

Hundred and sixty-fourth Session

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**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/Decisions 6.1-6.2 and 124 EX/Decision 6.1, 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 have taken place since the 161st session of the Board.

In accordance with 103 EX/Decisions 6.1-6.2, paragraph 4(b), the Director-General has decided to include in the agenda the sub-items included in the table of contents of this document. Other decisions and activities of relevance to UNESCO but that do not require a decision by the Board are included in separate documents 164 EX/INF.4 and 164 EX/INF.5 for information.

Decisions required: paragraphs 13, 22, 26, 30, 40, 47, 52 and 59.

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INTRODUCTION

*An overview of the 56th session of the United Nations General Assembly
(September-December 2001)*

1. The events of 11 September 2001 in New York and Washington no doubt overshadowed the regular 56th session of the United Nations General Assembly and greatly affected its mood and its focus and disrupted its work programmes: the annual General Debate was, in a rare decision, postponed to November, the Special Session on Children was postponed to May 2002; and the Assembly, at plenary level, devoted at the beginning of the session, a one-week debate on an otherwise routine agenda item discussed annually by its Sixth (Legal) Committee, i.e. the item entitled “Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism”. Although there was a clear consensus on condemning terrorism in the plenary debate, the Sixth Committee, which is working on a convention against terrorism, failed to agree on a definition that is acceptable to every delegation. The Committee will continue its negotiations through 2002.

2. Despite the opening dramatic weeks, the Assembly soon reverted to considering its usual agenda, adopting 257 resolutions, most of them of interest and relevance to UNESCO, some of them at the heart of UNESCO’s fields of competence: eight of these resolutions (Literacy Decade, Year for Cultural Heritage, Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin, Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan, Joint United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) are reflected in this document as separate sub-items, informing the Board on General Assembly decisions, what UNESCO is or will undertake in response, and a draft decision for the Board’s consideration and adoption.

3. Other important General Assembly resolutions that require action from UNESCO are considered under separate items by the Board: resolution 56/192 on “the Status of preparations for the International Year of Fresh Water” under item 3.3.2: “Preliminary proposals by the Director-General concerning UNESCO’s programme of activities for the International Year of Fresh Water”; resolution 56/93 entitled International Convention against the reproductive cloning of human beings, under item 3.4: “Report of the Director-General on action to be taken in the light of the Round Table of Ministers of Science on Bioethics”; resolution 56/201 entitled Triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system under item 6.3: “Report of the Director-General on extra-budgetary resources”; resolution 56/244 entitled “United Nations common system: Report of the International Civil Service Commission” under item 6.11: “Annual report (2001) by the International Civil Service Commission: Report of the Director-General”; resolution 56/226 entitled “Environment and sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21” and resolution 56/198 entitled “Further implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States” under item 8.4: “Report by the Director-General on the Status of preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and its expected outcomes”.

4. Other General Assembly resolutions, especially those with a transversal nature, would be considered under item 3.1.1: “Report by the Director-General on the execution of the programme adopted by the General Conference”. These include General Assembly resolutions 56/207 on Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, and 56/95 Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, as well as others of cross-cutting nature. In addition, document 164 EX/INF.4 includes a list of other resolutions of relevance to UNESCO for

the information of the Board, a list of major appointments of senior United Nations officials as well as a list of United Nations international days, years and decades.

7.1.1 United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All

5. The 56th session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted on 19 December 2001 resolution 56/116 in which it proclaimed the United Nations Literacy Decade for the period of 2003-2012 towards the goal of Education for All.

6. In resolution 56/116, the General Assembly took note of the “Draft proposal and plan for a United Nations literacy decade” submitted by UNESCO to the General Assembly through ECOSOC as per prior request by RES/54/122 of its 54th session, and it further decided that UNESCO “should take a coordinating role in stimulating and catalysing the activities at the international level within the framework of the Decade”.

7. The General Assembly also requests the Director-General of UNESCO to cooperate with the Secretary-General in seeking “comments and proposals from Governments and the relevant international organizations on the draft plan for the Decade” in order “to develop and finalize a well targeted and action-oriented plan of action” to be submitted to the General Assembly at its 57th session (September-December 2002).

8. With the adoption of this resolution, Education for All was given greater importance and visibility at the United Nations General Assembly than at any past time, and the centrality of literacy to Education for All, and to sustainable social development, peace and democracy was reaffirmed. The concern for gender equality was highlighted in particular across the global challenges that literacy relates to. Furthermore, reaffirming the Dakar Framework for Action adopted at the World Education Forum, Dakar, April 2000, the General Assembly called for intensified efforts in implementing Education for All and other relevant international commitments and recommendations in a complementary and coordinated manner within the framework of the Decade.

