



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Discours de la Directrice générale de l'UNESCO

Irina Bokova,

à l'occasion de la réunion d'information spéciale avec les délégations
permanentes

UNESCO, 26 janvier 2012

Madame la Présidente du Conseil exécutif,

Madame la Présidente de la Conférence générale,

Mesdames et Messieurs les délégués permanents,

Excellences,

Bonjour à toutes et à tous.

Depuis le mois de novembre dernier l'UNESCO est confrontée à une situation difficile.

Au cours des dernières semaines, je me suis déjà entretenue avec bon nombre d'entre vous.

J'entends clairement vos demandes et vos préoccupations.

Je les partage.

Ce matin, je souhaite vous présenter mon évaluation de la situation, et je vous soumettrai, à la prochaine session du Conseil exécutif, notre feuille de route pour les prochains mois.

Ce document appellera un soutien de votre part, et comportera plusieurs mesures concrètes, que nous devons évaluer régulièrement.

D'ici là, permettez-moi de revenir brièvement sur la fin de l'année 2011, et les conséquences de la suspension de la contribution américaine pour 2010-2011.

Nous avons eu moins de 6 semaines pour résorber un déficit de trésorerie de 72 millions de dollars.

Il a fallu réagir rapidement, prendre des mesures radicales pour stopper l'hémorragie – et ce fut difficile, mais nous l'avons fait.

Nous avons pris des mesures drastiques dans deux directions.

Une réduction massive de nos dépenses, d'une part.

Un effort pour dégager des ressources, d'autre part.

Nous avons pris un certain nombre d'engagements pour novembre et décembre, nous les avons réexaminés et revus à la baisse, avec à la clé une réduction de 3.8 millions de dollars.

Nous avons coupé dans les dépenses de mission : elles sont inférieures de 4 millions de dollars par rapport au budget prévu.

Le nombre de missions financées par le programme régulier a été divisé par plus de trois, passant de 319 en moyenne par mois à seulement 70 en décembre 2011.

Les coûts de mission pour la période Novembre/Décembre ont été réduits de 65% par rapport à la même période en 2010.

Le nombre de contrats d'assistance temporaire – contrats temporaires, surnuméraires, consultants – a été divisé par trois.

De 482 personnes au 1er décembre 2011, nous avons aujourd'hui 160 personnes sous contrat d'assistance temporaire.

Comme vous le constatez, c'est un effort considérable.

Nous avons dû nous séparer de collègues, qui pour certains travaillaient dans l'Organisation depuis plusieurs années et dont les contrats n'ont pas été reconduits.

Ce furent des décisions pénibles, mais nous les avons prises.

J'ai bien noté l'inquiétude de plusieurs Etats membres qui craignent que la réduction des postes temporaires ne déséquilibre la répartition géographique du personnel.

A cet égard, je tiens à les rassurer en rappelant que ces contrats temporaires n'entrent pas dans le calcul de la répartition géographique des postes.

A titre purement indicatif, sachez que la grande majorité de ces personnes relèvent de pays du groupe I.

Nous avons dû reporter ou annuler un certain nombre d'activités – et je donne seulement quelques exemples :

Le renforcement de l'antenne de Tunis a dû être reporté à cette année ;

Les programmes de formation pour les jeunes professionnels ou les équipes des commissions nationales ont été annulés ;

Le programme de promotion du personnel au mérite suspendu ;

Nous avons prévu d'acheter un nouveau système de télécommunications, nous y avons renoncé.

Sur 29 projets de publications soumises au Conseil des publications pour Novembre et Décembre, 1 seul est parti à l'impression.

Les 28 autres ont été annulés, reportés, ou redirigés vers une mise en ligne uniquement.

Au total, nous avons réduit nos dépenses de 31,2 millions de dollars, tout en maintenant notre effort pour la mise en œuvre du programme 35/C5.

La majeure partie de ces réductions proviennent du secteur de l'Education (34% / 10,5M\$) et dans les services centraux (12% / 3,8M\$).

Par ailleurs, comme je l'avais annoncé, nous avons dû utiliser l'intégralité du Fonds de roulement pour combler le déficit de 2011 et commençons l'année 2012 dans une situation dangereuse.

A cet égard, je voudrais remercier tous les Etats membres qui ont versé leurs contributions en avance, nous évitant ainsi de devoir emprunter.

