

The UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge is a global initiative with the aim of widening the understanding of systems and structures of higher education, research and knowledge, and focussing particularly on developing countries. The objective is to identify, gather, analyse, disseminate and promote research. The Forum provides a platform for researchers, policy-makers and experts to engage critically with research issues and findings.

EDITORIAL

Dear Colleagues and Partners of the UNESCO Forum,

The UNESCO Forum Secretariat is very proud to send you the second edition of its new biannual Newsletter covering the activities carried out over the last six months. As mentioned in the previous edition, the development of our Newsletter is part of our ambition to increase the UNESCO Forum's visibility and to facilitate your awareness of the UNESCO Forum's activities.

The past period has doubtlessly been very challenging for the UNESCO Forum and for the Secretariat in particular. No need to express how regrettable is the fact that our former project manager, Katri Pohjolainen Yap, could not stay among us and continue her excellent work making the Forum a successful project and pushing it to the top. With your help, we now have to turn to the future keeping in mind her ambitions for this project, bringing it as far ahead as we can and making her proud of us and of this accomplishment.

During this last semester, several regional activities took place, which contributed significantly to the objectives of the UNESCO Forum. Important decisions in terms of the future of the project have been launched and will be developed in the Spring of 2006.

In this respect, it is with great honour that the UNESCO Forum Secretariat would like to inform

you that the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge was selected to be one of UNESCO's flagship activities in the proposed Programmes and Budget of the Organization for 2006-2007, which was adopted at the General Conference last October. This, of course, means recognition of all of you who are contributing to making the UNESCO Forum what it is, and for the important results and outcomes of all the efforts. One of our challenges for the coming months will be to develop our advocacy work to the Members States to promote research, as an intersectoral project, in the Division of Higher Education as well as in the UNESCO Natural Sciences and Social Sciences Sectors, the objective being that the project should be fully taken into consideration in the next biennium budget. Accordingly, we are pleased to inform you that the cooperation with the UNESCO Science Sector and the Social & Human Sciences Sector is developing into concrete activities such as co-organized conferences and a web based tool for transforming/translating research results into policy briefs.

We look forward to a year rich of events and to the organization of our second International Colloquium on Research and Higher Education policy, in December 2006, which will focus on 'Universities as Centres of Research and Knowledge Creation: An Endangered Species?'

The UNESCO
Forum Secretariat



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UNESCO Regional Seminar on "the Implications of WTO/GATS on Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific"

The UNESCO Regional Seminar, held during 27-29 April 2005, focused on the "Implications of WTO/GATS on Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific," and was co-organized by UNESCO, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO and the Korean Education Development Institute

The objective of the seminar was to identify the implications of WTO/GATS for higher education and research policies by sharing the experiences of countries and regions, and enhancing cooperation and exchange at the regional level. We addressed the impact of GATS and Cross-border provision on Higher Education in relation to current issues, such as the liberalization, privatization and commercialization of higher education, increasing diversity of programs, and changes in government funding for higher education.

During the three days of intense debate which included presentations from 10 countries and 2 regional cases from Europe and Africa, we identified substantial regional differences in Cross-Border Higher Education. Participants in the seminar agreed that one of the main issues to address was how developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region could utilize the Cross-border Higher Education programs, while at the same time protecting the national integrity of their educational systems. Participants agreed upon the necessity of

(UNESCO Regional Seminar on 'the Implications of WTO/GATS on Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific')

establishing a system to ensure that the foreign providers of programs meet the specific, higher educational needs of individual regions. The session participants agreed upon the importance of standard setting for quality assurance. There is also a need for established criterions of qualification and accreditation, along with a clear regulatory framework, which facilitates the smooth integration of the foreign institution with regional institutions. As was discussed at the Bologna Ministerial Conferences, it is of great importance that the higher education programs remain consistent, but they must also respect the regional diversity of the served countries. In this regard, the UNESCO/OECD guidelines for Cross-Border provisions on Higher Education are a valuable resource for stakeholders because they promote the sharing of information, the achieving of consensus, and, resolving the north-south economic divide.

We concluded that it was essential to strengthen networks and further research cooperation among stakeholders at the national, regional and world level. Moreover, participants drafted and adopted "Recommendations on Future Actions" on Higher Education and Research with regard to GATS.

The meeting resulted in a meaningful and fruitful outcome. On behalf of the Asian and the Pacific Region, as its Chair at the UNESCO Global Scientific Committee, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all participants.