UNESCO action

9. As requested by the 54th session of the United Nations General Assembly, UNESCO submitted to the 56th session of the General Assembly via ECOSOC an action plan for the United Nations Literacy Decade. This action plan was developed through an expert meeting, a strategic session at the World Education Forum, Dakar, April 2000, and consultation with Member States, civil society, and international agencies. The process of developing the draft action plan itself was therefore already an integral part of the education for all processes as requested by the General Assembly. Furthermore, the draft action plan explicitly situates the Decade within the Dakar follow-up mechanisms.

10. The Executive Board, at its 159th session, welcomed General Assembly resolution 54/122 in which the General Assembly proposed the idea of proclaiming a United Nations literacy decade (159 EX/Decision 7.1.3). At its 161st session, the Executive Board examined the draft action plan prepared as requested by the General Assembly, and authorized the Director-General to submit it to the 56th session of the General Assembly through ECOSOC. With its recognition of the urgent need for a major new worldwide initiative focusing on literacy as an integral component of the global and renewed commitment for Education for All, the Executive Board also appealed to Member States to give support to this item at the 56th session of the United Nations General Assembly (161 EX/Decision 3.2.1).

11. As the United Nations specialized agency mandated in education, with its long-standing expertise in literacy, its role as coordinator of the follow-up to the Dakar World Education Forum, and its multi-disciplinary mandates which allow a holistic approach to literacy such as the General Assembly resolution takes, UNESCO is best placed in the United Nations system to play the coordinating role of the Decade. In order to prepare for the Decade, it has already initiated dialogues with other relevant United Nations agencies on future actions to take; and it is also cooperating with the United Nations Secretary-General in seeking inputs from governments of Member States on the draft action plan for its further development.

12. On the basis of the document “Draft Proposal and Plan for a United Nations Literacy Decade” which was presented to the Board last year, to ECOSOC and the General Assembly, and the comments and proposals from Member States and other organizations, UNESCO will prepare the well targeted, action-oriented plan of action requested by the General Assembly, in close cooperation with the Secretary-General.

13. In the light of the foregoing, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 159 EX/Decision 7.1.3 and 161 EX/Decision 3.2.1,
2. Further recalling the commitments to Education for All reaffirmed at the World Education Forum, Dakar, April 2000,
3. Takes note of the United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/116 United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All;
4. Welcomes the United Nations Literacy Decade proclaimed by the General Assembly for the period of 2003-2012;
6. Noting with satisfaction that the United Nations General Assembly accorded UNESCO the coordinating role of the Decade at the international level;
7. Calls upon Member States to provide comments and proposals on the draft plan of the Decade;
8. Requests the Director-General to fully cooperate with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in finalizing the well targeted, action-oriented plan of action requested by the Assembly;
9. Further requests the Director-General to report regularly on the action taken by the General Assembly and on the implementation of the plan of action of the Decade.

7.1.2 United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage

14. By resolution 56/8, adopted on 21 November 2001, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 2002 the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage and invited the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to serve as the lead agency for the Year, which will be marked in particular by the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972).

15. As the memory of the living culture of each people, the cultural heritage is reflected in various ways, both tangible (monuments, landscapes, objects) and intangible (languages, skills, performing

arts, music, etc.). As noted by the Universal Declaration adopted by UNESCO on this theme on 3 November 2001, it is of priceless value for the protection of world cultural diversity.

UNESCO action

16. Three main objectives are set in resolution 56/8 for this United Nations Year:

- (a) intensifying the implementation of programmes, activities and projects aimed at the promotion and protection of the world cultural heritage;
- (b) promoting education and raising public awareness to foster respect for the national and world cultural heritage;
- (c) encouraging the private sector to make voluntary contributions to finance and support activities aimed at the promotion and protection of the national and world cultural heritage.

17. Celebration of the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage provides an exceptional opportunity to make governments, the private sector and civil society as a whole aware of the fact that the cultural heritage is not only an instrument for peace and mutual understanding but also a factor in development. On these grounds, UNESCO has chosen “**dialogue**” and “**development**” as the main thrusts of this celebration.

18. In view of the implications of the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage for UNESCO as a whole, the Director-General has made the Assistant Director-General for Culture responsible for coordinating implementation of the Year’s activities. The Assistant Director-General set up in advance a special intersectoral team and a secretariat within the Executive Office of the Culture Sector.

