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185 EX/INFORMATION MEETING

REPORT OF THE INFORMATION MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

**Tuesday, 15 June 2010
(10.00 a.m.-1.00 p.m. and 2.35 p.m.-3.35 p.m.)**

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In accordance with 155 EX/Decision 5.4, confirmed by the Executive Board at its 156th session, an information meeting between representatives of the Member States of the Executive Board and the Director-General was held at UNESCO Headquarters on 15 June 2010. Fifty-five Member States out of 58 were represented at the meeting, which all the Permanent Delegations to the Organization were invited to attend, as well as non-Board members and Permanent Observers. An account of the meeting follows.

Morning meeting

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

Dear colleagues and friends, following the 184th session of the Executive Board, and before the summer recess, I am glad to open this information and dialogue meeting with the Director-General. There was general consensus on the need to have such a meeting in order to allow a constructive exchange of opinions with the Director-General on the Secretariat's and the Director-General's achievements and initiatives at this time, almost a quarter-way into the current biennium. I thus would like to thank you for your continued close cooperation in formulating your reflections.

1.2 I would also like to express my gratitude to many of you for having provided me with a considered and critical evaluation of the 184th session, referring in particular to the changes introduced during that session, aimed at improving the Board's methods of work, and especially with regard to the establishment of the agenda and timetable of its sessions, the reduction in its documentation, the organization of the general debate and other time management-related issues. Your precious contributions will be the subject of one of my future meetings with the Vice-Chairs. As of now, however, I can add that our early efforts have begun to bear fruit in financial terms. We will continue this endeavour as we plan the coming sessions.

1.3 Dear colleagues, before inviting the Director-General to make her introductory remarks, please allow me, on behalf of all members of the UNESCO Executive Board, to extend a special welcome to Her Royal Highness Princess Marie of Denmark, who is present with us for the early part of this morning. The purpose of Her Royal Highness Princess Marie's visit to UNESCO is for her to become further acquainted with the work of our Organization in her capacity of patroness of UNESCO's activities in Denmark.

1.4 In this regard, I am glad to underline the substantive contribution and support that UNESCO and the broader United Nations system enjoys from Denmark, one of the most recent demonstrations of which was the organization last December of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. Much emphasis was placed there, and certainly vigorously led by the Director-General when she travelled to Copenhagen, on such areas as research on climate change in education and on cultural and biological diversity, which are priority dimensions for UNESCO's actions.

1.5 Your Royal Highness, your presence with us today strengthens our confidence in UNESCO's values and encourages its Member States to further reinforce their common commitment to reach international development goals. Once again, we welcome you and hope your visit to UNESCO has been fruitful.

1.6 Dear colleagues, you have before you the revised consolidated list of 51 questions, organized by sector and activity, received from 18 Member States. Unlike the practice at previous Information Meetings, and if you have no objections, our work today will take up all your written

questions in a single block, so the Director-General will now take the floor to respond to them all. I am pleased to give the floor to the Director-General.

2.1 The Director-General *in extenso*:

Madam Chairperson of the Executive Board, Mr President of the General Conference, distinguished Members and Representatives of the Executive Board, colleagues and friends, good morning. I would like to begin before all else by extending a very special word of welcome to Her Royal Highness Princess Marie of Denmark. I was pleased that we were able to discuss areas of joint concern yesterday and am very happy that you have taken the time to join us here today.

2.2 I am very pleased to have this opportunity to bring you up to date on key developments since our Executive Board session last April. It has been a time of strong exposure for UNESCO, a time that has enabled me to engage directly with National Commissions through their regional consultations, a time during which I have steadily advocated for moving education to the top of political agendas and for ensuring that culture and science are integral to development policy. Organizational reforms are advancing with a view, as I have already reiterated on several occasions, to improving our effectiveness, relevance and impact. The aftermath of the financial crisis, with austerity measures under way in numerous countries, makes this all the more imperative.

2.3 I am strongly engaged in reviewing proposals from the Task Forces and Thematic Working Groups. My overall aim remains unchanged: to optimize the Organization's impact, to reduce administrative costs and to ensure that we are structured to deliver results in a coordinated and effective manner. I look forward to sitting down with my new leadership team of Assistant Directors-General next month to further discuss and follow up on key recommendations.

2.4 If there is one event mobilizing global attention at the moment, it is of course the World Cup under way for the first time on African soil. It is a vibrant celebration of the continent's diversity, youthful energy and pride that also offers a highly visible chance to galvanize political commitment around what matters most for the future – education – or rather those who are missing out on one. In Brazil earlier this month, I joined in launching the One Goal Campaign at the Maracana football stadium. Our Organization is in touch with South African national authorities ahead of a 7 July summit on education in Cape Town.

2.5 Education is our top priority – a political priority, a priority in programming. We must continue building up strong political momentum around education, pointing to the progress that has been made over the past decade and repeatedly demonstrating education's positive impact on all development indicators. At the last Board meeting, I informed the Board members that "I do intend, as I stated in Addis Ababa, to reposition UNESCO to make us true leaders in the field of education. We are lead agency for the second Millennium Development Goal on education and have to do more to move education up the global development agenda. I will continue to champion this absolute priority, taking it to the G8 and the G20."

2.6 During my official visit to the Republic of Korea in May, I urged the government and the chairperson of the G20 organizing committee to make education a fully-fledged part of the next meeting's agenda. I am encouraged by the overall positive response expressed on behalf of the Korean government.

2.7 The September High-Level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals at United Nations Headquarters is one of the year's most important events for raising the profile of education and mobilizing further political momentum for achieving the education-related MDGs and the six Education for All goals. You have understandably asked several questions about the process.

2.8 The Board, at the previous session, encouraged me "to spare no efforts to ensure that education and gender are given a proper place" in the review meeting and "that the two education-related MDGs are seen in the broader EFA perspective". It further invited me "to strengthen

initiatives, together with other United Nations agencies, to interconnect the education-related MDGs with the other MDGs in order to increase synergy and progress towards the achievement of EFA and the Dakar goals, particularly through joint actions in education, food and health”.

2.9 In this connection, I informed you very early on that I intended to make every effort to ensure that UNESCO has a more visible presence on the agenda of the MDG Summit, and that our contribution to the MDGs is reflected in the Summit Outcome Document. I have personally discussed this issue at the highest level, with the Secretary-General, with the UNDP Administrator, with the President of the General Assembly and several other key stakeholders. They have encouraged me to make UNESCO more visible. We have been working on different fronts to position education high on the global agenda, with our message revolving around the critical role and benefits of education for the achievement of all Millennium Development Goals.

2.10 Consultations are under way to finalize the draft of the Summit’s Outcome Document in July 2010. In line with my discussions and announcement at the Executive Board, I also sent two letters to Permanent Delegates of UNESCO Member States, transmitting for information the language I had proposed and seeking their support. Likewise, after I had sent the letters to Permanent Delegations, the Secretariat sent this information to National Commissions and Heads of Field Offices, seeking their involvement and support for my proposals.

2.11 To be a visible Organization, we must be in a position to propose approaches to peace, poverty alleviation and development that not only respond to current challenges but also build on positive trends. UNESCO is the only organization in the United Nations system that can broaden current thinking about development to encompass the pivotal role of culture.

2.12 Nor is it by chance that we are leading the United Nations’ International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. The power of cultural diversity and dialogue, the role of shared values to build peace in a globalized world, have not been sufficiently recognized in international relations. Our voice, I am convinced, must be heard.

2.13 During my participation in the Third Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, I took part in the plenary summit on Cultural Diversity as a Pathway to Peace and the Ministerial Meeting of the Alliance’s Group of Friends. I also led a UNESCO-organized plenary session on Education for Intercultural Citizenship. I am pleased to have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Jorge Sampaio, the United Nations Secretary-General’s High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations that delineates a focused and complementary collaboration between UNESCO and the Alliance for the next two years. This will reinforce our respective capacity to foster dialogue and reach out to youth through multiple channels.

2.14 In many parts of the world, a new trend has been evolving over the last decade, and mainly in developing countries. I am speaking about culture as a real economic driver. Culture creates jobs; it is a factor of social cohesion, a force for reconciliation and peace-building in post-conflict situations. For all these reasons I am lobbying to ensure that the contribution of culture to development is more widely recognized in the MDG process. I recently sent a letter to the entire membership of the General Assembly, but also to Permanent Delegations and National Commissions recalling the importance of the work of UNESCO for the achievement of the MDGs, especially in the area of education as I already pointed out, but also of culture and development. I am glad that a large portion of the United Nations membership has acknowledged the relevance of our arguments. In both Brazil and at the World Expo in Shanghai, China, I also had the pleasure to present our flagship Report on Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue.

2.15 Also let me mention that on each of my missions, I insist on meeting with the United Nations Country Team and the United Nations Resident Coordinator to discuss UNESCO’s role and mandate. Every time I stress our commitment to the United Nations Delivering as One reform process and to the importance we place on fully participating in this development project.

2.16 We are also reinforcing South-South cooperation, with a special focus on Africa. In Brazil, I signed an agreement with the government that promotes triangular technical cooperation in developing countries in our fields of competence. The memorandum that I signed with China, where I met with Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, includes initiatives in Africa: China will provide through UNESCO 100 full four-year scholarships in the field of science. More broadly, the agreement covers educational reform, literacy, capacity development, science and support to several cultural programmes. I am grateful for this proposal.

