



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

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

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

**Address by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO,  
on the occasion of the Information Meeting  
of the Executive Board**

**UNESCO, 18 January 2008**

Mr President of the General Conference,  
Mr Chair of the Executive Board,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first of all to begin the first information meeting of the Executive Board of the 2008-2009 biennium by expressing my warmest wishes to each of you and to your families and loved ones. May this new year be for you one of personal achievement and success in every field.

I also have several wishes to make on a more institutional level. First, that the Executive Board, with its new membership and under the enlightened stewardship of Mr Yaï, will continue to provide invaluable support to the fulfilment of our mission.

The working relations that have developed between the governing bodies and the Secretariat have led to highly satisfactory progress in many matters, as may be seen from the results obtained at the last session of the General Conference in terms of the preparation and adoption of the strategic 34 C/4 and 34 C/5 documents. I am confident that the discussions initiated by the President of the General Conference, Mr Anastassopoulos, on the functioning of the three organs and our working methods will help us forge ahead constructively and positively.

I also wish that we will continue to be moved by the spirit of consensus that prevailed at the last session of the General Conference.

The General Conference at its 34th session pointed clearly to the way ahead. The Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 and the Programme and Budget for 2008-

2009 will be the framework for our endeavours in the years to come. It will be a difficult task, in which we must succeed fully if we are to build upon and consolidate the progress achieved which has enabled us to confirm our leadership, comparative advantage and added value in many fields.

As to our meeting today, I fully endorse the four criteria on which you pin the success of our meeting, and so I shall endeavour to meet them. Acting on your suggestion, I have divided my statement into two parts, focusing initially on programme-related questions before dealing with questions relating to current methods, policies and reforms. I shall then attempt to answer the 30 questions that you have raised about the programme.

Mr Chair,

Turning first to UNESCO's work in **education**, which has prompted the most questions.

Of the 16 questions raised, the majority concern Education for All. Board Members are especially interested in the outcomes of the seventh meeting of the EFA High-Level Group, held in Dakar last December. At the Information Meeting just before the holidays, I provided a detailed summary of the High-Level Group's main recommendations. Rather than repeat what I said then, let me concentrate on those areas that specifically concern UNESCO's action.

The first is to ensure systematic and accountable follow-up to the Dakar communiqué. This is one of the issues that the EFA International Advisory Panel (the IAP) will address at its meeting next week in Oslo. In the future, UNESCO, with the help of the IAP, will be much more vigilant in monitoring the implementation of the High-Level Group's recommendations.

The IAP will also give preliminary consideration to the agenda for the next EFA High-Level Group meeting, to be held in Oslo in December 2008. As in the past, the agenda will be based on the findings of the EFA Global Monitoring Report, which this year will focus on education governance and financing. The Oslo meeting will also continue to assess overall EFA progress, identifying the main obstacles and actions to tackle them.

The agenda of the High-Level Group meeting must be made available early, and it must be attractive to top-level decision makers. While there was significant

participation from developing countries in Dakar, the level of representation from donor governments and the other EFA convening agencies was disappointing. We need to redress this balance so that the High-Level Group can fully realize its function as the main lever of political and financial mobilization for EFA. After all, this is the strategic purpose of these high-level meetings.

At this mid-term period, it is critical to maintain the momentum on EFA. Despite significant progress since Dakar, we still have a long way to go, and efforts must be redoubled if we are to achieve the EFA goals by 2015.

This is why UNESCO is working hard to include EFA priorities on the agendas of other development meetings, and to raise awareness and understanding of the connections between EFA and other global issues. Certainly, we must retain our clear and determined focus on the six Dakar goals. We cannot allow the EFA agenda to be diluted or confused. However, we must not forget that achieving EFA is inextricably linked with other development challenges – including poverty reduction, public health, HIV and AIDS and environmental sustainability. A better understanding of these links would help strengthen our campaign for EFA. I believe it is possible to deal with these synergies and still retain our focus.

UNESCO leads the global coordination of EFA. This means ensuring that education-related events are linked, and feed strategically into the EFA movement. We must therefore develop a more systematic approach to the major education meetings scheduled for the next 18 months.

This year will see the biennial meetings of ADEA and the E-9. The latter, to be held in Bali in March, will give special attention to teacher training and to strengthening South-South and triangular cooperation as key mechanisms for achieving EFA. In November 2008, UNESCO will also be holding the 48th session of the International Conference on Education in Geneva. The focus on “Education for Inclusion” will help to develop and deepen the High-Level Group’s discussions on equity and inclusion, and feed into the Oslo meeting.

The first half of 2009 will host CONFINTEA VI, the mid-term review of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, and the World Conference on Higher Education plus 10.

We need to maximize the outcomes of these meetings for the benefit of EFA.

I also draw your attention to the mid-term review process that UNESCO is leading at regional and subregional levels in order to assess the major challenges countries face in EFA and define the way forward.

Last year, review meetings were held for Africa and for Latin America and the Caribbean. Next month in Doha, I will open a Ministerial conference to evaluate EFA progress in the Arab States. Countries in the Asia and Pacific region have also been carrying out national EFA assessments, which will this year feed into sub-regional synthesis reviews. The next meeting of SEAMEO ministers, which I look forward to attending in March in Kuala Lumpur, will address the challenges faced by South-East Asian countries.

