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de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
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**UNESCO during the mandates of Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura  
(1999-2009)**

**Introduction**

This information document is intended to supplement 35 C/INF.2, the Director-General's introduction to the general policy debate. The purpose is to record in a succinct manner some of the highlights of the 10 years of Koïchiro Matsuura's two mandates as Director-General of UNESCO, from 1999 to 2009.

On taking office on 15 November 1999, Mr Matsuura set in train a far-reaching reform and modernization programme designed to strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of UNESCO's action for the benefit of Member States. In the major policy speeches he gave in late 1999 and early 2000, as well as in 2005 following his re-investiture, Mr Matsuura identified the needs of the Organization and his intentions in that regard. The results of the ensuing efforts form the basis of the reform highlighted in this document. This ten-year plan featured:

- Exerting leadership in addressing major challenges of the new century: on achieving quality education for all, improving freshwater management, tackling the ethical challenges of scientific progress, safeguarding cultural diversity, promoting freedom of expression and fostering knowledge societies;
- Prioritizing and concentrating UNESCO's programme on those areas where the Organization has a true mandate and can add value;
- Growing recognition of the relevance and urgency of UNESCO's mandate, as illustrated by the Organization's increased engagement in post-conflict and post-disaster situations;
- Reinforcing and rationalizing the Organization's field presence to achieve greater impact and respond to the development priorities of the developing countries and assist them to attain the internationally agreed development goals;

- Positioning UNESCO as a specialized agency of the United Nations to serve as a respected and effective actor within the multilateral system, especially at the country level;
- Strengthening UNESCO's universality, legitimacy and credibility by expanding membership to 193 Member States and seven Associate Members, the largest constituency in the multilateral system;
- Improving governance through better coordination and collaboration among UNESCO's three organs: the General Conference, the Executive Board and the Director-General;
- Broadening UNESCO's outreach through partnering with different stakeholders and expanding established networks;
- Equipping UNESCO to deliver better by overhauling the Organization's strategy, systems, structure, policies and human resource practices, underpinned by modern management tools and a results-based management approach ;
- Focusing on transparency and accountability, particularly through the establishment of the Internal Oversight Service and the widespread use of evaluations and reinforcing risk-based internal control systems;
- Renovating the Organization's Fontenoy site in Paris through a nine-year, US \$80 million project to provide a high-quality, energy efficient and staff-friendly working environment;
- Absorbing the costs of all the above reforms within a very constrained budget.

## **PROGRAMME**

### **Programme focus and added value**

The Director-General has focused on key priority areas that were selected to address some of the most pressing needs of the 21st century. He established principal priorities for each Programme Sector, which remained constant throughout his mandate.

### **Education: achieving Education for All (EFA)**

In April 2000, the World Education Forum in Dakar became the launch pad for a concerted drive towards Education for All (EFA). UNESCO has since forged stronger international collaboration with the other agencies of the United Nations system and with other stakeholders that deal with education, in order to mobilize the international community to meet EFA goals. This effort includes establishing a series of mechanisms to maintain the global political momentum on EFA, such as the annual high-level EFA group meetings which bring together the four main EFA constituencies: national governments, donors, multilateral organizations and civil society, including the private sector.

In response to the need for more evidence-based analysis, the Global Monitoring Report (GMR) was launched in 2002. The GMR, today recognized as the authoritative reference document for education, provides hard evidence of where progress has been made and where more needs to be done to reach the six Dakar EFA goals.

Over the past decade, UNESCO's analysis has put the spotlight on the need for quality education, particularly the issue of the chronic shortage of trained teachers, which in turn put the need for teacher-training programmes on national and international agendas. Primary enrolment rates have also expanded tremendously, notably in Africa, to the point that UNESCO is now turning to address the increasing pressures on secondary and technical and vocational education.

### **Natural Sciences: managing freshwater resources**

Upon his arrival, the Director-General highlighted the importance of managing the world's limited and precious water resources through international cooperation.

UNESCO has become a leader in the area of freshwater, by developing different approaches to managing the world's freshwater issues through the work of its International Hydrological Programme, the establishment at UNESCO in 2001 of the Secretariat of the World Water Assessment Programme – whose main output is the production of a regular triennial report on the state of the world's water resources, the World Water Development Report – and the integration in 2003 into the Organization as a category 1 institute, the IHE Institute for Water Education in Delft. In addition, UNESCO established a worldwide network of regional and international category 2 institutes in freshwater (soon to be 20), in areas as diverse as urban water management, groundwater, water law and floods.

