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Educational, Scientific and
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Organisation
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Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Address by Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO,

**on the occasion of the Information Meeting
of the Executive Board**

UNESCO, 4 February 2010

Madam Chairperson of the Executive Board,
Mr President of the General Conference,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to welcome you to this information meeting of the Executive Board, which is the first in my term of office as Director-General. May I also thank you, Madam Chairperson of the Executive Board, for your constructive comments. I sincerely hope that this day of exchange will seal between us the beginning of a very dynamic interaction based on dialogue and trust.

Now more than ever, we have a desperate need to be united, together as one, to meet the immense challenges of today's world. This year, 2010, dawned with the terrible tragedy in Haiti. The force of the earthquake and the extreme distress in which it has left the Haitian people have moved us beyond words. I shall brief you on UNESCO's action with regard to Haiti in a few moments.

Only 80 days ago, I took office as the head of UNESCO. The strategic priorities that I highlighted in my installation address were warmly welcomed by both our sister agencies in the United Nations system and numerous key partners. During these first three months, I have favoured very high-level meetings in order to demonstrate UNESCO's unique role and reposition our Organization at the centre of today's biggest challenges. With this in mind, I met, among others, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, many heads of agency, the Chairperson of the African Union, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, and many other international decision-makers.

During this period, I had the opportunity to visit a number of countries such as Brazil, Denmark, Egypt, the United States of America, India, Kuwait and Qatar, where I had the chance to meet many high authorities, including Heads of State.

I was listened to when I argued for cultural dialogue, peace and diversity. Likewise, when I mentioned the place that culture and science occupy at the centre of development. I reaffirmed the importance of advancing education for all, providing global solutions to climate change and the loss of biodiversity. I was listened to when I argued for freedom of expression and the promotion of access to information. I received wide-ranging support which will enable us to be a more influential player and to enhance our cooperation on all levels.

In my installation address on 23 October, I announced that I would establish a High-Level Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures. This project has been quickly implemented, since the Panel is scheduled to meet in two weeks' time. I also undertook to launch an initiative to address climate change, and I did so at the Copenhagen Summit. I also announced the establishment of a high-level scientific panel and, in that connection, I am consulting experts with a view to holding the first meeting during the second half of 2010.

I also announced the establishment of task forces to eliminate bureaucracy, optimize UNESCO's work and raise the efficiency of programme execution and operations. I have formed four task forces to achieve those ends, and they are already at work.

I shall, of course, inform you in depth on all of these issues this morning.

I should also like to express my firm resolve to make UNESCO greener. In my opinion, it is high time for us to be more demanding in this field and set an example in the struggle to safeguard our planet, practising what we preach in the international arena. My first, symbolic step in that direction will consist in sending the report of today's meeting to you in electronic format. Printed copies will naturally be available for delegates who do not have easy access to the Internet.

I am determined that UNESCO's response to the United Nations climate-neutrality plan will be exemplary. I have begun to study the greenhouse gas emissions inventory drawn up for the Headquarters and the field offices. I shall support all measures required to implement an emissions reduction plan. I am also examining the various methods of trading emissions that simply cannot be eliminated.

Madam Chairperson,

I have received many questions: about 100. I shall strive to answer them all during my address, which is divided into two main parts: the first will deal with document 35 C/5 and programme matters; the second will address, among other things, United Nations reform, human resources, partnerships and visibility. Each part will be followed by questions and answers.

Excellencies,

Now let me turn to Haiti, to update you and to answer specific questions from Chile and Argentina. I am proud of the strong role UNESCO has been playing in education since the disaster struck. As you know, the Minister of Education and his team are working out of the UNESCO premises. This week, the emergency education cluster, bringing together 12 organizations, met at the UNESCO office. We are at the heart of the education response and we intend to lead the response in the field of culture. Initiatives are currently being prepared for the immediate, post-emergency rescue phase.

Now to the specific questions: the Latin America and the Caribbean region has mobilized to support emergency operations. The Regional Bureau for Education in Santiago de Chile has made available up to \$50,000 in regular programme funds to finance the mission of an education expert this week to Haiti to support the UNESCO Port-au-Prince office. The Education Sector is financing the mission of another specialist. Consultations are ongoing with the president of GRULAC and its members to explore whether funds from the Participation Programme within a limit of US \$340,000 can be used to partially finance our education activities.

The top priority remains external fund mobilization for the Flash Appeal. Our requirements now stand at \$1.9 million for three projects: reactivation of emergency schooling; emergency support to national education authorities and psycho-social support through UNESCO teacher training.

As you will recall, I urged Member States last 26 January to contribute to this Flash Appeal. I am extremely pleased to announce that offers of support have already been made by Brazil, Bulgaria, Japan, Norway and Israel. I warmly thank all these countries. The Government of Brazil has decided to fund the project on psycho-social support through teacher training. These funds will be immediately credited to UNESCO. The Governments of Japan and Bulgaria are also ready to commit funds,

while Norway has seconded two specialists and Israel has also offered to provide an expert. I am confident that these generous responses will inspire other donors to come forth.¹

Of donor funding going to the Flash Appeal, about 3% only has been committed to all of the emergency education initiatives within the Appeal, among which our three projects form just one part. This low rate is typical at early stages of a disaster when donors focus on water, food, shelter and protection. We must continue our advocacy efforts, to convince donors that education also has its part to play in the emergency stage. I am confident that our three initiatives will get adequate funding and I will continue to urge Member States and all our partners to continue to provide funding for our post-disaster action in Haiti.

Coordination of the disaster response in Haiti is a huge challenge. In all high-level meetings I had during my official visits to the United Nations and to the United States of America, I explored ways of ensuring that UNESCO's role, values and concerns in the short- and longer-term post-disaster response are fully anchored in the coordinated humanitarian efforts of the international community. In partnership with the Office of the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs and the Education Cluster, we are taking part in the upcoming Education Sector Rapid Needs Assessment and we will be on board during the subsequent Post-Disaster Needs Assessment. In response to Argentina's question, school feeding falls under the remit of the World Food Programme.

UNESCO is also focusing on the cultural dimension of reconstruction. We have a mission in Haiti at the moment working very closely with Haitian authorities to assess damage to the country's tangible and intangible heritage. I have also written to the Secretary-General requesting his support in preventing the illicit traffic of cultural objects. In a separate letter to Haiti's Minister of Culture, I have proposed to establish an international coordinating committee to safeguard the island's cultural heritage. I will further report on this at the April session of the Board.

The situation changes day to day in Haiti: Member States can consult a dedicated web page on UNESCO's site which provides regular coverage of our response. You

¹ At the end of her speech, the Director-General also expressed her appreciation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Through the generous contribution of His Royal Highness Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, UNESCO produced the Arabic versions of the "Mobilizing for Haiti" web page.

will see that since Monday, UNESCO is inviting donations to help rebuild Haiti's educational system and preserve the country's cultural heritage.

Madam Chairperson,

I now have the opportunity to provide greater details on UNESCO's action to promote dialogue among cultures, to which we shall give special impetus, *inter alia*, when launching 2010, International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures on 18 February 2010. You will recall that the major goal of the Year 2010 is to highlight the beneficial impact of cultural diversity, while recognizing the importance of the continuous transfers and exchanges among cultures. The UNESCO World Report, *Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*, published in October 2009, focuses on this theme, which is reflected in many different approaches, thus opening up new lines of enquiry.

