

**Hundred and seventy-fourth session**

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**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE FINANCIAL  
IMPLICATIONS OF CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A  
SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION PROGRAMME IN EDUCATION**

**SUMMARY**

This document is submitted to the Executive Board in accordance with 33 C/Resolution 7.

It outlines the potential establishment of a new South-South Cooperation Programme in Education within the UNESCO Education Sector, closely linking it to the Organization's E-9 Initiative and reports on the financial implications of reinforcing the corresponding secretariat capacity, to be financed by voluntary contributions.

Decision proposed: paragraph 15.

## INTRODUCTION

1. South-South cooperation (SSC) is a key modality of development and has been considered and used as such since the inception of UNESCO. In recent years, the scope of SSC has become even more significant, recognizing the vital importance of using SSC in order to make development more effective and efficient.
2. At its 33rd session, the General Conference (33 C/Resolution 7) requested the Director-General to study the financial implications of creating an SSC programme/fund in education, “with the objectives of enabling developing countries to meet the objectives of the Dakar Framework of Action on Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals related to literacy, including through the exchange of experiences in the conduct of pilot projects in education among and within developing countries”, and present its findings at the 174th session of the Executive Board.
3. It is worth noting that at the 170th session of the Executive Board, the Director-General presented document 170 EX/7 Rev. introducing the findings of two studies: one on the modalities of implementing SSC and solidarity in the field of education; and a feasibility study on the creation of a fund for a programme of South-South solidarity in education.

## BACKGROUND

4. SSC has its origins in the liberation and anti-colonial movements after the Second World War. It has evolved over time by responding to contemporary social, economic, technical and political challenges. The current phase of SSC focuses on enabling developing countries to become effective partners with all other actors in achieving internationally agreed goals such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the targets set by the G-77 and China in the Havana Plan of Action, adopted in the First South Summit in Havana in 2000, and the Doha Plan of Action, adopted at the Second South Summit in Doha in June 2005.
5. Most studies on SSC emphasize the urgent need for countries of the South to learn from each other’s experiences, in view of their similar socio-economic conditions, and to develop their own capacities so that their basic needs could be met. The history of SSC shows the gradual emergence of regional and subregional organizations as the channels of South-South activities. A review of education programmes of UNESCO as well as other organizations reveals that SSC in education has been implemented even where it is not specifically acknowledged as being a South-South initiative.
6. Though the feasibility study, presented in document 170 EX/7 Rev., concluded that “it is difficult to envisage the creation of a new fund for a programme of South-South solidarity in education or to launch pilot projects”, it proposed that “existing modalities for South-South cooperation and solidarity in the field of education be strengthened and widened taking into account UNESCO’s comparative advantages and experience”. The study recommended that UNESCO should continue to strengthen its existing networks and expand activities of SSC in education through existing EFA-related funding mechanisms and to establish the institutional anchorage of SSC within the Education Sector.
7. The feasibility study also recommended that UNESCO, within the context of promoting SSC in education, should (a) facilitate the harmonization of education systems to meet the needs of the globalized world; (b) build a broader partnership by working with regional and subregional organizations to focus on commonly shared priority issues in developing countries; and (c) perform proactive roles of facilitator, innovator and catalyst in the international community to make SSC in education more effective.

## **THE E-9 INITIATIVE AS AN EXAMPLE OF SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN EDUCATION**

8. Following the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990), the special educational needs of the group of high-population countries were acknowledged. The E-9 Initiative was launched in New Delhi, India, in 1993 at the EFA Summit of Nine High-Population Countries (Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan) with a view to providing their citizens with basic education as a fundamental human right and as a way to curb population explosion. At the E-9 Ministerial Review Meetings in Beijing in August 2001 and in Cairo in December 2003, it was pointed out that the E-9 Initiative provides a chance to engage in genuine SSC. UNESCO was invited to provide an umbrella under which better South-South collaboration may thrive among E-9 countries.

9. More recently, the Final Communiqué that emerged from the fifth meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All in Beijing in November 2005, requested “UNESCO and the other EFA partners to encourage and support South-South cooperation, mutual learning and exchange at the regional level, including strengthening the E-9 network and other groupings as platforms for doing so” and highlighted cooperation on a triangular basis.

