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REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND THE RECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY ON A PLAN OF POSSIBLE JOINT ACTIVITIES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE 2010-2011 BIENNIUM

SUMMARY

In accordance with 179 EX/Decision 6, the Director-General presents to the Executive Board a plan of possible joint activities to be included in the 2010-2011 biennium.

The financial and administrative implications of the planned activities fall within the parameters of draft document 35 C/5 or will be carried out only if extrabudgetary assistance can be secured.

Action expected of the Board: proposed decision in paragraph 15.

1. At its 179th session, the Executive Board invited the Director-General and the Rector of the United Nations University (UNU) to present to the Executive Board at its 181st session a plan of possible joint activities taking into account, *inter alia*, UNESCO's priorities, to be carried out in 2010-2011.

I. PRESENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY (UNU)

2. UNU is an autonomous academic institution within the United Nations system that engages in research, training and the dissemination of knowledge in areas of international concern. It enjoys academic freedom, particularly as regards the choice of subjects and methods of research and training, the selection of people and institutions to share in its tasks, and freedom of expression (UNU Charter, Article 2). UNU's activities are carried out by its Centre in Tokyo, as well as by UNU's network of 15 research and training centres and programmes (RTC/Ps), and of individual scientists and institutions located across the world. Moreover, its scholarly press produces academic publications and professional journals, newsletters, annual reports and brochures featuring ongoing research and development conducted across its network. The UNU Strategic Plan 2009-2012 calls for the University to strengthen collaboration with other United Nations organizations, including UNESCO.

II. UNESCO-UNU POSSIBLE JOINT ACTIVITIES FOR 2010-2011 BIENNIUM

II.1 UNU-UNESCO programme of cooperation:

3. The UNU-UNESCO programme of cooperation will implement joint activities in line with UNESCO's Programme and Budget for 2010-2011 as adopted by its General Conference (35 C/5) and within the academic programme adopted by the UNU Council. The list of activities presented below represents ongoing cooperation as well as possible new areas for collaboration.

II.2 Major existing cooperation agreements

4. Several major cooperation agreements have been concluded between UNESCO and UNU, including an Aide-Mémoire on working relations between UNU and UNESCO signed in April 2004. Important activities and projects have been developed and implemented in recent years through direct collaboration between all UNESCO sectors and UNU's RTC/Ps, in areas such as (1) earth sciences, (2) the Man and Biosphere Programme, (3) hydrology and water resources development, (4) South-South Cooperation, (5) sustainable management of marginal drylands, (6) assessment, monitoring and management of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in the coastal ecosystem of the wider Caribbean region, (7) global marine governance, (8) ecosystem service assessment, (9) migration, (10) regional integration, (11) ethics, (12) online collaborative development, (13) activities within the framework of the Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) conferences, (14) quality assurance for education, (15) innovation in higher education, (16) activities within the framework of some of the projects of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, (17) urban development and the Management of Social Transformations (MOST), and (18) education for sustainable development.

II.3 Annual joint international conference

5. UNU and UNESCO (through its Bureau of Strategic Planning in partnership with relevant sectors) co-organized from 2003 to 2008 annual major international conferences addressing issues related to globalization, with extrabudgetary funds generously provided by the Japanese Government.

II.4 Cooperation in the context of UNITWIN and UNESCO Chairs

6. UNESCO and UNU cooperate in the context of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme:

(a) UNESCO-UNU Chairs

- UNESCO-UNU Chair in Cultural Rights (1994), Universidad de Palermo, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- UNESCO-UNU Mobile Chair in University History and Future (1997), Universidad de Palermo, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- UNESCO-UNU Chair in Plant Biotechnology (1992), Peking University, Beijing, China.
- UNESCO-UNU Chair in Leadership Studies (1997), United Nations University, Amman, Jordan.
- UNESCO-UNU Chair on the Concept and Practice of Zero Emissions in Africa (1996), University of Namibia, Windhoek, Namibia.

(b) UNESCO-UNITWIN Networks

- UNESCO-UNU Chair/Network on Global Economics and Sustainable Development (1996), Colegio do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- UNITWIN Mediterranean Network UNESCO-UNU-City of Cannes Chairs on water resources, sustainable development and peace. Participation of the universities, cities and economic stakeholders (1999), University of Nice-Sophia Antipolis, France.
- Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) (1999), the secretariat of which is hosted by the Polytechnic University of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain.

7. In order to reinforce the contribution of these Chairs and networks to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, a thorough joint evaluation of each of them will be conducted. In the future, they must be managed together by UNU and UNESCO.

II.5 Cooperation with Major Programme I – Education

8. Within UNESCO's Education Sector, the UNESCO/UNU partnership for the Asia-Africa University Dialogue for the Development of Basic Education in Africa will become a UNITWIN network contributing to the achievement of EFA goals. This activity was designed as part of the wider project supporting the Africa-Asia Dialogue among universities as a follow-up to TICAD III, the third summit-level Tokyo International Conference on African Development. Its objective is to twin African and Asian universities to build capacity to implement the NEPAD programme of action concerning education for all. It is particularly focused on the concept of self-reliance in African development as upheld by NEPAD and the wider African Union (AU).

