

**Hundred and fifty-ninth Session**

159 EX/9  
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Item 3.3.1 of the provisional agenda

**UNESCO's CONTRIBUTION TO POVERTY ERADICATION**

**SUMMARY**

In accordance with 30 C/Resolution 53 of the General Conference, the Director-General submits the present report "Towards a UNESCO strategy for contributing to development and poverty eradication". In 30 C/Resolution 53 the General Conference invited the Director-General to "report to the Executive Board at its 159th session on activities carried out in the spirit of 29 C/Resolution 53, and on activities contemplated in order to follow up document 30 C/5". The document itself focuses on a framework towards a UNESCO strategy for development and poverty eradication 2000-2001. The annex gives a descriptive, non-exhaustive overview of UNESCO's activities for development and poverty.

Decision required: paragraph 7.

## **Towards a UNESCO strategy for contributing to development and poverty eradication**

“We need your help to fight against poverty and bring war to an end in Africa. However, our greatest need is education”

*These words were left to us by two adolescent African children found dead on arrival from their Conakry-Brussels flight in August 1999. Seeking to flee their daily misery, they stowed away in the plane’s undercarriage, hoping to seek a better life. Conscious of the risk they were taking, they wanted to bring the plight of the poor to the attention of the world. They sacrificed their lives.*

### **1. Introduction**

1.1. This report outlines a broad policy agenda to guide UNESCO’s strategy for contributing to development<sup>1</sup> and poverty eradication.<sup>2</sup> Essentially, this implies crafting a viable approach towards working with partners in the international community, in both developing and industrialized countries, that will enable the Organization to play a valued role in assisting Member States, including the highly indebted poor countries (HIPCs), to maximize their chances to achieve the set of international development targets (IDTs) (ref. Box 1). The Organization’s contribution would be centred on its constitutional mandate of promoting education, natural sciences, culture and communication and the social and human sciences.

1.2. As indicated in its title, the present document does not propose directly a strategy for the Organization, but rather a framework that is to lead towards a strategy. In this spirit, it is to be considered in conjunction with document 159 EX/9 INF that represents some work intended to progress towards this objective. It begins with a background section sketching the current context of official development aid (ODA), which provides part of the framework in which UNESCO, like other agencies within the United Nations system, is to function. This is followed by the particular challenges faced by the Organization in this area. It ends with a discussion of the conditions that would be required to effectively respond to the guidelines outlined in this report. A decision is incorporated that requests the Executive Board to adopt this document, and recommend that a full and concise strategy, that includes implementing modalities, be presented to the 160th session of the Executive Board.<sup>3</sup> A presentation of activities considered by the Secretariat’s units as addressing poverty is annexed.

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<sup>1</sup> Meaning socially, culturally, economically and environmentally sustainable development.

<sup>2</sup> The World Bank uses the term poverty reduction, which is also the term used in the international development target for poverty. UNESCO uses poverty *eradication* conforming to the terminology employed in the United Nations Decade for Poverty Eradication (1997-2006), and in the World Summit for Social Development Declaration and Framework for Action which communicates that poverty should -and can - be eliminated, and this both in developing and industrialized nations.

<sup>3</sup> 2-25 October 2000.

### Pledges on development

*Reduce extreme poverty*<sup>4</sup>

The proportion of people living in extreme poverty in developing countries should be reduced by at least one half by 2015 (Copenhagen).

*Universal primary education*

There should be universal primary education in all countries by 2015 (Jomtien, Beijing, Copenhagen).

*Gender equality*

Progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women should be demonstrated by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 (Cairo, Beijing, Copenhagen).

*Infant and child mortality*

The death rates for infants and children under the age of 5 years should be reduced by two thirds the 1990s level, in each developing country, by 2015 (Cairo).

*Maternal mortality*

The rate of maternal mortality should be reduced by three fourths between 1990 and 2014 (Cairo, Beijing).

*Reproductive health*

Access should be available through the primary health-care system to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate ages, no later than 2015 (Cairo).

*Environment*

There should be a current national strategy for sustainable development, in every country by 2005, so as to ensure that current trends in the loss of environmental resources are effectively reversed at both global and national levels by 2015 (Rio).

*Draft Consultative World Development Report 2000-2001*

## 2. Background

2.1 Although the 1990s witnessed a regrettable decline of ODA, it was at the same time a period that encompassed a large number of world conferences,<sup>5</sup> which reaffirmed the commitment of the United Nations, cooperation agencies, and the world's developing and developed nations, to promoting development and reducing poverty. Entry of the world

<sup>4</sup> This means reducing the proportion of the extremely poor to 12.5% of the world's population by 2015.

<sup>5</sup> World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990), World Summit for Children (New York, 1990), United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995), Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Istanbul, 1996), World Food Summit (Rome, 1996), World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, 1998), Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (Stockholm, 1998), World Conference on Science (Budapest, 1999).

community into the year 2000 is underscored by a series of premises that represent a shift in development thinking. Some of these key premises are given below:

- That the shortcomings of the 1990s *Washington Consensus*, illustrated by the Asian financial crisis, and the plight of Russia, and other countries, points to the need for renewed thinking on the dynamics of development; the *Washington Consensus*, broadly defined, was the general belief that prevailed during much of the 1990s that free markets, deregulation and a reduced State were expected to be the most efficient way for countries to grow and develop.<sup>6</sup> Currently, efforts towards a so-called *Post-Washington* thinking suggest a move towards an approach that recognizes that good governance, empowerment, transparency, measures to reduce inequality and enforcement of human rights are crucial if economic growth is to lead to development and poverty eradication;
- That the concept of poverty must be broadened beyond income measurements, to encompass aspects of social exclusion such as voicelessness, powerlessness, vulnerability, volatility, discrimination of all kinds, and lack of dignity;
- That anti-poverty policies are to be nestled in a broader framework for development that includes measures such as those indicated above;
- That effective exercise of civic, political, as well as social, economic and cultural rights, is a cornerstone for development, and a major factor in the eradication of all facets of poverty;
- That globalization brings unequal benefits, hence the need to mitigate its adverse effects on development and on certain segments of the population in developing and industrialized countries;
- That measures to reduce inequality are necessary despite macro-economic stability and economic growth;
- That the poverty agenda must be nationalized, and that poverty reduction strategies are to be nationally led for them to be effective;
- That the unleashed “project approach”, so characteristic of the 1990s, can lead to perverse effects, including jostling between United Nations agencies and competition between donors at the field level, as each brings to a country its own history, experience, ideological background, conditionality and agenda. Individual projects should be embedded in a clear programmatic approach that is in line with the country’s own development and poverty reduction strategies;
- That efforts undertaken within the United Nations system to coordinate ODA are to be strengthened, and that the United Nations has a facilitating and convening role to play to support and build national capacities to eradicate poverty;<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For more information on the *Washington Consensus* thinking and its impact on development, refer to: the joint MOST/EHESS meeting *Beyond the Washington Consensus*, June 1999, the paper of which will be published by the *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 166, November 2000; and the meeting organized by UNESCO’s MOST Programme on “Rethinking development”, November 1998, the debates of which are published in: Bartoli, Henri *Repenser le développement: en finir avec la pauvreté*, Paris, Editions UNESCO/MOST and Economica, 1999 (English version in preparation).

<sup>7</sup> See *Halving Extreme Poverty: An Action Strategy for the United Nations*. ADD/2000/POQ/CRP.6, 22 February 2000.

- That inflow of private capital - which massively increased to developing countries in the 1990s - is no replacement for ODA: inflows of private capital have been concentrated in relatively few countries. In 1997 the top 15 developing countries received 83% of private flows to developing countries, leaving 140 developing countries and territories - representing some 1.7 billion people - to share the remainder.

2.2 The thinking behind the above points is in many respects reflected in the 1999 Human Development Report (UNDP) and in the draft World Development Report on Poverty (2000-2001, World Bank). UNESCO's standpoint on development and poverty has long-espoused and promoted these principles, as illustrated by a series of contributions, some of the most recent<sup>8</sup> being the Organization's position paper for the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995),<sup>9</sup> the November 1999 meeting organized jointly by UNESCO and the EHESS<sup>10</sup> entitled *Beyond the Washington Consensus*; the report prepared by the Education Sector on *Education and Poverty Eradication*; the report of the *Commission for Culture and Development*; the recommendations drawn from the November 1999 meeting organized by the MOST Programme in honour of Paul-Marc Henry, entitled *Rethinking Development* which are presented in the publication *Répenser le développement; en finir avec la pauvreté*; and the Declaration on Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge, which recognizes that *scientific research and its applications may yield significant returns towards economic growth and sustainable human development, including poverty alleviation* (para. 11).

2.3 UNESCO - through its work in culture, education, communication, basic/engineering and environmental sciences, and the social and human sciences - has always supported the idea that development and poverty cannot be tackled efficiently if eyed solely through an economic lens. In the 1990s, the unrestrained liberalization of market forces tended to distill the consideration given to non-economic analyses in the development debate. However, the Organization has now an opportunity to capitalize on the recognition that dynamics to reduce poverty extend beyond policies for macro-economic growth. And, while providing expertise in its fields of competence, it must do so while recognizing that it can no longer claim a monopoly in its areas of competence: particularly education, culture, communication, governance and partly the sciences are areas in which sister agencies in the United Nations system - not to mention the Funds and Banks - have also developed experience over the years, thus making it doubly necessary for UNESCO to demonstrate, and not only claim, its expertise and added value in these areas.<sup>11</sup> If the above premises are accepted, the question still remains: how, in what way, and in what timeframe?

2.4 UNESCO's strategy in development and poverty should conform to the new framework of thinking in development (etched out briefly above), and settled on the normative conventions, agreements and targets that will frame the strategies of

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<sup>8</sup> Earlier work by the Organization in the areas of endogenous development and participatory development can be found *inter alia* in Paul-Marc Henry (Ed.) *Poverty, Progress and Development* (1990); Kegan Paul International/UNESCO; *Stratégies du développement endogène* (1984), Huynh Lao Tri, UNESCO, Paris, as well as in the series of Reports on Poverty and Development published during the 1980s by UNESCO's Division of Study and Planning of Development.

<sup>9</sup> Which also discusses measures which subsequently have received less prominent attention, such as the Tobin Tax.

<sup>10</sup> Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales.

<sup>11</sup> Speech by the Director-General, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura to the UNESCO Secretariat, 18 February 2000.

industrialized and developing countries for the years to come. The IDTs provide coherence, in addition to a multidisciplinary approach to development, but they also raise the need for policy work that examines the implications of these development targets for countries that differ vastly in the nature of poverty - even within a given continent or grouping such as the Group of 77 - or the E-9. Hence, the need to nationalize the development and poverty agenda, along a country-specific approach and develop flexible country-specific measures of international progress towards meeting the IDTs.