Parallèlement à cet effort radical de réduction des dépenses, j'ai pris l'initiative de créer un Fonds d'urgence multi-donateurs.

Ce fonds est aujourd'hui crédité de plus de 25,2 millions de dollars.

Et je voudrais remercier chaleureusement les pays qui manifestent ainsi leur soutien et leur confiance. Beaucoup d'entre eux connaissent également des difficultés et leur geste est d'autant plus apprécié.

Je lance un appel à tous les contributeurs potentiels et je voudrais remercier tous ceux qui ont contribué au fonds.

Nous avons reçu 20M\$ du Qatar

La Turquie vient de faire un versement de 5 millions de dollars.

100 000 \$ pour l'Islande et 16 000 \$ en provenance d'Andorre, de Chypre, du Luxembourg, de Monaco et de San Marin.

D'autres pays ont promis de contribuer :

L'Indonésie, à hauteur de 10 M\$

La République du Congo (3 M\$)

Le Gabon (2 M\$),

Timor Leste (1,5 M\$)

Je suis extrêmement reconnaissant envers les pays en développement, qui connaissent actuellement des difficultés et qui ont souhaité nous soutenir.

Comme je l'ai indiqué, nous utiliserons cet argent pour financer des programmes dans ces régions.

Les donations individuelles s'élèvent à 30 000 dollars.

Je mentionnerais que ce montant est bien supérieur à celui récolté lors de campagnes précédentes – je parle des contributions individuelles. C'est un signe de grand soutien populaire.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Nous venons d'entrer dans une deuxième phase de notre action, avec l'adoption et la mise en œuvre d'un nouveau programme et budget pour 2012-2013, depuis le 1er janvier 2012.

Notre première préoccupation fut, comme je l'ai dit, de stopper l'hémorragie.

L'enjeu maintenant, c'est de soigner en profondeur et de fixer une feuille de route qui s'attaque aux problèmes structurels de cette Organisation.

Dans ce processus, je regarderai très soigneusement le fonctionnement de l'ensemble des services et des secteurs – et j'ai commencé à le faire.

Quelle est la situation ?

Compte tenu de la suspension des contributions des Etats-Unis et d'Israël, notre budget n'est financé qu'à hauteur de \$465M.

Voilà notre point de départ.

La question est la suivante : comment atteindre nos objectifs dans ce nouveau contexte, quel sera l'impact sur les secteurs, sur les méthodes de travail, sur les programmes ?

Car ne nous faisons pas d'illusions : il est évident qu'il y aura un impact sur les programmes.

Chacun doit prendre ses responsabilités, chacun devra faire des sacrifices.

Je sais que plusieurs parmi vous ont des propositions audacieuses et fortes à mettre sur la table.

J'en ai aussi.

Nous devons prendre le temps de les examiner, et de les mettre en œuvre à bon rythme.

La réponse à toutes ces questions va très au-delà d'une approche comptable.

Il ne s'agit pas seulement de réduire les coûts, de couper, de diminuer.

L'enjeu, maintenant, c'est, pour nous, de changer de façon de travailler, et d'introduire des changements pérennes, susceptibles de modifier notre structure de coûts de façon durable, pour les prochaines années, y compris lorsque le financement américain sera rétabli.

Il est vital d'analyser la situation lucidement, sans prendre de décisions hâtives qui risqueraient de fragiliser l'UNESCO pour les prochaines années.

Nous avons commencé l'évaluation des plans de travail.

La situation évolue en permanence.

Pendant tout le mois de janvier, j'ai engagé des discussions avec l'ensemble des secteurs et des bureaux de cette organisation, pour partager les informations disponibles, pour écouter les uns et les autres, entendre les idées.

Ma préoccupation centrale est de mobiliser le personnel, car la confiance du personnel est une condition essentielle de la réussite.

J'ai entendu des idées extrêmement audacieuses en provenance des collègues et des associations du personnel.

Certaines s'intègrent parfaitement dans le cadre de l'actuel C5, et nous allons les adopter ;

d'autres exigent des choix des Etats Membres, et seront soumises lors des prochains Conseils exécutifs ;

d'autres encore relèvent de notre stratégie à moyen terme, et seront intégrées dans le prochain projet de C4.