2.17 We cannot underestimate, ladies and gentlemen, the importance of reaching a wide spectrum of audiences to explain the importance of promoting a humanist approach to development that encompasses attention to education, science, culture and communications. This was the message that I shared with the regional consultations of National Commissions in the Asia-Pacific and Europe and North America that I recently attended.

2.18 We have the know-how and convening power to respond coherently, cooperatively and creatively to today's global challenges. Take the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. Just last week on World Ocean Day I was present to launch the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Commission. With its solid membership of 138 nations, its partnerships with other bodies and broad remit, the IOC has unparalleled legitimacy in its field, offering a model of best practice in addressing the world's most pressing problems collectively. Let me reiterate here my strong commitment to support the IOC and to expand its cooperation with other activities of UNESCO in the scientific field.

2.19 Madam Chairperson, distinguished Board Members, let me now turn to a subject of great concern to me. I refer to the UNESCO-Obiang Nguema Mbasogo International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences. Let me first summarize the facts. The Prize was established in October 2008 by 180 EX/Decision 57 of the Executive Board. The International Jury for the Prize was appointed by my predecessor, former Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura in August 2009. When I took up my duties on 15 November 2009, the deadline for the Prize had already been extended because of the insufficient number of candidates – only four. In December 2009, I still felt that this number – which then stood at 14 valid ones – remained inadequate. Therefore I decided to extend the deadline for the nomination process to 30 April 2010, to give credence to the Prize process in full conformity with the procedure and the decision of the Board. And I discussed this with Jean Ping, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, during a visit to Addis Ababa at the end of February. In a letter dated 12 March 2010, I informed the President of Equatorial Guinea about the extended deadline and plans for the award ceremony to be held eventually in June 2010. The announcement of the new deadline was also made to all Member States and the scientific community on 22 April.

2.20 Since the beginning of the year I have started receiving criticisms from NGOs and media about the Prize. I reported to the last session of the Executive Board on these developments. In the absence of any objection from the Board, I considered that it was my obligation to continue with the procedure.

2.21 Therefore, the Jury met on 18 and 19 May 2010. The outcome of this meeting, I have to say, was without precedent in the life of our Organization. One member withdrew from the process just prior to the deliberations, partly because of the controversy that the Prize has raised in the international community. The four remaining Jury members appealed to me to enter into consultations with Member States, also in light of these concerns.

2.22 The situation, I have to say, has evolved dramatically since the Jury met. I am receiving letters, messages and statements on a daily basis from a whole range of constituencies from around the world – not only from NGOs but from representatives from the scientific community, from Member States, parliamentarians and intellectuals from all regions. Many have urged me to sever UNESCO's association with the Prize. I have here a full folder of letters that I have received over the last month.

2.23 Because the decision to establish this Prize was adopted by the Executive Board, because the Jury recommended that I engage in a consultation with Member States, and in light of the many letters of criticism addressed to me, I immediately requested to meet with you, Mrs Chairperson of the Executive Board, in order to discuss the manner in which to proceed. This meeting, attended by the Vice-Chairs of the Board, took place on 26 May.

2.24 Let me once again say that I have heard the appeal by the Jury members to engage with you. I have also heard the voices of eminent scientists from around the world including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Desmond Tutu, Noble Physics Prize laureate Claude Cohen-Tannoudji, Nobel Chemistry laureate John Polanyi, prominent Japanese scientists such as Professor Minoru Obayashi who is also the former President of the Civil Forum for the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, Professor Michiya Kumaoka from the University of Tokyo, Professor Kinhide Mushakoji, Former Vice-President of the United Nations University and Professor Tatsuo Hayashi, President of the Africa Japan Forum. The laureates of several UNESCO prizes have also expressed their concern: Abdallah S. Daar, recipient in 2005 of UNESCO's Avicenna Prize for Ethics in Science and a Member of the UNESCO International Bioethics Committee; Belita Koiller, a laureate of the L'Oréal-UNESCO Women in Science prize; Monica Gonzales from Chile and Lydia Cacho from Mexico, respectively the 2010 and 2008 laureates of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. Ms Cacho is also a Member of the High-Level Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures. I am just citing a few of the intellectuals who have written to me. I have heard the voice of the many intellectuals, journalists and, of course, governments and parliamentarians who have appealed to me to protect and preserve the prestige of our Organization.

2.25 This global campaign is unmatched in scope by any other event in the last decades of the life of this Organization. As Director-General it is my firm belief that my first and foremost responsibility, above all other considerations, is to protect UNESCO's prestige and to alert Member States when I see a serious danger before us. Now, ladies and gentlemen, is such a time.

2.26 I am fully cognizant of my obligation regarding decisions of the Executive Board but I am also cognizant of my responsibility towards this Organization, as I stated, which is foremost and above all to preserve its name, integrity and high status.

2.27 I have come to you with a strong message of alarm and anxiety. I am fully aware that the Executive Board took a decision two years ago, but I believe that given the changing circumstances and the unprecedented developments of the past months, we must be courageous and recognize our responsibilities, for it is our Organization that is at stake. Therefore, at this stage, I will not set a date for awarding the Prize.

2.28 I appeal to you, the Executive Board, to continue its consultations in a spirit of mutual respect and dignity for all partners concerned, taking into account all recent developments, so that the issue could possibly be addressed in a constructive way at the next session of the Board.

2.29 This is not an issue of concern to just one group or one region. It concerns us all and it brings the reputation and credibility of our Organization into play.

2.30 Let me also mention that at the next session of the Board, I intend to present proposals on amending the criteria for prizes based on the recommendations of the Working Group on Prizes that I established, which will be looking ahead to our future activities.

2.31 Madam Chairperson, distinguished Board Members, let me turn to another set of questions put to me. The visibility of our Organization can benefit from intellectual and policy-type discussions. This is precisely the objective of the anticipation and foresight programme. After running the 21st century talks for several years, this approach was reviewed in order to provide more effective policy discussions. Over the past two years, the UNESCO future forums have addressed leading global issues such as the financial crisis and the knowledge revolution. As one

of the objectives of the programme is to stimulate policy discussions in Member States, let me also inform you that immediately following the regional C/5 consultations for GRULAC in Trinidad and Tobago, a UNESCO future forum will be organized on development challenges in Small Island Developing States, with special attention on the Caribbean.

2.32 Other events organized in Member States over the last year include one on the green society in China and on middle-income countries in Uruguay.

2.33 All these developments have been reported in the relevant Executive Board documents and to the General Conference. I feel that we are on the right track with this programme and that many valuable policy-style discussions have taken place over the past two years that have influenced the intergovernmental discourse and were also picked up by the international press. But of course I agree that there is still a lot to be done to make our work more visible and show its impact.

2.34 Let me now move on to address specific questions that I have not covered yet, beginning with gender equality and Africa.

2.35 We are seizing high-profile occasions to advance gender equality. At the end of this month UNESCO is organizing a ministerial meeting with UNICEF on women's and girl's education during the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial meeting dedicated to gender equality and empowerment in New York. In September, a UNESCO Future Forum in Athens will attract prominent figures around the theme "Gender Equality: the Missing Link." Finally, in late September, UNESCO will co-host the Expert Group Meeting to prepare for the 2011 session of the Commission on the Status of Women that will centre around the education of women and girls. I have also asked the Director of the Division for Gender Equality to propose concrete measures for improving the effectiveness of the implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan. A consultation process is currently under way, also drawing on some of the recommendations of the Task Force on Gender Equality.

2.36 Turning to our other priority area, I am convinced that we must ensure that we are structured to deliver effectively in Africa. The Intersectoral platform "Priority Africa" was an effort, by the Organization, to give new impetus to the Priority Africa programme. An upcoming review of all the Intersectoral Platforms will enable us to decide on the best adapted orientations for the future.

2.37 Let me turn to another set of questions that I have received on the Middle East. UNESCO has, over the past months, continued to closely monitor the situation in the region and to implement activities in its fields of competence. As far as the Old City of Jerusalem and the Mughrabi Ascent are concerned, the Secretariat has received no new information since the last session of the Executive Board. However, these two items will be discussed at the forthcoming session of the World Heritage Committee in Brazil (25 July-3 August).

2.38 There are some new initiatives to which I should like to bring your attention. The first one concerns a possible partnership with the Islamic Development Bank. The Bank is launching a major plan of \$1.6 billion for the reconstruction of Gaza that features education as one of its priorities. UNESCO is exploring ways of cooperating on the plan with a view to improving quality education in scientific disciplines through the provision of educational material and equipment to laboratories.

2.39 Another new initiative launched by the Ramallah Office is a project to construct a protective shelter and garden complex for the 8th century Omayyad site of Hisham's Palace – Khirbet al-Mafjar. The world-renowned Swiss architect Peter Zumthor has prepared a design for the shelter, estimated to cost \$7 million. This shelter would allow the outstanding mosaic of the Great Bath to be uncovered, and the site being made fully accessible to tourists. We have developed this initiative in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities as a contribution to this year's celebration of the 10,000th anniversary of Jericho.

2.40 And finally, let me mention that early next month, UNESCO and the Saudi Committee for the Relief of the Palestinian People will sign an agreement to support the right to education of university students, particularly those from the most disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and living in marginalized areas. The planned programme totalling \$2.9 million will establish or support libraries that contain vital course materials for students in each of the 12 districts in the West Bank and Gaza.

2.41 Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to now run through the questions concerning our sectoral programmes, beginning with education.

2.42 You have asked about the global education conferences held in 2008 and 2009 – together, these conferences generated tremendous interest in the education and policy-making communities. I will submit to the next session of the Executive Board specific reporting on the follow-up to these conferences. Let me remind me you that my predecessor submitted a report on this issue to the General Conference at its 35th session, which is available on the website.