19. The first step in implementing the Year has been an information campaign on the following lines:

- (a) the dispatch of a letter by the Director-General to all ministers of culture of Member States and ministers of culture of Associate Members, requesting them to join fully in this world undertaking, in particular by giving a very high degree of priority to the celebration of the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage by a major national operation but also by mobilizing a broad partnership bringing together, in particular, parliamentarians, mayors, culture and heritage professionals, teachers and youth organizations, National Commissions for UNESCO and UNESCO Clubs. Among other requests, the letter contains an invitation to inform the secretariat of the Assistant Director-General for Culture of activities initiated at national level;
- (b) the organization of information meetings at the Headquarters of the United Nations and at UNESCO for all Permanent Delegations;
- (c) a specific logo, devised to give visual identity to the events marking the year, and also a website, an information kit for the press and the public, and posters and other promotional material;
- (d) the distribution of information material to the organizations of the United Nations system, national United Nations Coordinators and the National Commissions for UNESCO, together with suggestions and recommendations for the implementation of the Year at both national and international level;

- (e) the distribution of information material to international non-governmental organizations enjoying official relations with the United Nations and UNESCO, organizations specializing in the field of heritage, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors and the private sector in order to associate them fully with the Year's activities.
20. Three main events will mark the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage:
- (a) the third Round Table of Ministers of Culture, organized in cooperation with the Turkish authorities, to be held in Istanbul on 16 and 17 September 2002, on the theme "The intangible heritage as a mirror of cultural diversity";
- (b) the International Congress of Experts to be held on 14 to 16 November 2002 on "World heritage: a shared heritage, a common responsibility", organized in cooperation with the Italian authorities to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the 1972 Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage;
- (c) the organization of a day of plenary meetings on 4 December 2002 in connection with the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.
21. A list of all the activities conducted under the auspices of the Year will be continually updated on the Year site: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/unych>.
22. In the light of the foregoing, the Executive Board may perhaps wish to consider the following draft decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having read the report by the Director-General on the implementation by UNESCO of United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/8 proclaiming 2002 United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage,
2. Considering with satisfaction that the Year's objectives correspond closely to the objectives of UNESCO's programmes aimed at protecting cultural diversity and strengthening the links between culture and development through the safeguarding and revitalization of the tangible and intangible heritage,
3. Welcoming the active participation of Member States, agencies of the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and individuals in the implementation of projects to promote the Year's objectives,
4. Reaffirming that the cultural heritage is an instrument for peace and mutual understanding and also a factor in development,
5. Notes with appreciation the Director-General's recommendation to organize activities to celebrate United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage on the themes of dialogue and development;
6. Invites Member States to give the highest priority to the implementation of the principles enshrined in the 1972 Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, the

2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, and other international instruments adopted under the auspices of UNESCO;

7. Further invites Member and non-Member States, national and international governmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector to make voluntary contributions to finance and support UNESCO's activities in this field;
8. Also invites the Director-General to continue his efforts with a view to stepping up the implementation of programmes, activities and projects intended to ensure the enhancement and protection of the world cultural heritage, to promote education and raise public awareness to inspire respect for that heritage;
9. Requests the Director-General to report to the Board at its 167th session on the implementation of this decision.

7.1.3 Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations

23. By its resolution 56/6, the United Nations General Assembly adopts the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations which in Part A defines the objectives, principles and participants, and in Part B contains a Programme of Action, enumerating a number of means of promoting dialogue among civilizations, many of which are of relevance for UNESCO's action in this area, in particular as regards education, culture and communication. UNESCO, in particular, is requested to continue to encourage and facilitate dialogue among civilizations and formulate ways and means to promote dialogue among civilizations in the activities of the United Nations in various fields. The Global Agenda's Programme of Action also stipulates that the United Nations system, including in particular the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, and UNESCO are invited to continue to encourage and facilitate dialogue among civilizations and formulate ways and means to promote dialogue among civilizations in the activities of the United Nations in various fields.

UNESCO action

24. As UNESCO contributed substantively to the preparations and conduct of the special meetings by the General Assembly which resulted in the adoption of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, there is a considerable commonality and coherence with the relevant provisions in the Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007 (31 C/4) as well as those in the Approved Programme and Budget for 2002-2003 (31 C/5).

