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187 EX/INFORMATION MEETING

REPORT OF THE INFORMATION MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

**Thursday, 7 July 2011
(10.05 a.m. – 1.05 p.m. and 3.05 p.m. – 4.15 p.m.)**

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In accordance with 155 EX/Decision 5.4, confirmed by the Executive Board at its 156th session, an information meeting between representatives of the Member States of the Executive Board and the Director-General was held at UNESCO Headquarters on 7 July 2011. 56 Member States out of 58 were represented at the meeting, which all the Permanent Delegations to the Organization were invited to attend, as well as non-Board members and Permanent Observers. An account of the meeting follows.

Morning meeting

1.1 **The Chair** *in extenso*:

Distinguished Colleagues, Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, first of all, let me remind you that I recently signed a letter to the Vice-Chairs of the Executive Board initiating wide consultations on the draft provisional agenda and draft provisional timetable of work of the 187th Board session, the last of the current biennium and essentially devoted to the preparation of the 36th session of the General Conference. In view of the relatively short time frame left before the official dispatch of documents, I would greatly welcome your suggestions on this issue by the end of this month.

1.2 May I also recall once again my encouragement to you from our last session to pursue consultations among ourselves and with the Secretariat during this intersession period, in order to come up, for the two forthcoming important official meetings – the Executive Board and General Conference sessions – with more business-oriented attitudes and less time-consuming exercises, such as duplication between the debates and drafting. Let us remain good managers of our own time, energies, health and money. I thank you all in advance for your positive consideration and supportive cooperation.

1.3 Now, dear colleagues, I feel it necessary and worthwhile to briefly inform you of the background developments and my subsequent final choice with regard to the thematic debate, traditionally held once a year in the framework of the Board's sessions, in accordance with Decision 175EX/23. As you may know, at the beginning of the year I initially considered, in consultation with the Vice-Chairpersons, devoting the second thematic debate of the biennium to the field of "Science, Technology and Innovation for Future Development", with possible special focus on the potential innovative applications of solar energy for the African continent.

1.4 To this end, I solicited the assistance of the Science Sector but, due to a series of misunderstandings, preparations for the thematic debate were delayed to a point where I felt that it would be too late to organize it in the best possible conditions. And since I was informed subsequently by the Sector that the Director-General wishes to organize a High Panel on Science and Development on 15-16 September 2011 next, I also felt that such a thematic debate might be considered as a duplication of the High Panel event.

1.5 Consequently, without wanting to consider the High Panel on Science and Development as a substitute, I recently suggested to the Director-General that she convey a special invitation to all Member States to participate in the aforementioned meeting. I trust that this would appease any misgivings that we as Board members may have regarding the cancellation of our own thematic debate on the same topic, which could potentially be considered by the Board at one of its future sessions.

1.6 Another matter on which we had some discussions at the end of the 186th session, and on which we envisaged pursuing consultations with the Director-General, is the suggested Plenary Ministerial Forum to be organized during the forthcoming session of the General Conference. I believe that, in the light of recent exchanges on that matter between Delegations and the

Secretariat, the Director-General will be making her proposals to the Board regarding the theme of the Ministerial Forum, as well as its rationale, structure and purpose. In my view, and as agreed at our last session, this Information Meeting could also be an occasion for us to question the Director-General on two other proposed parallel events: the Parliamentary Forum and the Youth Forum of the General Conference.

1.7 Dear colleagues, as you know, the 35th session of the World Heritage Committee ended less than ten days ago, having taken place at UNESCO Headquarters due to the prevailing situation in the Kingdom of Bahrain. As Chair of the Executive Board, and on behalf of all Board Members, I would like to express our sincere gratitude both to the Bahraini authorities and the UNESCO Secretariat for the excellent preparatory work for this exceptional event and for their continuous efforts to reinforce implementation of the World Heritage Convention. As Permanent Delegate of the Russian Federation, I am deeply thankful to the distinguished Committee Members for having “elected” my country to host its next session in 2012 in the beautiful city of Saint Petersburg, which is honoured and proud, together with Russia and its people, to welcome the delegates of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention.

1.8 Dear Colleagues, you have before you the consolidated list of questions, as well as an addendum containing questions received after the distribution of that consolidated list, organized by sector and activity. I would like to thank you once again for your continued close cooperation in formulating your reflections to allow a productive exchange of opinions with the Director-General.

According to the usual format of our Information Meetings, the Director-General will make her introductory remarks to brief you on recent developments and to respond to the questions submitted in advance. Our question-and-answer session will follow immediately after. I am now pleased to give the floor to the Director-General.

2.1 **The Director-General *in extenso*:**

Madam Chair of the Executive Board, Mr President of the General Conference, ladies and gentlemen, since the last session of the Executive Board there have been a number of major developments in the work of the Secretariat to which I would like to revert briefly before answering the questions you have put to us.

2.2 At the beginning of this week I was at the summit of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which UNESCO was largely responsible for preparing, and which, for the first time in its history, was devoted to the subject of education. ECOSOC has given us a unique opportunity to place education at the heart of the economic and social agenda, going well beyond the second Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education. We were able to address education in all its dimensions: the training of young people, gender equality, partnerships with the private sector and innovative financing methods. We heard very valuable first-hand accounts from several member states of ECOSOC, from Egypt to Zambia, and Kenya to Pakistan. Above all – and most important, in my view – we took the opportunity to highlight, to the World Trade Organization and the financial institutions, the critical importance of education as an accelerator of growth as we emerge from the crisis. I believe they were listening. The final document from ECOSOC, which specifically mentions UNESCO, takes up that inclusive vision of education and reinforces UNESCO in its leadership role. This was the product of years of work, and a powerful lever for our future action. We will be building on these achievements.

2.3 UNESCO, as you will recall, launched the Global Partnership for Girls’ and Women’s Education on 26 May, bringing together a number of partners in pursuit of two major priorities: literacy and secondary education. Thanks to this partnership, we have a solid platform from which to build new partnerships, in both the public and private sectors.

2.4 *The Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report, The Hidden Crisis: Armed conflict and education*, published at the start of the year, is recognized as making a major contribution to increasing the protection of schools in conflict situations. We launched that report in Juba, South

Sudan, last month, to affirm the role of education in constructing a new State. I took part, alongside the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a debate in New York organized by Germany on attacks on education, with a view to a Security Council resolution next Tuesday.

2.5 We have also just signed an agreement with the World Bank, in Washington, to strengthen our partnership in 4 key areas of culture and sustainable development, including the conservation of historic cities and the economics of culture. This contribution is the latest step forward in our work on that subject, following on from last December's United Nations Resolution on Culture and Development.

2.6 Let me also mention our agreements with Málaga football club, to combat racism, iTunes University for educational content, and the Permanent Memorial Committee and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) group of countries for the design of a Permanent Memorial in remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade at United Nations Headquarters. UNESCO will be launching the international design competition for this monument, the brainchild of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, championed by the Ambassador of Jamaica to the United Nations. This is one of our contributions to the International Year for People of African Descent.

2.7 I also want to highlight the meeting of the Broadband Commission, jointly organized with the International Telecommunications Union, which took place on 6 June this year at Headquarters. The Commission's work has given us a better understanding of how to harness the potential of the Internet for education, especially of girls and in the Least Developed Countries. Broadband is, clearly, an essential driver of development throughout the world, and UNESCO is in the vanguard of thinking in this field, especially in terms of assisting with the broadcasting of local content.

2.8 In Dresden, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Man and the Biosphere Programme. It is now up to us to put this tremendous potential to use for next year's Rio Conference. I also want to draw your attention to the 4th International Conference of the Memory of the World Programme.

2.9 There has also been a meeting of the World Heritage Committee, which is always a great success in terms of visibility. However, I feel bound to share with you my concerns about the credibility of the nomination process. This is a crucial issue as we approach the 40th anniversary of the Convention, and I know that several of you share my anxiety. Immediately after the close of business, I met with officials from the three Advisory Bodies of the 1972 Convention to look at ways of ensuring the credibility of the List in the long term, and avoiding a situation in which inscriptions are made at the expense of the management and conservation of the sites. This is also the case with the intangible cultural heritage. The growing number of nominations shows the high level of interest in the Convention. But the Convention must not become the victim of its own success. That is why, on 21 June, I convened a meeting of Member States with concerns on this subject to discuss the process for evaluating the nominations.

2.10 We are also moving ahead with our reforms. The restructuring of the Sectors is under way. The Publications Committee is operational, as announced, and held its first meeting on 8 June and its second yesterday. It will ensure that our publications policy is more selective and more strategic. We are moving forward, too, with examining our cooperation with the National Commissions. A questionnaire was available online until 30 June, and the replies are currently being reviewed. The internal evaluation team is holding consultations, in close cooperation with the delegations, both at Headquarters and in the countries. It was recently in the Philippines and is currently in the Republic of Korea. The findings from this work will be submitted to you at the next session of the Executive Board.

2.11 Now I would like to speak about my visit to Cairo on 13 June, the purpose of which was to work with the authorities in that country to identify the priority areas in which UNESCO should concentrate its actions. We pursued those discussions with the Egyptian Minister of Education,

Mr Moussa, during the ECOSOC summit. Where education is concerned, we are going to step up our efforts in literacy, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and teacher training. The Organization will shortly be sending a mission to Egypt to study the best way of working together with that country to help it engineer a transformation in those priority areas. Our work is already well in hand in the fields of freedom of expression, training of journalists, protection of archaeological sites and combating the traffic in cultural objects.

