UNISIST Newsletter

INFORMATION, INFORMATICS, TELEMATICS

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Information Society Division
Communication and Information Sector

EDITORIAL

Preparing the World Summit on the Information Society[1]

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INFORMATION and knowledge have become essential forces for social transformation. However, the growth of networks and ICT applications will not in itself provide the foundations for knowledge societies. A knowledge society is not just about technology, it is a complex social and educational process.

The main challenge that the World Summit on the Information Society has to address is that disadvantaged groups, rural communities, illiterate populations, or even entire countries, do not have access to the tools and contents which would empower them.

Secondly, the Summit must respond to ethical challenges. The core of the Information Society must be human rights. It should be based on equity, human dignity and social justice. UNESCO's fundamental missions –"to promote the free exchange of ideas and knowledge" and to "maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge"– have possibly never been more relevant. It is in the Organization's fields of competence –education, science, culture and communication– that the impact of ICTs on the activities and products of the human mind is most strongly felt.

Therefore, UNESCO stands ready to contribute to the goals of the Summit along three main strategic fronts:
- Developing universal principles, in order to protect and strengthen the "common good".
- Promoting pluralism and diversity.
- Promoting equitable access, capacity-building and sharing of knowledge.

The Summit should promote the protection and strengthening of the "global public good" in the Information Society. This includes, for example, equitable access to information for educational, scientific and cultural activities, a vibrant public domain of information, as well as the concept of public service broadcasting acting in the public interest.

It is also essential to ensure freedom of expression and its corollary, freedom of the press, as well as media pluralism, multilingualism, equal access to education, scientific and technological knowledge and artistic and cultural expression. The Summit must therefore focus on the need to reinforce the right to education, strengthen international scientific and intellectual cooperation, protect cultural heritage, foster diversified cultural expression, promote media development and broaden public domain access to information and knowledge.

It should encourage initiatives promoting community access and the integration of new and "traditional" technologies such as library services and community media, the production, adaptation, translation and sharing of local contents. The use of new methods of content development and access to education and to scientific information such as virtual universities, virtual laboratories and research groups should also be promoted.

ICTs offer the potential to expand the scope of teaching and learning, breaking through traditional constraints of space and time. But as educational demand increases and supply diversifies, increased disparities can be observed

1. Excerpts of the Statement on the occasion of the First meeting of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom I) of the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva (1-5 July 2002) delivered by Philippe Quéau.

with respect to access, affordability and quality. After decades during which education was acknowledged as a public good promoting equity through free basic education, the accelerating privatization of educational goods and services, partly driven by the potential and impact of ICTs, poses an entirely new challenge for the international community.

At stake is how to define the best use of ICTs in improving the quality of teaching and learning while lowering the cost of education. The Summit should encourage the production and dissemination of quality educational, scientific and cultural materials, independent and pluralistic media, and the preservation of the digital heritage. It will need to address ethical and legal issues concerning the wide-spread use of ICTs in education. These include ownership of knowledge, legal and tariff frameworks, new challenges related to education as a commodity and the impact of education on cultural diversity.

In preparing its input to the Summit, UNESCO organized meetings[2] with representatives of more than 100 Non-governmental Organizations in February and April 2002 at its Headquarters in Paris, France. The results of these have been forwarded to the WSIS Preparatory Committee[3]. Regional pre-conferences are also being organized in cooperation with the National Commissions for UNESCO, to provide forums for discussions on the regional specificities and challenges of the Information Society.

INFORMATION FOR ALL PROGRAMME

1st Meeting of IFAP Intergovernmental Council

AFTER the nomination by the 31st General Conference of the 26 countries to sit on the Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme, the first session was held at UNESCO's Paris Headquarters from 15 to 17 April.

The Council is responsible for guiding the planning and implementation of the Information for All Programme (IFAP) and is mandated to consider proposals for the development of the Programme, review and evaluate achievements as well as supporting fund raising-efforts.

In its initial stages, the Council will meet yearly and is expected to play a significant role in the preparation of the "Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace" and UNESCO's inputs to the World Summit on the Information Society.

The mandate of the Information for All Programme is to foster debate on the challenges of the emerging global Knowledge Society, in

*1st Meeting of IFAP Intergovernmental Council
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2. Cf. http://www.unesco.org/webworld/ict_ngo/ngos_plenary.shtml
3. Cf. http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/02/wsispc1/c/S02-WSISPC1-C-0001!!PDF-E.pdf

addition to implementing ICT-based projects that create this Society. Activities carried out by UNESCO since the creation of IFAP in 2001 have concentrated on using information to address crucial societal issues such as poverty and social exclusion, and empowering development actors in civil and professional society, notably at the local and community levels. In this context it is also developing a strategy to promote a strong public domain of information intended to cater to the educational and cultural needs of individuals and societies.

The IFAP Council, representing Member States from all regions, will therefore be in a prime position to meet challenges that have emerged through the development of ICTs and their applications.

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World Summit on the Information Society

THE World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which will be held in 2003 in Geneva and in 2005 in Tunis, is the foundation for the development of information policies that will have long-ranging consequences on the global information society. The Geneva Summit is expected to adopt two main outputs: a declaration embodying a set of principles and rules of conduct aimed at establishing a more inclusive and equitable Information Society; and a plan of Action formulating operational proposals and concrete measures to be taken so that everybody benefits from the opportunities of the Information Society. UNESCO, through its Information for All Programme, intends to ensure that the outcome of the Summit will be beneficial to all.

Its contribution will be based on a series of consultations at regional and international levels involving partners and stake-holders on the information society. The first consultation, with 40 representatives of NGOs working in the Organizations' fields of competence was held in Paris in February 2002 and examined four clusters of issues reflecting the preliminary WSIS themes:

- Infostructure in developing countries.
- Cultural diversity and public domain of information.
- Freedom of expression in the Information Society.
- Education in and for the Information Society.