2.43 With specific regard to the World Conference on Higher Education, the Education Sector is actively following up on the six areas of work identified in the Call for Action. They range from capacity development on quality assurance in Africa to platforms on distance education and the organization of Ministerial policy fora. In the coming weeks, a questionnaire will be sent to all Member States regarding the follow-up to this world conference at national level.

2.44 I will turn now to questions regarding specific aspects of our programme work. Technical and vocational education is one of the Education Sector's four priority areas in the 35 C/5 document. We are developing methodological frameworks, tools and guidelines to strengthen skills development for youth and adults. Country-level activities are being implemented by field offices, supported by the Regional Bureaux and Headquarters.

2.45 The UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNEVOC) in Bonn, Germany, plays an important role as a resource and capacity development centre. It facilitates knowledge-sharing and the exchange of good practices, and coordinates an international network of specialized centres. Furthermore, initiatives are being taken to gradually involve the UNEVOC centres in policy development work at the country level.

2.46 Teachers are one of the building blocks for Education for All. You have rightly expressed concern about Africa – it is where the need for additional teachers is greatest. I am pleased to say that several Member States, including Israel, Monaco and the United States of America, have recently committed funds to support activities on teacher education in Africa. I would like to take this occasion to strongly encourage Member States to make voluntary contributions that will enable UNESCO to further scale up its impact in this important field. UNESCO is also currently exploring options for financial support from the United Arab Emirates for an important teacher training programme in Africa. Every effort will be made to ensure that South-South and triangular North-South-South cooperation are used as modalities for implementing these activities.

2.47 Within its main priorities – literacy, skills and teachers – we firmly support mother tongue instruction and multilingual education. It is a means of improving education quality, promoting social and gender equality and encouraging understanding between different population groups. I would encourage interested delegations to look at our position paper on “Education in a Multilingual World” published in 2003, which still guides our efforts in this direction.

2.48 As the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* indicates, achieving education for all in low-income countries will require a major increase in financing. The Education for All Fast Track Initiative is severely under-funded. You have asked about a pledging conference. In light of the financial crisis, such an event at the present moment is not likely to bring in substantial resources. We are working to reinforce and stabilize the Fast-Track Initiative, and to discuss new avenues for cooperation

during and after the MDG Summit in September. Innovative approaches to education financing should be part of this exercise.

2.49 UNESCO is active on this front. In 2009, the General Conference requested that the Director-General establish an Advisory Panel of Experts on debt swaps and innovative approaches to education financing. Argentina has been a leading advocate of the debt swaps initiative. As a result of this, UNESCO has developed a proposal on the composition and mandate of this Panel. It reflects recent developments, namely the establishment in early 2010 of a Task Force on Innovative Financing for Education by the Leading Group on Innovative Financing for Development. This body brings together 59 countries and various multilaterals and NGOs, and its secretariat is located within the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. UNESCO is a member of this new Task Force that will focus specifically on innovative financing for education. We intend to ensure close coordination between it and the Panel on debt swaps. The first meeting of this Panel is expected to take place in September at Headquarters. A Special Account will be created to attract extrabudgetary resources based on the Advisory Panel's proposals, and to strengthen our expertise in this field. I will ensure that you are duly informed about developments so that you can express opinions during forthcoming information meetings.

2.50 I have already briefly referred to the great importance I place on reinforcing South-South cooperation, especially in the area of education. To mobilize funds for various educational projects, I recently sent personal letters to Member States – both present and potential contributors. From its end, the Education Sector is approaching potential private partners and recently met with the special UNDP unit in charge of South-South cooperation to explore opportunities for collaboration. With regard to the pilot projects, three are close to finished and a report will be submitted to the next session of the Board. The project on mother-tongue languages in Africa will be completed by the end of 2010 and a report available in 2011.

2.51 I have been asked about mobilizing funds in Africa for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. While UNESCO has a leadership and coordination role for the Decade, Member States must be in the driver's seat for ensuring implementation of the Decade's activities at national level. The Bonn Declaration adopted at last year's World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development stipulates that Member States have to make significant efforts to mobilize adequate resources and funding. One route is to integrate Education for Sustainable Development into national development policy and budgetary frameworks. At global and national level, UNESCO, with all the Decade's partners, will look at further integrating Education for Sustainable Development into United Nations common country programming processes and other national policy frameworks and international development initiatives.

2.52 Allow me to respond to a question about UNESCO Chairs and the UNITWIN network. Unquestionably, this programme is a unique bridge-builder between research and decision-making, and between academia and civil society. Since new strategic orientations were implemented in 2007, the Chairs and networks have become strong institutional partners for advancing our work in Education for All, education for sustainable development, intercultural dialogue, water management, bioethics and the use of information and communication technologies, to give just a few examples. Triangular North-South-South cooperation is also being enhanced, through the creation of subregional poles of excellence and innovation in specific areas of research and training.

2.53 Ladies and gentlemen, let me move on to the area of the Natural Sciences. I received several questions concerning the International Basic Sciences Programme. I would like to reassure you that substantial measures are already being taken to alleviate the financial constraints of this Programme through cost-sharing partnerships, streamlining and extrabudgetary contributions from Member States. A study to explore the feasibility of increasing the Programme's budget in the next biennium will be done next year and options for further financing presented to the Executive Board at its next session. Meanwhile, the Scientific Board of the Programme is being consulted and new programmatic orientations will also be presented to the next Executive Board session.

2.54 With regard to the Man and the Biosphere Programme, efforts are currently under way to negotiate a priority place for sites that are both biosphere reserves and World Heritage sites within the REDD and inter-agency REDD-plus initiative. REDD stands for the reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. The Man and the Biosphere International Coordination Council, held at UNESCO Headquarters earlier this month, also called for Biosphere Reserves to play an enhanced role in Member States as learning laboratories, through for example setting up working groups on key sustainable development topics. Participants also called for setting up an Observatory on Climate Change that would collect information from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, thus directly contributing to the monitoring of climate change.

2.55 Regarding the question on the African Union's Consolidated Plan of Action on Science and Technology, UNESCO contributed financially and technically to the fourth African Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology held in Cairo this year. I held in-depth commissions on science and technology during my high-level meetings at the end of February with the Africa Commission in Addis Ababa. Moreover, in cooperation with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the Bamako Cluster Office and the Malian Ministry for Higher Education, Science and Technology, UNESCO organized a training session in Bamako last May to reinforce capacity-building in science policies and evidence-based policy-making. Representatives from the 15 ECOWAS countries shared experiences in science policy and the use of statistics and indicators in policy-making. Next week in Addis Ababa we are co-organizing, with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, a conference entitled "Science with Africa II". It will bring together policy-makers and the scientific community from across Africa and globally to reflect on innovation. During the Conference, the United Nations Commission for Africa will also launch the African Innovation Endowment Fund, with participation and assistance from UNESCO.

2.56 In the meantime, UNESCO continues to provide technical assistance to African Member States to review their science, technology and innovation policies. Last May, a high-level workshop was held at Headquarters on Strengthening National Capacities for Science Policy and Management in Nigeria, to give one example. Funded by the Government of Nigeria with support from Japan, the meeting aimed to design, with Nigerian stakeholders, a roadmap for advancing science, technology and innovation policy in Africa's most populous nation, and to identify the role of different institutions in this exercise.

2.57 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, as you are aware, UNESCO is coordinating the major events that will take place worldwide in 2010 for the International Year of Youth, which will be launched on 12 August. UNESCO is also a member of the International Committee for the preparation of the World Youth Conference to be held in Mexico from 23 to 27 August 2010.

2.58 Other activities in UNESCO's programme for youth fall within the scope of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. I would mention, among others, the joint publication by UNESCO and the Inter-American Development Bank on "Best Practices in Youth Programmes and Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean". I would also cite the Fourth UNESCO Asian Youth Forum, jointly organized with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, to be held in September 2010.

2.59 The adoption at the last session of the Executive Board of the UNESCO Strategy on African Youth gave a fresh boost to our action in Africa. In that connection, I should like to express my enormous gratitude to the African Group for its substantial support. I know that the African Group is very firmly committed to pursuing its efforts throughout the entire implementation phase of the project. In the first stage, UNESCO will focus on a joint campaign with the African Union for the ratification and implementation of the African Youth Charter. There will be a regional study to consolidate the 2011 UNESCO global report on youth civic engagement, and a framework for the development of pro-youth policies.

2.60 Ladies and gentlemen, our Organization has, obviously, been proceeding with its work for Haiti. Since the earthquake on 12 January, we have dispatched four on-site missions from the Culture Sector, four from the Education Sector, three from the Communication and Information Sector and three from the Natural Sciences Sector and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. We have also strengthened the expertise available in our Office in Port-au-Prince: four additional Professionals are now working there, in the education, culture and communication fields. I would like to thank Norway in this regard for sending qualified experts to work with us in our office.

2.61 Since January, apart from about \$0.5 million in funding from the regular budget, \$4 million in extrabudgetary funds have been raised to benefit Haiti. Allow me here to express my most sincere gratitude in particular to the GRULAC States, the African States, Saudi Arabia and the Arab States, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Bulgaria, and indeed the other States in the ASPAC Group and Group I. This funding has been used to set up the projects I told you about at our most recent meetings: securing the Haitian cultural heritage, reopening community radio stations, reopening the Early Warning Centre for Natural Disasters, vocational training in anti-seismic construction techniques, and psychosocial support for teachers and pupils alike.