2.12 Some one hundred Tunisian journalists will receive training throughout the month of July, in readiness for the elections on 23 October. The first phase of the training, in French, began in June in Tunis and Monastir. The second phase, starting today, will be in Arabic, for radio journalists from Sfax, Tataouine, Le Kef and Gafsa. UNESCO held an international conference here on 31 May in support of Tunisian and Egyptian radio and television, in partnership with the European Broadcasting Union and France Télévisions.

2.13 We are continuing with the updating of our strategy for the Arab countries, working directly with the authorities in those countries, and based on our on-site surveys. Our roadmap for democracy in the region, drawn up following the Round Table of 21 June, will be available before the end of this month.

2.14 After this brief overview, I would now like to respond to the questions that have been put to me.

2.15 The delegation of Morocco, and several other Member States, have asked the Secretariat what measures are in place to support them as the deadline approaches for achieving the EFA Goals. Our priority is to better coordinate the existing systems. You had the opportunity to look at our proposals for reform at the last session of the Executive Board, and an information meeting was held on 16 June 2011. We are working on this now, and the architecture of the new system will be presented to the Executive Board at its next session.

2.16 To respond to the question on our post-2015 strategy, we are in the process of setting up a special inter-agency team in readiness for that date. And when I say “we”, I want to stress that this was my initiative, given that UNESCO has the leading role. A number of areas of focus have clearly emerged for this work: improving quality and fairness, and ensuring a transition between primary, secondary and higher education on the one hand, and between school and the world of work on the other. These are our priorities for post-2015. Moreover, the restructuring of the Education Sector takes full account of these orientations.

2.17 The delegations of the Philippines and Morocco have asked what resources are being allocated to the implementation of our strategy on TVET. In line with our decision to step up our action in this area, the total budget for the ordinary TVET programme has been raised to over 3 million US dollars (US \$3,277,000) for the current biennium. As part of the CapEFA programme for 2009-2011, over 4 million US dollars (US \$4,118,049) in additional funding has been provided for this activity in Malawi, Côte d'Ivoire, Afghanistan and the Southern African Development Community, which represents 17% of the total budget of the CapEFA programme for this period. We are seeking to attract further funding to supplement the valuable support from the German Government for the UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNEVOC) (US \$763,889 for 2010-2011). We have already received pledges from the Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of China. The implementation timetable up to 2015 breaks down into three parts: strengthening capacities upstream, strengthening the monitoring instruments, and sharing best practices to feed into the global debate. We are planning to launch technical education development policies in 15 Member States, and to strengthen existing policies in 15 others. We will hold a mid-point review in 2012.

2.18 To respond to a question from the representative of Germany, about boosting our UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) teams, I can already say that, in addition to the team currently in place, four Programme Specialists in the same section are also working on the

Associated Schools Network. The Sector is also looking into the possibility of designating focal points in the field offices, and is planning to recruit an additional expert.

2.19 In reply to the questions from the delegation of the Philippines about the setting up of an inventory of best practices in education and the state of progress on the report of results achieved in the 20 target countries, I wish to inform you that we are moving ahead with the report, and it will be submitted to you at the next session of the Executive Board.

2.20 Regarding the publication of best practices, this is updated on a regular basis on the Education Sector website. The plan for an online inventory will be part of the overall restructuring of the UNESCO website that is now in progress, with the aim of making it easier to access information country by country.

2.21 The distinguished representative of Argentina wanted to know what progress had been made with our work on “Debt swaps for education”. I am happy to be able to give you one very good example, the agreement signed with Nigeria on 9 May, which is based on a system of debt relief of US \$6 million to be used for literacy. This is an excellent, innovative and practical financing mechanism, capable of application to a number of other situations.

2.22 On the very specific issue of debt swap instruments, the Advisory Panel of Experts set up on this topic submitted its recommendations on 19 and 20 May this year, and we shall be reviewing their proposals.

2.23 In reply to the question put by the delegation of Morocco on the Pilot Projects of the South-South Cooperation Programme/Fund for Education, I am pleased to tell you that the first phase of these projects is now completed. Three of those four projects will now be extended to the regional scale. These are the projects for using information technology in teacher training in Asia and the Pacific, reducing the risks from natural disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean, and mother-tongue based education in Africa. A new project has been proposed for the Arab States, to develop community training centres.

2.24 Turning now to the preparation of our plan of action for a Culture of Peace, many of you took part in the information meeting on this subject earlier in the week, to exchange ideas with the Secretariat on the consultative document. That document was drawn up by the Programme Management Committee (PMC). It also drew on contributions from some 15 of our field offices.

2.25 I am happy with the positive spirit in which this work is being conducted, and very much look forward to reading your written contributions, which you have until next Tuesday, 12 July, to make. These will enable us to flesh out the text to be included in the alternative option of the next budget, as requested by the Executive Board. I think we are making promising progress towards satisfying the requests made by the General Conference at its last session.

2.26 The delegation of Morocco wished to know the Secretariat’s plans to strengthen cooperation with higher education institutions. I am pleased to tell you that several thematic meetings have already been planned between now and the end of the year with university Presidents. Boosting our links with higher education establishments, and in particular with the 830 institutions in our UNESCO/UNITWIN network, is of vital importance. This was brought home to us on 22 May this year, at a UNESCO Global Forum, “Uses and misuses of university rankings”, held here at Headquarters. The next meeting in 2011 with Presidents of universities in China and Africa is an example of the approaches we will be using. The Vice-Chancellors of 40 Chinese and African universities will be brought together to discuss the critical issue of the employability of young graduates.

2.27 This leads me naturally on to the questions from the delegation of Cuba, on the arrangements for the UNESCO Youth Forum at the General Conference this October. The theme of this forum, “How youth drive change”, was chosen on the basis of comments received since

2009 as well as workshops held in the margins of all the recent major events on youth, in Mexico, Turkey and Italy. We have received some very positive feedback on this theme.

2.28 Each National Commission is to nominate two youth delegates. The moderators of the debates will be chosen so as to guarantee geographical balance and gender equality. The same process will be used to select the five young journalists responsible for covering the event. UNESCO is already in touch with field offices to identify speakers with a powerful story to tell, to make the forum as lively as possible. We will make as much use as we can of social networking media to attract the broadest possible public and generate discussion. Our Goodwill Ambassadors, Forest Whitaker and Nizan Guanaes, and the United Nations Youth Champion, Monique Coleman, will be involved to create high visibility, and the maximum possible level of participation in the Forum. I will also be taking part in the United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on Youth on 25 and 26 July.

2.29 This work forms part of our Global Strategy on Youth, particular in Africa.

2.30 UNESCO has just held a Round Table, “Towards Youth Inclusive Policies and Prevention of Violence in the Great Lakes Region”, on 26 and 27 June in Nairobi. We are currently preparing a regional report on youth civic engagement, which will be finalized in October 2011. And we are pursuing our capacity-building action, with the formation of the African Union Youth Volunteer Corps.

2.31 On 9 June, in Egypt, UNESCO launched the very first series of seminars devoted to youth, civic engagement and democracy. We are also carrying out a series of studies into civic engagement as a factor in economic participation, with the support of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). The conclusions from this work will be reviewed at a UNESCO-ISESCO meeting in Beirut in September 2011.

2.32 The delegation of Burkina Faso has put a number of questions, in particular on the role of our National Commissions, both in terms of implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2008, and of UNESCO’s visibility. The purpose of the MOU signed with UNDP is to strengthen strategic cooperation at country level. The National Commissions can take part in meetings of the country team, at the invitation of the Resident Coordinator.

2.33 In order for our Commissions to be able to play a full part in this process, it is essential to strengthen their capacities, especially in Africa. For that reason, we have launched a series of initiatives to help them in their activities, training for Secretaries-General, monthly newsletters and the new website, www.unesco.int.

2.34 In this connection I want to mention, as an example, the African capacity-building programme of the National Commission of Germany, a country I visited a few weeks ago for the 60th anniversary of its membership of UNESCO.

2.35 In response to another question from the delegation of Burkina Faso on Non-Governmental Organizations, the framework for cooperation to be presented at the next session of the General Conference will help us develop a simplified partnership with the NGOs, that will enable them to become involved in drawing up and implementing UNESCO’s programme.

2.36 Furthermore, where the financing of category 2 centres is concerned, I would like to remind you that these centres are not automatically eligible for extrabudgetary funding. These entities are independent of the Organization. UNESCO is not responsible either for their management or their resources. That said, they can still be associated as implementation partners for UNESCO programmes, financed from extrabudgetary funds.

2.37 In reply to the question from the delegation of Argentina on the Management of Social Transformation (MOST) Programme, I would like to begin by reaffirming, to the delegation of Argentina, my attachment to this programme, and my determination to see that it is given its rightful place in our current restricted budget. The Secretariat will make sure that the issues of social inclusion and the social dimensions of climate change are reflected in the priorities of the Social and Human Sciences Sector. Details of the amounts allocated to each aspect of the programme will be provided in the next C/5.

2.38 I come now to the questions about the reform of our field structure, raised by the delegation of Argentina, among others.