I also wish to mention the ongoing series of literacy conferences, which likewise focus on regional and subregional challenges. Since literacy is not included among the MDGs it has tended to be neglected. The aim of these conferences is to show that literacy is just as important to achieving our development goals as universal primary education. Our purpose is to mobilize political and financial support at the highest levels and give literacy the place it deserves on the agendas of national governments and international partners.

Events are scheduled this year in Azerbaijan, in May, for Europe, and in Mexico, in September, for Latin America and the Caribbean. We hope to hold a final wrap up event in the autumn to assess the outcomes of all six conferences, and to help define the strategy for the second half of the United Nations Literacy Decade.

Through all these events, UNESCO is seeking to deepen understanding of key EFA issues in a way that answers country needs but also enriches the global debate.

Coordination also means ensuring the effective interaction and full engagement of the multiple EFA stakeholders. UNESCO is constantly seeking new forms of partnership and collaboration. Next week, I shall be going to Davos to discuss progress made in the Partnership for Education Initiative, which UNESCO launched last year with the World Economic Forum to mobilize greater private sector support for EFA.

UNESCO has given particular importance to ensuring coherence among the original five EFA convening agencies, notably through the development of the EFA Global Action Plan. The Plan provides a valuable framework for multilateral

coordination, and is a reference point in the strategy not only of this Organization, but also of UNICEF.

Our goal is to translate this global commitment into coherent action at the country level. UNESCO's focus in 2007 has been on ensuring our active participation in all eight of the "Delivering as One" pilots – to which I shall return this afternoon. UNESCO is currently evaluating this experience to see how the GAP can best be applied and bring added value to existing coordination mechanisms. This will include examining the relation between GAP and UNESS, which has emerged as a very useful tool for aligning support with national priorities and strengthening country ownership. UNESS is already being used to help formulate common United Nations education sector support strategies in several countries, including some of the "Delivering as One" pilots. Our hope is that as we gain greater experience, and credibility, there will be scope to do this more systematically.

Mr Chair,

To achieve EFA, we must give greater priority to Africa. This is one of the main conclusions of the GMR, and a key recommendation of the Dakar High-Level Group meeting. It is also the aim of UNESCO's own Medium-Term Strategy, and why we are creating this biennium an intersectoral platform specifically focused on Africa – which I will return to later. Let me highlight now what UNESCO is doing for Africa in education.

We will continue to advocate vigorously in international fora for greater focus on Africa's needs. We will also use our role as co-leader of the education thematic group of the Secretary-General's MDG Africa initiative to reinforce the effectiveness of United Nations support to country education needs.

With regard to UNESCO's own country-level action, as you know I have launched three EFA initiatives that focus particularly on Africa: LIFE – which has been extended this biennium to cover six more sub-Saharan countries; EDUCAIDS; and TTISSA.

Member States at the last General Conference called on UNESCO to take a number of measures to enhance the effectiveness of TTISSA. The Secretariat is moving quickly to implement the resolution. We are, for example, boosting support to countries in the fields of literacy training, of pre-service and in-service training, and of distance learning.

Regular assessment is essential to TTISSA's effectiveness. An internal evaluation is already underway, and will be presented to the Executive Board in April. Consultations have also begun with IOS on the preparation of a comprehensive external report for next year.

Preliminary feedback shows that TTISSA is providing valuable assistance to countries in developing effective teacher policies. However, there are human and financial constraints to TTISSA's execution. Therefore, in line with the General Conference resolution, I call on Member States to provide voluntary contributions to support the implementation of this important initiative.

UNESCO is continuing to bolster its field presence in Africa. The ADG for Education is acting swiftly to fill vacant education field posts, particularly in Africa, and additional new posts will be created this biennium.

Interviews will also be held next month for the director of BRENDA, as well as for the director of our regional education office for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago. I hope that I will be able to announce appointments to these two key positions soon after the interviews.

In addition, we are working hard to mobilize extrabudgetary funds for the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa, IICBA. In this respect, I wish to thank Japan for its initial contribution and China for its more recent donation. The latter provides an excellent example of South-South cooperation. I would also like to express my thanks to Ethiopia for its generous grant of land. Discussions are ongoing with Korea, Spain and the African Development Bank for additional funding, which will be targeted to supporting teacher training projects in TTISSA countries.

Let me also briefly update you on progress regarding the South-South Cooperation Fund. Contributions have been received from Brazil, China and India, and many other Member States have made pledges. We shall use the lessons of the four pilots launched last year to help countries develop projects under the Fund.

I can tell you that the pilot project for Africa, which channelled technical expertise from Brazil to support Guinea Bissau in developing a national education sector strategy for HIV and AIDS, proved extremely beneficial to all partners engaged. I hope that this success will encourage other Member States to donate money to the Fund.

Let me add that UNESCO's efforts to promote South-South cooperation are not limited to education, but engage all of our programme sectors.

I wish finally to signal that Africa will also be a priority issue for the World Conference on Higher Education plus 10, which UNESCO will organize in July 2009. One of the main items on the agenda will be the proposed creation of an action plan to support the revitalization of higher education in Africa. This will include how to strengthen the role of higher education in achieving the EFA goals and the MDGs.

Regional meetings will be held in preparation of the event. The education and science sectors are also working closely to ensure maximum synergy between the World Conference on Higher Education and the World Conference on Science plus 10, which will likewise be held in 2009, in Budapest.

