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**COMMENTS BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
ON THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORTS SUBMITTED
IN THE 2000-2001 BIENNIUM**

SUMMARY

In accordance with the provisions of 161 EX/Decision 9.1, the Director-General hereby submits to the Executive Board a short report on those evaluations carried out during the 2000–2001 biennium, which have been finalized.

Decision required: paragraph 31.

BACKGROUND

1. At its 161st session, the Executive Board requested in its decision 9.1 that the Director-General make available to it "... the reports of evaluations when they are completed". It further requested that he "examine the general lessons for UNESCO as a whole to be learned from individual evaluations or groups of evaluations", "encourage the undertaking of evaluations related to systems of operations as well as programmes", "... implement measures envisaged by him as a follow-up to the recommendations made by the evaluators" and "... report to it on progress made in the follow-up to evaluations".

2. Seventeen external evaluations were planned for the 2000-2001 biennium. Of these, four reports remain uncompleted (two in progress, one not done and one deferred to 2002), while 13 were completed and presented to the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) for approval. Four of these completed reports were returned to the Sectors with comments for their further improvement. These, together with four of the approved reports, will be presented to the Executive Board at its 165th session. The present document presents the five remaining approved evaluation reports. A sixth approved report – that on the UNESCO Brasilia Office – is presented in documents 162 EX/38 and 164 EX/INF.3.

3. For this session of the Board, the Director-General has chosen to present the evaluation reports in a different manner from the past. In its first part, the document presents, in a summarized form, a brief description of each of the evaluation reports, as well as its major findings (lessons and constraints) and main recommendations. This is followed immediately by a brief account of the actions that the Director-General is taking in response to the recommendations made in the report. In the second part of the document, the Director-General draws out the generic lessons that have emerged for the Secretariat in relation to its competence in the field of evaluations and, where possible, the steps that he is taking to remedy the situation.

PART I – PRESENTATION OF THE EVALUATION REPORTS

ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN COASTAL REGIONS AND SMALL ISLANDS (CSI) PLATFORM

Brief description and purpose of the evaluation

4. The intersectoral programme on Environment and Development in Coastal Regions and in Small Islands (CSI), established at the 28th session of the General Conference of UNESCO in 1995, stemmed from the recommendations of a number of United Nations meetings. These include the Conference on Environment and Development (Rio, 1992), the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados, 1994) and the Conference on Human Settlements (Istanbul, 1996). Over the past five years, CSI has developed and implemented an integrated interdisciplinary model to contribute to environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, culturally respectful and economically viable developments by testing “Wise Coastal Practices” using three modalities: Field Projects, University Chairs and an Internet-based Wise Coastal Practices Forum.

Major findings (lessons and constraints)

5. The following findings emerged from the evaluation exercise:

- (a) CSI was found to follow closely the mandate and programme of action envisaged by UNESCO’s governing bodies and was judged to have been successful in developing strategies to promote intersectorality within UNESCO and in Field Offices;
- (b) The evaluators described UNESCO’s experience with intersectorality as, in general, having been difficult due to a rigid hierarchical structure. CSI has provided an avenue for experimentation and its success can be attributed to its ability to overcome at least in part these impediments. This results from its flexibility and responsiveness. However, significant structural and administrative impediments remained which limited the extent to which CSI could pursue its intersectoral mandate;¹
- (c) The evaluators felt that CSI has made an important contribution to the development and testing of integrated management practices, that it has provided UNESCO Sectors with a valuable resource and has opened an important avenue for collaborative activities;
- (d) The structure was seen to be effective: the Field Projects and supporting University Chairs providing the critical building blocks to establish “Wise Coastal Practices”, the

¹ These impediments and strategies to overcome them were considered by a working group on intersectorality set up by the Director-General in 2000 as part of the reform process.

University Chairs giving technical and interdisciplinary support to Field Projects and the Internet-based “Wise Coastal Practices” Forum constituting an essential component of implementation;

