



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
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**Address by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO,  
on the occasion of his meeting with the staff UNESCO**

**12 December 2006**

Dear Colleagues,

Thirteen months ago, almost to the day, I addressed you on a very special occasion: it was the first day of my second term of office as Director-General of this Organization.

At that symbolic juncture, I expressed to you my gratitude for permitting me, thanks to your devotion and the high quality of your work, to address the challenging tasks of the last few years.

A year has passed and the messages that I have received from you, at Headquarters and in the field, attest to your continuing commitment and determination to serve UNESCO and fulfil our mission in the best possible way. I am particularly proud to note that we share the same values and ideals and that we are each resolved, in our individual capacities, to rise to the ever-growing challenges ahead. Our fields of competence are as relevant as ever and the expectations that we raise have not diminished – I would even be tempted to say that the reverse is true.

I should like to extend greetings to our colleagues in the field who are following this meeting by means of the Internet. When I travel to the different parts of the world, I always take the opportunity to meet them. On each occasion, I take the measure of their devotion to the ideals of the Organization, ensuring that its influence and presence are felt in every country. I know too that their experience and their knowledge of the real needs of the local communities and economic and social factors contribute to the preparation of our programmes. They accomplish their mission conscientiously, in sometimes difficult conditions. I am therefore sure that you will join me in paying special tribute to them here and now.

Today, as you can see, I am surrounded by my senior management team. Some faces will be familiar to you, others less so, so I will now ask the Assistant Directors-General and Directors to introduce themselves briefly.

Some of them are absent: Ms Françoise Rivière, the new Assistant Director-General for Culture, is in Cambodia, where she is attending the meeting of the International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor (ICC), Mr Noureini Tidjani-Serpos, Assistant Director-General of the Africa Department, and Mr John Parsons, Director of the Internal Oversight Service, are also on mission, but I think you already know them well.

Dear Colleagues,

First and foremost, I should like to tell you once more how proud and happy I am to be at the head of UNESCO for the seventh consecutive year.

Whether at Headquarters or in the many countries that I have visited worldwide, I have always been able to gauge the respect in which the Organization, and thus your work, is held and the great expectations that we raise.

I visit more than 50 countries every year – this year I have visited exactly 70. These regular and direct contacts with governments and civil society are essential in creating conditions conducive to an ongoing and fruitful dialogue.

They also give me the opportunity to assess, on the ground, the impact of our work, the progress achieved by our projects and the extent to which they meet people's real needs.

On each visit, I am deeply satisfied to see how much UNESCO is appreciated and trusted. I should like to make you aware of these sentiments.

I value and measure at its genuine worth the quality of our work. I am aware of the efforts that you make, each at your own level, and of the often difficult conditions in which you work.

You should know that I am not alone in this knowledge and I should like you to remember it on those days when everyday work seems monotonous and one loses sight of the objectives pursued and of the results obtained.

Whether in the field of education, science, social sciences, culture or communication, our achievements are indeed very substantial.

We have mobilized partners in ever-growing numbers. By making accurate data available to them, we have helped Member States to improve their assessments of progress in various fields as well as the efforts they still need to make. We have enabled some countries to build new capacities, acquire new expertise, share knowledge and nurture new forms of cooperation.

I know that every international meeting, every publication, every project successfully completed has spurred you into intensive action. I am thinking, of course, of the programme sector Professionals at Headquarters and in the field who are the main actors in these achievements, as well as the support staff, the General Service staff in the sectors and all the staff in the central services who must also feel proud of these successes, which are the outcome of team work.

I should like to thank you for all of this. You should know, and I will say it again, that your efforts have not been in vain.

I have received many messages from you on various matters. Some of them are general in nature, and I shall try to answer them today. I have also received some specific questions, in particular some interesting proposals on our working environment, which I should like my colleagues to examine without delay in greater depth and on which I shall not comment today.