Recommendations were formulated on behalf of the professional communities on equitable access for all to information; protection of cultural and linguistic diversity, promotion of various forms of cultural expression, as well as measures ensuring respect for freedom of expression in cyberspace and the judicious use of ICTs as innovative and experimental tools for education. A web site was established providing access to documents with the results of the meetings and an electronic forum was established at *http://www.unesco.org/webworld/ict_ngo/discuss.shtml*

A second two-day consultation with 150 NGOs was held at UNESCO Headquarters in April 2002. In close cooperation with the Civil Society Division of the WSIS Executive Secretariat in Geneva, this meeting was expanded to include a greater number of NGOs for a more general discussion on the involvement of NGOs and Civil Society in the preparation and the holding of the Summit.

UNESCO is also seeking to ensure that a wide range of views and regional specificities are included among the themes of the Summit and, organized the first regional consultation in Bamako, Mali, from 25 to 30 May 2002.

Under the theme *'Africa's Civil Society: A Look at the Information Society'* more than 25 organizations from 11 African countries put forward their views of the processes of globalization and liberalization.

Africa must adapt proactive initiatives mobilizing all sectors of society if it is to become an active participant in the Information Society. These measures must be built on links between traditional media and new information and communication technologies. Perhaps more than any other region broadcasting has a special role to play in Africa, in building the Information Society, as it is the most affordable, the most equitable and the most effective means of providing information on the continent, overcoming barriers of illiteracy and geographical isolation.

In Europe, the consultation focussing on *'Information Cultures and Information Interests: European Perspectives for the Information Society'* was held in Mainz, Germany, from 27 to 29 June. Access to information was the cross-cutting theme of the Conference. Other areas of interest to the region were:

- Regulatory frameworks.
- Intellectual property rights and legal exceptions.

- Protection of privacy and the ethics of the Information Society.
- Facilitating access to information.
- Services and applications, implications of the Information Society for science.

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Promotion and Use
of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace

IN response to the decision of the 31st General Conference (See Newsletter Vol. 29 N° 2), a second Experts meeting was held from 25 to 27 March 2002. Comprising 18 experts participating in their personal capacity, representatives of WIPO and 52 observers from 32 Member States and 12 NGOs, the meeting sought to reach an agreement on the issues of promoting multilingualism and universal access to cyberspace.

The debate showed that there was general consensus on the themes of access to networks and promoting multilingualism and content issues, although there was some concern about the definition of "public domain information" which is often confused with its use in copyright law.

Concerns were also expressed regarding the inclusion of issues on copyright and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) that might be interpreted as a desire to weaken the existing relevant agreements and which could overlap the work of other organizations. Therefore a special working group, composed of six specialists on IPR issues was assigned the task to rework the text to ensure

conformity with existing copyright conventions and avoid the possibility of the text being interpreted as undermining or even duplicating the work of other UN agencies on IPR.

The revised draft was examined by the IFAP Council, which acknowledged that significant progress has been made. The Council also invited intergovernmental organizations and international NGOs to continue contributing to the consultation process. All Member States and Associate Members of UNESCO, more than forty IGOs and NGOs have now been consulted on the revised text of the Draft Recommendation, before its submission to the forthcoming 165th session of the Executive Board in October 2002.

The full text in French, English and Spanish of the Draft Recommendation is available at: *http://www.unesco.org/webworld/mul_recom/*

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LIBRARIES

UNAL – Public Libraries: A Forum for Social Integration

ORGANIZED by the UNESCO Catalan Centre from 15 to 16 March, the workshop on the theme "Public libraries: a forum for social integration" in Salt, Spain sought

to examine the role of the public library in a changing environment.

Catalonia is experiencing the highest levels of immigration in Spain, with a notable increase

in Salt of 4% during the last 10 months. This situation has given rise to certain problems of adaptation on both sides and the UNESCO Centre in Barcelona, the coordinator of the Catalan Group of Associated Libraries, considered that an in-depth discussion of the issue was necessary.

The meeting sought to identify the major problems facing immigrants and to prepare a list of recommendations to be forwarded to the local government. The meeting obviously touched a core area of concern as the organizers originally expected about 60 librarians and other persons from the community but more than 200 registrations were received. It was an occasion to create a forum for dialogue between

public librarians allowing them to share experiences and ideas about the libraries' role in fostering social integration.

UNESCO presented the keynote speech, providing a global vision of the role of the public library, based on the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, in meeting community needs especially for marginalized populations.

This was the first major meeting organized by the Catalan Associated Libraries since its creation in 1995 but given the response, it is clear that there is a desire for further discussions and greater involvement of the library community at large in societal issues. The Catalan libraries closely collaborate with UNESCO through the UNESCO Network of Associated Libraries (UNAL). UNAL was launched in 1990 to promote library cooperation and international understanding. Over 500 public libraries around the world currently participate in the Network. The

UNESCO Centre acts as the secretariat and coordinates the activities of the libraries in Catalonia.

At the end of the meeting, the Group adopted a set of proposals and recommendations for presentation to the local administration. These are summarized below.

Alarmed by the current system of exclusion and marginalization of many citizens and to better cope with a growing cultural diversity, participants considered that the library should be a key element contributing to social cohesion. There is a need to establish multidisciplinary teams as part of a Network of other professionals and spheres of knowledge, which take into consideration the educational and integrating roles of the public library.

A technical and professional working brief needs to be developed for adoption by the local public administration. The brief would outline the mission of the library and would not be subordinated by electoral or political circumstances.

As a place where the development of good reading habits should be encouraged, the library has the basic and fundamental task of ensuring that appropriate facilities are made available. This may require additional personnel with training in management with emphasis on social and educational values.

Social change and the new roles of libraries necessitate closer cooperation with other professions concerned with the book industry, such as publishers, teachers and writers, among others. The library should continue to provide free access to all without regard to political, economic, social or market conditions. The trend towards paid public services should be discouraged within the library, which must remain a centre for democratic access to information, culture and knowledge.

The recommendations concluded with an appeal to all information professionals, to training institutions and to governments to ensure that the daily work of the library as well as library-related decision-making and planning are in accordance with the principles set out in the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto.