25. Based on its Action Plan for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations (161 EX/INF.14), UNESCO is already in the process of actively contributing to the implementation of the Global Agenda, in particular through:

- (a) the preparation of major symposia organized during the International Year and the wide dissemination of their proceedings (e.g. "Dialogue among Civilizations – The Round Table on the Eve of the United Nations Millennium Summit", the proceedings of the Vilnius International Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations and of the UNESCO-UNU Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations, Tokyo-Kyoto) as well as a special retrospective issue of the *UNESCO Courier* in December 2001.
- (b) the organization of meetings of scholars, intellectuals and writers, on various aspects of the dialogue among civilizations, such as a "Civilizations in the Eye of the Other" Symposium co-organized with the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in December 2001 (the proceedings of which will be published later in 2002), to be followed by a second

symposium in January 2003 aimed at taking stock of the evolution of the dialogue, in particular focusing on relevant research and discussions in the academic world and on educational initiatives related to the dialogue theme;

- (c) participation and sponsoring of many events and symposia organized by United Nations system organizations, by international, regional and subregional organizations as well as by academic, research and civil society organizations in various countries (such as Brazil, Gabon, Germany, Japan, Iran, Italy, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Venezuela), often times involving keynote speeches or policy messages by the Director-General;
- (d) providing intellectual and technical support and advice to the various Member States which are scheduling dialogue among civilizations-related activities in 2002-2003.
- (e) participating in the exchange of information with regional and subregional organizations, such as the Council of Europe, European Union, OSCE, OIC, ISESCO, ALECSO, as well as with United Nations system organizations, such as UNEP and UNU;
- (f) maintaining a dedicated website containing broad information on the dialogue among civilizations, which can be accessed at <http://www.unesco.org/dialogue2001>.

More detailed information on progress made is available in document 164 EX/4 Part I Add.

26. In the light of the foregoing information concerning the contribution of UNESCO to the implementation of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, the Executive Board may wish to consider the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Welcoming the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 November 2001,
2. Recalling the importance given to the dialogue among civilizations both in its Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007 (31 C/4) and in the Approved Programme and Budget for 2002-2003 (31C/5) and in other action by the General Conference, especially with respect to resolution 39 (Call for international cooperation to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism),
3. Welcoming the commonality and coherence in approach between the Global Agenda adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and UNESCO's programme of action,
4. Also recalling the important contribution made by UNESCO to the celebration of the United Nations Year for Dialogue among Civilizations and its follow-up,
5. Convinced that UNESCO has a major role to play and an important contribution to make in implementing the Global Agenda, in particular "with a view to encouraging and facilitating dialogue among civilizations and formulating ways and means to promote dialogue among civilizations in the activities of the United Nations in various fields" as envisaged by the United Nations General Assembly;

6. Taking note with appreciation of the activities already carried out towards the end of 2001 and in 2002 and other activities scheduled during 2002, expresses its conviction that such action will reinforce the Organization's contribution to the dialogue among civilizations, drawing to the extent possible on partnerships with other agencies of the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations and their specialized agencies, research institutions, the academic world in general, civil society organizations and parliamentarians;
7. Calls upon all Member States of the Organization, and in particular their National Commissions, to promote, encourage, and facilitate the dialogue among civilizations, giving particular emphasis to the elaboration and dissemination of teaching materials and publications aimed at raising awareness and contributing to the fulfilment of the Organization's mandate;
8. Requests the Director-General to reinforce further the Organization's action to promote and facilitate a broad-based dialogue among civilizations, involving all regions, in all appropriate fora and through a variety of means, in partnership with appropriate institutions;
9. Also requests the Director-General to closely link action in favour of the dialogue among civilizations with the planned activities aiming at the follow-up to and implementation of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and its plan of action as well as those concerning the celebration in 2002 of the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage;
10. Requests furthermore the Director General to submit a report to the Executive Board at its 166th session on the contribution of the Organization to the implementation of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations.

7.1.4 International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010

27. In its resolution 56/5 the General Assembly requests UNESCO to further strengthen the activities it has already undertaken for promoting a culture of peace, to continue to disseminate in various languages, *inter alia*, through its National Commissions, the Declaration on a Culture of Peace and the Programme of Action and related materials, and to continue to promote both formal and non-formal education at all levels that foster a culture of peace and non-violence. The resolution also welcomes UNESCO's efforts to continue the communication and networking arrangements established during the International Year for the Culture of Peace providing an instant update of developments related to the observance of the Decade.

