

Contribution of UNESCO to the 2013 report of the Secretary-General of the United-Nations on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020.¹

Organization: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Decision made by the respective governing body on the mainstreaming and integration of the IPoA into the work programme: UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (34 C/4) for 2008-2013 commits the Organization to providing targeted assistance to the LDCs in meeting their development objectives in all UNESCO's fields of competence. At its 186th session the Executive Board of UNESCO adopted specific decision which directs Organization's action in mainstreaming and integrating the relevant areas of the IPoA.

Month and year of the decision: May 2011.

Reference number of document: 186 EX/Decision 15.

(Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001930/193025e.pdf>, pg. 23, para.8).

Quote of the decision: After considering the Organization's draft programme and budget for 2012-2013 (36 C/5), the Executive Board of UNESCO stressed "the need to scale up efforts towards reducing inequalities and reaching the marginalized and the most vulnerable communities by further focusing action in favour of the least developed countries (LDCs), guided especially by the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011".

Total amount and percentage of budget allocated to LDCs:

For the current programme and budget biennium (36 C/5), covering 2012-2013 period, UNESCO committed approximately USD 21, 5 millions (13, 8%) of Regular Programme activity budget and approximately USD 100, 1 millions (24%) of Extrabudgetary resources targeted the LDCs.

Main activities in favor of LDCs and main activities planned for supporting the implementation of the IPoA:

Below is a brief synopsis of main activities UNESCO is implementing in favor of the LDCs under the current 2012-2013 programme and budget cycle (36 C/5).

Promoting quality education for all in the LDCs

Given its mandate and as lead agency for the United-Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), UNESCO is uniquely placed to provide policy advice and further technical support to LDCs in response to challenges such as climate change and natural disasters through education.

Through its activities on Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development

¹ For ease of reference, the UNESCO's contribution to the UNSG's 2012 report on the implementation of the IPoA for 2010-2011 period is attached to this template.

(CCESD), UNESCO facilitates the educational response of Member States to the challenges that climate change poses to exposed and vulnerable communities, particularly to LDCs. UNESCO has organized several International Experts' Meetings on Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development in the focus regions, and is coordinating five national capacity development programmes in pilot countries. These programmes target policy makers, curriculum developers and teacher education institutions.

The UNESCO Global Initiative on Education and HIV & AIDS (EDUCAIDS) aiming at preventing the spread of HIV through education, and protecting the core functions of the education system from the worst effects of the epidemic, promotes responses in all LDCs in support of a range of actions from policy development to curriculum design and implementation in schools and colleges. In 2012 a new partnership was established between UNESCO and the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) to support the implementation of EDUCAIDS in Central, South, West and East Africa.

UNESCO continues to convene the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) on Education, which conducted a Global Progress Survey (GPS) in 2011-2012 in 39 countries to assess HIV policy and programmes in their education sector, with 15 LDCs participated in the assessment. The process and findings of the GPS are acting as a catalyst to revitalise their response to HIV and AIDS.

UNESCO, together with UNAIDS and other partners is involved in initiatives focusing on building greater political commitment to ensure that young people in East and Southern Africa have access to high quality, comprehensive life skills based on HIV and sexuality education and onto appropriate youth friendly services. 14 LDCs from the region participate in this process.

UNESCO is launching in 2013, a 3-year regional project focusing on building the capacity of the education sector to implement sexuality education in LDCs in Africa. The project will address current gaps in sexuality education by supporting the review and revision of curricula to ensure that they meet international standards and respond to the real needs of young people in each country. Focus will also be made on improving teacher education.

As foreseen in UNESCO's 2010-2015 Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), the Organisation is actively responding to Member States' requests for upstream policy advice and capacity building with a view to accelerating progress towards the Education for All (EFA) goals. Through technical support, UNESCO has provided support to 11 LDCs.

The Organization has conducted TVET policy reviews in LDCs, resulting in a process of policy dialogue involving key national stakeholders to support their actions towards education and training for youth, with attention to tackling inequalities, especially through the skills development of girls and young women. This policy dialogue should inform national TVET policies and encourage support from development partners.

UNESCO is strengthening the capacities of LDCs in TVET with considerable support from the Capacity Development for Education for All (Cap-EFA) programme. The key outcomes are agreement on a national approach for curricula design, frameworks for entrepreneurship

skills development, TVET statistics and data improvement, and new institutional frameworks and quality assurance arrangements.

At the global level, UNESCO organised the Third International Congress on TVET in Shanghai on 14-16 May 2012. TVET experts from a wide range of countries, especially from low-income countries (LDCs) considered 'Transforming TVET: Building Skills for Work and Life', and adopted the 'Shanghai Consensus' on this topic.

In 2013, UNESCO will amplify its upstream policy advice to LDCs giving attention to enhancing capacities to address youth unemployment and to achieve learning goals by enhancing relevance, access, equity and quality. UNESCO will promote inter-ministerial coordination and the involvement of employers, employees, civil society, including youth and the private sector.

The United-Nations inter-agency work on the indicators for the monitoring, follow up and review of the IPoA draw on the experience of the UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (UIS) in providing data on the state of education in the LDCs; UIS figures being regularly used in the UNGA reports on LDCs.

Building capacities in Sciences for sustainable development

UNESCO, in partnership with African Development Bank and African Union Commission, provided a forum for Ministers of Education, Science and Technology and Finance to deliberate on effective and efficient use of science technology and innovation for human capital development, youth employment, sustainable development and inclusive growth. UNESCO provided policy advice in developing strategies for promoting industry-academia linkage to provide skills and tools to meet the dynamic needs of the private sector and enhance entrepreneurship among youth.