- (e) The Internet-based “Wise Coastal Practices” Forum was found to provide a crucial link between locally based experiences and a wider audience. The evaluators noted the quality and diversity of its website and publications, as well as the organization of regional meetings, which compensate for the lack of Internet access in small island states and coastal regions. Their effectiveness, however, needs to be evaluated in terms of target audiences, media and messages as part of a CSI communications strategy;
- (f) The evaluation team concluded that the programme had implemented effective processes and networks for consultation with Headquarters, field office staff and project leaders, as well as having provided alternative livelihoods, training opportunities, technical support through University Chairs and opened new avenues for regional networking. The evaluators identified the collaborative element as an essential ingredient in securing successful outcomes and stressed that only by providing a supporting organizational environment was it likely to be sustainable in the long term. They also pointed to the cross-cutting theme as a further element that would promote sustainability;
- (g) CSI was found to have effectively used UNESCO’s decentralized administrative arrangements and National Commissions to respond to local needs and emerging issues and to maximize opportunities as they arose;
- (h) The evaluators highlighted the way that CSI had incorporated key issues identified locally and globally (such as the role of local indigenous knowledge) into its programme of activities, leading to two projects funded through the UNESCO-wide cross-cutting theme (to start 2002-2003). They felt that this served to increase UNESCO’s profile in coastal regions and small islands;
- (i) While CSI has attracted significant extrabudgetary funds and been successful in securing funding from UNESCO Sectors to support Field Project activities, the evaluators emphasized the need for a stronger focus on generating extrabudgetary funds in the future.

6. The evaluation of the CSI programme concludes with two sets of recommendations – one set is addressed to UNESCO for follow-up, while the other is addressed to the responsible Secretariat division (SC/CSI).

Recommendations for UNESCO

7. In respect of UNESCO, the evaluators recommend that the Organization:
- (a) build on lessons learnt from CSI in pursuit of UNESCO’s intersectoral agenda;
 - (b) ensure that the intersectoral status of the CSI platform is formalized;
 - (c) review the cross-cutting programme at the end of 2003 to assess promotion of intersectorality;
 - (d) consider developing “integrated management science” as a new competency.

Recommendations for the relevant Secretariat division

8. Key follow-up actions recommended to SC/CSI relate to:
- (a) Field Project “exit” strategy;
 - (b) wise coastal practice standards, guidelines, procedures, and possible accreditation mechanism;
 - (c) regional wise practices virtual forum;
 - (d) full survey of the global “wise coastal practices” virtual forum;
 - (e) effective mix of communication activities;
 - (f) extrabudgetary funds for the long-term adoption of wise coastal practices;
 - (g) impact of the cross-cutting projects LINKS (Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems) and SIV (Small Islands’ Voice) on CSI activities and obtain additional human resources.

Actions being taken by the Director-General

9. The Director-General is committed to further developing intersectorality and will draw upon any lessons learned from this evaluation. The recommendation to undertake a full survey of the “Wise Coastal Practices” Forum has already been implemented and the report is now available. Follow-up on other recommendations has been included in the Science Sector’s 2002-2003 work plans.

SPECIAL PROJECTS FOR PRIORITY GROUPS

Brief description and purpose of evaluation

10. Given that the Organization was on the point of adopting two new global strategies designed to address very specific needs (that is, poverty and the need for communication and information technologies in development) in its fifth sexennial planning document,² the decision was taken to carry out an evaluation on the global strategy that had been adopted by the Organization in its fourth sexennial planning document (the 28 C/4)³ as one of the means by which it would address the specific needs of its former priority groups.⁴ The aim was not to try to measure to what extent the objectives of the strategy had been achieved. Rather, it was to determine the appropriateness of this type of programming mechanism for the Organization, highlighting the value that it added to addressing the expressed needs of its priority groups⁵ during the period under consideration, and to learn lessons in respect of the mechanisms that were adopted by the Secretariat for its

² Medium Term Strategy for 2002–2007 (31 C/4): the cross-cutting themes – “Eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty” and “The contribution of information and communication technologies to the development of education, science and culture and the construction of a knowledge society”.

³ The Priority Groups Strategy.

⁴ Women, youth, least developed countries (LDCs) and the Member States of Africa.

⁵ At various world conferences, decade and so on that had taken place within the international development community, and which had underlined the urgent necessity of rethinking multilateral cooperation if developmental goals were to be properly met.

implementation (special project activities and organizational structures such as the coordination units).

11. The scope of the evaluation was very specific. First it involved an examination of the background and historical development of the strategy in order to establish its legitimacy and verify that the model did indeed correspond to the intentions that had been expressed by Member States during the consultations that took place with them prior to the drafting of the strategy document. On the second level, it involved the testing of the appropriateness of the strategic model and its implementation mechanisms. The criteria for appropriateness, as determined by the Terms of Reference, were **effectiveness** (to be measured by the impact of the special project activities that were the delivery tool for the strategy), **efficiency** (to be measured by the appropriateness of the design, management and monitoring of the strategic model) and **relevance** (of the strategic model to the needs it was designed to serve).

