



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# Executive Board

Hundred and eighty-ninth session

# 189 EX/6 Part I

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Item 6 of the provisional agenda

## REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON SPECIFIC MATTERS

### PART I

#### RECENT DECISIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM OF RELEVANCE TO THE WORK OF UNESCO

##### SUMMARY

In accordance with paragraph 3 of 103 EX/Decision 6.1-6.2, 124 EX/Decision 6.1 and 167 EX/Decision 4.2, the Director-General informs the Executive Board of decisions and activities of the organizations of the United Nations system of interest to UNESCO that have been adopted or taken place since the 186th session of the Board.

There are no financial or administrative implications.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 12.

## I. 66th SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. UNESCO participated in the main segment of the 66th session of the General Assembly held in New York from 13 September to 24 December 2011, under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr Nassir Abdulaziz Al Nasser of Qatar.

2. The peaceful settlement of disputes; the reform of the United Nations and its Security Council; improving disaster preparedness and response; and promoting sustainable development and global prosperity were key areas of focus of the Assembly. Palestine's request for United Nations membership as well as the situation in the Middle East and in the Arab region also dominated the debates of this session.

3. The Director-General participated in the High Level Segment of the General Assembly (19-23 September) and took part in several meetings and events on a broad range of issues including education for democracy, non-communicable diseases, environment, climate change and biological diversity. The Director-General also chaired a special session of the United Nations Secretary-General's symposium on international counter-terrorism cooperation devoted to "Promoting dialogue, understanding and countering the appeal of terrorism".

4. As in previous years, UNESCO has been asked by the General Assembly to submit reports on agenda items for which the Organization has a specific mandate or responsibility. The following reports were submitted and examined by the Assembly at this session:

- Report on "Culture and Development".
- Report on "Implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace".

5. The Assembly has adopted so far the following resolutions which make a reference to UNESCO's programmes and/or assign specific action(s) to the Organization:

- **Culture and development** (res. 66/208). The Assembly invites United Nations system organizations and in particular UNESCO "to continue to provide support and to facilitate financing and to assist Member States, upon their request, in developing their national capacities to assess how best to optimize the contribution of culture to development, including through information-sharing, exchange of best practices, data collection, research and study, and the use of appropriate evaluation indicators, as well as to implement applicable international cultural conventions". It also invites UNESCO "to continue to assess the contribution of culture to the achievement of sustainable development through the compilation of quantitative data, including indicators and statistics, with a view to informing development policies and relevant reports". The Assembly requests the Secretary-General to submit to its 68th session a progress report and to assess, in consultation with relevant United Nations organizations, in particular UNESCO and UNDP, "the feasibility of various measures, including a possible United Nations conference, to take stock of the contribution of culture to development and to formulate a consolidated approach to culture and development [...]".

- **Implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace** (res. 66/116). The Assembly "commends UNESCO, for which the promotion of a culture of peace is the expression of its fundamental mandate, for further strengthening the activities it has undertaken to promote a culture of peace, including the promotion of peace education and the dissemination of the Declaration on a Culture of Peace and the Programme of Action and related materials in various languages across the world" and invites it to "consider the feasibility of creating a special fund under the Organization to cater to the country-specific projects for the effective promotion of a culture of peace". The Assembly also stresses the role of UNESCO "in mobilizing all relevant stakeholders within and outside the United Nations system in support of cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace, and invites it to continue to enhance communication

and outreach, including through the culture of peace website, in order to promote the objectives of the newly adopted Programme of Action at the regional, national and global levels”.