### 3. Meeting the challenge

3.1 UNESCO differs in its structure and mandate from the United Nations Funds<sup>12</sup> such as UNDP, UNFPA or UNICEF and has a broader mandate than other Specialized Agencies, such as ILO and WHO. The Organization's credibility and effectiveness in respect to development issues can be strengthened if it sets itself as an agency somewhat similar to a global policy think-tank. Furthermore, though it is not an agency designed to focus on poverty reduction,<sup>13</sup> it is galvanized to contribute to sustainable social development and poverty eradication as part of a United Nations system-wide effort.

3.2 As outlined in resolution 50/107 of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and in 30 C/Resolution 53 adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO, poverty eradication is clearly a common responsibility. And this means, as emphasized also by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, that all agencies must have a concern for development, and consequently poverty eradication, as a priority within their programmes and budgets.

3.3 The broadened concept of poverty briefly etched out in the points in 2.1, is an important working basis for UNESCO to develop its approach, since it represents poverty as a phenomenon that stretches beyond purely measurable econometric scales, into the everyday lives and concerns of people. This phenomenon calls for the right to benefit from:

- *Opportunities* offered by advances in information technology, science and communication; by the multi-nature earnings of education; and by the fundamental sense of identity and understanding that is channelled through culture, and the humanities;
- *Empowerment* through equality, that recognizes that gender, ethnic and religious divides need to be bridged;
- *Security*, broadly defined through democratic principles and the absence of corruption (in both developed and developing societies), good and transparent governance, human rights, integrity and the rule of law, empowerment of the poor and the participation of all citizens. Security thus defined, also means food security, employment and sustainable livelihoods, adequate education, shelter and health services and having the means and assets to manage risk in the face of natural disasters and ecological degradation.

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<sup>12</sup> Which are also implementing agencies.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, the 1996/1997 Government Report by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs entitled "*The Rights of the Poor: our Common Responsibility (Combating Poverty in Sweden's Development Co-operation)*" (p. 75) which states: Parts of the United Nations that are not primarily concerned with combating poverty, such as UNCTAD and UNESCO ...".

3.4 UNESCO was endowed with the mandate to contribute to world peace by stimulating intellectual cooperation in its fields of competence. It was created for the purpose of *advancing the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare*,<sup>14</sup> two goals which are intrinsically related to development. Its strategic advantage, and value-added within the United Nations system is presented here in the form of three key roles: its intellectual role, which needs to be reaffirmed and enhanced within the United Nations system, donor agencies, and Member - and non-Member - States,<sup>15</sup> its role as an international forum, bringing together actors from different levels of society to engage in the development process: a necessary function for any think-tank to remain abreast of the global, national and - importantly - local impacts of development programmes; and a monitoring role, within the United Nations system, with respect to targets set out by the international community, to ensure that ethical and humanistic values are respected and indeed promoted in the development process. What is intended by these three roles is debated below, followed by a short analysis of requirements if UNESCO is to meet the conditions of a strategy framed around these three premises.

*UNESCO's role as an organization for intellectual cooperation*

3.5 This is the Organization's core mandate that responds to a real need, in an era where development thinking is navigating into uncharted waters, where the tide of belief in deregulation and unfettered markets as the "only response" begins to recede.

3.6 UNESCO's contribution to this effort is to be drawn from education, culture, communication, science and technology, as well as the social and human sciences. These latter deserve particular mention, since contemporary development literature stresses the importance of these disciplines in contributing to the understanding of the dynamics of development. This is recognized by other organizations, as shown in Box 2, which summarizes some of the contributions made by economics, sociology and political science to development. Other key disciplines include philosophy, geography, anthropology, history, statistics and forecasting. Social analysis is a field where UNESCO has a comparative advantage, which needs to be fully harnessed, developed and reaffirmed.

**Box 2**

*"Economics* have argued that formal and informal institutions are crucial to understanding economic performance.

*Political science* shows that the density and scope of civic associations are the foundations for the widespread dissemination of information and social trust that create the conditions underpinning effective governance and economic development.

*Sociology* has demonstrated that the capacity of public institutions and the nature of State-society relations strongly influence whether a State is developmental or predatory."

*Draft World Development Report 2000-2001, Chapter three. World Bank.*

<sup>14</sup> UNESCO Constitution, London, 16 November 1945.

<sup>15</sup> One non-Member State, the United States, plays an important role in shaping the development framework.

3.7 The Organization's intellectual role as an international think-tank on development and poverty eradication means that it must have the capacity to analyse the effectiveness of policies in its fields of competence; to conduct research into the nature of poverty and its measurement (and this includes designing a limited, but relevant number of field projects targeted towards responding to specific knowledge gaps that fit into the Organization's broad programming); to identify those obstacles to development that prohibit the benefits of growth from reaching those who are most impoverished; to relate the results of the research and field projects to developing countries and the donor community, and to funnel them through existing mechanisms within the United Nations system to ensure that they are considered in the programmatic framework for concerted United Nations action; to assist in devising intermediate targets and milestones in reaching the 2015 goals; to contribute to analysing trends that have affected poverty over time in a given country, looking at its rural/urban divides, ethnic and intergenerational aspects.<sup>16</sup> Paragraphs 3.8 to 3.10 give just three examples of areas in which policy research can make a contribution.

3.8 One example of an area in which knowledge is required, is the issue of the prevailing types of poverty and the dynamics of impoverishment. A need in this area would be to conduct research that furthers understanding on the distinction between transient and chronic poverty. The question is relevant, since estimates for many developing countries show higher numbers of transient poor as compared to the chronic poor, which would make blanket policies inadequate.

