



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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

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

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Address by Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

**on the occasion of the opening of the
184th session of the Executive Board**

Introduction to the Executive Board Document 184 EX/4

UNESCO, 6 April 2010

Mr President of the General Conference,
Ms Chairperson of the Executive Board,
Honourable Members of the Executive Board,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we open the first plenary meeting of the 184th session of the Executive Board – the first Spring Board session of my mandate. The period that I will be reporting on this morning is a period at the start of which, in my inaugural address, I made a number of commitments and set out my strategic priorities as the new Director-General. It is a period in which I began making good on those commitments and priorities. It is a period in which a new direction has been taken.

Let me say from outset, I did not start my mandate with a blank canvas. There is the C/5, there is the medium-term strategy and all the other orientations of the General Conference. In a word, there is continuity – continuity in the implementation of the strategic documents of our Organization.

But equally, no one would expect the incoming Director-General merely to assure “business as usual”. I came to this high function with a clear vision for revitalizing on-going efforts to achieve the stated goals embedded in UNESCO’s mandate. In a word, I came to offer this Organization renewal.

To build the defences of peace in the minds of men and women: this goal is both extraordinarily ambitious and extremely relevant to the situation facing us today.

We live in a world where remarkable advances are marred by deep crises, where fresh opportunities for some go hand in hand with growing insecurity for millions of others, where a rise in access to information technologies like mobile telephony and internet is matched by a far less welcome rise – the widespread increase in tensions, intolerance and mistrust that marks far too many communities.

UNESCO's mandate, founded on a set of values-based responses, can make a decisive contribution to international efforts to tackle these challenges. But it is not enough to assert over and over again the relevance of UNESCO's message. We have to deliver on it. Only by doing so, will we fulfil the potential that lies at the heart of this Organization's mandate. Only by doing so, can we convince other development partners to take up our message and make it their own.

It is here that my task lies, as the incoming Director-General: to lead the effort to renew and revitalize UNESCO's core message – and to deliver on it more effectively.

The first step in delivering on our message is to ensure that it is articulated in ways that remain relevant: relevant, because they relate effectively to situations and contexts that have, with the impact of globalization in particular, undergone rapid transformations. Our mandate remains unchanged, but nobody today expects a repeat of flagship programmes that were tailored to meet the needs of past eras.

UNESCO needs to take a lead role in inspiring intellectual collaboration that is responsive to the times. UNESCO is no longer operating in a world where it used to be a unique forum for international cooperation in its fields of competence. Faced with a world where online communities and networks freely and fluidly create their own initiatives and platforms, UNESCO needs to reinvent itself.

That is why, as a first step, along with the announcement of other relevant decisions and of the high-level panels, I rapidly launched and completed a process of consultation within the Secretariat. Change is needed to respond to the world without but it nevertheless has first to come from within. I believed that if called upon, the staff of this Organization would respond with creativity and dynamism, and I was not disappointed. I will be reporting to you later in this address on the Task Forces. Let me just say now that I am confident not only that this Organization can be revitalized, but that there is a great eagerness for renewal.

In the meantime, I considered that UNESCO had to take action without delay to make its message resonate further and more clearly. 2010 is a decisive year for the international development paradigm. With the Millennium Development Goals summit under preparation for September, I made it one of my first tasks to take issue with an approach to development that reduces the role of education, marginalizes the role of science and quite simply ignores the role of culture!

UNESCO has always had a profoundly humanist agenda. It has always taken “development” to mean the holistic development of the intellectual, social and cultural fabric of societies, as well as material well-being. Today, with the financial and economic crises, with global challenges such as climate change, it has become more evident that only this holistic approach can bring truly sustainable development. However, that growing realization has yet to be translated into changed priorities within development programming and funding.

I have taken up exactly this cause on every occasion and will continue to do so. I argued this case while I was in Doha last year and in Delhi in January. I argued it again in New York and Washington at the start of the year. On 20 February last, I argued it in Mali, in front of six West African Heads of State and Government present at the 14th session of the West African Economic and Monetary Union. They were most receptive of this call to action. I had the same positive response from political leaders during my mission in Addis Ababa to attend the 9th High-Level Group meeting on Education for All immediately afterwards.

The challenge now is to translate these positive responses into concrete action. Your support, the support of Member States, will be essential in stepping up investment in education, science and culture. Your support will be essential to have these fields recognised as essential parameters of the global development agenda.

I do intend, as I stated in Addis Ababa, to reposition UNESCO to make us true leaders in the field of education. We are the 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.

I will also seek to ensure that the contributions of science and culture to development are more widely acknowledged. We have some telling examples to

showcase. I will just cite the increasing number of requests for science policy reviews received from developing countries and the 18 Joint Programmes on Culture and Development being implemented under the Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund.

Initiatives such as these are proving instrumental in strengthening the growing consensus that education, science and culture provide a response to the challenge of how to achieve sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals. Recognition by Member States of their importance is vital for the integration of UNESCO's competences and capacities in the United Nations reform process. This is particularly true at the country level in the context of the new generation of United Nations Development Assistance Framework. I have undertaken intensive consultations on this with the Secretary-General and with heads of other multilateral organizations.

At the end of the week, I will attend my first regular session of the Chief Executives Board, following an informal session during the Copenhagen summit, when Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed me warmly among the group of participating Heads of Agencies. The foremost priority of my involvement in the CEB mechanism will be the review of the Millennium Development Goals and its translation at the country level.

I already know from my encounters with top decision-makers over the past four months that much more needs to be done if we are to ensure that September's Review of Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals fully incorporates not only education but also science and culture. It is my aim to obtain the integration of the scientific and cultural dimensions into the Outcome Document and to ensure a central place for education.

To prepare the way, I have written to major decision-makers proposing wording for the eventual inclusion of science and culture in the Outcome Document. I am sending a letter to share this wording with all Member States and I hope for the strong support of your governments. In another initiative, I decided that UNESCO should organize a High-Level Round Table on culture and development in New York in the autumn. I hope that we can envisage an event on education as well. We must seize every opportunity to argue the case for UNESCO's holistic and profoundly humanistic approach to development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would now like to address the important issue of Haiti. On 31 March, I went to United Nations Headquarters in New York, to take part in the International Donors' Conference for Haiti. As you are aware, nearly US \$10 billion were pledged for the country's reconstruction. This is an enormous achievement and an immense source of hope.

After witnessing this extraordinary show of solidarity and fellowship, Haiti's President, Mr René Prével, that day declared that: "education is the essential requirement that gives meaning to the rest. Education is the cornerstone of development".

