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**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
ON AN INTEGRATED STRATEGY ON DEMOCRACY
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
FOR HUMAN SCIENCES (ICHS), BYBLOS**

SUMMARY

The Director-General submits to the Executive Board an integrated strategy, which aims at developing an international programme on democracy within the framework of the International Centre for Human Sciences (ICHS), at Byblos (Lebanon).

Decision proposed: paragraph 26.

Introduction

1. The last quarter of the 20th century saw successive waves of democratization that affected various regions at different times: Iberian Europe, Latin America, South-East Asia, large swathes of Africa and, finally, Eastern Europe. The end of the cold war appeared to initiate a new age of democracy. However, despite the progress made, the global success of democratization cannot be taken for granted. In some regions, non-democratic forms of rule still exist. In others, a number of successful attempts have yet to become stable democracies. In addition, falling turnout at elections, dissatisfaction with politics and politicians, the strength of new populist movements demonstrate that democracy is never permanently anchored anywhere, but requires constant nurturing and development.

2. From the outset, UNESCO has played a key role in the promotion of democratic values and principles. Its constitution upholds the democratic ideals of justice, liberty, equality and solidarity, and considers these principles as fundamental factors in the building of peace. Indeed, the Preamble makes a direct link between “the denial of the democratic principles of the dignity, equality and mutual respect of men” and the “great and terrible war”. The realization of the democratic ideals remains therefore at the core of UNESCO’s actions.

3. In 1992, at its twenty-sixth session, the General Conference invited the Director-General to carry out “educational activities that lay emphasis on respect for cultural identities, tolerance and democratic values”. At its twenty-seventh session, the General Conference highlighted “the importance of the reforms being carried out in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe with a view to consolidating democracy, guaranteeing human rights and ensuring sustainable development in the economic, social, scientific, informational and cultural fields”, and expressed its willingness to contribute to the dissemination of a “culture of democracy” in society. In 1995, the Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy was adopted by the General Conference, which stresses the need to implement activities towards a “culture of peace”. In its programme on democracy launched in 1990, UNESCO aimed at promoting democratic principles, and fostered international debate and exchange through international symposia. The core themes of the activities were: democratic culture, education for democracy, democratic governance, democracy and social development, poverty exclusion and illiteracy, and science in the service of development.

4. At its 165th session, the Executive Board invited the Director-General to develop an integrated strategy for an international programme on democracy, taking due account of the research programme of the International Centre for Human Sciences at Byblos, Lebanon (from now cited as Byblos) and its potential contribution in the implementation of such a strategy. Byblos, which became fully functional in October 2001,¹ aims at fostering interregional and international exchanges and cooperation, at serving as a forum to disseminate results of research conducted in the field of social and human sciences, at building up research capacities in different regions, and at fostering and strengthening networks of institutes.

5. In developing the present draft strategy, the Social and Human Sciences Sector has held two consultative expert meetings, two meetings of the International Scientific Committee of Byblos, as well as several meetings of the Board of Management of the Centre.² The present document was also discussed with the UNESCO field office staff. The document contains proposals for reorienting

¹ For information on the Institutional arrangements, refer to 165 EX/12.

² The Board of Management of the Centre met five times, and the Scientific Committee, established in June 2002, has met twice to discuss the vision and future programme of the Centre.

UNESCO's work on democracy by integrating the following components into an integrated strategy:

- (i) research and capacity-building at Byblos;
- (ii) implementation of the recommendations of the International Panel on Democracy and Development (IPDD)³ contained in the publication *The Interaction Between Democracy and Development*; and
- (iii) UNESCO's programme on democracy.

6. Until now, the work of the democracy programme at UNESCO has focused on the theoretical analysis of the principles of democracy, while the work of Byblos has centered on empirical research. The work of the IPDD aimed at providing a conceptual analysis and recommendations on themes to be considered in the promotion of democracy. The objective in consolidating these efforts into one strategy is to integrate all the three strands with Byblos taking the lead on the coordination of the international research programme of democracy, it being understood that UNESCO's action to promote education to democracy would be carried out by the Education Sector outside of this strategy. The present strategy proposes the theme **Democracy, Culture and Peace** as the overall theme of the democracy programme.

