



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Management of  
Social Transformations  
Programme

Distribution: Limited  
SHS-09/CONF.203/2a  
Original: English

9<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL  
Paris, 28-30 September 2009

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE MOST PROGRAMME - PHASE II (2008-2009) GENERAL CONFERENCE VERSION (short)

### OUTLINE

**Source:** Article X of the Statutes of the Intergovernmental Council of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme.

**Background:** In accordance with this Article, the Intergovernmental Council submits to the General Conference its report on the activities of the MOST Programme in 2008-2009. The biennium is the third one of a period of four consecutive biennia labeled as "MOST Phase 2 (2004-2011)". The mission assigned to MOST-Phase 2 during the 6<sup>th</sup> session of the MOST IGC (February 2003), states that "MOST will continue to promote the development and use of social science knowledge that contributes to better understanding and management of social transformations consistent with the universal values of justice, freedom, human dignity and sustainable development".

**Purpose:** This report is limited to a review of achievements of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Social Science Programme MOST-Phase 2 with regard to the objectives spelled out in documents 34 C/4 and 34 C/5 and in the recommendations adopted by the MOST Intergovernmental Council at its eighth session (cf 34 C/REP/17, Annex 2). Each biennium, the MOST Secretariat provides its Council with a synthetic report, together with detailed activity fact sheets. This information is also accessible on the MOST website: [www.unesco.org/shs/most/igc2009](http://www.unesco.org/shs/most/igc2009)

The MOST programme is implemented under the guidance provided by the MOST Intergovernmental Council and its executive body, the MOST IGC Bureau; as well as the MOST Scientific Advisory Committee. The MOST Intergovernmental Council is composed of 35 Member States, elected for four years by the General Conference. Half of the seats (18 versus 17) are subject to election/re-election at each session of the General Conference. Under MOST-Phase 2, the governing organs of the Programme have been significantly strengthened. During the biennium 2008-09, the MOST Intergovernmental Council Bureau met on 19 January 2008 to approve the detailed biennial work plans. A second Bureau Meeting was organized on 1 to 2 October 2008, to approve the terms of reference for the informal medium term review of the first four years of MOST Phase 2 (2004-2007) and to select candidates to be proposed to the Director-General for the new MOST Scientific Advisory Committee 2008-2011. The newly composed MOST Scientific Advisory Committee (six high-level representatives of their respective world region; plus the MOST IGC President in his capacity as an ex-officio member) met on 9 May 2009 at Bergen, Norway, back to back with the World Forum on Social Sciences organized

by the International Social Science Council under its current six-year framework agreement with SHS. The MOST IGC Bureau and the Scientific Advisory Committee held a joint session on 25 and 26 September 2009, followed by the 9<sup>th</sup> session of the MOST Intergovernmental Council (28-30 September 2009, UNESCO Headquarters).

**Decision required: none**

### **Presentation of achievements during the 2008-2009 biennium**

MOST programme activities contribute to UNESCO's strategic objectives as defined in UNESCO's Medium Term Strategy (34 C/4) 2008-2013. More specifically, Strategic Programme Objective 7: "Enhancing Research-Policy Linkages on Social Transformations" places emphasis on

- (i) the consolidation of platforms for dialogue and exchange between social science researchers and policy-makers at the international, regional and national levels; and
- (ii) the creation of collaborative national and regional social science research programmes for key issues, involving national and regional capacity-building and South-South cooperation.

In Document 34 C/5 (Approved Programme and Budget 2008/09), the above objectives are further refined under the "Biennial sectoral priority 2 of Major Programme III", entitled "Strengthening national and regional research systems in order to provide policy-oriented research on social and ethical issues".