The general messages can be divided into two main groups. The first consists of questions linked to the impact of the United Nations reform on the Organization, in particular our decentralization arrangements, and to the preparation of the

Medium-Term Strategy and the next programme and budget. This will therefore be the subject of the first part of my address, after which I propose to exchange views with you on these matters.

The second, and far larger, set of messages concerns staff and administration issues. I shall therefore address in the second part questions more specifically linked to the Organization's staff policies and management, insofar as they concern aspects of general interest. There too, I should like to enter into a dialogue with you and I will be open to any additional questions.

*(The Director-General continues in English)*

Dear Colleagues,

Many among you have raised questions about the current process of United Nations reform, and its implications for UNESCO. Let me state at the outset that this process certainly poses a challenge for our Organization. We will all need to make adjustments if we are to prosper in the new environment. Yet I also believe that United Nations reform constitutes an opportunity for UNESCO. With our intellectual mandate and knowledge-based competencies, I am confident that our Organization will play an increasingly important role within the reforming United Nations system.

The current process of United Nations reform has been ongoing for several years, and still has far to go. It was initiated by the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in response to the serious doubts expressed about the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system, in particular in light of the criticism of the Oil-for-Food Programme. Last September's World Summit gave further impetus to the drive for United Nations reform. Heads of State both reaffirmed the importance of the United Nations multilateralist mission, and pledged their commitment to strengthening the system so that it could respond more effectively to present-day needs, especially those of developing countries.

Initially, the reform process focused primarily on United Nations action in the areas of security and human rights. Reform of the Security Council is still under discussion, but the past year has seen the successful establishment of a new Peace-building Commission and the replacement of the Commission on Human Rights with a new Human Rights Council.

Following the 2005 World Summit, however, focus has shifted more to the issue of system-wide coherence. There continues to be considerable fragmentation, duplication and even conflict within the United Nations. In some developing countries there are over 20 agencies at work, and in many at least 10. This places a heavy burden on countries that are already under-resourced. It also undermines the very real benefits that the United Nations family can bring when it works together in a coherent manner.

In an effort to address this problem, the United Nations Secretary-General established in February of this year a High-Level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence. The Panel was charged with developing proposals on how to strengthen the coherence and effectiveness of United Nations action in three key areas: development, humanitarian assistance and the environment. UNESCO has a direct stake in the areas of development and the environment.

Following ten months of extensive consultation, the Panel published its recommendations last month. The final report, entitled "Delivering as One",

provides very detailed recommendations for the area of development. Several issues regarding the environment, however, remain unresolved. Given UNESCO's active engagement in this field, we must make sure that we are fully involved in future discussions.

I wish to highlight that UNESCO engaged closely with the Panel as it formulated its recommendations, especially in discussions on development. I myself spoke directly with Panel members on certain key issues, and UNESCO senior staff participated actively in the consultations arranged by the Panel. Many Member States also supported us in conveying our views.

In the process I set up a special Working Group on United Nations reform, led by the Director of ODG, Liz Longworth. With input from the Working Group, I produced two papers to clarify UNESCO's strategic position. This position was developed in close dialogue with other specialized agencies.

Through this proactive engagement, UNESCO was able to influence the Panel's thinking in certain core areas, and in particular with regard to the importance of maintaining a close linkage between normative work and operational activities. This has emerged as a major recommendation of the final report.

Dear Colleagues,

The High-Level Panel's report delivers a strong statement on the indispensable role of the United Nations system in driving forward human development. This is something that we must bear in mind when we approach its recommendations. They provide the basis for a reinvigorated United Nations within which all agencies – UNESCO included – can play to their full advantage.

It is towards this end that the report proposes the establishment of what it calls "One UN" at country level. In so far as this concept expresses the need for more coherent and unified action, it is something that UNESCO both welcomes and endorses. As I have said, the current situation of fragmentation and overlap is unacceptable. However, I also believe that in putting "One UN" into practice, we will need to be flexible. UNESCO, for its part, must be very strategic in its response.