10. Following the Beijing EFA meeting, UNESCO has been seriously considering a new approach to engage the E-9 countries more as strategic partners to achieve the EFA goals and for SSC. These countries may in fact play a “dual” role. First, they can lead by example – by improving their efforts aimed at keeping their children in school and graduating them, the sheer numbers will significantly enhance the world’s chance of meeting the Dakar goals. Secondly, they can make a serious sustained commitment to becoming the leaders of a peer-based South-South effort to strengthen the performance of other less-resourced developing countries, particularly Least Developed Countries (LDCs). China’s announcement at the Beijing EFA meeting of its decision to donate US \$1 million to support IICBA and CIEFFA in Africa is an example. The E-9 mechanism, while serving those nine countries per se, can also become a platform for a much broader SSC in education.

## **POSSIBLE MECHANISM TO ADMINISTER A NEW PROGRAMME/FUND FOR SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN EDUCATION**

11. In line with 170 EX/Decision 3.4.1 as well as the Doha Plan of Action, UNESCO proposes to use the E-9 mechanism to facilitate SSC and to give new tasks to the E-9 Secretariat in UNESCO’s Education Sector which will handle both E-9 matters and SSC, including the responsibility to coordinate and administer the proposed SSC programme/fund.

12. The Terms of Reference pertaining to this SSC responsibility could be as follows:

- Promote SSC in education among developing countries, including the E-9 countries;
- Monitor initiatives and activities concerning South-South cooperation in education worldwide;
- Facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices arising from SSC in education;
- In line with UNESCO’s capacities and the priorities of the regular programme, propose potential recipient countries, facilitate funding agreements and provide technical assistance;

- Assist in targeted evaluations of SSC in education; and
- Report on progress and trends in SSC in education.

13. To fulfil this SSC responsibility, the following additional personnel will be required: one P-5; one P-3; and one administrative assistant. The annual financial estimates (standard costs) for personnel would be \$338,500. In addition, about \$50,000 should be allocated on a yearly basis to support the conduct of required activities. The total financial costs for the biennium are thus estimated at \$687,000. This budget would need to be financed via extrabudgetary resources. The creation of a multi-donor special account to receive donations for this purpose would be examined upon request from donors.

14. The E-9/SSC secretariat would liaise with relevant United Nations system institutions and processes dealing with SSC. It would also have to establish close contact and working relations with other related international initiatives such as the International Humanitarian Trust Fund set up by Venezuela, as well as the South Fund for Development and Humanitarian Assistance set up by the State of Qatar, to which China and India also have made significant contributions.

## **PROPOSED DRAFT DECISION**

15. The Executive Board may wish to adopt a draft decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 33 C/Resolution 7,
2. Having examined document 174 EX/10,
3. Takes note of UNESCO's considerable ongoing and past activities in the field of education contributing to South-South cooperation;
4. Encourages Member States to explore possibilities for bilateral South-South cooperation initiatives in the field of education;
5. Requests the Director-General to strengthen UNESCO's existing role of facilitator, innovator and catalyst for South-South cooperation in education by launching a new programme/fund for South-South cooperation in education closely linked to the E-9 Initiative and financed via voluntary contributions;
6. Invites the Director-General to reinforce the secretariat capacity for coordinating and administering this programme/fund upon receipt of the required voluntary contributions;
7. Encourages Member States to provide voluntary contributions to the establishment of this programme/fund.

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**CORRIGENDUM**

Paragraph 13 of the document should read as follows:

To fulfil this SSC responsibility, the following additional personnel will be required: one P-5, one P-3 and one administrative assistant. The annual financial estimates for personnel would be about \$350,000. In addition, about \$50,000 should be allocated to the secretariat on a yearly basis to conduct required activities. The total financial costs for the biennium are thus estimated at \$800,000. This budget would need to be financed via extrabudgetary resources. The creation of a multi-donor special account to receive donations for this purpose would be examined upon request from donors.