2.39 We are pursuing our consultations by concentrating on the regions of Africa and the Arab States, which have been identified as the priorities for this reform. We will have a further meeting on this topic with the African Union on Tuesday next, 12 July, to discuss an overall proposal.

2.40 Just to respond to a question from the delegation of the Philippines about the evaluation of Priority Africa, that evaluation is ongoing, and several working meetings have taken place, in Paris in March, and in Dakar in April. The entire process should be finished by the end of the year. The results will be shared with the Board at its session in the spring of 2012.

2.41 The Latvian delegation has asked about the mandate of our Brussels office and recent progress in our cooperation with the European Union. The Brussels office, which opened on 16 February, is intended to publicize UNESCO's work, participate in the Union's bodies, and speed up exchanges between people and synergies between programmes. We have already seen the first results, in particular with the launch of a project financed by €1 million from the European Commission, to build culture management capacities in a number of developing countries. We have stepped up our cooperation with the Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, in particular in the field of risk prevention. We have also been approached to combine our efforts in North Africa, to defend freedom of expression and human rights, and encourage civic participation by youth. The office is also working to draft a memorandum to be signed in the autumn with the President of the European Commission, Mr Manuel Barroso.

2.42 To respond to another question from Latvia, on new proposed partnerships, I would like to thank that delegation for its appreciation of the work of the Secretariat, and I would inform you that there are no plans to announce or sign any new partnerships this summer, except for the agreement with BASF in Germany to support schools in Japan affected by the disaster, and with Chinese companies to build cultural management capacity in Africa.

2.43 While these agreements are often signed at Headquarters, they are implemented at national level, as close as possible to the target communities. As an example, in the case of Procter and Gamble, the resources are being mobilized in France and Romania for the education of girls in Senegal.

2.44 The delegation of the Philippines and others of you have asked about the status of extrabudgetary contributions under the Capital Master Plan for the renovation and conservation of the Headquarters buildings. On this point I can inform you that this Plan will be submitted to the next session of the General Conference for examination. The Headquarters Committee discussed it only yesterday.

2.45 To come back to the question by the delegation of the Philippines, the Secretariat has not, to date, received any voluntary contributions. Of course, such contributions would be welcomed and appreciated. Under the financing options or combinations for the Master Plan proposed to the General Conference for subsequent phases, Member States will be invited to make contributions in cash or in kind.

2.46 In reply to the questions raised by the distinguished representative of Italy, I would like to come back to the number of consultants and the recruitment periods. 3,555 consultants' contracts were signed in 2010, which is 1% more than in 2009. The cost was US \$24.4 million in 2010, an increase of 11% over 2009. There are a number of factors to explain this increase: on the one hand, the average contract term went up (from 57 days in 2009 to 74 days in 2010); on the other, while there was no increase in 2010 in the maximum hourly rates paid by UNESCO, consultants operate in a highly competitive market, and UNESCO has had to pay fees at the higher end of the range in order to be able to attract consultants with the required skills. As for recruitment periods, the Recruitment and Staffing Section is endeavouring to reduce the period to six months compared to the present 8.5 months. The average time taken in the United Nations is seven months.

2.47 The implementation of a new, more efficient recruitment tool should speed up the process, and rationalize the procedure for geographical mobility.

2.48 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I take this opportunity to reaffirm my commitment to strengthening the links between culture and development. We have sustained our advocacy for the implementation of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Culture and Development, adopted last December. At our initiative, the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office has requested all United Nations Resident Coordinators to integrate culture into their programming exercises – in particular, the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF). We are pleased that, for the first time, Resident Coordinators have received such instructions. This will encourage Resident Coordinators to include culture in their United Nations Country Team programmes. It will ensure more attention to UNESCO's work in the field.

2.49 The UNESCO Institute for Statistics has launched a three-year project on employment generated across the cultural sector. The statistics will inform policy-makers on the role of culture in generating revenue and jobs.

2.50 The work on UNESCO's "Culture for Development Indicators Suite" is progressing well, and is being tested in six countries. This is the first tool to provide comprehensive insight into the role of culture in sustainable and equitable development.

2.51 I took good note of calls during the last session of the Executive Board for more openness regarding our work on culture and development. Before the General Conference, we will organize a two-day seminar with Permanent Delegations, at our Headquarters. This will provide an opportunity to present our daily work on Culture and Development throughout all the cultural Conventions and Programmes. In this respect, I had the pleasure and honour, at the High-Level Segment of ECOSOC in Geneva this week, to meet with Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary-General of the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), to exchange views on deepening cooperation and coordination at Headquarters level and in the field.

2.52 In response to the question of the distinguished Permanent Delegate from the Philippines on the planned 15 June debate at the United Nations General Assembly on "Intercultural Dialogue and Youth," we can only say that the meeting did not occur for reasons of scheduling with key participants, which is why the President of the General Assembly called off the meeting.

2.53 The distinguished Permanent Delegate from Morocco enquired about UNESCO's activities in Iraq. Working with the Ministry of Culture and relevant Iraqi institutions, UNESCO is leading the protection of cultural sites and the fight against illicit traffic of cultural property. The rehabilitation of the Al-Askari Holy Shrine of Samara remains a highly visible national project. UNESCO has completed Phase One with support from the European Union and the Government of Iraq's self-benefiting funds-in-trust. We are moving ahead with Phase Two of the restoration of the Erbil Citadel, as approved and funded by the Kurdistan Regional Government. Other activities include the conservation of the Iraqi marshlands, modernization of the Sulaymaniyah Museum, support to the Government of Iraq in developing a National Tourism Strategy, and restoring the laboratories of the Iraq National Museum.

2.54 Education also lies at the heart of our work in Iraq. UNESCO co-chairs the UNDAF Education Working Group, with the United Nations Children's Fund. We assisted the Government in creating an Education Coordinating Committee, with all major organizations working in education. With two international staff in country, supported by national staff and international experts in the Iraq Office in Amman, more than US \$25 million of education activities are being implemented, with generous support from the Qatar Foundation. These focus on education reform and projects in basic, secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational and non-formal education.

2.55 In response to the question from the distinguished Permanent Delegate from Romania on the Danube Delta, I wish, first, to underline the importance we attach to this project to promote sustainable cultural tourism. A team from the Culture and Natural Sciences Sectors participated in the working group chaired by the Secretary-General of the National Commission of Romania for UNESCO, along with the Governor of the Delta and the office of the United Nations Development Programme in Bucharest, to formulate a strategy for the project. A project document containing this strategy has been forwarded to the Romanian authorities, who have received it positively. UNESCO now stands ready to support its implementation.

2.56 I thank the distinguished Permanent Delegate of Argentina for the question on the proposed cooperation with the "USAM – White Helmets" in Haiti. The Culture Sector has contacted the Distinguished Delegation of Argentina for further information on their experts in the preparation of built heritage inventories. I believe that Mr. Daniel Elie, Director of the National Institute for Historic Preservation (ISPAN), will be in Paris next week, which will provide an opportunity to take the discussions with the Delegation of Argentina further, with the participation of UNESCO. Unfortunately, I would add that no projects have been initiated in Jacmel, and that discussions remain ongoing. I hope that we can step up this activity very soon.

2.57 The distinguished Permanent Delegate of Morocco raised a question regarding progress on resolutions 186EX/5, 186EX/11, 186EX/12, 186EX/34 and 186EX/35. During the 35th session of the World Heritage Committee, I asked Mr. Mounir Bouchenaki, Director-General of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, to facilitate negotiations on the text of the decision related to Jerusalem. Let me say that no efforts were spared in seeking to reach a consensus. I was informed also that the different parties actively sought a mutual agreement.

2.58 I wish to reiterate that I will continue to stand by my responsibilities as far as our technical expertise is required.

2.59 In response to the question of the distinguished Permanent Delegate from Latvia, the *Index Translationum* is now managed within the new Division for Thematic Programmes, Development and Dialogue in the Culture Sector. With 146 countries participating, interest in the Index is increasing. In this respect, I thank Latvia for its excellent contributions. At the same time, this trend increases the scale of data to be integrated into the system. This is why, for instance, the Latvian data from the year 2009 is only now being integrated.

2.60 The distinguished Permanent Delegate of Latvia also asked about progress following the decision of the last General Conference regarding an international standard-setting instrument for the protection of indigenous and endangered languages. I will present a document on this issue to the next General Conference.

2.61 You will recall that resolution 35 C/43 requested us to undertake a feasibility study through a meeting of experts, financed through voluntary contributions. To date, we have not received any offers of support for such a meeting. This explains why it has not been held and why the feasibility study has not been undertaken.

2.62 Several Permanent Delegates – notably, Germany and the Philippines – asked about UNESCO's preparation for the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

UNESCO will make a significant impact on the Rio+20 negotiations and the outcome document. I have created a Steering Committee in-house, headed by the Assistant Director-General for the Natural Sciences, with the Assistant Director-General of the Bureau for Strategic Planning as Deputy.

2.63 We have developed an evolving strategy for UNESCO's contribution to Rio+20, focusing on clearing pathways to build "green societies". Building "green societies" involves action at multiple levels: fostering the sustainable use and governance of the oceans; improving access to and management of freshwater; ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; addressing climate change and natural disasters; mobilizing and generating scientific knowledge; educating all for sustainable development; fostering technical and vocational training; promoting local knowledge, cultural diversity and dialogue; strengthening media for informed policy choices, and improving global governance for sustainable development.