2.62 The Interim Haiti Recovery Commission met for the first time yesterday, June 14, in Port-au-Prince, under its Co-Chairs, Prime Minister Bellerive and United Nations Special Envoy, Bill Clinton. This working group, as you know, was set up at the International Conference in New York on 31 March 2010, at which I represented UNESCO. Our Organization presented three specific projects and one joint project with the International Labour Organization. These four new projects total \$3.75 million. They cover the continued development of community radio in Haiti, continued support for higher education and vocational training in Haiti, and the development of sustainable forms of economic activity in the city of Jacmel, especially in the field of crafts and the restoration of the architectural heritage. Lastly, the World Heritage Centre will be sending a new mission to Port-au-Prince at the beginning of July to carry out a fresh assessment of priority projects, in coordination with our Haitian partners. I consider it important to keep you informed of the actions we are taking in Haiti, and to assure you that Haiti remains a priority for the Organization.

2.63 Turning to the synergy of action between the various Funds hosted by the Culture Sector, I should start by recalling that each of these Funds is governed by specific rules and statutes. The objective of the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture is to promote cultural and creative activities, while the objective of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity is to strengthen cultural industries. They are different in scope, but coexist and complement each other.

2.64 Pursuant to a decision adopted by the Executive Board at its last session, the External Auditor has been requested to conduct an evaluation of the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture. A report thereon will be submitted at the next session of the Executive Board.

2.65 On the subject of the World Heritage Centre, I can confirm that the recruitment of a Deputy Director for Management will be completed before the next session of the World Heritage Committee in Brasilia. The process of recruiting a new Director for the World Heritage Centre is also well under way, and the post will be advertised very shortly. I hope that highly qualified candidates from all parts of the world will apply. Until the recruitment process is complete, Mr Bandarin will serve as Acting Director of the Centre.

2.66 With regard to the questions about the High-Level Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures, I can confirm that I have suggested that the Panel should hold its second meeting in New York in late 2010, on the occasion of the close of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, and the close of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. We are in the process of narrowing down and defining the central theme for this meeting, of which I have great expectations in terms of substantiating our thinking and actions in promoting a fairer and more balanced world.

2.67 I fully subscribe to the idea that the culture of peace is a part of everything UNESCO does. I firmly believe that it lies at the heart of our mandate, and that we must give it real expression in all our programmes. I have appointed a focal point in my Office, Ms Mariama Saïdou-Djermakoye, who will be responsible for coordinating all cross-cutting and intersectoral activities on this subject.

2.68 As requested by the Executive Board, I will include in the preliminary proposals regarding the Draft Programme and Budget for 2012-2013, which I will submit to the Board at its autumn session, proposals concerning the programme of action for the culture of peace, including intersectoral and interdisciplinary activities, taking into account the global context and new and current challenges. As you all know, I am currently consulting the National Commissions as part of the round of regional consultations. I will be gathering their opinions. I am also expecting suggestions from Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

2.69 As coordinator of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World which ends in 2010, UNESCO is drafting a report which will be submitted in autumn to the Executive Board, and to the United Nations General Assembly, on the actions conducted throughout the world over the last 10 years.

2.70 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I shall now turn to UNESCO's communication and information programme. This represents a series of actions which must be at the heart of development, in particular to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

2.71 Our era has opened up new and exceptional opportunities of which we at UNESCO would like to take full advantage. In this regard, I wish to draw your attention to the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, an initiative launched by UNESCO together with the International Telecommunication Union, on the occasion of the 2010 Forum of the World Summit on the Information Society held in Geneva in May 2010. The Broadband Commission is made up of a group of leaders from the political and business worlds, civil society and international organizations. Its role will be to identify and define key criteria enabling the use of broadband in order to advance more quickly, within the framework of a global partnership, towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals. Evidently, as Vice-Chair of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, I will participate in the meeting of the Commission in Geneva on 11 July this year. The Commission will submit its final report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Member States on 19 September 2010 in New York, on the occasion of the Summit of the United Nations on the Millennium Development Goals. I assure you that you will be informed long before the launch of this report in New York.

2.72 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, in reply to a question on the involvement of NGOs in the preparation of the C/5 document, I would like to notify you that the NGO Liaison Committee has already participated in three regional consultations of National Commissions. As is customary, NGOs were invited to fill out the questionnaire on document 36 C/5, and we are going to organize a special consultation with them on this subject. I will also request Assistant Directors-General to call on NGOs more systematically, to better use their potential and capabilities. I will also charge them with identifying new non-governmental partners. At the same time, we will create a "map" showing the development of regional and national NGOs according to UNESCO fields of competence, and we are considering creating NGO focal points in field offices.

2.73 I call on Member States to fully assume their responsibility, which is to support and strengthen the capacities of their National Commissions. UNESCO will continue to contribute as much as it possibly can. I would add that a guide for National Commissions on public information will be available at the end of the year. Lastly, I encourage National Commissions to develop their websites, which are a very effective tool for communication and exposure.

2.74 Ladies and gentlemen, as I have already said on several occasions, I am absolutely determined to maintain my commitment and continue my efforts to optimize the effectiveness of UNESCO, and to ensure a better balance between resources for administration and programmes. I

am also analysing our presence in the field, which must be reconsidered in the light of the United Nations reform and the “Delivering as One” agenda at country level. In this regard, the regional dimension is a major element. At the next session of the Executive Board I will present you with specific proposals. This new strategy of operations in the field includes a review of the functions and responsibilities of field office administrative officers.

2.75 The implementation of all the measures that I will propose to you will be gradual and transparent: that is why I have decided that a new section will be introduced for that purpose on the UNESCO website, under the heading “Director-General”.

2.76 Turning now to the follow-up of recommendations from the independent external evaluation, it appears that interaction with the Executive Board and the delegations is essential. The evaluation timetable forces us to hold a specific information meeting on 6 July, whereas the final report will be available for the Board’s October session. Once the specific recommendations of the evaluation are available, we will use the mechanism set up by the Internal Oversight Service to formulate a response and action plan for each of them.

2.77 In reply to a question on the Advisory Committee for Works of Art, allow me to remind you that the fourth and last meeting of this Committee will be held on 22 June. After that date, the terms of reference and membership of the Committee will be renewed. I hope to receive excellent applications, very representative in terms of geographical distribution. I wish to specify that it is up to me to appoint the new members of this Committee, which I will do after the autumn Board session. The six members of the Committee must be recognized experts in the field of modern and traditional art; their knowledge must encompass all the regions of the world. I wish to recall that the Committee must not accrue costs for the Organization and that it does not have a specific budget. This means that all travel and accommodation expenses are the responsibility of members of the Committee.

2.78 Lastly, I wish to inform you that the revision of the Organization’s Publication and Distribution Plan is well under way. This new Plan should enable the quality of information provided to be improved. You will receive details on this subject at the autumn session of the Executive Board.

2.79 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I hope that I have answered the questions which you transmitted to me. I have also shared some of my concerns with you. If you would like to obtain further explanations on certain points, I will answer you during the question-and-answer session which we are about to begin.

2.80 Our peace mandate is powerful and our Organization’s fields of expertise are unique. Therefore our action must also be unique. Above all, we aspire to be effective. We want the impact of both our intellectual and concrete action to be tangible, confirmable and clear. Thank you for your attention.

3. **The Chair** thanked the Director-General for her statement, and introduced the question-and-answer session. To allow for as many questions as possible in a meeting which had been conceived from the outset as highly interactive, she requested Members to limit their interventions to three minutes.

4. **Mr Anastassopoulos** (Greece) raised the subject of UNESCO’s leading role in the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. He had attended a series of meetings, arranged both by UNESCO and other entities, including a helpful discussion in Saint Petersburg at the invitation of the Chair of the Executive Board, but it was unclear to him whether all of them were valuable and where the process was heading. Was there a consensus on the direction to be taken?

5.1 **Ms Mukherjee** (India) thanked the Director-General for an excellent presentation which had provided answers to all the questions. On the South-South Cooperation Programme/Fund for Education, she thanked the Director-General for her efforts as chairperson, and asked for her assistance and support in the new fund-raising strategy, which looked to the Director-General to actively promote the Fund on her many visits and reach out to donors.

5.2 She asked whether the Bureau of Public Information of UNESCO was being restructured so as to ensure the proactive dissemination of information provided by the Director-General or the organization on particular policy issues, including to those sections of the media whose perspective about UNESCO might not be accurate. It was the Organization's responsibility to proactively clarify situations when they arose so that UNESCO's case did not go undefended in the media.

5.3 India would also appreciate clarification of the progress made with regard to external evaluation. As to works of art, she welcomed the information given and looked to the Director-General to address the issue of the present composition of the Works of Art Committee: it was not balanced either in civilizational or geographical terms, with Africa and Asia unrepresented since the Committee's inception.

5.4 Ms Mukherjee also asked the Director-General to review the many issues that were repeatedly ventilated in the Headquarters Committee, including the huge dissatisfaction with the state of the Miollis Building, which was not being properly maintained and did not correctly reflect the image of the Organization.

6.1 **Mr Yamamoto** (Japan) thanked the Director-General for her excellent and lucid presentation. He asked about the current status of climate change education, which was, in his view, one of the more important contributions UNESCO could make in the field of climate change, particularly in the context of education for sustainable development.