UNESCO action

28. In the Medium-Term Strategy of the Organization for 2002-2007 (31 C/4), UNESCO's role as lead agency in the International Decade and its contribution to the Plan of Action for a Culture of Peace have been clearly and prominently defined in paragraphs 2 and 3. The major ongoing actions are clearly spelt out in the Approved Programme and Budget for 2002-2003 (31C/5), in particular under Major Programme I (Programme I .2.1 – Main line of action 1, Educating for a culture of peace and human rights), Major Programme II (in particular under Programme II.2.1 – Main line of action 2, Water interactions and security), Major Programme III (Programme III.2 – Promotion of human rights, peace and democracy), Major Programme IV (Programme IV.2 – Promoting cultural diversity and promoting cultural pluralism and intercultural dialogue) and Major Programme V

(Programme V. 2 - Promoting freedom of expression and strengthening communication capacities). The interactions between the Organization's contributions to a culture of peace, to human security and to poverty eradication are also expressly referred to in document 31 C/4 in the context of the strategy on the eradication of poverty, in particular of extreme poverty (Strategic Objective 1) and in Strategic Objective 5 of the Medium-Term Strategy "Improving human security by better management of the environment and social change". Within the Secretariat, the mainstreaming and coordination of all activities pertaining to the culture of peace as a strategic issue is entrusted to the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP). BSP is also maintaining electronic links with the multitude of external partners engaged in the promotion of a culture of peace, providing networking possibilities and instantaneous communication and information exchanges (see website at <http://www.unesco.org/iycp/>).

29. The major results achieved during the previous biennium are already duly reflected in documents 162 EX/4 Part I for the first eighteen months of that biennium and in document 164 EX/ 4 Part I for the last six months of 2001.

30. In the light of the foregoing information concerning UNESCO action and responses pertaining to the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, the Executive Board may wish to consider adopting the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Underlining the importance for UNESCO to ensure fully its role as lead agency in the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010,
2. Recalling the specific actions contained in the Approved Programme and Budget for 2002-2003 (31 C/5) which relate to the promotion of a culture of peace,
3. Underlining the need to mainstream the culture of peace in all the Organization's programmes,
4. Requests the Director-General to strengthen, in particular, the promotion of formal and non-formal education at all levels with a view to fostering a culture of peace and non-violence;
5. Further requests the Director-General to continue the communication and networking arrangements providing updated information on the observance of the Decade on a global basis.

7.1.5 Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin

31. In its resolution 56/97, the General Assembly commends UNESCO on the work accomplished in this field, and reaffirms the importance of the relevant conventions and protocols regarding the return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin, and calls upon Member States who have not done so to become parties to these instruments and to promote their implementation.

32. The Assembly further notes the creation of the International Fund for the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Resolution in Case of Illicit Appropriation, and encourages the Director-General to define and implement a strategy for the effective promotion of the Fund, and invites Member States, intergovernmental bodies, the private sector and other donors to contribute to the Fund.

33. The Assembly encourages the Secretary-General to cooperate with the Director-General in the implementation of the resolution, and to submit to the General Assembly at its 58th session (2003) a report on the implementation of the resolution.

UNESCO action

34. UNESCO received a preliminary draft of this resolution and provided extensive commentary on it before it was submitted to the General Assembly for consideration. Most notably, new points were suggested concerning the Second Protocol to the 1954 Convention that was adopted at The Hague on 26 March 1999, the application of the Object ID inventory system, and the adoption by the General Conference of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, the International Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property, the creation of the International Fund for the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation, and the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. All of these points were incorporated into the adopted resolution 56/97 except for that on the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, which was removed from the draft text.

35. In conformity with this resolution, UNESCO will continue to promote the return or restitution of cultural property and the fight against illicit traffic. The Sector for Culture is fully engaged with UNESCO's field offices and outside partners to conduct regional workshops on joining and/or implementing the relevant cultural property conventions, particularly the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property of 1970. The reports of States on their implementation of the 1970 Convention have been requested and will be examined by the next General Conference.

36. Pursuant to the 2000-2001 Report by the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation, UNESCO is working to fulfil those recommendations. An information kit is being published to promote and encourage donations to the Committee's International Fund for the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation. The Fund has recently received its first contribution from the Greek Government, which specifies applying the funds to assist in repatriating cultural property to Afghanistan.

37. Specifically related to Afghanistan, UNESCO has entered into bilateral agreements with the Society for the Preservation of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage (SPACH), the Foundation Bibliotheca Afghanica in Switzerland and the Foundation for Cultural Heritage in Japan to temporarily house and preserve donated Afghan cultural objects and to return them to Afghanistan when UNESCO deems it appropriate to do so.