It is therefore extremely important that the report's recommendations are understood and internalized by staff. United Nations reform cannot remain an issue solely for senior management. The Secretariat as a whole needs to work together to position the Organization within the "One UN" framework.

I therefore strongly encourage staff members to read the report and our two position papers, all of which are on the Intranet. I am also asking ADGs to create opportunities for staff to discuss the report's implications for different sectoral activities. A "60 minutes to convince" meeting will be held on 23 January to enable views to be exchanged across the House. The Working Group on United Nations reform, which met for the third time last week, is also drafting an action plan that will lay down the strategic framework for UNESCO's response to United Nations reform.

It is likewise important that we share this response with Member States. United Nations reform has been placed as an item for discussion at the April session of the Executive Board. Prior to this, in February, I will hold an information meeting for all Permanent Delegates.

A key consideration for UNESCO is ensuring that our sectoral expertise is fully taken into account within the new “One UN” framework at country level. UNESCO’s added value within the United Nations system lies in its five areas of sectoral competence. So far, we have been largely successful in mobilizing this specialized knowledge to perform our global and normative role. The challenge before us, is how to employ our sectoral expertise more effectively in the field.

Recognizing that UNESCO would need to strengthen its field presence, I introduced at the beginning of my first mandate a new policy of decentralization aimed at reinforcing – within the context of available resources – UNESCO’s country-level action. In its first phase, this policy focused on rationalizing the structure of our field network, and decentralizing more human resources and programme budget. The task now is to adapt our field capacity to the requirements of “One UN” country activities.

Our success here will in large part depend on the concrete modalities that are chosen to implement the “One UN” at country level. Seven pilot countries have been chosen to work out practical scenarios for realizing the five aspects of the “One UN” concept – that is: one leader, one team, one programme, one budget and, where appropriate, one office. The countries involved are Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

It is important that the models adopted through these pilots draw on the full range of sectoral knowledge and resources available across the United Nations system. This sectoral expertise not only represents UNESCO’s added value at country level. It constitutes the comparative advantage of the United Nations system as a whole. The High-Level Panel explicitly recognizes that the United Nations strength – in comparison with the Bretton Woods Institutions – lies in the accumulated expertise carried by its specialized agencies. This must be recognized as we work to clarify specific aspects of the “One UN” model – such as the Resident Coordinator system, the question of access to line ministries, and the issue of establishing an oversight mechanism for “One UN” actions.

Flexibility in structural terms is very important. However, the extent to which UNESCO’s sectoral expertise is included in “One UN” processes will also depend on our ability to advocate, to demonstrate our added value, and to engage proactively in United Nations country teams.

We have already earmarked 1% of our programming resources to enhance our input into country-level exercises, and next year we will be putting forward two candidates for the Resident Coordinator system. But it is clear that much more still needs to be done if UNESCO is to be an effective actor within “One UN” activities in the field.

In order to respond to these issues, I have decided to reactivate the Task Force on Decentralization. This is in advance of the scheduled date for reviewing our decentralization policy, which as you may remember was planned for the 2008-2009 biennium. The Task Force is led by the Deputy Director-General, Marcio Barbosa, and includes over 15 heads of field offices. It held the first of a new series of meetings last week, back to back with the third meeting of the Working Group on United Nations Reform.

The Task Force’s immediate role is to address how UNESCO can engage in the seven “One UN” country pilots. This piloting scheme will move forward quickly: by 2009 there will be 20 pilot countries; by 2010 there will be 40; and by 2012 all

countries should be covered. It is therefore very important that UNESCO is fully involved from the start.

The Task Force will also look at how to enhance UNESCO's participation in a selected number of the new Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (CCA/UNDAFs). Our work here will be central to UNESCO's integration in the roll-out of the "One UN" pilots.

A final issue to be addressed by the Task Force is the implications of the newly established Education Sector decentralization framework for UNESCO's overall decentralization policy. This framework aims to strengthen delivery in the field, to build a more results-oriented education programme, and to achieve greater internal coherence among UNESCO's Education Sector, institutes and field offices. In all these respects the framework is very well aligned with the recommendations of the High-Level Panel. It provides important input to our decentralization strategy, and may carry valuable lessons for the work of other sectors.