3.9 A second area concerns institutional and governance issues such as decentralization, also strongly propagated by the World Bank and the IMF in the 1990s, and that now is submitted to some clear caveats: case studies have shown that in settings with highly unequal local power structures, decentralization can bolster the power of the elite, rather than promoting equality and local development. Under what conditions, therefore, is decentralization favourable to pro-poor planning, and what are the insights of the elite on this issue?

3.10 A third example relates to the nature of poverty itself: concepts of poverty can be geographically, culturally and historically different.<sup>17</sup> To just refer to the historical dimension, if one looks at poverty in seventeenth-century England, at a time when about half the English population was poor in the sense of having no property, State action was prompted by the idea of society as a commonwealth, with functioning parts, and underscored by the fear of the elite, of the political and social consequences of an increase in the number of poor. This was reflected in a specific State response to a perceived threat of social and political disorder if the ranks of the poor were swollen by impoverishment. In Victorian England, the origin of the British welfare State is seen in the fear that the "respectable" but lower layers of the working class could slip and be absorbed into the ranks of the lumpenproletariat. Poverty as it may be conceived in present-day Europe may be very different from these definitions: France, for example, recognizing its cultural and political ideal of social solidarity, has taken action to link targeting of income transfers to schemes of action reinsertion of beneficiaries into education, training, jobs and community projects. This is because its perception of poverty comes from the growth in numbers of the long-term unemployed, homeless, social misfits and youth from broken families which

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<sup>16</sup> See *Halving Extreme Poverty: An Action Strategy for the United Nations*. ADD/2000/POQ/CRP.6, 22 February 2000.

<sup>17</sup> UNDP Human Development Reports.

threaten violent disorder in poor suburbs: an issue shared with many other developed industrial nations.

3.11 The interesting facet of these examples that call for nationalizing and setting the poverty problem in a specific context, is that the issue at stake is inherently interdisciplinary and intersectoral. Numerous dimensions need to be woven into policy research: education, culture, social class and family structure, politics, the physical environment and its effect on the health of the inhabitants, and the impact of new technology and globalization on the impoverished; the role of the elite in development; the (perhaps) differential characteristics of the transient versus the chronic poor; the impact of globalization on vulnerability; and the conditions under which decentralization is a valuable mechanism for assisting the impoverished. Further issues relating to the Organization's intellectual role are developed in document 159 EX/9 INF. UNESCO's Institute for Statistics can contribute towards boosting the Organization's intellectual capacity to contribute to the study of poverty eradication.

#### *UNESCO's role as an international forum*

4.1 Development requires creating partnerships between the various levels of government, Member States, civil society and the international donor community. The Organization has an important asset in terms of its cumulated experience in its work with the academic and professional communities in its fields of competence. It should be recognized that these actors are instrumental to the success of development.

4.2 An example that illustrates this, is the decisive importance of the transmission of poverty and development by the media insofar as influencing public opinion: public support for development assistance and for poverty reduction spending is key. This, however, does not suggest that training for journalists to better report on the impact of poverty as it touches a household's everyday life is sufficient. It requires many other agents who need to be given an opportunity to interact. Although media should reflect and communicate debates, this requires certain conditions that are related to basic human rights, good governance, transparency and openness: it requires the capacity of the public to communicate their perceptions and a political environment which acknowledges and values public opinion; it needs a vibrant and empowered civil society where the media can express diverse viewpoints. It also requires partnerships between the academic community and the media from developing countries, as well as partnerships between researchers from industrialized countries and the southern media.

4.3 UNESCO, in its role as an international forum can stimulate partnerships between activists, academics, politicians and media personalities to ensure that information on poverty and development issues is accurate and that it is guaranteed wide media coverage.

#### *UNESCO's role as a monitoring agency*

5.1 The Organization's undisputed ethical role will enable it to contribute effectively towards monitoring progress made in achieving the IDTs. The Organization's broad fields of competence make it well placed to consider not only the progress towards quantitative indicators but also the qualitative positive - or negative - side effects of programmes designed to assist Member States in moving towards these goals.

5.2 A simple example of the need for monitoring and for promoting an ethical dimension to development can be taken by looking at some recent work that examines the IDT on poverty reduction.<sup>18</sup> This work suggests that achieving this target will be feasible for countries such as China and India, providing they maintain their growth rate, and that inequality does not increase. Given the dominance of these countries in the number of poor people, the world in *aggregate* may therefore achieve the target. However, for some regions, and notably sub-Saharan Africa (the growth rate between 1990-1997 having been estimated around -0.7), this target can be particularly remote. Sub-Saharan Africa would require an estimated magnitude of growth of 5.9% to enable it to achieve the targets. An ethical dimension to development therefore is required in order to help ensure that inequality between regions does not widen in the race to meet the development goals.

5.3 In its ethical and monitoring role, the Organization would have the longer term objective of providing future UNDP Human Development Reports and the next World Development Report (2010) with information on progress made towards achieving the IDTs. This would also require that UNESCO develop a set of ethical standards by which it would measure such progress, and which should be based on the respect of human rights. This could include, for example, collecting information from the poor, who are normally not consulted even about studies and programmes aimed at them.

5.4 In this regard, the Organization has a strong monitoring role in the area of cultural rights and practices. This is best illustrated by drawing on the voices of those who are subject to discrimination and exclusion from the benefits of social and cultural life - places often designed to benefit children and youth.<sup>19</sup> The following examples give life to these ideas:

“I had planned to take a group of children to the zoo. This was a treat for the children, but when we arrived, we were refused entry because of the appearance of the children” (Final report on human rights and extreme poverty, Mr Leandro Despouy), Economic and Social Council, June 1996.