- **Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace** (res. 66/226). The Assembly “notes the continuing work of UNESCO on intercultural and interreligious dialogue and its efforts to promote dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, as well as activities related to a culture of peace, and welcomes in particular the adoption of its new programme of action on a culture of peace and non-violence and its focus on concrete actions at the global, regional and subregional levels”.
- **Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade** (res. 66/114). By this resolution, the Assembly recalls “that the permanent memorial initiative complements the work being done at UNESCO on the Slave Route Project, including its commemorative activities” and “welcomes the conclusion of the tripartite Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Office for Partnerships, UNESCO and the Permanent Memorial Committee to serve as the framework for cooperation in implementing the initiative to honour the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. It also “encourages UNESCO to assist the committee in identifying qualified candidates, including from its pool of international specialists to serve on the independent international panel of judges to select the winning design.
- **Oceans and the law of the sea** (res. 66/231). The Assembly “takes note with appreciation of the progress made by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and Member States towards the establishment of regional and national tsunami warning and mitigation systems [...]” and “notes the 2011 report on ocean data buoy vandalism – incidence, impact and responses by the IOC and the World Meteorological Organization” and “urges States to take necessary action and to cooperate in relevant organizations, including the FAO, the IOC and WMO, to address damage to ocean data buoys [...]” The Assembly also “stresses the importance of increasing the scientific understanding of the oceans-atmosphere interface, including through participation in ocean observing programmes and geographic information systems, such as the Global Ocean Observing System, sponsored by the IOC, UNEP, WMO and the International Council for Science, particularly considering their role in monitoring and forecasting climate change and variability and in the establishment and operation of tsunami warning systems”.
- **Elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religious belief** (res. 66/168). The Assembly “stresses the importance of a continued and strengthened dialogue in all its forms, including among and within religions or beliefs, and with broader participation, including women, to promote greater tolerance, respect and mutual understanding, and welcomes different initiatives in this regard, including the Alliance of Civilizations and the programmes led by UNESCO”.
- **The law of transboundary aquifers** (res. 66/104). The Assembly notes the need for reasonable and proper management of transboundary aquifers and “encourages the International Hydrological Programme of UNESCO to offer further scientific and technical assistance to the States concerned”.
- **The girl child** (res. 66/140). By this resolution, the Assembly “urges all Governments and the United Nations system to strengthen efforts bilaterally and with international organizations and private sector donors in order to achieve the goals of the World Education Forum, in particular that of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education [...]” and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that all United Nations organizations, individually and collectively, in particular UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP, UNFPA, UN-Women, WHO, UNDP, ILO and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees take into account the rights and the particular needs of the girl child in country programmes of cooperation in accordance with national priorities, including through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

- **Human rights and cultural diversity** (res. 66/154). The Assembly “emphasizes the important contribution of culture to development and the achievement of national development objectives and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals” and “invites UNESCO to support initiatives aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue on human rights”. It also “urges relevant international organizations to conduct studies on how respect for cultural diversity contributes to fostering international solidarity and cooperation among all nations”.
- **Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)** (res. 66/215). By this resolution, the Assembly “emphasizes that education and training are among the critical factors in empowering those living in poverty, and “recognizes the role of UNESCO in coordinating the Education for All partners and in promoting the development of sector-wide education policies by, *inter alia*, elaborating pedagogical tools for grass-roots organizations and policy-makers”.
- **Information and communication technologies for development** (res. 66/184). The Assembly takes note of the establishment of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development at the invitation of the Secretary-General of ITU and the Director-General of UNESCO and of the “Broadband targets for 2015”, established by the Commission at its Broadband Leadership Summit, held in Geneva on 24 and 25 October 2011.
- **Questions relating to information** (res. 66/81A-B), the Assembly requests that full support be provided to the UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) which should support both public and private media and encouraged continued collaboration between the United Nations Department of Public Information and UNESCO in the promotion of culture and in the fields of education and communication, bridging the existing gap between the developed and the developing countries.

## II. SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)

6. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) held its substantive session from 4 to 29 July 2011 under the Presidency of Ambassador Lazarous Kapambwe, Permanent Representative of Zambia to the United Nations at the Palais de Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. The Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) of the high-level segment (4-8 July 2011) was dedicated this year to “Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education”.