We are all on the same page and this vision is shared at the international level. I would say that at UNESCO we are particularly thrilled with the pivotal role given to education.

For this reason, 31 March 2010 is a red-letter day on which education was given major recognition.

I am firmly committed to working in full partnership with the Haitian authorities in developing and implementing projects to rebuild the country's education system and preserve and revitalize its tangible and intangible culture.

Allow me to provide a general overview of UNESCO's response to the devastating earthquake of 12 January in Haiti. Detailed information on this matter is contained in document 184 EX/33.

I would like to point out that, as soon as news of the earthquake reached us, I did everything possible to ensure the immediate intervention of UNESCO in all its fields of competence in order to support the population and the Haitian government in facing that terrible ordeal.

I quickly established a crisis cell to coordinate all aspects of our Organization's response. I also launched a fund-raising campaign for Haiti as early as 14 January.

Responding to the earthquake in Haiti was at the heart of a series of meetings I had with Ban Ki-moon and heads of other United Nations agencies during my trip to the United States between 16 and 22 January. I requested a ban on buying or selling Haitian art to prevent the pillaging of the country's cultural heritage.

I also thought it essential to plan a meeting here on 16 February, with Haiti's Minister of Culture and Communication as co-Chair and a large Haitian delegation, to establish a preliminary evaluation of the damage incurred and lay the foundations of an international coordinating committee for Haitian culture. A project for the constitution of this Committee has been submitted to you for review in document 184 EX/33.

I also felt that I needed to go to Haiti on 9 and 10 March to see for myself what was needed and to examine, with the government, the role of UNESCO in terms of culture, education, science and communication. Above all, however, I also decided to visit Port-au-Prince and other regions of the country to show all Haitians directly that they had the support of UNESCO.

UNESCO also participated in meetings held on 16 and 17 March in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic to prepare the donors' conference in New York.

On 24 March, UNESCO hosted here a forum on "Rebuilding the Social, Cultural and Intellectual Fabric of Haiti". This forum brought together the Minister of Culture and Communication of Haiti, Haitian intellectuals, artists and journalists living either in Haiti or abroad, as well as international experts. The forum was an opportunity to draft the recommendations which I defended in New York on 31 March.

A detailed description of UNESCO action in the areas of education, science, culture, communication and information can be found in document 184 EX/33.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The case of Haiti poses a challenge for all of humanity and also for UNESCO, the only United Nations agency specialized in education, science, culture and communication. Will we be able to provide our multidisciplinary assistance to this country fully commensurate with its expectations? Will we be able to demonstrate

our reactivity and efficiency in every field of competence central to our mandate? This is my commitment, and I invite you all to join me.

Your Excellencies,

Since I took up my post, I have consistently and wholeheartedly stated that messages of tolerance and dialogue must be instilled in UNESCO's five spheres of competence. The challenges faced by the international community today are radically different from those which marked the last few decades and shaped previous programmes for a culture of peace. Circumstances have changed. Clearly we must adapt our strategies to today's major challenge of building a safer, more stable world.

Let me say it again – I am firmly committed to taking new paths towards peace in the 21st century. To this end, I have established a High Panel on Peace and the Dialogue of Cultures, as I announced in my installation address.

The High Panel on Peace and the Dialogue of Cultures is designed as an open forum composed of well-known individuals from diverse backgrounds. I would like to point out right away that the mandate of the High Panel in no way infringes upon the role of UNESCO's Member States. To the contrary, the Panel is intended to assist me in developing innovative strategies to build peace. It goes without saying that I will submit these strategies to the governing bodies for discussion. The first achievements of the Panel are reflected in the suggestions made concerning UNESCO's Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, presented to the Board in document 184 EX/15 Add.

I would like to reaffirm that proven results in the field of peace and intercultural dialogue cannot be obtained without attributing a central role to education, through which we all must learn to live side by side in peace. I am very happy to announce that I will chair a panel hosted by UNESCO on Education for an Intercultural Citizenship during the third Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, to be held on 29 May in Rio de Janeiro.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On 18 February at UNESCO Headquarters, I launched the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. On that occasion, UNESCO hosted a public debate which was supported by contributions from the Minister of Culture of Kazakhstan, the High Representative of the Alliance of Civilizations and you yourself, Madam Chair, along with messages from the United Nations Secretary-General and the French Minister of Culture and Communication. Members of the High Panel on Peace and the Dialogue of Cultures also took part in the discussions.

The goal of this public debate was to highlight two major themes: the essential role which must be played by cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, and the need to share common values that can help us build peace in a globalized world. I selected the themes advisedly; in my opinion, they are not adequately addressed in international relations. I am fully prepared to step up efforts to ensure that these subjects are given the significant attention they deserve. I will use every opportunity available to promote them.

One very encouraging sign that this message has been widely heard is the large programme of initiatives prepared by the international community and UNESCO Member States in particular, for the celebration of the International Year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are well aware, Africa is an absolute priority for our Organization. Over the last six months I have paid close attention to the needs and expectations expressed concerning UNESCO action, in my direct contact with representatives of African Member States at Headquarters, in my visits to the African continent, and via the "Delivering Priority Africa" Task Force which I established.

I have already had the pleasure of meeting six African Heads of State at the 14th ordinary session of the West African Economic and Monetary Union held in Bamako. In Ethiopia, I also met local authorities, commissioners from the African Union, as well as African Union Chairperson Mr Jean Ping.

These encounters were an opportunity for me to measure the importance which all the leaders placed on education, science, culture, communication and information as a driving force of development.

Allow me to share with you an example of the truly effective implementation of programming in Africa. Last January in Kigali, UNESCO and the Ministry of Education of Rwanda organized the first ever “Delivering as One” workshop on science, technology and innovation, and the contributions these have made to achieving Millennium Development Goals in Rwanda. The workshop was also held to assess results and highlight the obstacles to incorporating science, technology and innovation into national development strategies.

Thanks to this workshop we were able to evaluate Rwanda’s commitment to the African Union’s Consolidated Plan of Action, a master plan for using science and technology to further development in Africa. It also gave that country an opportunity to assess its potential in science, technology and innovation, and establish a road map for the integration of these fields in all sectors of the economy. The lessons learned at the workshop in Rwanda could be useful to other countries in reorienting their science policies to better meet today’s needs. This work to develop science policies, and the very real results it produced, are proof of the value UNESCO can contribute in Africa.

UNESCO also contributes to capacity-building in the field of culture via three category 2 centres created in recent years: the African World Heritage Fund in South Africa, the Institute for African Culture and International Understanding in Nigeria and the Regional Centre for the Living Arts in Africa, located in Burkina Faso.

