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ELEMENTS FOR AN OVERALL UNESCO STRATEGY ON HUMAN RIGHTS

SUMMARY

In response to the United Nations Secretary-General's Reform Programme (A/51/950) and in accordance with the Medium-Term Strategy (2002-2007), adopted by the General Conference, the Director-General asked the Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences to elaborate, in cooperation with other sectors, proposals for an overall UNESCO strategy on human rights.

The document suggests ways of further integrating human rights within the Organization's programmes. It presents the proposals concerning elements for an overall UNESCO strategy aimed at enhancing the Organization's contribution to the promotion of all human rights and, in particular, those within UNESCO's fields of competence. UNESCO Strategy for human rights education, as requested by the General Conference in 30 C/Resolution 16 and by the Executive Board in 161 EX/Decision 3.2.3, constitutes an integral part of the present document.

Decision proposed: paragraph 52.

INTRODUCTION

1. The present document contains proposals for revitalizing UNESCO's contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights. It is based on the work of the Intersectoral Task Force set up at the request of the Director-General by the Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences in July 2001. Over the past year, the Task Force has held regular meetings. It has carried out a thorough review of UNESCO's human rights activities and taken stock of the human rights mainstreaming experience within the United Nations system. It has elicited the views of all programme sectors, relevant central services and field offices, as well as those of key partners, including UNESCO Chairs. The Task Force has also taken into account the conclusions of the evaluation of UNESCO's publications in the field of human rights education, undertaken in conformity with General Conference Resolution 30 C/16. In June 2002, the Intersectoral Task Force undertook a mission to consult the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Chairpersons of treaty monitoring bodies and special rapporteurs.

2. The document is divided into five sections. Section I, *Human rights at the core of the United Nations system*, summarizes the human rights mandate of the United Nations system and UNESCO's activities aimed at the promotion and protection of all human rights. Section II, *Integrating human rights into UNESCO's programmes*, proposes how human rights might be mainstreamed into all of UNESCO's activities, taking due account of the experience of the United Nations system. Section III, *Advancing human rights in an era of globalization*, sets out UNESCO's human rights priorities in the following crucial areas: generating and sharing knowledge on human rights; developing and implementing UNESCO's human rights standards; renewing UNESCO's commitment to education for human rights; and contributing to technical assistance and advisory services in the field of human rights. Section IV, *Strengthening partnerships*, outlines steps that should be taken to improve coordination of human rights activities within the United Nations system, with regional intergovernmental organizations, traditional and new UNESCO partners. Section V, *Priority actions and expected results*, indicates the possible implications of the proposals and recommendations of the Task Force for UNESCO's activities for the next biennial Programme and Budget (32 C/5).

3. In view of the utmost importance of the promotion of the human rights of women and gender equality, and the struggle against racism and discrimination in all its forms, detailed strategies on these two subjects are currently being prepared and will be presented to the Executive Board in the near future. It is understood that all three strategies will be interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

SECTION I – HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE CORE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

4. The promotion of respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion was proclaimed a major objective of the entire United Nations system by the Charter of the United Nations. This commitment is reaffirmed in Article I of the UNESCO Constitution.

5. From the outset, UNESCO has played an important role in the promotion and protection of human rights. The Organization was actively involved in the elaboration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, immediately after its adoption, proclaimed the importance of the Universal Declaration for all UNESCO's activities. Subsequently, UNESCO assisted in the drafting of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. UNESCO has adopted an impressive number of standard-

setting instruments, which are directly or indirectly related to human rights. It has published numerous research and educational materials on human rights and, through a variety of promotional activities, has contributed significantly to the universal respect for human rights.¹ UNESCO's commitment to human rights has been reconfirmed and further elucidated in numerous decisions of its governing bodies. The General Conference at its two most recent sessions recommended the elaboration of UNESCO's overall strategy for human rights education (30 C/Resolution 16) and authorized the Director-General to enhance UNESCO's contribution to the promotion of all human rights, focusing on those within the Organization's competence, particularly civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights (31 C/5). According to the Medium-Term Strategy (31 C/4), the main focus of UNESCO's current human rights activities is closely linked to the major aim of the Organization, namely to "bring about globalization with a human face". Human rights also constitute one of UNESCO's main strategic thrusts for the period 2002-2007.