6.2 He, too, invited the Director-General's views on what direction UNESCO was taking with the process of rapprochement of cultures. Practical programmes should be devised to give effect to the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Alliance of Civilizations. He suggested that greater effort be made to utilize the rich networks that already existed around UNESCO, such as the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network, with more than 9,000 schools worldwide, and the UNESCO Chairs, spanning all sorts of activities around the globe and encompassing a wealth of talent, and to build upon the interaction between them.

7. **Mr Jang** (Republic of Korea) reported that the recent visit by the Director-General to the Republic of Korea had provided an opportunity for his country to organize significant meetings on topics such as digital consultation with UNESCO, a meeting of the National Commissions in the Asia-Pacific region and the Second UNESCO World Conference on Arts Education. A meeting with the chairperson of the organizing committee for the forthcoming G20 summit had raised the profile of education issues on the agenda for the G20 summit. The most important outcome of the visit, in his view, was the greatly enhanced visibility of UNESCO within the country, for which he commended the Director-General's media strategy. In terms of follow-up of the visit, UNESCO had a certain responsibility to implement the Seoul agenda drawn up by the World Conference on Arts Education. How would the importance of arts education be reflected in the Organization's regular programme?

8. **Ms Rabenoro** (Madagascar) deplored the cruel shortage of teachers in Africa, and remarked that the Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA) did not seem to have produced very clear results. What was being done by the special team set up to look into the question of teacher shortage?

9.1 **The Director-General** invited input from those present at the discussions in Saint Petersburg on the dialogue among cultures, as the issue was one of importance for the whole Organization. She agreed that a clearer strategy was probably needed, but felt that all the debates to date had been building towards such an outcome. The process was moving beyond the stage of analysis of the contents of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Alliance of Civilizations, to formulating and presenting what UNESCO was doing in practical terms, and streamlining its activities in education, communication, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. She looked forward to the thematic debate during the next session of the Board on that very topic, from which she expected a more focused UNESCO strategy to emerge.

9.2 Turning to the South-South Cooperation Programme/Fund for Education, she confirmed that, in line with the strategy outlined by the Ambassador of India, she regularly took the opportunity at meetings, at Headquarters and elsewhere, to advocate contributions from potential donors. She was particularly grateful to Brazil and China, countries with which MOUs had recently been signed, for their willingness to support UNESCO's activity with a special focus on education and science.

9.3 The Bureau of Public Information had not yet been restructured, but the matter would be considered when her new team was in place. In the meantime, she was endeavouring to coordinate better information policies both within UNESCO and outside, as it was important to convey a more coherent message.

9.4 The external evaluation team was now present at all the regional consultations with National Commissions for the next C/5 document. This was important, as it gave the team real feedback on the concerns of the National Commissions. An information meeting on the external evaluation process was scheduled for 6 July, with the possibility of another, depending on how the process evolved, before the next session of the Executive Board. She was now more satisfied with the process, which had developed into a credible tool that could be drawn upon in the future reform of the Organization.

9.5 With regard to issues before the Headquarters Committee, a new capital master plan was being drawn up to cover the whole of the Miollis building. A proposal would be put to the next General Conference to provide for the resources required for its implementation.

9.6 The Director-General said that she shared the view of the Ambassador of Japan that more emphasis and prominence should be given to education for sustainable development. A new dynamism was building up around UNESCO's initiative for climate change education. A working group had been set up within the Education Sector to identify and plan a pilot project, and a seminar for climate change education was to be held in July in the Maldives for Small Island Developing States. That would be an opportunity to test, on the ground, the input from Member States in that field.

9.7 As far as UNESCO's existing networks were concerned, more emphasis was being placed on their interconnection and more encouragement given to it. Unfortunately, no financing was available. To launch more concrete initiatives, make the networks more visible and harness their input to complement the resources within the Secretariat, specific requests could be made for modest amounts of extrabudgetary funding. She would ask her new team to take an intersectoral approach. The networks provided a unique opportunity to promote UNESCO's values and ideas, and to make a big impact without needing substantial financing.

9.8 The Director-General expressed her gratitude to the Ambassador of Korea and the authorities in his country for the excellent organization of both the Second UNESCO World Conference on Arts Education and her own first official visit, as well as the regional consultations in ASPAC for the next C/5. The debate had been very rich and substantial, with a wealth of interesting ideas. Such was the emphasis the Korean Government had placed on the development agenda in preparation for the next G20 summit that, by the time she met with the chairperson of the organizing committee, she had effectively been knocking on an open door.

9.9 On the specific question of UNESCO's responsibility in arts education, she entirely agreed with Korea. The Culture Sector was looking at ways of following up the Conference. With work ongoing on the next C/5 document, the timing was right to incorporate some of its recommendations into the regular programme. The issue would not be put aside and forgotten.

9.10 The issue raised by Madagascar was, in her view, one of extrabudgetary resources. Why did Education for All represent a real difficulty, a bottleneck, for some countries? The key, as was now widely recognized, was twofold: both the lack of teachers, and the quality of teachers. Hence the creation by UNESCO and the convening agencies for EFA of an International Task Force on Teachers for EFA. There had been a special discussion at the Ninth High-Level Group Meeting on EFA in Addis Ababa on the impact of the financial crisis on teachers and EFA, and a round table discussion would be held in July on the challenges of quality EFA teaching. Much work was being done, with the issue being debated in all the fora and meetings, including in Addis Ababa when the first stone had been laid of the new building for the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA). The focus was on how to help governments, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, put the right policies in place to address both aspects of the problem: numbers and quality.

10.1 **Mr Paré** (Burkina Faso) thanked the Director-General for sharing with the Board her concerns about the Obiang Prize, and commended her perspicacious analysis of the issue. Her approach was one that would protect the higher general interest of the Organization. He thanked her, too, for having set the Board on a course of cooperative reflection in anticipation of the debate on the subject at a future meeting.

10.2 He noted with satisfaction that actions with regard to Africa were being taken in synergy with the African Union and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), and said he would like to see the various initiatives in support of that continent grouped together in a priority programme for Africa, to give UNESCO's work a positive, visible impact on the ground. Burkina Faso also wanted the name "Priority Africa Programme" to be used in the C/5 document.

11.1 **Ms Florez Prida** (Cuba) thanked the Director-General for her detailed report. Her delegation wished to know more about the International Coordination Committee for the Safeguarding of Haitian Cultural Heritage: how, pursuant to Article 3 of the statutes approved by the Executive Board at its 184th session, would the Director-General decide whom to invite to its meetings, and who should be the 10 members of the committee?

11.2 In the light of recent amendments to the global strategy concerning UNESCO prizes, Cuba had noticed that financial regulation was increasingly handled by prize donors, with the result that the economic dimension of prizes now exceeded their symbolic and moral aspects. She would welcome the Director-General's opinion on that aspect, as well as on its repercussions for the attribution of prizes by developing countries with fewer financial resources, bearing in mind that the Thematic Working Group on UNESCO Prizes would be presenting its recommendations to the next session of the Board.

12.1 **Ms Bennani** (Morocco) explained that the World Heritage Committee would take a technical approach to the question of the Mughrabi Ascent, while the concerns of the Executive Board were altogether different in nature. The difficult conditions prevailing in the region called for prompt solutions, including compliance with the decisions of the Organization, and she wondered what measures the Secretariat was taking in preparation for the next session of the Executive Board.

12.2 She stressed the vital role of the Organization as an intellectual forum, especially in times of crisis, but said that she no longer understood UNESCO's vision of the future. It was a matter of regret that the 21st Century Dialogues, which had brought visibility to the Organization, attracted an audience of heavyweight intellectuals and generated publications, had been discontinued and replaced by the UNESCO Future Forum series, which, so far, had been lacklustre and brought no benefit to the Organization.

12.3 She congratulated the Director-General for her commitment to working with the Alliance of Civilizations and asked when the French version would be available of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Alliance and UNESCO, as it opened up interesting new avenues. The document was currently available only in English, and it was not right for non-English speaking delegations to receive increasing numbers of documents in English. Cooperation with the Alliance of Civilizations was vitally important, as it upheld a position that was opposed to the “clash of civilizations” school, and had the merit of positioning the culture of peace at the core of the political agenda. On education, the speaker repeated her request for more information on the follow-up to the recommendations that had emerged from the major global conferences on education, which had cost the Organization a lot of money. Lastly, she asked where she could find the report by the previous Director-General on the subject, to which the Director-General had referred in her statement.

13. **Mr Andreasen** (Denmark) reassured the Director-General that Denmark fully shared her deep concern about the Obiang Prize. He fully acknowledged and appreciated the value of the contribution to science and development an African prize in that field represented, and saluted friends and colleagues in all delegations and all regions for their efforts to implement such a prize in a non-divisive manner. However, the current situation raised concerns, not only for the Director-General herself, but also for the Executive Board, all electoral groups and Member States. The credibility of the Organization was being questioned and the Board must reflect and respond by finding common ground and lasting solutions.

14.1 **Mr El-Zahaby** (Egypt) stressed the importance of UNESCO’s presence at the summit on the Millennium Development Goals in September 2010, and argued for efficient procedures and better coordination. Though the Director-General had mentioned in her statement that the Secretariat had contacted the National Commissions and interested parties to keep them informed and seek their support, no one had contacted the Egyptian delegation. He reminded Members that the World Bank was very active in the fields of culture and development, with some 117 projects totalling approximately \$1.8 billion in value, and asked what further action had been taken following the Director-General’s meeting with senior World Bank officials in January.

