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DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S WRITTEN INTRODUCTION TO THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

I. INTRODUCTION

1. There has been significant activity over the past six months to implement UNESCO's programmes, which is reported in documents 182 EX/4 Part I-II and Part I Add. However, as the Director-General's introduction to the General Debate cannot traverse the details, the purpose of the following is to highlight some of the salient points of activity and provide brief background information.

2. Since the 181st session of the Executive Board, the Director-General has revised the Draft Programme and Budget for 2010-2011 (35 C/5) downwards, taking into account the Board's comments and recommendations on document 35 C/5, as contained in document 35 C/6.

3. The revised draft programme and budget (35 C/5 Rev.) presented to the Board has a budget ceiling of US \$653 million, representing an \$18 million reduction as compared to the \$671 million in the draft 35 C/5 document. The Director-General will elaborate further on this in his introduction to the plenary debate.

II. SALIENT POINTS OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANIZATION SINCE THE LAST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Education

4. One year after the collapse of the global financial system, UNESCO's efforts are focused on urging the international community to drive economic growth and recovery through increased investment in quality education for all (EFA). The benefits of education are clear: access to learning opportunities empowers individuals to make better life choices, reduces poverty and hunger, and promotes peace and sustainable development.

5. Building on the outcomes of the 8th meeting of the EFA High-Level Group (HLG, Oslo, 14-16 December 2008), which reaffirmed the role of education in development and called on governments and donors to provide adequate funding, **UNESCO has redoubled its advocacy efforts for EFA**. Following the Director-General's appeal to G8 leaders to increase aid to education, the G8 reaffirmed their commitment to the EFA goals at the L'Aquila Summit in July, reiterating the promise that no country would be thwarted in its efforts to achieve EFA by a lack of

resources. Pledges to accelerate action on EFA were also made by participants at the UNESCO-sponsored Fora for Arab and African Parliamentarians for Education (Cairo, April 2009 and Dakar, May 2009 respectively), as well as at the 17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (Kuala Lumpur, June 2009). At the grass-roots level, UNESCO was actively engaged in this year's Global Action Week (20-26 April), which mobilized close to 13 million people worldwide in support of youth and adult literacy and lifelong learning. UNESCO is also a partner in the "class of 2015" initiative led by the Global Campaign for Education, which seeks to use major forthcoming events – such as the 2010 World Cup in South Africa – to galvanize awareness and action on EFA.

6. UNESCO is closely **monitoring the impact of the financial and economic crisis** on these commitments. Initial findings of a mapping exercise to assess the impact of the crisis on public expenditure on education, submitted to this Board in document 182 EX/INF.14, suggest that many developing countries cannot afford to expand educational investments by augmenting their public deficits. Reliance on external aid is therefore likely to intensify. However, preliminary conclusions from the 2010 **Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR)**, to be launched in January 2010 in New York on the theme "Reaching and teaching the most marginalized", indicate that although overall aid levels are rising, there is a real danger of a huge shortfall against the bold pledges made by donors. Stagnation in aid to basic education remains a serious concern.

7. Recognizing the teacher gap as one of the major obstacles to achieving EFA, the Oslo HLG endorsed the creation of an **International Task Force on Teachers for EFA**, the Secretariat of which will be housed by UNESCO. A Steering Committee has been established to advise UNESCO and the work of the Secretariat. Member States have been invited to designate focal points for the Task Force, with 60 having done so to date. A global network open to all interested stakeholders will also be set up as a forum to share good practices and policies on teacher issues. A multi-donor Special Account has been created to support the administration and operational activities of the Task Force.

8. Preparations are under way for the **9th HLG meeting**, to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 23 to 25 February 2010 in partnership with the African Union Commission and the Government of Ethiopia. Potential themes for the event, including follow-up to issues addressed in Oslo, were discussed at the 1 September meeting of the International Advisory Panel on EFA. In line with the 2010 GMR, the overarching focus of the 9th HLG will be reaching the marginalized, with a proposed special focus on financing, teachers and South-South cooperation. Taking place five years before the target date for achieving EFA and the education-related MDG, the meeting will also be an important opportunity to take stock of overall EFA progress and identify the major challenges that remain.

9. Global advocacy must be accompanied by efficient and harmonized action on the ground. UNESCO has intensified efforts to advance **country-level coordination among the five EFA convening agencies**. The joint letter sent in April by the Heads of the five EFA convening agencies to all United Nations resident coordinators and country representatives, calling for improved inter-agency cooperation on EFA-related programmes, has spurred progress in the design of joint operational activities in several countries, notably in Central Asia. UNESCO is also coordinating the Inter-Agency Network on Education Simulation Models (INESM), which serves as a clearing house for all major education-related simulation and costing models and is enriching country needs assessments and planning exercises.

10. The **UNESCO National Education Support Strategy (UNESS)** documents provide a valuable tool for improving the alignment of UNESCO's action with Member States' needs and enhancing inter-agency coordination at the country level. Close to 90 UNESS documents have been completed or are in the final stages of preparation. Regional and global syntheses of the UNESS documents have identified large-scale needs and priorities in Member States, revealing shared concerns such as increased pressure at the post-primary level. In addition, capacity development efforts in key areas of planning such as education management information systems (EMIS) have enabled many countries to improve the monitoring of EFA progress, with an

increased number of Member States submitting timely and reliable education data to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. The Organization has developed and is testing draft operational guidelines for wide-scale institutional capacity development in policy, planning and management.

11. UNESCO has stepped up its involvement in the **EFA Fast-Track Initiative (EFA-FTI)**, for example through coordination of the funding process in Haiti and by successfully helping the Central African Republic obtain resources under the Catalytic Fund. In cooperation with UNICEF and UNDP, the Organization also assisted Moldova in preparing a sector-wide strategy and action plan, enabling it to become the first country to receive EFA catalytic funding for the development of early childhood care and education (ECCE). UNESCO is actively influencing the policy direction of the FTI, urging enhanced prioritization in the selection of beneficiary countries, greater attention to neglected sub-sectors such as literacy, and improved harmonization in capacity development, planning and management.

12. Countries are increasingly looking to tap into innovative funding sources for EFA. After four years of joint collaboration, the first-phase outputs of UNESCO's **Partnerships for Education (PfE)** initiative with the World Economic Forum are being finalized. A manual to guide the monitoring and evaluation of multi-stakeholder partnerships has been published and is being disseminated. The challenge now is to prepare a strategy for developing the capacity of key actors in the design and coordination of such partnerships, which will take the initiative into its next phase.

13. UNESCO continues to strengthen its role in promoting access to quality education in Member States facing **situations of conflict and disaster**. Education is increasingly viewed as a humanitarian priority, with the Organization having been instrumental in the establishment of humanitarian education clusters in Afghanistan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. UNESCO has also documented instances of aggression on institutions, students, staff and other education actors. Publications such as the 8th Annual Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, to which UNESCO contributed a comprehensive report, and the preparation of a second edition of "Education under Attack", play an essential role in raising awareness of violations of the right to education and encouraging strong political and legal action to stop them. An international experts' seminar, to be held in Paris from 28 September to 1 October, will identify opportunities for strengthening the monitoring and reporting of attacks and for ending impunity.

14. Progress has been made on the strategy for the second half of the **Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2015-2014)**, drawing on the Bonn Declaration adopted at the DESD mid-term review conference (31 March-2 April 2009) and the findings of the global report on DESD implementation, which is now being finalized. The draft strategy identifies five main areas of focus: addressing global challenges through education for sustainable development (ESD); developing capacities; building and sharing knowledge; advocating for ESD; and enhancing synergies between educational and development initiatives. A draft strategic roadmap, on which consultations with external experts and stakeholders are currently being held, is presented to this Board (182 EX/INF.10).

15. Sustained advocacy within the framework of the **United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD, 2003-2012)**, in particular through the 2007-2008 regional conferences in support of global literacy, is bearing fruit, with a progress report submitted to this Board (182 EX/INF.6). The growing high-level recognition of the importance of literacy is demonstrated by the very welcome decision of the E-9 to devote its next meeting (Nigeria, June 2010) to this issue, alongside follow-up to the 2008 Ministerial meeting in Bali on teachers. The celebration of International Literacy Day on 8 September will provide an opportunity to draw global attention to literacy's empowering effects on individuals and its role in promoting equitable social development. A ceremony will be organized at UNESCO Headquarters to mark the occasion, with the award of the 2009 UNESCO Literacy Prizes to five innovative projects in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, India, the Philippines and Bhutan.

16. At the country level, the **Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE)** continues to support participating Member States in reviewing policies and practices and preparing national action plans to address outstanding challenges. The results to date are noteworthy, with a significant number of countries having demonstrated renewed commitment to literacy through the creation of dedicated ministerial structures, updated policies and greater budgetary support from both internal and external sources. In 2010-2011, LIFE will continue to be managed by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, backstopped by Regional Education Bureaux and implemented by field offices, with Headquarters ensuring the global coordination of literacy activities. An in-house strategy on literacy is currently being prepared in order to ensure that UNESCO's work in this field is managed efficiently. Implementation of the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) will shortly be scaled up thanks to resources provided under the UNLD Fund to Advance Global Literacy, created with a \$2.55 million contribution from the United States of America.