The goal of the Year 2010 is to incorporate the principles of dialogue and mutual knowledge in all policies, especially education, science, culture and communication policies, in particular in the hope of eliminating erroneous cultural stereotypes. In reply to the questions raised by the representatives of Germany, Djibouti, the United States of America and Malaysia, I should like to remind you that the Member States and partner organizations, were involved in preparations for the year as early as spring 2009 so that they could make comments and propose activities. After an analysis of their replies, four strategic themes have been identified: first, promoting reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity; second, building a framework for commonly shared values; third, strengthening quality education and intercultural competences; and fourth, fostering dialogue for sustainable development.

To answer the question raised by the representative of Djibouti, let me say that I have mobilized all programme sectors, including field offices, in order to ensure both a worldwide and interdisciplinary implementation of the Year. All sectors have identified flagship activities in support of the celebration of the Year, whose timetable can be viewed on the website.

Furthermore, in order to win United Nations sister agencies' support for the spirit and for the implementation of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, I have requested Ms Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator and Chair of the United Nations Development Group, to call upon all Resident Coordinators and the United Nations country teams to launch, in turn, activities directly linked to the Year.

Thus, the culture of peace promoted by UNESCO will also be supported in the countries that we serve, in accordance with the Organization's Constitution. I have also written along those lines to all members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board.

On the actual day of the launching of the Year, a major public debate will be held on the rapprochement of cultures. I hope a very large number of you will participate. With regard to the Alliance of Civilizations, it has already proposed several activities to celebrate the Year. In a meeting with Mr Sampaio here at Headquarters on Monday, 1 February 2010, I reviewed those initiatives which will supplement all activities carried out by our Organization. We are determined to work together constructively. The Memorandum of Cooperation between UNESCO and the Alliance of Civilizations is being revised, in order to clarify our respective responsibilities and roles and identify specific projects. I intend to travel to Brazil with a large delegation in order to participate in the third Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, which will be held at the end of May.

It will also be on the occasion of the launching of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures that the first meeting of the High-Level Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures will be held. On 18 February 2010, I shall thus have the great honour of welcoming 18 eminent persons chosen for their force of thought, their experience and their scholarship. In reply to the question asked by the representative of Afghanistan, let me say that the members of the High-Level Panel were invited on the basis of criteria such as geographical distribution, gender equality and balance of profiles (decision-makers, artists, creators, intellectuals, representatives of the economic world and religious dignitaries). In reply to the question raised by the representative of India, I would add that due consideration has been given to the inclusion of eminent persons belonging to different faiths in the membership of the Panel. I should like to make it clear that these eminent persons have been chosen strictly in a personal capacity.

Several States, including the Philippines, wondered whether they could make suggestions concerning the membership of the High-Level Panel. I can reply that all observations in that regard are welcome and will receive my full attention. Furthermore, the list of the Panel's members is not closed since the High-Level Panel has been devised as an evolving structure, a think-tank on peace and dialogue. It is thus quite likely that other great intellectuals will attend this workshop,

which calls for very great synergy. The Panel's membership may be specifically enlarged according to the topics selected.

As I explained in my Ivory Note of 2 February 2010, the primary tasks of the High-Level Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures will be to ensure that UNESCO's message resounds around the world and to help me to make recommendations that will guide UNESCO's action for peace and dialogue among cultures.

The Panel will meet twice yearly. We hope that the second meeting will be held in late 2010 in New York, at United Nations Headquarters.

C5 and overall reform intentions

I turn now to the work plans. We rely on well-designed work plans to set the ground for achieving the aims defined by the General Conference. After intensive discussion and creative thinking in all regions, the plans were completed on time in December. They have since been examined by our central services to ensure their overall coherence and effectiveness in reflecting our strategic priorities.

In this process, a leading concern has been to verify that Africa and gender equality – our cross-cutting priorities – are integrated across all activities through relevant, quality interventions. We must make real advances – for Africa and for girls and women in all spheres of life.

I also attach particular importance to increasing support to small island and developing States (SIDS), and least developed countries (LDCs), a concern raised by Bangladesh. The sectors are now reviewing the work plans, in consultation with the Bureau of Strategic Planning, the Bureau of the Budget and the Africa Department. Changes will be integrated by the end of this month and I am confident that this exercise will lead to a well-targeted and coherent roadmap for implementing our programmes effectively.

In the meantime, I have given preliminary approval to the plans and authorized funding commitments up until the end of March.

As part of this review I have requested that particular vigilance be given to improving the balance of funds between administration and programmes, as requested by the General Conference. This matter has been raised by Group II. As already stated on several occasions, I will be unremitting in my commitment to

reduce administrative costs, including consultancies and travel. You have raised the possibility of delocalizing certain services. This has to be examined carefully to ensure that we maintain high standards. You will see proof of my determination to reduce administrative costs as the biennium unfolds.

A number of Member States – Denmark, Germany and the United States of America – have asked about eventual changes in our organizational and managerial structure. I am determined to ensure that our structures allow us to deliver in a coordinated and effective way, maximizing synergies between sectors, between Headquarters and field offices, centres and institutes.

But changes in structure must be based on informed evidence of what is working and what is not. Structures evolve with needs. As you know, one of my most urgent priorities is to optimize the Organization's effectiveness and relevance. At this stage I see two processes at work to achieve this. First I am recruiting my leadership team – 20 senior positions. My priority now is to recruit top calibre directors, with a proven track record in their field and leadership in an international context. I will ensure that geographical distribution and gender balance are also taken into account.

The second track that will contribute new ideas and practical proposals, in order to inform eventual changes in structure, are the four Task Forces that I set up. These have been running since 15 January. I am personally chairing them with the assistance of coordinators. All members of the Secretariat have been encouraged to take part: either by joining a Task Force, or by sending ideas and input to the dedicated email address and shared online work space. I am looking for fresh ideas and attach great importance to the input of staff at Headquarters and in the field. I am convinced that this exercise will also serve to mobilize and motivate staff. I see this as an open, dynamic process that will create a sense of ownership in the vision and work of the Organization.

Let me briefly run you through the Task Forces. One focuses on optimizing UNESCO's operations. It covers field operations, de-bureaucratizing our procedures, improving management practices and human resource policies. Two Task Forces are devoted to our priority areas, Africa and Gender Equality. In each case the aim is to increase impact, effectiveness and visibility. The last Task Force will explore new ideas for partnerships and the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources – crucial for achieving our ambitions. I expect compelling and relevant

recommendations to emerge from this open process, which runs until the end of this month. I look forward to sharing developments with the Executive Board in April.

Finally I am also holding meetings with the staff – Professional and General Services – in each sector. I started off at the beginning of the year with the Education Sector, next with the Culture Sector and continuing with the others. This direct dialogue with divisions and units is also giving me rich insights into daily challenges that will inform my decisions.