6. Elements for an Overall UNESCO Strategy on Human Rights is the UNESCO response to the United Nations Secretary-General's Reform Programme, which affirms that "a major task for the future will be to enhance the human rights programme and integrate it into the broad range of the Organization's activities, including in the development and humanitarian area".² It should ensure that UNESCO contributes effectively to the United Nations' agenda for the 21st Century. UNESCO is preparing itself to contribute constructively to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially the central goal of halving extreme poverty by the year 2015, reconfirming that "poverty is a denial of basic human rights".³ In its human rights activities, UNESCO is guided by its Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007 (31 C/4), especially paragraphs 90-92, and is inspired by the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by consensus by the World Conference on Human Rights (1993) and, in particular, by the principle of universality, indivisibility, interrelationship and interdependence of all human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social.

7. The proposals contained in this document are aimed at strengthening UNESCO's contribution towards the promotion and protection of human rights and at setting out a phased process for integrating a human rights perspective into all the Organization's functions: as the international lead agency for education, the sciences, culture and communication; as a laboratory of ideas; as a standard-setter; as a clearing house for gathering, transferring, disseminating and sharing information, knowledge and good practices in its fields of competence; as a capacity-builder in Member States; and as a catalyst for international cooperation and rights-based development.

SECTION II – INTEGRATING HUMAN RIGHTS INTO UNESCO'S PROGRAMMES

8. The United Nations Secretary-General's instructions for human rights mainstreaming arose out of recognition of the need for the United Nations system to have a consistent approach to human rights and for greater collaboration between the bodies, programmes and specialized agencies working on development and human rights. The United Nations Secretary-General has stressed that "human rights are also a central tenet of the United Nations reform, which emphasizes the centrality of human rights in all activities of the system".⁴ He has also underlined that "economic, social and

¹ As part of its promotional work, UNESCO awards a number of high-profile prizes for a range of human rights-related activities such as: the Prize for Human Rights Education; the Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize; and the Felix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize.

² "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform" (1997) (A/51/950).

³ 31 C/4, paragraphs 178 and 185.

⁴ Report of the Secretary-General, "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations millennium Declaration", A/56/326, paragraph 201.

cultural rights are at the heart of all the development goals related to poverty reduction”.⁵ Human rights mainstreaming includes:

- (a) recognizing the legitimacy of particular programmes in United Nations human rights standards – the so-called human rights-based approach to activities carried out within the terms of the mandates of agencies and programmes;
- (b) development of programmes or projects addressing specific human rights issues;
- (c) recognizing that existing programmes often have a relationship to human rights concerns, and re-orienting them to pay the greatest possible attention to those concerns;
- (d) inclusion of a human rights component into wider operations of the United Nations;
- (e) the presence of a human rights programme in all structural units of the Secretariat responsible for policy development and coordination.⁶

9. Within the United Nations system, certain experience has already been accumulated. The most impressive results have been achieved by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), which already in 1988 adopted a rights-based approach to programming. UNICEF has worked to identify ways in which international human rights standards can guide its work and be applied in all programme sectors. UNICEF tries to link its situation assessment and analysis in programming with the State’s process for reporting on its treaty obligations to children and women. The rights approach requires UNICEF to work with national partners to improve public policy development in order to implement the rights of children and women. UNICEF has produced a “resource guide” regarding cooperation with relevant treaty monitoring bodies (especially the Committee on the Rights of the Child). The UNICEF Programme, Policies and Procedures Manual (PPPM) has also been revised and a checklist on human rights mainstreaming produced. The UNICEF 2002-2005 results-based programming framework makes regional directors accountable for mainstreaming human rights within their work.

10. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) adopted in 1998 a policy on human rights: Integrating Human Rights with Sustainable Human Development. A programme for human rights strengthening – HURIST – was developed to support the implementation of the policy. The Human Development Report 2000 on “Human Rights and Human Development” stressed that human rights and human development share a common vision and a common purpose – to secure the freedom, well-being and dignity of all people everywhere. The ultimate aim of human rights-based programming will be to align the universally accepted human rights values with consistent action. In 1999-2000, UNDP organized five regional workshops on mainstreaming of human rights in sustainable development. An electronic network “Human Rights Talk”, launched in 1999, promotes debate and discussion among UNDP staff and its parties on human rights and development. The UNDP Administrator issued a special document to integrate human rights into UNDP’s activities.⁷ In March 2001, UNDP published its “Training Manual on Human Rights and Sustainable Human Development”, developed in cooperation with the OHCHR.

11. This experience demonstrates that successful human rights mainstreaming demands a consistent and interactive process to be managed by the head of the Organization and her/his senior assistants. It demands efforts to train personnel, to modify working rules and procedures, and, often,

⁵ *Ibid.* paragraph 202.

⁶ Report of the Secretary-General, Coordinated follow-up and implementation of the *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action* (E/1998/60).

⁷ Note of 22 September 2000 entitled “Implementing UNDP Policy on Human Rights in the New Millennium”.

requires institutional restructuring. It also demands rights-based programming and a systematic evaluation of the results achieved.

12. To further integrate human rights inside UNESCO, the following objectives should be pursued:

- (a) to develop an Organization-wide coherent vision of UNESCO's human rights role and mandate which might be achieved by training of personnel and a regular exchange of information;
- (b) to integrate human rights into all programmes in line with the United Nations Secretary-General's Reform Programme and taking into account a human rights-based approach to development;
- (c) to achieve greater in-house coordination ensuring the Organization's contribution to the advancement of all human rights, particularly those within its fields of competence, including economic, social and cultural rights "mainstreaming";
- (d) to increase capacity to respond to requests for technical assistance in the field of human rights;
- (e) to develop human rights-based programming and evaluation of activities.

SECTION III – ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS IN AN ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

13. UNESCO has a clearly articulated commitment to the promotion of all human rights, in conformity with the principle of their indivisibility, interdependence and equal importance. However, particular attention will be given to economic, social and cultural rights, in view of their frequent neglect and UNESCO's active involvement in the fight against poverty (31 C/4, para. 91).

Generating and sharing knowledge on human rights

14. The Organization promotes research and intellectual reflection on all human rights. It has a special role to play in identifying new challenges and new directions of action. UNESCO, given its intellectual mandate, helps stimulate debate among the academic community, decision-makers, professionals, and the general public on human rights issues, particularly those related to strategic objectives determined by the Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007. UNESCO has made a major contribution to current reflection on human rights through its analytical publications and dissemination of world reports, the most well-known of which is World Education Report 2000 – The right to education: towards education for all throughout life. Research undertaken by UNESCO has often had the specific purpose of supporting its standard-setting processes: for example, the drafting of the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights. UNESCO needs to develop a broad strategic and long-term approach to human rights research, which would aim at influencing and providing guidance for evidence-based policy and/or standard-setting in the area of human rights. More attention should be paid to the cultural aspects of human rights issues, in particular with a view to contribute to the recognition and implementation of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

15. One of the expected outcomes of the Medium-Term Strategy (31 C/4) is that UNESCO Chairs in Human Rights, Democracy, Peace and Tolerance⁸ promote research and information in the field

⁸ More than 50 Chairs in all regions of the world.

of human rights and also encourage reflection on human rights issues through a more efficiently connected network. Human rights research and training institutions⁹ with which UNESCO closely cooperates should also be involved. The production of short analytical papers dealing with the most pertinent topics on the current human rights agenda with special focus on UNESCO's fields of competence could help sensitize decision-makers and public opinion. These publications should be aimed at the academic community, decision-makers, non-governmental organizations, as well as the mass media. The results of the research should be widely and effectively disseminated among UNESCO partners and networks. National Commissions should engage more in UNESCO's human rights research and help disseminate the results. An active role in this process can be played by non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, in particular within the United Nations system.

16. A new impetus needs to be given to UNESCO's human rights research agenda, with improved coordination with other institutions, and most importantly with the OHCHR, to respect institutional responsibilities and to avoid duplication. A multidisciplinary approach will help meet emerging human rights challenges in UNESCO's spheres of competence.