2.64 To take this strategy forward, UNESCO is participating in all relevant high level meetings. We are working with the International Council for Science to organize Regional Workshops that give natural and social scientists, as well as engineers from different regions an opportunity to contribute to the intergovernmental Rio+20 Regional Preparatory Meetings. Two meetings have taken place already – in Kuala Lumpur on 16 -18 April and in Pretoria on 30 May - 1 June. Three further meetings will be organized by October, in Mexico, Egypt and Finland.

2.65 We will hold information meetings at UNESCO Headquarters and in New York, for UNESCO Delegations and United Nations Missions to interact with representatives of the scientific community from all regions.

2.66 Preparation has also included the Future Forum event organized on 24 May, with the Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and Secretary-General of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and Collegium International, on "Challenges of the Green Economy and Green Societies".

2.67 Strengthening global governance is especially important. Governing the ocean is an area where UNESCO, through its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, has unique experience. Our contribution could involve a review of "United Nations Oceans", the formation of an informal "Friends of the Ocean" group with Member States, and the drafting of a "Blue Paper", led by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme.

2.68 We are finalising a publication to present UNESCO's approach to Rio+20 in order to raise awareness and promote understanding. This follows the lines of the successful brochure, *UNESCO Building Human Capacities in Least Developed Countries*, presented to the 4th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which I attended in Istanbul on 9-13 May.

2.69 The distinguished Permanent Delegate from the Philippines enquired about the High Level Panel on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development. Composed of eminent scholars, decision-makers and intellectuals from all regions, the High Level Panel will seek to chart new ways for scientific communities to tackle common challenges and provide the basis for concrete recommendations for UNESCO and its partners. We are now in the planning process and coordinating dates for the first meeting, which will take place before the General Conference. I will keep you fully informed. You may rest assured there will be an open session of the first meeting, to allow all Permanent Delegations to participate.

2.70 I thank the distinguished Permanent Delegate from Morocco for the question on activities relating to the Consortium for Science, Technology and Innovation for the South (COSTIS). You know my attachment and commitment to taking this forward. The Secretariat has engaged with the leadership of G77+China, and its Paris-based representatives, and undertaken actions necessary for the organization of the General Conference of COSTIS. This includes a detailed work plan for

actions to be taken leading up to the General Conference and a revision of the statutes. We have assigned human and material resources to support the completion of the work for its organization. Despite the postponement of the Third South Summit in Libya, we created a special account for receiving the extrabudgetary funds that Member States will contribute to hold the Conference. I would encourage the G77+China to work closely with us to refine the draft proposal and to mobilize the extrabudgetary reserves.

2.71 I welcome the question raised by the distinguished Permanent Delegate of Belgium on the outcome of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the proposal for an International Centre for Science and Technology. Let me state, first, my deep gratitude to the Government of Turkey for their vision and leadership. This Conference saw the discussion of practical and concrete proposals, and also of new ideas, for reaching the goals of 2015 and beyond.

2.72 I wish to underline also how much I welcome the decision on science, technology and innovation taken at the Fourth United Nations Conference. Science, technology and innovation hold vital solutions for sustainable development in the Least Developed Countries. I am convinced UNESCO has expertise to help identify gaps and in capacity analysis, areas which are especially relevant for the Least Developed Countries. Unfortunately, funding is not available for these purposes, and, I believe, fund-raising would have to be discussed with all concerned parties. In the event the gap/capacity analysis is undertaken, we are ready to support the establishment of the proposed International Centre. The question to be addressed must be how to ensure its long-term and sustainable financing.

2.73 The distinguished Permanent Delegate from Germany enquired about public-private partnerships related to Biosphere Reserves. A number of Biosphere Reserves have developed partnerships – for instance, in Germany with the Danone company, and in Indonesia with the Sinar Maas group of companies. These are very positive developments.

2.74 Implementing, monitoring and evaluating such partnerships is the responsibility of the national Man and the Biosphere (MAB) committees and the UNESCO National Commissions. The UNESCO MAB Secretariat can contribute at the invitation of national authorities – as, indeed, has been the case for Germany.

2.75 On the wider issue, I wish to inform you we are preparing a draft strategy on partnerships, on which I will seek your active consultation, which will be presented to the next General Conference. This will identify the principles and criteria for partnerships and elements to be included in agreements.

2.76 Ladies and Gentlemen, our meeting is an opportunity, also, to explore the next steps we must take over the next few months. The distinguished Permanent Delegate from Latvia asked about the review of the consultation processes on the C/4 and C/5. As set out in 187 EX/Decision 17, the Executive Board requested me “to conduct a comprehensive review of the consultation process on the C/4 and C/5 with a view to enhancing priority-setting, allowing informed decision-making, and properly reflecting the opinion of Member States”. On this basis, I have been invited to propose a new consultation process to the Executive Board at its 187th session, which includes a quantitative approach as well as a qualitative approach. I have been asked to ensure that regional consultations on the C/5 are addressed to Member States, including their National Commissions, with no additional cost implications.

2.77 In response, we are now exploring various options to optimize consultations and reduce costs – while preserving the important role played by the National Commissions and Member States, especially for preparing the Medium-Term Strategy. Options might include making better use of the Sector for External Relations and Public Information (ERI) Capacity-Building Workshops for National Commissions, as well as others. It will be important also for National Commissions to develop programmes of cooperation with each other, especially between those in developed and

developing countries. We must consider ideas to optimize consultation as well as to reduce costs. I look forward to hearing your thoughts, to guide us as we move forward.

2.78 Several Permanent Delegates requested clarity on the organization of the next General Conference – especially the Plenary Ministerial Forum. I know an information meeting was held last week, and I wish to follow up with some points here. I believe it is important we attract high-level representatives of Member States to the General Conference – to underline UNESCO's relevance and to receive strategic directions on our work.

2.79 You will recall that a Plenary Ministerial Forum occurred at the 35th session of the General Conference, chaired by an elected official of the General Conference, with President Gül of Turkey as keynote speaker and a Secretariat background note covering two themes. We must draw lessons from that experience – to avoid overlap of the Plenary Ministerial Forum and the Plenary itself, to focus on a single theme feeding into the C/4 and C/5, to invite more Heads of State and government leaders to an interactive session, and to avoid scheduling other Ministerial Round Tables throughout the General Conference.

2.80 These considerations underpin my proposal to organize a Leaders' Forum followed by a Plenary Ministerial Forum of a day and half (26 October and 27 October a.m.) – devoted to a single theme of strategic relevance for UNESCO. While leaders would be invited as special guests, all Ministers could intervene, while preserving their right to deliver a statement in the plenary debate.

2.81 We aim for a panel of five or six Heads of State and Government, to engage in a debate moderated by an experienced personality. The format would be similar to that of the World Economic Forum or United Nations General Assembly summit discussions. The Leaders' Forum would be followed by the Plenary Ministerial Forum. Both would be chaired, as two years ago, by an elected official of the General Conference.

2.82 We have considered three themes – UNESCO and Rio+20; dialogue and development for attaining the Millennium Development Goals; and youth. All of these are important. I understand there are other ideas and also that there is something of a preference for the second theme. On this basis, I offer the following theme for your consideration: "Preparing for a Future in Peace – UNESCO Promoting Dialogue and Sustainable Development to Attain the Millennium Development Goals". I believe such high-level debates can help focus the activities of UNESCO. We would ensure quick turnaround with a report prepared by the Secretariat, to feed into the General Conference and C/4 preparation. I look forward to your thoughts.

2.83 I take this opportunity to say a word about the idea of a Parliamentary Forum on the eve of the General Conference. I know there have been consultations with the Permanent Delegations, and I have been informed of all the exchanges. On this basis, I think it is best to delay consideration of this idea for the next session of the General Conference.

2.84 This being said, I wish to encourage Member States to include parliamentarians within their delegations to the General Conference. I appeal strongly for us to strengthen the parliamentary dimension of UNESCO's work. On this basis, we could envisage holding an interactive debate with parliamentarians on the margins of the General Conference in order to solicit their view on our orientations.

2.85 I wish to inform you about initiatives to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity – a landmark agreement and turning point in international efforts to understand and manage cultural diversity. I have proposed a special plenary meeting during the 36th session of the General Conference on 2 November. This will take the form of a high-level debate to reflect on the implementation of the Declaration and its Action Plan. I also propose that a resolution be adopted by the General Conference, reaffirming the commitment of all to promoting, respecting and implementing the principles in the Declaration.

2.86 The event will be complemented by side activities and a new, permanent exhibition, “Open UNESCO”, that will highlight UNESCO’s efforts to promote, I quote our Constitution, “the fruitful diversity of the cultures ... of Member States” in all spheres of UNESCO’s activity. We also seek translations of the Declaration into local, minority, indigenous and endangered languages – with the help of National Commissions and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

2.87 I see this as a moment to raise awareness about the Declaration. It is also a chance to sharpen our understanding of its concepts and principles – in a world where managing cultural diversity carries rising stakes. I look forward to your help in making this a great success.

2.88 Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to say a few words this morning on the preparation of the 36 C/5. Following the 186th session of the Executive Board, I drew up a new budget envelope of US \$653 million, reflecting zero nominal growth. In distributing funds, I removed the increases granted in the previous C/5 option in compensation for statutory increases, inflation and other increases – these constituted the real growth components. I preserved the allocations for the Programme Sectors at that reduced level, while programme-related and corporate services were reduced further, almost doubling the amount of reduction.

