UNESCO Priorities

1. UNESCO Priorities
2. Priority Africa
3. Priority Gender Equality
4. Specific Interventions

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Rev.1

The fourth module called "UNESCO Priorities" will be divided into the following parts:

1. UNESCO Priorities.

2. Priority Africa.

3. Priority Gender Equality.

4. Specific Interventions in favour of priority groups and groups of countries.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

"UNESCO shall accord priority to **Africa** and to **Gender Equality** in all its fields of competence throughout the duration of the Medium-Term Strategy. Moreover, **Specific Interventions** will be envisaged for the following **priority groups** and **groups of countries**: **Youth** […] the Least Developed Countries (**LDCs**) […] the Small Island Developing States (**SIDS**)"

Medium-Term strategy 34 C/4

This implies:
- Integrating their needs and requirements in **all stages** of programming and implementation
- Working not only **for** them but **with** them throughout the process

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1. As stated in the Medium-Term Strategy; *"UNESCO shall accord priority to Africa and to Gender Equality in all its fields of competence throughout the duration of the Medium-Term Strategy. Moreover, specific interventions will be envisaged for the following priority groups and groups of countries: Youth […] the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) […] the Small Island Developing States (SIDS)."* The Organization will further respond with priority to the needs of disadvantaged and excluded groups, as well as the most vulnerable segments of society, including indigenous peoples.

2. This implies, as seen in module 3 entitled "RBM approach: a Programming Framework", that when identifying the reach of your element, the target groups and the countries impacted, you need to integrate UNESCO's Priorities in all stages of programming, implementation and evaluation.

3. An element needs to be programmed not only for the priorities but with them, they need to understand what are the interventions scheduled and their purpose. This will enhance their full participation as valuable partners and active players throughout the process, ensuring ownership and thus actual success.

Priority **Africa**

«The priority accorded to Africa and its development shall be translated into action in all of UNESCO's fields of competence through a coordinating and monitoring mechanism. It should be presented as a distinct intersectoral platform in the C/5 documents during the medium-term period, with specific and measurable expected results and performance indicators.»

Medium-Term Strategy 34 C/4

Action oriented towards the achievement of major goals and **international commitments**:
- **E**ducation **F**or **A**ll
- **M**illennium **D**evelopment **G**oals
- Objectives of the **African Union** and **NEPAD**

Africa occupies a special place in UNESCO's programmes. The major challenge today is to achieve the eradication of poverty and to accelerate the achievement of the EFA goals. The mid-term review conducted in 2005 demonstrated that if the present trend were to continue, the sub-Saharan Africa would be the only region not to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, the date for their achievement. This holds true for the EFA Goals. Mindful of this, the international community, in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document, reaffirmed the special needs of Africa and renewed its commitment to bolstering its support for the continent.

1. As stated in the Medium-Term Strategy *"The priority accorded to Africa and its development shall be translated into action in all of UNESCO's fields of competence through a coordinating and monitoring mechanism. It should be presented as a distinct intersectoral platform in the C/5 documents during the medium-term period, with specific and measurable expected results and performance indicators."*

2. UNESCO's action is oriented towards the achievement of major goals and international commitments as the EFA Goals, MDGs, African Union goals (including NEPAD) which provide a common framework for international action in support of Africa.

3

Priority **Africa**

Action is translated into UNESCO's fields of competence:

- Pursue the **EFA** and **Millennium Development Goals**
- Strengthen quality **education**, TVET, higher education and teacher training, curricula development and multilingualism
- Strengthen cooperation with African Member States in follow-up to the Addis Ababa Declaration on **Science**, Technology and Scientific Research for Development
- Support strategies to **strengthen** national, subregional and regional **capacities** and develop **human resources**
- Contribute to the **regional integration** process in the Organization's fields of competence
- Promote **cooperation** and **partnership** with multilateral, bilateral and private stakeholders, and broader participation of civil society representatives and NGOs in existing mechanisms
- **Assist** countries in **post-conflict** or **post-disaster** reconstruction situations

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The priority accorded to Africa and its development is translated into action in all of UNESCO's fields of competence:

- Pursuing the EFA and Millennium Development Goals;

- Strengthening quality education, TVET, higher education and teacher training, curricula development and multilingualism;

- Strengthening cooperation with African Member States in follow-up to the Addis Ababa Declaration on Science, Technology and Scientific Research for Development adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union in January 2007;

- Supporting strategies to strengthen national, subregional and regional capacities and develop human resources;

- Contributing to the regional integration process in the Organization's fields of competence;

- Promoting cooperation and partnership with multilateral, bilateral and private stakeholders, and broader participation of civil society representatives and NGOs in existing mechanisms;

- Assisting countries in post-conflict or post-disaster reconstruction situations.