Strategic objectives

17. The following strategic objectives are proposed to be pursued:

- (a) Strengthening research partnerships and networks, in particular the networks of UNESCO Chairs and human rights research and training institutions, by linking their activities more directly to the new research agenda and emerging human rights issues that fall within UNESCO's fields of competence and to the policy-making process;
- (b) contributing to advocacy and policy dialogue on human rights by holding an Annual Human Rights Forum in Paris on the most pertinent human rights issues with the participation of leading specialists;
- (c) identifying by means of research and reflection new trends and obstacles, including changing patterns of social relations, affecting the full enjoyment of human rights;
- (d) establishing a small grants research programme for young researchers from all regions to develop further the understanding of social, economic and cultural rights and contribute to their protection through special studies on their justiciability, the funding of which will include extrabudgetary resources.

UNESCO's human rights standards: progressive development, implementation, reporting and monitoring procedures

18. Standard-setting has always played an important role in UNESCO's activities. More than 70 conventions, declarations and recommendations have been elaborated and adopted by the General Conference or by intergovernmental conferences convened solely by UNESCO or jointly with other international organizations over the past 54 years. Many of these instruments are linked directly or indirectly to human rights.

19. UNESCO's normative instruments address specific human rights within its fields of competence:

⁹ More than 600 such institutions are included in the *World Directory of Human Rights Research and Training Institutes*. A database is maintained by UNESCO to facilitate exchange of information and cooperation.

- **the right to education:** the most important instruments are the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) which has now 90 ratifications and the Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989) with only 13 ratifications;
- **the right to benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from the scientific, literary or artistic production:** an early instrument of significance is the Universal Copyright Convention of 1952 as revised in 1971;
- **the right to take part in cultural life:** of many important instruments in this area, the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970) which has 92 ratifications and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) stand out.¹⁰

UNESCO has also adopted several human rights instruments of general character, such as the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights (1997) and the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance (1995).

20. UNESCO Constitution (Article IV, paragraph 6) provides for some form of monitoring of the implementation of UNESCO instruments by the General Conference. Reporting practice within UNESCO is founded upon Article VIII of its Constitution. Certain instruments like the Convention against Discrimination in Education contain specific provisions requiring Member States to give information on legislation adopted or other measures taken and to report on the results achieved or obstacles to their implementation. As regards the 1966 Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, Member States submit their reports on the implementation of the Recommendation to the joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts which presents its report to the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations (CR).

21. In order to improve the effectiveness of UNESCO's reporting mechanisms, CR is examining a number of proposals for reform (164 EX/23 paras. 31-46) which are currently under consideration by the Executive Board. CR observed that the growing number of monitoring procedures in the United Nations system places a heavy burden on Member States and consumes significant amounts of Secretariat time with only modest results. State reports are both a vehicle for promoting respect for international standards and a means of highlighting difficulties States encounter in implementing their obligations. They can be invaluable for determining the type of technical assistance that a Member State might need.

UNESCO activities related to human rights protection

22. The main mechanism for the protection of human rights within UNESCO's competence is the procedure established by 104 EX/Decision 3.3 of 1978. It provides for the examination of cases and questions submitted to UNESCO concerning alleged violations of human rights in its sphere of competence. UNESCO examines *cases* (communications) concerning violations of human rights, which are individual and specific, and *questions* of massive, systematic or flagrant violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Executive Board decision has not specified which human rights fall within UNESCO's competence. However those rights are deemed to include: the

¹⁰ Though **the right to freedom of opinion and expression** is clearly within UNESCO's competence and the Organization works very actively to promote and protect this right, no specific instrument has been adopted. The same is true of **the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications**.

right to education; the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits; the right to participate freely in cultural life; the right to freedom of opinion and expression.¹¹

23. The procedure laid down by 104 EX/Decision 3.3 is strictly confidential in nature; seeks a friendly solution with the State concerned. Decisions are normally arrived at by consensus. In the majority of cases, effective solutions have been found but the number of communications presented to UNESCO is currently relatively small.