17. Actions have been taken to respond to the recommendations of the external evaluation of the **Teacher Training Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA)**, a report on which is submitted to this Board (182 EX/9). The evaluation found that the 17 countries participating in the Initiative have benefited from targeted technical assistance in developing and improving teacher policies and practices. In particular, the evaluators praised the move away from direct teacher capacity development towards more upstream policy support. In his programme and budget for 2010-2011, the Director-General has addressed two key challenges raised by the evaluation, namely the low level of resources available for the Initiative and lack of clarity in the internal division of labour. In addition to an increase in funds allocated to teacher issues, the management of TTISSA will be decentralized to the Regional Bureau for Education in Africa (BREDA) and the mandate of the International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa (IICBA) will be refocused on the provision of technical backstopping. The resources of IICBA and BREDA will be boosted by savings from the European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES) in Romania, which will be maintained for a two-year transitional period fully financed by the Romanian Government.

18. Over 50 countries are benefiting from the UNESCO-led **UNAIDS Global Initiative on HIV/AIDS and Education (EDUCAIDS)**. For the first time, the Organization's planning under the Unified Budget and Workplan for 2010-2011 is being managed at country level and in a cross-sectoral manner. UNESCO is using extrabudgetary funds to establish more than a dozen field-based posts to provide high quality technical advice, including in countries where the Organization is not resident.

19. The **World Conference on Higher Education** (Paris 5-8 July) brought together over 1,000 participants from 148 countries to discuss the future of higher education. The final Communiqué reaffirmed the critical role of higher education in poverty reduction and sustainable development. Calling for adequate investment to meet surging demand, participants highlighted the importance of improving quality assurance systems, strengthening regional higher education and research areas, particularly in Africa, and making teacher training relevant to the needs of individuals and societies in the 21st century. A strategy to ensure systematic follow-up to the Conference is under preparation, which will consolidate UNESCO's role in tracking trends and strengthening national capacities in higher education.

20. In follow-up to the 48th **International Conference on Education**, UNESCO has prepared a set of policy guidelines to support Member States in building inclusive education systems and will launch in November a project to disseminate good practices on inclusion. On 25 September 2009, the Joint Expert Group UNESCO (CR)/ECOSOC (CESCR) on the Monitoring of the Right to Education will consider the legal and practice aspects of mother tongue and multilingual learning, an important factor in inclusion, building on the debates initiated during the Group's 10th meeting on 8 May.

21. Following concerns over the global health risks of the H1N1 virus, the **sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI, Belém, Brazil)** was postponed until 1-4 December. The additional time has been used to enrich preparations and prepare for follow-up.

Drawing on 154 national reports on adult learning, regional synthesis reports have been produced along with a Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE). This global report – the first of its kind – identifies major developments in policy, participation and practices. Together with the outcomes of the regional conferences, which brought together some 800 participants in Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Kenya, Hungary and Tunisia, it will ensure that the debates at CONFINTEA VI are focused and evidence-based. A draft outcome document for the conference has been circulated to Member States.

22. Research and experience show that well-designed early childhood care and education programmes are not only vital to a child's development and future educational attainment but also one of the most effective ways to offset disadvantage and promote social justice and economic growth. UNESCO and the city of Moscow, together with the Russian Federation, are organizing the **World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)** from 22 to 24 September 2010 to encourage policy debate and the exchange of good practices on this important theme. The conference is expected to bring together 1,200 participants from government, civil society and the private sector, and will include a Ministerial Round Table. It will emphasize the importance of an intersectoral approach to ECCE policy and practices.

23. Preparations are under way for the **Ministerial Round Table on Education**, which will take place during the 35th session of the General Conference on 8 and 9 October. The Round Table will discuss the outcomes and recommendations of the major international education conferences held in 2008-2009, with the aim of identifying steps towards making education systems true tools of individual empowerment and social transformation. To stimulate the debate, keynote speakers will introduce the three sessions, which will consider knowledge, values and skills for the societies of today and tomorrow; building equitable and inclusive systems in support of sustainable development; and the way forward. Ministers of all Member States will be invited to participate.

24. The global economic crisis has had a deep impact on vulnerable unskilled workers, in particular youth. Learning opportunities provided through **technical and vocational education and training (TVET)** can play an important role in equipping them with the skills to re-enter labour markets. A revised version of UNESCO's new strategy on TVET for 2010-2015, integrating comments made by Member States, is presented to this Board (182 EX/INF.5). UNESCO has moved to immediately begin implementing the new strategy. The first inter-agency meeting on TVET, held at Headquarters in April, identified areas for cooperation and assigned responsibilities. A second meeting was held in June at the European Training Foundation to share preliminary results. Within the agreed-upon division of labour, UNESCO has been entrusted with key tasks linked to conceptual clarification, policy review, improvement of data, collection of good practices and capacity development for staff of participating agencies.

25. South-South and triangular North-South-South cooperation are valuable means for accelerating progress towards education and lifelong learning for all. The Steering Committee for UNESCO's **South-South Cooperation Programme/Fund in Education** has selected four regional projects to catalyse collaboration in priority areas such as mother-tongue-based multilingual education, schools' disaster preparedness, ICTs in education teacher training, and literacy and non-formal education for immediate implementation. Preliminary results from these projects, which are benefiting from voluntary contributions from nine developing countries, will be available in the last quarter of 2009. A strategy has been developed to mobilize further support for this important Fund and is submitted to this Board (182 EX/5 (VIII)).

Natural sciences

26. Acknowledging the crucial role of science for sustainable development, UNESCO has continued to promote interdisciplinary approaches to key scientific issues, such as freshwater management, biodiversity, the oceans, and climate change; acted as a forum for the exchange of scientific knowledge; and continued to help Member States reinforce their scientific capacity and provide science policy advice.

27. UNESCO continued its **assistance to African Member States** in the formulation, revision and/or evaluation of their national science and technology policies. To date, 20 Member States have made formal requests for assistance in carrying out or formulating national science policy reviews during the period 2008-2009. With financial support from Spain, UNESCO launched the process of policy development in 13 of these countries. Document 182 EX/12 reports on progress in the implementation of the UNESCO plan of action in support of the African Union consolidated plan of action for science and technology. The first phase, focused on assessing the status of science, technology and innovation systems, was completed in Benin, Burundi, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Madagascar, Sudan and Zimbabwe. The process of science policy formulation continues, with most of the above-listed countries expected to have their policies formulated by the end of 2009. UNESCO has also completed the Science Policy of Armenia and Albania and started the process of the reform of the STI system in Azerbaijan, Nepal, Jordan and Iraq.

28. In the area of **freshwater**, Member States are increasingly recognizing the contribution of water-related category 2 centres under the auspices of UNESCO to UNESCO's programme implementation. Four new centres have been endorsed by the Executive Board and will be considered by the General Conference. Two more will be considered by the 182nd session of the Executive Board: the International Centre for Integrated Water Resources Management (ICIWaRM), proposed by the United States, and an Asia-Pacific Centre for Ecohydrology, proposed by Indonesia. If these centres are approved, this will bring the total number of water-related centres to 22.

29. IHP's work in the field of **transboundary groundwater** is gathering growing recognition, following UNESCO's lead in the celebration of World Water Day 2009 on Transboundary water. UNESCO played a key role in the formulation of the "Law of Transboundary Aquifers" adopted by the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly that will serve as the basis for a future convention on this issue. UNESCO organized sessions on this topic at the Stockholm World Water Week (16-22 August 2009).

30. During the same meeting, the members of UN-Water endorsed the new direction for the fourth edition of the **UN World Water Development Report (WWDR-4)** proposed by the World Water Assessment Programme. The new Report, to be launched in March 2012 on the occasion of the sixth World Water Forum (Marseilles, France), will have a thematic focus on "Managing Water under Uncertainty and Risk", with a new structure that includes challenge area reports and regional perspectives.

31. WWAP hosted, at its new headquarters in Perugia, Italy, the **4th meeting of water and sanitation experts from the G8 countries** (27-29 April 2009). A concept paper prepared as a contribution to the 2009 G8 Summit in July, "Water – the blue web that unites us", reviewed progress since the initiation of Water Action Plan at the 2003 G8 Summit in Evian, France, and proposed priority areas for discussion at the 2009 G8 Summit towards achieving internationally agreed goals on water and sanitation.

32. The 21st session of the **Man and the Biosphere Programme's International Coordinating Council** (Jeju Island Biosphere Reserve, Republic of Korea, 25-29 May 2009) added 22 new biosphere reserves to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, bringing the total to 553 in 107 countries. A new network of coastal and small islands biosphere reserves was established under the auspices of the Republic of Korea and Spain to address issues of climate change and sustainability. The South-South Cooperation Project for sustainable development in the humid tropics was launched by the UNESCO Chair for Sustainable Development at the Federal University of Pará in Belém, Brazil, ERAIFT in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Indonesian Institute of Science, which will connect several Indonesian universities to the initiative.