The proposed strategy contains three main lines of action:

- I. Fostering comparative analytical research
- II. Organizing international dialogues on the future of democracy
- III. Supporting democracy in post-conflict societies

ACTION I. FOSTERING COMPARATIVE ANALYTICAL RESEARCH

7. The widespread democratic progress since 1980 could be considered as the "globalization of democracy" in the world. Indeed, in recent years, demands of political freedom, representation, participation and accountability resonated in various regions. But while there is an emergence of a general consensus on the desirability of democratic societies, there has yet to be a profound understanding on the means to bring about democracy and entrench it. The question as to how democratic systems in various countries are established remains often dominated by the response that democracy is only possible under certain cultural, economic and social conditions, which are not universal. But current empirical research shows otherwise, namely that democracy is possible under diverse and different cultural situations. In order to assess the possibility of democratic practice and to fully comprehend the mechanisms which nurture the development and maintenance of democracy, it is important to encourage the generation of new knowledge which questions the

³ UNESCO set up an independent think-tank "International Panel on Democracy and Development" (IPDD) in 1998 with 20 experts chaired by Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Its principal mission was to advise the Director-General on UNESCO's line of action relevant to the construction of democracy within a global strategy of promoting a "culture of peace" in a multicultural world. The key questions addressed by the Panel concerned the definition of a democratic society, the challenges facing democracy, and the sustainability of equitable development. It has published the report entitled *The Interaction between Democracy and Development* which was translated into several languages. The Panel primarily recommends that UNESCO develop its activities by advocating the dissemination of a democratic culture in collaboration with Member States, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and NGOs. The report enables UNESCO to gain new perspectives to reinforce its action and orient its future programmes in the area of democracy.

prevailing paradigm and which will endeavour to show that democracy can be nourished everywhere despite the different traditions and cultures which ground societies.

The research programme

8. The generation of new knowledge through analytical empirical research and capacity-building will be coordinated by Byblos. The initial programme of work will focus on democracy and its relationship with culture. The aim is to conduct comparative empirical research on hypotheses (case studies) about determinants of democracy in order to analyse the compatibility of democracy with the will of the people living under diverse cultural traditions. These studies will be conducted in the field through surveys, opinion polls and analysis of media, focusing on citizens' attitudes to democracy. Hypotheses about the relevance of different determinants – as substantiated, contradicted or modified by comparing several cases of culturally different sub-societies – may provide a new approach to democracy theory.

9. Later the focus will be widened to cover democracy and its relationship to themes such as ethnicity, peace, development, etc. The objective is to achieve a better understanding about the reality of democracy in the world, in particular, the way in which democratic principles are understood and practised by the people in the different regions.

Capacity-building

10. The Byblos Centre will assist Member States in developing the capacities of researchers, especially the young researchers, to conduct empirical research on democracy. The action will include the following:

- (a) **Research Training:** Through the studies conducted in selected countries, teams of young scholars will be chosen to do the research under the supervision of the Director of the Centre. The researchers will be provided training in methodology of empirical research and will be trained to plan and conduct case studies.
- (b) **Tutorship Programme:** A limited number of graduate and doctoral students writing on subjects related to the Centre's research objectives will be accepted and tutored for their research.
- (c) **The Byblos Middle East Autumn School:** A yearly Byblos Autumn school will be held with participants from the wider Middle East, the Caucasian States, Central Asian countries, Latin America and Africa.

Partners

11. Efforts will be made to establish an international network of research and training institutes to work in cooperation with Byblos. This network will undertake joint research and capacity-building initiatives. The following institutions have been identified so far:

Centre National d'Appui au Développement et à la participation populaire (Kinshasa, RDC)

Caucasian Institute for Peace, Development and Democracy (Russian Federation) UNAM (Mexico)

Arnold Bergstaesser Institut (Germany)

Gorée Institute, African Peace Academy (Senegal)

Social Science Research Council (United States)

University of Philippines (Philippines)

Université St Joseph (Lebanon)

International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (Canada).

Publication and dissemination

12. The result of the new knowledge on the determinants of democracy will be published and widely disseminated to the communities, through the UNESCO National Commissions and through seminars animated by research teams.

ACTION II. ORGANIZING INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUES ON THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

13. Globalization is a major phenomenon of our era influencing the state of democracies everywhere. It has intensified international exchange and given rise to new actors. It has strengthened the extent to which international factors influence democratizing movements, and has opened the ways to the internationalization of the democratic struggle. It is therefore necessary to re-examine the setting for democracy in this new global situation, and to examine the ways in which globalization impacts on democracy, and how it could, or should, become an opportunity for the full realization of democracy in the world.

14. In order to respond to these new challenges, prospective analysis and fostering of international dialogues will be conducted within the framework of the follow-up to IPDD. The international dialogues will be grounded on reflection and research on democratic norms, values and principles and their relationship to the key issues of globalization and development. This action will include the production of concept papers and the holding of international conferences in different regions of the world with members of IPDD, decision-makers and researchers.

15. The first in the series of international conferences was organized in Lebanon. The conference, entitled “Democracy and Peace” (June 2-3, 2003, Beirut, Lebanon), gathered key members of IPDD, Lebanese policy-makers, and the local community of academia, civil society, diplomacy and students. This was realized with the cooperation of the Byblos Centre, IPDD, UNESCO Headquarters and the Beirut Office under the auspices of the Lebanese Ministry of Culture. The report of this first conference will be published in the coming months.