Akira ARIMOTO

Report from the Third Meeting of the Scientific Committee for Africa

After the resignation of Professor Mahmood Mamdani, as the Chair of the Regional Scientific Committee for Africa, I was appointed as his replacement in December 2004. At that same time, the Committee was reorganized to include two additional members, bringing the total up to eleven, four of whom are new members.

To date there have been three formal meetings of the Committee (Dakar, Senegal in October 2002; Harare, Zimbabwe in August 2003; Maputo, Mozambique in May 2005) and one Regional Research Seminar (Kampala, Uganda in July 2004). The fourth meeting is planned to take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in March 2006 and the second Regional Research Seminar is scheduled for 2007.

RESEARCH SEMINAR ON "Academic Mobility in a Trade Environment: Issues, Opportunities and Risks" for Latin America and the Caribbean

7-8 June 2005, Mexico City, Mexico

New aspects of international academic mobility were analyzed in the research seminar organized in Mexico City by the Latin American Scientific Committee of the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research in Knowledge. In addition to the centuries old cross border exchange of students and teachers, we are now beginning to witness the cross border movement of programs and providers. An innovation, which brings with it a new set of policy implications. There is clearly a different understanding of cross border education among educators and economists. Educators use the term to capture a wide range of education activities that are part of international academic linkages and agreements, and international development/aid projects. For them 'trade in education services' is a very small and novel part of academic mobility, -a subset of cross border education having a commercial or for-profit nature or purpose. By contrast, economists and the trade sector see export value that ought to be included in a country's balance of payments from accommodation, living, travel expenses and other activities involved in students' or teachers' exchanges.

These differences in understanding are central to the current debate on GATS (General Agreement on Trades in Services). The seminar aimed at offering a meeting ground for dialogue and analysis between different stakeholders in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean. The starting point was the implications of GATS for higher education policy. Since cross border education is expected to continue to grow, some conditions have to be met for developing countries to profit from these new opportunities. These include relevance, quality, usefulness, sustainability, cooperation and transparency, capacity building, reduction of brain drain, international validity of qualifications and mitigation of the education gap. Explicit mention was made of the joint UNESCO/OECD initiative of international guidelines to enhance the quality of higher education provision across borders, through facilitating the development of national systems, and enhancing international cooperation in quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications procedures and systems.

The seminar introduced the beginnings of a new typology of internationalization processes in Latin America, as well as new priorities centered on mobility, brain drain, study programs convergence and mutual recognition of degrees (MEXA, 6 x 4), quality assurance, and the situation of external providers. A heated debate touched on education

as a public good and the market, globalization as the privatization of public interests, the commercialization of educational services vs education for all, issues of privatization and equity, the mobility of the provider vs the mobility of the consumer, and political scenarios confronting transnational education. The participants agreed that, among the elements necessary to improve a region's higher education systems were the defense of education as public good, the development of quality and relevance standards in the schools, the use and improvement of existing legislation, and participation in regional agreements about virtual education, transnational education. These elements should ideally come from within the political resources of the region and not from exogenous forces.

There is much to be learnt from positive experiences such as that of Mercosur Educativo, at the sub-regional level, and CAPES, at the national one. Both experiences in the field of higher education have generated constructive policies designed to increase regional integration, including program accreditation, harmonization of academic programs and the improvement of higher education institutions.

Some participants offered a special view of the implications of the 'liberal' international division of labor upon scientific research in Latin America. In particular, attention was given to the question of how changes to the higher education systems of Latin America affect scientific research and research practitioners. Relevant changes include the internationalization of higher education in Latin America, modifications to the higher education systems that determine the local strategies of universities in the training and development of scientists, increased delocalization and subcontracting of research, reduced negotiating capacity, integration into international research programs, etc.

Among the implications of the new trade agreements upon research and research capabilities in LAC, several aspects were considered: the failure to introduce research projects that would help solve basic social problems like poverty, hunger, etc., the need for adequate monitoring and control of research networks to avoid the chain of failures of opportunistic and poor quality international research networks, the need to transform pedagogical practices to meet the needs of students and scientists. Finally, the region must develop capabilities in new technologies in order to be discriminating buyers.