12. At the end of the evaluation exercise, the team found that in respect of effectiveness, the implementation of the strategy had served to highlight the comparative advantage of UNESCO in its fields of competence, as reflected in the expert technical input of programme specialists to the special project activities (that is, the delivery tool for the strategy) for which they were responsible. The team also found that the model to which the special project activities were supposed to adhere⁶ was appropriate and, where adhered to, contributed to the success of the activities. With regard to the efficiency of the priority groups strategy, the evaluation team found that, while fairly appropriate in respect of the first criterion for efficiency (design), the strategy was of low efficiency in respect of the other two criteria (monitoring and management). Finally, in respect of the relevance of the strategy, the team found that despite the lack of a sense of ownership for the strategy, observed during interviews in the Secretariat and with some Member States, the priority groups strategic model had indeed been a relevant one since, to a large extent, it had endeavoured to respond to the needs of its target groups, which they had expressed in various fora.

Major findings (lessons and constraints)

13. Despite the judgement of appropriateness attributed to the Priority Groups strategy however, the following findings nevertheless emerged from the evaluation exercise. Many of them were not specific to the strategy only, but were relevant for programme implementation in UNESCO as a whole:

- (a) The evaluators felt that there was a need to accompany the strategies developed in UNESCO by more practical implementation arrangements. This would require the development of structures within the Secretariat to guide, support and monitor the implementation process. In addition, it was felt that managers of strategies needed to be given clear functional guidelines and the required authority to help them properly carry out their task;
- (b) The evaluators found that one of the things highlighted by their evaluation exercise was the insufficiently rounded expertise of programme specialists in project cycle management (that is, in both design and management) within the Secretariat as a whole. Although training is given, there are no help-desk facilities to aid programme specialists when they are trying to put their newly acquired skills into practice with the result that they tend not to apply their new skills;

⁶ This model required the projects to have the following qualities: results-orientation; defined objectives; outlined scope; intersectorality and/or interdisciplinarity; limited duration (maximum of six years); extrabudgetary funds (they had to be sought); and precise regular budget.

- (c) Programme specialists are not able to properly implement due to the time constraints imposed by the poor distribution of tasks within programme sectors, the tight programming cycle of the Organization, and the frequency and number of statutory reports and other tasks that are requested during the course of a biennium;
- (d) There is no UNESCO comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy that allows for the feeding of lessons learnt into future programming;
- (e) The Organization has no comprehensive strategy for working in an intersectoral manner. At present, projects of this nature often find themselves caught in a management void so that if they succeed, it is for reasons other than the strategic design or its implementation mechanisms;
- (f) The evaluators found that although the coordination units had been mandated with certain roles in the Green Notes by which they were created, those charged with the task remained uncertain as to the scope of their function or of their authority;
- (g) There is insufficient consideration of the views and knowledge of grassroots stakeholders when Member States prepare for consultations prior to the development of global strategies or the drafting of the C/4 and C/5 documents;
- (h) Related to finding (c), the project cycle of the Organization is not conducive to the proper implementation of projects. Programme specialists do not have time to implement activities to enable them to report in a truly meaningful manner to their hierarchical superiors and to the governing bodies.

Recommendations

14. The recommendations of the evaluators tended to be of a generic nature, in reflection of the nature of most of their findings. They concluded that if UNESCO was to improve its ability to design and manage global strategies geared at addressing specific needs, there were four areas in which there would have to be substantial improvements:

Development of global strategies

- (a) To ensure a high level of appropriateness for its global strategies, the evaluation team recommended that UNESCO should make the evolutionary process for those strategies more inclusive, particularly of the primary stakeholders,⁷ and ensure a proper process of translation of needs into UNESCO specific needs. In addition, greater care needs to be taken in the designation of priorities, including the establishment of the proper mechanisms to manage those priorities, and the proper indication of the level of their importance within the Organization's list of priorities.
- (b) In respect of Member States and their role in the development of global strategies and in the drafting of the C/4 and C/5 documents, the evaluation team recommended that they should endeavour to take into account the views and knowledge of grassroots stakeholders.

⁷ Secretariat staff and grassroots stakeholders.

Project cycle management

- (c) The evaluation team recommendations included the establishment of a comprehensive strategy for training in project design and management, which would have, as an integral part, help-desk facilities to give after-training help to programme specialists. It would also highlight the fundamental links that exist between Logical Framework and Results-Based Management, as well as why there is a need to properly design projects (including the development of benchmarks and indicators) if one is to be able to properly manage them. In addition, the distribution of tasks in the sectors needed to be reviewed and streamlined in order that programme specialists could be freed up to devote more time to project design and management, as well as training therein.
- (d) In a recommendation addressed principally to the Internal Oversight Service and the Bureau for Strategic Planning, the evaluation team proposed that a comprehensive strategy be developed for monitoring and evaluation. The strategies would include mechanisms for feeding results back into projects for correction of any deviations, and into future programming for improvement and future replicability, and would again highlight to programme specialists the link between monitoring and evaluation and the value of the one for the other.