Capacity-building

16. The capacity-building element will be part and parcel of the international dialogues. The following activities will be organized around the conferences with a view to building capacities in different countries:

- (a) seminars with academics on such themes as the universalization of democracy;
- (b) seminars with policy-makers to raise awareness of the current and future challenges to democracy and to foster ethics of leadership for democratic governance;
- (c) seminars with business leaders to explore the relationship between economic development and democracy;

- (d) seminars with journalists to foster better knowledge of journalists to the challenges of globalization and the role of communication in democratic development.

Partners

17. The partners in this line of action include the members of the IPDD, the UNESCO National Commissions, the UNESCO field offices, and various research centres, networks and institutes.

Publication and dissemination

18. The outcome of the conferences will be disseminated through a publication series in the main languages of UNESCO to the following communities:

- United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations, UNESCO Member States;
- academic communities, researchers and students of political science;
- policy-making communities;
- advocacy groups and other social actors.

The distribution will be done mainly through the UNESCO National Commissions.

ACTION III. SUPPORTING DEMOCRACY IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES

19. A large number of countries in different regions of the world have been or are affected by violent conflicts, in which the international community is making efforts to restore peace. Subsequent peace agreements will invariably involve attempts at setting up new democratic institutions, power-sharing arrangements, and at entrenching a culture of human rights. In this new dispensation, United Nations agencies are often called in to contribute to the reconstruction and reconciliation processes. Further, the most recent resolution of the 2002 General Assembly of the United Nations calls for the relevant specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system to contribute actively to assist countries in the task of promoting and consolidating democracy, namely by the strengthening of democratic governability and the rule of law.

20. In the recent past, UNESCO has joined forces with other agencies in the United Nations system to participate in programmes of reconstruction and reconciliation. Afghanistan, Israel/Palestine, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo are the latest examples of the engagement of the Organization in this domain. The contribution of UNESCO has mainly focused on the rehabilitation of the education system, the development of human resources, the promotion of independent media, and the rehabilitation and protection of cultural heritage. The proposed integrated strategy on democracy will bring UNESCO to contribute more directly to the restoration and/or establishment of democracy through a programme of research and capacity-building.

The research programme

21. The immediate aftermath of ethnic and factional conflict may pose the strongest challenge for implementing democracy. Since each country comes with its own history, cultural traditions, ethnic make-up, etc., there is no “ready-to-use” model. Rather there is a need in each context for domestic, social and political scientists to identify solutions that have worked elsewhere, that can be helpful to suggest arrangements compatible with the particular settings and based on a realistic appreciation of the nature and power of the interests involved. The aim here is to encourage the promotion of

democracy by local actors in the academic community who will make use of the results of the analytical research produced by Byblos and the debate generated by IPDD.

22. This could be done through the setting-up of new research and training centres or the strengthening of existing ones in the countries affected, for example in the universities of Baghdad, Kabul or Kinshasa. Working closely with the Byblos Centre in Lebanon, these centres would conduct research, disseminate information, and interact with policy-makers and civil society in the building-up of the new democracies. Existing studies and research, as well as the lessons to be learned from previous United Nations programmes on the promotion of democracy in post-conflict societies will be reviewed and integrated into the body of work.

Capacity-building

23. The capacity-building action will include the following:

- (a) The local centres would engage in training and capacity-building with the new legislators, civil servants and leaders of civil society in order to foster consensus around the need to protect and promote human rights, gender equality, and the rule of law. They could manage programmes of Civil Societies in Dialogue, similar to the one currently being run in Israel/Palestine by the Social and Human Sciences Sector.
- (b) The local centres would also develop training programmes for magistrates, army officials, police and security forces in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights and NGOs. The objective is to use the window of opportunity created by a new peace settlement to invest significantly in the dissemination of universal human rights principles and democratic norms.

Partners

24. The partners in this line of action would include the United Nations Secretariat, UNDP, the United Nations University, research centres and NGOs, and the relevant ministries in the country.

Publication and dissemination

25. The research generated by the local centres will be published by Byblos and communicated for awareness-raising campaigns. The target groups would include:

- United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations;
- policy-making communities;
- advocacy groups and other social actors;
- media.

Proposed decision

26. In light of the foregoing, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 167 EX/9,

2. Emphasizing the importance of the International Centre for Human Sciences, set up at Byblos, Lebanon,
3. Bearing in mind the recommendations by the International Panel on Democracy and Development chaired by Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali,
4. Taking note of the efforts made by UNESCO in its activities on the promotion of democracy,
5. Encourages the development of an international programme on democracy, based on the orientations of the present integrated strategy.