Mr Chair,

Before I conclude on education, let me respond briefly to a couple of questions that relate to specific activities.

The first regards our vigorous action to promote schools that are safe and violence free. Quality education cannot be achieved in an environment that is hazardous to the physical or mental well-being of the child.

Here, let me draw your attention to our efforts to help Member States implement the recommendations of the Expert Meeting held at Headquarters last June on "Stopping violence in schools: what works?". UNESCO has entered into an agreement with the International Observatory on Violence in Schools to monitor through regional networks the changing nature of violence in schools, and research and best practices aimed at addressing this global problem. Efforts will also be strengthened to raise public awareness in this area through a media campaign and other communication activities.

Let me also recall UNESCO's intersectoral programme on youth violence (Maras) prevention in Central America. Three major projects are under way in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, while a fourth should be launched soon in Honduras. At the regional level, an important Regional Forum of National Authorities of Youth Policies was organized by UNESCO in San Jose, Costa Rica, last August. The aim was to enable Ministers and national policy-makers in charge of youth issues to

share common concerns and achievements and develop their cooperation with bilateral and multilateral agencies. It was decided, on this occasion, to develop a network of youth and violence observatories and a tool for the comparative analysis of information on youth and violence for decision-makers, with the support of the MOST programme.

UNESCO will continue to support all efforts to strengthen cooperation at the sub-regional level in favour of the prevention of youth violence in Central America.

The second question regards our action to promote quality education that is relevant to learner needs, and in particular our work on education for sustainable development.

Let me highlight our five main objectives in ESD. The first is to bolster our role as advocate and champion of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. The second is to strengthen coordination, internationally and internally, in support of the Decade, so that all partners work together for maximum impact. The third is to make much better use of established mechanisms – including UNESCO Chairs and the ASP network – in our efforts to identify, develop and facilitate the exchange of effective models of ESD. The fourth is to prepare the 2009 mid-term review conference for the DESD, hosted by Germany. And the fifth is to put into operation the Monitoring and Evaluation process for the Decade – indeed, an expert meeting on this is being held here at Headquarters this very week.

These are the priorities for the next biennium.

The final question regards our work to promote bilingual education, which UNESCO defines as the use of two languages as media of instruction. UNESCO has always called for an inclusive approach to language education, both as part of our efforts to enhance education quality and access, and our broader commitment to cultural and linguistic diversity. The celebration in 2008 of the International Year of Languages is an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the value of multilingual education, particularly mother tongue-based bilingual education. Emphasis will be on policy dialogue, capacity development and the sharing of successful models and good practices.

Mr Chair,

Moving on to the **sciences**. Let me first update you on the follow-up to the recommendations of the Overall Review Committee on Major Programmes II and III. I am happy to report that this is progressing well. The Task Force that I created last June has already examined and commented on the draft work plans prepared by the two science sectors. Its suggested adjustments and changes are currently being integrated. Some of these changes involve shifts in resources to reinforce activities highlighted as priorities during the General Conference, and to create a better balance of resource allocation between the programmes. I will keep you informed of progress in our follow-up. Consultations will also continue with the scientific community, including the external members of the former Overall Review Committee, as we proceed.

A number of you have posed questions on UNESCO's action to tackle climate change. I held an Information Meeting in late November to discuss with Permanent Delegates the Organization's new draft climate change strategy. Let me update you on the major developments since then, notably in light of the Bali Conference.

UNESCO was proactive in the development of the "Compact on Climate Change", which was presented as a joint contribution of the United Nations system to the high-level segment in Bali. We also organized a side event to present our draft Strategy for Action on Global Climate Change, which represents UNESCO's specific contribution to the United Nations system-wide response.

Both the United Nations and UNESCO strategies give special attention to adaptation. The approval at Bali of the creation of an Adaptation Fund highlights the urgent need to support countries already affected by climate change. To this end, UNESCO will extend current research efforts – such as those undertaken by the World Climate Research Programme jointly sponsored by WMO, UNESCO/IOC and ICSU – to include adaptation research. UNESCO will also take the lead in efforts to update and complement the global knowledge-base on climate change, notably through the inclusion of key human and social science inputs, such as work on the ethics of climate change. Programmes in the human and social science sector will be re-focused towards this end. This emphasis on the more "human" dimensions of climate change will be vital to developing effective adaptation measures.

The Intersectoral Platform on Climate Change will be our prime vehicle for ensuring the coordinated implementation of the strategy, while the Task Force on Climate Change will continue to provide overall strategic guidance.

Two main activities are envisaged. First is the development of a series of pilot projects, aimed at bringing adaptation solutions to specific problems such as coastal erosion and sea-level rise. Where effective, these experiences will be promoted as worthy of being scaled up.

The second is the assessment of ongoing global efforts on climate change in the social and human sciences in order to strengthen their impact and bridge research gaps in critical areas, like migration or the resiliency of communities to global warming.

Finally, as part of its role as lead Organization for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO will coordinate with other agencies and with the UNFCCC Secretariat, international efforts to build a common platform for education and public awareness on climate change. The package for journalists on climate change, already developed by the Communication and Information Sector, is another example of a targeted UNESCO contribution to this global challenge.

The celebration in 2008 of the United Nations International Year of Planet Earth (IYPE) provides an important opportunity to stimulate public and scientific debate on climate change, as well as on other issues related to sustainable development.