Intersectorality

- (e) The evaluation team recommended that there be a revision of the way in which sectors work, perhaps by establishing intersectoral project teams comprising both technical experts and experts in project design and management.
- (f) The evaluation also recommended the establishment of a global, centralized structure for the management of intersectoral and global strategies. While the College of ADGs has already been attributed with some of the relevant tasks to fulfil such a function, it is clear that they cannot deal with the day-to-day management of projects. There is therefore a need to establish some other type of coordination/oversight mechanism that would be linked to the College of ADGs and to other concerned services, in particular the Bureau for Strategic Planning and the Internal Oversight Service.

Coordination of global strategies

- (g) The evaluation team recommended that there should be a redefinition of the functions of coordination units. Firstly, those functions should include an oversight function over the budgets attributed to global strategies, a measure of control over mainstreaming and specialized activities, and a role in the monitoring and evaluation of the strategies. The units should also be vested with the authority required to properly carry out their tasks.
- (h) It was recommended that the role of focal points should no longer be unofficial and that it form an integral part of their job descriptions.
- (i) In another recommendation addressed to Member States, the team proposed that the frequency of statutory reports be reviewed with a view to their reduction, and that the frequency and dates of governing body meetings be reassessed in a manner that would give programme specialists more time to design projects

beyond what is presented in the C/5 document and work plans, and implement those projects in the appropriate manner.

- (j) Finally, the evaluation team recommended that IOS develop a framework by which it can help the Secretariat implement the recommendations contained in this report and the reports of other evaluations that have been carried out in the Organization.

Actions being taken by the Director-General

15. Some of the lessons that emerged from the evaluation exercise, particularly those relating to the difficulties of promoting intersectorality, have already been recognized by the Director-General, and measures that seek to overcome them have been built into the design and implementation mechanisms for the two current cross-cutting themes. These include specifically:

- (a) The coordination units (women, youth and least developed countries) are now centralized in the Bureau of Strategic Planning in order to facilitate and ensure the proper mainstreaming of the needs of priority groups into the Organization's programmes. In respect of activities in favour of Africa, these remain in the hands of the Priority Africa Department. The functions of the Department have however been refined to ensure that they can better carry out their coordination function. Principle among these refinements are that they are more directly engaged in the design and coordination of projects destined for Africa, and that they have been given the task of raising funds and organizing promotional activities in favour of the continent;
- (b) The manner in which the projects for the cross-cutting themes were developed. There is a clear bottom-up approach which should ensure a sense of real ownership within the programme sectors;
- (c) Clear guidelines on the processes of developing the projects (inclusion of extrabudgetary funds, pre-indication of partners, performance indicators and expected results, etc.);
- (d) Importance of field contributions underlined;
- (e) Clear provisions for monitoring (through the College of ADGs) and evaluating the cross-cutting projects;
- (f) Clear guidelines for the implementation, administration and management of intersectoral projects. Such projects (including the cross-cutting theme ones) will be coordinated by the lead sector (SHS and CI for the cross-cutting themes), who will have the responsibility of giving the intersectoral teams established within the programme sectors any necessary training and other support that they may require in order to properly implement these projects. In respect of the intersectoral project teams, they will be led by a team leader, who will report directly to the lead sector ADG. The teams will have a dedicated budget and time allocation for the implementation of their projects;
- (g) Provisions for proper, systematic reporting and for evaluation;
- (h) Defined lines of reporting, as well as clear indication of individual responsibilities (including for those not directly involved in the implementation of the projects);

- (i) More flexible performance assessment mechanisms which allow for the dual responsibilities for those involved in the implementation of the projects.

16. IOS will be working closely with BSP to monitor the appropriateness of these measures and to make appropriate recommendations for improvement where necessary. IOS will also be working closely with the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP), the programme sectors and other concerned services in the Secretariat to establish the best modalities for the implementation of those recommendations that remain.

UNESCO'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD SOLAR PROGRAMME

Brief description and purpose of evaluation

17. The World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (WSP) was adopted in 1996 and reflected the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). It identified national and regional priority projects in addition to five projects of global importance concerned with education, information, rural electrification, water treatment and renewable energy policy. The evaluation examined how the key lessons from UNESCO's involvement in this Programme could be fed into the design of future UNESCO activities in renewable energies.