These three pillars – high quality work plans that reflect our strategic priorities and give us the means to deliver results at country level; the recruitment of first-class senior managers; and the creation of task forces to provide new ideas and orientations – form the main thrust of my immediate undertaking since being in office to strengthen UNESCO from within and increase our impact at all levels. I will be investing a good part of my time in the next two months to take this reflection forward and to consult extensively. I am committed to an inclusive and consultative approach to change management with as many participatory elements as possible.

I also expect the findings of the Independent External Evaluation to complement my initiatives to harvest information and ideas as to de-bureaucratizing this Organization and make it more dynamic, effective and above all relevant. While the Task Forces are focused on efficiency, delivery and internal procedures, the Independent External Evaluation concentrates on UNESCO and the external environment; how the Organization should position itself in the midst of the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century.

Finally, I would like to assure you that any considered change in structure will be put to the Executive Board in April when we discuss concrete steps that could be taken, including organizational change.

Group I has asked me to provide some initial indications of my thinking with regards to cutting the running costs of the Executive Board and the General Conference, as requested by the latter. We are taking a two-phase approach. First, after consultation with the Chairperson of the Executive Board, we have both agreed on several practical steps in relation to the Board that, as the Chairperson has reported, have already been taken. They are based on past decisions and resolutions to which the Chairperson referred in her preliminary remarks. Allow me to say how much I welcome our shared vision on this question.

But this does not dispel my concern about serious cost over-runs as experienced in the past biennium. I am ready to stand by Member States and the Executive Board to see how we can work together to reduce costs. Using electronic documents, for example, while not penalizing Member States with limited connectivity is part of the answer.

I must stress that although the Conference resolution expects net economies that could be transferred to programmes, this is unlikely to happen in the Board's case due to the size of the deficit involved. We must deal with this before all else.

It would not be wise just to identify short cuts to savings. Instead, some fairly radical measures might be required to significantly reduce the cost of the General Conference. Again, we have to decide this together. One option is to reduce the length of the session of both governing bodies. In this connection I will have to make a plea for realism and stand by you in any type of courageous decision we might take together in how we conduct our work. I am confident that we can find ways to ensure that any changes will not lead to less interaction between Member States and the Secretariat. Again we have to adapt to our times – harness technology for example, but above all, recall that in a context of limited resources, our overarching priority must be to run effective programmes. Let me now move on to address questions that have been asked about all Sectors and intersectoral activities.

Let me now turn to questions regarding education. As I said at the outset, in all my conversations with our United Nations partners and the Bretton Woods institutions at the highest levels, I have emphasized the urgency of placing education at the centre of the development agenda. I was very happy that the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon joined me to launch the Education for All *Global Monitoring Report* last 19 January at the United Nations in New York. As you know the Report is an independent annual publication commissioned by UNESCO. Over 400 people, including numerous United Nations permanent delegates, attended this high-level event, which was also webcast. This is the first time that a United Nations Secretary-General attended the launch and Mr Ban Ki-moon's presence sent a strong signal to the international community. He assured me that he would press throughout the year for more concerted action on education. To keep up the momentum, I have also suggested that the United Nations Chief Executives Board take up education at one of its future sessions.

The Education for All *Global Monitoring Report* provides a global and comparative picture of progress. I will not go into detail here as copies of the Report have been sent to all delegations and are easily obtained, but in answer to Malaysia's question, I can give a few salient figures based on the EFA Development Index. The latest calculations, which include data for 128 countries, find that 66 countries – six more than in 2006 – have either achieved the four most quantifiable education for all goals or are close to doing so. A further 36 countries are in an intermediate position while 30 countries, the majority of which are in sub-Saharan Africa, are far from achieving the education for all goals.

How are we responding to this? The General Conference fully endorsed the Education Sector's focus on priority areas – literacy, teachers, technical and vocational education and training, and sector-wide policy and planning.

Let me answer questions that have been asked on these issues. First on literacy, in response to Burkina Faso, Morocco and Pakistan. We have moved into the second half of the United Nations Literacy Decade. With regards to roles and responsibilities, the programme and budget for 2010-2011 stipulates that Headquarters ensures the overall coordination of all literacy activities, while the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning coordinates the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment.

The nine high-population countries, as Pakistan notes, are home to a majority of the world's illiterates. We must raise the profile of literacy on global and national agendas. Already, Literacy for Development will be the theme of the next E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting in Nigeria this June. I expect this meeting to result in a commitment to scale up literacy programmes through concrete follow-up actions and strengthened cooperation and I intend to participate in this debate.

Burkina Faso draws attention to innovations it has developed to increase the pertinence and quality of adult learning programmes but laments lack of funding. Your country's efforts gained international recognition in 2009 when the non-governmental organization Tin Tua received one of the two UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prizes. This January, UNESCO decided to open an antenna office in Ouagadougou that will be staffed by a national education programme officer. The profile of this post is being discussed with the Government of Burkina Faso and could include a specific expertise in literacy. UNESCO stands ready to support

Burkina Faso in all its efforts to accelerate progress towards literacy, a key for women's empowerment and reducing extreme poverty.

Second, several questions have been asked about teachers. Since the Oslo High-Level Group in 2008, UNESCO has stepped up its efforts to address the teacher gap. An estimated 1.9 million new teachers are required just to reach the goal of universal primary education in 2015. In response to the Philippines, the Teachers for EFA Task Force has secured \$3.8 million from the European Commission, France, Germany and Norway, and secondments from Indonesia and Germany. The Task Force includes 64 countries and 18 international organizations, with strong representation from the South. Three of six Secretariat members have been hired, two will join before the end of this month. The G8 communiqué in 2008 welcomed the creation of this Task Force, giving it exposure from the outset. The Task Force is conducting a study on teacher attrition in Africa, identifying possibilities for new partnerships, and will soon be launching a website and a global e-network. In response to Chile's question, our regional bureaux are also on board. Specifically, our regional bureau in Santiago is establishing a regional task force at the respected Universidad Católica de Chile in Santiago and has identified funds for this purpose.

The Teachers for EFA Task Force is not divorced from our programme activities on teachers, notably the Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa. Burkina Faso has expressed concern about the running of this Initiative. Since its launch in 2006, the Initiative's approach has changed, based on lessons learnt and the findings of an external evaluation in 2009. The priority now is to scale up the use of the policy tool kit to carry out a comprehensive diagnosis of needs. The Director of the Regional Bureau for Education in Africa wrote to all Ministers last December inviting their countries to carry out this exercise.

On the specific case of Burkina Faso, UNESCO is planning several activities including policy guidance, a seminar this March and reinforcing the centre for teaching at the University of Ouagadougou. The role of the national coordinators is being clarified and assessed by UNESCO's field offices. As it moves into a second phase I am confident that the Initiative will be an asset for developing sound and sustainable policies for teachers across Africa.

Our third priority is technical and vocational education and training, all the more vital in the context of the economic crisis and high rates of youth unemployment.

UNESCO shares the concern expressed by Bangladesh in this regard. Countries vary enormously in the coverage and effectiveness of technical and vocational education. Many national programmes suffer from a combination of under-investment, poor quality and weak links to employment markets. Guided by a new strategy for vocational education, UNESCO will be more centrally engaged in promoting skills development for the world of work within a broader context of lifelong learning.