38. The Object ID system of creating inventories of a State's valuable cultural property is routinely promoted at all UNESCO workshops on the illicit trafficking of cultural property. A contractor will be engaged by UNESCO to organize and animate specific workshops on establishing inventories using the Object ID system.

39. During the fifth meeting of States Parties to the Hague Convention (Paris, 5 November 2001), 11 States indicated that their national authorities were considering the provisions of the Second Protocol with a view to joining it. UNESCO will continue to encourage States to join the Hague Convention and its two Protocols.

40. In light of the above information, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Takes note of the United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/97 on the subject,
2. Expresses its regret that the resolution omitted reference to the adoption of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage;
3. Invites the Director-General to continue UNESCO's work on these important subjects.

7.1.6 Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

41. By its resolution 56/227, the United Nations General Assembly decided on the creation of the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and requested all the organizations of the United Nations system to mainstream the implementation of the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action for the LDCs for the Decade 2001-2010 within their programmes of work as well as in their intergovernmental processes.

UNESCO action

42. As stated in its Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007 (31 C/4) the Organization is firmly committed to mainstreaming throughout all its programmes the needs and requirements of the LDCs, in particular by “targeting the most disadvantaged groups (women and youth) and identifying specific actions for them; spreading and replicating successful examples of alternatives to traditional formal education; encouraging the use of science and technology in order to improve material living conditions in the LDCs; using culture as a political lever for poverty alleviation (promoting artistic creation, developing cultural industries and intellectual property rights); and fostering the development of LDCs and their access to ICTs”. Furthermore, in the framework of the Organization's strategies concerning the two cross-cutting themes (Eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty and The contribution of information and communication technologies to the development of education, science and culture and the construction of a knowledge society) the needs of the LDCs are to be addressed explicitly and as a matter of priority.

43. In the Approved Programme and Budget for 2002-2003 (31C/5) due attention has been given in the different Major Programmes to the importance of programming in favour of LDCs. The same applies to the projects relating to the two cross-cutting themes.

44. Furthermore, with a view to ensuring a more efficient coordination of activities relating to the LDCs, the Bureau of Strategic Planning, which has responsibility for coordinating the Organization's response pertaining to the mainstreaming of LDCs' needs, in cooperation with the Africa Department, as appropriate as well as with the cluster and national offices in the field concerned, is currently engaged in the process of elaborating more focused needs assessments in the fields of competence of the Organization, duly taking account of the Plan of Action for Least Developed Countries (2001-2010), UNDAFs as well as national strategic documents, in particular those relating to poverty eradication. Three pilot studies are currently being prepared in Cambodia, Haiti and Niger. The first two countries belong to the “small number of countries (...) which have been identified as the target of increased, coordinated efforts by the Organization for a specified period” (31 C/4, para. 31). On the basis of the results of those pilot studies, efforts will be made to solicit extrabudgetary resources in support of UNESCO programmes in the different countries concerned.

45. Concerning the LDC countries in Africa, the Africa Department and the Bureau of Strategic Planning are cooperating closely to ensure that the needs of African LDCs are fully taken into

account by the Programme Sectors, especially in the new work plans, and to reinforce and provide support to the implementation of NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) in the Organization's fields of competence, in particular on the basis of the recommendations of international seminar on Africa organized by UNESCO in November 2001. (More information on this aspect is provided in document 164 EX/4 Part I and document 164 EX/47.) In addition, human security indicators for the African LDCs are currently being developed in cooperation with the Institute of Security Studies of South Africa.

46. Finally, a dedicated bilingual website has been created for LDCs (<http://www.unesco.org/ldc/>). Also, an information booklet on the mainstreaming of the LDCs within the Organization's programmes is also under preparation, envisaged for publication in May 2002.

47. In the light of the foregoing information concerning the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and its follow-up by UNESCO, the Executive Board may wish to consider the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Recognizing the importance of the mainstreaming of the needs of LDCs in all the Organization's programmes, in particular in the framework of the Organization's contribution to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010,
2. Taking note of the ongoing efforts made by the Organization to better focus and reinforce its action in favour of the LDCs,
3. Requests the Director-General to ensure that UNESCO fully cooperates with the newly appointed High Representative of the Secretary-General for Least Developed Countries, Land-locked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing Countries in the discharge of his duties, especially the follow-up to the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs, held in Brussels in 2001;
4. Further requests the Director General to inform the Executive Board at its 166th session on progress made by the Organization in its contribution to the implementation of the Brussels Plan of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010.

