



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

2005
60
1945

Bureau of public information
memobpi

Priority Africa

A constantly reiterated willingness for cooperation, and support for African authorities in drafting their policies: UNESCO's relationship with Africa is characterized by permanence and pragmatism.

In the early 1960s, when many African Member States became independent and joined UNESCO, the Organization started to build up a solid partnership with Africa in order to respond to its needs concerning the development of indigenous political and intellectual leadership. In the 1970s, the Organization responded to the Lagos Action Plan, notably by launching the

Priority Africa programme in 1985, which was permanently adopted by the 25th General Conference in 1989. In 1986, it contributed to the adoption of the Programme of Action for

African Economic Recovery and Development by the General Assembly of the United Nations. In the framework of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, UNESCO has been designated lead agency in three sectors: basic education, harnessing information technology for development, and communication for peace-building.

Always attentive to the needs of the continent, UNESCO organized **Audience Africa** in 1995. This consultation enabled the Organization to set up a moral partnership contract between Africa and the international community and to include priorities drawn up by Africans themselves in its programmes. In order to coordinate these actions, an internal UNESCO structure was created in 1996: the Priority Africa Department.

Appropriate responses

The most appropriate response to the needs of Africa was the creation of a unified international framework for action, based on African leadership. In 2001, this framework, the **New Partnership for Africa's Development** (NEPAD), was created in association with the African Union (AU). It enabled UNESCO and the AU to cooperate in order to concentrate on the implementation of the programme.

In 2001, UNESCO organized an international seminar on "**Forward-looking Approaches and Innovative Strategies to Promote the Development of Africa in the 21st**

Century". The aim was to define new guidelines for action and strategies to promote the development of Africa. The UNESCO Medium-term Strategy (2002-2007) includes the recommendations of the seminar and NEPAD's priorities. The Organization then set up a consultative committee for follow-up, - the UNESCO Committee for NEPAD - which makes recommendations for the sustainable development of Africa, as well as for the support that UNESCO can provide to NEPAD.

From vision to action

In 2003, the Ouagadougou seminar '**UNESCO and NEPAD: from Vision to Action**' defined how the NEPAD Action Plan should be applied in the areas of competence of the Organization. Since then, UNESCO has contributed to the drafting and implementation of



Axoum Obelisk, Ethiopia
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UNESCO and Africa in figures

More than **20%** of the Organization's budget is devoted to the African continent.

15 Multi-country or national offices outside headquarters implement UNESCO activities in the field: Abuja, Accra, Addis Abeba, Bamako, Brazzaville, Bujumbura, Dar es Salaam, Harare, Kinshasa, Cairo, Libreville, Maputo, Rabat, Windhoek, and Yaoundé.

2 Regional offices: BREDA (Dakar) for education and ROSTA (Nairobi) for science.

53 UNESCO National Commissions in African countries.

Over **1,300** UNESCO Clubs, **1,600** Associated Schools, **80** UNESCO Chairs create networks among more than thirty African countries.

AU/NEPAD action plans in the following areas:

- **education and culture**, with the 6th AU Ordinary Session of Heads of State and of Government (Khartoum, January 2006) that adopted a declaration on the interface between culture and education, proclaimed the Second decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) and 2006 as Year of African Languages. The Summit was preceded by preparatory Ministerial Conferences on education (Algiers, April 2005, Addis Abeba, January 2006) and on culture (Nairobi, December 2005).

- **environment**, with the Action Plan adopted at the Maputo Summit in June 2003;

- **science and technology**, with the African Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology in Dakar in September 2005 and Johannesburg in November 2003.

Reinforce regional cooperation

To reinforce action in favour of African regional integration, UNESCO set up the Forum of Regional and Sub-regional African organizations to support UNESCO-NEPAD cooperation (FOSRASUN). The Forum was conceived as a tool of cooperation between UNESCO and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), which are the pillars for the implementation of the AU/NEPAD programme. SADC and COMESA will organize the next meeting of FOSRASUN in June 2006.

Africa Day

As a token of its commitment to Africa, UNESCO organizes Africa Day every year on 25 May, in cooperation with the the Organization's Africa Group. In **2004**, this day was marked by the visit of the Chairman of the AU Commission, Alpha Oumar Konaré, and in **2005** by the visit of the President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, Chairman of the AU and of the Committee of Heads of State and of Government in charge of the Implementation of NEPAD.

Africa Department

The mission of the Africa Department is to **reinforce the coordination of programmes to benefit Africa**, creating conditions conducive to ensuring that the special priority given to Africa by the governing bodies is translated into reality. It is responsible for ensuring that Africa-related activities are treated as a priority; it monitors and coordinates all programmes to benefit Africa; it is attentive to the needs and aspirations of the continent through contacts with the Permanent Delegates to UNESCO; it coordinates the response of the Organization in respect of post-conflict and reconstruction; it mobilizes resources and of promotional activities in for Africa.

To better take into consideration the priorities of the continent, the Department monitors **relations with the Member States and partnerships in Africa**. It is UNESCO's focal point for NEPAD, joint United Nations programmes in Africa and cooperation with the African regional and sub-regional organizations.

Contact:

N.Tidjani-Serpos
Assistant General
Director
Africa Department
01 45 68 15 35

For more information

www.unesco.org/Africa

For further information, contact the Bureau of Public Information, BPI,

UNESCO, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75352 PARIS 07 SP, tel. +33 (0)1.45.68.16.81 (16.82) - bpi@unesco.org