To pay tribute to these requirements, achievements of MOST during the biennium are analyzed according to the following criteria:

- Strategies undertaken to build the Research-Policy Nexus
- Research
- Policy Dialogue
- Results and publications

**34 C/5 Biennial sectoral priority 2 of Major Programme III, Main line of action 2: "Enhancing research-policy linkages in the field of social development and policies relating to physical education and sports" stipulates namely 2 compounded "expected results" relating to MOST**

#### **FIRST EXPECTED RESULT for MLA 2:**

**Policy-oriented research networks in the field of the social sciences strengthened, with a view to informing the formulation of policies in such fields as poverty eradication, migrations, regional integration, urban issues, youth, including youth violence, and gender equality and the teaching of the social and human sciences.**

**Poverty Eradication (ref. 34 C/5 03009, 03019) ; Focus on the needs of Africa; and MOST priority theme for Latin America and the Caribbean**

Research needs are identified in the light of the National Poverty Reduction Strategies (NPRS). In East and West Africa, the concept of poverty as a human rights issue is unraveled through research tackling legal, socio-anthropological and philosophical perspectives, with a view to

integrating the human rights principles in the PRSP's. A better understanding of human rights-based approaches to poverty is initiated through dialogue in thematic PRSP drafting groups, targeted training seminars and the launching of private sector and NGO partnerships. Outreach to the sub-regional and regional level is built into the approach. Concise policy recommendations are aimed at helping planners and policy makers. Results to date include 30 MOST Policy Briefs, 3 publications on HR-based policy options for poverty eradication, 1 training manual on HR based approaches and one Policy Paper compiling the recommendations drawn on the last six years of UNESCO Cross-cutting poverty research.

As for Latin America and the Caribbean, state-of-the-art reviews have been carried out in four Latin American countries (Argentina, Columbia, Bolivia and Mexico) to study the impact of research on the formulation of social policy. Restitution seminars at the four national levels are actually underway.

### **Migration (ref. 34 C/5 03019 iii); Follow-up to UN High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Participation in activities of the Global Migration Group**

Through ad hoc networks of stakeholders in the relevant field of activities, the major research findings will be discussed, published and disseminated, together with short Policy Briefs highlighting policy recommendations. The inclusion of regional organizations and international networks is being promoted. The strategic choice of key partnerships with OSCE-ODIHR is to be underlined. The various research topics included "*Regional Agreements on Migration*", "*African Migration*", "*Migrants' Rights*", and "*Migrants' Rights Central Asia*". Main results include improved knowledge about regional migration agreements by relevant actors in the field; and significant strengthening of networking capacity and use with the concomitant outreach to a wide range of stakeholders. The research especially helped promote a better perception of labor migrants by policy makers. There is enhanced awareness of the vulnerable position of labor migrants in cities and the importance of civil society movements is highlighted. Publications include the Handbook on key terms of migration management: "People on the Move", 2008; the comparative research report on free movement in Europe and W-Africa, K.Touzenis (end 2009), the translation of book "Migration without Borders" to F, S, R, Ch; as well as a special issue of French Journal "Hommes et Migration", a forth-coming book by UNESCO/Cambridge Univ. Press, special issues of IJMS: vol.9, Nr 2; vol. 10, Nr1; and special issue of IJMS on Human Rights for Migrants, end 2009; as well as the preparation for Int. Migrants Day: Radio 1812

### **Urban Issues (ref. 34 C5 03009, 03019); Special performance indicator in 34 C/5 : Good practices on social integration in urban settings developed and disseminated**

Policy-oriented research in the field of migrations and urban issues supported a range of different research actors to cooperate closely in relevant research fields, esp. on the right to the city, with a view to promoting better policies and implementation measures, to achieving social sustainability and spatial cohesion and to furthering social integration at the local level. An international dialogue platform between city managers, migration experts and migrants was created and resulted in improved rights-based approaches to the elaboration of urban policies. It fostered social and physical integration as well as respect for and recognition of this right to all. The methodology have been disseminated during the Porto Alegre World Conference on the development of Cities (February 2008) and during the World Urban Forum IV in Nanjing (2008). Likewise, the *Urban Inclusive Policies initiative, South Asia (New Delhi Office)* succeeded in involving the research community at national, sub-regional and international level, together with the support of UNESCO Chairs on Habitat and Cities. Through identification of research policy gaps, systematic capitalizing on secondary research data and related awareness activities, the initiative addresses the needs of city professionals for the revitalization of historic districts, and develops and disseminates good practices on social integration in urban settings. In this vein, UNESCO will participate in the Habitat Summit, to be held in Delhi (24-26 September 2009).