### **Social and Human Sciences: bioethics**

UNESCO has established itself in the forefront of bioethics, not only in the United Nations system but also in the international community as a whole. UNESCO adopted the International Declaration on Human Genetic Data (2003) and the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005). These Declarations, together with the 1997 Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights, have promoted a better understanding of major ethical issues raised by modern science, while also providing practical assistance to decision-makers in dealing with their implications.

### **Culture: promoting and protecting cultural diversity**

The past decade saw UNESCO pioneering a more dynamic and inclusive vision of culture, under which legal protection has been expanded to all forms of cultural expression. Most notably, UNESCO promoted the concept of intangible heritage as the subject of an international convention which now after its speedy entry into force enables the protection of oral traditions, songs, rituals and languages.

Ten years on, UNESCO has built a comprehensive standard-setting framework to assist Member States to promote and protect cultural diversity in all its forms. Since 1999, UNESCO adopted three new international conventions – the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions which complement the three important conventions already in place concerning the preservation of tangible heritage.

### **Communication and Information: freedom of expression**

UNESCO has been the champion in the United Nations system for freedom of expression and promoting freedom of the press as a basic human right. UNESCO's work establishes how media independence and pluralism are prerequisites of democracy, dialogue and foster development.

One of the vehicles for this advocacy was UNESCO's strong effort at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held in 2003 and 2005. UNESCO played a key role in helping to achieve an international consensus around the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for universal access to information and knowledge where UNESCO advocated building "knowledge societies", with freedom of expression as a core principle.

## **Responding to new challenges**

In addition to the sustained focus on principal priorities, over the past ten years, UNESCO has also responded to emerging challenges and demands. This is exemplified in the work of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) which, in response to the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, drew on its longstanding experience in this area to develop regional tsunami warning systems.

It has continued to respond to global threats by becoming the United Nations system's coordinator, together with WMO, for science, monitoring and early warning in the context of climate change action. UNESCO, through COMEST, has recently taken the lead in looking at the ethical implications of climate change.

UNESCO has focused on promoting national innovation systems and policy-maker dialogues on current issues through MOST(Management of Social Transformations).

UNESCO has successfully developed its work in addressing the HIV and AIDS pandemic, and played a lead role in HIV prevention education within UNAIDS.

UNESCO has pushed to mainstream culture in international development work. Through the UNDP-Spain MDG Fund, UNESCO is demonstrating the multiple ways in which culture can drive development.

UNESCO has been proactive on how to optimize new ICTs for development and in the debate on Internet governance. This work builds on the 2003 Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace.

## **Priority Africa**

UNESCO adopted two global priorities mainstreamed in all programme work, namely, Africa and gender equality. With respect to Africa, UNESCO bolstered its support to African Member States and built strong relations with African regional and subregional organizations. UNESCO is now a crucial partner of African countries, and the African Union, in the implementation of ambitious action plans in the fields of education, culture, and the sciences. This renewed attention to Africa finds its expression in a range of diverse actions, including policy advice, capacity-building, monitoring and benchmarking as well as normative and standard-setting activities.

## **Priority Gender Equality**

UNESCO has been promoting gender equality by mainstreaming gender concerns to ensure that the specific rights and needs of women and girls are addressed in all its programmes. UNESCO was first within the multilateral system to establish gender equality as an overarching global priority and has since produced an organization-wide six-year Gender Equality Action Plan with well-defined expected results.

## **Post-Conflict and Post-Disaster**

UNESCO has made a conscious decision to engage in post-conflict and post-disaster situations, helping to win recognition of the importance of protecting basic pillars of its domains in emergency situations and ensure a seamless transition from relief efforts through to recovery.

The growing demands on UNESCO for assistance in post-conflict situations in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Palestinian Territories, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, the Great Lakes region and Haiti, and in post-disaster situations following the 2003 Bam earthquake and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, demonstrate the value that is accorded to this work.

## **Intersectoral work**

In addition to advocating for programmatic focus, during the past ten years UNESCO has identified the potential of its five programme sectors to address the multi-dimensional, complex problems of today's world through interdisciplinary approaches. In order to capitalize on what is now understood as a comparative advantage, there is a heightened awareness of and new approaches to encourage interdisciplinary problem solving and programme action, including through twelve intersectoral "platforms". Each platform brings together the expertise of concerned programme sectors to address key international issues, such as education for sustainable development, HIV and AIDS, global climate change, science education or dialogue among civilizations and a culture of peace.