II.6 Cooperation with Major Programme II – Natural sciences

9. Within the Natural Sciences Sector of UNESCO, collaboration with UNU may build on existing activities and/or focus on new areas:

- (a) both UNESCO and UNU are engaged in activities related to the assessment of natural hazards and the mitigation of risks arising from these hazards. UNESCO and UNU will be expected to cooperate further on the studies of hazards such as earthquakes, floods and landslides and may find common interest in working together on disaster reduction. These activities relate to risk assessment, early warning, community participation and improvements in structural resilience as well as integration of disaster reduction into educational programmes;
- (b) regarding water sustainability, UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP) is collaborating with the UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNU/UNW-DPC) in the context of the International Decade for Action: Water for Life. In this context, IHP will coordinate the follow-up, together with UNU/UNW-DPC and the German Government, to a workshop on education for water sustainability at the 2009 UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development;
- (c) UNESCO-MAB will continue to collaborate with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Society for Mangrove Ecosystems (ISME), the International Timber Trade Organization (ITTO), the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP/WCMC) and the UNU Network for Water, Environment and Health (UNU/INWEH) on the development of the World Atlas of Mangroves (extrabudgetary);
- (d) UNESCO, UNU and the International Council for Science (ICSU) have established an expert group on filling knowledge gaps on ecosystem services as identified by the

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. This expert group has concluded its work and recommended the establishment of the international Humans, Ecosystems and Well-Being (HEW) Programme. The HEW Programme, along with the UNESCO-ICSU Diversitas Programme, will provide the science base for the proposed Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the establishment of which is under discussion;

- (e) UNESCO and the UNU Institute of Advanced Studies will continue to conduct joint policy research on marine biodiversity and in particular access and benefit-sharing in relation to marine genetic resources, implementing the ecosystem approach in areas beyond national jurisdiction, and criteria for marine-protected areas;
- (f) UNESCO and the UNU International Network on Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) could collaborate in the implementation of the large-scale project Sustainable Management of Marginal Drylands (SUMAMAD) – Phase 2, which involves scientific institutions and biosphere reserves in 11 countries. If approved for extrabudgetary funding by the Flemish Government of Belgium for 2009-2013, the project will focus on soil and water conservation and the development of alternative income opportunities for dryland people.

II.7 Cooperation with Major Programme III – Social and human sciences

10. Within UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences Sector, collaboration with UNU may build on existing activities and/or focus on new areas:

- (a) continuation and extension of ongoing joint activities on urban development and the Management of Social Transformations (MOST);
- (b) potential cooperation with the UNU Programme on Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS) for the project led by the SHS Sector on establishing a UNESCO West Africa institute (category 2) in Cape Verde to study regional integration in West Africa.

II.8 Cooperation with Major Programme IV – Culture

11. Within UNESCO's Culture Sector, collaboration with UNU may build on existing activities and/or focus on new areas:

- (a) research and training on the contribution of culture to sustainable development within the framework of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions; and
- (b) joint training and research activities between the future UNITWIN network on "UNESCO-Alliance of Civilizations on Media Literacy and Cross-Cultural Dialogue" and the future UNU Institute on the Alliance of Civilizations to be established in Spain.

II.9 Cooperation with Major Programme V – Communication and information

12. Within the Communication and Information Sector of UNESCO, possible areas of collaboration include:

- (a) UNESCO's Power of Peace Network is currently developing an online degree programme in peace studies. UNU could be encouraged to join in the process and consider use of the curriculum as part of its programme of offerings;
- (b) UNESCO is working with several universities and research institutions in North Africa on the translation into Arabic of a set of frequently used open source software

applications, for example in the area of science education and for office tasks such as word editing, worksheets, presentations etc, to be made available on mobile data storage devices (Miftaah Project). Collaboration with the UNU Maastricht Economic and Social Research and Training Centre on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT) in this regard should be further explored;

- (c) UNESCO plans to cooperate with public administration schools in North Africa to develop an online course on governmental public domain information within a broader scope of electronic government. This could involve collaboration with the UNU International Institute for Software Technology;
- (d) UNESCO is engaged in a project on socio-economic impacts of new technologies in MERCOSUR countries and Chile. Collaboration with UNU-MERIT may focus on the development of standards and tools that are needed to better understand the socio-economic impact of such new technologies on primary school students and their parents;
- (e) cooperation with the UNU International Institute for Software Technology (UNU-IIST) could focus on innovation and Free and Open Source Software (FLOSS), particularly in MERCOSUR countries; and
- (f) collaboration with the Open Training Platform, which UNU joined in May 2008 and which offers 21 development topics, will continue.

II.10 UNESCO-wide

13. The staff exchange programme between UNESCO and UNU could be revived, particularly at the level of young professionals and of programme specialists, in order to improve mutual understanding and facilitate cooperation.

III. FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

14. Where the potential joint actions can be easily integrated into the activities foreseen under draft document 35 C/5, without any financial or administrative implications, they will be accommodated within the work plans of document 35 C/5. Potential actions that will impact on the budget and staffing will be implemented only if extrabudgetary assistance can be secured.

IV. ACTION EXPECTED OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

15. In view of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following draft decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 181 EX/7,
2. Recognizing the key role of the cooperation between UNESCO and the United Nations University (UNU) as a bridge between the international scientific community and the United Nations to address major goals formulated by the community of the United Nations,
3. Expresses its gratitude to the Government of Japan for the financial and intellectual support that it provides to UNU;

4. Also expresses its gratitude to the Member States in which UNU research and training centres and programmes (RTC/Ps) are located for their financial and intellectual support;
5. Invites the Director-General to pursue his cooperation with UNU in the areas listed in the plan of possible joint activities for the 2010-2011 biennium, where such cooperation can be accommodated within the Draft Programme and Budget for 2010-2011 (35 C/5);
6. Further invites the Member States to consider making extrabudgetary contributions in order to enable UNESCO and UNU to carry out their plan of joint activities for the 2010-2011 biennium.