7. Throughout the 2010-2011 biennium, UNESCO’s Education Sector provided substantive support to the preparation of the AMR in liaison with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). Preparatory events supported included the following: (i) facilitating four ECOSOC preparatory regional meetings which captured specific regional issues in education, ensured multi-stakeholder involvement and which summary reports were presented at the AMR; (ii) organizing with DESA a special event on “Partnering with the Philanthropic community to promote education for all” in New York on 28 February 2011, which was attended by the Director-General; (iii) contributing to the United Nations Secretary-General’s reports for the AMR and for the high-level segment thematic discussion on “Current Global and national trends and challenges and their impact on education”; (iv) supporting the organization of an e-discussion from 1 February to 4 March 2011 on “Education: Closing the gap”; (v) contributing to the preparation of the first draft of the Ministerial declaration and supporting DESA during the negotiation phase among Member States, under the leadership of the President of ECOSOC.

8. The Director-General gave a keynote address at the opening of the high-level segment and participated in a broad range of meetings and events including a special dialogue on “Accelerating Progress on the EFA goals: mobilizing resources and partnerships”; a broadcasted face-to-face debate on “Education, Human Rights and Conflict”; a high-level policy dialogue with the international financial and trade institutions on current developments in the world economy; and a session on “Education for Sustainable Development”.

9. The Director-General also participated in four UNESCO side events organized jointly with partner organizations on various subjects such as education and training for the world of work, gender dimensions in post-conflict countries, engaging the private sector in education, rural education.

10. The Ministerial Declaration (E/2011/L.28) unanimously adopted at the end of the ECOSOC high-level segment is of particular importance to the work of the Organization:

- The preamble “reaffirmed the leading role of UNESCO” in the implementation of EFA and the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.
- It calls for a holistic approach to the development of educational systems and for prioritizing education in the design and implementation of national development strategies, recognizing the interlinkages between education and the advancement of all the other Millennium Development Goals. It thus embraces a holistic vision of education promoted by UNESCO that goes beyond the Millennium Development Goal 2 and reaffirms the pledge to reach all six EFA goals.
- It gives focus to transition from primary education, access to secondary education, vocational education and training as well as entry into the labour market. It encourages programmes to promote universal access to secondary education and to expand access to quality higher education.
- The Declaration also stresses the need to take measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence in any education setting.
- It calls for more effective and efficient international cooperation in order to achieve the EFA goals. This is in line with UNESCO’s current efforts to strengthen cooperation with the five EFA convening agencies and rethink current coordination mechanisms.
- It “calls on the international community, including the United Nations system and especially UNESCO, to strengthen the coordination and implementation of existing policies, programmes and follow-up mechanisms for Education for All by strengthening regional and international partnerships and cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation...”.

11. In addition, the following resolutions which assign specific action to UNESCO were adopted during the ECOSOC substantive session:

- *Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (res. 2010/2)* The Council notes the holding in Geneva from 16 to 20 May 2011 of the World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2011, organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNCTAD and UNDP as a multi-stakeholder platform for the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit and to facilitate the implementation of the World Summit Action Lines. The Council also welcomes the report of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in New York on 19 September 2010, and notes that the report includes the Declaration of Broadband Inclusion for All.
- *Science and technology for development (res. 2011/31)*. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development is encouraged to examine new metrics to assess and document outcomes of investments in science and technology and engineering research and development, education and infrastructure, in collaboration with UNESCO, the World Bank and member countries that have established programmes in this field of research.

**Action to be taken by the Executive Board**

12. The Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling paragraph 3 of 103 EX/Decision 6.1-6.2, 124 EX/Decision 6.1 and 167 EX/Decision 4.2,,
2. Having examined document 189 EX/6 Part I,
3. Takes note of the content of the Report of the Director-General on the decisions and activities of the organizations of the United Nations system of interest to UNESCO.



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## Part II

PARIS, 1 February 2012  
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### Item 6 of the provisional agenda

#### REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON SPECIFIC MATTERS

#### PART II

#### PREPARATION OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET)

##### SUMMARY

Pursuant to 187 EX/Decision 6 Part III, the Director-General submits a report on the preparation of the Third International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Shanghai, 13-16 May 2012) entitled "Building Skills for Work and Life".

The financial and administrative implications of the reported activities fall within the parameters of the current 36 C/5.

Action expected of the Executive Board: paragraph 9.