Tout en étant mobilisés pour faire face aux questions budgétaires, il est vital de ne pas nous détourner de l'essentiel, qui est la mise en œuvre du programme.

Ce processus ne part pas de zéro.

Depuis déjà deux ans, nous avons pris des mesures fortes, sur les recommandations de l'Evaluation Externe indépendante.

Notre feuille de route doit s'inscrire dans ce processus, et accélérer le mouvement de réforme déjà engagé, qui porte ses fruits.

Nous allons continuer d'assurer le suivi des recommandations de l'Evaluation externe indépendante. Vous pourrez lire dans le rapport 189 EX/11 que nous avons mis en œuvre 26 des 87 points d'action entérinés à la dernière Conférence générale.

Notre situation budgétaire est un encouragement à accélérer la réforme sur plusieurs points-clés comme le nouveau cycle de programmation ou notre stratégie de partenariats.

Nous allons également poursuivre la réforme du réseau Hors Siège, comme convenu lors de la 36e session de la Conférence générale. Il s'agit d'une priorité et malgré les contraintes, cet objectif reste quasiment intact.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To act, we must be clear about the principles that should guide our action.

I see three core principles.

First principle: We must focus our programme delivery and safeguard our leadership.

I am determined to consolidate UNESCO's leadership -- in Education for All, in oceans and freshwater, in science, technology and innovation, in cultural diversity and heritage, in promoting the culture of peace and intercultural dialogue, in protecting freedom of expression and in exploring the ethics of development.

Current difficulties call on us to focus on core priorities -- where demand is highest and where we have the sharpest edge.

They call for greater intersectoral and cross-sectoral action.

Second principle: we must seek cost-savings as well as efficiency gains.

This means continuing the strict review of all missions and travel.

It means curtailing the use of temporary assistance and consultants.

It means sharpening our policy on publications and use of periodicals.

All of this for better delivery and impact.

Efficiency calls for better planning all across the board.

We must strengthen the entire extrabudgetary cycle in close linkage with the regular programme – from mobilizing resources and implementation to monitoring and the communication of results.

This is essential for UNESCO's global position and our ability to deliver.

Third principle: we must transform the way we work.

I am convinced we must take this opportunity to review fundamentally our processes.

My goal is to move from a culture of control to one of accountability.

We must lighten procedures, to accelerate decision-making and quicken impact.

We must seize this opportunity to develop a comprehensive culture of cost-effectiveness in everything we do.

Guided by these three principles, I am now pursuing several directions.

First, I have established a cross-sectoral Working Team on UNESCO Efficiency Initiatives, with the active participation of the Staff Associations -- to collect, review and cost initiatives for immediate cash savings and longer term efficiency.

Ideas and initiatives come from previous taskforces, Internal Oversight evaluations, external audit reports, the review of the Joint Inspection Unit, as well as from the staff associations and individual staff members, whom I especially wish to thank.

These take in a range of areas -- including budget administration, official travel, meetings and conference, contracting and procurement, printed materials, IT policies and overheads.

A number of measures have already been recommended to me as having potential high financial impact and relatively rapid implementation, and I am reviewing these in the context of programmatic implications.

Some measures have been highlighted as 'quick wins,' able to generate immediate savings.

These include improving the planning of all travel to further reduce the average travel cost per mission, increasing the number of hours required for business class travel (from 8 to 9 hours) and reducing regular programme travel budgets by 20% across the board, which could produce savings of up to \$2.4M.

Reducing daily subsistence allowance to programme meetings and conference participants by 25% is expected to generate an immediate savings of \$1M – this measure has been adopted and is now in the Administrative Manual.

The UNESCO Publications Board has put in place measures to reduce productions by 50% and drastically reduce associated costs.

This will allow us to make the most of the best we produce, to raise our profile and increase our delivery.

Other measures involve efficiency and process improvements –for instance, on the use and distribution of mobile telephones, reviewing the work of administrative units and simplifying business processes, and ensuring strict implementation of office space distribution norms to reduce occupancy costs.

In addition, I have requested the Assistant Directors-General to review all commercial contractual arrangements for possible savings and efficiency gains. For instance, we are aiming to reduce communication costs by \$200K by renegotiating our commercial contract.

I must say these are early days – actual savings will only be available once the relevant measures have been fully implemented.

I will keep you fully informed as we move forward with these measures.