33. The 25th session of the **Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Assembly**, (Paris, 15-26, June 2009) adopted a Programme for the next biennium that prioritizes Africa,

gender equality and SIDS. Preparation for the 50th Anniversary of the IOC (2010-11) is well under way. IOC, along with UNEP, recently presented the three-year effort by the Group of Experts for the start-up phase of the United Nations Regular Process for Global Assessment of the Marine Environment, including socio-economic aspects to the United Nations Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole at United Nations Headquarters (31 August-4 September 2009). Representing one of the most comprehensive efforts in decades in terms of ocean governance, the Working Group of the Whole will recommend a detailed course of action to the 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly for undertaking the first-ever integrated assessment of the state of the marine environment of the global ocean. The issue of ocean governance will also be brought to the forefront during the General Conference Ministerial Round Table on the Oceans to be held on 12 and 13 October 2009.

34. IOC's tsunami programme has been very effective in establishing three new **Tsunami Warning Systems**, in addition to the previously existing one in the Pacific Ocean in order to provide global coverage for risks of tsunami and other ocean-related hazards. Following the tsunami in the Indian Ocean in December 2004 the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBTO) agreed with UNESCO/IOC to provide real-time seismic data on a global scale to tsunami warning centres in order to improve the quality of tsunami warnings. Document 182 EX/64 presents a draft memorandum of understanding establishing formal links between the two organizations for providing and improving the access and quality of the data that CTBTO contributes to the four Tsunami Warning Systems. In February 2009, the Pacific system decided to establish four regional groups to improve regional tsunami detection capabilities. Considerable progress is underway for the Southeast Pacific. For the Southwest Pacific, the Regional Working Group, assisted by the Senior Seismic Advisor of the IOC Tsunami Unit, developed detailed plans to enhance the coverage and quality of the seismic network. National agencies, warning centres, donors and other stakeholders will meet in Vanuatu in October 2009 to decide on these plans.

35. In its contribution to the **International Strategy for Disaster Reduction**, UNESCO has strengthened international and regional networks on knowledge sharing and capacity-building for disaster risk mitigation through international events including the Second Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (Geneva, June 2009). The Organization was actively associated with the preparation and launch of the 2009 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction. Under the International Platform for Reducing Earthquake Disasters programme, which is supported by the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, UNESCO organized an international workshop for earthquake risk reduction in Istanbul, Turkey in July 2009, inviting scientists from ten countries as well as representatives of local authorities.

36. UNESCO has been working on several fronts to address climate change. For example UNESCO's active role in the third **World Climate Conference (WCC-3)** coordinated by the World Meteorological Organization (Geneva, Switzerland, 31 August to 4 September 2009) included contributions to the formulation of the Global Framework for Climate Services, the working session on climate and oceans, and the forum on capacity development, education and training that guided the formulation of the new World Climate Services System. In addition, UNESCO organized the forum on gender and climate change and a side event on groundwater and climate.

37. An **International Seminar on Climate Change Education**, organized by UNESCO with financial support from Denmark, (Paris, 27-29 July 2009) examined the role of education in addressing climate change, with particular emphasis on the challenges faced by SIDS. The seminar made recommendations on how climate change issues can be integrated into educational programmes and school curricula. It also highlighted the need for a one-stop clearing house mechanism for climate change educational materials, including ones to address the ethical and social dimensions of climate change. The Seminar provided a unique opportunity, particularly for individuals from SIDS, to exchange experiences, good practices, knowledge, tools and resources for climate change education.

38. In addition to addressing climate change through education, UNESCO is mobilizing the broadcast media. UNESCO organized the first **international conference on Broadcast Media and Climate Change** in Paris on 4 and 5 September 2009, which sought to highlight the important role of the media in raising awareness on climate change. The conference is reported on in paragraph 74 and 75 below.

39. On 14 July 2009, the technical team at the **SESAME** Centre produced the first electron beam from the recently-installed microtron which is a key part of the BESSY I machine donated by Germany. This is an important milestone for the machine and the project as a whole. SESAME is the Middle East's first major international research centre, with programs planned in structural molecular biology, molecular environmental science, surface and interface science, micro-electromechanical devices, x-ray imaging, archaeological microanalysis, materials characterization, and clinical medical applications. The SESAME Centre, which was established under the auspices of UNESCO, currently consists of nine members (Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Jordan, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, Palestinian Authority, Turkey) and 11 observers (France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Portugal, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States of America).

40. To demonstrate the **benefits of renewable energy technologies**, pilot projects for the solar electrification of two rural schools were implemented in Benin. Students and teachers thus gained access to lighting and the use of modern educational tools such as the Internet, as well as information and communication technologies.

Social and human sciences

41. The Social and Human Sciences Sector again laid emphasis on building countries' analytical, teaching and research capacities and on the establishment of sustained dialogue between researchers and policy-makers. The Sector addressed, in particular, the ethical implications of global climate change, human rights and gender-equality issues and youth support policies.

42. The pressing need to further promote the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights and to reinforce the capacity of Member States in the field of **bioethics** was an important message of the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC), held at UNESCO Headquarters on 9 and 10 July 2009. After examining the Report of the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) on Human Cloning and International Governance, IGBC members agreed that an international dialogue on the international governance of human cloning should be pursued. The sixteenth (ordinary) session of IBC, scheduled to take place in Mexico City from 23 to 25 November 2009, will give an opportunity to further discuss the issue of human cloning and international governance in light of the comments formulated by IGBC at its sixth session. The session will be also an occasion to focus on bioethics in Latin America and foster interaction with existing bioethics networks in Latin American. Finally, on 11 June 2009, the Director-General held an information meeting at the Organization's Headquarters on UNESCO's major achievements in the area of bioethics over the past 10 years.

43. The ethical implications of climate change, the ethics of science and environmental ethics education were the main topics discussed during the **sixth Ordinary Session of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST)**, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 16 to 19 June 2009. After extensive consultation, COMEST completed a report on the ethical implications of global climate change (182 EX/INF.56) highlighting both the need for an ethical approach to enhancement of the scientific knowledge base, mitigation and adaptation, and the potential for consensus on core ethical principles already enshrined in key international declarations and conventions. In its final recommendations, COMEST encouraged UNESCO to consider the development of an ethical framework of principles in relation to climate change. Drawing on this recommendation, document 182 EX/56 invites the Executive Board to consider the feasibility of a universal declaration of ethical principles in relation to climate change.

44. Encouraging progress has been made in the implementation and promotion of the **International Convention against Doping in Sport**, now ratified by 116 UNESCO Member States from all parts of the globe. The administration of the Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sport will be the key item of discussion of the second Session of the Conference of Parties to the Convention at UNESCO Headquarters from 26 to 28 October next. Some \$2 million is now available in the Fund thanks to generous contributions from more than 20 Member States. Projects have already been approved in Albania, Barbados, Jamaica, Mali, Mozambique, the Seychelles and Uruguay.

45. Building on the momentum gained during the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UNESCO pursued its activities in the area of **human rights**. The Third Experts meeting on the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications (REBSP) was organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation (EIUC) (Venice, 16-17 July 2009). The results of the meeting should contribute to the work of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). Building on UNESCO's experience in the field of water management and the work of the International Hydrological Programme, an experts meeting on human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation took place at Headquarters on 7 and 8 July 2009. Reflection on pressing human rights issues and emerging ethical and social challenges was advanced through a round table on "Memory and Human Rights" organized in cooperation with the Permanent Delegation of Argentina (Paris, 14 April 2009), a round table on social justice and human rights held in cooperation with the Permanent Delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (Paris, 30 June 2009), as well as a national conference on human rights held in Kabul, Afghanistan, on 21 July 2009. Out of concern to promote in-depth dialogue between Africa and the Arab world on issues relating to democracy and human rights, UNESCO also held at Headquarters, on 25 and 26 May 2009, the first meeting of the Steering Committee of the Permanent Forum of Arab-African Dialogue for Democracy and Human Rights.

46. The **global financial crisis and social policies** to counter its adverse effects, especially for vulnerable populations, was a key issue on the agenda of the **World Social Science Forum** (WSSF) in Bergen, Norway from 10 to 13 May, as well as the 7th Forum of Ministers of Social Development for Latin America and the Caribbean in Quito, Ecuador from 27 to 29 August. The 9th Session of the MOST Intergovernmental Council will convene at UNESCO from 28-30 September 2009, to further discuss national and international responses to the crisis and the strengthening of the links between social science research and policy development.

47. It was therefore timely that on 4 September 2009, the Director-General held an information meeting at Headquarters in order to take stock of the Organization's intersectoral action in regard to **human security** and of the various projects implemented in that field under the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security in particular.

48. Within the framework of UNESCO's action in favour of **women's rights and gender equality** in post-conflict situations, and with a view to establishing a Regional Research and Documentation Centre on Women, Gender and Peace Building for the Great Lakes Region (GLR), UNESCO co-organized with the Government of Kenya the Second Forum of Ministers of Women's Affairs of the GLR (Mombasa, 2-5 June).