Dear Colleagues,

The implications of the United Nations reform will also need to be taken into account in documents 34 C/4 and 34 C/5. I know that drafting a C/4 and C/5 document constitutes a heavy task. However, it also provides us with a very important opportunity to define UNESCO's unique mission within the new multilateral context, and to lay down the strategies by which we will achieve it.

Instructions for the preparation of documents 34 C/4 and 34 C/5 have been given through two blue notes. They outline an intricate agenda and a very tight time frame. In order to be ready for the next Executive Board, final drafts of both documents will need to be submitted to CLD by 15 February 2007 at the latest. This means that the bulk of our work falls now, at the end of the year.

This already heavy workload has been further increased by the need to develop four budget scenarios for the new C/5 document. Initially, I had prepared three scenarios. These were submitted to the Executive Board in October, in the hope that a clear preference would be expressed for our preferred option of real growth. As you know, I advocated strongly before the Board that the only realistic budget for delivering on our core priorities was one of real growth – that is, US \$658.3 million.

However, the Board did not pronounce a clear opinion. Many delegations favoured the proposals for zero real growth (\$648.3 million) or real growth, showing particular support for the former. A few countries expressed their preference for adjusted zero nominal growth (that is \$610 million plus \$13.4 million for the repayment of the Belmont Plan loan). However, some countries, including the major donors, argued that they could not express their opinion until they had a clearer idea of the type of programme proposals that would be made in the draft 34 C/5 document. And the Board even added a fourth option: that of zero nominal growth (\$610 million).

In light of these discussions, I have decided to opt for zero real growth as the core scenario. While I have not abandoned the hope of achieving real growth, I believe that given the Board's response it would be unrealistic to maintain this as our core option. Indeed, we will need to work very hard to convince the Board that zero real growth is the very lowest basis upon which we can achieve our mission. We must leave no doubt in the Board's mind that yet another biennium

of zero nominal growth would necessitate drastic programme cuts and personnel cost cuts and seriously damage our ability to serve Member States. In fact, the High-Level Panel's report advises that it may now be time to review this long-term freeze on the budget of specialized agencies.

The responsibility therefore falls on all staff to make a persuasive case for zero real growth, as opposed to other much less favourable scenarios. The Board's decision calls on us to define with much greater focus and clarity where we have real value to add. We must continue our strategic planning with this objective in mind. We need to provide a clear and compelling definition of UNESCO's core competencies and comparative advantages.

The past has shown that such efforts can bring real reward. The reforms I introduced to the Organization at the beginning of my first mandate helped pave the way for the return of the United States, and thereby a budget of some real growth in document 32 C/5 – and a growth of \$66 million over the previous budget, that is a nominal growth of 12%. Had we not made these reforms, and brought the United States back into the Organization, then we would have continued to suffer for both the 32 C/5 and the 33 C/5 a budget of zero nominal growth – that is, of US \$544 million. This would have had a devastating impact on the structure of the Secretariat and on our work. We face a similar challenge now. To secure the budget we need, we must once again illustrate our readiness to adapt and reform.

Such efforts are of particular importance as we draft the new C/4 document. Document 34 C/4 will provide UNESCO's vision for the next six years. This vision will need to guide us through the process of United Nations reform, and also inspire and mobilize us during the vital phase for achieving international development goals, in particular the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the six goals of EFA. We must never lose sight of the fact that achieving sustainable development constitutes one of the overarching objectives of all UNESCO's activities.

In order to clarify our strategic focus, we will need to reflect critically on the work of each of our five sectors. As I have already mentioned, the recent Education Sector reform already places the Organization in a much stronger position to deliver in the priority area of EFA. Moreover, the development of the EFA Global Action Plan has helped to reaffirm UNESCO's international leadership in education, and provides a good example of how UNESCO is putting into action the call for United Nations agencies to work together in a more coherent manner.