Hebe VESSURI

ACADEMIC FREEDOM CONFERENCE

"Problems and Challenges in Arab and African Countries"

10 - 11 September 2005, Alexandria, Egypt

The UNESCO Forum Regional Scientific Committee for Arab States in cooperation with the Arab and African Research Center in Cairo (AARC), the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), and the Swedish Institute in Alexandria organized a Conference on Academic Freedom with particular emphasis on the problems and challenges facing Arab and African countries. The Conference took place 10-11 September 2005 in Alexandria, Egypt and was attended by over 60 senior and distinguished academics, researchers and policy makers from a wide range of professional backgrounds and from several Arab and African countries, as well as Asian, European and Latin American countries.

The Coordinating Committee responsible for the planning of the Academic Freedom Conference was composed of representatives of the three partners' organizations as well as members of the UNESCO Forum Regional Scientific Committee for Arab States. The Committee prepared a Call for papers that was launched in the Spring, on a very broad basis, and yielded well over 37 proposals. Out of these, the Committee selected 17 proposals to be presented as papers at the Conference. These papers focused on a wide range of issues and were organized accordingly for the Conference programme.

In addition to the contributions that resulted from the Call for Papers, the UNESCO Forum and its partners invited three academics to present keynote



speeches covering the following themes: *The State vis-à-vis Academic Freedom; Communication Revolution and Academic Freedom; and Globalisation and Academic Freedom.*

This Conference was very interesting in terms of the issues discussed, namely the trio of "Academic Freedom", "Institutional Autonomy" and "Social Responsibility" which are very basic to the proper functioning of higher education institutions. It was also successful in bringing to the fore, through the papers presented, the vivid discussions and reflections of academics and other concerned with academic freedom and higher education institutions, the importance of securing and protecting academic freedom in Arab and African countries as well as in the other regions of the world for enhancing the capacities of the higher education sector.

At the Conference, the participants put forward a number of recommendations, which will be gathered and adopted after consultation with all the parties involved in the Conference. Another major follow up activity of this event will be the publication & dissemination of a selected number of papers, in Arabic, English and French.

(Report from the Third Meeting of the Scientific Committee for Africa)

So far the Committee has commissioned several papers in two specific areas: higher education policies and historical investigations. The Committee has authorized the following three papers relating to issues of Higher Education Policies: *Higher Education Mandates in Transition Africa; ICT's and World Bank Policies in African Higher Education; and Gender, Higher Education and Knowledge Production Systems in Africa.* The Committee has also decided to commission a fourth paper on the higher education system in Mozambique. All the four papers, once finalized, will be published as Thematic Occasional Papers.

Following presentations made at the first Regional Research Seminar, the Committee is in the process of commissioning three papers concerning Historical Investigations: *The Production of Knowledge in Pre-colonial Nilotic Sudan; Islam and the Production of Knowledge in pre-colonial West and Central Sudan; and Education and Critical Investigation in Ethiopia: Ancient Roots and Modern Stresses.* Again, the Committee proposes to publish these three papers, once completed, as Thematic Occasional Papers.

At its third meeting held in Maputo in May 2005, the Committee decided that over the next couple of years the focus of its work will be on the theme: "The Role of Higher Education in National Education Systems". The committee proposed this theme for the second Regional Research Seminar planned for 2007. The Committee plans to involve several organisations in the preparation of the Seminar, including the Association of African Universities, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), the Council on Higher Education of South Africa and the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU).

Goolam MOHAMEDBHAI

SPECIAL FEATURE

Invitational Workshop on the Comparative Analysis of Research Systems

6-7 April 2006 UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

A very important aspect of higher education in relation to research is 'Research Systems' as they are at the very core of knowledge production in any country or region.

In this context and having in mind the dramatic differences in research capacity and research output across different regions of the world, the UNESCO Forum is organizing, in cooperation with the UNESCO Division of Science Policy and Sustainable Development as well as the International Council for Science (ICSU) an experts meeting in the form of an invitational workshop on 6th and 7th of April 2006 in UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France. Around 20 international experts would be invited to discuss issues related to research policy, research organization, research funding and

research output. The workshop replaces the earlier planned 'Second Global Research Seminar' that was scheduled to take place 8-9 December 2005.

In the knowledge society (be it in the context of a country or a region), research takes place in a matrix of different institutional arrangements, which may or may not be within the higher education system. Research takes place under public, non-governmental and private auspices and the function of research involves four major variables, which are 'research governance' (i.e. conducting of research), 'research personnel' (i.e. the staffing of research tasks), 'research funding' (i.e. financing of research) and 'research output' (i.e. performance of research). Such arrangements would constitute 'research systems' in a country or region.