As lead agency for this International Year, UNESCO will organize a high-level global launch event at Headquarters on 12 and 13 February 2008, in collaboration with the International Union of Geological Sciences. Speakers at the launch ceremony will share their views on three issues of major societal concern: population growth and climate change; earth resources; and geohazards. About 250 students from around the world, winners of the IYPE Student Contest, will also take part in the debates.

Similar events of a more regional nature will be held in several countries during the course of 2008. The 60 or so IYPE National Committees created with UNESCO support are also organizing awareness raising activities to demonstrate how the earth sciences can contribute to building a safer and more prosperous world. In particular, the Republic of Tanzania, one of the main sponsors of the Resolution

declaring 2008 International Year of Planet Earth, will organize a major African outreach event in May, which I shall attend.

In August 2008, under the patronage of UNESCO, an International Geological Congress will be held in Norway. Here, several thousand scientists will share their views on human-induced problems relating to the earth and discuss means for their solution or mitigation.

Finally, let me recall that the third edition of the World Water Development Report will also focus on climate change. The Inception Meeting, which brought together some 70 experts in Paris last month, has now established the Table of Contents for the Report. I will launch the report at the Fifth World Water Forum, which will take place in Istanbul in March 2009.

UNESCO is fully engaged in the organization of this Forum, including as one of the co-Chairs of the Political Process Committee and as a member of its International Steering Committee, which will decide upon the programme and scope of participation for the Forum.

I should add that I had the honour of inaugurating the new home of the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) Secretariat in Perugia last November, in the presence of the Italian Minister of Environment. The renovation works on the Villa La Collomba, which will house the Secretariat, are nearly complete. I expect the WWAP Secretariat to move there at the beginning of April.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Italian Government, the Region of Umbria and the City of Perugia for their generous support to this initiative.

Mr Chair,

In the field of the **social and human sciences**, as you know, one of our priorities is to finalize the plan of action for the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the celebrations of which I launched at the Organization's Headquarters on 10 December 2007 in the presence of many distinguished guests, including the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Louise Arbour.

Many activities have already been planned by the various sectors of the Organization for the new biennium. However, in accordance with 34 C/Resolution 38 adopted by the General Conference at its most recent session,

the plan of action must be further refined and Member States must be consulted on the subject. I should like to inform you that a meeting for discussion and exchange in that regard will be held on 6 February 2008. The plan of action will be revised to take the comments made at that meeting into account, and will be submitted to the Executive Board at its 179th session.

I have every hope that the plan of action, which will cover all of UNESCO's fields of competence, will meet the expectations of Member States, the United Nations system as a whole and the international community.

Mr Chair,

I was asked a number of questions about **dialogue among cultures and civilizations** and the progress achieved in that regard.

As an information document will be distributed to you at the next session of the Board, I shall not at this point review in detail the many activities currently conducted by the Organization in this field.

I should like to stress here that the intersectoral platform on the contribution to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures and a culture of peace established in document 34 C/5 will certainly be a crucial instrument in ensuring that the Organization's action is better distributed among our various fields of competence. As a means of programme delivery, it will be the operational complement to the Task Force on the dialogue among cultures, which will remain, under my chairmanship, a forum for strategic discussion.

On my return from Madrid where, together with a large delegation which included the Assistant Directors-General for Culture and Communication and Information, I had taken part in the First Alliance of Civilizations Forum, I was in fact impressed to note the extent to which the Organization is regarded by many actors – representatives of States and of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations – as holding the lead in key fields dealing with the issue of dialogue among cultures. Education was put forward by the participants as one of the main factors for responding to the clash of ignorance; the role of the media was similarly underscored. Many paid tribute to UNESCO's work in these fields.

It is against this backdrop that I hoped to establish a new partnership with the Alliance of Civilizations and signed with the United Nations Secretary-General's

High Representative for the Alliance, Mr Sampaio, a Memorandum of Cooperation to promote activities conducted jointly with public authorities at all levels, civil society, NGOs and the private sector. The agreement provides for the development of educational, cultural and scientific content to encourage dialogue and mutual appreciation, an increase in exchanges among young people to overcome cultural barriers, the promotion of the media as vehicles for tolerance, and the establishment of new multiple partnerships, in particular, for the promotion of multilingualism and the identification and rapprochement of students, researchers and scientists from different cultural backgrounds, religious leaders and other opinion leaders in order to promote mutual respect.

Likewise, 2008, European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, will afford a significant opportunity to highlight the value of the Organization's work in this respect and to reinforce synergy with various partners. The forthcoming Summit of Heads of State of South-East Europe, to be held in Athens, is particularly important in this context and will provide an opportunity to highlight the concrete achievements of this series of annual meetings since its inception in 2002.

International Year of Languages, to be celebrated this year, with many events planned throughout the world, will be another opportunity to highlight the crucial role of multilingualism in the preservation of cultural diversity and to promote dialogue and exchange among cultures. International Mother Language Day, on 21 February, will mark the launch of the Year, which I hope many of you will also celebrate.

Another important date will, of course, be 21 May, on which World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development will be celebrated and the UNESCO *World Report on Cultural Diversity* will be launched. The importance of languages in that regard will certainly be stressed on that Day.

Other questions raised concerned the progress achieved in implementing the Action Plan for the safeguarding of the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem.

