



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Hundred and eighty-sixth session

186 EX/INF.22
PARIS, 6 May 2011
English & French only

Item 4 of the revised provisional agenda

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE EXECUTION OF THE PROGRAMME ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON UNESCO AND UNITED NATIONS REFORM, IN PARTICULAR EFFORTS AND CHALLENGES WITH RESPECT TO UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM-WIDE COHERENCE

SUMMARY

Further to document 179 EX/42, the present information document provides an update on UNESCO's involvement in discussions and initiatives promoting United Nations system-wide coherence, including the results achieved and the challenges identified, at the country, regional and global levels.

INTRODUCTION

1. At the heart of the ongoing United Nations reform agenda has been the quest for increased coherence, efficiency and quality delivery. UNESCO is actively engaged in, and contributing to, these efforts which, through enhanced inter-agency cooperation, have proven beneficial both to Member States and the United Nations system.

2. Further to document 179 EX/42, the present information document will provide an update on UNESCO's involvement in the discussions and initiatives promoting system-wide coherence, including the results achieved and the challenges identified at the country, regional and global levels.

I. DELIVERING AS ONE AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

3. Launched by the United Nations Secretary-General as a follow-up to the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence (SWC) in 2007, the **Delivering as One** (DaO) approach was **piloted in eight countries** – Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam. Since then a number of other countries have adopted the principles and modalities of “Delivering as One” on a voluntary basis. As such, the countries concerned have taken the lead in driving the collective vision and putting in place the modalities conducive to maximizing the impact at the field level.

4. After more than three years of implementation, the pilots have been assessed by two **stocktaking reports and country-led evaluations**. They have also been discussed at two High-Level Intergovernmental Meetings on Delivering as One (Kigali, 2009, and Hanoi, 2010), with the next High-Level Meeting scheduled to take place in 2011 in Montevideo, Uruguay. As the pilots have gone from the programming stage to the implementation phase, particular attention will need to be paid in future to delivery and results attainment.

5. At its 64th session (2009-2010), the United Nations General Assembly requested an **Independent Evaluation of the Delivering as One** pilot initiative to be carried out. The evaluation is to be overseen by the Evaluation Management Group (EMG) composed of nine members and funded from extrabudgetary funds. The evaluators agreed to build their efforts on the country-led evaluations conducted in seven of the eight pilot countries by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) in 2007-2008, as well as the comprehensive body of evidence contained in reports, studies, reviews and evaluations on systemic initiatives related to DaO. The recommendations of the Independent Evaluation are to be presented to the General Assembly at its 66th session. A trust fund has been established to fund the evaluation exercise to which Member States and agencies have been invited to contribute. UNESCO supported the conduct of the evaluation with a contribution of US \$40 000, jointly financed from BSP and IOS.

6. Special efforts have been made in the pilot countries to respect the principles identified as being crucial for the attainment of a higher degree of United Nations coherence at the country level, which have proved beneficial for both the countries concerned as well as UNESCO: **national leadership and ownership, inclusivity of all relevant United Nations organizations and of line ministries, “not one size fits all” approach**. The governments of DaO countries clearly and undisputedly have taken the lead in the design and implementation of One United Nations Programmes/Plans, with full alignment to national priorities and objectives as well as increased involvement of line ministries in the programming discussions.

7. Since the launch of the DaO initiative **joint analysis, planning and programming** by the United Nations agencies has considerably increased. This notwithstanding, United Nations agencies oftentimes tend to deliver individually in a stand-alone mode. This then underlies the need for continued refinement and improvement in the design of **joint programmes** by United

Nations agencies. Joint programmes are often built around a series of existing stand-alone activities which are grouped together under strategic themes within an UNDAF. The UNCT in Tanzania for instance decided that, rather than designing joint programmes in a new UNDAF under preparation, the agencies will work collaboratively in achieving certain outputs of a holistic all-encompassing plan within which key actions remain agency-specific. Furthermore, many activities are still implemented as stand-alone activities outside UNDAFs.

8. The DaO experience has also demonstrated that strong national leadership has not been at the expense of the larger **normative agenda of the United Nations**. Rather, it could be observed that the United Nations system rallied around an effective and joint delivery of the normative agenda and messages.

9. The past biennium witnessed an **increased inclusion of UNESCO's fields of competence in common country programming documents**. The education sector components are now well represented, though often distributed among different UNDAF outcomes and deliverables, which somehow runs counter to the ideal of a sector-wide approach. However, with an increasing number of programming components related to natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, and communication and information being included in joint United Nations programming documents, the Organization is facing a challenge in delivery given its limited human and financial resources.