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2nd Meeting
of the International Commission of Experts
for the National Library of Latvia

THE purpose of the second meeting was to review progress made and make recommendations concerning a number of technical issues such as legal deposit of electronic publications, national bibliography and national union catalogue, digital library projects, staff development, as well as to assess the sketch design of the new Library building and project management.

The Commission stressed that the National Library has to perform new roles and new functions to be able to provide services to all other libraries, communities and groups of end-users. The intention is therefore not to build a library for today, but a digital library for the future, catering to education, multilingualism, science, culture and multi-ethnic integration in the context of globalization and competitiveness.

The role of the International Commission of Experts set up by UNESCO for the National Library of Latvia (NLL) is of a consultative and advisory nature. Its members contribute to the development of the NLL project, in particular by:

- Providing methodological and technical support.
- Assisting in the mobilization of financial resources and resources in kind through fund-raising campaigns and sensitization of professional and political communities.
- Developing a communication strategy.

Since the first meeting in Riga in September 2000, the draft law on establishing the NLL is in its second reading. A third and final reading will take place in a few months.

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Developing World School Libraries
Awarded IASL/UNESCO Book Grants

FIVE school libraries in the developing world have been awarded books grants by recommendation of the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) in order to enable them to purchase library books. The awards of US $1000 each were donated by UNESCO in Paris.

In making the awards, IASL noted that the recipients of the UNESCO Project #55S-Books for Children awards each had to guarantee shelves, space, personnel and service and verify this through a letter or other documentation by the school principal or designated supervisor.

The 2002 recipients come from schools in Argentina, Micronesia, Oman, Rwanda and South Africa. To date, more than $20,000 has been disbursed to schools in more than 15 countries.

The International Association of School Librarianship comprises personal and association members from over 80 countries committed to enabling young people to develop literary and cultural appreciation and to use information effectively through the improvement of school libraries and school library programs as a vital component of education.

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MEMORY OF THE WORLD

THE "Memory of the World" programme, established in 1992 to promote preservation of, and access to the world's documentary heritage continues to expand. Its International Register of documents of human history is similar in purpose to the World Heritage List, which protects the natural and cultural environment.

First National Register Launched

Member States are encouraged to nominate significant collections to one of three types of register: international, regional and national. There are currently 69 collections on the International Register, and Australia recently became the first country to launch a national register.

Australia also has two collections: Captain James Cook's Endeavour Journal and the papers of Edward Koiki Mabo, both held by the National Library of Australia, listed on the International Register. The country has played an active part in the Programme and in the preparation of its global criteria and guidelines. Libraries, archives and other repositories of historical documents will be invited to submit nominations and the first group of Australian inscriptions will be announced in 2003.

Latin America

In Latin America, *'100 years of Architecture in Colombia, 1880 – 1980/Photography'* was published on CD-ROM by the Medellin Pilot Public Library. The CD-ROM, which is accompanied by a book, contains a collection of photographs held by the Library, which

was created in 1952 by UNESCO and the Colombian Government. Among many fonds and collections, the Photographic Archive has more than 1,100,000 materials, dating from 1849.

The Archive has expanded rapidly over the past 10 years and represents one of the most important heritage collections of the Library. It includes a range of formats such as daguerreotypes, glass negatives, ferrotypes, dry plates, postcards, slides, album cards, stereo-scopic photos, and presents images of people and daily life, religion, architecture, arts and literature, transportation and politics among many others.

Slave Trade Archives Preservation and Access

Under the Memory of the World Programme and within the framework of the Slave Trade Archives Project, the National Archives of Senegal organized a seminar in Dakar to examine whether digitization of documentary sources can help to fight against amnesia.

Some twenty participants representing the national archives of Burkina Faso, Cap Verde, Guinea, Mali and Mauritania discussed how to achieve the objectives of the Slave Trade Project which is intended to create a universal memory of the centuries-long trade of human beings from Africa across the Atlantic through the establishment of an information database and ensuring measures for preservation and access to materials.

Participants in the five-day meeting concluded that only the digitization of documents could save the documentary sources of the transatlantic trade of millions of slaves from Africa.

AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVES

Consultation on the Long-Term Preservation of Audiovisual Recordings

IN cooperation with the Sub-Committee on Technology of the Memory of the World Programme and the Technical Committee of the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA), UNESCO organized meeting on 14 June at its Paris Headquarters to examine measures for the preservation of the audiovisual heritage of humanity.

The main goal of the meeting was to lay the foundations for closer cooperation and understanding between the archival community and the manufacturers of magnetic tape and CD-R equipment required to store and access the world's rich heritage of sounds and images.

One of UNESCO's responsibilities is to ensure the preservation of the collective memory of humanity through its recorded heritage in order to preserve identity and shape the future. A significant proportion of this heritage of cultural and intellectual material is conserved by libraries and archives in magnetic form and, according to recent estimates, the worldwide stock of audio and videotapes in archival custody is estimated to be near to 200 million hours. This represents an incredible wealth of heritage collections but given the funding available to archives, it will take decades to transfer to new carriers and is therefore in danger of disappearing.

UNESCO is also concerned about the stability of magnetic carriers as a storage medium and considered that exchange of information was essential to formulate common methods for estimating the life expectancy of the carriers of cultural information and to ensure the development of professional products with optimal recording results.

Archive representatives provided their inputs by describing the prevailing situation as well as their problems and experiences in dealing with large quantities of tapes in many formats in storage. The biggest problem for archives was the prioritization of transfers. Urgently needed was the development of tools to help assess the need for transfer. Currently, most archives use empirical methods of determining when tapes should be transferred and are seeking a more systematic methodology. It is essential that a strategy for preservation needs be established to provide warning of endangered materials.

The meeting also examined the role of the CD-R in heritage transfer. An increasing proportion of manuscripts, printed documents, images and sounds is being transferred to CD-R, thus arguing a case for a reliable and long-lasting format. At the present time, all agreed that CD-R is not a long-term storage medium although its use is widespread especially among some institutions, which either do not have the means or knowledge of the need to test the discs utilized.

In seeking to establish cooperation with manufacturers, UNESCO hopes that, ultimately, stable and reliable professional products will be available to circumvent the potential loss of invaluable heritage collections.