The Action Plan documents have been collated and transmitted to the parties concerned and to the donors who have provided funding (namely Italy, Saudi Arabia and the European Union). A brochure on the projects is being compiled and a meeting with permanent delegations will be held soon to launch a campaign to mobilize funds for the implementation of the second phase of the Plan. I hope in

this connection that many of you will respond to the appeal and will do so generously.

I should also like to inform you that, as requested in decision 31 COM 7A.18, adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 31st session in Christchurch, Israeli, Jordanian and Waqf experts met to discuss the proposed final design of the Mughrabi ascent on 13 January 2008 in Jerusalem, under the auspices of UNESCO.

The meeting gave rise to a very useful exchange of views, information and technical data. On that basis, the experts engaged in a detailed discussion on the principles that should govern future conservation and development work, ensuring respect for the integrity and authenticity of the site.

At the end of those exchanges, it was agreed that a follow-up meeting would be held in the next few weeks in order to continue discussions on the various documents presented at the meeting.

It is for me a source of great satisfaction to note that, in the difficult context of which we are all aware, such dialogue can take place, thereby showing that the cultural heritage and our shared responsibility for it are unifying forces in areas where politics remains a source of division.

This brings me to the recent restructuring of the World Heritage Centre, which was the subject of a Blue Note published a few days ago. As we shall discuss this matter at length in the private meeting of the Board, I shall not review it in detail now. I merely wish to say that the Steering Committee established in this context held its first meeting on 11 January 2008 to discuss the complementarity of the objectives pursued by the Natural Sciences Sector and those of the World Heritage Centre and to draw up a strategy for more systematic effective collaboration.

Furthermore, the units concerned are working actively to formulate innovative proposals for the joint funding of additional posts at the World Heritage Centre, which will be submitted to the Executive Board at its next session. I have also taken steps to ensure that a number of established functions, such as those of all the chiefs of the regional units, are assigned to posts financed from the regular programme. I should therefore like to assure the delegates of the Latin America and the Caribbean region that the post of chief of the Latin America and the Caribbean Unit will be opened to internal and external recruitment at grade P-4 very soon.

As to the questions about the Secretariat of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, I have taken good note of the decision requesting me to take “in an urgent manner, [...] the necessary steps to reinforce the personnel of the Secretariat of the Convention” adopted at the first ordinary session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, held from 10 to 13 December 2007 in Ottawa.

I have requested the Assistant Director-General for Culture to submit proposals to me thereon very shortly in the context of the restructuring of the Culture Sector outlined in the Blue Note issued in January 2007.

I must however stress that the Culture Sector is faced with the concomitant entry into force of several of the seven major conventions for whose implementation it is responsible. In addition to the reinforcement of the World Heritage Centre which I have just mentioned, the Secretariat of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is about to embark on a crucial stage as work on the operational directives nears completion. It will therefore soon have to see to the effective implementation of the Convention and it, too, needs to be strengthened.

Furthermore, the Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which is now in force, and the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, whose entry into force is imminent, should at least have a nominal Secretariat. I would remind you that there is at present no provision for a post to serve the 2001 Convention, which is obviously unacceptable; I am therefore obliged to establish a post to ensure that it is followed up.

I must therefore advance gradually, depending on the needs and scope for action with the context of available resources. Thus, I also appeal to the Member States to be generous, in the hope that you will wish to support the implementation of all of the standard-setting instruments mentioned, by making extrabudgetary contributions and, in particular, by providing Associate Expert posts and other forms of technical and financial assistance.

Mr Chair,

The Sector for **Communication and Information** is working to give more strategic focus to UNESCO's follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society, and

to reinforce our engagement with the issues and mechanisms emerging from the WSIS process.

The World Summit highlighted the importance of collaboration and partnership. In this regard, let me mention UNESCO's very successful partnership with the private sector to develop ICT Competency Standards for Teachers, which has just completed its first phase. Developed in cooperation with Cisco, Intel, Microsoft, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) and the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, these standards are designed to help educational policy-makers and curriculum developers identify the skills teachers need to harness technology in the service of education. They will make a valuable contribution to our efforts to achieve EFA, as part of our broader commitment to building inclusive knowledge societies.

Finally, let me turn to the Information for All (IFAP) Programme, which specifically aims to help narrow the gap between the information rich and the information poor. Last year's evaluation of the Programme raised some critical issues about its efficiency and effectiveness, and pointed to the need for a sound strategic framework for delivering the Programme. To that end, the IFAP Bureau started a strategic planning exercise in October 2007. The plan aims to redefine the Programme's structure and strengthen the role of the IFAP Council and network of National Committees in order to better leverage the Programme at the national level and substantially strengthen its quality and efficiency. The Plan will be submitted to the Executive Board at its forthcoming session in April.

Mr Chair,

I think I have touched upon practically all questions related to the work of UNESCO's five programme sectors. There may be some issues that I have not fully addressed. However, rather than speak for any longer, I would like to leave time for a good discussion. I presume Board Members may like to pursue or reformulate their questions in light of my remarks. For those issues that require a more technical response, I will ask the relevant ADGs and central service directors to answer.

Thank you.

**[First question-and-answer session]**

Mr Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this second session, we shall move on from programmatic issues to other major areas of concern for the Organization.

Let me turn first to **United Nations reform**. Last October, I presented to the Executive Board a full report of UNESCO's involvement in United Nations reform processes, in particular at country level. I will be submitting an updated report to the Board at its next session in April. Let me outline briefly how we are advancing on this front.