“We liked to go to the public shopping centre that was nearby, but we were spat at and turned away and told that we were dirty and not-wanted.” Extract from an interview with a 15-year old boy, Growing up in Cities, Cnaanland, South Africa, MOST Project, November 1998.

5.5 Although these examples are simply illustrative (countless others exist), the core idea is that UNESCO can position itself to contribute to the United Nations effort to build capacity in Member States to monitor and assess poverty. A special mention may be warranted on the impact of globalization: the opportunities and benefits of globalization need to be shared much more widely. Monitoring the impact of development interventions also means monitoring the impact of globalization. Amidst issues of job and income insecurity, trade, investment, debt and financial volatility, are issues of cultural and environmental insecurity. It is undeniable that today's flow of culture is unbalanced and heavily weighted in one direction, from the rich to the poor countries. Although globalization may open people's lives to new ideas, the culture that it transmits is

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<sup>18</sup> See the International Development Target Strategy Paper on Economic Well-Being. Department for International Development (DFID); Government of the United Kingdom, February 2000.

<sup>19</sup> *Culture: the way to fight extreme poverty*, 1997, NGO/UNESCO, World Decade for Cultural Development (CLT-97/WS/8).

disquieting: what is needed in any “integrated development strategy” is support to indigenous and national cultures that allow them to flourish alongside foreign cultures.

5.6 While contributing to the above, the Organization (and this is related to its ethical function), must not neglect encouraging progress by the industrialized nations in tackling the poverty phenomena in their own backyard. As an agency that is not strictly a “development agency”, UNESCO has an important ethical and policy contribution to make in ensuring that the impoverished amongst the wealthy do not disappear from the development agenda.

## **6. What does it take?**

6.1 Achieving the above will require some essential work and commitments on the part of the Organization, without which it will not be able to respond effectively to this sketch towards a strategy. Some of the key principles are summarized below.

6.1.1 UNESCO must ensure that its field projects geared towards supporting development are in line with the Organization’s strategy for its role in development and poverty eradication. The rationale for implementing field projects needs to be grounded in demonstrable evidence that the project is innovative, can lead to implications for policy-making and fits into one or more of the Organization’s three roles as outlined above.

6.1.2 The Organization must concentrate on its strategic advantages, as they are outlined above, capitalizing on its intergovernmental structure and refraining from the temptation to address the poverty issue as would an NGO, or a highly decentralized agency with a strong implementing mandate. Again, this does not preclude the agency from developing targeted and innovative grass-roots projects, particularly when they are designed to meet a demonstrable knowledge gap, and provided that project results are streamlined into the Organization’s own policy-making or into recommendations for the country in question, and for development agencies, and that they be properly disseminated.

6.1.3 The Organization must ensure communication with Member States so as to keep them abreast of positive examples of development interventions, and best practices in moving towards achieving the IDTs. This means, for example, drawing guidelines from the rich information contained in the Organization’s world reports so as to translate the knowledge into policy recommendations for Member States; and formulating proposals that assist the Member States in translating into action the array of recommendations derived from the world conferences. Regular reporting can also be made on progress towards finalizing a strategy and a development and poverty eradication programme (DPEP).

6.2 To achieve the above it is suggested that under the coordination of UNESCO’s intergovernmental programme for the *Management of Social Transformations* (MOST), be established a small, in-house project group responsible for working with sectors and programmes to develop the Organization’s strategy for presentation to the 160th session of the Executive Board. It may also work towards preparing a preliminary proposal for document 30 C/5 (as amended) that would cover the ground for a DPEP for document 31 C/5 and which would also be submitted to the 160th session of the Executive Board. The purpose of this group would be to assume the intellectual leadership to prepare the expected results, strategy and output for the DPEP. It would have the possibility to propose policy changes in programming and budgeting that overcomes sector frontiers. The group would also ensure that the DPEP is built around key issues, which are necessarily

multidisciplinary and intersectoral. It is stressed that only a modest budget would be required for this preliminary programme preparation, outside of the time devoted by the staff members involved.

6.3 Finally, any move towards recentring the Organization in the development arena must be done in tandem with the current in-house reform process that is under way. This should also determine the magnitude of the budget allocation for a DPEP under document 31 C/5. The above analysis illustrates the need for innovation in UNESCO's programming approach, that further develops the results-based programming principles and that is guided by the Organization's more general reform. In this spirit, development of the DPEP could serve as an example for the new form of programming towards which the Organization is moving: a programming centred around key societal issues; that draws, as required, on the competence of the professionals within the different sectors; that is results-based, framed in a clear strategy and set of activities, has a good communication strategy and that contains a strong evaluation component.

## **7. Draft decision**

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 159 EX/9,
2. Welcomes the efforts made by the Secretariat to develop a framework for UNESCO's strategy on development and poverty eradication;
3. Welcomes the work in progress, as presented in document 159 EX/9 INF;
4. Reaffirms its commitment to the importance of poverty eradication in UNESCO's programming;
5. Invites the Director-General to elaborate a strategy and preliminary programme on development and poverty eradication in UNESCO, through a strong interdisciplinary approach coordinated by the MOST Programme;
6. Requests that this strategy take into account the views expressed during this debate and outline modalities for its implementation, and that it be submitted to its 160th session.