## **Evidence-based policies**

The UNESCO Institute of Statistics was established in 1999 and developed throughout the decade to respond to the needs of Member States for evidence-based policies. UNESCO also launched two seminal evidence-based reference documents: the Global Monitoring Report and the World Water Development Report. There are numerous initiatives underway to respond to the increasing demand of Member States for specialist technical advice in the form of evidence-based policy-development work. In this respect, the work of MOST takes on more significance, as in 2004 it was re-oriented to assist social decision-makers to improve their policy development processes by emphasizing the nexus between research and policy.

## **UNESCO within the United Nations system**

UNESCO has re-inserted itself into the United Nations system and is now better positioned as a responsible and sought-after partner. It has become an effective participant in United Nations country team activities and has been able to insert not only education but also science and culture for development in common country programming exercises. In areas where it carries special responsibilities, such as education, freshwater, and the oceans it has assumed lead roles while reinforcing its contribution to joint United Nations efforts in other key domains, in particular HIV and AIDS, climate change, gender equality and human rights.

UNESCO now contributes to strategic policy discussions within the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and its subsidiary bodies, including the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and fully engages in efforts to improve the coherence and quality of multilateral action on the ground. UNESCO has played a key role in forging a flexible and inclusive approach within the United Nations system-wide effort to "deliver as one" that recognizes the relevance and expertise of specialized agencies.

## **Decentralization and country-level presence**

The past ten years have seen significant efforts to ensure that UNESCO could contribute effectively to common United Nations country-level action and improve its service to Member States. Since 2000, UNESCO has continued to reinforce and rationalize its field network so that the Organization could become more efficient and improve the delivery of its programmes to Member States in the field. The pre-existing system was re-organized into a rationally distributed global network of offices, with cluster offices (or "constellations") each serving a manageable number of Member States, backed by specialized thematic regional bureaux.

During the successive biennia since the adoption of the first decentralization strategy, and due to the work of the successive Decentralization Task Forces established by the Director-General to keep adjusting UNESCO's response, improvements have been made to consolidate and strengthen the field office network and build policies and processes in support of decentralization. This work continues to evolve in the context of the UN Reform movement at the country level.

UNESCO has strengthened human capacity in its field offices by shifting programme funds and personnel from Headquarters to its regional and cluster offices so that the ratio of staff in Headquarters to those in the field has shifted from 3:1 in 1999 to 2:1 today. This now healthy ratio reflects the difference between UNESCO and the development agencies which are largely field-based, because UNESCO has a significant global function with its work as an international forum and setter of global standards and norms.

### **Extrabudgetary contributions**

Extrabudgetary contributions have more than doubled over the past decade (US \$150 million in 1999 to US \$367 million in 2007). Today, UNESCO receives more than half of its resources from extrabudgetary funding sources, enhancing the Organization's capacity to deliver.

In recent years, there has been significant effort to ensure that the projects funded by extrabudgetary contributions are fully aligned with UNESCO's programmatic strategy. In order to reduce cross subsidization, a cost-recovery policy was introduced in 2008 so that the resources needed for the proper implementation of an extrabudgetary project are charged to that project and do not become a burden on the Regular Programme and Budget of the Organization.

### **National Commissions**

National Commissions have continued to play a crucial role as a unique and valuable feature of UNESCO's network. Their role has evolved in the past few years to adjust to the new United Nations dynamics at country level. There are increasing opportunities for those National Commissions with the requisite capacity to advise on country priorities, act as a source of information, facilitate consultations with line ministries and mobilize national expertise to help shape UNESCO's inputs to United Nations common country programming processes.

### **Partnerships**

Partnering has been mainstreamed so as to increase the Organization's capacity, visibility and outreach. UNESCO has pioneered new forms of multi-stakeholder partnerships, drawing on civil society for public-private partnerships. UNESCO has been able to deepen its knowledge-base through access to vital networks and expert knowledge from think tanks such as the World Economic Forum and from strategic partnerships with the private sector. These partnerships have been brought to bear on areas as diverse as: building teacher competencies; fighting HIV and AIDS, promoting women in science, nurturing young engineers to find sustainable solutions, preserving cultural heritage, fostering social inclusion, providing leadership role models, using ICTs to bridge the digital divide and addressing brain drain.