1. **Background:** UNESCO, in close consultation and cooperation with a broad range of partners, including specialized United Nations agencies, developed a strategy (181 EX/Decision 8 and 182 EX/INF.5) to support the development of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Member States over three biennia (2010-2015). The consultative process leading to the articulation of the Strategy generated several ideas, key among which was for UNESCO to convene the Third International Congress on TVET to provide a global forum on TVET and to take stock of developments since the Second Congress held in Seoul, Republic of Korea (1999). The Third International Congress is organized by UNESCO and hosted by the Government of the People's Republic of China in Shanghai from 13 to 16 May 2012.

2. **Context:** The Congress is organized at a time when skills have become a leading policy concern. In the face of demographic shifts, rapid labour market changes and high youth unemployment in many countries, there is strong demand for upgrading skills, acquiring new ones, and improving linkages between learning and work. Moreover, TVET can provide some of the new knowledge, skills and attitudes required by the transition to green economies and societies. Finally, protracted economic uncertainties have further heightened the need to rethink and even transform TVET systems to make them more resilient and responsive.

3. **Objectives of the Congress:** The Congress will provide a unique global platform for knowledge sharing, reflection, debate and charting new directions on the changing landscape of TVET and wider skills development systems in a lifelong learning perspective. The Congress will focus on the following key objectives: (i) identify and discuss present and future challenges facing TVET and explore appropriate responses; (ii) build better understandings of and share knowledge on improving the contributions of TVET to sustainable development; and (iii) inform perspectives for international cooperation in the field, and define strategic directions for joint future work and support to TVET at the national, regional and international levels.

4. **Congress Themes:** The central focus of the Congress is on how to transform and expand TVET to ensure that all young people and adults can develop the skills needed for work and life. It will be organized around eight themes to be discussed through plenary, parallel and round table sessions. There will also be a round table on enhancing support to Least Developed Countries as well as visits to TVET institutions in Shanghai. Special sessions will be organized according to partner organizations' proposals and in line with the Congress focus. The eight themes are:

- (i) **Skills development for youth employment:** Youth unemployment can be traced back to a number of economic, political and social factors. It is now commonly accepted that youth unemployment is a structural concern that requires long-term solutions. In the skills development field, a mismatch between demand for skills and the lack of appropriately skilled young workers has often been a root problem.
- (ii) **Building the responsiveness of TVET systems:** It is generally accepted that quality TVET must be responsive to changes in the demand for skills, whether these are economically, socially or politically generated. Growing attention is given to responsiveness to employers. There are also questions regarding the extent to which TVET responds to the needs of individuals and communities, as well as for self-employment, complex livelihoods and non-wage work.
- (iii) **Revisiting TVET funding and enhancing efficiency:** TVET is under heightened pressure to demonstrate value for money. Recent years have seen increasing use of a diverse range of funding mechanisms and diversification of sources of financing for TVET, as well as a growing emphasis on relating payment for provision more closely to learning and outcomes in the world of work.
- (iv) **Tackling social inequities and exclusion:** TVET should promote the skills of all learners, irrespective of gender, class, ethnicity, age or other social characteristics. While TVET can empower excluded individuals and groups both economically and socially, skills are only one aspect in promoting social inclusion, so TVET policies need to be equitable and located within wider public policies.
- (v) **Changing governance and widening stakeholders' engagement in TVET:** Many TVET reforms have resulted in the development of new national organizations and new coordination and oversight structures. Attention is often given to the involvement of employers, while at the same time there is growing emphasis on the importance of making TVET more accountable to other stakeholders such as learners, parents, unions, communities and elected representatives.
- (vi) **Promoting innovation and sustainable development through TVET:** TVET has a valuable role in contributing to economic and social innovation. The rise of the sustainable development agenda suggests that TVET must engage more systemically with social, cultural and environmental issues, in terms of its own ways of working, its contribution to sustainable development, and in response to new skills needs.
- (vii) **Achieving better quality teaching and learning:** The multiplicity of learning sites and modes in TVET brings policy challenges for achieving better outcomes of teaching and



learning. There are very wide differences in TVET learning opportunities across sectors and occupations. In the formal TVET sector, there is a growing awareness of the changing role of teachers and trainers and the need for a systemic view of staff development needs, qualifications, career paths and remuneration.