### **Regional Integration (ref. 34 C/5 03013, 03019): “Focus on the needs of Africa” and MOST priority theme for Africa**

To reflect on, promote, debate and exchange ideas on regional integration in West Africa, a platform has been created bringing together researchers and policy makers in the ECOWAS sub-region. Policy seminars were held in 15 ECOWAS countries. 15 publications (ed. Karthala) are highlighting case studies in each of the participating countries and 2 synthesis publications are expected by the end of 2009. As an important addition to capacities in this area, UNESCO's Executive Board at its 181<sup>st</sup> session adopted a decision recommending the creation of the “*West Africa Institute*” for international research on regional integration and social transformations at Praia, Cape Verde, as a Category-2 Institute. With a view to achieving sustainable peace, the *Greater Horn Horizon Forum* has been created; holding 3 Executive Committee Meetings in 2008-09 with a view to preempting future challenges and formulating responses. A Greater Horn Horizon General Assembly is foreseen at the end of 2009 to establish a ‘permanent nexus’. Furthermore, the MOST Forum of Ministers of Social Development continued their sub-regional and regional activities through a series of Ministerial gatherings including in the ECOWAS countries (Côte d'Ivoire, September 2008), the first East African Community Forum of Social Ministers at Kigali, Rwanda, (September 2009), and the Arab States Forum of Ministers at Amman, Jordan in November 2008. An institutional partnership concluded between MOST and the United Nations University's Unit on Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS) at Bruges, Belgium is ongoing and transforms UNU-CRIS Working Papers into MOST Policy Briefs that are made available through the Online Policy Research Tool.

### **Youth, including youth violence (ref. 34 C/5 03009, 03019)**

The Youth Strategy is being finalized through international, regional and sub-regional workshops in which are participating various stakeholders, including relevant UNESCO Chairs. The 6<sup>th</sup> *UNESCO Youth Forum* (1-3 October 2009) addresses key policy recommendations to UNESCO's General Conference, related to two themes: “Investing out of the Crisis” and “Youth Participation”. The project on *Best Practices in Youth Policies and Programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean* has established a three-stages-selection methodology which culminates in the “Regional Meeting of Best Practices in Youth Policies and Programmes in LAC” (Mexico, 31 August – 2 September 2009). Cooperation at regional level on youth activities are significantly strengthened and harmonized. A “Declaration on public youth policies” is adopted and the launch of the “America Youth Network” has been proposed at the *UNESCO Regional Meeting – Youth Networks and Policies at Punta Cana, Dominican Republic* (15-19 October 2008). The Extra-Budgetary project *Youth Development and Prevention of Youth Violence* achieved a range of results that were compiled and highlighted at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum of Ministers and High-Ranking Officials responsible for Youth in Central America, held in San Jose, Costa Rica (21-22 August 2009); on the theme “Towards the institutionalization of public programs of prevention”. It successfully facilitated the exchange of experiences and best practices between political decision-makers and strengthened the links between research institutions and policy making organs (national and regional level). 30 Policy Briefs (Spanish) produced under the project have been integrated into the MOST Online Research Policy Tool.