## ANNEX

### DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW OF UNESCO'S ACTIONS FOR POVERTY ERADICATION IN BROAD LINES

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. UNESCO's actions for poverty eradication, in the context of 29 C/Resolution 53 and 30 C/Resolution 53, give strong emphasis and recognition to the social and cultural dimension of development, and stress the following: the appropriation and exercise of all human rights - both civil and political, and economic, social and cultural - as a guiding principle of development; endogenous capacity-building and human resource development, through education at all levels and throughout life; democratic and participatory governance; the incorporation of cultural factors in development strategies; environmental awareness and harnessing science and technology, including communication technologies, for development.
2. The Organization has a strong ethical and normative dimension, which guides the operational level. In initiating and implementing its activities and programmes, UNESCO seeks to ensure that benefits reach the most sensitive and needy segments of society such as women, young people, rural populations, street children, the handicapped, the excluded ethnic groups and refugees. These groups are the ones most often subject to extreme poverty and social exclusion. UNESCO strongly believes that sustainable poverty eradication requires an integrated approach to social development.
3. The actions and activities described below illustrate in broad<sup>1</sup> lines different ongoing activities in poverty eradication. For ease of reading, they are grouped by theme although a number of them involve cooperation between sectors. This is a descriptive synthesis of the Organization's actions; it is not an exhaustive overview of UNESCO's activities.<sup>2</sup>

#### II. EDUCATION AND POVERTY

4. The report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on poverty eradication describes universal primary education as being central to the struggle against poverty. UNESCO has taken action in this field through a wide range of activities. As a follow-up to

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences Sector prepared a Compendium of UNESCO's follow-up activities to the World Summit for Social Development, of which Chapter 2 in this Compendium focuses on the Organization's activities for the eradication of poverty. The Compendium was distributed, upon request of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to all the delegates at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives, 17-28 May 1999 (A/AC.253/9/Add.6). For a more detailed overview of UNESCO's activities in the field of poverty eradication, the "Compendium" (currently in English only), can be requested from the Social and Human Sciences Sector.

<sup>2</sup> The Social and Human Sciences Sector received contributions from several sectors and field units on poverty-related activities undertaken by the Organization to prepare this poverty document for the Executive Board. It is foreseen that those activities which have not been mentioned in this annex will be integrated in the above Compendium together with other relevant information to allow for a continuously updated document on the Organization's activities in the field of development and poverty.

the Jomtien Conference, a series of innovative projects have been implemented to provide education opportunities to various target groups living in difficult conditions. In adherence to its Medium-Term Strategy for 1996-2001, increased access to basic education of the most disadvantaged populations is a priority for the Organization. More than 30 Member States, mostly in Africa, which suffer from a high rate of illiteracy, have benefited from reinforced access to basic education for girls and women, as well as for different disadvantaged groups of the population (handicapped, early childhood, refugees). Alternative strategies (e.g. satellite schools in Burkina Faso) are undertaken to reach the vulnerable groups. Parallel to this, UNESCO focuses on offering to children and young people deprived of access to school or who are drop-outs, an alternative education with a focus on social and economic life. Over the years, our programme for street children has expanded. An example: in Mali, training workshops have been organized to reinforce the professional competences of the educators who take care of street children. This has been done in cooperation with UNICEF, the European Union, ILO, and various NGOs. In February 1999, UNESCO and UNICEF signed a Memorandum of Understanding for joint activities aimed at expanding educational opportunities for girls and women.

5. The EFA 2000 Assessment exercise was launched under the auspices of the EFA Forum in 1997, following a joint decision by the heads of UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the World Bank. In July 1998, the Director-General invited, on behalf of the Forum's conveners, all countries to participate in the Assessment. It is hoped that the World Education Forum in Dakar, April 2000, will result<sup>3</sup> in the adoption of a Global Framework for Action which will be an Agenda for Education in the Twenty-First Century. This could be a useful instrument for refined planning to meet the goal of providing education for all which is one of the most important factors to achieve poverty eradication.

6. Considering the urgent need for education to address issues of poverty eradication, UNESCO organized a Consultation on the Role of Education in Poverty Eradication, March 1997, which brought together representatives of governments, international agencies and NGOs. The consultation led to follow-up contacts with other agencies to promote solidarity and also to the preparation of the "Education and poverty eradication-cooperation for action".

7. A preliminary intersectoral project proposal on education and poverty eradication is currently being prepared. Efforts will be made to have a convergence of services at community level. It is foreseen that UNESCO inputs will cover: (1) information and advocacy for poverty eradication, (2) empowering the poor, (3) improving life opportunities for poor girls and women, and (4) fund-raising, monitoring and accountability. The focus of the programme is on country level participation, programme elaboration, implementation and monitoring. Ongoing evaluation will be an important aspect of the project.

8. In the field of higher education, UNESCO is establishing networks among universities. The World Conference on Higher Education (1998) focused on expectations for higher education to prepare students for indeterminate future job tasks, new employment patterns, and to contribute to innovation in society, hence to social development and poverty reduction. In the field of social sciences, the UNESCO/UNITWIN Chairs programme joined hands with WHO to promote a worldwide university initiative in favour of the disadvantaged;

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<sup>3</sup> This document was prepared prior to Dakar.

