by the Organization in the multilateral context, at the global and regional levels as well as at the country level;

    (e) identifying innovative measures to involve civil society in UNESCO's deliberations and programme implementation, especially through the work of the National Commissions;

    (f) specifying UNESCO's role as a catalyst for harnessing the energy of the private sector;

    (g) designing innovative structures and decentralization modalities, benefiting from synergies with existing facilities and resources, which may enable the Organization to deliver top-notch services and ensure high-quality impact and results in a timely manner (e.g. through scientific programmes, category 2 institutes, UNITWIN networks, the ASP Network, and greater interaction and cooperation with the United Nations University);

3. *Expresses* its desire to achieve a clear concentration of the programme around thematic issues/clusters which is aimed at the realization of attainable results, and is furthermore reflected in resource allocation;

4.   *Underlines* the critical importance of working to ensure tangible recognition of and high visibility for UNESCO's mission and activities so as to secure understanding and support for its mission among policy-makers, experts in various fields and, especially, among the public at large;

5.   *Highlights* the positive impact of well-defined flagship programmes and projects with a positive track record, both in programmatic terms and in terms of public information approaches;

6.   *Requests* the Director-General, in consultation with the President of the General Conference and the Chair of the Executive Board, to lead a global consultation on the long-term future role of UNESCO – using the modalities, *inter alia*, of the forthcoming regional consultations on documents 34 C/4 and 34 C/5 – with the Permanent Delegations, the National Commissions, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with UNESCO, youth constituencies, including delegates to previous youth fora, and other United Nations bodies, in particular the United Nations University;

7.   *Further requests* the Director-General to prepare for this global consultation a succinct and engaging discussion paper identifying issues, trends and challenges of relevance for the future role of UNESCO, including themes identified at the 33rd session of the General Conference and taking into account the recommendations contained in the report of the Task Force on UNESCO in the Twenty-First Century (160 EX/48);

8.   *Requests* the Director-General to draw on the results of this ongoing global consultation in the preparation of his vision and proposals for the Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013, and to present a brief report on the implementation of this resolution to the General Conference at its 34th session.

Explanatory note:

The occasion of the 60th anniversary of the birth of UNESCO has motivated the Asia and the Pacific group to discuss the question of the future of UNESCO, both visionary and programmatic, in several of its plenaries, and this was further discussed in an Asia and the Pacific working group. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, re-reading the Constitution of UNESCO to discover its probable under-utilized capacities and to elaborate on the visionary insight that was in the minds of its founders could equip us to better face the new challenges of our age vis-à-vis UNESCO. Constructing the defences of peace in the minds of men and founding that peace upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind is a sacred task which deserves continuous oversight to mobilize even further various relevant resources. The prospect of the world in front of us indicates that this oversight is indeed what we need for a more visible and effective UNESCO in the future, to ensure its original function of intellectual watchtower and moral conscience of the United Nations family.