Let me pause here to pick up on a question from Germany on the perception that UNESCO's role partly collides with UNICEF's. It is important in my mind to make a distinction here. UNICEF is a fund that operates in over 150 countries; UNESCO is a specialized intergovernmental development agency and global organization. UNICEF is one of the five convening agencies of the Education for All movement. Our two organizations cooperate closely but work in very different ways. Although UNESCO was not involved in the Schools for Africa Partnership, we discussed the use of these funds at country level with UNICEF. We also have a very strong network through our Associated Schools. Our two agencies have worked closely in Africa on the Child-Friendly Schools programme and our own Basic Education in Africa programme.

This brings me to the broader question about our role as global coordinator of education for all and the perception that UNESCO has lost some ground in key sectors. In my discussions with top management at UNDP, UNFPA, the World Bank, the IMF and with the chair of the Fast Track Initiative Carol Bellamy, I have consistently stressed that education needs a stronger coalition and higher visibility and more funding. Based on the recent evaluation of the Fast Track Initiative, I have signaled to the Managing Director of the World Bank, which administers the Fast Track Initiative, and to Carol Bellamy, that UNESCO will seek a much closer linkage of country needs and resources provided. To this end, I intend for UNESCO to take a much stronger role in the Steering Committee of the Fast Track Initiative.

Let me also inform you that for the first time this year at the World Economic Forum in Davos, education took centre stage at two sessions. I attended both and made the case for education as essential to the economic recovery and sustainable development. I pledge to do all in my power to move education up on the international agenda. This is one way in which UNESCO can regain ground.

Our sights are now on the High-Level Group meeting in Addis Ababa later this month and the Secretary-General's high-level Millennium Development Goals review in September. On the former, in response to Spain and Germany, we will present and discuss the outcomes in an upcoming information meeting. As the lead agency for Millennium Development Goal 2 on universal primary education, UNESCO is collaborating closely with sister agencies and EFA partners to produce a paper that will inform and complement the Secretary-General's report.

We must also have the openness to look at where we should be doing more. We will be more vocal and active on women and girls who are still not enjoying equal education opportunities, a question raised by the United States of America. You will recall that in my investiture speech I also expressed my extreme concern at this situation. I am most encouraged that in discussion with leading personalities, including Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, First Ladies of Qatar and Egypt, among others, there is a commitment to launch a global initiative on girls' and women's education. I will share with you my intentions at the Executive Board in April.

The four World Conferences on Education held in 2008 and 2009 have produced a shared global agenda to promote inclusion, education for sustainable development, adult learning and higher education. In response to questions regarding follow-up from several Member States, including Chile and Morocco, let me give a few examples ahead of a more detailed report that will be prepared for our next meeting.

UNESCO has provided assistance to develop learning tools for inclusive curricula and is facilitating consultations in all regions on inclusive education policies. I am also happy to inform you that during my visit to Kuwait in December for the UNESCO/Emir al-Sabah Prize to promote quality education for persons with intellectual disabilities, I had discussions with his Highness the Emir of Kuwait and the Government of Kuwait to establish a new trust fund dedicated to inclusive education. I am extremely grateful to the Government of Kuwait and His Highness the Emir for a very positive response.

A strategy is now developed for the second half of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development that will be submitted to the April session of the Board. In higher education, work plans also include follow-up activities of the World Conference, including on brain drain and brain gain, on using open educational resources, and capacity-building for quality assurance agencies as well

as research and development, among others. Finally, UNESCO has integrated a number of actions stemming from CONFINTEA VI in its work plans. The Secretariat has started to support Member States to share good practices on the recognition and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning, following an initiative on this topic launched at CONFINTEA.

Finally, there are several questions regarding UNESCO's participation in various regional initiatives such as the PRELAC Ministerial plan for education in Latin America. Let me say that we are systematically engaged in such large-scale regional strategies that are shaping educational development. To answer Chile, in the case of PRELAC, specific activities are planned around the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this strategy.

But in today's integrated global environment, it is crucial to share knowledge and practices across regions. This is particularly the case in higher education where the cross-border environment has transformed teaching and learning. Latvia and Romania have drawn attention to the Bologna process, which aims to make academic degree and quality assurances standards comparable and compatible across Europe. UNESCO is ensuring that this process, now involving some 46 countries, is promoted across other regions. The aim is not to replicate but to inform similar initiatives under way in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. We are also facilitating the participation of Higher Education Ministers from outside Europe at a Bologna Ministerial Conference in Vienna this coming March. Such knowledge-sharing and cooperation is at the heart of our mandate.

Allow me now to turn to questions linked to centres and institutes. UNESCO's centres and institutes make a significant contribution to our programmes. As Burkina Faso notes, UNESCO's Education Sector is actively promoting collaboration between category 2 centres, field offices and Headquarters. Following a meeting in China in May 2009, this collaboration is being maintained through an e-platform, newsletter and network of focal points. A second meeting of category 2 centres will be organized in Seoul in 2011 and hosted by the Asia-Pacific Centre for International Understanding. Centres and Institutes in China and Africa are working together on teacher training. UNESCO has also provided technical assistance for setting up category 2 centres in the Philippines and Syria, as approved by the General Conference at its 35th session. But as I have said, these centres and institutes must be sustainable and serve our programmes. We should consolidate

what we have and build strong synergies between this network and our regular programmes.

To further respond to Burkina Faso, UNESCO is not in a position to fund activities of category 2 centres from regular programme funds. But in line with a strategy adopted by the last General Conference, the Organization may contract category 2 institutes and centres to implement programme activities.

There is no graduation process from category 2 to category 1 status. Such a change has administrative, financial and legal consequences. Applications must benefit from host country support backed by sufficient resources. There should be no precipitated decisions on creating new entities. I stress the importance of presenting thorough and well-argued proposals to the Executive Board and the General Conference.

Excellencies,

I trust that this addresses your immediate concerns about education. I will discuss South-South cooperation in education towards the end of my intervention. I would first like to move on to our other sectors, starting with science.

UNESCO has a unique comparative advantage in the sciences, as reflected on several occasions over the past two months. One example is our participation in the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen last December. The conference might not have lived up to expectations, but it generated an unprecedented global debate. Our climate change strategy, including the new initiative that I presented in Copenhagen and which builds on our multidisciplinary capacities, takes on a new importance in this perspective. You will recall that this new initiative has four pillars: scientific, educational, environmental and ethical. On the ethics, we have begun the process of preparing a report on “the desirability of preparing a draft declaration on the ethical principles in relation to climate change” for submission to the 185th session of the Executive Board, as requested by the General Conference at its 35th session.

The initiative was well received and later, during my meetings with the members of the United Nations Chief Executives Board, led by the Secretary-General, I was able to begin discussions on how partnerships could be built with interested agencies, programmes and funds so as to reinforce our efficiency and effectiveness and boost the impact of our joint action with other agencies in the field. Moreover,

the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, who met with me here at Headquarters at my invitation, expressed his agency's interest in being associated with our climate change work, especially as regards education and ethics. I received similar shows of support from many influential constituencies during my mission to New York and Washington.