Major findings (lessons and constraints)

18. The following findings emerged from the evaluation exercise:
- (a) UNESCO did not draw up an action plan for the implementation of activities, consequently, implementation tended to be ad hoc and to lack focus. The result was that the programme failed to provide a rallying point, which the United Nations agencies could use as a base from which to develop strategies for cooperation and enable proper resource planning and mobilization.
 - (b) The evaluation report concluded that the WSP has greatly contributed to raising awareness of the opportunities to utilize renewable energy at societal, political and governmental levels;
 - (c) The impact of WSP was found to be wide-ranging: in Namibia and Niger, for example, the UNESCO solar village electrification projects have contributed to the introduction of adult literacy programmes and the solar water-pumping project in Ghana, by alleviating the chore of fetching water. It has also contributed to "solving some of the gender biases in Africa";
 - (d) Under the Global Renewable Energy Education Training Programme (GREET), the WSP contributed to enhancing capacity on the use and application of renewable energy through the implementation of training activities, publication of learning/teaching materials;
 - (e) The exact sum of extrabudgetary funds received is unknown since the amount quoted did "not include, amongst others, money possibly received by UNESCO Field Offices". Moreover, knowledge of the exact contributions made to WSP activities on a bilateral basis or between countries and other institutions was not known;
 - (f) Solar villages, based on the concept of stand-alone power for local consumption, were found to have replicability value although the cost of solar technology is beyond the

reach of many rural households. As a result, there is no evidence of the adoption of the technology by other communities;

- (g) Workshops and training programmes organised by UNESCO in conjunction with other organizations, both in Europe and in developing countries were seen as a successful undertaking. The publication partnership had successfully resulted in the production of an “important series of publications”, with over 2,350 copies sold since the first edition in 1995;
- (h) WSP was found to have failed to collaborate with the majority of United Nations agencies with strong interests in renewable energy technologies (UNIDO, UNEP, UNDP and FAO) and this despite invitations extended by the Director-General of UNESCO to actively participate in the design and development of the programme and the willingness of these agencies for such collaboration. There was also a total lack of awareness of the WSP in agencies such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank;
- (i) The money allocated to monitoring exercises was insufficient; often programme specialists could only afford to undertake one field visit after the project was commissioned;
- (j) WSP was criticized for its propensity for organizing high-level conferences and workshops as opposed to concentrating on “projects that would help people solve energy problems rather than activities that only produced reports”;
- (k) The evaluators felt that a task manager ought to have been appointed for the sole purpose of ensuring that an action plan and project documents were developed for WSP, that collaboration was established with other agencies, and that the programme was properly monitored;
- (l) The evaluators noted that decentralization adversely affected the information provided to Headquarters in that information on some activities in the UNESCO Field Offices had not been provided to Headquarters.

Recommendations

19. The recommendations that emerged from the evaluation were the following:

- (a) UNESCO should reinforce the implementation of the GREET Programme in the different regions and strengthen its African Chapter to enhance capacity-building on the use and application of renewable energy of Member States;
- (b) UNESCO should draw up a plan of action for WSP and ensure that the objectives, duration, output and results of the programme are clearly stated in order to maintain a focus of activities, facilitate collaboration with other agencies and in order to improve mobilization of funds.
- (c) Greater efforts ought to be made to ensure effective communication between Field Offices and Headquarters in the case of decentralized activities;
- (d) The Organization needs to ensure that there are structural mechanisms in place to ascertain the provenance and exact character of all project financing, that records are

meticulously maintained for the purposes of accountability, and that this information is easily accessible;

- (e) Transectoral aspects of programmes ought to be strengthened in order to fully exploit the resources of the Organization and thereby optimize the impact of the activities in question;
- (f) The dissemination of information ought to be made more efficient in order to ensure that government institutions responsible for energy, and scientific and technological communities are fully aware of the possibilities offered to them by WSP;
- (g) A task manager, whose sole responsibility will be WSP, ought to be appointed;
- (h) The cooperation between UNESCO and other United Nations agencies, as well as other organizations must be strengthened. The evaluators suggest the establishment of an international expert advisory group to consider issues of implementation;
- (i) The Organization ought to ensure that a sufficient budget has been allocated for monitoring of projects. UNESCO should also consider developing innovative financing mechanisms, such as the ECO approach.