10. Another challenge for UNESCO is the difficulty to **translate its regional activities into deliverables with country-specific impact in UNDAFs**, in particular when these activities focus on a specific theme or entail significantly smaller budgets than those of the other agencies.

11. **UNESCO is now better integrated within the United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs)** and participates in a large number of UNCTs and their working groups, sometimes assuming the role of lead agency (e.g. pertaining to quality education, gender mainstreaming, culture, human rights, and environment sustainability). This has allowed UNESCO to influence the programming and strategic decisions of the UNCT, in close consultation with the governments concerned. By way of example, the UNESCO Office in Viet Nam successfully advocated for “culturally appropriate programming” to be one of the six cross-cutting issues shaping the One Plan programming. In Mozambique, UNESCO, together with UNFPA, UNICEF and UNIFEM, has played a crucial role in leading the joint United Nations exercise for mainstreaming culture, gender and human rights into the development programme, which represents now a key feature of the next UNDAF. Such proactive engagement also helps to enhance UNESCO's visibility.

12. **The One Budgetary Framework/One Fund** has increased transparency and alignment of the United Nations programmes with national priorities in the DaO pilots. The pilot countries have considerably benefitted from the supplementary funds allocated to United Nations action in the pilots and collected in national Coherence Funds, representing true additionality of resources. Given the critical importance of these Coherence Funds for DaO and United Nations reform at country level, some Resident Coordinators have already flagged the urgent need for the development of a funding strategy for the United Nations at the country level.

13. The major challenges for the full engagement and delivery for UNESCO at the country level are **lack of staff in the field offices to cover all UNESCO's fields of competence and the financing of the posts of antennas/focal points in countries where UNESCO is non-resident**. The proposed new architecture for UNESCO's field presence seeks to address these issues.

14. The **Resident Coordinators play a crucial role in ensuring inclusiveness** of the programming and in reaching out to non-resident agencies so as to make sure all the agencies' competences are brought to bear. In this regard, the Resident Coordinators' induction programme is of high importance so as to sensitize them to UNESCO's value added and competences. At the request of the undg Advisory Group, the training of Resident Coordinators and UNCT members was revamped and UNESCO, together with other agencies, joined in these efforts to make the

induction programme issue-based. At the recent Resident Coordinators' induction in Geneva in March 2011, UNESCO led a panel dedicated to MDGs 2 and 3, EFA and culture and development.

15. The Delivering as One initiative has indeed changed the way the United Nations works. This is why an idea has been put forward to create a “**champions group**” bringing together the pilot countries, the voluntary adopters and like-minded donors so as to mobilize support in inter-governmental fora, such as the United Nations General Assembly and the Governing Bodies of the funds and programmes as well as the specialized agencies.

The Spain/UNDP MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F)

16. Launched in early 2007 at the initiative of Spain, the **MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F)** has significantly reinforced UNESCO's mandate, in particular as regards culture and development. UNESCO is involved in the implementation of 49 country Joint Programmes under the eight thematic windows of the Fund (the Environment and Climate Change; Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment; Youth, Employment and Migration; Democratic Economic Governance; Children, Food Security and Nutrition; Conflict Prevention and Peace-Building; Culture and Development; and Development and the Private Sector) entailing a total budget volume of US \$55,460,969 (of which transfers received to date amount to US \$40,550,459). These joint programmes have considerably contributed towards increased national ownership and inter-agency collaboration, building on the comparative advantage of each participating agency.

17. UNESCO is convenor of the Thematic Window on “Culture and Development” which encompasses 18 joint programmes implemented for a total amount of some US \$95 million, of which US \$35 million is directly managed by UNESCO. This is the first time that such a significant amount of funding has been allocated to large-scale programmes on culture at country level. Spain's initiative has provided a strong impetus to the advocacy for and integration of culture as a pillar of sustainable development and an important factor in the fight against poverty. While being in their ultimate phase of implementation, these inter-agency programmes have already produced a number of tangible results in a variety of areas such as tourism, heritage promotion and conservation, craft and creative industries, empowerment of ethnic communities, thereby demonstrating the contribution of culture in the realization of the MDGs. These Joint Programmes were instrumental in the high-level advocacy on culture and development which culminated in the adoption of resolution 65/166 by the United Nations General Assembly that recognized culture and cultural diversity as fundamental components of development.