These centres play a very important role in the implementation of UNESCO programmes in the region. They complement the work of other specialized institutions and traditional partners in the field of culture, such as the African Academy of Languages, the School of African Heritage and the International Centre for the Bantu Civilizations. Soon, I hope, we will be able to celebrate the creation of a category 2 centre for intangible culture.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2010 is a landmark year with regard to gender, UNESCO's second global priority. Fifteen years after the Beijing World Conference on Women, we are at an opportune moment to assess progress and plan the next steps on the road to achieving women's rights, empowerment and gender equality. Evidence and data indicate that while there will be cause for celebration regarding progress achieved in some of the critical areas identified in the Beijing Platform for Action, there will certainly be concern regarding gaps and challenges that remain or that have emerged since 1995. Gender Equality remains a global priority for UNESCO. It is one of the most important goals of our times, one that I have pledged to place at the forefront of my responsibilities as UNESCO's first woman Director-General.

As you know, the theme of this year's International Women's Day celebrations was, in keeping with the theme chosen by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), "Beijing Plus Fifteen: The Unfinished Agenda". UNESCO was honoured to host at one of the Round Tables organized on this occasion, the key architects of the Beijing Conference – Ms Gertrude Mongella, the Secretary-General of the Beijing Conference, and Professor Patricia Licuanan, the Chair of the Main Committee of the Conference, who drafted and negotiated the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. UNESCO also hosted, in cooperation with the delegations of Spain and the European Union, a Round Table on "Women in Science: Challenges Ahead" which addressed the obstacles, progress and challenges for women working in the scientific field from a scientific, political and development perspective. Likewise, the other discussions organized on "Gender Equality and Progress in Societies" (on 12 March) and "Freedom of Information and Women's Rights in Africa" (16 March) contributed towards mapping out our route along the path set in Beijing 15 years ago.

Honourable Members of the Executive Board,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start with the Major Programmes and I will start with Programme I. Since I took office, I have made it one of my priorities to raise the international profile of Education for All (EFA). I have done so by taking our message – that education is a precondition for development – to the highest levels of decision-making. In my meetings with Heads of State, of United Nations agencies and of Bretton Woods

institutions, I have shared my vision of Education for All as a continuum that starts at birth and goes on throughout life, with learning taking place in both formal and non-formal settings. I have also highlighted the importance of going beyond access to strengthening quality in education.

Since I took office, I have moved swiftly to engage in advocacy for this holistic vision and to ensure that it is fully reflected in the current biennium's revised work plans. In particular, I have announced my intention for UNESCO to develop a quality framework that Member States will be able to use to assess the quality of their education systems. I have also moved ahead with plans to scale up our impact in 20 "EFA-challenged" countries, having secured extrabudgetary funding for each of the countries concerned. Let me state once again that UNESCO will continue to support all Member States who request our assistance, by accompanying them in the formulation of education policies and by developing their institutional capacities to implement inclusive, effective and sustainable programmes.

On 19 January, I launched the 2010 edition of the Education for All Global Monitoring Report together with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Ban Ki-Moon, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. This was the first time that a Secretary-General had launched the Global Monitoring Report. The launch was attended by a large assembly of United Nations colleagues, education and development experts, as well as by representatives of non-governmental organizations, and was webcast live on UNTV. I am very pleased to say that there was wide media response to the report, which is of course essential in getting our message out to the world.

This year's Report shows that marginalization is compromising efforts to reach the Education for All goals. These findings were closely examined by the Ninth Meeting of the High-Level Group on EFA, which I convened together with the Government of Ethiopia and the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 23 to 25 February 2010. Building on the outcomes of the EFA Working Group's meeting in Paris last December, the High-Level Group also focused on another timely theme: the impact of the economic crisis on education. It was encouraging to learn that many governments are mitigating the effects of the crisis and working to narrow educational inequalities through inclusive policies and measures targeting the hardest-to-reach populations. I touched on some of the action taken in this regard in India in January, in my lecture on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Indira

Gandhi National Open University, one of the world's largest institutions of higher learning.

At the opening of the High-Level Group meeting, I announced that I will launch initiatives in two areas, female literacy and education and climate change, which have the potential to substantially speed up progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. I also declared my commitment to improving existing EFA mechanisms and initiatives, including the High-Level Group itself.

UNESCO is now working closely with its partners to translate the Addis Ababa Declaration into concrete action. With only five years until the target date for the achievement of the EFA goals, we must be resolute in tackling shortcomings within the EFA effort. Together with key partners, UNESCO is playing an active role in the reform of the Fast-Track Initiative, which I discussed with partners including the World Bank; during my visit to New York and Washington, as well as later, with leaders in Addis Ababa. The recent evaluation of the initiative found that in-country processes – and particularly planning and implementation – needed to be significantly strengthened. A number of reforms have already been put in place.

If we are to achieve, or even to come close to, the 2015 targets, it is urgent to inject more national and donor resources into education. The High-Level Group meeting also called for exploring innovative approaches to education financing. This is an area to which I will also give high priority in the coming months. UNESCO has already announced its intention to join the soon-to-be-created education taskforce of the Leading Group on Innovative Financing. We will also organize an experts' meeting on the potential role of debt swaps for education in Buenos Aires in early July.

Some areas of education receive less coverage in the international media, but have immense importance for people's lives. The Sixth International Conference on the Education of Adults, or "CONFINTEA VI", hosted in Belém by the Government of Brazil on 1-4 December, was one such event. Bringing together over one thousand participants – including some 70 Ministers and Vice-Ministers – CONFINTEA VI refocused attention on adult literacy as a tool for empowerment and social change. The Conference was informed by the first Global Report on Adult Learning and Education, a major reference document and advocacy tool.

UNESCO is also working with other agencies to bring more targeted efforts to the education of adolescent girls. Together with the Executive Heads of UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM, ILO and WHO, I recently signed the United Nations Joint Statement on Accelerating Efforts to Advance the Rights of Adolescent Girls. Last month, I also presented UNESCO's work on bringing literacy to the women and girls of Afghanistan to the members of the US-Afghan Women's Council at a conference hosted by Mrs Laura Bush, the Honorary Ambassador for the United Nations Literacy Decade.

We have to pay the greatest attention to ensuring that access to education and learning is not impeded by the threat of violence or by actual violence. This is nowhere more true than in the case of the girls and women who are the principal victims of such threats. UNESCO would not be true to its mission if it allowed attacks on education to go unopposed. This is not just a matter of policy; it is about our Organization's moral compass.

