



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
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Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
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Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
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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

*The final meeting in this series presents the platforms on Climate Change, Science Education and Fostering ICT-Enhanced Learning*



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### Climate Change Platform

This platform supports the implementation of UNESCO's Strategy for Action on Climate Change, which aims to help Member States to build and maintain the requisite knowledge base, to adopt measures for adapting to the impacts of climate change, contribute to the mitigation of its causes and enhance sustainable development. The strategy takes a dual approach, supporting development of the knowledge base on climate change and supporting the application of educational tools, sectoral measures, public awareness activities and national policy frameworks on climate change adaptation. It puts special emphasis on Africa, gender equality and small island developing states.

The platform links colleagues in all Sectors at Headquarters as well as in the field, seeking to facilitate collaboration on some 40 climate-relevant activities, ranging from field projects in Africa preparing coastal communities for climate change impacts, to the organization of expert meetings on climate change in the Arctic.

Collaboration between UNESCO and other UN organizations and programmes is also facilitated by the Platform. For example, UNESCO, together with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), has been charged with the role of convenor for United Nations agencies active in the cross-cutting area of science, assessment, monitoring and early warning. This key role in developing the knowledge base on climate is coordinated and managed through the Platform.

The human welfare dimensions of climate change, such as impacts on the livelihoods of different social groups, on human settlements and on migration, require an interdisciplinary response and the Platform encourages this. For example, the Social and Human Sciences Sector is now looking at migration issues from a climate change perspective. Special efforts will be made by the Platform to raise extrabudgetary funds for additional social and human sciences initiatives and actions.

The Platform also provides guidance to field colleagues who act as UNESCO members of UN country teams. It supported the preparation of concept papers for several successful UNDP-Spain 'MDG Achievement Fund' projects in the area of environment and climate change.

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### Platform for Science Education

This Platform aims to highlight the importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education for development and poverty eradication. STEM education is important for increasing science, engineering and technology literacy, and also to enable developing countries to build up a critical mass of scientists, researchers and engineers.

The Platform involves the Sectors for the Natural Sciences (SC), Education (ED), Social and Human Sciences (SHS) and Communication and Information (CI). As such, it covers all levels of STEM education. ED involvement is in policy guidance in school science and technology education, and science and mathematics teacher education. SC supports production and use of teaching and learning materials to promote the basic sciences, engineering and the environmental sciences. SHS involvement focuses on

education on ethics of science and technology, and CI, on science journalism and access to scientific information the media.

While the Programme Sectors involved had collaborated in the past, recent changes in structure and personnel presented challenges for continuity which the Platform should help overcome. One project underway within the platform is the global study of the state of science and mathematics education. The study, led by ED and SC, seeks to identify priorities, challenges, good practices and policies in different countries. Several Member States have expressed interest in taking part in the study.

The platform team recently decided to collaborate in an EU-funded project which seeks to develop materials and online learning tools on environmental issues, in partnership with Ludwig Maximilians University, Germany. Another proposal of partnership with the Nature Publishing Group on its launch of Nature Education is under consideration.

The cooperation and involvement of field offices in these projects is key. Colleagues in Addis Ababa, Cairo, Cameroon, Jakarta and New Delhi will be involved. A final example of a new Platform activity is the intersectoral Earth Science Education Initiative for Africa, which aims to train the next generation of earth scientists with the tools of sustainable development, enhancing their chances of securing jobs in environmental fields.

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## Platform for Fostering ICT-Enhanced Learning

The goals of this Platform are to work towards the inclusion of all learners through using information and communication technology (ICT); the reinforcement of quality education and training for all; and lifelong learning through the innovative use of ICT in teaching and learning processes. Platform participants have also adopted a vision statement for the group: 'A world without boundaries where technologies support education to build knowledge societies'.

The Platform mainly involves the Communication and Information Sector (CI) and the Education Sector (ED). Some outreach efforts to involve other Sectors on an ad hoc basis as required have been undertaken. Several field offices have also been engaged in the Platform and the Bangkok office, which has a long track record of work in this area, is particularly active. Through the Platform, links are now being established or further developed between Sectors, field offices and Institutes, especially the International Bureau of Education, the Institute for Statistics and the International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

ICT as a vehicle to enhance learning is a vast domain and the Platform group chose the following areas to focus on: resources for teachers to use in face-to-face and distance education; training of various kinds, including teacher professional development; access to scientific and technical information; raising awareness and fostering learning on critical issues such as the environment and health.

The first strategy for developing these priority areas, through an interdisciplinary approach, is to create a consolidated web site that makes it easy for users to find UNESCO resources on ICT and learning, without having to know anything about UNESO or how it is organized. This priority action was decided at a face-to-face intersectoral meeting in July.

The participants selected the following themes for joint projects and focus for fund raising (particularly important for a new platform such as this one): website; open resources (such as Open Educational Resources and Open Training Platform); methodological guide and policy briefs; ICT and education indicators; digital opportunities in Least Developed Countries; teacher capacity development. The Assistant Directors-General for Communication and Information and for Education have validated these choices, which link activity themes to the four priority areas of focus described above.

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