7.1.7 Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

48. In resolution 56/220 B under the above title, the General Assembly, responding to the situation in Afghanistan, called upon the United Nations system to coordinate closely its humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and appealed to donors and other humanitarian organizations to cooperate with the United Nations. In addition to the special appeals and donor alerts already issued by the United Nations, the resolution urgently appeals to all States, the United Nations system and international and non-governmental organizations to provide, in close collaboration with the interim authority and Afghan civil society, all possible humanitarian, financial, technical and material assistance for the Afghan populations especially in the areas most affected by drought, and to respond generously to the donors alert, Consolidated Appeals as well as long-term needs for rehabilitation and reconstruction.

49. The resolution called upon the international community to ensure coordinated efforts in various areas especially demining, resettlement of refugees and displaced Afghans, and to ensure

that all humanitarian assistance and future rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes integrate a gender perspective.

50. The Assembly placed a clear emphasis on the need for coordinated international effort in Afghanistan whether on the whole programme, through stressing the coordinating role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Mr L. Brahimi), supporting the efforts of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (for the emergency phase), and welcoming the designation of the Administrator of UNDP to lead the early recovery efforts in Afghanistan in collaboration with the World Bank, IMF, the Islamic Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank. It encouraged all parts of the United Nations system to work closely together on the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts to ensure a smooth transition from relief to development in Afghanistan.

UNESCO action

51. UNESCO reacted promptly to the serious situation in Afghanistan that resulted from several years of war, drought and large displacement of population internally and across the Afghan borders. Following are some of the major actions and activities undertaken by the Director-General during the last few months. A more detailed amount of what UNESCO did, or plans to undertake is provided in document 164 EX/INF.5.

- (a) The Director-General was one of the first, if not the first Executive Head of a major organization to visit Afghanistan (11-12 January 2002), where he held meetings with the leaders of the Interim Authority particularly the Chairman, Mr H. Karzai as well as Mr L. Brahimi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on UNESCO's role within its fields of competence, in the international effort to assist the Afghan population.
- (b) To ensure UNESCO's coordinated and integrated intervention, the Director-General established an intersectoral Task Force on Afghanistan to develop UNESCO's strategy, and to agree on project proposals which were presented for financing.
- (c) As early as 19 December 2001, the Director-General established a UNESCO "antenna" in Kabul to ensure UNESCO's presence and close cooperation with Mr Brahimi and his team, as well as with the Afghan authorities.
- (d) UNESCO participated in the numerous meetings held on assistance to Afghanistan, in particular the Tokyo ministerial meeting (represented by the DDG) and other donor meetings, as well as the meeting of the Afghan Support Group (ASG).
- (e) In addition, several specific projects are already launched in the field of education, culture and communication. For details of these projects, and other proposed projects please refer to document 164 EX/INF.5.

52. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following Draft Decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Deeply concerned about the situation in Afghanistan and the enormous need for relief assistance as well as rehabilitation and recovery of the war-torn, drought-stricken country,
2. Recalling the statement by Mr H. Karzai, Chairman of the Afghan Interim Authority during his visit to UNESCO on 1 March 2002,

3. Takes note of General Assembly resolution 56/220 B on Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan;
4. Takes note with appreciation of the decisions taken by the Director-General to respond to the General Assembly resolution and to the situation in Afghanistan;
5. Urges the Director-General to ensure that UNESCO plays its full role in assisting Afghanistan within the joint United Nations system intervention, in close collaboration with the Afghan authorities;
6. Requests the Director-General to report regularly to the Board on UNESCO's contribution in the joint United Nations programme of assistance to Afghanistan.

7.1.8 Joint United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

53. At its session in July 2001, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) urged all organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, in particular UNAIDS co-sponsors, to give priority to the full implementation of the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, including support to governments in their expanded national responses to the epidemic (resolution 2001/23). In light of the goals of the Special Session, the Council also urged UNAIDS co-sponsors to refine their strategic objectives on HIV/AIDS and calls on the United Nations system, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, to further strengthen coordinated action at country level. The UNAIDS Secretariat hopes that, as one concrete follow-up action to the ECOSOC resolution, the Governing Board of each Co-sponsor will in 2002 adopt a resolution or decision related to the implementation to the UNGASS Declaration.