3rd CCAAA meeting at UNESCO Headquarters

THE Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (CCAAA) held its annual meeting at UNESCO Headquarters on 8 May 2002. Comprising professional organizations whose membership is primarily institutional and international (worldwide or regional) and whose objective is to support professional, audiovisual archive activities,

CCAAA provides, among other objectives, a platform for the exchange of information, the production and/or endorsement of policy statements and position papers on key issues and the addressing issues of common concern to the profession.

Two new associations participated for the first time: the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) and the Southeast Asia-Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association (SEAPAVAA), in addition to the five NGOs, which have been members since its creation in 2000. These are the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA), International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), International Federation of Television Archives (FIAT/IFTA), the International Council on Archives (ICA) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

Participants discussed ongoing and planned projects including a proposal to hold a Joint Technical Symposium (JTS) in Canada in 2003 to be organized by AMIA. This will build on the achievements of the 5th JTS (See Vol. 28, N° 1) and will, as always, examine in detail the key technical issues facing audiovisual archivists.

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TELEMATICS

10th European Congress and Specialist Trade Fair for Educational and Information Technologies

LEARNTEC is an annual event, which has been organized in Karlsruhe for the past ten years. In this year's event, UNESCO's inputs concentrated on the LEARNTEC Asian Forum involving discussions on cooperation among Asian participants. Interest was expressed in mobilizing support for major projects already underway or already substantially developed such as the ITV and MCT projects in India, teacher training and ICT training proposals for Afghanistan and the cross-cutting project on virtual universities.

The 'Global Forum on Learning Technology: Appropriate ICTs to Reach the Unreached' consisted of about 35 case studies presented by participants invited by UNESCO from developing countries and countries in transition. In addition to learning technologies, the presentations also covered other aspects of "reaching the unreached" including access to ICTs and information. National case studies, international projects and other presentations formed the core of an AGF-UNESCO Workshop on Distance Learning. In addition, the UNESCO UNEVOC Institute in Bonn arranged discussions with about ten representatives of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries on distance education in vocational education, including the establishment of a common SAP-based website in the sub-region.

On several occasions during the conference, the importance of having access to affordable, multilingual author ware for the production of e-learning materials was voiced, and options are currently being explored to produce such software on an open source basis for Asia.

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International Policy Dialogue on "Networked Readiness"

ORGANIZED by the German Foundation for International Development (DSE) as "one of the German contributions to assist and promote the efforts of the UN ICT Task Force", the meeting comprised about 55 participants, including representatives from government, the private sector and international organizations with a smaller number from civil society and from developing countries.

Although public-private partnerships were to be only one of the major topics covered, in fact the role of the private sector was in the foreground throughout the proceedings. It seems likely that major new initiatives in the area of ICTs and development will be launched, emphasizing cooperation with a limited number of selected countries and with special concentration on Africa. A major reason for the meeting was apparently to provide guidance on the orientation of these new initiatives.

It also provided an opportunity to present UNESCO's views and interests concerning ICTs and development and to meet several potential partners. Of particular interest was the Virtual Laboratory Toolkit under preparation, digital libraries and the Greenstone software, and especially the Simputer. These could be closely linked to examples of innovative ICT programmes and policies in China, including the development of 156 Web-based expert systems in agriculture, among others.

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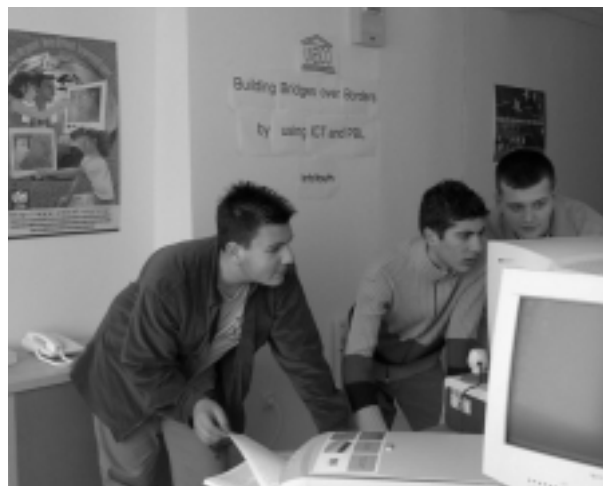
INFOYOUTH

Building Bridges Over Borders

STRENGTHENING communication and cooperation between young people in different countries is one of the main objectives of the two new Internet Educational Centres for youth that will be established in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Albania, with the support of the INFOYOUTH programme. The Centres should shortly start to collect and provide information on youth activities and projects such as exchanges, voluntary service activities, training workshops and seminars in the two countries.

The two new centres, which will also provide training in ICTs will become focal points for strengthening relations between similar youth information structures in other countries in the Balkan region as they seek to create learning communities for raising awareness of cross-cultural issues, through an increased use of ICTs and the organization of practical exchanges between educators and young people.

Kabul INFOYOUTH Centre

IN Afghanistan, preparatory activities for the establishment of an INFOYOUTH Computer Centre at the Faculty of Journalism at Kabul University have been completed. The Centre, which is entirely funded by UNESCO, is providing basic information and communication facilities, including access to the Internet and will offer on-going ICT training for students, especially young women. The project, implemented in partnership with the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education, includes the purchase of equipment (computers, printers and software) and the development of ICT training programmes that are adapted to local needs. Priority will be given to training youth, specifically young girls and women, in computer skills.

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SOFTWARE

Development and Finalization of CDS/ISIS for Windows, Arabic Version

INITIATED one year ago, with contributions from ALDOC which also provided a computer software analyst, the work-cycle on the Arabization of UNESCO's software package, CDS/ISIS has been completed. Arabization consisted of the following steps:

- Verification of software aptitude to handle Arabic characters for storing, searching and display purposes.
- Use of Arabic in conjunction with other Latin scripts.
- Translation of the software's interface, menu and messages into Arabic.
- Support of RTL (Right-To-Left) editing in order to support Arabic in both directions.
- Testing over all target Windows platforms.

To finalize the development of the software,

in March 2002, UNESCO fielded a staff mission to focus on enhancing support for RTL and testing various Windows platforms.