Action being taken by the Director-General

20. The Director-General recognizes that UNESCO's role in WSP should focus on advocacy for renewable energy, capacity-building, development of competent human resources, mobilizing functions in raising awareness and give priority to sustainability in the use of renewable energies and provision of related policy advice. The Director-General intends to strengthen the GREET Programme with particular emphasis on its African Chapter. UNESCO will henceforth develop an action plan and play an active role in coordinating the implementation of WSP activities with United Nations agencies, within the appropriate mechanisms namely the United Nations Ad hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on Energy; designate at Headquarters a competent programme specialist as a task leader for WSP and renewable energy issues. UNESCO will strengthen its cooperation with IGOs; ensure that external funding partners reinforce UNESCO's priorities defined in the Medium-Term Strategy, and emphasis will be given to negotiations within the United Nations system, UNDP, UNEP, World Bank and other funding sources on joint or parallel programming in order to mobilize extrabudgetary resources and voluntary technical assistance to accelerate implementation of WSP. Cooperation with extrabudgetary funding sources will play an important role in complementing UNESCO's continued efforts to achieve its objectives in its contribution to WSP.

UNESCO'S SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION (STE) PROGRAMME

Project description and purpose of the evaluation

21. Rapid advances in science and technology and the increasing dependence of societies on its application have made science and technology education (STE) pivotal to human development and survival. The World Conference on Science (Budapest, 1999) and the World Education Forum in Dakar both called on governments to place high priority on improving science and technology education. Joint action between the Education and Natural Sciences Sectors, in cooperation with relevant IGOs, NGOs and UNESCO Institutes will produce an integrated Plan of Action for Science and Technology Education, to be implemented within UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2000-2007. The key focus of the Plan will be building national capacities through developing

guidelines, curricula, and teacher training materials etc., in order to expand, diversify and adapt science and technology education to the needs of today.

Major findings (lessons and constraints)

22. The following findings emerged from the evaluation exercise:

- (a) The evaluation established that there was limited awareness of the UNESCO Science and Technology Education Programme. As such, few beyond UNESCO field staff and some high-level government officials in the concerned countries could comment on the STE philosophy and its relation to the needs of their country. The evaluation therefore had to take an exploratory approach by seeking to discover the needs of each country and to see how these could link up with the UNESCO programme philosophy and concept. Further, those who were aware of STE did not consider it to be a programme, but a general framework, characterized as “project 2000+”, which sets out characteristics and boundaries for STE;
- (b) Those interviewed saw UNESCO’s mission as that of providing expertise, intellectual leadership and new ideas. Given this, the programme was seen as having the potential of meeting the needs of the countries in which the programme operated;
- (c) Current implementation practice of STE is to rely on individuals rather than connect with local offices and organizations. The evaluation concluded that it is crucial for STE to link with institutions rather than individuals if its impact is to be maximized;
- (d) STE has created very limited awareness and limited impact in the field. It has made no impact on students and very limited impact on teachers. In countries where STE is a priority and where there is awareness and innovation, UNESCO’s STE assists the actors to keep up the philosophy but does not provide direct support to the education system and hence it has had very limited impact;
- (e) UNESCO was seen as spreading too thinly its very limited financial resources and therefore failing to create any impact;
- (f) The evaluation demonstrated that the existing needs in the area of science and technology education fully justify the existence of a UNESCO STE programme. However, it also revealed that while the programme is needed, its focus needs to be more clearly defined.

Recommendations

23. The following recommendations emerged from the evaluation:

- (a) It is recommended that UNESCO establish a programme that is more relevant and responsive to the needs of member countries by developing a more precise vision of the requirements for science and technology education;
- (b) Engage governments in discussion to establish a clear purpose of education in science and technology for all so that a direct and effective link can be built between national needs and what UNESCO’s vision and programme can offer;
- (c) Link the programme with institutions rather than individuals in order to increase the chances of sustainability;

- (d) Develop a training framework for the training of trainers in STE, establish standards and work with education administrators in order to reach the maximum number of teachers as well as extend STE approach to pre-service training;
- (e) Build an effective database about STE as the basis for disseminating information to the diverse regional and local actors;
- (f) Consider using the Internet as a major vehicle for expanding STE;
- (g) When designing the programme take into consideration the different types of inequities such as poverty, gender, language, ethnicity, race and the digital divide;
- (h) Develop a corporate attitude among UNESCO's staff so that they work together more effectively and so that they can empower field office staff to carry the message to the right people;
- (i) Create a special consultative task group in STE composed of experts that would assist UNESCO in reworking its programme.

Actions being taken by the Director-General

24. The Director-General is already applying most of the recommendations from the STE evaluation (e.g. on the development of a more precise vision of STE, policy framework, materials, training, the reinforcement of the STE website, networking, cooperation with NGOs, interdisciplinarity). There are however a few recommendations (establishment of support systems for sustainable impacts, a resource centre, a web forum) that cannot yet be implemented in view of the current resource constraints. There is also a group of recommendations whose implementation the Director-General has foreseen in the Approved Programme and Budget for 2002–2003 (31 C/5). These are the recommendations relating to the consultative task group to assist UNESCO in the revision and strengthening of its programme and projects, the establishment of closer working relations with policy-makers in order to establish a policy framework and promote dialogue between policy-makers, the production of geo-culturally adapted teaching and learning materials regionally, the development of a framework for the training of trainers and laboratory technicians, and the strengthening of the STE website.