(viii) **Qualifications systems for connecting skills development and lifelong learning:**

There is a growing realization that learning takes place in multiple settings that go far beyond formal TVET. This requires establishing flexible and open learning and qualifications systems able to reduce the barriers between education, training and work, and to increase access and progression in initial and continuing TVET.

5. **Participants:** The Congress will be held in accordance with UNESCO's regulations and procedures as a Category IV meeting with non-representative character.<sup>1</sup> UNESCO is inviting Ministers responsible for TVET in its 195 Member States and eight Associate Members to nominate delegations of up to three participants. The participants will be drawn from a wide range of stakeholders, including ministries of education and training, labour, finance and health; the formal and informal private sector; employees' organizations, youth and civil society.

6. **Partnership:** To ensure rich and high-quality reflection and debates, UNESCO is convening the Congress with key international organizations active in the field, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank (WB), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Training Foundation (ETF). These organizations are part of the Advisory Group, which has met twice to discuss the draft agenda of the Congress, and several members will be playing active roles during the Congress, mainly as sessions' conveners.

7. **Consultation:** UNESCO is organizing several regional consultations in partnership with Member States and other partners: The Arab regional consultation hosted by the Sultanate of Oman (Muscat, 17-19 March 2012); the African regional consultation organized as a side event to the Association for the Development of Education (ADEA) meeting (Ouagadougou, 12-16 February 2012); and the Caribbean regional consultation (Montego Bay, 7-9 March 2012). For Europe, UNESCO will present the Congress to the European Union TVET Director Generals' meeting (Copenhagen, 23-24 April 2012). Discussions are ongoing to explore the possibility for regional consultation in Asia and the Pacific region and in Latin America.

8. **Progress:** Progress is in line with the overall plan for the organization of the Congress. Invitation letters have been sent to Member States, international and bilateral organizations, NGOs, experts and key speakers. Preparations are also progressing as regards both the technical inputs and communication for better visibility of the Congress.

- (i) **Technical input:** UNESCO is preparing a World TVET Report as input to the Congress and as a seminal reference point in the development of TVET. The primary audience of the report is TVET policy-makers, practitioners and specialists. The report presents an analysis of policy areas, associated policy choices, available tools and actions which have been shaping TVET since 1999 and are likely to continue to shape its future. It is expected to advance global conceptual and policy debates on TVET and its future role in development. The Report should also support and stimulate mutual learning, policy dialogue, international cooperation and development assistance in TVET. UNESCO, with partners, is also preparing an introduction note for each session. In addition, UNESCO-UNEVOC is developing an online World Database on Technical and Vocational Education and Training. The aim of the database is to provide concise, accurate and up-to-date information on TVET systems around the world. The database in its first form will be launched in English in March 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> See Basic Texts, H. Regulations for the general classification of the various categories of meetings convened by UNESCO.

- (ii) Communication: The Congress website in three languages (French, English and Chinese) will be activated in early February 2012. It will (i) give information about the organization of the Congress, allowing public access to finalized documents (i.e. congress notes, agenda, newsletters) and (ii) play an important role, as a virtual communities' platform, in enhancing communication, exchange and cross-regional dialogue. It will give restricted access to Congress participants to different types of information (i.e. session discussion papers, organization arrangements and logistics, online registration). Particular attention will be given to uploading the links which involve international organizations. The direct target groups of the website are the Congress participants. The indirect target groups are the wider education and training community, and citizens connected to the Internet. The website will give access to an online e-discussion to be hosted by UNESCO-UNEVOC e-forum. Multimedia presentation and video production will be other audiovisual products of the Congress.

### **Action to be taken by the Executive Board**

9. In light of the foregoing, the Executive Board may wish to consider the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 187 EX/Decision 6 Part III,
2. Takes note of document 189 EX/6 Part II,
3. Welcomes the efforts of the Director-General to ensure the successful preparation of the Third International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Shanghai, 13-16 May, 2012).