UNESCO action

54. In March 2001, the Director-General approved UNESCO's Strategy for HIV/AIDS Preventive Education. At its 161st session, the Executive Board adopted UNESCO's Strategic Plan of Action, which is part of the United Nations system strategy against AIDS. A coherent overall strategy is crucial. Yet the critical test of UNESCO's action will be the impact of its efforts in the most infected countries, in the most affected communities and for the most vulnerable groups, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa. It continues to be the basis for UNESCO's activities, but some adjustments will be made to take into account the emerging crisis, for example, in Asia and the countries of the former USSR. The fight against HIV/AIDS is an integral part of Education for All – and all EFA partners are also co-sponsors of UNAIDS. The organic link between HIV/AIDS prevention and the EFA goals is recognized and addressed through a number of inter-agency initiatives. At present, UNESCO is mobilizing its field offices to develop regional responses and action at country level in cooperation with governments, United Nations agencies and NGOs.

55. The Director-General has established an HIV/AIDS Coordination Unit at IIEP and a Consultative Group with representatives of UNESCO's sectors and services which meets regularly and serves as the principal mechanism for cooperation and evaluation within UNESCO. These bodies prepared the Unified Budget and Workplan (UBW) for 2002-2003, now approved by UNAIDS and ensured the reporting exercise for the UBW 2000-2001. In cooperation with UNAIDS, a capacity-building seminar in cooperation with UNAIDS for field offices and UNESCO's institutes was held in Paris in March 2002, a key focus of which was to adapt the overall strategy to regional and country conditions and concerns.

56. On the initiative of UNAIDS and following a UNICEF proposal the inter-agency working group on AIDS, has now become a formal body called an Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) on Education with UNESCO as convening agency. The IATT on Education is one of a number of such IATTs initiated by UNAIDS with programmatic, strategic and monitoring responsibilities, including a modest budget for the next two years. UNAIDS co-sponsoring agencies and other international partners developed a global strategy framework on HIV/AIDS, schools and education that will serve as the umbrella under which all agencies will carry out further educational activities. UNESCO shares with UNDP the lead role for the World AIDS Campaign 2002.

57. In April 2001, the United Nations Secretary-General called for the creation of a Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS. The Fund has now been established as a financial instrument to attract, manage and disburse additional resources through a new public-private partnership that will make a sustainable and significant contribution at the country level to reduce infections, illness and death also from malaria and tuberculosis. The first meeting of the Board of the Global Fund took place in Geneva on 28 and 29 January 2002. UNESCO was invited as a member of the UNAIDS delegation, and was represented by its HIV/AIDS Coordinator.

58. The Director-General took part personally in the nineteenth meeting of the UNAIDS Committee of the Co-sponsoring Organizations (CCO) meeting in Rome on 12 April 2002. UNESCO will take the chair of the CCO as of July 2003 and therefore is also prepared to host a CCO meeting.

59. In the light of the foregoing, the Executive Board may wish to consider a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling and reaffirming the commitments made by Member States on the fight against HIV/AIDS through the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on HIV/AIDS (27 June 2001),
2. Acknowledging UNESCO's specific role within the United Nations system to combat and mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS through preventive education, and its responsibility in the follow-up of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and commending the efforts of the Director-General to enhance and strengthen UNESCO's response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and to further develop and extend the role of UNESCO as a key co-sponsor of UNAIDS,
3. Urges Member States:
 - (a) to act upon the political commitment expressed at the United Nations special session on HIV/AIDS, by operationalizing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and by allocating significantly increased resources for prevention, care, support and treatment of HIV/AIDS;
 - (b) to develop programmes for prevention, care and alleviation by learning from success and failure to optimize the allocation of resources;
 - (c) to build and strengthen partnerships between the education and health sectors as well as communities and non-governmental organizations;

4. Requests the Director-General:
 - (a) to provide personal and institutional support for full implementation of the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS;
 - (b) to take all necessary measures to ensure that UNESCO continues to play a key role in providing leadership, direction and support in the field of education to the United Nations system-wide response to HIV;
 - (c) to provide support to Member States to improve interventions for advocacy, prevention, care and coping with the institutional impact of the epidemic;
 - (d) within the framework of the UNESCO Strategy for HIV/AIDS Preventive Education, to provide support to countries, as part of their national strategies, in the areas of prevention, care, support and in order to meet the commitments and goals agreed at the United Nations special session on AIDS, in particular as they:
 - (i) take effective measures, within a supportive environment, to ensure that people everywhere, particularly young people, have access to the information and services necessary to enable them to protect themselves from HIV;
 - (ii) develop national strategies and actions on care and support for people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS;
5. Also requests the Director-General to keep it informed at regular intervals about the implementation of these requests.