This resulted in implementing better RTL support, among which were the inclusion of a button enabling on-the-fly switching from LTR to RTL and vice versa and the detection and elimination of minor problems.

A working Arabic version of CDS/ISIS for Win95, Win98 and WinMe platforms has been produced and is available from ALDOC.

The Arabic installation file will be separated from the standard (non-RTL) installation, but the long-awaited RTL version of CDS/ISIS will certainly be of great help for many data base developers/user in the region.

As for Web publication of CDS/ISIS databases, some changes need to be made to the

Open Source UNESCO tool Genisis2 in order to comply with Arabic.

ALDOC is also presently translating the CDS/ISIS documentation into Arabic. Although this concerns only the Arabic language, the RTL interface can theoretically be adapted to any other RTL language, such as Urdu, Persian, Farsi and Hebrew. Contacts have been made with institutions interested in using CDS/ISIS in those languages.

New CDS/ISIS Tools

TWO new tools have been released for data exchange from and to CDS/ISIS. ImpExp2709 is a powerful import/export utility to replace the standard one built in to CDS/ISIS. It supports all four types of ISO records, including the type 4 used by most MARC applications (UNIMARC, MARC21) and automatically detects the type of ISO record in input. It includes character conversion ANSI-OEM and vice-versa and supports multilingual interface.

The new release of IsisAscii (IsisAscii v 0.92) has better support for delimited and tagged text files and includes character conversion ANSI-OEM and vice-versa.

The above are complemented by another tool for XML. XML2ISIS is a utility for importing XML files directly into a CDS/ISIS Master file. It features a visual mapping facility for establishing multiple connections between the source XML file and the target CDS/ISIS fields/subfields and supports multilingual interface.

The above utilities are available for free downloading from the site below and released with their source code (GPL license): *ftp://ftp.unesco.org/pub/winisis/windows/utilities*

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GENDER

New Learning Cyber Hub for Women

A "learning cyber hub" aiming at facilitating the development of women and ICT communities is currently being established by the UNESCO-supported Asia Pacific Women's Information Network (APWINC) and the Association for Progressive Communications Women's Networking Support Programme (APCWNSP) in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The hub is designed to promote women's rights and their social position in the information age.

This initiative is the first step in building a Regional ICT Centre for Women with a view to facilitating the development of women and ICT communities in the region. OLC will accommodate various contents: ICT training materials for women translated into various languages, resources for ICT trainers in the region, a directory of female ICT trainers in Asia and the Pacific, gender and ICT related symposia, workshops and policy issues.

The project comes within the framework of UNESCO's action to increase respect for women's rights and their empowerment through mainstreaming a gender perspective. The Organization promotes the participation of women at all levels and fields of activities, developing specific programmes and activities for the benefit of girls and women. In order to carry out this task, UNESCO created mechanisms such as the UNESCO Chair in

Communication Technologies for Women in 1998 at the Sookmyung Women's University. The Organization also promotes the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in its document *'Passport to Equality'* and has published a *'Women and Gender*

Equality' brochure and the *'Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language'*.

☞ *For additional information please contact Mr Yong Nam Kim, CI/INF, UNESCO, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15, France. Tel: (331) 45.68.40.55. Fax: (331) 45.68.55.83. E-mail: yn.kim@unesco.org*

Empowering Adolescent Girls to become Agents of Social Transformation

As part of its intersectoral project "Breaking the poverty cycle of adolescent girls" in four target countries (Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan), UNESCO organized a workshop in Jaipur, India in April 2002 to introduce the project to potential local partners. Each of the project partners presented their own current projects in the respective countries. Of particular interest was:

Bangladesh

DAM: establishment of community centres to facilitate continuing education, accessible to all ages, with emphasis on women and the poor. The information centres provide access to newspapers, leaflets, exchange of experiences and success stories. The centres are organized to deal with conflict situations.

YPSA: ensuring youth participation in development activities. Youth clubs are managed by young people aged 18 to 35, of which 70% are women and the rate of illiteracy of girls aged 14 to 18 is as high as 75%.

India

FED: a collaborative attempt, through a selection of a group of girls to ascertain their ideas, thoughts and basic needs. The girls requested the participation of boys in the activities in order to maximize the impact and selected a number of them for training. A village-to-village-walk method has been used to pass the message and get support. In order to assess the impact of these activities FED is considering organizing a regional workshop or meeting with the young people involved.

Nepal

CeLRRd (Centre for Legal Research and Resource Development): focusing on the trafficking of girls. A network has been established between villages to keep track of the situation. The issue of education of adolescent girls is positively treated by the communities. The use of radios and television is well accepted but activities are difficult to implement because of civil conflicts.

Pakistan

IDSP (Institute for Development Studies and Practices): experience in local training in difficult areas. A new method, "innovative learning environment" has been adopted. It is based on conceptual understanding rather than on simple technical capacity.

Sindh Graduates Association: developed a parallel system of local schools. These are run by the communities as a participatory mechanism in the learning process. Girls are both teachers and students. Thanks to donors, the schools remain free for girls, an important factor when the very high rates of illiteracy are taken into consideration.

Conclusions

Site visits were organized in selected project areas in India in order to assess and see, at first hand, what has been accomplished by local partners and what are the real conditions.

The main conclusions were that the communication component needed to be further developed as the concept of community radios

was useful within an overall participatory approach under a community access programme such as Community Multimedia Centres. It was also evident that the communication and science components should be firmly interlinked in terms of material production (related to content delivery methodologies adopted) as well as of equipment. The role of low technology (i.e. tape recorders) will also have to be considered since it is less demanding in terms of infrastructure and thus, more accessible to the target population.

☞ *For more information on CDS/ISIS software please contact Mr Davide Storti, CI/INF, UNESCO, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15, France. Tel: (331) 45.68.37.91. Fax: (331) 45.68.55.82. E-mail: d.storti@unesco.org*

CLEARINGHOUSE

UNESCO Documents

As part of its policy to provide access to the Organization's documents, the UNESCO Library has announced a new, enhanced functionality, that of the "intelligent document". The interactivity of its online documents allows the reader to navigate from reference to reference, whether in English, French or Spanish, for documents from 1960-2002. It is planned to extend this service in the near future to all documents from 1946 to the present.