49. High-level regional meetings on **the teaching of philosophy** were held for the Arab States (Tunis, Tunisia, 11-12 May 2009), Asia and the Pacific (Manila, Philippines, 25-26 May 2009), Latin America and the Caribbean (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 8-9 June 2009), Africa (Bamako, Mali, 1-2 September 2009 and Port-Louis, Mauritius, 7-8 September 2009). At those meetings, matters relating to teacher training, courses of study, textbooks and the teaching of philosophy were addressed, giving rise to the adoption of some recommendations taking identified regional priorities into account.

50. To promote the contribution of youth to its policy agendas, UNESCO will host from 1 to 3 October 2009 the **6th UNESCO Youth Forum**, as an integral part of the 35th General Conference. The Youth Forum will bring together nearly 200 young delegates to address two themes: “Investing out of the crisis: towards a partnership between UNESCO and youth organizations” and “Youth participation – UNESCO Youth Forum, a long-term approach”. The 3rd UNESCO Asian Youth Forum (Gwangju (Republic of Korea), 2-7 July) on the theme “Reshaping our future: in search of Asian alternatives” served to identify youth development and youth-led community projects in the region. With a view to supporting the development of public policies for youth development, UNESCO organized the Second Forum of Ministers and High-Ranking Officials responsible for Youth in Central America, on 21 and 22 August 2009 in San José, Costa Rica. The meeting allowed an in-depth exchange of experiences and best practices in youth-violence prevention between Central American States and multilateral and bilateral partners.

Culture

51. The actions of the Culture Sector have continued to focus on safeguarding cultural diversity through the promotion and implementation of the standard-setting instruments for which it is responsible; on the promotion of intercultural dialogue; and the integral role of culture in development.

52. The **Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation** held its 15th session on 11 May 2009 at UNESCO Headquarters. The three cases regarding the Parthenon Marbles (Greece – United Kingdom), the Boğazköy Sphinx (Turkey – Germany) and the Makonde Mask (United Republic of Tanzania – Switzerland) and the Consolidated Draft Rules of Procedure on Mediation and Conciliation were the core matters discussed. Proposed strategies for the Committee’s future work were submitted on that occasion.

53. Encouraging progress was noted in regard to action to **combat trafficking in cultural property**. To date, there are 118 States Parties to the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. Furthermore, a successful training workshop for African countries was held in Vicenza (Italy) in June 2009, with support from the Italian cooperation agency. Ten African countries (21 participants) were represented. UNESCO is developing an information and awareness-raising audiovisual campaign by producing a promotional film on UNESCO’s action to combat trafficking in cultural property.

54. At its 33rd session (Seville, 22-30 June 2009) the **World Heritage Committee** inscribed 13 new properties on the World Heritage List (2 natural and 11 cultural) and approved three extensions. Burkina Faso, Cape Verde and Kyrgyzstan had their first properties inscribed on the List, which now comprises 890 properties in 148 States Parties. Its examination of 178 State of Conservation reports led the Committee to remove the Walled City of Baku with the Shirvanshah’s Palace and Maiden Tower, (Azerbaijan) from, and inscribe Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System (Belize), Los Katios National Park (Colombia), and the Historic Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The Dresden Elbe Valley was deleted from the World Heritage List in view of the continuing construction of the Waldschlösschen Bridge. The application of the reinforced monitoring mechanism was discontinued in relation to the Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu (Peru), Bordeaux, Port of the Moon (France), Timbuktu (Mali), Samarkand – Crossroads of Cultures (Uzbekistan) and the Okapi Wildlife Reserve (DRC). It was extended to include Manovo Gounda St. Floris National Park (Central African Republic) and continues to be applied to the existing seven properties, including the Old City of Jerusalem. The Committee also continued its reflection on the future of the Convention, highlighting the need to develop an overall strategic plan to guide its implementation over the next decade.

55. UNESCO’s “**Final Report on Damage Assessment in Babylon**” was presented at a press conference in Paris on 9 July 2009. Produced by the Sub-Committee on Babylon of UNESCO’s

International Coordination Committee for Safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage of Iraq, it provides an exhaustive technical evaluation of present conditions at the renowned archaeological site and compiles several national reports as well as the findings of the two most recent inspections by members of the Committee in 2008 and 2009. A list of recommendations for the future protection, restoration and management concludes the Report. All activities should be undertaken with a view to the eventual nomination of Babylon for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The report was widely covered by the international media.

56. The fourth meeting of the **Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict** (UNESCO Headquarters, 27-29 May) elaborated and adopted the Chapter on international assistance and the guidelines concerning the use of the Fund, thus completing its preparation of Draft Guidelines for the Implementation of the 1999 Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention. An extraordinary one-day meeting of the Committee was held on 2 September 2009 to finalize the Draft Guidelines and ensure their formal coherence in anticipation of their adoption by the third Meeting of the Parties to the Second Protocol at UNESCO Headquarters on 23-25 November 2009.

57. Emphasis has been laid on the promotion of the **Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage** (2001), to which there are 26 States Parties to date, ever since it entered into force in January 2009. Accordingly, two regional meetings designed to encourage the ratification of the Convention were held on 20 and 21 April 2009 in Cape Town, South Africa, and in September 2009 in Valparaiso, Chile. A third will be held in October 2009 in Zadar, Croatia. A handbook explaining and disseminating the principles annexed to the 2001 Convention, funded by Norway, is in preparation. Lastly, a meeting on the construction of underwater museums will be held at Baiheliang, China, in the spring of 2010.

58. The 111 nominations received for the first inscriptions on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity were examined by a subsidiary body of the **Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage** in May 2009. The body's recommendations have been transmitted to the Committee, which will take a decision concerning the inscription of elements at its next session, to be held in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) from 28 September to 2 October 2009. Thirteen files for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding in 2009 and five files concerning programmes, projects and activities for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage that best reflect the principles and objectives of the Convention will also be submitted to the Committee with a view to being listed as well. The agenda of the forthcoming session also contains additions to the operational directives for the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) concerning the visibility, use of the emblem and means of increasing the Fund's resources. The Convention has now been ratified by 114 States.

59. The second ordinary session of the Conference of Parties to the **Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions** (2005) was held in Paris on 15 and 16 June 2009. At that session, the Conference approved all operational directives relating to Articles 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 drawn up at its request by the Committee. It requested the Committee to continue its work on drafting operational directives for Articles 9, 10 and 19 and on measures to promote the Convention and raise its visibility, and to formulate a fund-raising strategy for the International Fund for Cultural Diversity and a ratification strategy. The Conference of the Parties also renewed half of the Committee's membership, approved the Intergovernmental Committee's Rules of Procedure and noted the Committee's report on its activities and decisions. The Convention has been ratified to date by 99 States and the European Community.

60. The seventh **South-East Europe Heads of State Summit** was held on 3 and 4 June at Cetinje (Montenegro) on the management of heritage diversity and its promotion for tourism. The Summit was organized jointly by the Council of Europe and UNESCO and placed under the auspices of the President of Montenegro, Mr Filip Vujanović. The participants adopted the Cetinje

Declaration on Management of Heritage Diversity and its Promotion for Tourism, which proposed in particular guidelines for future cooperation in promoting the cultural heritage and sustainable tourism in the region.

61. Pursuant to the United Nations General Assembly resolution that requested the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in consultation with Member States and through extrabudgetary resources, to play a leading role in the preparations for the celebration of the **International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures** (2010), Member States and the main governmental and non-governmental partners were consulted with a view to drafting a plan of action on preparations for the celebration in 2010. The Alliance of Civilizations made a substantial contribution to the drafting of the plan. The draft action plan is submitted to the Executive Board at the present session (182 EX/16).

62. As a result of the importance accorded to **African languages** in the process of regional integration by the FOSRASUN III meeting (Tripoli, February 2009), UNESCO is in the process of elaborating a project entitled "Promotion of the Main African Languages", with the financial support of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

63. Preparatory to the **second World Conference on Arts Education**, to be held in Seoul in May 2010 and organized jointly by UNESCO and the Republic of Korea, the organizing committee has met twice and an international advisory committee of experts convened on 1 and 2 July 2009. The 30 specialists, selected on account of their diverse skills and varied backgrounds, made fruitful suggestions on the plan drawn up by the co-organizers. That plan also drew on numerous consultations held throughout the world on the initiative of the National Commissions and NGOs. Emphasis will be laid on follow-up action taken on the road map drawn up at the first world conference on the socio-cultural aspects of arts education, in Lisbon, in 2006.

64. Following the 2008 re-launching of the **Creative Cities Network**, the number of member cities has risen from nine to 19 in less than one year. The last three cities admitted by the Director-General were Ghent (Belgium), Bradford (United Kingdom) and Kanazawa (Japan). The cities' representatives met at Lyon, a member as a city of digital arts, from 15 to 17 June 2009 and drew up, with UNESCO, new lines of action for their future cooperation. They also laid the groundwork for the international conference on the theme "New Technology, New Media and Creative City Synergy", to be held in December 2010, at the invitation of the city of Shenzhen, China.