At Headquarters, I am in the process of launching a thematic working group on climate change. Its mandate will be to sketch out concrete measures to implement the new initiative, in collaboration with the Intersectoral Platform.

I have also asked ADG Science to follow-up on my discussions with the United Nations Environment Programme and to put together a team which, on the basis of the agreement that was signed with this agency last April, will develop concrete initiatives and activities, including in line with our climate change discussions.

In response to the question by Group I on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Programme, I would like to reassure you that we are in no way duplicating efforts. The IPCC education programme, to which reference was made, comprises one curriculum component. UNESCO's work, on the other hand, is more wide-ranging because it deals with broader curriculum change. I trust this will answer concerns by Group I, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Argentina on UNESCO's participation in the Climate Change Conference, its relationship with similar activities of the IPCC and other activities under way.

As regards environmental governance, I am convinced that we are uniquely placed to frame a constructive debate on this important issue. During my visit to the United Nations, I met with several delegations involved in discussions and negotiations at the General Assembly on the issue, and I have conveyed UNESCO's unique role through its programmes in the Natural Sciences Sector.

In my mind the erosion of biodiversity is as big a global challenge as climate change. I am proud that UNESCO hosted two high-level events for the launch of the International Year on Biodiversity last month. It will be a crucial year for awareness-raising and reinforcing UNESCO's efforts to address all aspects of biodiversity management and conservation. I have expressed UNESCO's interest in a project to create an intergovernmental platform on biodiversity and ecosystems services to promote exchange between scientists and policy-makers, similar to the IPCC. I will inform and consult the Executive Board when this proposal firms up.

To answer Chile, we will continue to be closely associated with negotiations on the Convention on Biological Diversity, leading up to the Nagoya Summit in October. We will encourage initiatives on biodiversity in all regions of the world and jointly with all our partners – from National Commissions to UNESCO Clubs and Associated Schools Network, so that we can reach the widest public. In response to Burkina Faso, teaching and learning materials on biodiversity will be widely distributed, both through the Associated Schools Network and UNESCO Clubs.

From climate change to biodiversity, we have to seize opportunities to influence leading debates. We are doing exactly this. To further improve our relevance, I intend to establish a High-Level Panel on Science, as indicated in my inauguration speech. Its role will be to advise us on how best to focus and reorient our programme to better respond to pressing needs and to map out avenues through which we can reinforce our links with international scientific bodies and gain our leadership in this important area. In response to Group II, I am being proactive at the highest levels of the United Nations. For instance, I spoke with the United Nations Secretary-General about engaging with the Biotechnology Forum he plans to establish and spoke with the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme about improving cooperation in the field of science through the United Nations country teams.

Encouraging scientific scholarship and research is partly the vocation of the African Virtual Campus, a key component of our activities to implement the African Union's Consolidated Plan of Action. Cote d'Ivoire has expressed concern about its future. This Virtual Campus, established through extrabudgetary funding, has led to the establishment of e-learning centres in four West African countries. Although further expansion is constrained due to lack of funds, we are committed to continuing the capacity-building aspects of the project. In the meantime, the Science Sector has submitted project proposals to fund the extension of the Campus to the European Commission and the African Development Bank. I will pursue this when I visit the European Commission on 17 February, and make every effort to stress the value of this project and its contribution to Africa's scientific development.

Argentina has asked about ways to ensure the continuity and relevance of our natural and social sciences programmes. The Budapest Science Forum noted the need to break traditional barriers between the two and to adopt a more interdisciplinary approach. The Climate Change Initiative, with its scientific, ethical,

social and human dimensions, is an example of this. But it is an issue that I will also encourage the High Level Panel on Science to address in the near future.

Beyond this, the Natural Sciences Sector will also build on the recommendations made at the World Science Forum in Budapest last November. To answer Argentina, the recommendations were wide ranging. They include the need to improve national science policies, ensure a supportive research environment, increase the participation of women in science and broaden scientific cooperation both regionally and internationally. All these are fields in which UNESCO is directly involved.

UNESCO, for example, helps Member States to formulate or review national science policies. These generally recommend appropriate science and technology infrastructure. While UNESCO cannot provide financial assistance for setting up such infrastructure, it can help Member States identify the potential donors for doing so, and we stand ready to work with the Government of Bangladesh in this regard.

Madam Chairperson,

I now come to the social and human sciences.

First of all, regarding the question raised by the Philippines concerning the examination of the Statutes of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST), I should like to say that the proposal to review the statutes is currently under consideration, in the light of the decisions taken by the Executive Board at its 182nd session and in view of the important work carried out by the Commission (COMEST) on the advisability of developing a framework of principles in relation to climate change.

In response to Djibouti's question concerning the measures taken by the Secretariat to guarantee the continuity of the Forum of Intellectuals for the Horn of Africa, let me say that since the Forum was established in 2007, UNESCO has provided constant support for the implementation and funding of its activities. The sum of \$190,400 has been allocated for the operation of the Forum during the current financial period. UNESCO has also increased contacts in order to raise additional funds and it encourages all members of the Forum to do likewise.

I am pleased to inform you that UNESCO has drawn the attention of the European Union, which has shown a great deal of interest in the Forum's activities and has

substantial funds for allocation to the Horn of Africa. Although, as you are aware, the crisis does not facilitate the mobilization of extrabudgetary funds, you may rest assured that I shall spare no effort to support this activity.

I should add that a policy dialogue took place in November 2009 between the “Grand Horn Horizon” Forum and the world of business in the region. That meeting resulted in a very important agreement under which the business world will in future actively support the Forum’s activities. A similar meeting is planned for next May, for the purpose of making contact with the media in the region. The aim is to obtain media support for the dissemination of the outcomes of the Forum’s various initiatives, thus raising the Forum’s profile.

In regard to the Regional Research and Documentation Centre on Women, Gender and Peace Building in the Great Lakes Region, I am pleased to inform you that the centre, based in Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, already has premises and a skeleton staff made available on a provisional basis. An operating budget has also been proposed by the host country. The consultation of the 14 States of the Great Lakes Region, held in order to finalize the proposal for the launching and the status of the centre, is drawing to a close. This proposal will be submitted to the Executive Board at its 184th session.

A technical meeting with experts from the countries of the Great Lakes Region will be held from 16 to 18 February next in Tanzania, in order to finalize the technical and legal documents necessary for the opening of the centre. I hope that the official launch can take place in May or June 2010. It will most probably be accompanied by a conference of the centre’s donors, including the African Development Bank.

I now come to another question raised by Djibouti, as to how and with which partners did the Social and Human Sciences Sector intend to implement projects concerning the culture of peace and the dialogue between cultures. We are broaching here a theme which is both wide-ranging and essential, a theme which, as I said when I took office, is more central to my term of office at UNESCO than ever before. I would say that the culture of peace is embodied intersectorally in every UNESCO programme. It is UNESCO’s *raison d’être*.

We are exploring new paths which can improve the effectiveness of the Organization’s endeavour to bring cultures closer together. I have just informed you about the Forum of Intellectuals for the Horn of Africa, which was established to facilitate the formulation and implementation of policies designed to promote mutual

understanding, regional integration, peaceful coexistence and the development of the region. In the same spirit, UNESCO and the National Council for Human Rights of Egypt launched the Permanent Forum of Arab-African Dialogue on Democracy and Human Rights in Cairo in 2008.