Through the UNESDOC database (*http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ulis/*), the public has access to the full texts of official UNESCO documents, currently estimated at approximately 20,000, which includes documents of the General Conference and the Executive Board, reports and documents of meetings and conferences organized by UNESCO and speeches of the Director-General.

In addition to the photo bank, the worldwide translations database (1,3 million bibliographic records) and its trilingual Thesaurus, the UNESCO bibliographic database UNESBIB (*http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ulis/unesbib.html*) can also be consulted online for information on the Library's collections from 1972 onwards.

☞ *For more information on UNESCO Clearinghouse, please contact Mrs Denise Pelissier, UNESCO, 7 place de Fontenoy, F-75352 Paris 07 SP, France. Tel: (331) 45.68.21.01. Fax: (331) 45.68.56.15. E-mail: clearing-house@unesco.org*

STAFF MOVEMENTS

After 30 years service, Mr Victor Montviloff retired from UNESCO at the end of April 2002. Throughout a career spent mainly in the fields of information policies and planning, Victor was instrumental in the development of information policies in several countries around the world. In this capacity, he was involved in projects and feasibility studies which led to the establishment of regional and national networks such as INFOLAC, ASTINFO, ARISNET, PANGIS, SADDEC Information network and the Hungarian Computer Network, the Russian inter-library network LIBNET, to mention but a few, often in close cooperation with international, regional and national organizations.

Victor was Secretary of nine sessions of the Intergovernmental Council for the General Information Programme (PGI) and for many years, was Secretary of different Commissions and Committees of the General Conference and the Executive Board of UNESCO.

In recent years, he was responsible for developing activities related to the ethical, legal and societal aspects of the information society. These include the organization of three successful international INFOethics Congresses, the creation and development of the UNESCO Observatory on the Information Society and the preparation of the draft Recommendation on the promotion and use of multilingualism and universal access to cyberspace.

Thanks to his fluency in Russian, Victor was a key partner in several operational projects in the Russian Federation including the rehabilitation of the Russian State Library, the Kremlin Museums Multimedia Centre, the Russian Archives on-line, LIBNET with the Ministry of Culture, the UNESCO multimedia Centre in Library of Foreign Literature, Moscow.

We wish him a long, happy and rewarding retirement.

REGIONAL OFFICES

AFRICA

UNESCO/RINAF Workshop on Distance Education in Africa

An African Regional Workshop on"Distance Education, National Policy and the Role of ICT: Design, Building, Implementation and Management" was recently organized by the Regional Informatics Network for Africa (RINAF) at the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa in Dakar, Senegal. The workshop focused on the elaboration, implementation and management of national policies in distance education with particular emphasis on ICTs in higher education.

Designed for decision makers and specialists in the development of national policies for Distance Education (DE) in higher education, the main goals of the workshop were to familiarize participants with the principles, strategies, methods, models and tools for planning, implementing and managing DE using ICTs in higher education; provide training in the supervision of the design of DE national policy documents; sharing country and institutional experience in the successful integration of ICTs in DE programmes, including critical evaluation of the programmes and courses; sharing information on similar experiences and projects on multilateral cooperation and networks in Africa.

Distance Education is considered to be one of the main factors to improve access to and the quality of African education systems which are the foundations needed in building the knowledge society and a knowledge based economy. Two years ago, RINAF defined the development of a DE project to be used as a tool for building the emerging knowledge society in Africa.

Faced with the exponential increase of DE programmes, RINAF deemed that each country should develop its own DE policy, strategy and planning governing the use and integration of ICT facilities in order to satisfy social demands in higher education.

☞ *For additional information please contact Mr Guenther Cyranek, Adviser for Communication and Information in Eastern and Southern Africa, UNESCO Office, P. O. Box 1177, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Tel: (251-1) 51 39 53 or 51 72 00 ext. 35 422. Fax: (251-1) 51 14 14. Email: g.cyranek@unesco.org*

G8 Africa Action Plan

At the G8 Kananaskis Summit in Canada in June 2002, the G8 countries adopted an Africa Action Plan which pledges full support for NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development). In the area of Communication and Information, the G8 Action Plan identified the major focus to be "Expanding Knowledge: Improving and Promoting Education and Expanding Digital Opportunities".

Within this area, the Plan proposed the following main actions:

- Helping Africa create digital opportunities including encouraging the Digital Opportunity Task Force (DOT Force) International e-Development Resources Network to focus on Africa, and supporting other DOT Force initiatives that can help to create digital opportunities, each building wherever possible on African initiatives already underway.
- Attaining the goal of universal access to ICT by working with African countries to improve national, regional and international telecommunications and ICT regulations and policies in order to create ICT-friendly environments.
- Encouraging and supporting the development of public-private partnerships to fast-track the development of ICT infrastructure.
- Supporting entrepreneurship and human resource development of Africans within the ICT sector.

Within the framework of assisting Africa to make more effective use of ICTs in the context of promoting sustainable economic, social and political development, the following proposals were put forward:

- Endorsing initiatives to make best use of ICTs to address education and health issues.
- Reinforcing efforts of African countries in increasing access to, and making the best use of, ICTs in support of governance, including the development and implementation of national e-strategies and e-governance initiatives aimed at increased efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of government.

☞ *For more information please contact Mr Hezekiel Dlamini, Adviser for Communication and Information in Western and Southern Africa region, UNESCO Office, c/o ROSTA, P. O. Box 30592, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel.: (254) 2-62 27 17. Fax: (254) 2 B 21 59 91 or 62 23 24. E-mail: h.dlamini@memo.unesco.org*

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

SimpLAC´2002

The Latin American and Caribbean Symposium on Education, Science and Culture in the Information Society, SimpLAC'2002, was held in Havana, Cuba from 18 to 21 February 2002. It was organized by UNESCO Montevideo and the Cuban Ministry for Informatics and Communication, with sponsorship from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC, Canada); Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO); Regional Centre for Training in Information Technologies (CREPIAI) and the Cuban National Commission for UNESCO.