Reports issued by UNESCO count among our most effective advocacy tools. The World Water Report, the Global Monitoring Report, the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education have a real impact. Their value and indeed, their credibility, depend upon their use of cogent policy analysis, solid data and impartial assessment, conducted in a clear and coherent process by the Secretariat, working with relevant partner organizations.

I am determined to ensure that UNESCO makes the best possible use of this advocacy tool. For our world reports and indeed, for all our publications, I will require the highest standards to be maintained, in terms both of quality and of editorial control. The recent study published on Education under Attack sought to address an issue of crucial importance and one that UNESCO must uphold: education has to be free from violence. The right to education is a non-negotiable human right.

Now let me turn to Major Programme II, Natural sciences. You will recall that last October, I launched a new initiative on climate change at the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, (or COP15) following a broad in-House consultation with the main stakeholders.

The new initiative seeks to enhance the use of UNESCO's multidisciplinary approach, and is built on the four pillars of science, education, environment and the socio-ethical. It also gives special emphasis to UNESCO's two global priorities – Africa and gender equality.

Despite the fact that COP15 was not the success we would have wished, I think UNESCO can be proud of the response to its new initiative. It was well received in Copenhagen and later, during my meetings with the members of the United Nations Chief Executives Board in Copenhagen, chaired by the Secretary-General, I was able to begin discussions on how partnerships could be built so as to reinforce the effectiveness of UNESCO's action, as well as boost the impact of our joint action with other agencies in the field. I was able also to carry these discussions forward with the agency, fund and programme heads that I met in New York during my mission to the United States of America in early January this year.

We are now working on the implementation of the new initiative at Headquarters. I will launch a Thematic Working Group on Climate Change shortly, to translate the specific elements contained in the new Initiative into time-bound, budgeted actions and activities.

One of the key elements involves science education. Whether it be for the adaptation of habits so as to mitigate climate change or biodiversity loss, or to know how to react in the event of a tsunami warning, the education component is vital. The challenge is great, however, given the growing disenchantment of young people with science, with a trend of declining enrolments in science disciplines and mathematics at all levels of education.

In the framework of the Intersectoral Platform on Science Education, the Education and Science sectors have been working on a series of initiatives aimed at reversing this trend. Together, they are looking at the constraints and shortcomings in science education so they can provide governments with the data that will help them reformulate science and maths education policies. The aim is two-fold: to attract more young people to science studies and careers, and enhance populations' readiness to engage with the technology that is increasingly present in everyday life.

I have also asked that action be taken to build on one of the few positive outcomes at Copenhagen – that is, the REDD-plus initiative. REDD, which predates COP15, stands for the reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Its origins lie in the notion that developing countries that are rich in forest cover need to be compensated by developed countries for their efforts at forest conservation using market or other financial incentives. In this context, UNESCO is seeking to highlight the important role of shared sites, which have been designated both as biosphere reserves and as world heritage sites. Such sites can contribute to education and research as well as to tourism and other forms of income generation, and thereby assist Member States in qualifying for REDD funding.

We have made contact with the UN-REDD Secretariat, and I will shortly be writing to seek Observer status for the Organization on its Policy Board. We will also be working with countries who have expressed an interest in implementing related pilot projects in UNESCO-protected sites.

Regarding the socio-ethical pillar of the initiative, the 35th session of the General Conference requested me to conduct a feasibility study on the desirability of preparing a declaration of ethical principles in relation to climate change. I am committed to implementing the Resolution in a rigorous manner. That is why, on learning that some of you felt that the Secretariat's original proposal may not have distinguished sufficiently between the consultation of Member States as well as other stakeholders, and the further study on the ethical implications of climate change that COMEST has been requested to conduct, I ordered a thorough revision of the action plan to include a full programme of regional consultation meetings. As indicated in the revised action plan sent to you, I shall submit to the 185th session of the Board, a detailed report on the consultation process.

One of the added advantages of UNESCO's new climate change initiative is that it properly engages the biosphere reserves, highlighting their learning and demonstration value, as well as the urgent need to stem biodiversity loss. In this context, the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity takes on a new significance.

As you know, UNESCO had the honour of hosting two high-level events for the launch of this important Year – the event on 21 and 22 January, and the biodiversity science-policy conference, which I opened on 25 January. The conference brought

together some 200 participants and its recommendations are available on-line. They will be presented at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity taking place in Nagoya (Japan) in October this year.

Several awareness-raising activities are taking place in the context of the Year. One is the travelling biodiversity exhibition, launched here at UNESCO last January. It aims to enhance public awareness of the importance of biodiversity for life on earth and will travel to the main international events being organized under the aegis of the International Year, such as the special session on biodiversity that will take place at the United Nations General Assembly next September. A kit is also being prepared in partnership with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It will provide easy-to-use and appealing tools that teachers and trainers can use to raise awareness and educate young people and the wider public on key biodiversity issues. Let me just say that if the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) decides to establish a permanent secretariat, I will be most glad for UNESCO to host it.

Let me now move on to the issue of tsunamis. As you know, our Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission coordinates four such systems – one for the Pacific, one for the Indian Ocean, one for the Caribbean and one for the North-West Atlantic.

Unfortunately, there have been three major earthquakes over the last six months – in the Solomon Islands, Haiti and Chile – each generating tsunamis of varying severity. These tragic events have demonstrated a major challenge to tsunami warning systems – there is no time to lose, there can only be immediate, well rehearsed action. No matter how good a tsunami warning system, it is the knowledge of how to react at the local level that determines a system's real efficiency.

The Commission has been preparing a post-event survey to collect information from the three Member States most recently affected – on their perception of how the systems worked, as well as on how the warnings were received and acted upon. The Commission has also been coordinating efforts to survey and document the extent and type of damage caused by the tsunamis, which will help improve the predictive ability of the warning systems we coordinate.

International Years, which help boost the impact of our activities at the international, regional and national levels, can also draw young people to science education. The celebration of the International Year of Astronomy last year (2009), for which UNESCO was the lead agency in partnership with the International Astronomical Union is a fine example of this. This Year achieved its objectives most successfully, and UNESCO can be proud of the part it played in that success. It highlighted the importance of science and science education, bringing science closer to society and demonstrating the link between science and culture.

One valuable outcome is the strategic plan that has been developed on education and outreach. Called “Astronomy for the Developing World: Strategic Plan 2010-2020”, this document will be the basis for cooperation between UNESCO and International Astronomical Union in the coming years. Other outcomes of the Year are the Space Education Programme and the “Astronomy and World Heritage” initiative.