I was privileged to open the first meeting of that Forum, held on migration in the Arab-African region, in Cairo on 7 December 2009.

The International Coalition of Cities against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance is, of course, another powerful instrument for promoting the culture of peace by combating racism, discrimination and xenophobia at the municipal level.

The Sector's work to create a culture of human rights is also supported through a number of prizes such as the UNESCO-Bilbao Prize for the Promotion of a Culture of Human Rights, established in December 2008, and the UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence, established in 1996. The Social and Human Sciences Sector also publishes works on human rights, such as *Human Rights: Questions and Answers* and *Introducing Democracy, 80 Questions and Answers*. I would add that special activities and events are held regularly. I refer in particular to the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Lastly, I should like to remind you that an International Centre for the Advancement of Human Rights was opened in Buenos Aires in February 2009. The purpose of the centre established, under the auspices of UNESCO, is to act as a catalyst in order to build inclusive societies respectful of human dignity through training, research and human rights advocacy.

Madam Chairperson,

Turning now to culture, I should like to begin by addressing the issue of World Heritage, in view of Chile's question about the periodic reports on the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is a very important mechanism that yields highly useful evaluations, both with regard to implementation by the States Parties in compliance with the World Heritage Convention and the maintenance of the exceptional universal value of listed properties. It also provides information regularly about these properties, in particular any change in their state of conservation. Lastly, it is a mechanism that boosts regional cooperation and the exchange of information and

experience among States Parties in regard to the World Heritage Convention and the conservation of listed properties.

With regard to the second series of periodic reports now under way in Latin America and the Caribbean, six meetings are scheduled between 2010 and 2013, two in each subregion, in close collaboration with the Regional Bureaux in Latin America and the Caribbean and with the category 2 centres of Zacatecas in Mexico and Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. Two meetings will be held in 2010 by these two centres with which the World Heritage Centre is working specifically to prepare the training programmes for the managers of World Heritage sites, in the context of preparation of the periodic reports. This is another indication of the important contribution made by the category 2 centres to the implementation of UNESCO's programmes in these countries.

To move on now to a question from both Romania and Latvia concerning the respective roles of the World Heritage Committee and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), I can say that these roles are very clearly apportioned. It is the World Heritage Committee that is the sovereign body with the final say on whether or not to include a property in the World Heritage List. As stipulated in the operational guidelines governing the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), as an advisory body to the World Heritage Committee, is responsible for making recommendations which the Committee decides to follow or not to follow.

In response to a question from the Philippines concerning the detailed report which, according to 182 EX/Decision 33, must be submitted to the Executive Board at its 184th session on the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture, I should like to give the following explanations. The Secretariat has for one thing drawn up a working document outlining the context and reviewing action taken by the Secretariat to implement the decision in question. The document contains a draft decision on the approval of the modified Statutes of the Fund, together with those modified Statutes, as submitted in document 35 C/57 to the General Conference. The document will be complemented by an information document reporting in detail on the management and administration of the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture from 2006 to 2009, evaluating the activities of the Fund's Administrative Council and its decisions taken at its 2006 annual meeting and presenting financial statements from December 2005 to November 2009.

I should like now to give India and Côte d'Ivoire the clarifications sought on the project “Rabindranath Tagore, Pablo Neruda and Aimé Césaire for a reconciled universal”. I am pleased to announce that the regular budget funds allocated under document 34 C/5 have been used not only to develop the strategic thrusts of the programme and prepare a set of communication and international dissemination tools, but also to have them examined and developed by an international expert group that recently met on 28 and 29 January 2010. The booklet introducing the programme, which is to be published at the end of April, was discussed by that group.

The proposals made at that expert workshop, and in particular their intersectoral implementation, will be the subject of a meeting of programme ADGs on 8 February next. The meeting is further due to complete the preparation of the proposals that I shall be submitting to the Executive Board at its 184th session, in accordance with 35 C/Resolution 46.

Let me add that an information and advocacy meeting of the permanent delegations and foundations concerned is being considered for 24 February next.

I should like now to answer the questions raised by Morocco and the Syrian Arab Republic on the subject of Jerusalem. As you know, UNESCO has for many years constantly been endeavouring to safeguard the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem. All decisions and resolutions adopted by its governing organs have aimed to preserve the City's distinctive character, both religious and cultural, historical and demographic.

In common with the international community as a whole, I earnestly hope that dialogue between the parties concerned, duly taking the cultural identity of the population of the Old City into account and respecting its diversity, will be resumed.

The situation of the Ascent to the Mughrabi Gate has unfortunately not evolved since it was examined by the Executive Board at its 182nd session and the General Conference at its 35th session. UNESCO continues to monitor the issue with the utmost attention, but no fresh information has been provided by the parties concerned.

You will remember that the Executive Board and the General Conference requested UNESCO to organize as soon as possible a follow-up expert meeting once the parties concerned had reached an agreement.

I wish to assure you that UNESCO will continue its efforts to facilitate dialogue and technical exchanges between all heritage conservation professionals involved.

Finally let me add that UNESCO is continuing its operational commitment, in particular by implementing the Action Plan for Jerusalem. This Action Plan aims to safeguard the cultural heritage of the Old City and improve the daily lives of its inhabitants and its social and urban environment.

Madam Chairperson,

I shall now turn to the communication and information programme. I shall answer Côte d'Ivoire's question on South-South cooperation when I deal with this topic more globally. I should now like to reply to Bangladesh's question concerning access to information and communication technologies in connection with the digitization process and the growing digital divide between the developed and the least developed countries.

Clearly, there are two complementary aspects to this issue. First, there is that which concerns infrastructure, equipment and software; and, second, there is the whole side concerned with content, policies and capacity-building. To my mind, UNESCO's contribution consists primarily in supporting and developing this latter aspect, particularly by stimulating the creation of items of local interest, by strengthening multilingualism on the Internet or by increasing the number of capacity-building initiatives.

In this respect, a new step towards greater linguistic diversity on the Internet was made in December 2009, when I signed a partnership agreement between UNESCO and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the agency which coordinates the system of online addresses for Internet users, in order to introduce internationalized domain names in non-Latin characters, which will make the Internet more global and more accessible to all. This is progress for which UNESCO had long been calling. The Internet must be multilingual to allow all language groups genuinely to take advantage of its exceptional potential.

I should also like to recall that in April 2009 UNESCO and 33 partners launched the World Digital Library, an Internet site offering a whole range of cultural materials from libraries and archives worldwide. The site offers manuscripts, maps, rare books, films and sound recordings. Untrammelled access to these resources is

provided in seven languages, free of charge. In only a few months this project has expanded considerably since it now has 56 partners in 35 countries.

I want here to say how very interested I was by my recent conversation in Washington with Professor James Billington, who as Librarian heads the United States Library of Congress. The world digital library project, developed by the Library of Congress under the auspices of UNESCO, now has a very extensive network of partnerships. I consider that this worthwhile initiative should be able to contribute still further to UNESCO's programmes, regarding for instance the cultural dimension of development. This project would therefore deserve more extrabudgetary support from a greater number of partners.