In accordance with the resolution adopted by the 33rd session of the General Conference of UNESCO, a Review Committee has been established to elaborate a forward-looking framework for the sciences programmes. The Committee comprises external experts and senior UNESCO staff. At a time when the importance of science to development is increasingly recognized, and at a time, too, when the world's needs in this area are rapidly evolving, it is important that UNESCO engages in such a critical review.

The Committee's recommendations will be fully taken into account in preparing the new C/4 and C/5 documents. I may also need to examine the implications of these programmatic recommendations for the structure of the two sectors. At this juncture, however, I do not envisage that any profound change will be needed.

The Culture Sector also faces a time of challenge and opportunity. It has the immense task of assuring the integrated implementation of the seven normative

instruments, which together constitute a global framework for protecting and promoting the rich cultural diversity of humanity. This task is all the more pressing given that the 2003 Convention has now entered into force, and the 2005 Convention is likely to do so next spring.

However, the rapid ratification of these two Conventions also draws attention to the heightened importance that governments are now giving to culture in all areas of development. As the only United Nations agency with a mandate in culture, UNESCO looks set to be called on more and more by its Member States to provide policy advice, guidance and support.

The Sector for Communication and Information likewise has a major task before it, in assuring the follow-up to the two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society. CI will need to focus its work in providing effective coordination of the six – out of 11 – WSIS Action Lines for which UNESCO is the lead agency.

Document 34 C/4 must provide a strong and focused vision of our work in all these fields. And this vision will need to be reinforced with a set of clear and substantive programme activities in document 34 C/5.

I know that this constitutes a heavy task. However, our work is of great importance, and we must assume it together. Moreover, we should be confident that the efforts we make now will be rewarded in the long term. As I have said, we face a unique chance to reaffirm the abiding relevance of UNESCO's mission, and the value we bring to the United Nations system in all our fields of competence.

In recognition of your commitment to this task, and to your hard work throughout this past year, I have decided to award two days of additional leave. Given the importance of ensuring a continuity of service throughout the holiday period in order to meet the C/4 and C/5 deadlines, these extra two days can be taken on a flexible basis, any time between 20 December and 5 January. After a week-long visit to Yemen and the United Arab Emirates, I myself will return to the office on the 28th of December to work with staff throughout the New Year period on the C/4 and C/5 documents.

I am now open to receive your questions.

*[First round of questions and answers]*

*(The Director-General continues in French)*

Dear Colleagues,

I now come to the second part of my address. As I said earlier, many of you have sent me messages about the Organization's staff and administration. Some of them raised questions of a general nature while others were much more precise and specific. Today I shall deal with matters of general interest.

I should like to state, as I have done in previous addresses, that the staff of this Organization is one of its greatest assets and that nothing can be achieved without its dedication, competence, professionalism and sectoral expertise.

Now that the United Nations system reform requires mandates and the added value of its various components that are clearer and better coordinated, it is more



necessary than ever to demonstrate clearly and unambiguously the excellence of the contribution that we can make, and know how to make, in our various fields of competence. Investment in human resources is a key factor in our success.

One of the matters on which you have stated your expectations and called for improvement is the general question of career development: promotion, including end-of-career promotion, reclassification and mobility.

I do understand such expectations, particularly from those who have been making particularly sustained efforts in their work for a number of years. For my part, I consider that career development is the main pillar of any staff policy and it is therefore of central importance to me.

Some specific questions have also been raised about the career development of Young Professionals. I must say in this respect that once the Young Professionals join the Organization, they have the same career development opportunities as other staff members. Of course, the first few years are often devoted to training and their mobility within Headquarters and in the field can only enrich their experience. Every effort must be made to enable them, after a few years, to become autonomous and make progress in the Organization.

There are at present two means of promotion: reclassification and appointment at a higher grade. Against that background, I have established in the budget a reserve for reclassification that stands at \$1.5 million and is intended to cover, each new biennium, the costs of a number of reclassifications at Headquarters and in the field. Likewise, under the new recruitment policy, I have introduced the principle of internal advertisement prior to external advertisement for most posts, precisely to afford staff members better career opportunities.