2.89 The main emphasis has been given to Programmes. However, it is clear that a reduction of the magnitude of US \$32 million will impact on the scope, depth and intensity of our activities. While I have done my utmost to preserve Programme Sectors, I have also softened the impact on the Participation Programme – which will be reduced only by an amount commensurate with the overall percentage reduction from zero real growth levels.

2.90 Beyond the financial adjustments, we have refocused some of the sectoral activities. In Main Programme I, we are reducing the expected results from 14 to 12 and focusing activities more sharply. Main Programme III will present a more focused results chain.

2.91 The intersectoral platforms will be presented in a clearer manner, as requested by the Executive Board. Above all, I have preserved close to US \$10 million for financing reform of the field network. This will help secure the financial viability of this key initiative.

2.92 Throughout all of this, I have been guided by the spirit and letter of the decision by the Executive Board. The alternative option of the 36 C/5 will be available to all Member States by 27 July – three months before the General Conference, as stipulated by the Rules of Procedure. I am working hard to abide by your instructions and the requirement to provide sufficient time for capitals to carefully consider the proposal. I hope this will go a long way towards securing consensus on the budget envelope for the next biennium.

2.93 At the same time, UNESCO must have secure and predictable funding at reasonable levels to perform our critical functions – which involve leading roles on the global education, sciences, culture and communication agenda. I hope that you appreciate our efforts at Headquarters and in the field to reaffirm our leadership, with our partners and all stakeholders. This leadership is being reaffirmed at this very moment in Geneva, at ECOSOC’s Annual Ministerial Review, which has endorsed and appreciated the vision we have brought. This shows the role UNESCO can and must play.

2.94 Thank you very much for your questions. I look forward now to our further discussion.

3. **The Chair** thanked the Director-General for her very full statement, and introduced the question-and-answer session, the first part of which would deal with questions relating specifically to the Executive Board. Its purpose was to allow Members to raise questions they had submitted in advance, which they felt had not been answered, or not fully answered, by the Director-General during her introductory statement. She asked Members to limit their interventions to three minutes to ensure an interactive meeting.

4. **Mr de la Riva** (Spain) thanked the Director-General for her extremely convincing presentation. He commended her ability to prioritize, the political effectiveness of her interventions in Egypt, Tunisia and Haiti and her work in promoting freedom of expression, reforming the Organization and coordinating UNESCO's activities with those of other agencies such as ECOSOC. His country's delegation encouraged partnerships in the field of science and technology, where new possibilities were opening up for UNESCO. Citing the cooperation between UNESCO and Málaga Football Club, he highlighted sport as a promising terrain for initiatives that captured the attention of the media, especially via the Internet. However, as a major contributing country, Spain took the view that UNESCO needed to cultivate a proper culture of management of funds, more appropriate to the importance of its role. He was also concerned that priorities be established for the Capital Master Plan to include health and communication, and that due attention be given to endangered languages.

5.1 **Mr Diop** (Senegal) thanked the Director-General for her pertinent and exhaustive answers. His country noted with satisfaction that UNESCO had given its agreement for the design of a Permanent Memorial in remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade at United Nations Headquarters, and would be contributing to the project. He welcomed and encouraged reform of the procedure for nominating cultural and natural property for inscription in the World Heritage List and the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

5.2 He was pleased that the Director-General intended to share the results of the evaluation of Priority Africa, and thanked her for the Ivory Note "Readjustment of the functions of the Africa Department and its capacities in furtherance of 'Priority Africa'". He assured the Director-General that she had the support of the Member States that had initiated Priority Africa, which he hoped would, at last, take tangible form on the ground. Finally, he supported the Director-General's decision to strengthen the Memory of the World Programme, which would give documentary heritage the attention it deserved.

6. **Mr Jang** (Republic of Korea) thanked the Director-General for her strong participation in the recent ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (AMR). He was keen to learn about recent developments in EFA coordination. The new system had been discussed at length at the previous meeting of the Executive Board, following which the Education Sector had held an information meeting to introduce it. However, nothing had been heard since then. What practical structures, if any, had been put in place not just at global, but also at regional and national levels?

7.1 **Ms Bennani** (Morocco) thanked the Director-General for attaching such importance to information meetings, and congratulated her on the quality of her answers. She asked, first, what progress had been made with the strategy to raise funds for the South-South Cooperation Programme/Fund for Education, a strategy her country awaited with interest.

7.2 She went on to observe that higher education still seemed to be the "poor relation" of the Education Sector, though it was extremely important for major programmes such as the promotion of science and technology, innovation and sustainable development. Moreover, Member States lacked information on the follow-up of the implementation of the recommendations of the World Conference on Higher Education.

7.3 On the Culture of Peace, she commended the Director-General for the concrete proposals received, which were not only encouraging but also met the expectations of Member States.

7.4 Lastly, the speaker expressed concern about the possibility that there might not be a thematic debate at the next session of the Executive Board, as that could create a dangerous precedent, and remarked that, in her capacity as Vice-Chair of the Group of Arab States, she had never been consulted on that issue. She noted that, in general, efforts should be made to coordinate to avoid overlap between debates and other activities, which put smaller delegations at a disadvantage.

8.1 **Ms Kavalec** (United States of America) was impressed by the ability of the Director-General to cover such a wide range of issues so well and so thoughtfully. Her contribution to drawing on best practices, both in promoting democracy in the “Arab Spring” and in education, was vital, as was the expanded emphasis on coordination of UNESCO’s work with that of other agencies. She looked forward to seeing the draft strategy on partnerships, and urged that it include provisions on transparency and consultation, particularly for projects in the field.

8.2 Such partnerships were becoming increasingly important in terms of value, and so, too, was the funding raised from extrabudgetary sources. She shared the concern raised by the representative of Spain about the management of projects funded in that way: not only must they be well-conceived, but greater emphasis should be placed on their proper management and completion.

9.1 **Mr Al Tarrah** (Kuwait) expressed appreciation for the Director-General’s efforts across the board. He was concerned to understand how UNESCO could best assist States just emerging from conflicts or natural disasters. Stronger ties were needed with the National Commissions and civil society, to do more to address the problems of psychological trauma in particular.

9.2 He thanked the Director-General and the Social Sciences Sector for their initiatives in support of the “Arab Spring”, which had raised the question of how to promote an active culture of democracy in the countries involved, to help them tackle the challenges that lay ahead. The culture of peace was more relevant than ever, especially in the Middle East. It required a better understanding of how to develop respect for national cultures.

10.1 **The Director-General** expressed her gratitude to speakers who had shown support for her priorities, especially with regard to the importance of working together with other agencies. Delivering as One meant just that – better coordination of the input from each one. The high-level segment of the ECOSOC AMR had provided an opportunity for well-attended debates on TVET and the employability of young people as well as literacy and gender equality, all of them areas in which UNESCO had a strong role. The work of the IOC was another in which UNESCO had unique expertise, in terms of recognition of the role of the oceans in climate change and sustainable development. Other areas in which the Organization planned to pursue its collaborative approach included greater cooperation in the provision of education to refugees, the subject of a Memorandum of Understanding signed in April with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

10.2 With regard to the comments by Spain, she supported the focus on science and technology in partnerships. She was cognizant of the fact that UNESCO lacked expertise in the management of project funds, though it had acquired experience in the course of managing the Spanish MDG Fund. She encouraged training in that area as part of field reform, and would consider setting up more Resident Coordinator posts so that projects could be managed by trained staff.

10.3 In reply to the representative of Senegal, the Director-General said that the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with Jamaica for the design of the Permanent Memorial was of great importance to UNESCO, and that, among other things, the initiative dovetailed with the Slave Route project. She was very happy with the progress made on that undertaking, which would bring more visibility to the Organization and mark the International Year for People of African Descent.

10.4 As she had stated earlier, the evaluation of Priority Africa was under way. In the view of the Director-General, the evaluation would give a better understanding of the action taken in that area. While savings were being sought on many levels, the Africa Department would, on the other hand, be strengthened, thus enabling it to benefit from greater extrabudgetary and local resources.

10.5 Replying to the question of Morocco about the fund-raising strategy for South-South cooperation, she explained that the first phase, now completed, had been to identify the projects.

The second phase, which was currently ongoing, was to present the selected projects in the field, and attract funds in order to implement them.

10.6 On higher education, she announced her intention to set up a special team with a specific plan of action to create synergy between the Education Sector, the Natural Sciences Sector and the Social and Human Sciences Sector. Higher education was, in practice, inextricably linked to the new technologies, innovation and science.

10.7 On the subject of the Culture of Peace, the Director-General said that the Organization was on the right track, and that she hoped the action plans drawn up in that area would be approved first by the Executive Board and then the General Conference. She added that UNESCO must make better use of its added value in the field of the Culture of Peace, which was deeply rooted in the Organization's mandate.

10.8 Turning to the question of help in post-conflict situations, she believed that, alongside the humanitarian agencies, UNESCO had a major role, not only in terms of combating the illicit trafficking in cultural property. It also had a comparative advantage in education, where it could bring its considerable experience to bear in providing psychosocial assistance and bridging the two phases of recovery, from humanitarian assistance to development. That had occurred both in Haiti and in Indonesia in 2005. The *2011 EFA Global Monitoring Report, The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education* had had a huge impact. In post-conflict situations where educational systems had been entirely destroyed, UNESCO's presence at the very outset was vital if its expertise was to be applied to the task of rebuilding the system differently and better, as had been done in Pakistan.