The Workshop, which aims at reviewing the analytical utility of systems analysis, would result in a Strategy Paper on the possibilities and limitations of systems analysis for the comparative study of different kinds of research. The paper could bring out a fairly comprehensive canvas for the systemic study of research systems.

This expert meeting is closely related to the preparation of the second UNESCO Forum's International Colloquium that is to be held November 29th and December 1st, 2006 in UNESCO Headquarter, Paris.

Third Meeting of the Global Scientific Committee

The third Meeting of the UNESCO Forum Global Scientific Committee was held on 20-21 October 2005 at UNESCO headquarters



in Paris. Fourteen committee members met to discuss issues of strategic importance of the UNESCO Forum in general and the Global Scientific Committee in particular. The committee took several decisions, which will influence all aspects of the UNESCO Forum. To mention some decisions of special importance, the committee decided to set up a working group for the purpose of looking into

long-term principles, working methods and results for the UNESCO Forum. The UNESCO Forum is facing a period where a lot of papers and books

will be published and the committee identified a need of setting up a common publication policy, including rules of procedures, for the UNESCO Forum. Moreover, the committee supported the secretariat's decision to postpone the Global Research Seminar, which was supposed to take place in December 2005, to **6-7 April 2006**. They also suggested that the seminar should evolve in

an Invitational Workshop on Comparative Analysis of National Research Systems, focusing on comparative analysis of research system, with special focus on the developing countries. The idea is that the expert workshop partly should feed into the Forum Colloquium, which will take place on **29 November and 1 December 2006**.

UPCOMING EVENTS

a) Scientific Committee Activities

Several of the UNESCO Forum Regional Scientific Committees will carry out activities in the Spring 2006.

Africa

The Regional Scientific Committee for Africa will hold its Fourth Meeting on **9-10 March 2006** in UNESCO headquarters, in Paris, France. The primary objective of the meeting is to develop the programme for the 2nd Regional Research Seminar, but if necessary issues related to commissioned may be brought up.

Latin America and the Caribbean

The fourth Meeting of the Regional Scientific Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean will deal with 'Knowledge and Society's Needs in Latin America'. The contrast between knowledge production and knowledge dissemination will be emphasized, as well as public policies. This meeting will take place on **26-28 April 2006** in **Caracas**, Venezuela.

Global Scientific Committee

The fourth Meeting of this Committee will be held on **29-30 May 2006** at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. During this meeting, the Committee will provide a report from the experts meeting of **6-7 April**, it will prepare the Forum Colloquium of **December 2006**, the activities of the different Regional Scientific Committees will be evaluated and the future of the UNESCO Forum will be discussed.

Arab

The Regional Scientific Committee for the Arab States has its next meeting - the fourth - in the United Arab Emirates **6-7 June 2006**. At this occasion, Jane Knight will be invited to present her research on the implications of GATS/WTO on higher education.

Second International Colloquium on Research and Higher Education Policy

29 November-1 December 2006

Following the success of the first edition of the Colloquium, which was held on 1-3 December 2004 on "Knowledge, Access and Governance: Strategies for Change", the UNESCO Forum is undertaking the preparation of the second edition scheduled to take place from 29 November to 1 December 2006. The UNESCO Forum Global Scientific Committee is in charge of the organization of this event and has appointed an Ad Hoc working group for this task during its last meeting. This second International Colloquium will be held on the general theme: "Universities as Centres of Research and Knowledge Creation: An Endangered Species?" and similarly to the 2004 event, the 2006 Colloquium is expected to draw a wide range of experts, among others academics and policy-makers. A Terms of Reference for this event as well as a 'Call for Papers' are currently being prepared and will be very soon widely disseminated.

b) Partner Activities

CODESRIA

6-10 December 2005

CODESRIA 11th General Assembly, *Rethinking African Development: Beyond Impasse, Towards Alternatives*, Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, in Maputo, Mozambique.
http://www.codesria.org/Links/conferences/general_assembly11/general_assembly05.htm

ICSU

4-8 March 2006

International Workshop On Protein Characterization
2-8 July 2006

XVth World Congress Of Pharmacology 2006

16-23 July 2006

36th COSPAR (Committee On Space Research)

Scientific Assembly And Associated Events

<http://www.icsu.org/eXcal2/calendar.php4?mode=view&id=8>

SRHE

13-15 December 2005

SRHE Annual Conference 2005, *New Perspectives on Research into Higher Education*, Society for Research into Higher Education, in Edinburgh, Scotland.

<http://www.srhe.ac.uk/conference2005/>