18. In order to capture and capitalize on the above-mentioned results at all levels, UNESCO is engaged, in partnership with the MDG-F Secretariat (UNDP New York), in establishing a **knowledge management system on culture and development**. This United Nations-wide system will help give visibility and showcase the impact of those programmes on national development and will constitute a starting point for a wider knowledge management system on this thematic with a view to enhancing the evidence-based advocacy and demonstration of the linkages between culture and development. The MDG-F exercise requires a significant commitment and mobilization of human and financial resources by participating United Nations agencies, especially in countries where they are non-resident.

Other support modalities for UNESCO field offices

19. UNESCO is pursuing its efforts to improve its country-level delivery and become more supportive of the field offices' needs. In this regard, the following programmatic and funding modalities should be mentioned.

20. The **UNESCO Common Country Programming Document (UCPD)** introduced in 2007 as a strategic and analytical tool for programming covering all UNESCO's fields of competence has proved its relevance and value for UNESCO's strategic positioning, communication, visibility and advocacy at the country level. To date, UCPDs have been prepared in 20 countries: Afghanistan,

Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Brazil, Cambodia, Cameroun, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Moldova, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Uganda, Uruguay and Viet Nam. A number of others are under preparation.

21. As in previous biennia, UNESCO provides **timely reinforcement funds** and capacity-building support for field offices engaged in common country programming exercises. This includes the 2% modality (i.e. 2% of all funds for programme activities by Major Programmes, of which 1% is managed by the Sectors concerned and 1% pooled administered by BSP) and the BFC reinforcement funds. Since the beginning of 2010, 26 regional, cluster and/ or national field offices engaged in common country programming exercises have benefitted from the pooled portion of the 35 C/5 2% modality, with an emphasis on field offices responsible for 2010 and 2011 UNDAF roll-out countries. To date, 40 UNDAF roll-out (or equivalent) processes have been supported from the pooled portion of the 35 C/5 2%, as well as participation in all regional UNDGs (formerly Regional Directors Teams), and the preparation/updating of several UCPDs. More requests are coming in as roll-out exercises proceed. While the 2% and other financial/training reinforcements play an important facilitating and instigative role, it should be underlined that they remain transitional in nature. In the long term, the challenge is for field offices to ensure sustained commitment and delivery throughout the implementation phase of commonly agreed programmes.

22. Furthermore, efforts are made to enhance **linkages and exchanges between the Headquarters and the field offices**. Thematic workshops organized for field office directors and staff focus on the regional aspects of United Nations reform (Nairobi, 2009); UNESCO's engagement in middle-income countries in the context of a reforming United Nations system (Montevideo, 2009) and on recent UNDG developments (New Delhi, 2011), as well as the establishment of the online **UNESCO Country Practices Network (UCPN)** for knowledge-sharing, have served useful purposes and strengthened country practises.

II. PROMOTING COHERENCE AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

23. In accordance with the 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) of Operational Activities for Development recommendation to further strengthen cooperation and coordination among agencies at the regional level, UNESCO has strived to ensure regular participation in, and contribution to, **inter-agency efforts at the regional level**. The proposed new architecture for UNESCO's field presence will further enhance the Organization's ability to fully engage in these regional structures of the United Nations system.

24. Originally established by the funds and programmes under the authority of UNDG, the **Regional Directors Teams (RDTs)** have become more inclusive since 2008. The change of the name of the RDTs to "**regional UNDGs**" in 2010 bears witness to an enhanced alignment between the global, regional and country levels of the UNDG.

25. The Regional UNDG Teams play a critical role in driving forward the UNDG strategic priorities and the Management and Accountability System. In this context, the Regional UNDG Teams perform the following key functions: (i) provide strategic leadership and policy guidance as well as coherent technical support to the Resident Coordinators (RC) and United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs); (ii) provide quality support and assurance of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF)/United Nations Programme; (iii) manage Resident Coordinator (RC)/UNCT performance; and (iv) provide country specific support and trouble shooting.

26. The **Peer Support Group (PSG)** is the operational arm of the UNDG and provides Quality Support Assurance (QSA) by overseeing and supporting UNCTs to ensure a quality and timely common country programming process in line with the UNDG CCA/UNDAF Guidelines. UNESCO is increasingly involved in the work of the PSGs of the regional UNDGs. Since the PSG work is time and resource-intensive, and in some regions required at senior level, UNESCO needs to define the most efficient modalities for its PSG engagement.