In his keynote speech, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information stressed the role of UNESCO as an agent for change contributing to the development of the Knowledge Society centered on social equity and digital inclusion.

SimpLAC is the only regular conference in the Communication and Information field in the Latin America and the Caribbean region organized by UNESCO and it was an excellent opportunity to make UNESCO's views and vision of the information society known to a large audience.

Participants were unanimous in their judgement that SimpLAC'2002 was a very relevant event for the region, and UNESCO was praised for organizing the conference. Many national Information Society officials attending SimpLAC'2002 have expressed their interest in hosting the event in 2003. This is particularly important as it allows UNESCO to build on the political climate to emphasize the themes of the "World Summit on Information Society" to a larger audience.

Another important activity held in parallel with SimpLAC'2002, was the information session on the @LIS European Union Initiative. The main @LIS priorities are: e-inclusion, e-governance and e-health.

Following the SIMPLAC Conference, UNESCO launched its Free Software Users and Developers Consortium *(http://www.unesco. org.uy/informatica/consortium/index.html)* during a session with very lively participation.

The Consortium will be consolidated in order to generate its expected results. Some project outlines are already available and will be submitted to the forthcoming Eurolat-IS Workshop. Co-operation with other UNESCO Offices will be strengthened in these areas.

☞ *For further information please contact Mr Claudio Menezes, Adviser for Communication and Information in Latin America and the Caribbean region, UNESCO Office, Avenida Brasil 2697, P. O. Box 859, 11300 Montevideo, Uruguay. Tel: (59-82) 707 20 23. Fax: (59-82) 707 21 40. E-mail: cmenezes@unesco.org.uy*

More than 100 Bibliographic Databases Now Online through the UNESCO Supported LATINO Project

The UNESCO Knowledge Portal is gradually taking shape as a diversified entry point to information in the public domain. The Colima University in Mexico, in association with UNESCO recently launched the online version of the LATINO project of bibliographic databases of Latin America and the Caribbean. The portal comprises 114 databases with bibliographic descriptions from libraries of institutions in 14 countries of the region, in addition to Spain.

The project was implemented by UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Communication and Information in Quito and the UNESCO Regional Centre for Information Technologies at Colima University. The Portal covers a wide range subjects areas including agriculture and rural development databases, publications, medical and scientific collections as well as databases on publications concerning regional issues such as Argentina's 'Merco' database covering mainly MERCOSUR countries.

☞ *For more information, please contact Mr Isidro Fernández-Aballí, Adviser for Communication and Information in Latin America and the Caribbean region, UNESCO Office Quito, Foch #265 y de Diciembre, piso 2, Quito, Ecuador. Tel.: (593-2) 252 90 85, 256 23 27. Fax : (593-2) 250 44 35. Email : quito@unesco.org or E-mail: i.fernandez-aballi@unesco.org*

ARAB STATES

Cairo

International Computer Driving License in Arab Region

The European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) Foundation has granted UNESCO Cairo Office its International Computer Driving License (ICDL) for Egypt and Jordan, and the ability to assist with the introduction of the ICDL programme in other Arab States.

The ICDL concept is owned by the ECDL Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Dublin, Ireland, that was formed to coordinate the introduction and operation of the ICDL/ECDL concept throughout Europe and the rest of the world. ECDL was established by the Council of European Professional Informatics Societies (CEPIS) as a support and co-ordination mechanism. To gain the ICDL, the applicant must pass one theoretical and six practical tests, which are administered internationally by accredited test centres.

Under the agreement, UNESCO will ensure the introduction of incentives and identification of benefits for the higher education community to upgrade their basic computer skills and pursue ICDL certification as well as the

adoption of the ICDL syllabus as a required course in basic computer skills and knowledge for all university students in higher education institutions in Egypt.

☞ *For more information please contact Mr Tarek G. Shawki, Adviser for Communication and Information in the Arab States region, UNESCO Office, 8 Abdel Rahman Fahmy Street, Garden City, Cairo 11511, Egypt. Tel: (202) 354 30 36 or 354 55 99. Fax: (202) 354 52 96. E-mail: tshawki@mail.unesco.org.eg*

LIBYA

Libyan National Information Policy Underway

UNESCO fielded a staff mission to Tripoli, Libya in March 2002 to assist in the development of the country's information and communication policy, the development of the National Information and Documentation Authority (NIDA), and the establishment of a documentation system for historical documents and libraries.

Internet connectivity and the use of the Internet for e-mail and web access in Libya are still in their infancy as there are only a few Internet Service Providers in the country, whether public and private. However, user interest is rapidly growing, particularly in Tripoli, where numerous Internet Cafés have been established. As the technical infrastructure is still under development, a national policy on information technology has yet to be established and legal provisions to facilitate the transition from analogue to the digital telecommunications system need to be developed. Moreover, Libyan-related web content is very scarce both in the public and the private area with only a few public institutions, mainly state-owned enterprises, having a web presence on websites mainly hosted abroad.

In order to address these issues, the Government recently established a working group on ICTs. The National Information and Documentation Authority (NIDA), together with the state-owned General Post and Tele-communication Company (GPTC) has the potential to play a key role in the process of establishing a national ICT policy, initiating a national debate on Information Society-related issues such as content concepts (including multilingualism, cultural diversity, public domain content, open access, ethical issues, etc.) and fostering the creation of Libyan-related content.

NIDA has been requested to develop both an extranet linking the central government and the 31 Shaabias (Municipalities) and the public web presence (Internet) of the government.

Historical documents and libraries

The most important repository for historical collections in Libya is the "Libyan Studies Centre" which depends on the Al-Fatih University. With rare manuscripts dating back to the 10th century, historical documents related to the Ottoman empire (starting 1711), the period of Italian colonization (1911-1944), the British/French mandate (1945-1949) and the era of King Idris (1949-1969), a collection of 80,000-100,000 photographs and 18,000 hours recordings of oral history, mainly covering the struggle for independence between 1911 and 1944, the Centre is the de facto historical archives.