International Years offer excellent opportunities to popularize science and UNESCO’s scientific prizes also contribute to a better understanding of science. I set up a Working Group on all UNESCO prizes, in order to evaluate their effectiveness and impact. I will share the recommendations of this Group at the next session of the Executive Board.

In this context, many of you have received communications about the UNESCO-Obiang Nguema Mbasogo International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences. I have myself received criticism about this prize, which I immediately communicated to the Board, as decisions about prizes are the prerogative of the Member States. I have done my best, as Director-General, to fulfil my role, which is to ensure the credibility of the process. Without sufficient candidates, this process would be seriously flawed and, as you know, the deadline was extended again for this reason.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I spoke earlier about the work of UNESCO’s Social and Human Sciences sector in the field of climate change. Social and human issues are at the heart of all the major challenges UNESCO needs to address: bioethics; migration; urbanization;

and the past few months have seen the sector extending its advocacy and outreach in exciting new ways.

For example, in March, together with Joan Laporta, President of Football Club Barcelona, I launched a year-long campaign against racism. The campaign is the latest initiative resulting from a cooperation agreement UNESCO signed in 2007 with this Football Club, one of a wide range of partners around the world who are helping to promote UNESCO's message.

On 21 March, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, we issued a joint communiqué emphasizing football's extraordinary power to unite people of all origins and all sections of society, which makes the sport such a fine example of the unity in diversity that UNESCO encourages in all aspects of life.

We called on the football industry and fans to categorically reject the racism that continues to sully the "beautiful game", as football fans call it, as well as society as a whole.

In addition to the misery and suffering they cause to their victims, incidents of racism are an attack on the very notion that we all have the same basic human rights, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

UNESCO is committed to promoting the universality of human rights in all aspects of its work throughout the world, which is why it was a great pleasure for me to open the first meeting of the Permanent Forum of Arab-African Dialogue on Democracy and Human Rights in Cairo on 7 December. Such Fora play a vital role in promoting understanding and dialogue among the peoples of the world. They are fundamental to the new humanism that I am promoting as Director-General. I wholeheartedly encourage the development of similar fora, in particular those involving youth because young people have a huge potential to be agents of peace and national development. UNESCO is sharpening its focus to promote youth civic engagement in very concrete ways, as a means of empowering youth and preventing violence and radicalization.

The proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly of 2010 as the International Year of Youth on Dialogue and Mutual Understanding really brings youth to the fore of global debates. As co-chair of the Interagency Network on

Youth Development, UNESCO will play an active role in the celebration of the Year when it is launched on 12 August, not least at the World Youth Conference in Mexico shortly afterwards. To that end, I am setting up a thematic working group on youth in order to enhance UNESCO's specific contribution in this area.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me reaffirm here how essential I consider it to be to place culture at the heart of the development process. I reaffirm that this is most assuredly a crucial dimension which I pledge to emphasize and to which I will give practical expression, one that UNESCO will ceaselessly advocate and for which, I may say, it will even fight. As you are aware, since the beginning of my mandate, I have made every effort and held many consultations and meetings with the heads of other United Nations agencies and partners, to ensure that culture is taken into account in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The link between culture and development conveys a strong message, which, I hope will be brought to the fore as a result of all the efforts undertaken by UNESCO, particularly in the context of its standard-setting mandate.

In this connection, and as we are about to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, reflection on the future of the Convention is increasingly urgent and raises fundamental issues regarding its purpose and sustainability. With 890 listed sites, how can we ensure that the Convention serves its overarching objective of preserving and protecting the cultural and natural heritage? How can the World Heritage Centre continue, in view of our budgetary constraints, to monitor almost a thousand sites while building the capacity of site managers in the countries most in need? And above all, how can it ensure that the protection effort contributes towards effective sustainable development and strengthens our Organization's objectives of intercultural dialogue, reconciliation and peaceful coexistence?

The workshop organized a few days ago in Brazil by the World Heritage Centre pursued the reflection initiated several months ago on these issues. I firmly pledge to make full use of the opportunities provided by the Convention to contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The same applies to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which may play an important role in sustainable development, social cohesion and poverty reduction. I am confident that it will provide a considerable, tangible contribution in this area since it has raised the profile of entire communities that are often marginalized, and promoted their identity and the values transmitted by their intangible heritage.

I shall do my utmost to ensure that solutions are found very rapidly to address the problems arising at the end of the first cycle of operational implementation of the Convention. Mechanisms that are no doubt too complex, uneven resources and preparation among States, significant enthusiasm among many others, and a Secretariat with staff numbers that remain limited account for the fact that the applications received – more than 150 altogether (including all lists for the first year) and yet more for the second cycle – cannot all be processed. I therefore welcome the ongoing discussions on the revision of the operational directives for the implementation of the Convention, which will be instrumental in attempting to channel an already highly successful venture, by enhancing the impact and effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The group of experts that met on 15 March 2010 to discuss this issue proposed many interesting options, and I sincerely hope that the General Assembly of States Parties will be in a position, next June, to adopt revised directives.

With regard to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, it is no doubt the very first international convention that places emphasis on culture for development, with guiding principles focused on the cultural aspect of development, whether economic or social. This is most probably what led to its rapid ratification, with a total number of 109 States Parties to date, in addition to the European Union, which demonstrates the importance attached by States to protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions.

I am therefore delighted that the operational directives will soon be completed so as to enable the effective implementation of the Convention, which will be strengthened by the strategy to promote its ratification in under-represented countries, thereby redressing the balance among States Parties. Furthermore, I am pleased to inform you that the plans to establish a technical assistance programme

for developing countries with a view to facilitating the implementation of the Convention are currently being finalized, with the support of the European Union.

As to the International Fund for Cultural Diversity, established in 2005 to promote the emergence of a dynamic and viable cultural sector, I am also pleased to announce that it has now raised some two and a half million dollars, although this is of course insufficient. I wish to recall at this stage the letter I addressed to all States Parties in March, encouraging them to pay contributions amounting to a minimum of 1% of their overall contributions to UNESCO.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With regard to Major Programme V, Communication and Information, the emphasis has remained on promoting freedom of expression and support for Member States to put in place free, independent and pluralist media. The International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) plays a very important role in this connection. At its last meeting, the Bureau of the Programme's Intergovernmental Council approved the allocation of funds to launch 82 media development projects in 53 countries for a total amount of \$2.1 million.

It should be noted that despite a relatively modest budget under the regular programme, IPDC has managed to mobilize funds which have been used to finance a large number of small projects with tangible results on the ground. IPDC has also strengthened its approach in terms of concrete programmes. Initiatives have been launched, targeting in particular fields specific to the Programme, including media development indicators, centres of excellence in teaching journalism in Africa, and monitoring journalists' safety.