27. The absence of hierarchical relations between national, cluster and regional levels of UNESCO's present field structure, suggests to other United Nations system organizations that UNESCO representative to the regional undg do not have programmatic and reporting authority over the other field offices in the region he/she represents. This perception makes it difficult for UNESCO to participate in some of the functions of regional undgs (e.g. RC and UNCT performance evaluation exercises, as well as provision of leadership and guidance). This is one of the reasons why the new proposed field architecture is foreseeing a clear hierarchy between UNESCO's regional and country offices.

28. Overall, the regional undgs seem to have contributed to increased inter-agency collaboration both with regard to programmatic as well as managerial aspects. They have facilitated defining region-specific priorities, drawing on the regional expertise and improved the quality of common country programming documents. The main achievements and challenges by region were the following:

29. **The Europe and Central Asia undg** reported a tighter and smoother inter-agency collaboration in 2010, both at the regional and UNCTs levels, with growing inclusion and leverage of the expertise of regionally-based agencies. Most of the countries in the region completed their UNDAFs in 2009/2010. The evaluation of the Delivering as One pilot in Albania offered opportunities to learn how better to leverage the United Nations resources together. The UNCTs in Montenegro and Kyrgyzstan voluntarily adopted Delivering as One programmes. Direct engagement of the regional undg Team with RCs and UNCTs was enhanced on substantive issues. With regard to country-level operational efficiency, a Common Services assessment revealed that progress in achieving the goals set for improving common services had not been consistent. In follow-up to this assessment, a regional team of operations managers is being established to take the common services and business process forward in 2011.

30. The preparation of a regional MDG report for the September 2010 MDG Summit in New York allowed to assess progress made in Europe and Central Asia in achieving the MDGs and exchange substantive policy ideas related to accelerating progress in the countries of the region. UNESCO contributed actively towards the regional discussions on the MDG2.

31. The regional undg Team for **Latin America and the Caribbean** (LAC) supported 11 countries formulating new UNDAFs in 2010. The engagement happened at a more senior level, and during the earlier stages of identification of strategic areas of United Nations intervention in each country. Challenges were identified in the area of the coordination role and accountability of non-resident agencies and accountability of those agencies that have a representative in the country and a country director outside of the country for which they are responsible. A sub-committee of undg LAC continued its work on the establishment of a future regional United Nations hub in Panama which is intended to be a unique model of good practices in the implementation of sustainable construction in the Latin American region and contribute towards strengthened United Nations coherence and coordination at regional and country levels.

32. A number of activities jointly planned and implemented at the regional level reflect increased programmatic inter-agency coherence in Latin America and the Caribbean. UNESCO has actively contributed towards those in the fields of education, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction. In the lead-up to the Youth Global Summit in Mexico (September 2010), UNESCO supported the regional pre-conference of the Americas in Brazil (May 2010) attended by 250 participants (youth networks, parliamentarians, etc.) from 29 countries. At the Summit itself, UNESCO chaired various sessions and presented the study "Education, Youth and Development: UNESCO in Latin America and the Caribbean",¹ which analyses the MDGs and the EFA goals from the perspective of youth. The document was the result of a joint effort by all UNESCO offices and institutes on four key issues: quality education for all youth; education for peaceful coexistence; sexuality education and HIV prevention; and education for sustainable development.

¹ Available online at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001891/189108e.pdf>

33. UNESCO has also contributed to the promotion of sharing of country-level good practices between the UNCTs in the region to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs and promote South-South cooperation.

34. The provision of high-quality support and advice to UNDAF roll-out UNCTs continued to be a priority function of the **UNDG for Asia-Pacific** (UNDG-AP) in 2009 and 2010, in particular through early engagement and face-to-face interactions with the UNCTs. Time-bound inter-agency task forces began work on issue-based position papers pertaining to social protection, positioning of the United Nations in middle-income countries, climate change mainstreaming and the health MDGs. The regional UNDG team has established a regional expert network to facilitate UNCT access to regional/global expertise and resources (including South-South and triangular), and to support quality and coherence in programming, operations and M&A system implementation. These initiatives are targeted to help leverage regional resource to more coherently support UNCTs and are also useful in informing priority setting and UNDAF programming at the country level. In 2010, the UNDG-AP focused on developing a strategy to position the United Nations better in the region. A paper on capacity assessment revealed that the role of UNDG is valuable in providing strategic leadership and oversight for the United Nations reform process at large and for DaO at the country level. During the year, the UNDG-AP gave special attention to providing guidance and support to seven countries from the region embarking on new UNDAF preparations and programming processes (Mongolia, Philippines, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Viet Nam and Thailand).