As a specialized agency, UNESCO must have recourse to and support the growth of technical centres of excellence. In this regard, there has been a quadrupling of the number of category 2 centres hosted by governments under UNESCO's auspices to develop capacities in programmatic priorities, such as water and intangible heritage.

Established networks, such as Associated Schools (2,500 new members), UNESCO Chairs (from 74 to 649) and UNITWIN networks (from 6 to 61) have also grown exponentially since 1999.

UNESCO has increased cooperation with intergovernmental organizations (87 new agreements) as well as international non-governmental organizations (now 310 with official relations), foundations and similar institutions (26), and decision-makers in the form of various national partners such as parliamentarians, cities and local authorities.

## **Universality**

Mr Matsuura's first mandate saw significant effort on improving the universality of UNESCO, with the milestone of the return of the United States of America in 2003. In addition, four other countries – Singapore (2007), Brunei Darussalam (2005), Montenegro (2007) and Timor-Leste (2003) – have joined or rejoined the Organization. UNESCO's enlarged membership of 193 Member States and seven Associate Members signals Member States' recognition of the importance of UNESCO as a forum of international cooperation.

## **UNESCO's constitutional organs**

During his tenure, Mr Matsuura placed considerable importance on improving relations among the three constitutional organs of UNESCO (the General Conference, the Executive Board and the Secretariat). This involved establishing a continuous dialogue with the Executive Board and permanent delegations through numerous information and plenary Question and Answer sessions, regular information meetings on key issues and extensive reporting. The General Conference is progressively moving towards becoming a more interactive forum for policy discussion. For its part, the Executive Board plays its constitutional role of overseeing the results of programme execution.

## **MANAGEMENT**

Over ten years, UNESCO has revamped many aspects of internal management in order to become more efficient in the support of programme implementation. This reform process began in 1999 with the simplifying and rationalizing of the Secretariat's structure, overhauling human resources policies, introducing mechanisms for greater transparency and accountability, and transforming the physical environment.

### **Secretariat structure**

One of the first steps taken starting in 1999 was to simplify the composition of the Secretariat to provide a more rationalized and balanced Organizational structure while clarifying lines of authority. The number of directors was reduced by 50%, so that by 2009 there are 102 director posts representing 5% of the total posts.

### **Gender balance**

As of 2009, UNESCO has one of the highest rates of female representation within the United Nations system. For example, parity has been achieved at P-1 to P-5 levels with 51% of posts being held by women (compared to 46% in 2000). In order to address the continuing imbalance at senior management levels, UNESCO has developed an Action Plan to Improve Gender Equality, which proposes a series of measures to raise the level of representation at director level and above to a target of 50% by 2015.

### **Rejuvenation and geographical distribution**

Between 1999 and 2008 there has been a 20% increase in the number of staff aged between 30 and 34; and a 51% increase in those aged between 35 and 39, which means that the staff profile is much younger today than it was ten years ago. The 79 new recruits from under- and non-represented States brought in since 2000 under the Young Professionals Programme have greatly contributed to this. The Secretariat is now more geographically diverse, with staff coming from 160 Member States today, as opposed to 144 in June 2000.

## **Human resources policy**

A new human resources policy framework was developed, following the thorough review of all aspects of the personnel policy. The outcome was the adoption of an integrated staff policy covering key areas such as recruitment, training, performance appraisal, promotion and geographical mobility, all of which are aimed at ensuring that UNESCO can carry out its programmes more effectively.

## **Training**

In 1999 0.13% of staff costs were devoted to training. Today, the figure is 1.5% – or \$5.5 million. This investment aims to strengthen professional competencies for programme delivery, for example, training on enhancing the culture of management accountability through the management leadership course; and specialized training to assist UNESCO's participation in joint United Nations activities in the field.

## **Participatory approach**

The Director-General established a participatory approach to management, characterized by monthly meetings of the Directorate presided by the Director-General, as well as the College of ADGs presided by the Deputy Director-General. Major organizational issues have been addressed through wide consultation, with various internal working groups drawn from across the Organization charged with the responsibility of considering different aspects of management and programme.

## **Management governance**

From 1999, there was a significant shift away from centralization in that management governance was largely devolved back to programme sectors, which were then empowered through delineated tables of accountability and delegation, and supported by an executive office.