24. UNESCO Constitution in Article I, paragraph 2(a) stipulates that the Organization will “collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples through all means of mass communication and to that end recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image”. This has enabled UNESCO to play an active role both in promoting freedom of expression and in protecting the rights of journalists, artists and others whose life or liberty may be at risk as a result of their professional activities. UNESCO has established good links with the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), which groups leading non-governmental organizations that monitor issues related to the freedom of the media. Freedom of expression and freedom of the press as basic human rights and elements of democracy, will continue to be promoted and safeguarded by UNESCO through raising public awareness, normative action and operational projects.

25. In addition to the above and in accordance with well-established practice, the Director-General has had occasion (through the right of intercession vested in him by the General Conference, in particular by its 19 C/Resolution 12.1), personally to make various humanitarian representations on behalf of persons who have allegedly been victims of human rights violations in UNESCO’s fields of competence and whose cases have called for urgent consideration.

Strategic Objectives

26. The following strategic objectives are proposed to be pursued:

- (a) to promote understanding and acceptance of UNESCO’s human rights instruments by encouraging ratifications by Member States;
- (b) to strengthen the normative basis of UNESCO’s work, through the elaboration, where appropriate, of additional protocols to key instruments, or their revision;
- (c) to implement different standard-setting instruments adopted by the Organization and to continue the examination of cases and questions submitted through the procedure established by 104 EX/Decision 3.3 of the Executive Board which defines UNESCO’s role in dealing with communications concerning human rights violations in the fields of competence of the Organization;
- (d) to adopt a simplified monitoring system as proposed by the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations (164 EX/23, paras. 34 and 35);

¹¹ The exercise of other rights may also be implicated: such as the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers; the right to protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production; the right to freedom of assembly and association for the purposes of activities connected with education, science, culture and information.

- (e) to modify the reporting procedure so that States will report on specific human rights that fall within UNESCO's fields of competence rather than on the implementation of given instruments (164 EX/23, para. 41);
- (f) to make the whole process of consideration of the reports more dynamic, high-profile and participatory (164 EX/23, para. 36);
- (g) increasing awareness of UNESCO's 104 EX/Decision 3.3 procedure by, for example, undertaking promotional activities linked to the 25th anniversary of its establishment (2003);
- (h) to further enhance and consolidate UNESCO's already recognized role as lead agency within the United Nations system.

Renewing commitment to human rights education

27. In promoting education for human rights, UNESCO operates at different levels of the education systems (formal and non-formal) and targets a wide range of beneficiaries. The main objective is that learning should focus on the acquisition of values, attitudes and skills required to meet the emerging challenges of contemporary societies and the full development of the human personality.

28. It is important to note that the General Conference adopted at its 30th session 30 C/Resolution 16 providing basic guidance for the formulation of a "UNESCO overall strategy for human rights education". Most of UNESCO's recent actions on human rights education have been implemented in this context. As requested by the same resolution, an evaluation of UNESCO's education and information materials concerning human rights education during the Medium-Term Strategy for 1996-2001 (28 C/4) has been conducted. The findings concluded that materials were of a high quality and covered a range of UNESCO themes but important issues, such as the struggle against racism, gender equality and terrorism were not adequately dealt with. The main recommendations of the review are that UNESCO should continue to publish and disseminate human rights education materials and that it should develop an overall strategy for the production and dissemination of these publications.¹²

29. Within the framework of 30 C/Resolution 16, a tentative assessment of the impact of the regional conferences on human rights education was undertaken.¹³ The conferences have contributed significantly to increasing awareness about human rights education and strengthening partnership and cooperation between governments, the civil society, academic institutions. However, it should also be recognized that these conferences have had no evident impact on improving the status of human rights education in the curricula, nor have they influenced significantly the elaboration of national plans of action.

30. Although much has been achieved, some obstacles and challenges remain which call for a renewed commitment from UNESCO and its Member States in support of human rights education. In order to achieve the development of a comprehensive education system which promotes all elements related to the acquisition of values, attitudes and skills favouring the full development of the human personality, at least two conditions should be fulfilled: political will, and adequate financial resources both at national and international levels.