35. The UNDG-AP also addressed the issue of security and programme criticality in countries with a problematic security situation. The need for enhanced security measures with sustainable financing, programme and staffing prioritization, alternative business models, and decision-making process for United Nations strategies was discussed. It was noted that these initiatives need to be coordinated so that there is coherence among the UNCT members in the countries concerned.

36. The United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia Pacific (UNEDAP) was formed in 2009 with the aim of promoting an evaluation culture in the region and strengthening regional evaluation capacities.

37. With better coordination of the UNDG at the regional level, it is hoped that the United Nations reform and DaO process will lead to greater coherence of the United Nations system at country level. In various discussions and presentation in the UNDG-AP, UNESCO has promoted a new and effective model for cooperation between governments and development partners, in which "The country leads, the United Nations reforms and Delivers as One, and the donors align".

38. The **UNDG for Western and Central Africa** (UNDG-WCA) had 10 UNDAF roll-out countries in 2010 and four Delivering as One voluntary adopters – Benin, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone, in addition to the original pilot joint office in Cape Verde. The UNCTs in the subregion called on the QSA/PSG, in particular as concerns such areas as results-based management (RBM), monitoring and evaluation (M&E), human rights based approach (HRBA), Mid-Term Reviews of UNDAFs and Joint Programmes.

39. The UNDG-WCA identified priority areas and established Working Groups so as to provide coherent joint policy advice as well as technical support to overcome vulnerabilities in the region in the following areas: HIV/AIDS, food security, nutrition, violence against women, MDGs and poverty reduction, harmonization for health in Africa, disaster risk reduction and preparedness, as well as education and youth employment.

40. One of the key innovations was the designation of Regional Directors as country focal points in order to further engage the RCs and UNCTs by ensuring a direct line of communication, for increased and more focused dialogue, for oversight and accountability, as well as to provide an opportunity for furthering the United Nations reform agenda in the WCA region. UNESCO was given the focal point responsibility in Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau.

41. A number of countries in Eastern and Southern Africa – Botswana, Malawi, Lesotho, Comoros, Namibia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda – voluntarily adopted the Delivering as One agenda. All of these countries relied on the support of the regional **UNDG Team for Eastern and Southern Africa** (UNDG-ESA) for assessment, planning and programme development. The UNDG-ESA also provided technical support to five UNDAF roll-out countries: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Concerning the exercise of oversight functions the UNDG-ESA carried out performance appraisal of 14 of the 20 UNCTs. UNESCO participated in the establishment of the subregional priorities and contributed to the operation of coordination activities.

42. The **Regional UNGD Team for the Arab States** established its Peer Support Group (PSG) at Deputy Regional Directors' level which facilitated the provision of strategic guidance to the UNCTs in UNDAF roll-out countries.

43. In 2009 the Team agreed on a number of region-specific strategic priorities: (i) strategic positioning in middle-income countries; (ii) addressing the Youth "bulge"; (iii) the nexus of food security and climate change; (iv) employment/decent work; and (v) gender – as a prism through which to approach MDG acceleration at the country level and for incorporation into the CCAs/UNDAFs/CPAPs/CPDs. UNESCO contributed to the preparation of the regional MDG report by drafting the chapter on universalization of primary education in the Arab States.

44. The United Nations action and country priorities will need to be considered in light of the recent political developments in the region. The pooled agency expertise on various thematic areas has increased the focus on substance, helped address analytic gaps in the country analyses, stimulated a sense of common purpose and coherence, and identified opportunities for synergies among agency-specific priorities.

III. INTERGOVERNMENTAL DEVELOPMENTS

45. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) achieved important results in the framework of system-wide coherence, one of the main intergovernmental processes of United Nations reform, over the past year. A major breakthrough concerned the area of gender equality and women empowerment with the establishment, on 1 January 2011, of a new United Nations entity – the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, or **UN Women**, under the leadership of former Chilean President, Michelle Bachelet, now Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of United Nations Women.

46. UN Women has the mandate to lead and coordinate the efforts of the United Nations system to support the full realization of girls' and women's rights and empowerment with a view to achieving gender equality. It has also the responsibility to monitor all United Nations agencies and hold them accountable for gender mainstreaming and for achieving gender equality results within the areas of their respective mandates. Furthermore, as the chair of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE), UN Women helps orchestrate the efforts of 25 United Nations organizations, including UNESCO, to promote gender equality across the system.