When you are programming your element, you need to consider whether you are contributing to UNESCO's objectives regarding Africa.

Priority **Gender Equality**

- Of the world's one billion poorest people, **three-fifths** are women and girls
- Of the 960 million adults in the world who cannot read, **two-thirds** are women
- **70%** of the 130 million children who are out of school are girls
- In sub-Saharan Africa, **57%** of those living with HIV are women

"As called for by the 2005 World Summit Outcome document, priority will also be given to the pursuit of Gender Equality through action in all of UNESCO's fields of competence supported by a two-pronged approach pursuing both women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming in Member States and within the Organization." Medium-Term strategy 34 C/4

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1. Of the world's one billion poorest people, three-fifths are women and girls

2. Of the 960 million adults in the world who cannot read, two-thirds are women

3. Seventy percent of the 130 million children who are out of school are girls

4. In sub-Saharan Africa, 57 percent of those living with HIV are women

Promoting Gender Equality is a UN priority. The Beijing Platform for Action was established in 1995 as the global strategy for promoting Gender Equality at the United Nations Fourth World conference on Women in Beijing. One of the Millennium Development Goals is devoted to the promotion of Gender Equality and Women's empowerment. The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document reaffirms that Gender Equality is essential to advance development and peace and security and that Gender mainstreaming is recognised as an important tool for achieving Gender Equality.

5. UNESCO confirms the importance of Gender Equality in the Medium-Term Strategy: "*As called for by the 2005 World Summit Outcome document, priority will also be given to the pursuit of Gender Equality through action in all of UNESCO's fields of competence supported by a two-pronged approach pursuing both women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming in Member States and within the Organization.*" This implies that Gender Equality concerns need to be fully taken into account in all programmes levels, during all phases of programme development, implementation and evaluation: preparing a results-based action plan to define the action envisaged by UNESCO in its fields of competence as provided for in the C/5 documents and reporting results against specific gender-relevant indicators.

Priority **Gender Equality**

Gender **mainstreaming** means:
- **Identifying** Gender Equality gaps
- **Raising** awareness about gaps
- **Building** support for change
- **Developing** strategies and programmes to close existing gaps
- **Monitoring** implementation
- **Holding** individuals and institutions accountable for results

Gender Equality implies:
- Equal **distribution** of power and knowledge
- Equal **opportunities**, rights and obligations
- Equal **access** to quality education, capacity-building opportunities
- Equal **possibilities** to develop their full potential and personal ambitions

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UNESCO focuses on both Gender Equality and the empowerment of Women (Gender Equality plus (+) approach). The latter is a critical - but not sufficient element - in promoting Gender Equality. It requires a focus on identifying and redressing imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own lives. UNESCO has adopted a Gender mainstreaming strategy as a way of ensuring that women as well as men benefit equally from programme and policy support. Gender mainstreaming means:

1. Identifying gaps in Gender Equality through the use of gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data;

2. Raising awareness about gaps;

3. Building support for change through advocacy and alliances and partnerships;

4. Developing strategies and programmes to close existing gaps putting adequate resources and the necessary expertise into place;

5. Monitoring implementation;

6. Holding individuals and institutions accountable for results.

Gender mainstreaming is intended to transform development so that equality becomes both a means and an end.

7. Equality between men and women will exist when both sexes:

- Are able to share equally the distribution of power and knowledge;

- Have equal opportunities, rights and obligations in terms of work or income generation;

- Are given equal access to quality education, capacity-building opportunities throughout life and in all of UNESCO's domains;

- Are given the possibility to develop their full potential and personal ambitions.

Gender analysis:

- Collection of data **disaggregated** and **analysed by sex**
- Examination of gender **roles** and **relations** in terms of the distribution of power and resources
- Identification of the **different perspectives** of women and men

To ensure:

- **Gender Equality** issues addressed in the **results** indicators and the **strategy**
- Gendered **interests reflected** in the decisions made
- A **representation** and active **participation** of women and men

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When programming an element, you need to include in the situation analysis a gender perspective, that is proceed with:

1. The collection of data disaggregated and analysed by sex;

2. The examination of gender roles and relations in terms of the distribution of power and resources, and how these are affected by social factors as age, disability, caste, class and ethnic differences;

3. The identification of the different perspectives of women and men.

4. On the basis of this situation analysis, you should ensure:

To Address in the results indicators and the strategy Gender Equality issues identified;

5. A reflection of gendered interests in the decisions made;

6. A representation and active participation of women and men from diverse and marginalized groups in the programming process.