14.2 He regretted the delay in publishing the Complementary Additional Programme (CAP), the total amount of which was \$809 million, while the corresponding figure in the C/5 document, for the same number of projects, was \$462,751,000. What were the reasons for that discrepancy? Lastly, he asked for more information about the departure of the Executive Director, ODG, and was sorry that the meeting between the Director-General and the Group of French-speaking countries, scheduled for 19 May, had been cancelled without any advance warning to the Chair of the Group.

15.1 **The Director-General** fully supported the suggestion of Burkina Faso to set up a Priority Africa Programme. As discussed within the Task Force on Africa, the time was right, while the C/5 document was in the course of preparation, to re-examine the Organization’s actions on that continent, with special emphasis on their impact on education.

15.2 On the questions from Cuba, the Committee on Haiti was made up of members – three of them Haitian – who were put forward by Member States but sat in their personal capacity. The work of the Committee would present challenges and would be followed by numerous observers. On the subject of UNESCO Prizes, the special Working Group appointed to address the issue was coming to the end of its mission; the Director-General felt it was premature to express an opinion about the various aspects of its work, though she wanted to see the issue on the agenda for the next meeting of the Board. The regulations in force laid down a minimum of \$20,000 to establish a prize, but, obviously, there must be a balance between the financial aspect of a prize and the values it promoted.

15.3 The Director-General had noted the proposals of the representative of Morocco on the vision of the future, and informed her that the French version of the Memorandum of Understanding between UNESCO and the Alliance of Civilizations would be ready in a week’s time. It was an

important document, because it contained all the elements of a very close future cooperation with the Alliance. The culture of peace and the other major strategies must be made an integral part of UNESCO's everyday work, which was why it was so important to seize the chance offered by the preparation of the C/5 document.

15.4 The Director-General gave her backing to the statement of the representative of Denmark, and said that she shared the view of the representative of Egypt that UNESCO must be present at the discussion of the Millennium Development Goals and must strengthen its coordination, as it was the first attempt by the Organization not only to be present in New York but to take part in formulating highly important ideas and documents. That task was made more difficult by the extremely short time periods given to the Secretariat to respond, which did not always allow it to hold broad consultations.

15.5 As to culture and development, she had invited the World Bank to support more programmes in both those fields and the reply had been favourable. That decision supplemented the Organization's close collaboration with the OECD on state development aid, strengthening UNESCO's hand as a legitimate player in the development area, which included assistance with policy formulation. All of that required huge extrabudgetary resources, as could be seen from the CAP, but that was normal given the modest size of the Organization's budget for its many priorities in its five fields of competence. The aim, therefore, must on the one hand be to transform and restructure the Organization and reduce bureaucracy and administrative expense, and on the other to be more energetic in seeking assistance from donors in the form of extrabudgetary resources. That was the reason for the slight restructuring of BSP. As to the meeting with the Group of French-speaking countries, it had been postponed to 15 September 2010.

16. **Mr Engelken** (United States of America) was grateful to the Director-General for raising the issue of the UNESCO-Obiang Prize. The United States appreciated the actions she had taken to date on the issue: the situation must be addressed. The damage to UNESCO's reputation was serious. Numerous human rights organizations, the international scientific community, former UNESCO prize recipients, and members of the United States Congress were calling the credibility of UNESCO into question. The Chairman of the Senate sub-committee responsible for appropriating money to the State Department had written a letter of protest to the Director-General. Media freedom groups – usually supporters of UNESCO – were united in their concern that UNESCO's association with the Obiang Prize would undermine its ability to promote freedom of expression. He called on Members of the Board to solve the problem through dialogue and mutual cooperation in the best tradition of the house, and undertook, in a spirit of mutual respect, to participate in any formal or informal discussions between Member States with a view to finding a solution. Everyone, he concluded, remained committed to the goal of building scientific capacity in Africa.

17.1 **Mr Portillo Angulo** (Spain) spoke on behalf of the European Union and its Member States to express their support for the Director-General's initiatives, actions and consultations to safeguard the necessary coherence between UNESCO's prize policy and the principles and values that inspired the Organization. They encouraged the Director-General to continue her efforts and reaffirmed their complete confidence in her skills and ability to find a suitable solution, through dialogue, for the good of the Organization.

17.2 On a national level, he expressed Spain's satisfaction at the Director-General's fruitful participation in the Third Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in Rio de Janeiro and congratulated her on the Memorandum of Understanding, which offered significant hope for synergies between the Alliance and UNESCO in their shared fields of competence that could benefit the entire international community.

18. **Ms Yao Yao** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that she shared the concerns many speakers had raised about the Obiang Prize. In her view the issue must be settled by dialogue, and compliance with UNESCO's commitments and rules was paramount. Since the outcome of the Jury's deliberations was known, she wondered why they had asked the Director-General to consult the Executive Board, or whether the level of the candidates was not good enough. She feared that the controversy stirred up around the Prize would discourage many Africans, and suggested that they, too, should be allowed to contribute, in their own way, to Africa's development.

19. **Mr Al-Nafisi** (Kuwait) subscribed to the views of the representative of Morocco concerning Jerusalem and the Mughrabi Ascent, and wanted to know if there had been any progress in that regard. He took the view that the Organization's publication and distribution plan must take account of the needs of all groups in society, and visually impaired people in particular. Regrettably, that was not the case. He asked for at least one publication per year to be devoted to that group, enabling it to have access to information about UNESCO. Lastly, he welcomed the Organization's efforts in the field of technical and vocational education and training, but was sorry that the results were not more solid. Those efforts must be stepped up, with greater focus on the UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Bonn and its role in implementing strategy in that area.

20. **Mr Munjeri** (Zimbabwe) said that his country fully concurred with the use of a consultative process to resolve the issue of the Obiang Prize, and appreciated the Director-General's efforts. However, that process should not be based on emotion and pre-judgement, certainly not from the media. He quoted from a judgement of the British Privy Council of 2 February 2006 in the case of the President of Equatorial Guinea versus The Royal Bank of Scotland and others: "We are unable to resolve the question of whether the government of Equatorial Guinea was an oppressive tyranny or not." He looked forward to hearing details of the Jury's input in the consultative process leading to the 185th session of the Executive Board. History repeated itself, he said, because the first time no one was listening. When Alfred Nobel himself was wrongly believed to have died, a French newspaper had published an obituary that read: "The merchant of death is dead," and went on, "Dr Alfred Nobel, who became rich by finding ways to kill more people faster than ever before, died yesterday." He urged further research into the matter.

21.1 **The Director-General** shared the view of the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, that the issue of the Obiang Prize must be resolved by dialogue, with dignity and respect. She hoped it would not discourage African States or any other States from playing a part in UNESCO's activities in the field of prizes. One excellent formula would be to set up joint African Union-UNESCO prizes in its different areas of activity, as that would give added visibility to Priority Africa as well as to the commitment of the African Union and its collaboration with UNESCO in different fields.

21.2 The Director-General stressed that it was not her wish to stir up debate or pass judgement, but she could not pretend to be unaware of the atmosphere generated by that prize around UNESCO, an atmosphere that risked undermining the Organization's image and reputation. It was her responsibility to alert Member States in such a case, especially when she had received an enormous number of letters from NGOs, intellectuals, scientists, UNESCO Prize laureates and Nobel Prize laureates such as Desmond Tutu. She could not disguise either her anxiety or her emotion. She stressed, however, that it was not for her to take decisions, but for the Board to assess the situation and rule on the course to be taken.

21.3 She agreed with the representative of Kuwait that UNESCO had a moral responsibility to produce at least one publication per year for the visually impaired. As to technical and vocational training, it was a major pillar of the Organization's activities, and UNESCO must endeavour to enhance the visibility of its work in that area, including in cooperation with the Bonn Centre.

22. **Mr Bessikri** (Algeria) appreciated the Director-General's resolve to consolidate programmes and address financial issues, and commended her efforts to enhance the Organization's visibility and prestige at the international level. UNESCO was not simply a delivery agency but an ideas-based institution, and he wished to see the resumption of the 21st Century Dialogues. On the Obiang Prize, he welcomed the position of the United States of America and Denmark and hoped that the issue, which was one of concern to everyone, would be resolved by the Director-General and Member States through dialogue, as the prestige of the Organization was at stake. Lastly, he was sorry that the new senior management team included only one representative of the Arab Group, while there had been two in the previous team. He asked the Director-General to be attentive to the situation of those who were leaving the Organization.

23. **Mr Farah** (Djibouti) said that the Obiang Prize was the fruit of a praiseworthy and generous act on the part of an African country, and an illustration of the diverse nature of contributions to the Organization. He was convinced that the Director-General, with her strong commitment and record of decisive action in favour of Africa, would find a solution through consultations that would safeguard the dignity and harmony of UNESCO, and he suggested that an ad hoc group be set up for the purpose. On the subject of Africa, he supported the position of the representative of Burkina Faso. Priority Africa had existed since 1994. The time had come to take stock of the fresh perspectives opening up to UNESCO on that continent, which would raise the Organization's profile with the African Union.

24. **Mr Nseir** (Syrian Arab Republic) regretted the fact that the Director-General had dealt only briefly with the questions on the Middle East, though they were extremely important and had worldwide impact. He was sorry, too, that there was no in-depth, objective discussion of those issues within UNESCO, enabling its voice to be heard within the scope of its mandate and areas of competence. The whole world had condemned Israel for having attacked vessels of freedom in international waters, killing a number of humanitarian officials and militants for peace, and the Syrian delegation would have liked the Director-General to condemn that act of piracy, as the vessels in question were carrying humanitarian supplies and educational materials destined for Gaza.