EVALUATION OF THE MAB PROGRAMME

Brief description and purpose of the evaluation

25. The Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme was initiated at the 16th session of the General Conference of UNESCO as a follow-up to the 1968 Conference on the Rational Use and Conservation of the Resources of the Biosphere. The concept of Biosphere Reserves progressively came to constitute the central theme of the MAB programme, the focus of which was to conserve landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation; to foster economic and human development which is socioculturally and ecologically sustainable; and to provide support for research, monitoring, education and information exchange related to local, national and global issues of conservation and development. In 1995, a review of this particular dimension of MAB was undertaken and it resulted in the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves and the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Major findings (lessons and constraints)

26. The following findings emerged from the evaluation exercise:

- (a) The evaluation team found that the biosphere reserve concept has changed the face of conservation by combining human development concerns with biodiversity conservation. However, inclusion of Biosphere Reserves in national biodiversity strategies is not yet sufficiently systematic to ensure that it provides an effective means of meeting conservation objectives and responsibilities under the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- (b) Since 1995, there has been a significant increase in the number of Biosphere Reserves which are situated in vulnerable ecosystems. However, there are still gaps in geographical coverage, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Arabian peninsula, southern Africa, the Indian subcontinent, the Pacific region and the Northern region;
- (c) The evaluation team highlighted the importance of having established five Transboundary Biosphere Reserves, which epitomize peaceful cooperation between neighbouring countries and allow for harmonized management of common ecosystems in Europe since 1995. These Reserves have prompted numerous activities that should lead to new designations, particularly in Africa;
- (d) Although Biosphere Reserves are unable to provide for broad scale sustainable development, it was found that many Biosphere Reserves are seeking to demonstrate more sustainable means of land/water use with accompanying systems of social development, such as low impact agriculture/forestry and the use of native species to provide alternative incomes;
- (e) The evaluators underlined that although high biodiversity in natural areas is the primary criterion for establishing Biosphere Reserves, degraded areas are also important for conservation and that Biosphere Reserves provide an invaluable tool for landscape rehabilitation;
- (f) The evaluators concluded that the research function of the Biosphere Reserves was being successfully carried out. However, the recommendation of the Seville Strategy to conduct comparative environmental and socio-economic research, including long-term research was found not to have been sufficiently implemented on a global basis. Closer cooperation with international scientific programmes is needed, in particular with ICSU;
- (g) The evaluation team found that research on social sciences in Biosphere Reserves was neglected and hence the important issue of conflict resolution over natural resources was overlooked. The methodology employed in the research that had been conducted was also found to lack consistency;
- (h) BRIM (the Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring project) was identified as a particular asset to MAB and one that could facilitate the involvement of Biosphere Reserves in integrated monitoring, both at individual site level, and at the World Network level;
- (i) Since MAB National Committees and Biosphere Reserves are responsible for securing their own long-term funds, the evaluation pointed to private corporations becoming the main funders in the future;

- (j) A marked improvement in the management of the World Network since the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework were drawn up was noted, although it has yet to be optimized;
- (k) The regional and subregional networks were found to constitute one of the dynamic features of MAB and of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Recommendations

27. The following recommendations emerged from the evaluation:

- (a) Member States should be invited to review their national biodiversity strategies and make sure that their Biosphere Reserves are given the appropriate standing;
- (b) Relations with other conventions or institutions dealing with ecosystem conservation ought to be concretely reinforced;
- (c) Member States should be encouraged to adopt the Ecosystem Approach as outlined in the Convention on Biological Diversity to combine conservation and development issues more effectively;
- (d) The Secretariat should thoroughly assess the coverage of the World Network in terms of biospheres in vulnerable areas and encourage, in cooperation with regional networks, the establishment of new Biosphere Reserves where gaps have been identified;
- (e) MAB National Committees and the Secretariat should explore possibilities for establishing new Transboundary Biosphere Reserves and the Secretariat should also publish and disseminate detailed guidelines and working examples on transboundary cooperation;
- (f) MAB National Committees should give more emphasis to the establishment of new Biosphere Reserves in areas that have been rehabilitated and redeveloped;
- (g) MAB National Committees and the Secretariat should take steps to further integrate social science research in the MAB programme given the importance of the human element in ensuring the social and economic relevance of research results in ecosystem use and conservation;
- (h) Member States should ensure that their MAB National Committees include representatives of all relevant ministries, as well as natural and social scientists;
- (i) The Secretariat ought to draw up guidelines on the creation, zoning and functioning of Biosphere Reserves;
- (j) Rigorous designation of new Biosphere Reserves should be ensured, periodic review properly implemented, de-listing of non-functional sites accomplished, under the guidance of the Advisory Committee for biosphere reserves, so as to strengthen the World Network;
- (k) Links with research institutions should be reinforced and national centres and institutions which could take regional responsibilities within the MAB programme should be identified.