40 UNESCO Chairs and networks on sustainable development have been established in all regions.

### III. SCIENCES AND POVERTY

9. The relationship between society and nature is recognized as a basic dimension of development. The earth's viability should be safeguarded for both current and future generations in line with Agenda 21. UNESCO has several scientific intergovernmental programmes working actively on various dimensions of environmental issues for sustainable development: Man and the Biosphere (MAB), Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), International Hydrology Programme (IHP), International Geological Correlation Programme (IGCP), Management of Social Transformations (MOST) and the intersectoral project entitled "Educating for a sustainable future". An example: the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves is a tool for involving poor local communities in environmental conservation, education and training and sustainable development activities. As of January 2000, 62 biosphere reserves have been created in "low-income" countries. The concept fully promotes involving and empowering local communities to manage and benefit from resources within their biosphere reserves. As an operational principle, all science field projects dealing with water, energy, recycling and appropriate technologies will capitalize on their work by looking for practical information to disseminate to other communities through the various networks.

10. Science and technology constitute tremendous resources for development in order to, among others, protect health, the economy and the environment. UNESCO publishes biennially the *World Science Report* and, as of 1999, the *World Social Science Report*. The relation between science and development was discussed at the *World Conference on Science*, Budapest, June 1999, and is reflected both in the Declaration on Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge and in the Science Agenda: Framework for Action.

### IV. THE MOST PROGRAMME AND POVERTY

11. In order to facilitate, at an international level, access to information about positive experiences and to establish contact between the actors participating in them, the MOST programme has created the *Best Practices Database* on poverty eradication. MOST projects relate to community participation, social and economic transformations connected with drug trafficking, cultural and ethnic related causes of poverty, developing methods for the participation of young people from disadvantaged communities in improving their physical environment, urban development in coastal zones, and migration problems as they relate to poverty. In this regard, MOST is publishing through UNESCO Publications and Earthscan, a research-based manual for development practices. The programme promotes policy-relevant research and field activities on the problems of cities and urban-rural interactions because big cities concentrate problems of unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, crime, violence and weakened human solidarity. The MOST programme on Human Habitat focuses on the stimulation of urban policies aimed at enhancing social integration and rehabilitation of underprivileged settlements. Examples of community development projects are those of Yeumbeul (Dakar), Jalousie (Port au Prince), and the one in Burkina Faso (Kokologho) based

on an integrated development approach, that has increased access to basic infrastructures such as clean water and health, and to formal and non-formal education.

12. An agreement was signed in July 1997 with the Secretariat of Social Development in Argentina concerning the UNESCO/SIEMPRO (System of Information, Evaluation and Monitoring of Social Programmes) project. It has assured the training and transfer of methodological tools and techniques to provincial teams for the Integral Management of Social Programmes, and the designing and implementing impact evaluations of social programmes. A Social Observatory for Living Conditions of Poor Population in Argentina was launched in 1999 with funds from the World Bank and MOST. A project to design and develop an Observatory for children's living conditions will be implemented during the 2000-2001 biennium. These World Bank- and IBD-supported projects are in the process of being replicated in other countries of the region, and eventually in other regions.

13. Following the mid-term evaluation of the MOST Programme, the Intergovernmental Council of the MOST Programme recommended in 1999 to the Director-General and the Member States to strengthen the activities of the MOST Programme with regard to *inter alia* poverty eradication. Reference was also made to 155 EX/Decision 4.1, paragraph 49,<sup>4</sup> which states that the MOST Programme's activities should focus more attention on poverty eradication activities. This concern is largely reflected in the Draft Plan of Action of the MOST Programme for the 1999-2002 period.

## V. MICROFINANCE AND POVERTY

14. Microfinance has proven to be an important tool for poverty eradication as it specifically addresses the poorest segment of the population, particularly the women who have least access to resources. The challenge lies in ensuring that, along with the expansion of microfinance, the poor, especially poor women, are able to access social services and to realize the benefits of these facilities. An example: UNESCO developed in 1998-1999 cooperation schemes with successful microfinance institutions in Asia, Latin America and Africa in order to enhance the effectiveness of financial programmes by support services within the fields of the Organization's competence which address the social and cultural dimensions of poverty. Thus UNESCO continued to support the basic education and life-skills development programmes for Grameen Bank borrowers and their children.

15. UNESCO's strategy for this biennium is that intersectoral action aimed at enhancing the potential of microfinance in poverty eradication programmes will be pursued, through sensitization of policy-makers and development practitioners, dissemination of information on best practice and methodology in this regard, and design of appropriate capacity-building and supportive social services to obtain a sustainable impact. There will be close cooperation with NGOs.

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<sup>4</sup> "The MOST Programme should be reinforced and its activities clearly geared towards combating exclusion and alleviating poverty, through the adoption of interdisciplinary approaches and enhanced intersectoral cooperation."

## **VI. HUMAN RIGHTS, TOLERANCE, DEMOCRACY, PEACE AND POVERTY**

16. Democratic governance, respect for human rights, tolerance, the freedom of the press and peace are essential factors in the regulation of political, cultural, economic, social and ethnic tensions and therefore necessary for social development and poverty eradication.

17. UNESCO has developed an important human rights, democracy, tolerance and peace programme. Extreme poverty is in itself a violation of human rights because extreme poverty is the main obstacle for the implementation of all human rights and of the principles of the equal dignity of all human beings and of non-discrimination. This is also recognized in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. The Organization is *inter alia* reviewing the state of education within these fields and recommends concrete measures for developing a comprehensive system of human rights education, including the preparation of relevant manuals, textbooks and other teaching materials as well as the development of networks of institutions active in education for peace, human rights and democracy. The first volume of the manual on human rights education for universities, entitled *Human Rights: New Dimensions and Challenges* (1998), encourages universities and professional and vocational training institutions to introduce curricula and innovative teaching aids on peace, human rights and democracy. It includes a chapter on human rights and extreme poverty. The network of UNESCO Chairs on human rights, democracy, peace, tolerance and international understanding plays an active role in promoting education for human rights.