Strategic Objectives – the following strategic objectives are being pursued:

¹² The evaluation reports may be obtained from the Secretariat on request.

¹³ The text may be obtained from the Secretariat on request.

31. Advocating for human rights education as an integral part of the right to education. UNESCO considers that education, including human rights education, is a human right and will continue to promote these goals in its activities, including in relation to the Dakar Framework for Action. Human rights education is part of a larger vision of quality education and in this framework, the inclusion of human rights in education is a key element of a quality education. The following objectives will be pursued:

- (a) to ensure that national legislation on education is elaborated and implemented in compliance with the treaty obligations concerning human rights and the right to education;
- (b) to ensure that, in the process of elaboration of national plans of action on education for all, human rights education is given due attention within the curricula and through the inclusion of human rights in education.

32. Supporting the mainstreaming of human rights education into national education systems. UNESCO considers that the challenge for its Members States is to re-orient educational policies at national level (including national legislation) to ensure that contents include values such as human rights, peace, democratic participation, tolerance, non-violence and intercultural understanding and that the corresponding educational processes are consistent with the teaching of such values. Therefore, UNESCO should continue to make a significant contribution to increasing awareness and understanding, as well as implementation of international human rights standards and norms by providing advisory services and technical assistance at national level in the following fields:

- (a) elaboration of national plans of action for human rights education in line with the specific guidelines that were formulated by OHCHR;
- (b) elaboration and implementation of educational projects at national and subregional levels in order to integrate the knowledge and practice of human rights throughout the learning environments (both content and processes);
- (c) training of professional groups with special responsibilities in the promotion and protection of human rights, such as media personnel and support to NGOs and local associations in the promotion and protection of human rights;
- (d) research on quality indicators for the evaluation of human rights education and the practice of rights in education.

33. Networking and mobilizing the community as well as educational groups for human rights education. Cooperation with international, regional and national networks is an essential component of UNESCO strategy to promote and mainstream human rights education, in particular in areas where the Organization has little comparative advantage (e.g. informal education) and with the view to avoiding duplication of activities. With this in mind UNESCO:

- (a) will continue to promote and disseminate good practices and innovative pedagogical approaches in the field of human rights education by establishing collaboration with existing international, regional and national networks;
- (b) will use the opportunity of new international communications technologies to support the creation of an online network, connecting experts, researchers, educators, students and NGOs.

Advisory services and technical assistance to Member States and other partners

34. UNESCO has a great potential for providing advisory services and technical assistance in its fields of competence. It has accumulated significant experience in the area of human rights education and in formulating policy and legislation ensuring freedom of the media and the free flow of information. The most promising areas in which UNESCO could, in response to requests from Member States, use its experience and expertise are:

- (a) assistance in drafting legislation and formulating national policies in relation to freedom of expression and the media; the right to education; human rights education; the right to benefit from the results of scientific progress; promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples; protection of cultural rights and promotion of cultural diversity;
- (b) assistance to Member States in drafting reports on the implementation of UNESCO standard-setting instruments and in ensuring follow-up to relevant recommendations;
- (c) assistance to Member States in the preparation and presentation of their reports on the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence to the United Nations treaty monitoring bodies, in particular to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on Human Rights, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- (d) dissemination of good practice, revision of curricula and text books on the protection of human rights within UNESCO's fields of competence;
- (e) capacity-building, including in the creation of relevant structures aimed at carrying out research within UNESCO's fields of competence, including supporting the network of UNESCO's Chairs, human rights institutions and research centres;
- (f) training of professionals dealing with human rights related issues in the fields of UNESCO's competence, including personnel of UNESCO National Commissions.

Strategic Objectives

35. The following strategic objectives are proposed to be pursued:

- (a) to realize fully UNESCO's potential for providing advisory services and technical assistance through the mobilization of extrabudgetary funds and the attraction of highly qualified experts in respective fields;
- (b) to build national capacity, in particular by training the personnel of National Commissions;
- (c) to assist in mainstreaming human rights, especially those within UNESCO's fields of competence, into national poverty reduction and development strategies.