As you know, UNESCO is proactively engaged in the ongoing policy debate on United Nations reform. UNESCO participates in all the major inter-agency meetings that address United Nations reform and United Nations system-wide coordination for achieving the MDGs – such as the CEB and UNDG meetings, the annual ECOSOC session, and the ECHA/OCHA briefings.

On 14 February, I shall attend a meeting of a limited number of United Nations Executive Heads convened by UNDP Administrator Kemal Derviş and hosted by ILO in Geneva to formalize membership criteria for the UNDG Advisory Group on the “Delivering as One” pilots. The meeting will also address the next steps after the first stocktaking of these pilots, as well as the evaluation of the functioning of the Resident Coordinators and UNCTs in 2007.

The “Delivering as One” process, as well as CEB reform, will also be the subject of intensive discussion at the next meeting of the Chief Executives Board, which I shall be attending in Berne in late April, after the 179th session of UNESCO's Executive Board.

I am also pleased to inform you that UNDP has invited ADG/BSP to address its Executive Board on 28 January, to share some of UNESCO's experiences and our assessment of the “Delivering as One” process at country level. This is a most welcome development. UNESCO and ILO are the only organizations invited to the meeting.

There are, of course, other meetings and briefings organized by individual United Nations Funds and Programmes for their Member States in New York – just like UNESCO organizes information meetings for its Permanent Delegates here in Paris. However, UNESCO is only invited to attend these meetings as an observer, without being able to take the floor, which is why some of you do not see our participation in the reports you receive from New York. This is quite normal, and should not create the perception that UNESCO is in any way excluded or disengaged.

As an active participant in United Nations reform discussions, UNESCO is helping to shape the debate. Intensified dialogue and cooperation at top decision-making levels is enabling UNESCO to affirm its role within common United Nations action at country level, especially in the context of the eight “Delivering as One” pilots.

Overall, I am satisfied with our engagement in this process. We have made substantial contributions to the design of the One Plan/One Programme in all of the pilots, even in the three countries where we are not a resident agency.

This engagement has not only enhanced working relations with other United Nations organizations, particularly the specialized agencies, but also improved coherence within UNESCO, between Headquarters and the Field. UNESCO has been driven to develop new forms of support in order to participate in the pilots, such as secondments.

My decision in the last biennium to earmark specific funds to support field office participation in country-level programming exercises proved very useful in this respect. This is why I have decided for the 2008-2009 biennium to again set aside 2% of the Regular Programme resources to provide support to the relevant Field Offices.

This support will also help colleagues to prepare projects for funding from extra-budgetary sources, such as those available under the UNDP/Spanish MDG Achievement Fund. We expect that a number of important initiatives led by UNESCO in the field of culture and development will be funded after completion of the final project documents later this month. UNESCO is also participating in projects for the promotion of gender equality under the MDG Fund.

It is still too early to evaluate “Delivering as One”. However, we can already point to some very positive developments that have resulted from the process itself. For

example, the pilot exercise has certainly energized the United Nations system. Early reports show that it has stimulated much closer interaction among the agencies, generating a clearer understanding of the diversity of the United Nations system and greater agreement on the division of labour and the definition of lead roles in thematic areas. It has sharpened our internal reflection on where our added value lies. However, there are many issues emerging, and the thinking on how to leverage the experience of the pilots is still evolving.

“Delivering as One” has wider implications for UNESCO, which the Decentralization Review Task Force, chaired by the Deputy Director-General, is addressing. Having successfully supported UNESCO’s immediate participation in the 8 pilots, the Task Force has entered the second phase of its work. It will now consider further measures to strengthen our field presence within the context of United Nations reform at country level and will revisit our decentralization strategy accordingly.

The Task Force will examine three related issues. The first is the role of National Commissions and the larger UNESCO family in the context of United Nations reform. Our cooperation with them has particular importance in those countries where UNESCO does not have an office.

The second is how to clarify and align UNESCO’s programming and budgeting frameworks and procedures at country level.

Finally, and most significantly, the Task Force will determine whether the present field network structure offers the most effective means to address the challenges of United Nations reform. Options for a revised decentralized system will be prepared, including their implications for programmatic, administrative and HR support structures.

The final report of the review will be presented to the Board in April 2009, but as you requested I will keep you informed regularly. I intend to hold an Information Meeting in March on United Nations Reform and Decentralization. A progress report will also be presented at the forthcoming session of the Board.

Mr Chair,

Let me now turn to UNESCO’s new **Medium-Term strategy**. I am glad that Member States agreed to turn the 34 C/4 into a **rolling document**. This means it

can be revised, if needed, every two years by the General Conference in response to new developments and challenges, but also in light of results already obtained.

The Board will examine at its next session its own role in this process. Since the Medium-Term Strategy has never been revised in the past, entirely new procedures will need to be established.

I will consult the Chairman of the Executive Board and the President of the General Conference about the best way forward. On this basis, I will share my ideas and suggestions with the Board at its next session.

The Board may wish to revert to this issue when the substantive and programmatic orientation lines of subsequent biennia emerge, that is: in October 2008, when considering my preliminary proposals for the 35 C/5; and in April 2009, when examining the draft 35 C/5.

On those occasions, the Board could consider making proposals to adjust or adapt the 34 C/4.