10.9 She acknowledged that it was unavoidable, on occasion, for meetings at Headquarters to overlap because of the dictates of governmental and diplomatic agendas, causing stresses that had to be managed. Circumstances in Bahrain had dictated the relocation of the meeting of the World Heritage Committee to Headquarters at a time when other meetings such as that of the ICO had already been scheduled there.

11. **Mr Tang** (Assistant Director-General for Education) addressed the question raised by the Republic of Korea about the EFA coordination system. Work was continuing on the development of coordination at the three different levels. Following the information meeting, a meeting of heads of agencies had been planned in Geneva during the current week, but because of the unavailability of other participants it had been deferred to September, during the Director-General's visit to New York. He undertook to report back to Members after the consultation with the partner agencies.

12.1 **Mr El-Zahaby** (Egypt) added his thanks to the Director-General for her well-directed answers, and for her visit to Egypt on 13 June to set up cooperation projects. He stressed that other African countries, too, were in need of stronger cooperation, especially South Sudan, which had recently come into existence.

12.2 Where management was concerned, he deplored the current practice of the Secretariat in making direct contact with countries without going through their Delegations. He also pointed out that Member States often learned at the last minute that information meetings were being held, and were unable to attend, as their schedules were fixed several weeks in advance. He commended the Director-General for her efforts to make savings, but expressed surprised that the management of internal disputes took up 12% of the budget, which seemed high.

12.3 Lastly, he stated that reducing the debate with the NGOs from two days to one, at a time of calls for increased cooperation with NGOs and civil society, was damaging to UNESCO's image. He added that, as Chair of the NGO Committee, he had received some ten letters from NGOs complaining about that decision.

13. **Mr Shafi** (Bangladesh) said that he had learned a great deal from the lucid presentation and answers given by the Director-General, but four questions remained. When and how would UNESCO implement the reforms to the administrative hierarchy recommended by the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) team? How was it envisaged to raise extrabudgetary funds for the Information for All Programme (IFAP)? What steps were being taken to follow up and evaluate the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures? Finally, what measures were in place to enhance the visibility of UNESCO's work in the Natural Sciences at global, regional and country levels?

14.1 **Mr Attar** (Algeria) was grateful to the Director-General for her availability and her interactive relations with Member States through the information meetings, which allowed her to share her vision and the results of her actions. Turning to the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, he asked what steps would be taken to secure the adherence of the remaining countries that were not yet parties, to make the instrument universal in its coverage. He echoed the Director-General's words, that the core challenge for the Convention was the conservation of the sites inscribed and not the inscription of new ones, which was not an end in itself.

14.2 He congratulated SHS for its excellent work on *Arabo-Muslim Civilization in the Mirror of the Universal: philosophical perspectives*. That work, which had not received enough media coverage, had been financed by Spain, whose commitment to the Alliance of Civilizations he commended. On the subject of reconstruction of States such as Haiti, he was pleased with the Organization's responsiveness and recalled an anecdote to illustrate that it was as important to provide books as it was food.

15. **Ms Haddad** (Grenada) thanked the Director-General for the information she had provided. She welcomed the fact that UNESCO was actively participating in the preparations for the Rio+20 summit, and especially commended its work in the areas of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), climate change and the oceans. One of the Organization's specific mandates was ethics: was UNESCO planning to include the ethical dimension of sustainable development in its contribution to the Rio+20 summit?

16.1 **Mr Kizabi** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) thanked the Director-General for the high quality of the information given in reply to the 41 questions. He encouraged her to pursue her efforts to promote UNESCO's visibility, especially within the United Nations system. He requested information about the deterioration in relations between the International Staff Association of UNESCO (ISAU) and the Administration, and asked whether the crisis had indeed been resolved before the Executive Board's session in May 2011, as announced.

16.2 He supported the comment by Egypt about contacts between the Secretariat and the countries, stating that it was often the case that Permanent Delegations were not informed about visits to their countries by members of the Secretariat. The problem was not new, but the instructions given in order to solve it did not appear to have changed anything.

17.1 **Mr Andreasen** (Denmark) thanked the Director-General for her comprehensive answers. Following the Independent External Evaluation, he looked forward to seeing revisions to the consultation process that would increase focus and prioritization in the next Medium-Term Strategy and budget.

17.2 He recognized the importance for UNESCO of strengthening contacts with parliamentarians from Member States, but agreed with the Director-General's decision not to hold a Parliamentary Forum on the eve of the forthcoming General Conference, as there was insufficient time to allow for proper preparation.

17.3 With reference to the question of Morocco about the drawing up of a consolidated plan of action for a culture of peace and non-violence, he suggested that the Secretariat provide a better

definition of certain expressions such as “cultural diversity”, “cultural dialogue” and, most of all, “culture of peace”, without which it was not possible to move forward.

18.1 **Mr Adoua** (Congo) thanked the Director-General for her clear and reassuring answers, particularly the announcement that the Africa Department was to be strengthened, which he firmly supported. He recalled the plan by African countries at the previous session of the Board for a version for teaching purposes of the *General History of Africa*, and welcomed the Director-General's decision to lift the suspension of the Libyan funding. The Africa Group, which was to meet on 12 July, would be sure to thank her. He said that, in his view, new sources of self-financing must be found to bring that project to fruition, and suggested that it might be included in the C/5.

18.2 On the evaluation of Priority Africa, he wanted to wait for the results to understand the real impact of the programme and where it was heading, given that there was no shortage of priorities in the region. He thanked the Director-General once again for having given preference to Africa and the Arab States in the reform process.

19.1 **The Director-General** said that her recent visit to Egypt, where she had been most warmly welcomed, had been very fruitful and marked the start of a renewed cooperation with that country. The exchanges of ideas had been highly rewarding, and provided a better understanding of the issues. The Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences had travelled to Egypt the following weekend to follow up. The Director-General herself, together with the Assistant Director-General for Education, had had the opportunity, while in Geneva for the ECOSOC AMR, to discuss literacy, TVET and teachers with the Egyptian Minister of Education.

19.2 She was gratified that the subject of the Republic of South Sudan had been raised. The Deputy Director-General was in Juba to attend the Independence Day celebrations of the world's newest state. A mission had visited the country two weeks previously, to assess what contribution UNESCO could make. It was clear that there was a huge role to be played, given the scale of the country's needs, especially in terms of literacy (there were reported to be only 400 literate women in the entire country).

19.3 The Director-General explained that it was part of her leadership policy to hold frequent information meetings, as she attached great importance to transparency. Such meetings also provided her with feedback. When emergencies arose, as had been the case with the meeting on Tunisia and Egypt, she needed to consult with Members before moving forward. She hoped that the Permanent Delegations would find the resources to enable them to attend such meetings, admittedly sometimes at short notice.

19.4 She did not have statistics to hand on the amount, cost, or trends in recourse to mediation within the Organization over the years, but promised to provide them. She saw the issue as related to the question concerning ISAU. She respected the right of staff members to organize into unions to hold dialogue with the Administration; mobilization of the staff was necessary in order to carry out major reforms. However, she insisted that, in fairness to everyone, the applicable rules must be respected. UNESCO had two staff unions, and it was her duty to be fair to both. She had asked them both to work together to resolve their differences.

19.5 Instructions were being issued on a monthly basis that no in-country missions should be organized without previously informing that country's Permanent Delegation. The Director-General said that she had taken good note of the complaint that the practice was still current, though the institutional culture was now changing towards one of greater coordination. She was herself dissatisfied with the manner in which correspondence from Member States was handled, and was taking steps, together with the Senior Management Team, to improve the Secretariat's responsiveness, including by the introduction of software.

19.6 Responding to the question of Bangladesh on implementation of the IEE recommendations, the Director-General recalled that significant changes had already been made to the hierarchical structure with the introduction of the Programme Management Committee, Executive Management Committee and Corporate Services Committee. Everything was now reviewed by those committees, leading to better coordination. Working differently had already resulted in better team spirit and more effective programme delivery.

19.7 The Director-General undertook to provide specific data on the raising of extrabudgetary resources for IFAP.

19.8 Turning to the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, she reported that an assessment of the Year was being prepared, to be submitted to the General Conference. More than 1,000 events had been held worldwide, making the Year an extremely rewarding experience. She thanked all those partners who had contributed, in particular the Government of Kazakhstan for its wonderful initiative and continued support.

19.9 Enhancing the natural sciences at national level was a challenge for UNESCO, which needed to use its added value in reaching out to the scientific community to see how the sciences could be harnessed for development. The topic of water resources, for example, was clearly linked to issues of development and human capacity. The main challenge facing the High Panel she was convening on Science and Development was to ensure that its work was not merely theoretical, but that those links were established.

19.10 Intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity were related notions that were difficult to define distinctly, especially now that they were being debated in a variety of venues. The first UNESCO World Report: *Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*, in 2009, had examined what the term meant, and what were the relevant indicators in an increasingly diverse world. The High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures had held its second meeting in March in New York, largely thanks to support from Saudi Arabia. She had also signed an MOU with the World Bank on 1 July 2011 on cooperation on culture and sustainable development. The process of reflection must continue, including input from philosophers and intellectuals. The challenge was to identify positive unifying values based on commonality, reconciliation and humanism that could be deployed in the fight against extremism.