SECTION IV – STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

36. Over the last decades, the number of organizations, bodies and mechanisms dealing with human rights has grown substantially. In addition, many agencies have started to introduce a human rights dimension into their programmes. In order to coordinate human rights activities within the

United Nations system, the post of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was established.¹⁴ Among the principal responsibilities of the High Commissioner are: coordinating human rights promotion and protection activities throughout the United Nations system; providing advisory services and technical and financial assistance through OHCHR; and rationalization, adaptation, strengthening and streamlining of the United Nations human rights machinery. Among specialized agencies, the most active in the field of human rights is the International Labour Organization (ILO)¹⁵ while among the bodies and programmes UNICEF and UNDP play a particularly important role. Recently, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) are paying increasing attention to human rights in their activities.

37. Within the United Nations system, UNESCO preserves its unique role and primary responsibility for the promotion and protection of a number of human rights. Moreover, as an intellectual organization, it has an obligation to stimulate reflection on trends and emerging issues related to human rights and in sensitizing decision-makers and public opinion on current challenges by means of research, education and information. The importance of UNESCO's human rights work was acknowledged at the meeting of the Intersectoral mission with the High Commissioner for Human Rights in June 2002. The OHCHR welcomed UNESCO's research activities and invited the Organization to increase its support for the work of treaty monitoring bodies, the Commission on Human Rights, the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, other bodies and special rapporteurs. The importance of coordination of human rights within the United Nations system was confirmed. It was agreed that consideration should be given to reviewing the 1995 Memorandum of Understanding between OHCHR and UNESCO. UNESCO's cooperation should not be limited to the United Nations system and the Organization should also work closely with regional intergovernmental organizations such as the Council of Europe (CE), the African Union (AU), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Moreover, UNESCO should substantially develop its relations with other actors, including cities, parliamentarians and non-governmental organizations. At the same time, relations with UNESCO's traditional partners – National Commissions, UNESCO Clubs, Associated Schools, UNESCO Chairs, human rights research and training institutions – should be maintained and strengthened.

Strategic Objectives

38. The following strategic objectives are proposed to be pursued:

- (a) to ensure better coordination and full cooperation with OHCHR, including, if appropriate, revising the Memorandum of Understanding;
- (b) to improve collaboration with United Nations bodies, including treaty monitoring bodies;
- (c) to strengthen cooperation with ILO and other specialized agencies;
- (d) to increase cooperation with traditional partners;
- (e) to develop new partnerships;
- (f) strengthening relations with non-governmental organizations.

¹⁴ United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993.

¹⁵ The Agreement on Cooperation between UNESCO and ILO was signed in 1947.

SECTION V – PRIORITY ACTIONS AND EXPECTED RESULTS

39. The Millennium Declaration reaffirmed that fundamental human rights are the foundation of human dignity and must be protected.¹⁶ UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy in sub-objective on "Promotion and protection of human rights" of strategic objective 4 affirms that the Organization is expected to undertake advocacy, awareness-raising and knowledge-sharing with regard to human rights through education and information activities with special emphasis on women's rights (para. 91, 31 C/4). It should also endeavour to facilitate and disseminate research in the field of human rights, particularly with regard to the obstacles impeding the full implementation of social, economic and cultural rights and taking fully into account human rights-based approaches to development (31 C/4, para. 91). The elaboration of an overall UNESCO human rights strategy will therefore be an important accomplishment for the Organization. Some initial activities might be included in the programme and budget of the next biennium.

Mainstreaming human rights into all UNESCO's activities

40. Proposed action:

- (a) In-house capacity-building:
 - (i) preparation and dissemination of an explanatory brochure on the human rights dimensions of UNESCO's work;
 - (ii) provision of in-house training at Headquarters and in the field;
 - (iii) organization of regular staff meetings on current challenges to human rights with experts.
- (b) Steps for integrating human rights within UNESCO's programme sectors:
 - (i) exploring the human rights implications of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity;
 - (ii) intersectoral collaboration in research on the human rights dimension of water management, traditional knowledge and biodiversity.

41. Expected results at the end of the biennium:

- (a) development of an Organization-wide vision of UNESCO's human rights role and mandate;
- (b) raising of staff awareness in Headquarters and in the field through human rights training.
- (c) human rights mainstreamed into the work of all sectors through the use of innovative methods.