For your information, since 1 January 2005, 12% of you, that is, 256 out of the Organization's 2,050 staff members, have been promoted to a higher grade. I consider this average percentage of 6% a year to be quite acceptable and consistent with the rate recorded at the United Nations. Of these promotions, 167 were granted to Headquarters staff and 89 to field staff. A total of 109 concerned General Service staff, of whom 12, that is more than 10%, were promoted to the Professional category.

Of course, some people consider that their performance warrants recognition and that the current system makes this impossible. I am thinking, in particular, of those who have reached the last step of their grade.

I can, however, only work within the post system that is in force throughout the system and I would remind you, provides for the maintenance of purchasing power at a constant level through cost-of-living adjustments, in addition to a system of increments granted annually when performance is deemed generally satisfactory. The overwhelming majority of you are granted such increments. I do understand the frustration of those who have reached the end of their grade, but I have no miracle solution to offer.

I would say that career development cannot really take the form of successive promotions for everybody. Horizontal mobility, which some of you have mentioned in your messages, in my view affords a good opportunity to broaden one's professional horizon and increase satisfaction derived from work. The new experience gained can indeed strengthen one's scope for promotion and I can only encourage it in the strongest possible terms.

Reclassification, you will remember, only applies when there has been a substantial change in the duties attached to a post, together with a significant increase in responsibility. It cannot be used as a means of personal promotion.

There is no doubt room for a mechanism in our system that would acknowledge merit without undermining the current post system. In this respect, it should be noted that very few agencies in the United Nations system practise merit-based promotion.

It is needed all the more now that we are required to harmonize all of our administrative and human resources procedures with those of the United Nations system and to establish common policies. It is important in this context for UNESCO to conform with system-wide practices, which should not prevent it from proposing innovative policies, where appropriate.

A promotion policy based on merit and results achieved is, in my opinion, an innovative proposal that UNESCO could put forward. This kind of promotion should however be granted on the sole ground of performance and not seniority, which does not in itself constitute a criterion of excellence.

Last year, when I addressed you, I undertook to introduce a system that would effectively require that criterion of excellence to be met. I am still determined to do so. The Bureau of Human Resources Management has been working on it and it has now been submitted to the Advisory Council on Personnel Policies for consideration. It is to be discussed by the College of Assistant Directors-General and should also be discussed in the broader context of the broadbanning proposals currently being examined by the International Civil Service Commission, which are designed, *inter alia*, to promote greater mobility within enlarged salary bands.

The purpose of merit-based promotion would be to strengthen the culture of result achievement, excellence and teamwork. It would necessarily be granted only to a very small number of people so that it retains its exceptional nature. It should also be granted on the basis of fair and transparent criteria.

As to end-of-career promotions, I have no plans to reintroduce them, as I still fail to see their validity in regard to the staff policies that I wish to promote. Indeed, they are not granted elsewhere in the United Nations system. Of course, merit-based promotion may perfectly well be granted to some people about to retire.

I believe that the key idea for each of us must be the pursuit of high-quality results. Moreover, a fair assessment of the performance of each staff member should enable everyone to know how his or her performance has been appraised and how it could be improved if necessary.

That is the purpose of the new performance assessment system that was introduced two years ago. An evaluation of the first implementation phase is under way and its findings will be discussed by the College of Assistant Directors-General in the near future. It is on the basis of such a system that we will be able to lay the objective foundations for merit-based promotion.

It should be noted that the performance agreements introduced for the senior management team (Assistant Directors-General, Directors at Headquarters and in the field) are now practically in place. They will enable an evaluation of results achieved. A pilot implementation scheme will be launched in 2007.

Training is also highly important to perfect and highlight the skills of staff in various fields which may also be conducive to career progression. I would remind you in this connection that \$6 million, amounting to 1% of the budget have been allocated for training.