My report to the Programme's Intergovernmental Council highlighted the urgent need to address questions concerning the safety of journalists and the dangers of impunity. Monitoring the safety of journalists is a very important role of the Programme in order to publicize crimes committed against media professionals. Despite repeated calls at the international level to end the killing, UNESCO has deplored and condemned the murder of 77 journalists and media technicians who were trying to cover the news in 2009. Of the 28 Member States in which the 122 murders in 2006-2007 were perpetrated, 15 have provided UNESCO, at the Programme's request, with information concerning the legal follow-up, and I thank

them for that. This is a first, important step and I do hope that this initiative will help to put an end to impunity by encouraging and making public legal action whenever a journalist is targeted.

We cannot expect the media to do its work in full confidence unless we can guarantee the safety of journalists. That is why UNESCO is wholly committed to working with the governing bodies, Member States and professional non-governmental organizations to keep this issue on the international agenda.

As regards the Information for All Programme (IFAP), the Intergovernmental Council and its Bureau met last week. The Strategic Plan for 2008-2013, endorsed by the Executive Board at its 180th session, emphasizes the areas corresponding to the priorities identified and reflected in the C/5 document. The Programme was established to provide a platform for discussion of policies and strategies for the development of information and knowledge societies. However, in recent years, the Information for All Programme has evolved in a way that highlights the need to redefine its role, its objectives and its implementation plans so that its ambitious goals may be reached.

Following the Executive Board's decision in 2008, additional resources under the regular programme, and human resources, were allocated to the Information for All Programme. However, although the regular programme funds are sufficient to cover the costs of the Programme's statutory meetings, they do not allow it to implement large-scale projects. The success of the Information for All Programme therefore depends to a great extent on the extrabudgetary contributions which it manages to mobilize. In 2009, the Programme received only one contribution, \$20,000 from China. I sincerely hope that the Council of the Programme and the members of its Bureau will show their commitment by increasing their participation and by engaging in fund-raising.

Lastly, UNESCO is making an active contribution to the general implementation mechanism of the World Summit on the Information Society, notably by facilitating the application of six action lines of the Geneva Plan of Action. This year, 2010, is critical: five years have passed since the second phase of the World Summit, which took place in Tunisia. We have just five years left to reach the Millennium Development Goals, before the 2015 deadline.

With a view to greater linguistic diversity on the Internet, an important step was taken in December 2009 when Rod Beckstrom, President of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), and myself, signed an agreement whereby UNESCO will help ICANN, the institution that attributes online addresses to Internet users, to introduce the first multilingual domain names.

I am also in touch with Mr Hamadoun Touré, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union, regarding the organization of the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society Forum to be held in Geneva in May 2010, and the launch of a broadband commission for digital development. This multi-partner initiative, which has the backing of the United Nations Secretary-General, is intended to promote the immense potential of high-speed broadband communication networks to transform economies through content and connectivity. The commission will meet for the first time in June 2010 in Geneva to review the current situation in a large number of countries across the world, and to identify economic, social and commercial models and practical, innovative proposals to stimulate development and attain the Millennium Development Goals through the universal use of high speed connections.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turning now to organizational matters: I know that you are eager to hear of my plans regarding restructuring within the Secretariat. I will raise these with you during this afternoon's consultation meeting. The private session on 14 April will be the opportunity for me to inform you of my decisions regarding the recruitment of the Organization's senior management personnel. Constant dialogue with the Member States is the key to maintaining a successful day-to-day working relationship between the Secretariat and the governing bodies. I myself have conducted three information meetings and permanent delegations have been invited to several others organized by the Sectors on specific topics.

Transparency and accountability are the hallmarks of a healthy organizational culture. I am glad that there are several evaluation reports before this Board session. Both internal and external auditing are essential tools that help you carry out your task in overseeing the implementation of the programme.

As I said in my inception speech, I will ensure that the Organization continues to pursue high quality evaluations that support programme management decisions, with adequate accountability mechanisms. I am also committed to working closely with the external auditor who has rendered so many good services to the Organization in all transparency.

The Independent External Evaluation of the Organization is helping us to improve our processes and working methods. In this regard, the core team of evaluators has been modified during the evaluation process to ensure that we have a better balance in geographical representation. At our request, it now includes evaluators from Argentina, China, Egypt, India and Mauritania. Meetings have been held with the external evaluators and all electoral groups and an information session took place on 10 March. I would like also to recall that the General Conference resolution states that “the external evaluation team may seek external advice, in particular from eminent persons”. I intend to pursue this option in order to ensure that the evaluation process is authoritative, credible and benefits from the widest-possible geographical coverage.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of my most important responsibilities is to render UNESCO more visible on the international stage as an effective, respected Organization with a forceful voice. I have reviewed the Organization’s positioning in view of its strategic orientation. I have looked at ways to make its structures more responsive and streamlined, less costly and bureaucratic, with the focus on high-quality programme delivery and results. The four Task Forces which I convened were of immense help in this review process. UNESCO staff members at all levels, working in Headquarters and in the Field responded immediately to my invitation, joined these group discussions and provided valuable assessments, ideas and proposals. I have drawn greatly on this input in deciding my first measures to introduce new working methods focused on efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.

As you already know, each Task Force focused on a specific theme for urgent consideration by the Organization. The Task Force on Optimizing UNESCO’s Operations was sub-divided into three groups: Optimizing field operations, Simplifying and streamlining procedures and processes, and improving management practices, and Aligning human resource policies and practices to

optimize UNESCO's human resources management. The other Task Forces focused on Delivering Priority Africa, on Delivering the UNESCO Priority for Gender Equality and on New Partnerships and Mobilizing Extrabudgetary Resources.

As I have already informed you, the Task Forces were open for participation by all staff members both at Headquarters and from the Field who wished to express their ideas and proposals, either through Internet, direct participation in the discussions or through video and telephone conferences. I chaired these groups myself, receiving these contributions directly which helped me to make certain decisions on a series of short, medium, and long-term measures on how to optimize the work of our organization, and as such, has been of tremendous service.

At the outset, I would like to say that, given the composition, mechanisms and mandate of the various Task Forces, the 18 Task Force Coordinators and all the members of the Secretariat who contributed to this consultative process did a remarkable job in addressing the numerous complex issues. The level of participation was extremely high. In total 881 members of the Secretariat participated in the Task Forces, including 403 from the Field. Representatives from both Staff Associations participated actively in the work of one of the Task Forces as ex-officio members. What this tells me is that there is an immense wealth of expertise and energy in the Secretariat, and that staff members are eager to have all of their skills and abilities recognised and made full use of to improve the way we work. My objective today is to give you an account of some of the main decisions which I have taken, based on ideas and proposals which emerged during the deliberation of the Task Forces.