Finally, to take another facet of UNESCO's role in this area, I should like to mention the Media Development Indicators (MDIs) drawn up by the Organization. These indicators were approved by the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) in 2008. The various United Nations bodies and agencies working on media development and good governance recognize that these indicators constitute unique and very complete tools for assessing the media environment in a given country and identifying shortcomings. These indicators, already tested in three pilot countries, Croatia, Maldives and Mozambique, were launched in 2010 in a fourth country, Ecuador.

Excellencies,

A growing number of our activities work across sectors and this was the main reason for setting up intersectoral platforms. In response to Morocco's question, I believe that the platform approach has proven value and I will do my best to enhance it further. They offer a mechanism that is enabling us to work more effectively and coherently. I will give you two examples. First, climate change: the new Climate Change Initiative that I launched in Copenhagen was based on and drew from the expertise of the dedicated platform. Secondly, the disaster in Haiti: the post-conflict, post-disaster platform was activated immediately after the earthquake, to pull together all the Organization's relevant competences.

Morocco has submitted questions regarding assistance to the reconstruction and development of Gaza and Lebanon, and actions for educational and cultural institutions in Iraq.

UNESCO has consolidated its presence and activities in Gaza. We acted swiftly and constructively in the aftermath of the military operation. In a context where the humanitarian response was focusing on primary schools, UNESCO provided support to organize catch-up courses for students in upper secondary education. In the field of communications, we have focused on the protection of freedom of expression and safety training for Palestinian journalists, photographers and cameramen. By the end of 2009, we had received funding for all our projects in the 2009 United Nations Gaza Flash Appeal. Morocco has also asked about the occupied Arab territories and occupied Syrian Golan. UNESCO has continued to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Education in the Palestinian Territories in the field of a national teacher education strategy, training for school principals and the development of science education. Continued assistance was provided for the safeguarding of selected cultural monuments and sites in Bethlehem, Nablus and Jericho. In the occupied Syrian Golan, funding from the Japanese Funds-in-Trust was approved in May 2009 for a four-year scholarship for Syrian students studying at Damascus University.

With regards to Lebanon, UNESCO's Deputy Director-General led an intersectoral mission to Beirut in August 2008 which was received by the President, Prime Minister and a number of key Ministries, collecting a wide range of requests for assistance. UNESCO then developed a Programme of Assistance for Lebanon's Reconstruction based on the requests expressed by the various ministries and other agencies visited. The \$20 million programme covers three overarching projects: building bridges across diversity, strengthening capacity to respond to conflict and disaster and modernizing key public sector services. The programme was submitted to the Prime Minister in April 2009, who confirmed his full commitment to it and fundraising activities were discussed at the time with key aides. UNESCO will determine with the new Government authorities the best moment for dispatching a new mission to Beirut.

We are also a major multisectoral actor in Iraq. In education we take a sector-wide approach, assisting authorities to support access to quality education at all levels. I can cite just a few achievements: the printing of 18 million new textbooks, the launch of educational television programmes, staff training and materials for vocational institutions, science equipment for secondary schools and short-term fellowships. We are involved in protecting Iraqi cultural heritage through the rehabilitation of the Al-Askari Shrine in Samara and revitalizing the Erbil Citadel. On

a long-term basis our programmes focus on building up the capacity of national cultural institutions and combating the illicit traffic of cultural heritage.

Let me now come back to the efficiency of the intersectoral platforms. We have begun taking a critical look at the effectiveness of the twelve platforms established during the 2008-2009 biennium. It has concluded that while these platforms were successful at encouraging a dialogue and a cross-fertilization of ideas among colleagues, they were not securing effective high-level buy-in and results.

In the circumstances I will consider several options. I will propose that we improve the effectiveness of our work across sectors and in collaboration between Headquarters and field offices and category 1 and 2 centres. One option is to reduce the total number of thematic platforms, selectively focusing on three or four that can most effectively serve our priorities. A second option is to maintain the twelve platforms but to reformulate their work plans by defining a limited number of high-level objectives. Here again, I think we must face facts: to achieve effective, high-level buy-in and results, the platforms need dedicated funds.

As I said at the outset, I attach foremost importance to the recruitment of my senior leadership team. For all these positions, I have used the competitive process in order to secure the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. Again, let me reiterate to Group II and Chile that the evaluation panels will ensure that due consideration is given to geographical distribution as well as gender. I am well aware that Group III and Group IV are below their minimum quota and will seek to remedy this. But I would like to stress that appointments are and will first and foremost be made on the basis of competence and merit.

With respect to the External Auditors' recommendations on temporary assistance, several are in progress or will be implemented in 2010 and 2011. In response to Morocco's concern, the introduction of a new policy on consultants has already addressed several recommendations. These cover closer attention to competitive bids, starting and expiry dates of contracts and geographical diversity. Other recommendations are in progress or will be implemented in 2010/2011. As an incoming Director-General, let me assure you that I intend to scrutinize closely the matter of consultancy contracts.

With regards to Sri Lanka's questions about staff performance, if expected results are not achieved as agreed, managers are expected to prepare a plan to improve on shortcomings. At the end of each biennium, they are supposed to provide a

detailed assessment on the performance of each of their staff. I am aware that this is not always the case and will take measures to improve the situation.

Excellencies,

Let me now move on to our place in the United Nations system and in the “Delivering as One” initiative. As regards the question of Cuba on our seemingly marginal place within the United Nations system, let me state unequivocally that my ambition is for this not to be the case. It is not the perception of the Resident Coordinators and the United Nations country teams I have met and it certainly is not correct if we look at the track record of the “delivering as one” pilots as well as the new United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks being prepared. UNESCO has fully participated in this process we have been able to emphasize the central role of education in the development efforts of the countries concerned and we were even able to bring to the fore the critical role of science and culture in the development process. I do believe that we can deliver more and better. Moreover, in many countries, UNESCO has been asked to take a lead role in thematic groups of United Nations country teams and thus had an unusually visible and responsible role in shaping the United Nations system programme for the benefit of the countries concerned. At the global level, UNESCO has become, in the Chief Executives Board and the United Nations Development Group, a respected and listened-to partner shaping programmes in unison with other specialized agencies and funds. This country-level and global performance and orientation will continue with renewed vigour and energy on my side in the months to come.

I am dedicated to making UNESCO a lead partner in United Nations country teams and in promoting regional programmes. Decentralization is one of the issues that I consider crucial to ensuring UNESCO's impact in the Member States, along with human resources and strategies for more effective programme delivery. For this reason I have created a task force on optimizing UNESCO's operations, which will include field operations. I will inform you of the group's recommendations and of my own decisions at the April Executive Board session.

As you know, I will be presenting a full report on decentralization at the autumn session of the Executive Board.

On numerous occasions I have reiterated the importance of forging partnerships and strategic alliances, for advocacy, financing, programme development and better understanding of our values. We already have a faithful set of allies in our

National Commissions of course. To answer Group II, the Coordination Group of National Commissions was invited to Headquarters to brainstorm on how to further strengthen relations with UNESCO. I am looking for concrete proposals to review and improve our programme with National Commissions, and will be personally attending all the upcoming regional consultations on the preparation of the draft document 36 C/5.