25.1 **Ms Lacoeylthe** (Saint Lucia) expressed her country's deep satisfaction with the initiative of the Director-General in giving UNESCO its rightful place in New York for the meeting on the Millennium Development Goals. Saint Lucia had always advocated cooperation by UNESCO with the rest of the United Nations system, and she could see that the Director-General was strongly committed to that path. However, she would like to see better collaboration in future between UNESCO's Secretariat and the Member States. Member States should be consulted on any text for inclusion in a resolution before it was sent to New York on their behalf. The permanent delegations could provide positive help to the Director-General in obtaining the adoption of text in New York, and they should not be used just as mailboxes.

25.2 On the issue of the Obiang Prize, she too thanked the Director-General for having shared her concerns. All Members were responsible for the well-being of the Organization. She supported the Director-General's proposals to find a way forward, confident that a solution could be reached based on dignity and respect for all Member States.

26. **Mr Kizabi** (Democratic Republic of Congo) remarked that Africa had been a priority of UNESCO since 1994, but he was still wondering what results the programme for Africa had produced after almost two decades, and wanted information to be presented at the forthcoming sessions of the Executive Board. On the Obiang Prize, this was no longer an African prize or an Equatorial Guinean prize, but a UNESCO prize. The planned consultations must therefore involve all 58 Member States of the Executive Board, not just the African countries. He was convinced, however, that the Director-General had the qualities needed to bring the consultations and dialogue to a successful conclusion so that the Obiang Prize and UNESCO Prize would not both be the losers.

27.1 **The Director-General** said, in reply to the representative of Algeria, that she was still in the process of deliberating on how best to structure the intellectual debate at UNESCO around the major themes of the day. As for those who were leaving UNESCO, she was doing her best to find solutions to all the issues facing the Organization while staying within its budget, which meant that she could not satisfy everyone.

27.2 She was grateful to the representative of Algeria for having stated that the controversy generated by the Obiang Prize was not a question for the Director-General but for all Member States, which made it essential to seek the best possible solution through dialogue with respect and dignity. She would cooperate with the Executive Board and with any working group it decided to set up to take the consultations forward.

27.3 On the subject of the continent of Africa, she had personally taken part in the work of the Task Force on Africa and had asked its participants to take stock of the work done to date, and draw up a new strategy based on the experience gained by the Organization since the adoption of Priority Africa fifteen years previously. That strategy would be finalized in coordination with the Africa Department, the African Group, the African Union and the various United Nations bodies as part of the great debate about the future of the continent.

27.4 Turning to the Middle East, the Director-General recalled that UNESCO's action extended well beyond the few examples she had given, and that she had already made major statements on behalf of the Organization and been very clear on the subject of recent events, but she acknowledged that more in-depth discussion was required about the action taken by UNESCO on the ground. While staying within the scope of its mandate, the Organization did its best to support the efforts of the international community to assist the Palestinian Authority in the priority area of education, and it was important that all the projects that were on hold be implemented to produce a real improvement in the lives of the Palestinians. The task now was to prepare for the next session of the World Heritage Committee to ensure the preservation of the sites on the World Heritage List.

27.5 In reply to the representative of Saint Lucia, the Director-General explained that it was often very difficult to consult Member States on proposals sent to New York because the Secretariat was given very little time. She was pleased with the Executive Board's discussion on the question of UNESCO's participation at the New York Summit on the Millennium Development Goals, and reaffirmed her intention to hold fuller discussions with Member States on United Nations system reform and the "Delivering as One" initiative to see how to strengthen the Organization's work on the ground.

28. **The Chair** informed the Executive Board that the Information Meeting must finish not later than 4.00 p.m., as the Director-General had to catch a plane to Libya. She therefore proposed to start the afternoon session at 2.30 p.m. to enable the dozen or so speakers still on the list to take the floor.

The meeting rose at 1.00 p.m.

Afternoon meeting

29. **The Chair** announced that since it was 2.30 p.m. she would start promptly as the meeting was informal in nature, even though the majority of Members had not yet taken their places.

30. **Mr Sheya** (United Republic of Tanzania) thanked the Director-General for her comprehensive report and answers to the written questions. Following on from the question on publications, he asked about the status and future of the Management of Social Transformation (MOST) policy research tool, developed by the Social and Human Sciences Sector to enable online publication of policy research or reports of social research with policy implications. It was a valuable conduit for information relating to social transformation, and an important support for decision making.

31. **Mr Belevan-McBride** (Peru) congratulated the Director-General on the complete and pertinent answers she had given to Members' questions. Concerning the "warning message" that the Director-General had issued – not for the first time – about the Obiang Prize, Peru pledged its support for the action she had taken and would take. The issue served as a reminder that one of the multiple and difficult tasks of the Director-General was to ensure that the mandates not only of the Executive Board but of the Member States as a whole were carried out. At the same time, she must constantly protect the prestige and reputation of the Organization. Peru congratulated her for maintaining this complex balance.

32. **Mr Adoua** (Congo) congratulated the Director-General for her frankness in sharing with Member States her legitimate worries and concerns about the Obiang Prize. The situation was highly embarrassing, but a solution must be found, through consultation, that would preserve both the image of the Organization and the dignity and generosity of President Obiang Nguema. He wanted to know more, therefore, about what communications strategy was envisaged to ensure that international public opinion understood the workings of the Organization, so that bodies such as the Executive Board or the General Conference did not have to modify one of its decisions.

33.1 **Ms Chainaye** (Belgium) thanked the Director-General for having reaffirmed the Organization's priority objectives, especially the education of girls and their access to primary schooling, as part of the preparations for the Millennium Development Goals Summit, a meeting that had to succeed with the target date of 2015 only five years away. In that connection, she wished to know more about the objectives of the "Culture and Development" round table to be held alongside the Summit.

33.2 On the Obiang Prize, she fully subscribed to the statement by Spain on behalf of the European Union, and supported the responsible and courageous approach of the Director-General, who had given a very clear account of the chronology of events and the problems encountered. Those problems concerned all countries, whether or not they had been members of the Executive Board in 2008, and she thanked all those States that were endeavouring, through dialogue and consultation, to find a lasting solution, satisfactory to everyone, that would safeguard UNESCO's image and probity.

34.1 **Ms Shi** (China) reported that China had had the honour to receive the Director-General both in Beijing and at the Shanghai Expo, where she had met the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Education and Culture, university professors and students. China was encouraged by the level of dialogue between the Director-General and Member States, as well as the high profile she projected through her vision, sincerity and capacity for communication. China had taken on board UNESCO's priorities of Africa and gender equality and was doing its best to support the Director-General and the Organization in its efforts.

34.2 Turning to the Obiang Prize, she was grateful for the Director-General's detailed account of the genesis of the issue, and understood her concerns as well as those expressed by colleagues earlier for the solidarity of the Organization. Consultation must continue in order to maintain

UNESCO's reputation and credibility. However, its accountability and authority would also be damaged if a decision of the Board, taken after following the necessary legal procedures, were not duly implemented. It was quite normal in the modern world for some NGOs and media to have different views, but those alone should not guide the members of the Executive Board in their consultations, which she wished to see accelerated.

35.1 **The Director-General** expressed thanks to those who had supported her approach to resolving the issue of the Obiang Prize. She was pleased to see a consensus developing around the need for further consultation. It was important for all concerned to listen to each other and try to find communality of approach, moving forward rather than seeking to lay the blame at the door of any particular body. The same spirit of dialogue and mutual respect should guide the Organization's strategy in communications.

35.2 She was happy that the message about the Millennium Development Goals was getting across. It had never been her intention to downgrade education as a priority, but to reinforce it. The preliminary assessment showed that, despite all the difficulties, progress had been achieved towards the MDGs and there was momentum in education. Work was progressing for a joint Round Table on education with UNICEF and Save the Children, and the Organization's approach demonstrated synergy with other agencies.

35.3 The Director-General expressed gratitude to Ambassador Shi for making possible her recent visit to China, during which she had signed important agreements, especially the MOU on cooperation with special emphasis on Africa. UNESCO's visibility had been enhanced by the opening of a festival of cultural diversity, and by the events held as part of the Shanghai Expo 2010 where she had launched UNESCO's World Report: Investing in Cultural Diversity and Cultural Dialogue. She had also met the holders of UNESCO Chairs and visited schools and universities, all of which had combined to make her time in China highly productive in terms of results.

36. **Ms Longworth** (Deputy Assistant Director-General, Social and Human Sciences) addressed the question raised by the United Republic of Tanzania. The future of the MOST tool was under evaluation. Its database contained a number of policy collections that linked to raw research, but the labour-intensive work of synthesizing that raw research into policy briefs had to be done within existing budget resources. Therefore, the tool needed to become both more intelligent and more sustainable. New consultants and partners were being sought to take the process forward. UNESCO remained committed to MOST as there was a great future for online tools in the area.

37. **Mr Grexa** (Slovakia) raised the topic of UNESCO's contribution to the document on the Millennium Development Goals, and remarked that the Secretariat's proposals lacked balance in that they put too much emphasis on culture at the expense of education. Balance was an issue in a general sense, and the Organization must strive continuously to maintain it, especially as between culture and education, and to ensure that its commitments in wide-ranging fields like intercultural dialogue or the Alliance of Civilizations did not absorb too much in terms of resources and energy at the expense of really tangible, measurable activities. A dramatic shortage of teachers in Africa was not infrequent, but even in the most developed countries, certain things were in severely short supply. As for the Obiang Prize, he supported the approach of the Director-General, whose primary concern was to safeguard UNESCO's prestige, and stated that several of his colleagues in Group II shared his view and were ready to assume their share of responsibility by taking part in the consultations.