In a nut shell, the Gender mainstreaming strategy is to make sure that what you do and how you do things, promotes Gender Equality.

Further to the priority attached to Africa and to Gender Equality, specific interventions in favour of priority groups (i.e. Youth) and groups of countries (i.e. LDCs and SIDS) will be envisaged.

1. In UNESCO, accordingly to the United Nations criterion, Youth is defined as individuals between 15 and 24.

2. They represent almost 1.2 billion people, 85% of which are located in developing countries and the percentage is increasing.

3. Young people are often pursued as a problem rather than a resource, as a trouble rather a valuable partner, as an investment in the future rather than a real potential of today. UNESCO is seeking to inverse this trend.

UNESCO's action is based on the *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond* adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1995. It is further inspired and guided by recommendations, declarations and plans of action emanating from a number of regional and international youth meetings and fora held over the last years. In that context, the UNESCO Youth Forum is a main springboard for exchange between young people and UNESCO. This Youth Forum which became in 2003 an integral part of the UNESCO General Conference is a unique space for debate (no equivalent exists in the United Nations system) where young people from all over the world can formulate recommendations for integration into UNESCO programmes and activities

4. In that regard it is stated in the Medium-Term Strategy that:

"*Specific interventions will be envisaged for […] youth, especially addressing youth violence and other issues affecting the welfare of youth around the world, in particular the needs of youth in rural areas and marginalized groups, as well as of unemployed youth,*"

The approach on Youth differs from Gender Equality mainstreaming, as it represents a transition phase from childhood to adulthood rather than a permanent condition. Young people want to be recognized as a group that exists in the present and not only as an investment in the future. They want to be considered as resources, equal partners and actors of the social development process.

Five **functions** of UNESCO's strategy for
youth empowerment:

• **Governance**: increased **youth participation**
  in its bodies and events

• **Programming**: **integration** of youth in programme activities and
  partnership with youth associations and NGOs

• **Policy development**: **assistance** to Member States

• **Advocacy**: acting as a **clearing house** for and about youth

• **Monitoring**: **evaluation** of projects promoting youth

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Young people have distinctive needs, concerns and expectations.

1. To enhance the full participation of young people in the society as equal and valuable partners, the strategy for UNESCO's action with and for youth recognizes five complementary functions aimed at their empowerment:

Governance is to increase the presence and participation of young people in UNESCO's bodies, events and activities.

2. Programming aims at incorporating and integrating youth views and concerns in programme activities, and partnership with youth associations, NGOs and networks.

3. Policy development is about providing assistance to Member States in mainstreaming youth concerns and issues into their policies and programmes.

4. Advocacy is for acting as a clearing house for and about youth and sustain campaigns; preparation and dissemination of publications and information material.

5. Monitoring ensures the evaluation of projects promoting youth and encouraging research on promoting youth.

To make sure that UNESCO is committed to the active and meaningful integration of youth in society, when programming an element, you need to take into account all these functions and to identify expected results, estimated specific budgetary input and estimation of impact.

Least **D**eveloped **C**ountries

Specific Interventions

"*Specific interventions will be envisaged for […] the **Least Developed Countries (LDCs), in line with the results of the September 2006 High-Level Meeting on Review of the Brussels Programme of Action.***"

Medium-Term Strategy 34 C/4

September 2006 High-Level meeting on the midterm comprehensive global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010.

Goal 7 "Ensuring that by 2015 all **children**, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have **access** to and complete, free and compulsory **primary education of good quality.**"

Goal 8 "Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in the levels of **adult literacy by 2015**, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults."

Goal 9 "Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving **Gender Equality in education by 2015**, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality."

Goal 26: "Increasing **computer literacy** among students in higher institutions and universities by 50 percent and in junior and high schools by 25 percent, by 2015."

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1. UNESCO addresses the specific needs of the Least Developed Countries. As stated in the Medium-Term Strategy *"Specific interventions will be envisaged for […] the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), in line with the results of the September 2006 High-Level Meeting on Review of the Brussels Programme of Action".*

The United Nations began paying special attention to LDCs in the late 1960s, recognizing those countries as the most vulnerable of the international community. The First United Nations Conference on the LDCs was held in Paris in 1981, the second in 1990 and the third, in which was adopted the Brussels Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, was held in Brussels in 2001.