The landscape of development cooperation is changing: dynamic middle-income countries have emerged with growing influence on the world stage. This offers a tremendous opportunity for sharing knowledge, expertise and best practice among countries facing similar challenges. The questions on South-South cooperation should be addressed against this backdrop both for Least Developed Countries and middle-income countries. The issue is high up on UNESCO's agenda and has been raised by Cote d'Ivoire, Morocco and India. Last December in Montevideo, we organized a Future Forum and workshop on middle-income countries featuring speakers from governments and a wide range of development actors, including United Nations funds and programmes, specialized agencies, Bretton Woods institutions, regional economic commissions, development banks and civil society. Our action in middle-income countries should be specific, targeted and demand driven.

I am convinced that strengthening South-South cooperation is a key to advancing the right to education. UNESCO has taken steps to raise the visibility of the South-South Cooperation Fund in Education. I warmly welcome India's energetic promotion of this initiative. UNESCO has taken measures to implement a fundraising strategy, including the organization of a round table in December, making initial contacts with potential partners to whom I have personally written. Although no new contributions have been received to date, these contacts will be actively followed up. A fundraising event in the Gulf States is foreseen later this year. India's proposal for a pledging conference needs to be considered against the wider backdrop of resource mobilization, from both conventional and innovative sources. Currently nine developing countries have contributed a total of nearly \$227,000 to the Fund. UNESCO cannot transfer funds from its regular programme to extra-budgetary accounts such as the South-South Cooperation Fund. But there are direct links between the Fund's pilot projects and regular programme activities, such as ICTs in education in the Asia and the Pacific region. The pilot project

officers have submitted funding proposals in the Complementary Additional Programme tool.

Côte d'Ivoire asked about the possibility of extending South-South cooperation to the field of communications and natural sciences. We are, of course, already promoting such exchanges but I fully intend to enhance them. In the field of public service broadcasting UNESCO is developing models to enhance South-South collaboration in Lusophone countries. Our 33 science-related category 2 centres are another rich mechanism for South-South cooperation. The centre for biotechnology, training and education in India, the centre for science technology and innovation in Malaysia, our network of water centres in practically all the regions of the world and many others give us an enormous potential to share knowledge and expertise.

More broadly, the Secretariat is rethinking its overall resource mobilization strategy. A specific task force, as I outlined earlier, is devoted to this.

We are about to launch the second Complementary Additional Programme of projected extrabudgetary activities, known as CAP. This mechanism aims to strengthen the results, scope and impact of UNESCO's regular programmes. I will review the final CAP towards the end of March before officially launching it in the presence of Member States, major partners and donors. In response to the Czech Republic and Latvia, the CAP document will be available for all the Member States, donors and partners in a booklet format. An online version will be accessible from the UNESCO Internet site after the launching.

Headquarters security plan and renovations

The security of staff at Headquarters and in the field remains a top concern for the Organization. The Philippines has enquired about a revised medium-term security plan. This is under way although several measures have already been taken, including replacement of badges and entry rights for retired staff, improvement of video surveillance and hiring of three additional security agents on the regular budget. The main thrusts of the medium-term plan and financial requirements remain unchanged.

With regards to the External Auditor's recommendations on the renovation work at Fontenoy, all have been applied. More detail will be provided, as planned, at the Board's April session.

Visibility

As you will have realized from my account of the various actions I have undertaken over the past weeks, I see communication and visibility as an integral part of UNESCO's work. When we take a successful initiative, we can get visibility if we reach out to the media effectively. When we deliver our programme, we must ensure that we get our message out relating to that programme. This is not just PR – public relations. Informing the public is a duty and a core responsibility of our Organization.

You will undoubtedly have noticed that I have given many interviews and appeared in numerous television programmes. Our media monitoring service reports that UNESCO was cited in 2,975 articles since Monday. My website now also carries increased coverage and offers greater transparency on my official activities. This is not an issue of personal visibility. My intention is to raise the profile of our Organization, to amplify its key messages and explain its themes and activities. These are often not well-known to the public. Last month, we launched the International Year of Biodiversity. One newspaper article on the launch of this Year noted the findings of a Gallup poll: 64% European citizens had either never heard of the word “biodiversity” or had heard of it but did not know its meaning. This is the challenge UNESCO faces.

I want to ensure that we develop a closer relationship with journalists, so that they get a better understanding of the daily work of our Organization. I have instructed the Bureau of Public Information to issue permanent accreditation and offer facilities to those journalists who cover our activities regularly. Earlier this week, I launched the new website, which offers a more attractive, more user-friendly access to our one million pages of online information.

In response to Group I, our activities calendar has also been improved and can now be consulted in the new, integrated online version. If you have already used this new version of the events calendar, you will have seen that the user can select activities according to a set of practical criteria – by theme or by region, for example – as well as by date.

As for the calendar of official conferences and meetings, the first version went online in December and a revised version went online this week. Further updates will be issued on a regular basis.

Another important aspect of our information and communication activities, and one that is essential for UNESCO's visibility, is the Organization's publication and dissemination strategy. To respond to Morocco's question, of the 15 recommendations on publication and dissemination made by the External Auditor, eight have been fully implemented while seven are still at different stages of implementation. Their full and effective implementation is a priority, and I intend to report to you on these activities at the next session of the Executive Board in April.

Prizes also give visibility to our programmes, encourage innovation and showcase best practice. In response to Bangladesh asking about a directory of UNESCO prizes, such information is available on the website. With regards to fellowships, offers are announced to Member States through a circular letter. As soon as this is done, all information is posted on the UNESCO fellowships web page which receives more than 200,000 visitors each year. A directory of former fellows, however, is published.

As I mention prizes, I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that I have established a Thematic Working Group on UNESCO prizes, in order to ensure a greater coherence of UNESCO prizes and to enhance their visibility and impact, thereby helping to raise the profile and prestige of the Organization.

Conclusion

We are starting 2010 in a position of strength to address major challenges: proactive engagement to carry forward our climate change initiative, activities to safeguard biodiversity, advocacy to bring education to the center of the internationally agreed development goals, and dialogue to favour the rapprochement among cultures. Internally, my senior management team is being recruited while initiatives are in place to encourage debate and recommendations to improve our effectiveness. I look forward to reporting to you in April on all these issues.

Ahead of that, I will continue to organize regular information meetings with Permanent Delegations to brief them on our ongoing activities and encourage dialogue. We rely on each and every one to implement our ambitious agenda. I plan to hold the next one on 5 March, upon my return from Ethiopia.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to Deputy Director-General Marcio Barbosa, who will be leaving us this month. For the past decade Mr Barbosa has been a real driver of reform in UNESCO. All those who have worked with him appreciate his calm, tempered and wise manner. No matter how complex a situation may be, he examines all aspects with the eye of a scientist, always searching for the best short and long-term solutions.

Thank you, Mr Barbosa, on behalf of the entire Organization for bringing your competence and managerial vision to bear. I am certain that the Board joins me in wishing you every success in the next chapter of your distinguished career.

Thank you for your questions, thank you for listening. I have done my utmost to answer your concerns frankly and clearly and look forward to our continued discussion.