¹⁶ See United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2 of 8 September 2000) and the Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration – Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/326 of 6 September 2001).

Generating and sharing knowledge on human rights

42. Proposed action:

- (a) develop an empirical research programme on the content, application and justiciability of social, economic and cultural rights and obstacles for their implementation;
- (b) collect and disseminate good practice in the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights;
- (c) conduct research on issues related to freedom of expression and freedom of the media;
- (d) stimulate reflection on emerging problems in the field of human rights.

43. Expected results at the end of the biennium:

- (a) influencing policy-making and standard-setting in human rights within UNESCO's fields of competence through the dissemination of the results of human rights research.

Revitalizing UNESCO's human rights standards and reporting and monitoring procedures

44. Proposed action:

- (a) develop in a small number of Member States a pilot project to test the feasibility of adopting a method of reporting on UNESCO's standard-setting instruments based on rights rather than on a given instrument (as recommended in 164 EX/23 Option B1 paragraph 41);
- (b) undertake awareness-raising initiatives related to the work of the CR in human rights protection through the organization of meetings, workshops and outreach activities to NGO and other civil society actors.

45. Expected results at the end of the biennium:

- (a) greater awareness of the scope and content of UNESCO's human rights instruments achieved;
- (b) recommendations for revitalizing UNESCO's reporting and monitoring procedures tested.

Human rights education

46. Proposed action:

- (a) encourage the acknowledgement of the right to human rights education as a human right and as an integral part of education;
- (b) incorporate human rights education as an integral part of education curricula at all levels of formal education;
- (c) assist in preparation and implementation of national plans for human rights education;
- (d) strengthen networking in support of human rights education.

47. Expected results at the end of the biennium:

- (a) adoption and implementation of national plans of action for human rights education in certain Member States;
- (b) wide dissemination and adoption of good practice and innovative pedagogical approaches to human rights education.

Technical assistance and advisory services

48. Proposed action:

- (a) launch a fund-raising campaign to have necessary financial and human resources to render relevant services to Member States at their request.

49. Expected results at the end of the biennium:

- (a) increased capacity to provide technical assistance and advisory services.

Strengthening partnerships

50. Proposed action:

- (a) develop an agreed human rights research agenda in cooperation with OHCHR, human rights bodies, special rapporteurs and specialized agencies;
- (b) increase cooperation with ILO in a number of areas, including human rights education;
- (c) increase coordination of all UNESCO's human rights related work with the relevant human rights bodies and agencies, in particular OHCHR, regional intergovernmental organizations and other partners;
- (d) develop cooperation with the United Nations system and other governmental and non-governmental organizations in the promotion of the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and its Action Plan with a view to enhancing the synergy of actions in favour of cultural diversity.

51. Expected results at the end of the biennium:

- (a) improved coordination and collaboration with the United Nations system and regional intergovernmental organizations based on agreed strategic objectives;
- (b) increased UNESCO's contribution to the human rights and development work of the United Nations system;
- (c) strengthened cooperation with traditional and new partners.

52. Draft Decision: The Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

- 1. Recalling the Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007 (31 C/4),

2. Bearing in mind the United Nations Secretary-General's Reform Programme (A/51/950) and the Millennium Declaration (United Nations General Assembly resolution 55/2),
3. Having examined document 165 EX/10,
4. Reconfirming UNESCO's commitment to human rights and the need to enhance UNESCO's contribution to the promotion and protection of all human rights, in particular economic, social and cultural rights,
5. Welcoming measures taken to mainstream human rights into UNESCO's programmes and to reinforce internal coordination in the field of human rights, both at Headquarters and in the field,
6. Commending the efforts to reinforce cooperation with other bodies and agencies of the United Nations system and regional intergovernmental organizations, as well as with non-governmental organizations,
7. Invites the Director-General, taking into account the discussion at the 165th session, to reflect the provisions of document 165 EX/10 in draft document 32 C/5, to continue preparation of an Overall UNESCO Strategy on Human Rights in close consultation with all relevant partners and to present a progress report on its elaboration to the Executive Board at its 166th session.