## **Administration**

The supporting administrative machinery and policies with corresponding accountabilities were put in place to ensure a smoothly functioning organization. All these policies have recently been consolidated in a revised Administrative Manual, which will be accessible electronically in an interactive format.

## **Internal Oversight**

In 2001, the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) was established to provide a consolidated oversight mechanism covering internal audit and evaluation. In the second mandate, this was extended to include investigation. This Service was one of the first such offices established within the United Nations system and has been crucial over the past ten years in bringing high levels of transparency, emphasizing continuous improvement and strengthening accountability. During the Director-General's second mandate, the Oversight Advisory Committee was established comprising external experts to advise the Director-General on issues of audit, evaluation, internal control and risk management.

## **Results-based management**

A new management culture has been established, where setting expected results and evaluating programme performance have become an integral part of daily working life. This Results-Based Management process (RBM) enables UNESCO programme sectors to improve their focus on expected results and encourages the measuring of the impact of UNESCO's programmes. IOS plays a complementary role by conducting systematic evaluations on the programme results and their follow-up.

## **Risk management**

In 2008, after an extensive process to identify the top organizational risks, a high-level risk management committee was established to make the assessment of risk a permanent and systematic feature of UNESCO's programme execution and management.

## **Ethics office**

An ethics office was created in 2009 to promote an awareness of and advise staff on ethical standards and issues, develop and deliver ethics training, establish a voluntary disclosure channel, and develop financial disclosure arrangements.

## **Management tools and standards**

Since 1999, UNESCO has introduced modern management tools for its financial systems, programme planning and monitoring, and human resources management. It is targeted to introduce International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) for its accounts in 2010. Thanks to these efforts, UNESCO is significantly more modern and efficient.

## **The physical environment**

In order to provide staff and permanent delegates with a safe, secure, high-quality and energy-efficient working environment, UNESCO's physical environment also underwent a complete transformation over the past nine years. Between 2001 and 2009 the Fontenoy site at Headquarters was thoroughly renovated in two phases. In Bonvin, the first phase of major works intended to ensure fire-safety compliance have been undertaken, and safety and hygiene has been improved in the Miollis building.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

The founders of UNESCO understood that the path for peace and security was a dual track. It would take the power of knowledge, working through (in 1945) education, science and culture; and it would take international cooperation. The past ten years have been faithful to this constitutional vision, putting the emphasis on access to knowledge – and building national capacities in knowledge – through the work of UNESCO's five specialized domains on fighting poverty and accelerating development. UNESCO has interpreted its mission through the lens of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

UNESCO has come to understand and reconcile the potential of its global normative or standard-setting role. The resulting standards and practices can be made relevant to and translated into action at country level to address the needs of Member States, and in so doing have significant impact as a positive force for change.

The 1945 commitment to international cooperation has been carried forward with the renewed emphasis on the importance of multilateralism and the determination of UNESCO to carve out its place in the multilateral system.

The challenge to come is for UNESCO to continue to develop its country presence so as to build upon this base and ensure that UNESCO can play the role that it asserts and that is expected of it within the United Nations country teams (UNCTs) and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) or other programming documents.

The implication is that, in order to be the provider of choice for technical specialist advice and assistance, UNESCO must ensure that it has recourse to a critical mass of qualified experts in all priority areas: top-level professionals for building analytical and policy capacities, producing evidence-based work that sets the benchmark, and for strengthening knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation functions.

The mantra of this work should be “delivering quality results, with impact”. In terms of how the Organization fulfils this promise, it should be “delivering as one UNESCO”. Because the demand for UNESCO’s assistance is so high, and the needs of its Member States so diverse, the Organization will have to keep making difficult choices as to where it puts its energy, focus and resources. A key challenge will be to find the mechanism that will encourage Member States to cut or even terminate programmes and activities, however worthy.

Much has been achieved in delivering Mr Matsuura’s ambitious ten-year plan, however there is always more to be done. There has been huge progress in modernizing the Organization; however this is a constantly evolving need. It is therefore crucial to keep internal oversight rigorous and to invest in the tools, systems and expertise needed to re-engineer business processes so as to provide the most efficient support for programme planning, evaluation, and delivery.

And ultimately, the future of an organization rises or falls on the quality of its staff – making it imperative that UNESCO continues to focus on developing, attracting and retaining capable and committed staff. It is in this sense that the achievement of the past ten years can be seen as a collective effort.