The Task Force on Field Operations was very effective in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the current Field office situation and practices. I am retaining several of the ideas formulated to improve the Organization's efficiency. Their aim is to provide Field offices with greater financial, administrative, human resources management, programmatic autonomy and greater accountability. In this regard, I am convinced that what the Organization needs is for each programme sector to have a consolidated and harmonized approach concerning field operations. This will ensure UNESCO's integration and preparedness in the United Nations reform and "Delivering as One" agenda, which calls for an improved convergence of efforts by all UNESCO entities into a truly intersectoral 'Delivering as One UNESCO' approach. In the same spirit, when I first established this task force, I purposely

decided to talk about “field operations” or “field presence” and not use the term “decentralization”, traditionally used when speaking about UNESCO’s field network, as better suited terminology to the “One UNESCO” approach which I strongly advocate.

As a start I plan to review the present programming approach to achieve a better balance between global and normative work and delivery at country level. I will conduct a review of UNESCO’s programming and budgeting processes in order to favour a better and more predictable funding of field offices. I also intend to provide for greater flexibility to allow for more interdisciplinarity in the delivery our programmes. I plan to adjust and systematically enforce the use of internal programming tools such as the UNESCO Country Programming Documents (UCPDs) at the country level. I intend to boost the fund raising capacity and strengthen the role of regional bureaux to provide a regional perspective, especially in programme planning. In the area of Human resources management, I will conduct a review of the contractual arrangements for local field staff. I will seek a better balance between generalists and specialists, pursue a proactive geographical mobility system, reinforce a comprehensive training strategy and align local contractual arrangements with sister United Nations bodies as well as set up a system of improved Headquarters-field interactions via short term assignments. UNESCO also needs to uphold and strengthen its prime role and provide an intellectual and humanist response to globalization and the current crisis. The notion of managing knowledge more effectively as a corporate resource will become an integral practice of the Organization as this will only serve to benefit UNESCO’s function as a “laboratory of ideas”.

There are a number of important issues involving the optimization of our field operations and field presence that still require further in-depth examination. One of these is the restructuring of the Bureau for Field Coordination (BFC). As foreseen, I will report to you on this subject and on the future of UNESCO’s field presence at the next session of the Executive Board in the fall.

The Task Force on simplifying and streamlining procedures and improving management practices took stock of the Organization’s strengths and weaknesses in administrative, budgetary and financial procedures and processes. The Task Force reported that the general impression of the Secretariat was that over the past years UNESCO had developed a “culture of over control” which was deemed as

counterproductive resulting in a slowing down in programme delivery and also in a duplication of efforts and the dispersion of actions and overall responsibility. In this regard it is important to ensure coherence in the programming between Headquarters and the field, and to ensure a balance between UNESCO's response to global priorities defined by the Governing bodies and specific needs and priorities at the country level.

Adding to this situation, there is currently no central mechanism which coordinates the Organization's rules and regulations/policies and procedures and which also takes into consideration the needs of all stakeholders. The rules and regulations are the strategic link between the Organization's vision and its day-to-day operations. Clearly written policies and procedures will avoid ambiguity and will allow all staff to understand their roles and responsibilities within predefined limits. I therefore plan to create an operational Change Management/Manual Unit to manage, coordinate, oversee, arbitrate, and update UNESCO's Administrative Manual which encompasses the Organization's regulations, rules, processes and procedures. This Manual Unit will be mandated to delineate the rules and procedures to follow in the implementation of the mandate of the Organization and the execution of the functions of the Secretariat, deriving principally from the provisions of the UNESCO Constitution, General Conference resolutions, Executive Board decisions, Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, Financial Regulations and Rules, Director-General Notes and Administrative Circulars.

I will be considering many other measures in order to improve management practices and to streamline the long administrative procedures and unnecessary paperwork. I plan to simplify the reporting structure, reinforce the concepts of one delivery team in order to have coherent field operations, and will create one principal focal point for each process or policy to avoid confusion and redundancy.

Together with my new team I will carry out a review of the organizational structure of UNESCO in terms of its intersectoriality and from the point of view of streamlining to avoid overlapping as well as to cut administrative costs. Some structural units could be merged and a more effective decentralization and field presence would create more synergies between Headquarters and its field operations.

The stock-taking exercise of the Task Force on Human resources policies and practices revealed various issues and areas for improvement in Human Resource

management within the Organization. As a start, there appears to be a gap between the Human Resource goals and strategies and the broader organizational mandate, vision and programme. My immediate task is therefore to elaborate a new Human Resource Strategy for the Organization, for both Headquarters and the Field, linked with the programme priorities and our organizational mandate.

In the past, the delegation of human resource functions to sectors, services and bureaux, which was meant to improve the human resource management by placing a greater degree of authority and responsibility into their hands, resulted as being counter-productive and inefficient as the devolution of responsibilities from the Bureau of Human Resources Management to senior and middle managers in sectors/services/bureaux was not accompanied by the reallocation of staff required to absorb the additional workload, nor was it supported by training on relevant human resource management. As a result a number of human resource decisions taken do not fully comply with approved policies and procedures.

In the preparation of the next C/4 and C/5, I will ensure that HRM works together with the Sectors and the Bureau of the Budget to design and implement a programme-oriented human resource planning so that they can identify together essential skills and competencies required to implement UNESCO's programmes. I will ensure that generic and sector-specific skills and competencies required by the Organization are clearly defined and updated; also a mapping out of the skills and resources required paving the way for efficient succession planning. I will be considering measures to redress gender imbalance at the senior management level. My efforts will also be devoted to maintaining an equitable geographical representation through proactive search processes. I will reinforce the Young Professionals programme as this programme has contributed to increase the geographical representation at the junior levels. I will expand opportunities for career development and promotion; and will enforce staff rotation by harmonizing current practices among sectors and encouraging lateral and functional mobility between Headquarters and field office.