Second, I am making maximal use of the preparation of the 36 C/5 Work Plans to focus action within a ceiling of reduced available funding.

My Ivory Note of 8 December, 2011 sets clear lines for preparing the Work Plans.

Let me remind you of these:

In terms of the reduced funding available, I requested all Sectors/Bureaux/Offices to prepare Work Plans for 2012-2013 that reflect an overall reduction of 29% in the Approved Budget. I determined 29% as a realistic measure of good contingency planning in the face of the accumulated deficit.

Rest assured, the Global Priorities of Africa and Gender Equality are programmatic priorities, and targeted action will be identified in favour of youth, Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States and countries in post-conflict and post-disaster situations.

In order to meet the reduced funding ceiling, I decided that 75 percent of all vacant Regular Programme posts at Headquarters and in the field will be kept vacant as an initial measure.

I called for a review of all activities foreseen in the first months of 2012, with a proposed plan for reductions in temporary assistance, consultancies, travel, meetings and conferences, and any other possible savings.

Sectors/bureaux/offices must ensure that envisaged travel requirements are kept to an absolute minimum. Restrictions must be visible in quarterly comprehensive travel plans -- covering both Regular Programme and extrabudgetary resources.

I have requested all Sectors/Bureaux/Offices to step up significantly the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources and increase the programming and execution of available extrabudgetary resources. In this respect, Work Plans must reflect a maximum of synergies of 36 C/5 Regular Programme priorities with extrabudgetary activities to complement core activities envisaged in the C5.

This process is soon to be completed.

Early analysis of work plans for the five Major Programmes and the rest of the Organization as of 20 January 2012 shows the profound impact of the severe funding constraints across the entire Organization, which reaches into core priorities and operations.

I must be frank here.

It bears witness also to the considerable efforts made in all areas to deal with the first phase of an unprecedented challenge.

In the same spirit of frankness, Assistant Directors-General are facing considerable challenges in formulating credible work plans, in ensuring continued Field delivery, in meeting statutory requirements, and in balancing present challenges and future needs.

Work plans show considerable efficiency improvements, in particular through drastic reductions in travel and publications, as well as in consultancies, but also in the planning of statutory meetings, for which initial consultations with Member States have been held.

This is just a start, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I will approve the work plans for the first three months, and we will continually review and monitor them, to adapt as the situation evolves. We will aim for a full review by the end of March.

Major Programmes are called upon to continuously sharpen their programme focus -- making further proposals to concentrate the programme on core areas and to align their structures and staffing.

They should aim at achieving credible levels of resources in priority areas, and better linking extrabudgetary resources with the regular programme.

Throughout all of this, I am determined that special care should be given to the level of Field-Headquarters ratios.

In this process, Sectors must continue consultations with the Field and also with Institutes and involve them closely in decision making, as they are heavily affected.

Another early conclusion concerns the financing of statutory meetings.

The bare facts today are that we must consider alternative sources of financing, alternative meeting modalities, sharply reduced travel costs, and other questions.

It is vital that Sectors adopt an “all-of-budget” approach -- using extrabudgetary funding to compensate for the budget shortfall, and scaling up fund-raising, including for core activities.

This is a vital issue – we must create stronger synergies between extrabudgetary funding and the regular programme, to execute activities.

Early analysis of the work plans shows, therefore, this is an ongoing process.

We must pursue a continuous programmatic and staffing review at global and Sectoral levels -- to sharpen our programmatic focus and to achieve credible and sustainable levels of resources in programmatic areas.

I am committed that this ongoing exercise pays close attention to our key ratios (activity-staff, programme-administration, and Field-Headquarters) and to the need to maintain a balance between the normative and the operational levels of our work.

Again let me say, this is a rolling process, which I will monitor closely and adjust to, as the situation evolves and greater clarity is attained.

There are a number of bold ideas to be considered – for instance, on deeper restructuring of our work and on staffing issues – and I am in the process of reviewing these. Others will be examined in the context of the discussions on the next Medium-Term Strategy.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have no time to lose.

For the next session of the Executive Board, I will present to Member States a roadmap that will set out precise goals to be achieved over the short and medium term, along with an outline for their implementation by the end of 2012.

I am establishing a Working Group, led by the Deputy Director-General, to prepare this roadmap. Let me note this group will also consider processes, procedures and issues of accountability.