The same applies to rotation, which was the subject of a number of your messages.

I have stressed on many occasions the usefulness of rotation in the career of every Professional staff member, who must imperatively have had practical experience of the situation in the field. I have also made rotation one of the parameters needed for career progression. I note, however, that other agencies have a far more directive policy than ours.

You will recall that a new rotation policy was launched in 2003, applicable to most Professionals at Headquarters and in the field. During 2005-2006, 70 staff members were transferred to new duty stations.

I consider however that the rotation system introduced is not fully satisfactory and will have to be revisited.

This is because some of you, young Professionals in particular, wish very much to be posted to the field but cannot find posts that match your aspirations and profile. Nor has it been possible to find Professionals willing to fill certain key posts that require experience and specialization. In short, we are experiencing great difficulty in reconciling supply and demand now that the quality of our presence in the field has become crucial for our credibility in the context of the United Nations system reform. I have therefore requested that the policy, in particular the arrangements for its implementation, be reviewed to ensure that the Organization has appropriate skills at its disposal where they are needed.

With regard to post-natural-disaster or post-conflict situations, a roster of some 25 Professionals who have expressed their willingness to be deployed at very short notice for brief periods has been drawn up by HRM. They have attended a training course specifically designed for such situations and are ready at any time to be deployed where the need arises. This is an excellent example of the culture of mobility which I would like to see developed in the Organization.

Your questions also concerned contracts, particularly in the field offices. In that connection, I would remind you that new contracts were introduced in 2002 for locally recruited staff in the field, and some 137 contracts were converted into Service Contracts in 2002-2003 with a view to harmonizing employment conditions for field staff. The vast majority of locally recruited staff now have social and medical cover and annual leave.

Likewise, an examination of all the contracts used in the Organization is currently under way so that they may be aligned with those used in the United Nations system, ultimately leading to three kinds of contract: temporary, fixed-term and indeterminate. The situation of many current contracts, in particular those of long-term supernumeraries, and the sometimes abusive employment of consultants, will be analysed in this context.

Another important development, which I wish to bring to your notice, is my intention to establish a Unit of Ethics in the Secretariat, along the lines of the initiative taken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, with a view to promoting ethical behaviour in the Organization. The Unit, placed under my

direct authority, will be responsible for promoting a code of conduct in the Secretariat, based on the Standards of Conduct approved by the International Civil Service Commission. The Standards will soon be distributed, in the form of a brochure, to all of the staff.

The Unit of Ethics will also be responsible for managing, under very precise procedures, a direct information line enabling staff members and other stakeholders to report behaviour that is considered inappropriate, protecting whistleblowers, administering a financial transparency programme for high-ranking staff and staff in sensitive positions (such as procurement), and developing ethical standards and training, in conjunction with the Bureau of Human Resources Management.

In this connection, I should like to invite you to ensure that we maintain within the Secretariat working relations based on the values of tolerance and respect that are central to our mandate and form part of our programme priorities. To be absolutely clear, I would like to see an end to certain rumours and destabilization campaigns that are wholly unworthy of us and seriously harmful not only to the individuals against whom they are aimed, but also to our image and even more so to our reputation. I am myself often the subject of such rumours, alleging in particular that I suffer from so-called serious health problems. Nevertheless, I can assure you that I am in excellent health, thanks no doubt to the regular practice of sport.

Similarly, I will not tolerate any discriminatory behaviour, in particular towards colleagues living with HIV/AIDS. In this respect, I should like to remind you that training is being provided for all colleagues so that they will be better informed about the illness and its consequences. I invite you all to attend the courses.

Dear Colleagues,

Other questions concerned accountability. As I announced last year, specific Tables of Delegated Authority and Accountability have now been introduced. Any concerns the staff may have regarding their proper application by supervisory staff should be brought to the attention of the Delegation and Accountability Committee chaired by the Deputy Director-General. Any proven failure to apply the Tables properly will be duly penalized.