Moving now to the next Task Force, I was extremely encouraged by the enthusiastic participation in the Task Force on Delivering Priority Africa as our delivery in this area is our collective challenge. I found interesting to note the similarity of the findings of the Task Force with the observations about the programme that have been made to me by different parties. Some, such as those

relative to the proper definition of “priority Africa” or the nature of the resource allocated to the priority, are systemic in UNESCO. I have already presented some of my ideas and proposals to the members of the Bureau of the Africa Group and members of the Board. I was encouraged by their immediate feedback which was quite positive. Some of these included: a need for a clear policy orientation and requisite resource allocation; and greater effort in the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources by field offices for the implementation of activities in Africa. It was said that UNESCO’s priorities in Africa are not sufficiently aligned to those of the African Union; the need for more synergy between what is being requested by Member States within the Participation Programme and what the Organization is implementing in the field; more clarity on the role of National Commissions in helping UNESCO reach its Priority Africa objectives; a better formulation of projects in the Priority Africa framework to attract donor funds; and more active use of South-South cooperation for programme implementation in Africa.

Clearly, we need to make better use of our National Commissions. I intend to create a network of external experts to reflect on pertinent issues and craft out a development agenda that UNESCO could coordinate. We need to be more engaged in South-South cooperation initiatives, and enlarge our partnerships for the implementation of projects by associating bilateral development programmes in developed or emerging economy countries to UNESCO programmes for Africa. I intend to make better use of ICTs for education and other capacity-building measures. I also intend to increase the technical capacity of field offices; strengthen teacher training initiatives in Africa; reinforce the link between culture and education; reinforce energy projects, as well as the link between the Forum of African Parliamentarians for Education. I also plan on developing a long-term action strategy for Africa with a forward-looking vision on how to build up the capacities of National Commissions; create greater synergy between the education programmes; streamline procedures for the management of extrabudgetary resources and identify flagship projects; strengthen the internal capacity for fund raising; and improve connectivity in our field offices.

The Task Force on Delivering the UNESCO Priority for Gender Equality was effective in its assessment of the current situation. The need to have a clear policy on accountability for gender equality (GE) implementation, in line with the Gender Equality Action Plan and necessary allocations, at all levels of the management and sector-wide commitment to promote gender equality through effective

implementation strategies is evident. I intend on introducing a number of measures, including some mandatory United Nations online courses on gender mainstreaming/equality for all staff, also ensuring accountability for gender equality and gender awareness as a criterion in performance assessments. Concerning programming, sector specific tools to assess the impact of our policies and strategies, including in relation to internationally-agreed development goals (IADGs) and Millennium Development Goals will be developed. To avoid “gender-blind” programming, Sectors will develop specific gender equality “check lists” adapted to their programme requirements and specificities. My plan is also to revise UNESCO’s communication strategy for gender equality to reflect a “visibility plan” for success stories and concrete achievements. We will also tap into and utilize resources and skills of UNCTS to strengthen implementation at regional level. The Gender-Responsive Budgeting Tool of UNIFEM or the “Guidance for the development of gender responsive Joint Programmes” developed by the Millennium Development Goals Spanish Fund are examples of such tools that UNESCO could apply to better integrate gender equality in our programmes. I will also be introducing measures to improve the functioning of the Sector and field office Gender Focal Points mechanism, including providing the Focal points with clear guidelines or induction on their roles and responsibilities. To raise the visibility and work of the Organization on delivering the gender equality priority, I have decided to place the Division for Gender Equality fully integrated into my Cabinet. I will provide you with further details this afternoon in my speech on the structuring of the Secretariat.

I will be retaining many of the recommendations provided to me by the Task Force on New Partnerships and the mobilization of Extrabudgetary Funds. The situation today is that UNESCO must actively seek out new partnerships and new funding opportunities to stabilize the overall volume of resources mobilized as there will most likely be knock-on effects caused by the global financial crisis. UNESCO therefore needs to be sharper in its performance and more articulate in communicating its added value to compete for dwindling resources by stepping up its efforts to engage in negotiations with in-country representatives of funding sources and in joint United Nations programming, including that funded by Multi-donor Trust Funds. A UNESCO-wide set of criteria for “partner” and “partnership” is needed in order to have a clear partnership strategy that affects the various phases of partnership preparation and implementation. Clarity is needed on the

responsibilities of Programme Sectors and Central Services, and also concerning the responsibilities' of Headquarters versus field offices.

We must further capitalize on the significant potential that some organizations and entities like the European Union represent for the Organization in terms of programmatic cooperation and resources. Due attention needs to be given to the programming of activities at the country level: the dynamics of the country programming and of "One United Nations" joint programming need to be taken into account, also considering that the bulk of bilateral government funding and several intergovernmental donors funding is directed at the country level. Field offices must make concerted and additional effort to assess the needs and priorities of in-country funding partners, assume and demonstrate technical leadership in joint United Nations working groups to position UNESCO in relation to country development strategy and donor/partner priorities.

I am convinced that UNESCO must develop and provide to its funding partners incentives in terms of visibility outreach and access. I plan to carry out a study on possible innovative mechanisms which would allow donors to make non earmarked voluntary contributions over and above their assessed contributions to expand delivery of Regular Programme priorities. I plan also to take stock of other United Nations agencies' experiences, in fact I have already started to do that and go for fully integrated regular and extrabudgetary programme planning in connection with the preparation of the future C/5. UNESCO's programme planning and resource mobilization strategy and its communication strategy need to be linked.

As I have mentioned earlier I am committed to improving the Organization's internal and external communication flow of information as it affects both our visibility and efficient implementation of activities. I will speak on communication and on the importance of visibility in more detail this afternoon, when I will be addressing my immediate restructuring plans in my efforts to make UNESCO a more effective, transparent, and respected Organization.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I have reported to you on the activities of the past six months. I have highlighted the strategic priorities and orientations that guided me as I set out to

deliver on the commitments which I pledged on the occasion of my installation as Director-General.

Over these few months, I have forged strong ties with many key leaders and carried UNESCO's message to them. Our Organization is beginning to gain greater influence on the international development agenda. I have exchanged ideas and worked with numerous colleagues from across the Organization within the Task Forces, in an approach based on dialogue and openness. This consultation process, as well as my dialogue with you, the Member States, has been most helpful to me in planning the changes that are needed to revitalize UNESCO.

We have made a new start. We now have a road map. It will become more detailed over the months ahead. A new senior management team will be joining me shortly and will be instrumental in implementing the changes that are required. At this point, I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to the outgoing senior management team, on behalf of the whole Organization. Their work over the years has been an invaluable contribution to UNESCO. Over the last few months, as I took up my duties, they have worked side-by-side with me. As they prepare to close this chapter and to start the next chapter of their lives, I am sure that you will want to join me in wishing them well. I know I can count on them in the remaining weeks until the hand-over in each sector to continue to support my efforts to make this new start.

Let me say in conclusion that I have begun my task and I hope that UNESCO is on the move.