38.1 **Mr Kocel** (Poland) agreed that education should have priority within the Organization but felt that culture, and especially intercultural dialogue, also deserved an important place. Poland welcomed the Director-General's involvement with the Alliance of Civilizations, and looked forward to UNESCO's implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding through proposals that were as specific as possible. Dialogue between cultures was a way of building towards the goal of universal peace.

38.2 His delegation supported the position taken by the Director-General on the Obiang Prize and was glad that many other Member States had expressed willingness to pursue consultations; ideally, the matter should be resolved during the summer as it would be damaging for the Executive Board to have to devote substantial amounts of time to it at the forthcoming session.

39. **Ms Navarro-Tolentino** (Philippines) added her thanks to the Director-General for her very full replies to the questions submitted, and her congratulations for the transparent and consultative spirit in which she approached relations with Member States, including on highly sensitive issues. Reverting to the written question of the Philippines concerning the status of fulfilment of pledges by development partners in favour of education and EFA, and in relation to South-South cooperation generally, she asked whether the Director-General foresaw or expected any MOUs to be signed with countries from the North.

40. **Mr Mezri Haddad** (Tunisia) said that the moral issue raised by the Obiang Prize was neither subsidiary nor circumstantial but fundamental, and its underlying causes must be addressed. He could not remain indifferent to the emotion expressed by the Director-General, who was in no sense to blame and who had chosen the harder path over the easy one, as she could have opted to abide by a decision taken by the Executive Board before she took office. He commended the Director-General for an attitude eminently worthy of respect, and assured her that she had both the moral and political support of Member States, each of whom bore a share of responsibility for the situation. He hoped a decision would be taken that preserved the authority of the Organization.

41.1 **Ms Nibbeling-Wriessnig** (Germany) (Vice-Chair, Group I) congratulated the Director-General for having started a process of reform that would restore UNESCO to its rightful place in the United Nations family, by investing much time and energy in establishing a network of direct contacts with all the players. She was happy to see that Philippe Kridelka would be heading UNESCO's New York office. The Director-General had also demonstrated some success in shifting financing within the Organization from administration to projects.

41.2 All points of view had been aired on the Obiang Prize, and it was by now well understood that the question was not one for the Director-General but for the Board as a whole. Members might have different opinions about the speed of reaction of the NGOs, but in the modern world that was a reality that must be faced. She echoed the view expressed by Spain on behalf of the European Union. The issue must be resolved by dialogue with dignity, and she was confident that a solution would be found.

41.3 Ms Nibbeling-Wriessnig felt that there was not enough visible evidence of Priority Africa being implemented on the ground. She requested detailed input from the Secretariat on the questions she had raised on TVET and ESD, as these were crucial elements, and perfect subjects for triangular or South-South cooperation. Germany's experience in the export field attracted interest from many countries, and it was honoured to host the TVET secretariat.

42. **Ms Jean** (Haiti) said that the information provided by the Director-General had reassured her that the post-disaster work of UNESCO in Haiti was being carried out in a coherent manner, and she joined wholeheartedly in thanking the various donor countries, whose participation was vital to UNESCO's work in her country. Furthermore, she was pleased that the many events at UNESCO as part of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures had coincided with those organized by the Latin American and Caribbean Group, jointly with the African Group, to celebrate the bicentenary and the fiftieth anniversary of the independence of countries in that Group. Turning to the Obiang Prize, she had noted the Director-General's message of anxiety and aligned herself with the statements, including those by the representatives of Algeria and Djibouti, that had the merit of refocusing the debate and suggesting approaches to finding a solution.

43.1 **The Director-General** recalled that UNESCO's original mission, as laid down in its Constitution, was to construct the defences of peace in the minds of men, adding that this was a cross-cutting activity calling for energetic and dynamic measures. To clear up any

misunderstanding, she made it clear that the document to which the representative of Slovakia had referred dealt with culture and development in particular. At the present stage it was not necessary to submit proposals on education to the United Nations, as education – a constant focus of the Organization – was already firmly established as part of the Millennium Development Goals. She undertook to see to it that UNESCO was a balanced organization. Education, culture and the other priorities were all given the attention they deserved, and the fact that one area had priority did not mean that the Organization was not working to assist governments in other regions and on other subjects.

43.2 The Director-General agreed with the representative of the Philippines that the MOUs she had signed were, essentially, with countries from the South. However, she had already discussed that issue with several countries from the North as well as the European Commission, with a view to having it commit to working alongside UNESCO in the field of South-South and not only North-South cooperation. With the European Union, she was negotiating a much broader partnership that would cover both South-South and North-South cooperation. As to the statement by Tunisia, she would do her best to preserve the spirit of dialogue and strengthen transparency, as that was the only way to have synergy between Member States and the Secretariat no matter what difficulties or divergences of opinion arose. She thanked the representative of Germany for her support with regard to the restructuring of the Secretariat, especially the reduction of administrative costs in favour of programmes. She recognized that technical and vocational education and training (TVET) needed to be reviewed in greater depth, and suggested that, since several Member States had raised questions on different aspects of the subject, an information meeting or a discussion should be held on it.

44. **Mr Richmond** (Director, Division for the Coordination of United Nations Priorities in Education) addressed the question raised by the Philippines. He reported that the EFA coordination team was liaising with the Global Monitoring Report to obtain the data needed for a current profile, to be presented to the next session of the Board. The prevailing view was that the economic climate was not favourable to holding a pledging conference. There would, however, be opportunities at the G20 meeting, the forthcoming MDG meeting and through the One Goal campaign to take soundings on possible increased support. Advice would be sought from development partners; the situation was being monitored and a report would be presented to the Board at its next session.

45. **The Chair** announced that three non-Board Members had asked to take the floor. She reminded them that the time for each intervention was two minutes.

46. **Mr Osubita Asam** (Permanent Delegate of Equatorial Guinea) acknowledged the excellent presentation by the Director-General of the life of the Organization and the special attention paid to the UNESCO Obiang Nguema Mbasogo Prize. Equatorial Guinea recognized the concerns this topic had elicited from all levels of government. He thanked Member States that had participated in a positive manner in seeking a solution worthy of UNESCO, the African continent, and all Member States: Cote d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe, United States, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congo, Denmark, China, Benin, and all the others. His country had taken note of those joint efforts to find coherent, consistent and dignified solutions. It wanted the solution to be the same for everyone: there had been no discrimination in the Board's decision when the prize was approved. He reconfirmed Equatorial Guinea's support for the guiding values and principles of the Organization and pledged that it would continue making its modest contribution towards achieving UNESCO's mandate. Money had a smell; he admired the very subtle olfactory imagery of his Tunisian colleague, who had demonstrated to all present that the perception of that smell by Member States was almost non-existent, and the same was true for everyone who worked with Equatorial Guinea.

47. **Mr Yaï** (Permanent Delegate of Benin) spoke out of concern, as a former Chair of the Executive Board, that UNESCO, its bodies and its decisions should be coherent, solid and credible, and its prizes accorded an equal footing. He was somewhat disturbed by the turn the discussions had taken, and the excessive politicization of the Obiang Prize. He had already been

obliged for valid reasons to postpone the awarding of the Prize, but once the Jury had met for a second time, there was no reason why the Prize should not be awarded in the time limit set. The media uproar and the political pressure being applied by certain States should not affect the decisions of the Executive Board, otherwise it would set a dangerous and historic precedent for UNESCO. It was a democratic Organization, with procedures laid down whereby any decision could be amended. Attempts to circumvent those procedures, around which the debate had centred, damaged the credibility of the Executive Board and undermined the foundations of the Organization. An organization that played tricks with its own procedures was an organization on a dangerous slope, and he counted on the wisdom of all concerned to preserve UNESCO's credibility intact, both internally and externally.

48.1 **Mr Del Caja** (Permanent Delegate of Mexico) thanked the Chair for allowing him to participate for the first time as an observer. He expressed the support of Mexico's Permanent Delegation for the Director-General's reforms, and its great satisfaction at the progress made in various areas identified as priorities for her mandate. His Government would back all the Director-General's reform proposals, particularly those directed at creating a results-based management system, making processes less bureaucratic and channelling funds into programmes rather than administration. Mexico welcomed the questions put by the Director-General in the United Nations and supported her initiative in positioning UNESCO's pluralities within the Millennium Development Goals.

48.2 The Mexican delegation shared the concerns voiced by the Director-General regarding the Obiang Prize and firmly supported the proposal to continue consultations to find a solution that satisfied all parties and remained faithful to the spirit and purpose of UNESCO.

49. **The Chair** concluded that, even only half a year into the Director-General's mandate, the Information Meeting had provided a valuable opportunity for relevant questions to be raised and comprehensive answers given, and enabled the Board to reaffirm its support for the Director-General's actions. It was important to address the issue of the Obiang Prize, a subject on which both she and the Director-General had received numerous letters not only from prominent persons but also from UNESCO's partners. While their views could not be ignored, she was concerned that the issue remained unresolved, and that a bad precedent would be set if a previous decision of the Executive Board were called into question. A solution must be found via dialogue that would satisfy all parties, and she counted on the constructive cooperation of Members to bring that about. She concluded the meeting by wishing all the participants a pleasant summer.

The meeting closed at 3.35 p.m.