At present, the management of historical archives (Centre for Libyan Studies) and of records of current government and administration affairs (NIDA) is separated. The establishment of a national strategy to ensure a coherent approach to records and archives management, both for heritage and governance reasons is urgent.

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ASIA AND PACIFIC

ICTs as a Tool to Combat Poverty

UNESCO is launching a new project in South Asia to test and demonstrate different models that effectively put ICTs and relevant content into the hands of people living in poverty in order to empower them to meet their own information, knowledge and communication requirements.

Access to information, knowledge and communication is essential for development but far too often, the poor find themselves severely handicapped. By expanding information flows and making communication more accessible, people living in poverty can make better choices, voice their opinions, demand their rights and have more power over their own lives.

The main goal of the project is to find ways in which people living in poverty can benefit from ICTs to obtain access to productive information, create content that is relevant to them or opportunities to communicate and better organize themselves. The focus is not on technology itself, but on how to use technologies for a specific purpose.

With inputs from different partners that will contribute to this project, UNESCO will support the development of innovative ideas to put ICTs to work through pilot projects in at least five different locations in South Asia.

The projects are expected to use some combination of traditional and new software technologies, develop other techniques, adapted or appropriate to the situations and needs of people living in poverty and/or in isolated areas.

In an effort to give maximum coverage to lessons learned and successful models, the pilot projects will be well documented and the lessons learned widely shared.

The main thrust of UNESCO's project is to identify specific tools and ways of using them that empower people by increasing access to information and communications. The project seeks to demonstrate concrete applications of ICTs as a contributing force in strategies to reduce poverty.

☞ *For more information please contact Mr Wijayananda Jayaweera, Adviser for Communication and Information in Asia and the Pacific region, 8 Poorvi Marg, Vasan Vihar, New Delhi 110057, India. Email: newdelhi @unesco.org*

Regional Training Workshop on the Preservation of and Access to Documentary Heritage

A Regional Training Workshop on the preservation of and access to documentary heritage in Asia and the Pacific was held in Seoul and Cheongju City, Republic of Korea, from 4-8 June, 2002.

Cheongju is the birthplace of a major historical revolution in information technology:

printing with movable metal type and the oldest existing book produced in this manner in 1371, the *Buljo jikji simche yojeol* (Vol. II), has been included on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register.

The Workshop provided a good opportunity for regional participants to gain better understanding of the objectives of the 'Memory of the World' Programme, the principles of conservation and preservation work and digitization for access. Specialists in research and care of the documentary heritage and applications of new technologies for preservation and access discussed national achievements, challenges and collaborative approaches to the preservation of and access to the rich, diverse and unique documentary heritages of this vast region.

This workshop is one of an ongoing series under the auspices of the Memory of the World Programme to enhance national and regional capacities through obtaining knowledge and expertise and has as its goal to promote greater political and public awareness and resource support. It follows a similar workshop on the preservation of the South-East Asian heritage held in Hanoi in February 2002 under the auspices of UNESCO and the Viet-Nam National Centre for Scientific and Technological Information Documentation (NACESTID).

The workshop enjoyed excellent media coverage both locally in Cheongju and nationally with the Mayor of Cheongju proposing the award of a Memory of the World international prize for outstanding projects in the area of preservation of and access to documentary heritage. The prize, to be awarded every two years, would be called the 'Jikji' Memory of the World Prize and would be funded by the Korean Government.

Participants recommended the adoption of further measures for the preservation of the national heritage including the organization of a workshop in 2004, the development of a Memory of the World education kit, the translation of guidelines in local languages and further training initiatives.

☞ *For additional information please contact Mrs Susanne Ornager, Adviser for Communication and Information in Asia and the Pacific region, 920 Sukhumvit Road, Bangkok, 10110, Thailand. E-mail: s.ornager@unesco-proap.org*

At UNESCO Headquarters, please contact Mr A. Abid, CI/INF, UNESCO, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15, France. Tel: (331) 45.68.44.96. Fax: (331) 45.68.55.83. E-mail: a.abid@unesco.org

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Requests from Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Portugal, Spain, United States of America, and the Asia and Pacific Region should be sent directly to our documents resource centres whose addresses are indicated below.

Document requests from Africa, Arab States, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean should continue to be sent to: Information Society Division, UNESCO, 1, rue Miollis, 75732, Paris Cedex 15, France.

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ASIA/PACIFIC REGION

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All documents may be consulted at the premises of each of the institutions mentioned above. Copies may be obtained on a cost recovery basis at prices set out by the distributing institutions. UNESCO is in the process of digitizing its documents and a full text selection of these can be consulted at: *http://ulis.unesco.org/*

Below is a list of new publications:

• JENSEN, Mike; ESTERHUYSE, Anriette. *La création d'un Télécentre communautaire pour l'Afrique : Les recettes de l'autosuffisance.* Paris: UNESCO, 2001. 126 p. (CI.2001/WS/2). French version of the Community Telecentre Cookbook for Africa.

• EDMONSON, Ray. *Memory of the World: General Guidelines (Revised edition 2002).* Paris: UNESCO, 2002. 72 p. (CII.95/WS/11 Rev.). Also available in French, Spanish and Russian.

• *Informe de la reunion de expertos sobre laboratorios virtuales.* Paris: UNESCO, 2002. 64 p. (CII.2000/WS/1). Spanish version of the Report of the Expert Meeting on Virtual Laboratories.

Other Publications:

• CREED, Charlotte; PERRATON, Hilary. *Distance Education in the E-9 Countries. The Development and Future of Distance Education Programmes in the Nine High-Population Countries.* Paris: UNESCO, 2001. 67 p.

• CREED, Charlotte; PERRATON, Hilary; ROBINSON, Bernadette. *Teacher Education Guidelines: Using Open and Distance Learning. Technology-Curriculum-Cost-Evaluation.* Paris: UNESCO, 2002. 67 p.

• ROBINSON, Bernadette. *In the Green Desert. Non-formal Distance Education Project for Nomadic Women of the Gobi Desert, Mongolia.* Paris: UNESCO, 1997. 38 p.