### **Gender equity and equality (ref. 34 C/5 03014) Focus : Gender equality and women's empowerment**

Two major capacity-building initiatives under this focus include the *Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Center* and the *Research and Documentation Center for Women, Gender and Peace Building in the Great Lakes*. As for the already established Palestinian centre, it pursues activities relating to the consolidation of research and unification of data on Palestinian women, promoting among other, female political leadership and gender-related human rights approaches. 15 researchers from national institutions are trained on policy-action research. Based on reports of 5 national consultations organized in Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda,

Tanzania and Zambia, the establishment of the *Research and Documentation Center for Women, Gender and Peace Building in the Great Lakes* has advanced through the adoption of two Action Plans in 2008 and 2009 respectively, spelling out contributions and activities to be implemented by the main partners in the project (Ministries, UNFPA, UNECA, ADB and the Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region). A Draft MoU and the Draft Agreement for the Centre's creation are to be finalized in November 2009, in Tanzania. The programme "*Violence against Women*" aims at disseminating research results between relevant stakeholders and civil society actors, using the policy knowledge management tool of the MOST programme (13 policy oriented research papers, 25 Policy Briefs). The *Global Women's Studies and Gender Research Network* aims at promoting policy-oriented research and strengthening collaboration between universities and research centers across continents. A curriculum for gender studies is developed and 16 policy-oriented research papers and 40 research papers have been produced on various gender related issues.

### **The Teaching of the Social and Human Sciences**

Teaching initiatives include conceptual and methodological up-grading in the different complex substance areas addressed above. Particular attention is paid to policy-relevance and the implications for research of the science-policy nexus. Active UNESCO Chairs in areas such as migration, urban development and gender equality are rendering students and young researchers more literate in terms of the research-policy nexus, through their gradual involvement in and direct exposure to structured stakeholder debate at national level. The MOST Summer School held in the Dominican Republic in September 2009 trained 20 young professionals (from government, NGOs, research centres and universities) in the field of the research-policy nexus, with a special focus on youth. Furthermore, a MOST Award entitled "Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo" for the best doctoral thesis using participatory action –research methodology and providing useful policy recommendations was created through the generous contribution of the Argentinean Ministry of Social Development and has successfully completed its first round in Latin America. Likewise, young scholars in Indonesia have been encouraged to bridge the gap between their research activity and policy-making by competing for the MOST-LIPI Award set out by MOST and coordinated by the Indonesian Institute of Sciences.

### **Second EXPECTED RESULT for MLA 2:**

#### **National research systems capacities enhanced for the formulation of policies on social development**

##### **Forum of Ministers of Social Development (ref. 34 C/5 03020)**

Based on the four pronged approach of providing social ministers a space for peer learning and dialogue on experiences and best practices at national level, for developing regional social strategies and policies, for formulating horizontal cooperation projects and for constructing a vibrant nexus between government, social research and NGOs, a new series of Ministerial Social Fora has taken place over 2008-09. The second South-Asian Forum of Ministers of Social Development was convened at Bhutan, India (March 08); the second ECOWAS Forum of Ministers of Social Development took place at Abidjan, Ivory Coast (September 2008); the first East African Community Forum of Social Ministers gathered at Kigali, Rwanda (September 2008); and the Second Forum of the Ministers of Social Development of Arab States took place at Amman Jordan, in November 2008. The VIIth Regional Forum of Ministers of Social Development for Latin America and the Caribbean convened in August 2009, at Quito, Ecuador. All these Fora marked progress towards a better integrated research-policy nexus, with the tabling of research reports and the targeted drawing on preparatory expert workshops that fed into the adopted Declarations.

In the same vein, the "Rethinking Latin America Project" aims at strengthening the Forum of Ministers in Latin America by advocating a greater involvement of researchers and NGOs. A

common agenda has been set up between academic researchers and policy makers and the production and dissemination of policy-oriented knowledge on strategies of social development in Latin America has been pursued. Training courses for Ministerial officials will be organized through the virtual network of CLACSO, and the implementation capacities of national governments in the field of social development will be significantly strengthened.