Actions being taken by the Director-General

28. This document was seen and briefly discussed by the MAB Council at its 17th session, 18-22 March 2002. The Council considered that several recommendations confirmed the orientations that the Programme was already taking under its impulsion. These concern in particular:

- (a) The reinforcement of cooperation with the main conventions, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention on wetlands of international importance. In this respect, a joint programme of work between MAB and Ramsar has just been approved by the Council, and a booklet will be prepared jointly with UNEP on Biosphere Reserves and their relationship with the main conventions;
- (b) The promotion of the ecosystem approach, with the publication of a brochure aiming at demonstrating how biosphere reserves can and do apply this newly accepted concept;
- (c) Development of social sciences within the Programme: efforts are being made towards this, in particular with the setting up of two task forces in the field of urban issues and quality economies. More generally, further integration of social sciences into MAB will be needed to allow the inclusion of socio-economic data within the BRIM programme (Biosphere Reserves Integrated Monitoring);
- (d) Conflict resolution: a first training seminar on this issue is being organized for biosphere reserves in Europe in the Vosges du Nord/Pfälzervarld Biosphere Reserve (France/Germany) with the support of the Secretariat. The results of this seminar will be applied in other regions;
- (e) Transboundary Biosphere Reserves: in order to facilitate their establishment and functioning, a new set of recommendations have been prepared by the MAB Secretariat with an ad hoc task force and adopted by the MAB Council. Initiatives are encouraged in all regions, and several sites should be nominated in the near future in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe;
- (f) The elaboration of guidelines for the creation, zoning and functioning of biosphere reserves has been identified as a priority by the MAB Council and the work will start as soon as possible.

PART II – CONCLUDING REMARKS OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

29. The exercise of preparing the present report on evaluations to the Executive Board has highlighted to the Director-General the urgent need to review the evaluation process within UNESCO. Several of the important issues that emerged during IOS's scrutiny of submitted reports served to confirm the importance of such a review. One of the most important factors that resulted in some reports not reaching the standard required by the Director-General and the Executive Board is that the projects that were being evaluated were not conceptualized within the new organizational logic for evidence-based results, transparency and accountability. Consequently, the Terms of Reference, and thus the evaluation reports, did not sufficiently reflect the emphasis on the expected and actual programme outcomes that is now requested by the Executive Board. There is a need to build evaluation into results-based programming. More generally, there is clearly room for improvement in evaluation methodology and analysis.

30. With this in mind, the Director-General has already started to take steps to reform the process of evaluation in the Organization. This reform is closely linked to the reforms that have already taken place on the programming side, with both IOS and BSP working closely together on designing new, complementary results-based approaches to programming, monitoring and evaluation. Some of the steps already being taken are presented in the document entitled “Internal Oversight Service Activities in 2001 and Strategy for 2002-2003” (164 EX/35) that is presented to the Executive Board at the present session. A full report on the new process of evaluation for UNESCO will be presented to the Executive Board at its 165th session in the form of a strategy paper.

31. In light of the above comments, the Executive Board may wish to consider the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 164 EX/46 and appreciative of the evaluations that have been presented to it therein,
2. Taking note of the recommendations made by the evaluators as well as the report of the Director-General on the implementation of those recommendations,
3. Bearing in mind the constraints that have tended to hamper the production of the type of evaluation reports requested by the Executive Board, particularly those highlighted in the concluding remarks of the Director-General in Part II of the present document,
4. Invites the Director-General to implement in the appropriate manner those recommendations that he judges to be necessary to improve the programmes to which they relate, bearing in mind the new organizational logic of results-based management and reporting;
5. Requests the Director-General to take necessary steps to reform the evaluation process in UNESCO and present to it at its 165th session a strategy paper for evaluation in the Organization;
6. Further requests the Director-General to continue to report periodically to the Executive Board on evaluations that are carried out on the Organization’s programme activities and on the progress made in the follow-up to evaluation recommendations.