The 2001 Brussels Programme of Action aims at improving human conditions of the population of LDCs and provides a framework for partnership between LDCs and their development partners. The overarching goal is "to make substantial progress toward halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and suffering from hunger by 2015 and promote the sustainable development of the LDCs".

2. The Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries was reviewed during the High-Level Meeting of September 2006. This high-level meeting adopted a declaration by which Member States recommitted themselves to meeting the special needs of the Least Developed Countries. In order for the UN system and its agencies to accelerate the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in their respective fields of competence and areas of mandates, lead agencies and institutions have been defined for reporting on the progress on the 30 international development goals and targets contained in Programme of Action. In this regard, UNESCO was given the duty of reporting on specific indicators identified for Goals 7, 8 and 9 of the Brussels Programme of Action (of the 30 defined goals). Although UNESCO was listed as a contributing agency for Goal 26, no specific indicator has yet been specified.

3. Goal 7: "Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality." (MDG 2, Target 3).

4. Goal 8: "Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in the levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults."

5. Goal 9: "Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving Gender Equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality." (MDG 3, Target 4).
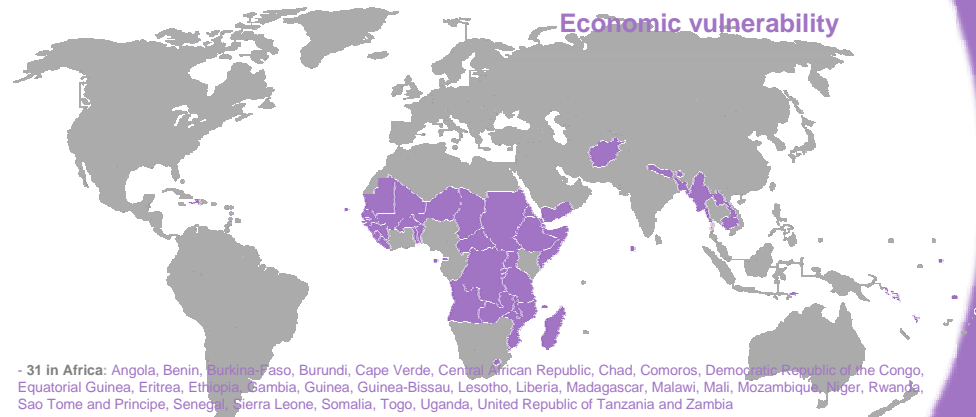
6. Goal 26: "Increasing computer literacy among students in higher institutions and universities by 50 percent and in junior and high schools by 25 percent, by 2015."

Fifty countries are currently designated by the United Nations as "Least Developed Countries" (LDCs). The list is reviewed every three years by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) according to specific human and economic criteria such as:

1. Low-income;
2. Human resource weakness based on indicators of nutrition, health, education, and adult literacy;
3. Economic vulnerability.

To be added to the list, a country must satisfy all three criteria.

4. The majority of LDCs are located in Africa: 31 countries out of 50. Thus, Priority Africa and the Specific interventions envisaged for the Least Developed Countries are pursued in close cooperation.

5. 4 LDCs are situated in the Arab States.

6. 14 in Asia and the Pacific.

7. 1 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

- **Targeting** the most disadvantaged groups (women and youth) and identifying specific actions for them
- **Spreading** and replicating successful examples of alternatives to traditional formal education
- **Encouraging** the use of science and technology in order to improve material living conditions in the LDCs
- **Using** culture as a political lever for poverty alleviation (promoting artistic creation, developing cultural industries and intellectual property rights)
- **Fostering** the development of LDCs and their access to ICTs

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With respect to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), UNESCO is committed to:

1. Targeting the most disadvantaged groups (women and youth) and identifying specific actions for them;

2. Spreading and replicating successful examples of alternatives to traditional formal education;

3. Encouraging the use of science and technology in order to improve material living conditions;

4. Using culture as a political lever for poverty alleviation (promoting artistic creation, developing cultural industries and intellectual property rights);

5. Fostering the development of LDCs and their access to ICTs.

You need to consider whether your element is addressing the specific needs of one or more LDCs. In this case, you will need to indicate the countries concerned along with the overall estimated specific budgetary input.

Small Island Developing States

Specific Interventions

Specific interventions will be envisaged for […] Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in line with the Mauritius Declaration and the Mauritius Strategy, developing a holistic and interdisciplinary approach and bearing in mind the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change "Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability."