Turning to developments regarding the **34 C/5 Approved**: the Secretariat has adjusted the text to take account of various changes approved by the General Conference. The final text should be published in English and French by the end of the month, and will be available in the other four official languages soon after.

On the basis of the approved 34 C/5, detailed work plans have been prepared. Although we will need to make some modifications, I am pleased to announce that I have given provisional approval to all of the work plans, and that corresponding budget allocations have been authorized. This means that all Sectors, Bureaux and Field Offices can already begin implementation of the 34 C/5.

Version 2.2 of SISTER is scheduled to go live in mid-February, at which point the information on work plans will have been entered into the system. As I explained to the Board in October 2007, Permanent Delegates will have access to the main lines of action so that they can monitor how we are progressing towards the expected results. If you want to access more information on various upcoming events, the best way is through the online calendar produced by BPI. If you have any specific improvements to suggest for that tool, then I encourage you to communicate them directly to the director of BPI.

One of the main innovations of the 34 C/5 is the introduction of **intersectoral platforms**. These platforms are designed to harness UNESCO's capacity to work across sectors to resolve complex issues in a results-oriented way, drawing on one of UNESCO's main comparative advantages, its multidisciplinary capacities.

Once the General Conference approved the idea of intersectoral platforms, the Secretariat quickly moved ahead with their development.

The platforms will be the subject of a separate report to the Board at its next session, when their programmatic features, strategies, expected results and administrative arrangements will be presented. However, let me highlight the progress made to date.

Lead ADGs have been designated for each platform. They are entrusted with leading the development and implementation of individual platforms and of championing their "cause" and relevance.

For each platform, the lead ADG will be supported by a "platform manager". This is a key role because he or she will be responsible for operational management, including all relevant activities identified by participating sectors for joint implementation.

The platform manager will be able to rely on the strategic guidance provided by the lead ADG and a dedicated Steering Committee. The work plan will contain a defined set of measurable expected results, performance indicators and benchmarks. Staff will work as an implementation team, regardless of their sectoral base. The budget for each platform will come from the various sectors, at levels that will not fall below those defined in the draft 34 C/5 second version.

At this stage, the Secretariat is working intensively to finalize the different aspects of platform management and their respective work programmes. While a few platforms are readily operational – mainly those which build on past intersectoral activity – others will become operational in the coming weeks. Some will depend more specifically on the content of relevant sectoral work plans which, as I said, I have just validated.

This new modality is an exciting development for UNESCO, and one which I hope Member States will continue to support, including through extrabudgetary contributions.

I believe that many of the questions you have raised with regard to programme management can be addressed in relation to these intersectoral platforms.

This is the case, for example, for UNESCO's efforts to strengthen its responsiveness in post-conflict and disaster situations. An intersectoral platform has been set up specifically toward this end, for which Programme Sectors have earmarked an indicative amount of US \$4.27 million in the 34 C/5. This platform will build upon the previous work done by the Secretariat in elaborating a Post-Conflict Post Disaster Strategy and will bring together the expertise of all of UNESCO's sectors involved in the area.

Mr Chair,

The Anticipation and Foresight Programme will also be covered by an intersectoral platform. As you will recall, I was invited in 34 C/Resolution 54, adopted by the General Conference, to reinforce, in an innovative way, the Organization function as a forum for reflection and, accordingly, to establish a new intersectoral platform which would be placed under my chairmanship.

To that end, as I stated in the Blue Note issued on 19 November 2007, I have established an intersectoral working group which met twice, in November 2007, to consider redesigning the programme.

I am currently examining the conclusions of the intersectoral working group which has already identified a few important guiding principles. Here, I refer in particular to the strengthening of programme links between foresight activities and the priorities set out in documents 34 C/4 and 34 C/5, to increasing the account taken of emerging themes in the field of the natural, social and human sciences, to paying greater attention to capacity-building in developing countries, in particular in Africa and Latin America, to genuinely expanding our partnerships with the international scientific and intellectual community and to synchronizing more systematically, at Headquarters and in the field, our forward-looking debates with major international events in which UNESCO is closely involved.

Taking these proposals into account, I shall soon issue instructions for the intersectoral platform to implement, in accordance with your request, a programme that is both coherent and strategic.

The same applies to **Africa**, which is also covered by an intersectoral platform and which will benefit in this context from the coordinated implementation of our programmes.

In this connection, I welcome the new strategic partnership that was established between Africa and the European Union in Lisbon around an ambitious and operational Action Plan. Unfortunately, I could not attend that extremely important Summit as I was chairing the meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All held at the same time in Dakar. Accordingly, I requested Mr Nureldin Satti, Director of the UNESCO Office in Addis Ababa and UNESCO representative to the African Union, to represent me in Lisbon.

The Action Plan broadens the scope of our cooperation with Africa to new fields, in particular, the fields of cultural property, democratic governance, human rights, education and technical and scientific capacity-building.

The Africa Department is already working to disseminate the Lisbon decisions widely among the African and European permanent delegations and the Secretariat services concerned. I have invited the programme sectors to use this strategic partnership to mobilize support among European Member States for the African Union's sectoral action plans relating to UNESCO's fields of competence mentioned therein. These include the Second Decade of Education for Africa, the Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action, the Regional Action Plan for Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE) and the platforms of action in the field of culture adopted at the Khartoum Summit, which have already been taken into account in the Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 and the Programme and Budget for 2008-2009.