65. Under the **UNDP-Spain MDG Achievement Fund**, the 18 joint programmes approved for the culture and development thematic window are now in the implementation phase, as UNESCO has received \$13 million for the first year of implementation of these three-year programmes. UNESCO is lead agency for 13 of these joint programmes. Furthermore, after the eight Conveners of thematic windows financed under the Fund met at the Organization in April 2009, UNESCO is designing a United Nations system-wide pilot mechanism for sharing knowledge of matters relating to culture and development.

66. The **World Report on Cultural Diversity** was finalized in the second quarter of 2009. Draft recommendations were circulated in mid-June to permanent delegations, and were discussed at an information meeting held on 23 July 2009. The executive summary of the World Report has been finalized on the basis of comments received and remarks exchanged. The English version of the report is to be launched in early October 2009 (the executive summary will be available in the Organization's six official languages).

67. UNESCO is holding, in cooperation with the Government of Italy, the region of Lombardy and the municipality of Monza, a **World Forum on Cultural Industries**. The forum, to be held at the Villa Reale, Monza, Italy, from 24 to 26 September 2009, will afford decision-makers, artists and representatives of the private sector an opportunity to meet and discuss the role of culture in and for development. The specific themes vary from one forum to the other, but the theme of the

forthcoming forum will be “creativity, innovation and excellence: from crafts to the design and fashion industry”.

Communication and information

68. UNESCO’s activities in the field of communication and information were implemented in the framework of the follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and focused on enhancing universal access to information and knowledge and fostering pluralistic, free and independent media and infostructures. An information meeting for permanent delegations on 1 September provided detailed information on UNESCO’s involvement in the follow-up to and implementation of the WSIS.

69. From 18 to 22 May 2009 UNESCO, ITU and UNCTAD co-organized the **WSIS Forum 2009** in Geneva, Switzerland. Building on the tradition of the annual WSIS May meetings held since 2006, the event successfully introduced a new format of consultations and meetings to renew momentum in the post-WSIS process. During the Forum, UNESCO presented an online community platform (www.wsis-community.org) with social networking features to facilitate interaction among stakeholders.

70. As co-chair of the **United Nations Group on Information Society** (UNGIS), UNESCO contributed towards ensuring the United Nations system-wide coordination of WSIS activities. It also contributed to the global debate on **Internet Governance** through the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and its Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG). UNESCO’s work with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers to provide its expertise for the implementation of Country Code Internet domain names in non-Latin scripts continues.

71. Implementation of the new Strategic Plan of the **Information for All Programme** (IFAP) endorsed by the 181st session of the Executive Board is underway and working groups have been established to assist the IFAP Council in planning and carrying out priority activities. An online Information Society Observatory was launched at <http://ifap-is-observatory.ittk.hu/> and work has progressed in the development of information policy templates.

72. On 31 July, on the recommendation of the 9th session of the International Advisory Committee (IAC) of UNESCO’s **Memory of the World Programme** in Bridgetown (Barbados), the Director-General announced the inscription of 35 new items on the Memory of the World Registry. The Director-General also announced the winner of the 2009 UNESCO/Jikji Prize: the National Archives of Malaysia in recognition of its outreach, educational and training programmes in the area of preservation within the Asian region.

73. UNESCO’s work in raising awareness about freedom of expression as a fundamental human right culminated in the celebration of **World Press Freedom Day** on 3 May with various events organized worldwide, including at the United Nations Headquarters. The Director-General awarded the 2009 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize posthumously to the Sri Lankan journalist Lasantha Wickrematunge at a ceremony in Doha, Qatar. An international conference organized under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned on this occasion gathered around 250 participants from all regions, including media professionals and non-governmental civil rights organizations. The resulting Doha Declaration stresses that independent and pluralistic media are essential for ensuring transparency, accountability and participation as fundamental elements of good governance and human rights-based development. It furthermore notes that freedom of opinion and expression are essential for free and democratic societies and contribute to a better understanding of and a dialogue among cultures.

74. With regard to UNESCO’s assistance to the **media**, special attention was placed on developing capacities in the communication of scientific information, particularly on climate change related issues. In this context, UNESCO organized the first international conference on Broadcast Media and Climate Change in Paris on 4 and 5 September 2009. The meeting sought to highlight

the public service remit of broadcast media in raising awareness on climate change and to increase cooperation between national broadcasters for this purpose. Organized in cooperation with UNEP and UNCC, the meeting was attended by senior executives representing some 100 national broadcasting organizations from across the globe. UNESCO successfully established partnerships with a number of organizations – including the BBC, France Télévisions and the production companies Dansk AV Produktion and Ki-Productions – to provide a range of quality audiovisual material and resources on climate change rights-free to national broadcasters from developing countries.

75. Other examples of UNESCO's assistance to the media's reporting on climate change include: (i) the workshop "Reporting on Climate Change", organized on 29 June in cooperation with the United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO at the Geographical Society in London as part of the 6th World Conference of Science Journalists; (ii) two workshops in Central Asia (Almaty, 1-3 July and Dushanbe, 6-8 July); and (iii) the agreement signed with the African Union Commission (AUC) to strengthen journalism training in science and technology through the potential centres of excellence in journalism training in Africa identified by UNESCO.

76. In follow-up to the Resolution adopted by the Intergovernmental Council of the **International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)**, Member States have been requested to provide information on judicial inquiries conducted on each of the killings condemned by the Director-General. A number of countries concerned by the killings of 121 journalists in 2006 and 2007 have yet to provide their inputs to the report to be submitted to the Council's next meeting in March 2010.

77. UNESCO continued to provide **assistance to media in conflict and post-conflict environments** focusing on safety issues, the setting up of media laws, conflict-sensitive reporting and ethical and professional standards, as well as reporting on elections, and giving voice to marginalized communities. UNESCO has published a Practical Guide for Journalists working in conflict zones in cooperation with Reporters sans Frontières, a new curriculum and textbook on Conflict-Sensitive Reporting and launched a pilot project in Bangladesh on using local community media for providing humanitarian information in post disaster situations.

78. Preparations are under way for a global **Power of Peace Conference**, which will explore practical options for harnessing media and ICTs in the service of peace in a changing world. The conference, to be held in Bangkok in October 2009, is being co-organized with the Thai National Commission for UNESCO. UNESCO also continues to support the Boundless Prize, awarded to young television and web journalists working for cultural dialogue and reconciliation.

Gender equality

79. Since the Board's endorsement of the UNESCO Priority **Gender Equality Action Plan** for 2008-2013 (GEAP) at its 181st session, issues pertaining to the promotion of women's empowerment and the achievement of gender equality have systematically been integrated into key strategic and policy initiatives and documents of the Organization. One example is the organization by UNESCO of the "Gender and Climate Forum" within the framework of the World Climate Conference-3 on 1 September 2009. Co-sponsored by WMO, UNDP, UNEP, FAO, IUCN and the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA), this Forum explored linkages between gender and climate issues, particularly in relation to the role of women as effective agents of change, and enhancing women's capacities to address climate change. A stand-alone report on UNESCO actions promoting women's empowerment and gender equality is being submitted to the General Conference (35 C/INF.21). This report provides an overall assessment from January 2008 to July 2009 of UNESCO actions on (i) overall trends with respect to women's empowerment and gender equality, and (ii) actions by programme sectors pertaining to women's empowerment and gender equality and progress achieved towards outcomes identified in GEAP. It also gives a brief account of key challenges and lessons learned as well as issues to be resolved.

80. UNESCO has continued its collaboration with other United Nations agencies to promote gender equality, including in the context of the “Delivering as One” process. Training was offered to the United Nations Country Teams in China and Viet Nam. Such efforts were also based on the UNESCO Programme for Capacity Development and Training in Gender Mainstreaming, launched in September 2005. Offered in self-contained training modules, this training programme is increasingly used by other United Nations agencies, especially at the country level.

Africa

81. Many specific activities reported under the sectoral headings above reflect the high priority given to Africa and its development in all of UNESCO’s fields of competence. Similarly, the Organization has increased its contribution to regional integration under its partnerships with the African Union and the subregional organizations.

82. Visits paid to the Organization’s Headquarters during the period under consideration by President Thomas Boni Yayi of Benin (on the occasion of the 181st session of the Executive Board), President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and President Pedro Pires of Cape Verde (for the award of the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize to the President of Brazil) and by Mr Nahas Angula, Prime Minister of Namibia (during the World Conference on Higher Education) attest to the importance ascribed to such cooperation at the highest level.

83. **Africa Week** 2009, opened by the Director-General on 25 May 2009 on the theme “Dynamics of Culture of Sports in Africa”, was highly appreciated by the entire Africa Group at UNESCO. Many events were held to mark Africa Week, which ended on 29 May with an address by the President of Mali, Mr Amadou Toumani Touré, on “Conflict management, the case of Mali”.