I would like moreover to stress that the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) regularly monitors the implementation of recommendations resulting from audits at Headquarters and in the field. It should be noted that the rate of implementation of these recommendations, albeit not yet fully satisfactory, is higher in field offices than at Headquarters.

Our working environment was also addressed in several questions, notably savings on and the recycling of paper, savings on electricity, respect for the ban on smoking in offices, fair trade coffee in the cafeteria, use of tele-conferencing, and so on.

These are all excellent suggestions and quite justified in an organization which advocates ecology and responsible behaviour in terms of health and environment. Consequently, without addressing these matters in detail today, I should like to assure you that I shall personally ensure that these suggestions are studied attentively and implemented as far and as soon as possible.

Lastly, I should like to welcome the new developments concerning the application of the Headquarters Agreement with the French authorities, about which you have been informed by the Bureau of Human Resources Management. Henceforth, the spouses and children of international staff members of UNESCO shall be authorized to work in France and international staff shall be authorized to remain in France beyond the age of retirement. I am sure that the new arrangements will make the residency conditions easier for many of you. We must now continue our efforts to ensure that the same conditions apply at all duty stations, which will, I hope, facilitate rotation.

Dear Colleagues,

Before I give you the floor once more for a second round of questions and answers, I should like to quote an extract from one of the messages that I have received, for it does indeed reflect the spirit that many of you and myself share: "I ask you to act courageously and resolutely so that we leave to future generations an organization in which the values of competence, honesty and loyalty will be meaningful once more."

We must indeed demonstrate through our deeds that UNESCO can make a radical contribution to peace and development. In this context, we must be energetic, optimistic and determined and, despite some difficult moments for all, we must avoid being locked into the vicious circle of discouragement and pessimism, which can only lead to even worse scenarios.

I am convinced that we are on the right track and that, although the reforms initiated several years ago, which I have pursued resolutely, have not always had tangible results in your daily life, they constitute a solid basis on which a competent and loyal Secretariat can operate.

*[Second round of questions and answers]*

Dear Colleagues,

A moment ago, I referred to the renovation work, some of which has now been completed. I felt that you would welcome more precise information about the work undertaken and the timetable for its completion. I shall therefore now ask Mr Amine Khene, Assistant Director-General for Administration and Ms Blanco-Borra, his colleague, to give you a quick overview of the renovation work at Headquarters.

*[Overview of the Belmont Plan]*

Dear Colleagues,

Now that the time has come to bring this morning of exchanges to an end, I can appreciate how important it is for us to meet and talk to each other.

The end of year festivities are often experienced as important moments for reflection, assessment and self-appraisal. In preparing for this meeting, I hoped that they would also and primarily be characterized by sharing, listening and dialogue.

I know that I have spoken at length about reform, refounding and adaptation. I am not afraid of using such words because they open up opportunities and promising lines of action for the future.

If we convert the try, we will gain in visibility, legitimacy and recognition. It is a battle that is worth fighting because UNESCO is a unique organization with an exceptional mandate. I wish to carry out this exciting venture with you.

Whether in regard to the United Nations system, decentralization, the next C/4 and C/5 documents or UNESCO Headquarters buildings, the venture will be played out at several levels, on varying scales: the long time of our life and our shared history, the shorter time of our responsibilities and decisions.

To tell the truth, I have no concerns about our capacity to rise to these challenges. Together we will convert the try, because I know that the staff of UNESCO, as in rugby, form a solid and united pack. More than ever, however, and this is the secret of success, we must play the game with conviction, determination and enthusiasm.

That, then, was the purpose of this meeting and the hope to which it has given rise. Seeing you here in such numbers, so mobilized, I know that our luck lies with you.

Once again, I thank you wholeheartedly for all that you do each day for the Organization. Our profession, that of international civil servant, is a noble and fine profession, and the envy of many. Let us help to spread that reputation, let us bring to life the ambition that unites us.

I therefore address to all of you, and to your nearest and dearest, my most sincere wishes and I now invite you to come together for this end-of-year meal in friendship and brotherhood.

Thank you.