

U N E S C O

DG/Note/04/07
10 February 2004

The Director-General

To: Deputy Director-General
Assistant Directors-General
Directors of Bureaux, Offices and Divisions at Headquarters
Directors and Heads of Established Offices and Institutes away from Headquarters

Subject: **UNESCO's contribution to Sustainable Development in Small Island Developing States -- the Barbados+10 review and Mauritius 2004 forward-planning process**

1. The World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in August-September 2002, reaffirmed the special case for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and called for a review of the Programme of Action on SIDS, adopted in Barbados in 1994. This review, carried out under the aegis of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), includes the identification of new and emerging issues and will lead to an international meeting, with a high-level segment (Mauritius, 30 August-3 September 2004), as well as suitable follow-up action.

2. As part of that process, UNESCO has: (a) designated a Focal Point for the process, (b) created an interactive cross-sectoral website (<http://portal.unesco.org/islandsBplus10>), (c) participated in various UN and AOSIS (Alliance of Small Island States) preparatory activities, (d) initiated a substantive review of recent and ongoing UNESCO activities relating to sustainable development in small islands, with special emphasis on SIDS, (e) prepared a forward-looking discussion document on "Small Islands: Looking Forward – Beyond 2004", (f) started to compile a forward-looking planning document, setting out how UNESCO plans to assist SIDS beyond Mauritius 2004, defining mainstream UNESCO activities in terms of the specific needs of SIDS and the possibilities of meaningful UNESCO action, and (g) organized a series of informal open planning meetings on a near-monthly basis since May 2003.

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3. More recently, in October 2003, the UNESCO General Conference adopted a resolution (32 C/Res. 48) specifically focusing on the “Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States: further implementation and review of the Barbados Programme of Action (Barbados +10)”.

4. The Mauritius meeting and its follow-up are of strategic importance for some 40 Island Member States and Associate Members of UNESCO, and, in view of their need to develop concerted approaches to sustainable development, to the wider international community.

5. UNESCO's activities and projects in SIDS are long-standing and wide-ranging, covering many areas of the Organization's mandate and programme, including the cross-cutting themes. Of special importance is the building of bridges and networks of various kinds, for effective collaboration between societal/organizational sectors (intersectoral cooperation), between regions (interregional cooperation), and between generations (intergenerational cooperation). The Organization is also specially concerned to highlight the role of culture and education in the development of a new vision for small islands.

6. In this context, I have therefore decided to formalize the coordination of UNESCO inputs to the B+10/M'04 process, by setting up an intersectoral Working Group (WG-SIDS) which will promote and coordinate UNESCO-wide contributions to the Barbados +10 review and Mauritius 2004 forward-planning process, including any relevant follow-up proposals.

7. The group will be composed of the ADGs or DADGs of the programme sectors and of ERC, AFR and IOC, as well as DIR/BSP and DIR/IIEP, the directors of field offices exclusively or mainly concerned with SIDS such as those in Apia, Dar es Salaam, Haiti, Havana and Kingston, as well as the directors of field offices with a partial or shared concern for SIDS such as those in Bangkok, Dakar, Doha, Jakarta, Libreville, Montevideo, Nairobi and New Delhi, DIR/GLO and DIR/NYO.

8. The group will be chaired by ADG/SC, with the field office directors/heads, when not in Paris, participating by conference call as far as time differences allow. Mr D. Troost, Chief SC/CSI and Focal Point for B+10, will serve as its Secretary.

9. The WG-SIDS will be supported by staff within all the programme sectors, who will be designated by their respective ADGs and expected to devote a certain amount of their time to the Barbados +10 review and Mauritius forward-planning process, in particular preparation of the Mauritius meeting and its follow-up.

10. These arrangements take effect immediately. I invite you all to extend your full cooperation and creativity to the WG-SIDS.