84. At the invitation of the Chairperson of the Commission of the **African Union**, Mr Jean Ping, and of the serving Chairperson of the African Union, President Muammar Gaddafi, the Director-General attended the 13th African Union Summit, held from 1 to 3 July 2009 in Sirte (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya). Participating for the fourth time in African Union Summit meetings, he met many of the continent’s Heads of State and Government and took stock of the rewarding cooperation maintained with the African Union. On that occasion, the Director-General expressed regret at not having been able to visit Somalia as planned, and thanked the President of Somalia for his renewed invitation to visit Somalia, the only African country that he had not visited during his term of office. The Sirte Summit ended with the adoption of two important UNESCO-related decisions concerning the Pan-African University and the *General History of Africa*.

85. Similarly, the visit paid on 15 June 2009 by Mr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, recently appointed Executive Secretary of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), was an opportunity for him to speak of NEPAD’s integration into the African Union’s structure and to welcome UNESCO’s support for the programme through the **UNESCO Committee for NEPAD**.

86. The signing at Headquarters, on 26 May 2009, of a cooperation agreement between the Director-General and the Secretary-General of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), Mr Habib Ben Yahia, has rounded off the series of cooperation agreements concluded by UNESCO with the eight **Regional Economic Communities (RECs)** officially recognized by the African Union.

Action undertaken in post-conflict and post-natural disaster situations

87. The Director-General made his first official visit to **Iraq** on 7 May 2009, accompanied by Her Highness, Sheikha Mozah Bin Nasser Al-Missned, the First Lady of Qatar and UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education. Three agreements were signed with Iraqi authorities: one to support a campaign to reduce illiteracy by 50% over five years, a second to expand cooperation in the field of higher education through the establishment of Colleges of Archaeology at the Universities of Samara and Kofa; and a third aimed at restoring the Al-Malawyah Minaret and the Great Mosque of Samara, which in 2007 was placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. On

8 July 2009, the Director-General signed at UNESCO Headquarters a \$26.6 million Framework Agreement on education in crisis affected areas with the Office of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah, of which \$23.8 million will be used to support the educational system in Iraq, focusing on the rehabilitation of the higher education system, the development of new curricula, literacy and non-formal education, and teacher training.

88. In the **Palestinian Territories**, UNESCO's assistance has continued to focus on the areas of education, culture and communication. UNESCO has begun delivering humanitarian early-recovery assistance to meet priority needs on the ground in the Gaza Strip. In the context of the Framework Agreement signed with H.H. Sheikha Mozah, additional funding for an amount of \$2.8 million has been provided for the five emergency education UNESCO projects retained in the United Nations Flash Appeal for Gaza, aimed at restoring quality education and educational services, in particular at secondary and higher levels.

89. The UNESCO Programme of Assistance for **Lebanon** was endorsed by Prime Minister Siniora on 2 April 2009. A joint UNESCO-Lebanon modality for fund mobilization will seek to raise \$20.7 million for 15 project proposals addressing three priority areas: strengthening Lebanon's post-crisis response capacity; modernizing key public sector services; and building bridges across diversity. As part of the efforts to increase the knowledge and understanding of international standards and their application in Lebanon, UNESCO organized a seminar in Beirut in August on the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crisis and Early Reconstruction, targeting planners and decision makers in United Nations agencies, NGOs, donors and ministries. Follow-up to the seminar will include training for the Ministry of Education and initiatives to promote inter-agency coordination and cooperation in Lebanon. UNESCO Beirut is involved in the planning and implementation of several forthcoming trainings on the INEE Minimum Standards, in cooperation with other UNESCO offices in the region and with national and regional partners. UNESCO is also contributing to the Millennium Development Goal-Fund project "Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in North Lebanon", which conducts training and extra-curricular activities aimed at harnessing the potential of young people as positive agents of change in their local areas.

90. In **Pakistan**, UNESCO assistance has continued to focus on the areas of education, culture and communication, including substantial support to the earthquake-affected areas of the country and in disaster risk management. Following the mass migration of an estimated 3.2 million Internally Displaced People (IDPs) earlier in 2009, UNESCO proposed several education and communication projects as part of the Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan. An outreach radio programme for IDPs (\$200,000) is being implemented. In partnership with WFP, UNESCO is supporting a programme of "School Days" in which food distribution to families of enrolled students is accompanied by delivery of school supplies and training for school management committees and head teachers. As part of the USAid-funded "Strengthening of Teacher Education Programme", UNESCO and the Ministry of Education have successfully launched the first National Standards for Teachers, and the first National Standards for Accreditation of Teacher Education Institutions.

91. UNESCO has scaled up its support to **Sudan** through its Office in Khartoum and Antenna in Juba. In education, emphasis has been placed on training to help strengthen national capacities for educational planning. In August, at the request of the Government of Sudan, the Office began a review of secondary, technical and higher education. The findings of a comprehensive sectoral analysis will enable the development of policy guidelines and a master plan in this regard. A USD 100,000 project on higher education has also been launched, with the support of the Japanese Funds in Trust. A fact-finding mission to Darfur in July 2009 explored the ways in which the Organization could support the development of technical capacities in the education system through training and planning, especially in secondary and higher education, technical and vocational education and non formal education. The Office is also exploring ways and means for integrating traditional culture and inter-religious dialogue in the process of the disarmament demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants. Finally, a Festival organised to mark the

World Day for Cultural Diversity in June 2009 in Juba gathered for the first time since the signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), all the ethnic groups from southern Sudan.

92. In **Somalia**, the Integrated Programme for Strengthening of Secondary Education (IPSOS) project financed by the European Community (EC) was completed on 31 June 2009. Its objective was to improve the participation and quality of secondary education, particularly of girls. A \$1.083 million project within the framework of the UNESCO-UNICEF-DfID strategic partnership for education recovery and development is under way, with UNESCO PEER concentrating on developing basic education systems, including supervision, management and review of teaching and learning materials.

93. In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the implementation of the special post-conflict overall support programme in UNESCO's fields of competence continued with various projects, including those entitled "Request for support for the Examinations and Competitive Examination Board of the Ministry of National Education of Côte d'Ivoire, with a view to the digital filing of documents and the computerization of the Board's services" and "For increased and recognized effectiveness of action by parents of pupils and students in Côte d'Ivoire". The establishment of a national virtual campus has commenced and activities have been carried out under the UNESCO/ECOWAS/ABD regional project on education for the culture of peace, human rights, citizenship, democracy, intercultural understanding and regional integration in countries in crisis and post-conflict situations.

94. In **Liberia** and **Sierra Leone**, cooperation with these countries has been strengthened, particularly in the field of education, owing to the strengthening of the UNESCO antenna in Monrovia. Cooperation with the Ministry of Education of Liberia has resulted in the completion of various activities, including the finalization of the review of the education sector and of the 2009-2015 national education plan, the formulation of a plan for institutional capacity-building and the training of national experts and the launching of a new project on technical and vocational education for former combatants, disabled persons and young people at risk.

95. In the framework of the United Nations Flash Appeal launched in September 2008, following the hurricanes in **Haiti**, UNESCO has raised \$100,000 to buy educational kits destined for pupils in Jacmel, in the South-East of the country, for the school year 2009-2010. The UNESCO Port-au-Prince office will continue to work with the Ministry of Education and in close coordination with the United Nations Country Team, to raise additional funds in support of post-natural disaster activities in the field of education. In the framework of the "Peace-building and Conflict Resolution" thematic window of the UNDP-Spain MDG Achievement Fund, UNESCO will be implementing an indicative \$350,000 as part of the joint United Nations project on "Conflict Prevention through Local Community Empowerment and Institutional Capacity Building in Haiti". Working in a partnership with MINUSTAH, UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM and IOM, the Organization's activities will include strengthening media outlets and initiatives targeting schools to promote peace education; support to youth organizations to undertake violence prevention activities; and analyses and dissemination of materials in support of the National Violence Observatory on Poverty and Exclusion.

96. UNESCO continues to support countries facing **post-natural disaster situations**. In response to the severe impact of the flooding in northern **Namibia**, UNESCO assisted with a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) of the six flood-affected regions. Three projects for a total value of \$1,019,000 were incorporated in the Revised Flash Appeal launched on 29 July 2009. These include: a catch-up programme for learners who missed school during the flooding period; providing support to communities and educational planners to prepare for and mitigate the impact of annual floods; and a project to strengthen the capacity of community media centres to enable more effective dissemination of life-saving messages. The World Heritage Fund contributed \$110,000 to support rehabilitation efforts. In **Myanmar**, the implementation of the two education projects which are part of the revised OCHA humanitarian appeal for Cyclone Nargis are well under way. These projects aim to enhance the resilience of the education sector, to cover both disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness as an integral part of the education system, particularly during emergency recovery, to ensure a safe future through a community-based,

participatory and multi-sector approach that is process oriented and extended to the local community.

III. UNITED NATIONS REFORM AND MANAGEMENT

97. The Director-General participated in the third meeting of the **UNDG Advisory Group** at the principals level in Geneva on 15 July. The meeting, chaired by Ms Helen Clark, the recently appointed Administrator of UNDP and Chair of UNDG, discussed how the United Nations development system can improve its work and commitment to the Millennium Development Goals; the status of the “Delivering as One” initiative; and the capacities needed for the United Nations development system to leverage its comparative advantage.