### **Responding to the Crisis**

MOST also contributed to fostering policy responses to mitigate the negative social consequences of the financial crisis by a series of three events in which the research-policy nexus came to fully play its role: first, through a parallel event jointly organized by MOST and the Human Science Research Council of South Africa within the framework of the World Social Science Forum (convened at Bergen, Norway, 10-12 May 2009); second, through the thematic sessions addressing the issue at the VIIIth Regional Forum of Ministers of Social Development for Latin America and the Caribbean convened in August 2009, at Quito, Ecuador; and third through a full-day's debate on national and international responses to the crisis during the 9<sup>th</sup> session of the MOST Intergovernmental Council, on 29 September 2009.

Ministers, high-level officials of governments and IGOs as well as researchers and NGO representatives informed about concrete initiatives undertaken by their respective countries. Participants outlined policy-proposals to stem the worst social effects.

### **Follow-up to the International Forum on the Social Science-Policy Nexus**

Conceived as a sub-regional follow-up forum to the International Forum on the Social Science-Policy Nexus (IFSP, "Buenos Aires Forum 2006"), the "Dialogue Forum on Social Policies in Southeast Asia: Probing the Social Science – Policy Nexus" took place from 20 to 22 August 2008 at Bangkok, Thailand and was generously sponsored and co-convened by the Thai National Commission for UNESCO, the Social Research Institute of Chulalongkorn University, the Sociology Committee of the National Thai Research Council, and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand. Major actors from South-East Asia and South-Asia participated in the Forum that benefited from the presence of several Ministers from other countries and regions. Major questions addressed included the establishment of a sustainable forum space for multiple stakeholders to participate in social debates that are specific to the sub-region and related policy making at regional level.

Following the analysis and publication of select outputs from the First International Forum on the Social Science-Policy Nexus (IFSP) organized during the last biennium, a general analytical framework (State of the Art) for research-policy linkages has been developed. It has, among other results, fed into a thematic collection of more than 20 policy briefs based on theoretical and methodological reflection on the research-policy nexus; the publication of the 'IFSP highlights' and several MOST Policy Papers.

### **International and Regional Research Capacities**

Within the new 6-years Framework Agreement signed between UNESCO and the International Social Science Council (ISSC), emphasis has been placed on strengthening national research systems and advancing the social sciences, thus enhancing evidence-based policy making. In this perspective, ISSC convened the World Social Science Forum at Bergen, Norway, from 10 to 12 May 2009 and will produce the World Social Science Report as a joint UNESCO –ISSC publication. On the regional level, the Rethinking Latin America Project will make available its outcomes in three different publications and will enrich the Forum of Social Ministers of Latin America with a strategic analysis on the social development and its perspectives.

## **MOST National Liaison Committees**

Following the evaluation led in 2005/2006 of MOST National Liaison Committees, the MOST Intergovernmental Council Bureau recommended in 2008 that the Secretariat prepare draft guidelines in order to promote the creation and functioning of MOST National Committees that would be better attuned to the research-policy nexus. The concise draft guideline document is accessible under [www.unesco.org/shs/most/igc2009](http://www.unesco.org/shs/most/igc2009) and has been discussed at the 9<sup>th</sup> session of the MOST Intergovernmental Council. The overall objective is to better integrate social sciences in the policy-making process at the national level, by promoting dialogue among policy-makers, researchers and civil society.

## **MOST Online Policy Research Tool**

The MOST Online Policy Research tool is a novel initiative that aims at providing easy access and enhanced comparability of policy-relevant research results drawn on various sources. It reduces cognitive cost by at the same time trying to co-opt a large number of research contributors from all over the world, thus cross-referencing and disclosing /rendering visible relevant research results produced in both North and South.

During the current biennium, the MOST Tool has significantly upgraded its pilot collection that to date capitalizes on research results from some 100 research reports produced by the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge. At the same time five new thematic collections relating to the MOST priority themes “Research-Policy linkages”, “Regional Integration Policies”, “Poverty Eradication”, “Gender Equality” and “Prevention of Youth Violence” have been developed and discussed during the 9<sup>th</sup> MOST IGC session (28-30 September 2009). More detailed information is accessible under [www.unesco.org/shs/most/igc2009](http://www.unesco.org/shs/most/igc2009)