I know that all Member States have expectations, and I welcome that you have asked me to let you know also what I expect from you.

At the next session of the Executive Board, I will request Member States for their support -- on the roadmap, on taking forward the action points from the Independent External Evaluation, on sharpening our partnership policy, on the mobilization and use of extrabudgetary resources, and many others.

This will include also such activities as the Participation Programme, which unfortunately has also to be reduced by 29% in line with the reduced funding available. I draw your attention here to my letter of 13 January that called for focusing the submission of requests to reflect the needs of current circumstances.

I will continue Consultations with National Commissions on the Preparation of the Draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021, seeking new modalities where Member States may voluntarily assume responsibility for supporting these meetings. These consultations are especially important in current circumstances, and I am committed to making the most of them.

I believe we can find combinations of resources to support these meetings. I believe a range of countries can assume their own costs. I believe also we can find extrabudgetary support for countries which need this and whose voices must be heard in this process.

Solidarity must be our guide in all of this.

As we move forward, we must sharpen our focus on the Global Priorities of Gender Equality and Africa and on priority target groups, in Least Developed Countries, developing countries, Small Island Developing States, countries in post-conflict or post-disaster situations and countries in transition, including through south-south cooperation.

I strongly believe the current situation calls on us all to think about how we can modernise the Organization.

Frankly, many of our processes are '20th century' – we must bring the Organization into the 21st century, the century of high technology, the century of digitalization.

We must modernise the way we all work.

We have started.

We have reduced the printing, distribution and mailing of resolutions of the General Conference (normal cost \$39,000).

I have suspended the printing, distribution and mailing of my Ivory Notes (\$793 per Note).

We have reviewed the printing, distribution and mailing of the 36 C5 (normal cost \$49,000).

We must do more – and this should not be piecemeal measures but part of a wider programme to pursue the overall digitalization of documentation in the Organization.

These are decisions that we must take together.

I wish to thank here Ambassador Mitrofanova as former Chair of the Executive Board for her leadership in initiating much of this reform.

I am very grateful to Ambassador Cummins for the close collaboration we are building, and for the bold ideas she has expressed to me.

I am confident we can and will move forward together.

We will continually review and monitor the situation -- by making the most of the next session of the Executive Board, by periodically taking stock, by starting discussions on the C4 Medium Term Strategy in the summer.

This is not a time for pessimism or depression. It is a time for action.

This has been my message in all of my meetings with staff.

The 36th General Conference showed that demand for UNESCO has never been so high.

The support we have received in extrabudgetary resources and to the emergency fund, along with the political support, has been very strong and encouraging.

The international community faces strategic cross-roads that require UNESCO's full contribution.

There is the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, where we will debate the future of the convention.

There is the 6th World Water Forum in Marseille, where we will present the new edition of the World Water Report.

There is the 3rd International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Shanghai, where we will show our leadership on a key issue in education today.

There is the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, where all parts of the Organization are mobilized to contribute to a new approach to sustainable development.

There is the Expo 2012 on "The Living Ocean and Coast" in Yeosu, where we will make the most of our global leadership on all aspects of the ocean for risk management and sustainable development.

There is the run-up to the 2015 deadline for Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals.

All of this demands a stronger UNESCO.

This is my key point -- current difficulties must not weaken the Organization.

Reduced resources must not mean a reduced UNESCO.

On the contrary.

This moment is an opportunity to build a sharper UNESCO, a UNESCO with greater impact, a UNESCO with better delivery, in tune with the ambitions of its mandate and in sync with the needs of the 21st century.

I believe our goal must be this “UNESCO+”.

I know this is not easy.

There are difficult decisions to make, and the consequences will be felt in our activities – but together, I am convinced we can make this happen.

For this, I believe we must build deep cooperation between the three governing organs of the Organization. I look forward to stronger mechanisms to work with the President of General Conference and the Chair of the Executive Board, to whom I am very grateful.

This is also why I requested an early session of the Executive Board.

I firmly believe that the situation we face now is temporary and will change with restored funding, at which point we will continue, stronger and better equipped.

We must take long term decisions to this end and avoid acting in ways that precipitate decisions that could weaken the Organization and jeopardize the leadership positions we have attained and that are recognized in the United Nations and with Member States.

This is my appeal to you.

Thank you.