



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

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

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

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织



## September 2008 Cycle on the Intersectoral Platforms

*This week:* The second in this series of meetings presents the platforms on Education for Sustainable Development; Contributing to the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures and a Culture of Peace; Priority Africa: coordinating and monitoring the plan of action to benefit Africa.

### Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Platform

The ESD Platform aims to contribute to Member States' efforts to improve the quality of education through integrating sustainable development issues and practices into all types, levels and settings of education. It focuses on such areas as policy, capacity development, knowledge enhancement and awareness-raising.

The launch of the ESD Intersectoral Platform provided the opportunity to strengthen the pre-existing internal coordination mechanisms on ESD, including the Intersectoral Working Group on ESD and the UNESCO Action Plan for the Decade for ESD. Taking the Action Plan as its foundation, the platform has defined its strategy, expected results and priority focus for this biennium.

Led by the Education Sector, the platform benefits from substantial contributions from all Programme Sectors and many field offices. It works with a wide range of partners including educational and research institutions, the media, the private sector and civil society.

In a recent initiative, platform created an intersectoral working group to establish a results-oriented monitoring mechanism, by developing performance indicators to assess the platform's achievements, in close collaboration with the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP).

The preparation of a global monitoring and evaluation report focusing on the context and structure of the work on ESD is currently underway. In the area of capacity-building, a media training and resource kit on sustainable development issues for journalists has been developed.

Examples of field activities include a technical group for the National DESD Strategy established in Namibia and the launch of a project to mainstream ESD in the curriculum in Angola. In the Apia cluster, an implementation plan for the ESD intersectoral programme has been developed.

The platform seeks to ensure gender balance and sensitivity as well as to promote women's involvement in planning, implementing and monitoring ESD activities. It will develop a conceptual framework on the linkage between gender and ESD.

The platform will support the operationalisation of the Regional Strategy of ESD for Sub-Saharan Africa by promoting synergies across regions and providing technical support, especially to on-going activities.

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### Platform on Contributing to the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures and a Culture of Peace

This Platform builds on UNESCO's long-standing efforts to strengthen dialogue among civilizations and cultures. Based on its many years of experience with far-reaching dialogue initiatives such as the 'Routes of Dialogue' and the 'General Histories' projects, the Organization has systematically fine-tuned its approach to dialogue and has adapted methodologies and focus to take into account shifts in the international context.

The Platform group members have developed an action plan, involving activities and contributions from all Sectors. As this is a new intersectoral structure, the group defined strategies for four key objectives. These have realistically attainable results to be achieved by the end of the 2008-2009 biennium, while

maintaining clear links and transitions to UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy. The four objectives are: the promotion and exploitation of the Regional Histories; the development of inter-cultural skills; engaging new voices in interfaith dialogue and other spiritual traditions; the media and dialogue.

One Platform initiative involves a transversal reading of different Histories from the general Histories project through the prism of intercultural dialogue. Another initiative is to undertake a survey of the state of the art regarding existing intercultural skills necessary for "living together". This exercise also comprises an investigation of less-known intercultural skills, such as traditional practices, that constitute competencies for intercultural dialogue in various cultures; It will also focus on the issue of gender-based violence in schools and its educational and psychological consequences.

Dialogue is essential for effective sharing of water resources. Preparations for journalists training to be conducted at the World Water Forum in 2009 are underway, mobilizing the Science and Communication and Information Sectors. A partnership opportunity has now emerged with the University of Miami, which this year produced a critical documentary called "One Water," that could be made available as a training tool and for screening at the conference.

The Platform's action plan complements the recently-initiated collaboration with the Alliance of Civilizations. A Memorandum of Understanding between UNESCO and AOC signed in January 2008 outlines specific areas for the development of joint projects and activities for which the mobilization of financial resources will also strengthen the Platform and its implementation.

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## The Priority Africa Platform

In relation to the other platforms, the Priority Africa platform, in addition to its intersectoral and cross-cutting aspects, is unusual in that it is a regional structure responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the programme priority accorded to Africa.

The aim of the platform is to ensure that the implementation of UNESCO's programme is genuinely fuelled by a coherent and integrated vision of Africa with regard to the Millennium Development Goals, as defined by the resolutions and decisions of the summits of the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and as set out in the Organization's Medium-Term Strategy and the current programme.

The action frameworks defined by the AU and the RECs are mainly the decisions relating to the Second Decade of Education for Africa and its Plan of Action, the Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union Summit on Science, Technology and Scientific Research for the Sustainable Development of Africa and the Consolidated Plan of Action associated with it, the African cultural renaissance, the interface between culture and education and the action plans associated with them.

With respect to the priority domains approved by the General Conference and the Executive Board, the following regional activities have, among others, been singled out for particular attention: support for initiatives concerning teacher training, literacy and HIV/AIDS preventive education; development of educational materials based on the General History of Africa; support for three flagship projects in science (initiative for capacity-building in science policy, science and technology education, and establishment of a virtual African campus); extension of the African continental shelf of African coastal states; and the Regional Post-Graduate Training School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forests and Lands.

The Platform, which involves the African field offices and institutes in its work, participates in the work of other Sectoral platforms, in particular that relating to support for countries in post-conflict and post-disaster situations. It also draws on the work of the regional consultation of UN agencies working in Africa to support the AU and NEPAD, the UNESCO Committee for NEPAD and the Forum of the Regional and Sub-Regional African Organisations in support of cooperation between UNESCO and NEPAD (FOSRA-SUN).

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