98. Responding to the ongoing global economic and financial crisis, UNESCO is contributing to the **United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB) joint crisis initiatives**, in which the United Nations system is coordinating its collective action. UNESCO has been advocating that the international community “invest out of the crisis” by maintaining and, when possible, reinforcing investments in all social domains, including education, sciences, culture and communication and information. Past experience has shown that UNESCO’s areas of competence could potentially be vulnerable to severe budget cuts, with attendant long-term implications. This concerns both national allocations and development assistance funds. Rolling back investments in these areas would threaten the important and hard-won gains of the past decades, the enjoyment of human rights for present and future generations and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals.

99. UNESCO remains committed to the ongoing efforts of increased **United Nations system-wide coherence**. At the **global/inter-agency level**, UNESCO has been part of the discussions of the CEB and its pillars HLCP, HLCM, and UNDG, as well as of the UNDG Advisory Group. Advancing its perspectives as a specialized agency of the United Nations system, the Organization has actively contributed to various important deliverables of these groups, including the elaboration of specific support measures for UNDAF roll-out countries, and to guidance on operationalizing the UNDAF through an UNDAF Action Plan.

100. At the **regional level**, UNESCO has started to be systematically engaged in the Regional Directors Teams (RDTs) tasked with the provision of coherent technical support to RCs and UNCTs; quality assurance of UNDAF/UN programmes; performance management; and trouble shooting and dispute resolution in difficult country situations. Following an agreement reached with the Director of the UN-Development Coordination Office (UN-DOCO) and the RDT Chairs, UNESCO can be represented at the RDTs by the two Directors of the Regional Offices for Education and Science in each region, who will consult closely with colleagues in the region from other programme sectors. This allows UNESCO to advance its interests in regards to the RDT work and to raise its visibility both at regional and at country levels. In order to review first experiences with the RDT and to discuss the way forward, UNESCO held a workshop with all regional directors and programme sectors in Nairobi, Kenya, in July 2009 to exchange experience and to chart the Organization’s further involvement and contribution.

101. At the **country level**, the organization is actively contributing to United Nations Country Team common country programming processes and to joint implementation through joint programmes. After almost two years of implementation in the eight “**Delivering as One**” **pilot countries** and as part of a broad reform agenda, important innovations have been launched in the way the United Nations works together at country-level and responds to identified national priorities, including through a One Programme/UNDAF, a One Budgetary Framework, and a unified United Nations country team headed by an empowered Resident Coordinator. The recent **stocktaking reports** of the Delivering as One pilot countries demonstrated that the experience has promoted an increased sense of collaboration and coordination, as well as stimulated joint programmes and joint resource mobilization. It will be important to make further headway in regards to the harmonization of business practices, including the issue of cost recovery, as well as

the use of commonly agreed tools, such as the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT), shared premises, where applicable, as well as common IT and travel services. Common action on the ground is furthermore informed and guided by the August 2008 Management and Accountability System for the United Nations development and RC system, its implementation plan, the new Resident Coordinator Job description, and the Resident Coordinator/United Nations Country Team dispute resolution mechanism.

102. The lessons learned and new modalities of working together in a more coherent fashion will be applied to a **new generation of UNDAF documents**, designed in an improved results-based fashion to better respond to national development priorities. The upcoming roll-out of UNDAF documents for some 90 countries until 2012 will be a major opportunity for the United Nations system at large, and for UNESCO in particular, to ensure that the United Nations delivers the best possible support to countries so that they can realize their national development priorities and advance towards the realization of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. Countries committed to applying the lessons learned and best practices emerging from the “Delivering as One” initiative, will be able to benefit financially from allocations of the UNDP/Spain MDG Achievement Fund, to which some new donors have given indications for long term commitment. Oversight is exercised by a Steering Committee, where UNESCO is represented, and which held its first meetings in the first half of this year. UNESCO has been successful in getting the agreement on an enhanced involvement of National Commissions in United Nations Country Team activities, especially in countries where UNESCO is a non-resident agency. Accordingly, training programmes for National Commissions will henceforth include sessions on United Nations reform processes as well as common country programming.

103. After a period of intense reflection and consultation, the Director-General is presenting the results of the second review of the Organization’s **decentralization strategy** in document 182 EX/6 Part II. Based on the working hypotheses considered by the Decentralization Review Task Force, as further assessed using a specially designed computerized simulation tool, the Director-General is presenting two basic options by which UNESCO could continue to enhance its decentralized structure while adjusting where possible to the exigencies of today, including those relating to United Nations reform at the country level. The report gives a factual account, backed up by numerous data, of the considerable improvements that have continued to be made to the network as a result of the reforms launched in 2000 by the Director-General. While many of the weaknesses identified at the time of the first decentralization review, and duly reported upon to the Governing Bodies in 2005, have since been successfully addressed, the document also assesses frankly the shortcomings that persist, most of which can be attributed to the lack of additional financial resources that would be needed to strengthen the field network more appropriately. It then looks at the requirements of United Nations reform and the broader context of today. The proposed two resulting options outline the extra investments they would both entail. In the light of the proposed adjustments in both options, the Director-General concludes that the resolution adopted by the General Conference in 1999, which has since constituted the basic decentralization policy, should now be revisited, notably so as to withdraw the notion of “exceptionality” from the existence of country level offices. The proposals also cover such matters as evolving human resource needs, the creation of new field functions, and improvements to reporting and authority lines. It is proposed that the Board transmit its views on the proposals made to the General Conference for final resolution. An extensive annex is proposed to the decision containing revised basic criteria for the rational implementation of decentralization. The draft decision proposes that the Director-General be requested to present to the Executive Board at its 185th session, a single consolidated proposal reflecting the debates of the Executive Board and General Conference on this subject.

104. Work to implement the Action Plan for Improved Management of UNESCO’s extrabudgetary activities has continued. The **Complementary Additional Programme (CAP)** of targeted/projected extrabudgetary activities has been updated and comprises 908 outlines, of which 14 have so far attracted donor interest. To further strengthen the coherence between extrabudgetary and regular programme activities, the timeline for the elaboration of document 35 C/5 CAP is being synchronized with the preparation of the regular programme (35 C/5) work

plans. Regarding the implementation of the resource mobilization strategic plan (180 EX/INF.5), efforts are focused on strengthening training in extrabudgetary activities for staff in field offices. The scope for further enhancing resource mobilization with private sector partners is being analysed.

105. As part of the implementation of the **cost recovery policy**, UNESCO launched in 2008 a cost measurement study and in parallel, a cost recovery policy harmonization study initiated jointly by the Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO) and the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM). The results of the cost measurement study, presented to the Board in document 182 EX/42, provide a clear picture of UNESCO's cost structure and highlight the importance of having a cost recovery policy by showing the level of cross subsidization that would exist if such a policy were not in place. Furthermore, building on the harmonized PSC rate for Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTFs), United Nations Joint Programmes and the Delivering as One initiative, the HLCM Working Group co-chaired by UNESCO is finalizing the UNDG-HLCM study which aims to accelerate the harmonization of cost recovery policies among United Nations agencies. To enhance transparency and efficiency in the implementation of the policy at UNESCO and promote a better understanding of the budgeting process as well as the cost recovery policy, internal processes and technical tools are being reviewed. Training sessions are also underway for Programme Specialists and Administrative Officers both at Headquarters and in the Field.

Internal Management

106. The rollout of the Finance and Budget System (**FABS**) to UNESCO field offices and institutes has entered its final phase with the rollout of the remaining key modules. In July 2009 some 80 staff from 40 offices and smaller institutes or centres (IICBA, IESALC, UNEVOC and TWAS) received training in the use of the Material Management (MM) and Travel Management (TV) modules, which are indispensable for compliance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). They also received access to the same Finance (FI) functionalities as Headquarters. To facilitate the usage of these new modules, a simple and user-friendly interface has been put in place. Expected to be in use from September 2009, it will help ensure IPSAS compliance before the end of year deadline. The same interface will also be deployed at Headquarters, which should greatly facilitate purchasing and contract management throughout the Organization. Work to integrate the remaining UNESCO institutes and centres – the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in Hamburg and the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste has continued. A FABS blueprint for UIL was prepared and the preparation of the ICTP blueprint is scheduled for completion by November 2009. The integration of UIL and ICTP will complete the FABS roll-out in its initial scope.

107. A major milestone was reached in the implementation of the new human resources management system – **STEPS**. It should be recalled that after the go-live of STEPS in April 2007, only basic functionalities necessary to run the payroll were available. The absence of automatic workflows, in particular, prevented users from benefiting fully from the new system in terms of greater process efficiency and reduced paper flow. Following intensive preparatory work during the first half of 2009, detailed functional requirements were completed for post management and personnel administration and the implementation of the corresponding workflows started in August 2009. These should be operational by the end of the year. Like the contract and travel management in FABS, they will be interfaced with SAP-STEPS and integrated in the UNESCO SharePoint Portal. Their implementation will alleviate workload and reduce paper work in HRM and other central services, as well as administrative offices throughout the Secretariat. Resulting in shorter delays in post management and personnel actions processing, it is expected to contribute to more efficient human resources management. The implementation of other functionalities in STEPS – such as e-recruiting, personnel development and training – is envisaged in 2010-2011. However, implementation of these will depend primarily on the availability of funds.