We have thus started to implement the Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action, in particular through three flagship projects, namely the initiative for capacity-building in science policy, science and technology education and the establishment of an African virtual campus.

I take this opportunity to thank the Spanish authorities and the World Islamic Call Society (WICS), which have already provided seed funding for the third flagship project, to appeal for contributions for the other two projects and to encourage the Africa Group and the Group of States Members of the European Union to provide tangible support.

Lastly, contact has been made with the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union in the run-up to the African Union Summit to be held in late January, which will determine the procedures for implementing the partnership. Likewise, the joint UNESCO/African Union Committee, which will meet in the first half of 2008, will devote a considerable part of its proceedings to studying the follow-up to the Lisbon Summit for submission to the Conference of African Ministers of Education (COMEDAF), the African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology (AMCOST) and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN).

Mr Chair,

Let me turn briefly to a couple of questions related to specific management issues.

On the question of how to make the implementation of UNESCO's rotation policy more effective, I have some positive news. Just yesterday, we intensively discussed at our directorate meeting tangible measures to encourage staff mobility. Proposals are currently being developed by HRM, which, once further elaborated through internal consultation, will be made available to the Board.

There are a number of specific ideas being looked at, including ensuring that staff are not left in the same post beyond an acceptable period. We are also investigating other measures, such as short-term assignments and more pro-active staff management plans within the sectors.

In response to the question raised this morning regarding extrabudgetary resources, I am pleased to report that we are moving ahead swiftly with the preparation of one of the key elements in the Action Plan on improved management of UNESCO's extrabudgetary activities, namely the "additional programme of targeted/projected extrabudgetary activities".

In the Blue Note I issued just before Christmas, I outlined the criteria and timeline for the preparation of this important instrument for the future programming and advocacy of UNESCO's extrabudgetary activities, and the subsequent resource mobilization. A first consolidated draft of all the outlines to go into the "additional programme" will be ready in February and submitted for my approval. Needless to say, the potential beneficiaries of the projected activities will be consulted in the process of preparing the outlines. Donors will of course also be consulted, first through collective consultations on the full "additional programme", probably in

March or early April, and then through the normal individual consultations to formalize the funding agreements.

Information on UNESCO's ongoing extrabudgetary activities will continue to be provided to Member States, both through the regular reports to the Executive Board, and through the more detailed information available from the relevant central services, notably the Bureau of the Budget, and the Bureau of the Comptroller.

Mr Chair,

I now turn to the progress achieved in the recruitment of a new Director for the Internal Oversight Service to replace Mr John Parsons, who left the Organization at the end of 2007.

The post of Director, at grade D-2, was advertised externally in December 2007 for two months, until 7 February. The applications will first be subject to pre-selection by two panels of high-level staff members (including one outside expert). I shall then draw up a shortlist of candidates who will be interviewed by the evaluation panel and whom I shall meet separately. I intend to make my choice in consultation with the Executive Board at its 179th session.

In the meantime, as stated in the Blue Note dated 15 January 2008, I have requested Mr Peter Maertens (Canada), who retired in November 2007 from the post of Inspector General of the European Investment Bank Group, to manage the Service as Acting Director.

Mr Maertens has spent his entire career in the field of evaluation and audit, mainly in international organizations. I am sure that he will bring to IOS the experience and management abilities necessary to ensure a productive, flexible transition until the recruitment process has been completed.

Mr Chair,

The Organization's visibility in the media is a recurrent theme. However, it became apparent to me, on pursuing the documents and press reviews submitted to me, that UNESCO's actual presence in the media did not coincide with the perception that you often have of its coverage. I have in fact noted, from the systematic monitoring instruments established by the Bureau of Public Information, that UNESCO's print press coverage, both quantitatively and qualitatively, has been regular, meaningful, constantly growing and relating to all programme activities.

World heritage, education for all and freedom of expression are the trio heading the roll of honour.

For example, the statistics for the last three months of 2007 show that 8,000 articles referring directly to UNESCO activities were published in the press of 42 countries throughout Europe. More than 300 articles were in the French media. For instance, between 30 October and 10 December 2007, there were seven features on our programme activities in *L'Express*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde*, and *Agence France Presse*. In addition, I penned two opinion pieces that were published in the special issue of *L'Express* on climate change and in *Le Figaro* the day before the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were launched.

UNESCO also features significantly in what is known as the new media. The new editorial line of the Organization's web portal takes account of recent developments and the expectations aroused by increasing use of electronic media.

It is therefore not fair to claim that UNESCO is less visible than other specialized agencies.

Having said that, other avenues may, of course, be explored. That is something which we can all do – the teams responsible for communication in the Organization, the programme sectors, and also every Member State and National Commission, which must help us to enter new circles, reach new audiences and new opinion-makers. Although it is important to increase UNESCO's presence in the European media, it is equally important to increase it in other parts of the world.

In this regard, the question of multilingualism is crucial if new audiences are to be reached through the web and audiovisual media. Accordingly, I should like to thank Saudi Arabia for financing the translation into Arabic of many pages of our website and publications. If other Member States were to follow its example, the Organization's visibility in other regions and other languages would indeed rise.

Mr Chair,

I now come to the end of my second statement. I think I have answered most of the 20 questions that were raised in addition to the questions relating to the programme only. I think it would be useful now to move on to the kind of interactive discussion that was held this morning.