19.11 While sharing Denmark's concerns that the holding of a Parliamentary Forum might be premature, she urged Members once again to include parliamentarians in their delegations to the General Conference, for the benefit of all concerned.

19.12 The answer to Grenada's question was "Yes": ethics was a consideration present in all the topics to be discussed at Rio+20. She recognized the particular importance to the small island developing States (SIDS) of promoting an understanding of the ethical dimension of environmental issues. UNESCO would share its experience in order to bring that about.

20. **The Chair** reported, with reference to Egypt's question, that the preliminary agenda for the next meeting of the Executive Board had been drawn up to take account of the wish expressed at the previous meeting to keep it as short as possible and reduce the number of side events, hence the proposal to allocate one day for the NGO Committee. She invited the views of Members so that a second day could be added if it was felt that there should be a thematic debate.

21.1 **Ms Lacœuilhe** (Saint Lucia) supported the proposal not to have a thematic debate at the Executive Board, in the light of the circumstances the Chair had explained, or at the NGO Committee. Thematic debates had limited impact, in her view, and the decision not to hold one on that occasion should not cause Members to lose sleep.

21.2 She expressed relief that the Director-General shared the concerns of many Members about the credibility of the World Heritage Convention, and in particular the 2003 Convention for

the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The persons who evaluated nominations for the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity were the same as those deciding on inscriptions in that List. Also, as a matter of substance, she did not wish to see the door opened to turning the Representative List into a mere list of recipes.

22.1 **Ms Bourdas-Magail** (Monaco) extended warm thanks to the Director-General for her efforts towards coordination with other agencies. Like her colleagues, she wished to see improved monitoring of projects implemented using extrabudgetary contributions. She regretted that so little information had been provided about the field offices, which were doing outstanding work.

22.2 With regard to the Culture of Peace, she was expecting the concepts to be given practical application through the targeted partners and by means of educational programmes. In her view, the scientific expertise within the IOC must be developed together with other agencies, as part of an effective cross-cutting approach to combating climate change on the eve of Rio+20, a major meeting at which the ethical dimension must be taken into consideration.

22.3 She had noted the determination to create synergy and plans of action, and wished to be kept informed of future partnerships. She also asked what actions were planned to raise awareness about the protection of the common heritage of mankind, and the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural property. Finally, she reaffirmed the importance Monaco attached to the Goodwill Ambassadors Programme, and asked what strategy was envisaged for that programme.

23.1 **Mr De Canson** (France) also commended the Director-General for the importance she attached to information meetings, as well as her mastery of the issues. On the life of the Organization, he thought there should not be a UNESCO World Forum of Parliamentarians during the next session of the General Conference, and supported the Director-General's decision. In his view, the large number of information meetings was a positive development. He endorsed the reduction of the length of the meeting of the NGO Committee to one day, as that would enrich the quality of its work.

23.2 On regional strategies, he expressed support for the Director-General's actions for the benefit of Africa, in particular by strengthening the Secretariat, and of the Arab States. Turning to the main issues on the international agenda, he expressed approval for the setting up of innovative forms of financing for development, particularly education. He shared the concerns expressed by the Director-General about the credibility of the various Conventions on culture, and recommended that the next C/5 should provide them with improved resources. The Culture of Peace was moving in the right direction, and he thanked the authors of the document recently distributed on that subject.

23.3 He asked how UNESCO planned to mobilize the scientific community at the Rio+20 Conference in favour of sustainable development, and what preparations the Organization was making for the World Water Forum, which would take place before that conference.

24.1 **Mr Jayatileka** (Sri Lanka) commended the Director-General for her sustained commitment to information meetings. However, participation in the meetings was sometimes made very difficult because of insufficient lead time. One fascinating recent event, the 9th Euro-China Forum on the theme of "New Humanism in a Globalizing World", had been held on a Monday but announced by email only the previous Thursday.

24.2 His own country, still in a complex, open-ended transition phase of post-conflict peace-building, was one where UNESCO's values were of cardinal importance in determining the post-war order. Sri Lanka had extended an invitation to the Director-General to visit the country, which she had accepted in principle, and he looked forward to making concrete plans. Her message, and UNESCO's benign intervention in the form of ideas, would be very much welcomed.

The morning meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

Afternoon meeting

25.1 **Mr El-Zahaby** (Egypt), clarifying his statement at the morning meeting, said that he was glad to have more information meetings, but that problems arose when notice of those meetings was given only at the last minute. On the subject of the Appeals Board, he did not in any way dispute the rights of staff members, but was looking for ways of making savings.

25.2 Returning to the question of NGOs, he referred to Article 11 of the Constitution, which emphasized the importance for UNESCO of cooperating with civil society. Such cooperation not only provided the benefit of advice, but also served to boost the achievement of the goals of the Organization on a practical level. Where the NGO Committee was concerned, he noted the improvement in its work, pointing out that the Committee participated in the choice of themes, suggested speakers, took part in the debates and provided the only forum for cooperation between the Secretariat, the NGOs and Member States. That Committee's importance was also reflected in the recommendations of the Independent External Evaluation. To cancel its debate, along with the thematic debate and the World Forum of Parliamentarians, was a mistake and tarnished the image of UNESCO. In conclusion, he commended the secretariat of the Committee, which produced outstanding work with a minimum of resources.

26. **The Chair** replied that she understood the importance of the work of the NGO Committee, and did not doubt the effectiveness of its methods or the fact that the NGOs were satisfied with its actions. The question was whether it was necessary for that work to be done during the session of the Executive Board or the General Conference. She was, she added, convinced that UNESCO should strengthen its relations with the NGOs. The question remained open, and could be the subject of consultations.

27. **Mr Andreasen** (Denmark) shared Egypt's idea that the partnership between UNESCO and the NGOs was becoming increasingly important, especially in the context of globalization. Referring to a question from Burkina Faso: "How does the Organization intend to channel the action of NGOs in the field so as to better direct them towards UNESCO's priority objectives?", he said that the practical aspects must come first. Like Saint Lucia, he thought the meeting with the NGOs could be kept short if the Committee focused its work on the practical aspects of the relations between UNESCO and the NGOs.

28. **The Chair** repeated that the NGO thematic round tables were important, but indicated that, from the standpoint of the General Conference, what mattered was knowing how to properly target the use of resources. That was the reason behind the proposal that the meeting should last one day only.

29. **Ms Pavljuta-Deslandes** (Latvia) thanked the Director-General for having given an exhaustive reply to her question, and for her command of the subjects raised. With regard to the discussion about the NGO Committee, she recalled that her country set great store by dialogue with those organizations, and she hoped the work would be effective, and conducted in a spirit of transparency and openness. She supported the proposal to concentrate the Committee's work into one day so as to facilitate preparations for the General Conference session.

30. **Ms Chainaye** (Belgium) thanked the Director-General for the time she was devoting to Member States. She endorsed the decisions taken not to hold a thematic debate, and to concentrate the work of the NGO Committee into one day in the context of the General Conference. She was pleased at the growth in partnerships with the private sector, and asked about progress in developing a partnership strategy, and whether a report or draft strategy would be submitted to the next session of the Executive Board.

31. **The Director-General** replied to Belgium that a private partnership strategy was indeed being drawn up, and would be presented to the Board at its next session.

32. **Ms Brito** (Director, Division of Science Policy and Sustainable Development), responding to the question from France in the absence of the Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, reported that UNESCO shared the leadership of the political process of the World Water Forum, with the Director of the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education serving as co-Chair. UNESCO would be hosting meetings of the Forum in December 2011 and February 2012. It had particular responsibility for the sessions on international waters, water governance and conflict resolution.

33. **The Director-General** said that she saw broad support within the Board for deferring the Parliamentary Forum. Instead, she suggested the possibility of arranging a meeting of those parliamentarians attending the General Conference as part of their countries' delegations. Turning to the NGO Committee, she said it had become very dynamic under Ambassador Lakatos, and still was, but relations with NGOs were not limited to any single meeting, be it one-day or two-day. She attached great importance to partnering with the Organization's expanding family of NGOs and civil society in various fields. Those NGOs with consultative status were regularly invited to other meetings. UNESCO was working with NGOs every day at the country level.

34. **The Chair** asked the Vice-Chairs of the Executive Board to consult their groups about whether to hold a thematic debate on a second day of the meeting of the NGO Committee. Before making the final decision, it would be useful to have an understanding of the majority feeling in the Board and among the electoral groups. She then invited non-Members to take the floor, with speaking time limited to two minutes.

35.1 **Ms Suebsith** (Thailand) asked when written information would be available about the forthcoming meeting at UNESCO Headquarters with Presidents of universities, focusing on Africa and China. Thailand had itself been working for the past two years to promote links between Asia and Africa, and she wished to commend the efforts of both China and the Education Sector in organizing such activities at UNESCO. Echoing the concern expressed earlier by the Republic of Korea about progress on EFA coordination, she warned that adjustments might be necessary to the composition of the High-Level Group on EFA, which would delay the process.

35.2 **Ms Suebsith** extended an invitation to Members to visit the charity bazaar her country had organized in support of the children of Haiti on the following day, 8 July.