18. UNESCO's Culture of Peace project in relation to poverty eradication, is based on the interlinkage between development, poverty eradication and peace. The Women and Culture of Peace project has undertaken actions aimed at empowering women for democratic participation in political processes to increase their impact especially in economic and security issues, and to help prevent violent conflicts which ruin economies and aggravate conditions of poverty.

## **VII. CULTURE AND POVERTY**

19. The cultural dimension of development is recognized and acknowledged by the Organization as a condition for reaching families and population groups in situations of extreme poverty. An example: during the biennium 1998-1999, two subregional workshops have been organized - respectively in Namibia for southern African countries and in Kyrgyzstan for Central Asia - to upgrade the skills of craftswomen, improve their knowledge of the management of small enterprises, increase their income-generation capacities and contribute thereby to their social status. Similar workshops are scheduled in document 30 C/5 for craftswomen in Western Africa and the Asian countries. An intersectoral programme is launched for an integrated approach to this issue for future strategies in this field.

20. Over the last decade, and in particular 1998-1999, UNESCO has contributed to clarifying the complex interactions between culture and development as well as to improving the methodological instruments facilitating their integration in development planning processes, namely in the framework of, *inter alia*, the following activities:

- The Stockholm Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (1998).
- The UNESCO/UNAIDS project (1998-1999) resulting in Project Design Handbook on the *Cultural Approach to HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care*.
- The African Itinerant College for Culture and Development was launched in 1996 to promote national capacities in Africa for planning development in a cultural approach.
- The publication of the first (1998) *World Culture Report*.
- The publication in English of the book *Culture; a Path to Combating Extreme Poverty*.<sup>5</sup>

### VIII. COMMUNICATION AND POVERTY

21. The free and voluntary participation of people is a prerequisite of development and poverty eradication. This is linked to, *inter alia*, the accessibility and reach of communication and information facilities. It is therefore essential for social development to invest in improving such facilities and to expand their access to different segments of the society in order to provide people with the knowledge, skills and opportunities essential to make their opinions and concerns known. UNESCO is active in the building and strengthening of communication and information capacities through the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), the General Information Programme (PGI) and the Intergovernmental Informatics Programme (IIP). The main goal of all UNESCO's communication projects is to build or strengthen communication capacity in developing countries. A key example is UNESCO's Tanzania Office which is implementing multipurpose community tele-centres within the framework of the African Information Society Initiative Action Framework.

### IX. FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

22. UNESCO is preparing for the five-year review of the Social Summit which will take place at the special session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives, in Geneva, from 26 to 30 June 2000. ADG/SHS is the focal point for UNESCO for the preparations and for the event itself.

23. The Social and Human Sciences Sector organized in November 1998 an International Symposium on *Rethinking development: do we need a paradigm shift?* which resulted in a book published in November 1999 in the framework of UNESCO's MOST Programme, entitled *Repenser le Développement: En finir avec la pauvreté*.<sup>6</sup> The book will be distributed at the special session on "Copenhagen +5". The strong ideas set forth in this book outline

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<sup>5</sup> Already published earlier in French by the Group NGO/UNESCO.

<sup>6</sup> This book can be requested from the Social and Human Sciences Sector. It exists in French only, but will be ready in English for mid-June 2000.

approaches for rethinking development and will contribute to the development debates as guidelines of action, and thus to the design of development and anti-poverty strategies. The International Social Science Journal published a special issue in December 1999 on *Policy Options for Social Development*. Both this issue and the report *Elimination de la Pauvreté en milieu urbain-changer le regard*, which is a result of a study undertaken by the mixed NGO commission on poverty, will also be distributed in Geneva.

24. The MOST Programme and ISSC/CROP (International Social Science Council/Comparative Research Programme on Poverty) will organize a joint symposium entitled *Social capital formation in poverty reduction: which role for the civil society organizations and the state?* which will take place during the special session of the General Assembly.

25. UNESCO had the lead in preparing the report requested in paragraph 17 in resolution A/AC.253/L.7 on the role of the United Nations system which was adopted by the Preparatory Committee to the special session concerning progress made in achieving education for all since Jomtien, and to make recommendations for further action.

26. The ideas and proposals expressed in the above publications and report, as well as the symposium will be a contribution to the general policy debate on poverty eradication at Geneva and after.

## X. CONCLUSION

27. In implementing the above activities for poverty eradication the Organization seeks to lay a foundation to better reach the most vulnerable groups of society. The Organization devotes in this respect particular attention to women's empowerment through education and training, as a key to improving the situation of women and men, of their families and their communities. UNESCO is also helping women articulate alternative visions of development.

28. The actions carried out by Headquarters and/or field units, often in cooperation with partners such as NGOs and other agencies, aim to respond to the agreed goals and commitments of the United Nations and other major development conferences. UNESCO's actions could benefit from a coherent strategy and programme for poverty eradication that would frame and develop its activities within a clear strategy and result-oriented approach in order to better reach the major international development targets.

**Hundred and fifty-ninth Session**

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Item 3.3.1 of the provisional agenda

**UNESCO's CONTRIBUTION TO POVERTY ERADICATION**

**CORRIGENDUM**

The quotation at the beginning of document 159 EX/9 should read as follows:

“If you see that we are sacrificing ourselves and risking our lives, it is because there is too much suffering in Africa and we need your help to fight against poverty and bring war to an end. However, we want to study and we ask you to help us study”.