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UNESCO approach regarding **SIDS**:

Stepping up the holistic, integrated approach to sustainable island living and development, through **inter**sectoral action with an **inter**generational perspective at the **inter**regional level

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In January 2005, a high-level United Nations (UN) meeting was convened in Mauritius to review the implementation of and refine the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Together with governments, civil society, regional bodies and other international organizations, UNESCO was urged by the UN General Assembly to take timely actions to ensure effective implementation of the updated Programme of Action.

1.This has been reflected in the Medium-Term Strategy where "*Specific interventions will also be envisaged for […] Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in line with the Mauritius Declaration and the Mauritius Strategy, developing a holistic and interdisciplinary approach and bearing in mind the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change "Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability." (13 April 2007)."*

The principal negotiated outputs of the Mauritius International Meeting - a strategy document and a political declaration - call for action in many fields related to UNESCO's concerns, programmes and priorities. The Mauritius Strategy also highlights several new priorities and emerging issues, such as HIV/AIDS, information and communication technologies, culture, trade, security.

2. In terms of UNESCO, an approach is being followed: stepping up the holistic, integrated approach to sustainable island living and development, through intersectoral action with an intergenerational perspective at the interregional level. Particular attention is being given to often marginalized dimensions such as culture, indigenous knowledge, youth and outer islands.

Disadvantaged and excluded groups, including **indigenous peoples**

"*The Organization will further respond with priority to the needs of disadvantaged and excluded groups, as well as the most vulnerable segments of society, including indigenous peoples […] Overall, the Organization will pursue in all its field of competence a human rights-based approach to programming."*

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- Bringing disadvantaged and excluded groups into the **decision-making** process

- Enhancing their **full participation** as valuable partners and active players in society

- Contributing to the Second **I**nternational **D**ecade of the **W**orld's **I**ndigenous **P**eople 2005-2015

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1. Apart from the previous specific interventions *"The Organization will further respond with priority to the needs of disadvantaged and excluded groups, as well as the most vulnerable segments of society, including indigenous peoples […] Overall, the Organization will pursue in all its field of competence a human rights-based approach to programming.*"

2. In that regard UNESCO addresses specific needs of disadvantaged and excluded groups to bring them into the decision-making process.

3. To enhance their full participation as valuable partners and active players in society.

4. To contribute to the objectives of the second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People 2005-2015.

UNESCO concentrates its activities and action, especially at the regional and country levels, on groups that are most in need.

Overall, the Organization pursues a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to programming. A HRBA involves the use of a conceptual framework to understand the causes of (non-) fulfilment of human rights including Gender Equality. It is based on international human rights standards and principles and it focuses on the relation between the people and the state by developing the capacities of rights-holders to claim their rights and duty-bearers to fulfil their obligations. A HRBA gives the same importance to process as it does to results.

UNESCO attaches priority to:

1. Reaching out to strengthen Africa's capacities in all of UNESCO's domains of competence in line with the internationally agreed developments goals and the Objectives of the African Union and NEPAD.

2. Mainstreaming Gender Equality in all of UNESCO's activities to ensure that women as well as men benefit equally from programme and policy support and that Gendered interests are addressed and reflected in all of UNESCO's action.

3. Furthermore specific interventions in favour of priority groups and groups of countries are envisaged for:

4. Youth: contributing to the empowerment of youth by taking it into account through all UNESCO activities during all phases of programme development, implementation and evaluation.

5. The Least Developed Countries: pursuing the eradication of poverty in line with the Brussels Programme of Action.

6. Small Island Developing States (SIDS): ensuring sustainable island living and development, through a holistic and interdisciplinary approach.

7. UNESCO is responding with priority to the specific needs of disadvantaged and excluded groups, as well as the most vulnerable segments of society, including indigenous peoples.

As for all UNESCO Priorities, an element needs to be programmed not only for those receiving interventions but also with them. They need to understand what are the interventions scheduled and their purpose. This will enhance their full participation as valuable partners and active players throughout the process, ensuring ownership and thus actual success.

UNESCO
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Africa Department http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=20266&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Human Rights-Based Approach http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1827&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Indigenous peoples http://www.un.org/issues/m-indig.html (UN)

Least Developed Countries
http://www.unesco.org/ldc
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001472/147259M.pdf (Intranet)

http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Page.asp?intItemID=3641&lang=1 (UN)

Small Island Development States http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=24487&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
http://www.sidsnet.org (UN)

Women and Gender Equality www.unesco.org/women

Youth www.unesco.org/youth

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For additional information you may consult the websites indicated.