36. **Ms Jean** (Haiti) took the floor to express her country's gratitude to Thailand for holding that event.

37.1 **The Director-General** first congratulated Thailand on the designation of Bangkok as World Book Capital 2013, which opened up wonderful opportunities for UNESCO to work with the country in the vital field of culture and development. The meeting with university presidents was an initiative of China she wholeheartedly welcomed, as she encouraged bilateral links among UNESCO's stakeholders. The outcome of the meeting would be shared with Members.

37.2 On EFA coordination, she explained that the ECOSOC AMR on Education had been based directly on the achievements of the meeting of the High-Level Group in Jomtien in March 2011. Five regional meetings had been held in preparation for the AMR. Steady progress was being made, both bilaterally and multilaterally. The EFA coordination meeting planned for Geneva had not gone ahead for practical reasons, but discussions had, nonetheless, taken place with a number of the agencies present. The work was moving forward and would not be delayed until September.

38. **Mr Ávila Belloso** (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)) noted, in connection with the programme of action for the Intersectoral Platform for the Promotion of a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence, that the Organization must find concrete solutions in this area and wondered what could be done to resolve two persistent problems, namely the assassination of journalists throughout the world and the violence seen in those States involved in the "Arab Spring". Lastly, he asked what plans the Organization had to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Memory of the World Programme in 2012.

39. **Ms Banasziewicz** (Poland) expressed concern that the number of ratifications of the 1989 Convention on Technical and Vocational Education remained very low, despite the importance of the topic. She was aware that a document existed outlining the possible reasons, and asked if it could be circulated before the next meeting of the Board. Like Senegal and Venezuela, her country, too, wished to highlight the importance of the Memory of the World Programme.

40. **Mr Grexa** (Slovakia) warmly thanked the Director-General for her answers to all the questions. Turning to Latvia's question on the consultation process for the C/4 and C/5, he endorsed the determination to optimize the regional consultations while keeping costs down, but wanted to know what decisions had been taken in that regard so as to be able to take practical steps, as part of the next consultation for the Europe and North America region was due to take place in his country the following year.

41.1 **The Director-General** confirmed that those consultations would be held, as they were important for the preparation of the C/4 and C/5 documents. The challenge, however, in the light of the findings of the IEE, was to reduce the costs to the regular budget. She hoped it would be possible to attract extrabudgetary contributions to enable more National Commissions to participate. The Secretariat, too, would endeavour to streamline its participation.

41.2 On the Culture of Peace, the latest document submitted by UNESCO for consultation was much better structured and more field-oriented. As for the security of journalists, she observed that the majority of journalists killed were not battlefield casualties but local journalists assassinated in the course of their work in uncovering corruption and crime. Even worse was the impunity with which such assassinations were carried out. UNESCO's advocacy was targeted at the national level in order to end that impunity, and she had noted a gratifying upturn in political will among governments, notably from her recent talks with President Aquino of the Philippines. Those issues would be discussed at a United Nations inter-agency meeting on the safety of journalists, to be held at UNESCO in September.

41.3 The Director-General agreed that the Memory of the World Programme deserved greater visibility and prominence, and that more work was needed to strengthen it. Very many countries attached enormous importance to documenting the history of humanity and also of their particular communities, as she knew from her recent visit to Uppsala University in Sweden for the inscription of the *Codex Argenteus*, the "Silver Bible", in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register.

42. **Mr Tang** (Assistant Director-General for Education) responded to Poland's question on TVET. There were currently two normative instruments in that field: the 1989 Convention and the Recommendation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training, adopted in 1974 and revised by UNESCO in 2000. The problem was that, 20 years after its adoption, only some 20 Member States had ratified the Convention. The General Conference had requested the setting up of an independent expert evaluation team to explore options and analyze the reasons for the low level of ratification. Its report, to be submitted to the next session of the Executive Board, would propose options including the further revision of the Recommendation.

43.1 **The Chair** proposed that, since the list of speakers for the first part of the meeting was closed, the Board should proceed to take up any general issues that remained on the subject of the organization of the General Conference.

43.2 She drew attention to the letter she had sent the previous day to the Vice-Chairs concerning possible cuts of a minimum of US\$ 1 million in the financing of the Executive Board, as part of the new budget proposals. She asked the Vice-Chairs to consult with their regional groups and capitals on what kind of variations would be acceptable. The matter would be discussed further at the end of the month or in early September.

44. **Mr Andreasen** (Denmark) agreed with the Director-General's proposal to concentrate on one overarching theme for the Ministerial Policy Forum at the General Conference, her summing up of the lessons learned, and also her statement that the general policy debate should provide the direction for the next C/4 and C/5. As to the formulation of the theme, his group agreed with the intention of the Director-General's proposal, but felt the theme should be presented as an action-oriented question, slightly reworked to read as follows: "How should UNESCO, within a broad partnership, respond to the challenge of sustainable development within its mandate, Education, Science, Culture and Communication?"

45.1 **Ms Lacœuilhe** (Saint Lucia) said that she had thought the three topics proposed earlier for the thematic debate excellent, because they were focused. The theme now put forward was very broad and vague, and encompassed practically everything. It might be a way of pleasing everyone, but would lead in no particular direction. Denmark's proposal was an improvement, but she urged still greater focus.

45.2 While not yet having seen the Chair's letter to the Vice-Chairs, she observed that the budgets of both the General Conference and the Executive Board had been cut on a regular basis for the past ten years. The point would be reached at which it was no longer possible to function at the desired level of quality. Her country would be very reluctant to countenance further cuts.

46. **The Chair** replied that, while financing had been difficult for the past two biennia, it was still possible to make budget cuts, though to do so would require countries to show real political will. She invited Member States to examine her proposal so that a decision could be taken at a later date.

47. **Ms Sardiñas** (Cuba) thanked the Director-General for her answers to all the questions, in particular that of Cuba. While she saw no objection to the proposed theme for the Plenary Ministerial Forum and the Youth Forum, which seemed sufficiently general, she would have preferred Member States to be consulted to ensure real convergence of views on the theme. She went on to ask if the Heads of State and Government who spoke at the Plenary Ministerial Forum would be chosen by the Director-General, or whether they were to be selected on the basis of proposals by Member States.

48. **Mr De Canson** (France) thought it would be better to have only one theme for the Plenary Ministerial Forum and expressed a preference for the one proposed in the morning by the Director-General, as it was short and generic. However, he suggested the addition of some more specific indications of subjects to be discussed.

49. **Mr Seghrouchni** (Morocco) said that the Ministerial Forum was important, and that lessons should be learned from previous debates. For him, it was not so much the theme that mattered as the way the debate was conducted: speeches should be avoided, and interactive exchanges between ministers encouraged. Finally, it was important to implement and follow up the recommendations generated by such round tables, which could be included in the programme of the Organization.

50. **The Secretary** recalled, first, that Member States were responsible for their own delegations, and could, theoretically, choose whom to send to General Conference sessions. In practice, however, in common with other United Nations organizations, the choice of speakers was made by the Director-General, bearing in mind requests made in the course of her contacts with high national authorities. A number of criteria came into play, including geographical and gender balance.

51. **Mr Ávila Belloso** (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)) thought the theme was very interesting, and took the view that the Plenary Ministerial Forum was important as it offered ministers an opportunity to put forward their ideas on sustainable development and the reform process UNESCO had undertaken. He considered it preferable to invite one Head of Government

per region, making six ministers instead of four or five. That way, all the regions and all worldviews would be represented. He, too, insisted that the debate should be interactive, though he feared that the time allocated was too short.

52.1 **The Chair** thanked the Director-General and the Secretariat for their good work in preparing the replies to the questions, and said that meeting had been especially productive. She was pleased that there had been an exchange of views on the Plenary Ministerial Forum and said that, as representative of the Russian Federation, she favoured a general formulation of the theme, with a list to be sent out by the Secretariat of all the topics that might be covered as part of the Forum. She renewed her invitation to Member States to reflect and consult on the issue of whether to hold a two-day meeting of the NGO Committee. Quite clearly, the NGOs would not be happy if there were no thematic debate.

52.2 She requested the Vice-Chairs to forward to their groups the letter she had sent them containing proposals for cost reductions, so that they could review them in their capitals before the next session of the Executive Board.

53. **Ms Chainaye** (Belgium) remarked that, since no choice had been made of a theme for the Plenary Ministerial Forum, a decision should be taken before the meeting closed on how and when Member States would be informed of the theme, to enable them to mobilize their governments.

54. **The Secretary** explained that the letter informing Members of arrangements for the Plenary Ministerial Forum was ready, and would be sent out as soon as he had received final instructions concerning the title of the theme.

55. **The Director-General** said that the idea underlying the theme now proposed had been that sustainable development was a topic spanning all the different Sectors, and the Millennium Development Goals provided the obvious context. There was no question of a formula being imposed on Members if they did not agree. However, it was not clear from the present meeting where the majority view lay, and the different ideas expressed were difficult to reconcile. She suggested that the Assistant Director-General for Strategic Planning hold fresh consultations the following week as time was running short, and urged Members to attend them despite the short notice.

56. **The Chair** wished Members a pleasant and restful summer in readiness for the intense autumn of work ahead, and declared the meeting closed.

The meeting ended at 4.15 p.m.