UNESCO is an active supporter of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the establishment of the Technology Bank for LDCs coordinated by UN-OHRLLS in the context of the IPoA and has contributed to the review of the existing mechanisms of technology transfer and technological innovations in LDCs within the context of the Organization's areas of competency in science.

In 2013, the recommendations of the 1st Ministerial Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Forum will be followed up including the identification of challenges and opportunities to develop national and regional strategies for enhancing STI for resilient economic growth, youth employment, sustainable development and regional cooperation.

Through the Adaptation to Climate and Coastal Change (ACCC) project, UNESCO's International Oceanographic Commission has assisted West African countries in developing coastal adaptation measures and improving adaptive capacity of coastal community of LDCs. The ACCC project has developed the first Coastal Adaptation Guidelines for Africa, developed by African scientists for African practitioners.

UNESCO's Annual Regional Summer Schools promoting renewable energy policies in LDCs in Africa and Asia benefited number of West African and the South East Asian LDC

countries.

In the area of climate change and environmental sustainability UNESCO is leading activities in favor of LDCs by: strengthening capacity building in carbon assessment and in renewable energy technologies and energy policy reviews; assisting in defining national renewable energy policy; supporting the establishment of a biodiversity centre of excellence and Man and Biosphere(MAB) reserves; and mainstreaming environmental assessments and environmental policy knowledge and sustainable management of marginal and drylands projects.

In the area of water and sanitation UNESCO is assisting LDCs in: improving water resources management and available information; in capacity building in drought monitoring tool; and in assessment of water resources and identification of transboundary aquifers. In 2013, assessment of the groundwater resources will be carried out and capacity building activities will be pursued in this regard in several LDCs.

In the area of the disaster risk reduction UNESCO is supporting LDCs through capacity building for addressing floods issues towards the preparation of national floods programme, and groundwater resources exploration for emergency situation to combat drought in the Horn of Africa.

Actions supporting women's empowerment and gender equality in LDCs focus on closing the gender gap in science. To this end, UNESCO is working with a wide range of partners, notably through the UNESCO L'OREAL Partnership "For Women in Science". This initiative includes encouraging the creation of associations and networks of women scientists and engineers; reinforcing the cooperation of institutions specifically focusing on women in science and technology; and increasing public understands of science with a focus on girls and women.

The visibility of the need for greater progress towards gender equality in the sciences and engineering was highlighted on 8 March 2012, International Women's Day, at the "Women in Engineering: Importance and Challenges" Workshop held at UNESCO Headquarters with the World Federation of Engineering Organizations.

UNESCO's Strategy on African Youth seeks to enable young women and men, particularly in LDCs, to drive change in their countries and communities with three underlying objectives: strengthen knowledge of, and promote research on, youth issues in Africa; foster the development of policies and frameworks to address youth issues in Africa; and promote youth participation in decision-making, youth civic engagement and social inclusion. UNESCO specifically focuses on supporting youth civic engagement and constructive participation of youth in political process, as a means to prevent related violence.

The UNESCO project "Assisting Bioethics Committee" (ABC) accompanies Member States to build or reinforce bioethics infrastructure. In 2012, the ABC Project trained 8 National Bioethics Committees (NBCs) newly-established in developing countries, including LDCs. Work also continued for production of guides, partnering and networking and technical advising.

Promoting culture as a powerful engine for economic growth

UNESCO implemented projects that contribute to the emergence of a dynamic cultural sector and development of cultural industries in LDCs under the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD).

Technical assistance missions under the UNESCO/European Union funded project 'Strengthening the system of governance for culture in developing countries' are supporting countries, including LDCs, in their efforts to establish legal and institutional frameworks for the development of national culture sectors and to introduce policies that address the role of culture in social and economic development, particularly through cultural industries.

Under the Pilot Capacity-Building Programme in Africa, UNESCO trained key actors and stakeholders in the field of cultural and creative industries from 17 African LDCs. These professionals were trained through regional workshops with the aim of build national technical and institutional capacities to boost the production, promotion, distribution and enjoyment of cultural expressions in Africa.

In the framework of the MDG-F project, UNESCO trained 500 artists and crafts persons (90% from minority groups of LDCs) in the crafts industry and the management of commercial enterprises.

With regard to the World Heritage sites protection, priority of funding for conservation projects is given to LDCs as well as the financing of experts to participate in the World Heritage Committee sessions, which results in hands-on capacity building and creation of effective networks.

UNESCO encourages LDC-state parties to the 2005 Convention to involve more women in the development of cultural policies and cultural industries. Increased involvement of women in the conservation and management of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as well as in promoting culture as a powerful engine for economic growth to generate income and stimulate employment is one of UNESCO's priority objectives.

Supporting communication and information for development

In LDCs UNESCO continues to facilitate enabling environments by supporting policy formulation, particularly in the domain of community media, enhancing capacities in media and information literacy and mainstreaming a focus on women and youth throughout its numerous ICT initiatives.

Analysis of progress of LDCs in the priority areas of the IPoA relevant to the work of the organization:

UNESCO made steady progress in assisting LDCs, in particular in Africa, with capacity building activities in all its fields of competence. Guided by its Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2008-2013, UNESCO has put a serious focus on partnerships for girls and women empowerment.