108. The responsibilities for the management of **SISTER** were transferred in March 2009 to a Management Committee co-chaired by ADG/BSP and DIR/BB, with other members being DIR/DIT

and DADG/ED. In order to assess the status of the functionality of SISTER and help guide its future direction, the new Management Committee commissioned a technical assessment of the tool, the results of which will be available shortly. Meanwhile, an alternative tool was made available for the preparation of the C/5 document.

109. The **IPSAS** project has entered another important phase with the roll-out of IT changes and training as well as the preparation of accurate opening balances in order to achieve IPSAS-compliant financial statements for 2010. Work has also begun on identifying how the Organization's internal documentation will be affected by the implementation of IPSAS in order to ensure that amendments are correctly reflected therein. It is also envisaged to produce a Policy Guidance Manual aimed to assist staff during the transition period.

110. The mandatory implementation of IPSAS at the end of this year will further enhance the control environment of UNESCO, and increase the transparency and accountability of the Secretariat to its stakeholders. UNESCO is likely to be one of the very few United Nations organizations to meet the deadline of 2010 set by the General Assembly of the United Nations. However, significant resources will be required during the course of the 2010-2011 biennium to prepare the very first set of IPSAS-compliant financial statements. Document 182 EX/45 requests the Executive Board to authorize the Director-General to identify savings from within the current biennium budget to close the funding gap.

111. In respect of establishing a fully-fledged **Ethics Programme** in the Secretariat, a workshop was organized on 15 June at UNESCO with the participation of the IMF Ethics officer who made a presentation on setting up an ethics office in an international organization. As a result of this workshop, the terms of reference of the Ethics Office are under consideration, based on the conceptual design of an ethics framework to address protected disclosures such as a voluntary disclosure channel, a whistleblower protection policy and financial disclosure arrangements, as well as the required modalities to ensure appropriate interaction between the Ethics Office and other Central Services such as IOS, BOC and HRM. The Ethics Officer has assumed his duties and is expected to play a crucial role in promoting ethical values and principles that should guide staff conduct and behaviour.

112. The culture of evaluation is an essential component of continuous process improvement and oversight in UNESCO. Document 182 EX/24 contains three possible scenarios for a proposed **external, comprehensive evaluation** of the Organization, each of which recognizes the importance of conducting this exercise in an independent, forward looking and strategically focused way. This exercise could provide actionable recommendations to position the Organization for meeting future needs and challenges, while taking into account the cumulative changes and reforms of the recent past, prospective issues and relevant trends.

113. **Internal audit** has maintained a heavy work schedule addressing risk and controls, performance and efficiency. It has completed 36 engagements so far during this biennium including field offices, procurement and contracting, travel and temporary assistance, as well as a range of information technology systems and practices. While pointing to a few areas where more efforts are needed, IOS has established that the internal control environment is, by and large, effective.

114. Document 182 EX/6 Part I, presents the major achievements of **staff policy reform** and provides an update of the implementation of the medium- and long-term staffing strategy. Notable achievements include significant improvements in geographical distribution and gender parity. The field staffing capacity has been reinforced, with a net addition of 142 posts (34 C/5) in the field since 2000. In order to foster greater decentralization, the Director-General developed a strategy for the implementation of geographical mobility which was approved by the Executive Board at its 181st session in April 2009. This strategy reinforces the notion that geographical mobility is driven by organizational needs, in particular by the need to ensure effective delivery of UNESCO's programmes at Headquarters and in the field. Since 2008, emphasis has been placed on

evaluating key human resource policies. This included performance audits on staff rotation, promotion and performance evaluation policies, as well as on temporary assistance contracts, by the External Auditor. IOS, commissioned by the Bureau of Human Resource Management, also conducted evaluations of the recruitment policy and of the merit-based promotion programme. These reports are available on the internet. The tender process for the development of the **360° management assessment tool** has been completed and the evaluation to select an appropriate provider to develop the system is about to commence.

115. The **renovation plan for UNESCO's Fontenoy Headquarters premises** (Belmont Plan) undertaken from 2001 to 2009 has been successfully completed on time and within the budget authorized by the General Conference and the Executive Board. It should be recalled that the Belmont Plan was executed through two major phases. The urgent safety work under Phase 1 began in August 2001 and resulted in a significant improvement in fire safety in the Fontenoy building and basements, as well as the renovation of the Fontenoy kitchens to bring them into line with the health standards of the host country. From 2002 to the end of the first quarter of 2004, the works covered security, restoration of the façade sunbreakers, waterproofing of the flat roofs of Buildings I and III and the piazza, and compliance with regulations of Building IV and the car park. Phase 2 of the Belmont Plan for the Fontenoy site started in 2004. This included the modernization of the offices and common areas in buildings I, III and IV as well as the 7th floor restaurant. These works comprised the renovation of the glass façades, overhaul of the technical networks (electricity, telephone, informatics and plumbing) and the installation of air-conditioning. In addition, each stage of the second phase included a series of works and significant modifications to UNESCO's technical premises. New technical rooms had to be constructed in order to house air-conditioning and other installations, entailing a complete rearrangement of services and machinery situated in the basement levels. The Director-General will formally inaugurate the renovated site on 25 September 2009.

116. By 179 EX/Decision 34, the Executive Board invited the Director-General to identify the necessary resources to conform to applicable **security standards at Headquarters**. A Task Force on security and safety established by the Director-General undertook a relevant study assisted by a team of experts tasked by the Prefecture of Police (September 2008-March 2009) and INTERPOL (April-June 2009). The medium-term security plan prepared by the Task Force is presented in document 182 EX/44 and encompasses the necessary measures in order of priority. The Board is invited to approve the Medium-Term Plan as presented and to recommend to the General Conference that it authorizes the Director-General to transfer \$1.8 million of any unspent funds from document 34 C/5 to the Special Security Account with a view to the construction of a forward security post at the main Fontenoy entrance.

117. General information on the **flu virus** is being provided to all visitors at the UNESCO reception areas and staff and Permanent Delegations receive regular briefings on preventive measures. As of end August 2009, the situation in the Host country (France) is below pandemic levels but the Secretariat's Crisis Cell is monitoring the situation.

Relations with Member States and partners

118. Under the **Participation Programme** for 2008-2009, 1,450 requests, amounting to \$35,741,939, were received. As at August 2009, 891 requests totalling \$17,158,137 had been approved, raising the approval rate to 98% of the overall appropriation, excluding emergency assistance for which 29 requests, amounting to \$1,344,759, were submitted. At the Director-General's request, several Member States refrained from submitting requests and the amount of contributions granted to countries in priority categories has thus remained the same as in 2006-2007. However, some Member States have still not been able to benefit because they have yet to submit financial reports and activity reports for previous biennia.

119. Work to update and improve communication materials, tools and services provided to **National Commissions** is under way. This includes improvements to the Secretariat's Database

of National Commissions and a feasibility study for the creation of an extranet for Member States. A number of printed materials, such as “Architecture of National Commissions”, “Partnership with African National Commissions” and “Involving National Commissions in United Nations Common Country Programming Process”, as well as an information bulletin entitled “National Commissions in Action”, will be launched at the 35th session of the General Conference.

120. **Partnership with elected representatives (parliamentarians, mayors and local authorities) and the movement of UNESCO Clubs** has continued to grow. The third meeting of the Forum of Arab Parliamentarians for Education (FARPED), held in Cairo in mid-April 2009, the second meeting of the Forum of African Parliamentarians for Education (FAPED), held in Dakar in May 2009, and the meeting of the Bureau of the Forum of Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians for Education (FASPPED), held in Jakarta (Indonesia) in June 2009, have helped to strengthen ties among these networks of parliamentarians in support of EFA. A Conference of Parliamentarians from Latin America and the Caribbean is planned for the first half of 2010, with a view to launching a forum of parliamentarians for education for the Latin America and Caribbean region. The Conference of Parliamentarians for UNESCO will convene on 3 October 2009 at Headquarters in order to analyse ways and means of promoting the Organization’s goals in national laws and budgets.

121. A **UNESCO Partners Forum** designed to bring together all external actors who support and defend the Organization’s ideals will be held on Monday, 5 October 2009, as part of the 35th session of the General Conference, of which it will form an integral part in the same way and in the same format as the Youth Forum. Its theme will be “UNESCO and its partners: multiple partnerships for a common ideal” and it will be an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of cooperation established by the Organization within civil society so that civil society can be an intermediary for the Organization’s action and to increase its visibility.

122. In regard to **publications**, the Secretariat continued its action to implement the External Auditor’s recommendations on “UNESCO’s publication activities”. The recommendation on linguistic diversity is, most importantly, beginning to be applied in respect of Arabic, owing to \$3 million in extrabudgetary funding provided by Saudi Arabia. Progress must still be made, however, in respect of the other languages. As the other recommendations have been implemented, the Organization now has a Publication and Distribution Policy in place, in accordance with the wishes of the Member States.