47. UNESCO participated actively in the 10th session of IANWGE (16-18 February 2011). Along with ILO and FAO, UNESCO took the lead in preparing the joint IANWGE statement for the 55th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW, 22 February to 4 March 2011) which focused on the role of education for women and girls and employment. This statement was distributed during the high-level panels of the CSW.

48. Gender equality being one of UNESCO's two global priorities, UNESCO is committed to collaborating with UN Women at the global level for high-level advocacy and policy dialogue to promote women's empowerment, women's rights and gender equality. At the country level and

within the United Nations Delivering as One initiative, UNESCO is already engaging with UN Women in numerous countries through the joint programming mechanisms and the United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs).

49. The UNGA stressed the importance of achieving adequate **funding for the United Nations**. Reference was made to the Gleneagles commitments of the G-8 and to all the major principles and concepts articulated by the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR). The UNGA also recognized the potential positive impact of determining the “critical mass” of regular budget funding, and noted that the concept of critical mass might include the level of resources adequate to respond to the needs of the programme countries and to produce results expected in strategic plans, including administrative, management and programme costs. In this respect, the UNGA invited the governing bodies of specialized agencies, within the context of their 2012-2013 budgets, to consider exploring the most appropriate concept of and process of arriving at a critical mass of core funding, according to their individual mandates. UNESCO, along with the other specialized agencies, will need to report on its efforts and conclusions on critical mass to the Economic and Social Council.

50. Pursuant to the GA proposal to **align planning cycles with the “quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system” (QCPR)**, UNESCO’s Executive Board will consider at its 186th session an analysis of possible implications of a change of the C/4 and C/5 planning cycles, building on document 185 EX/19.

51. **UNESCO has been actively involved in the United Nations system-wide coherence process, including as chair and co-chair of United Nations working groups and networks**, and has contributed to all discussion note papers which served as a basis for Member States’ discussions and negotiations in the above areas.

52. In preparation for the **United Nations High-level Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs) in New York in September 2010, UNESCO advocated for an approach to development that gives a central role to education and fully harnesses the potential of sciences, culture, and communication and information. During the “MDG Summit”, UNESCO stressed the importance of education as a foundation for human development. The role of culture was explicitly affirmed at the High-Level Round Table on Culture for Development organized in cooperation with the European Union and the African Union.

53. Subsequently, the Summit Outcome Document emphasized “the importance of culture for development and its contribution to the achievement of the MDGs”. In December 2010, the UNGA adopted a resolution reaffirming the role of culture in development and calling for its integration in global development policies through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAFs). This recognition by the UNGA represents a historic shift in the prevailing international development paradigm.

54. The Outcome Document’s recommendations on education also represented a step towards the holistic approach advocated by UNESCO, going beyond primary schooling – the focus of MDG 2 – to encompass progression through the school system as well as youth and adult literacy, with an emphasis on tackling inequalities.

IV. INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION MECHANISMS

55. UNESCO continued its active engagement in, and contribution to, the inter-agency coordination mechanisms, notably the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and its three pillars, the High-level Committee on Programme (HLCP) considering global policy issues, the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) working on system-wide administrative and

management issues, and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) dealing with operational activities for development with a focus on country-level work.

56. Much of the in-depth work of these bodies is carried out through dedicated working groups to which UNESCO contributes, such as: UNDG/ECHA Working Group on Transition; Working Group on RC System Issues; UNDAF Programming Network; Joint Funding and Business Operations Network; Steering Committee for the Expanded Funding Window; Reference Groups on Common Services and Business Operations and HACT Advisory Committee; Human Rights Mechanism and the HLCP Working Group on Climate Change.

57. In addition, UNESCO continued to participate in the work of the UNDG Advisory Group that provides the UNDG Chair with advice and guidance on managing the operational dimensions of the UNDG and the Resident Coordinator system. The Advisory Group holds meetings at heads of agency as well as ADG level. UNESCO holds the 2011 chairmanship of the latter.

58. UNESCO's active involvement in these coordination mechanisms has allowed for the Organization's voice to be heard and the specificities of the specialized agencies to be taken into consideration in the shaping of the policies and action of the United Nations system.

59. For the first time, the **UNDG** has drafted and endorsed a set of **strategic priorities** to guide its action in 2010 and in 2011 which give direction to UNDG efforts at the global, regional and country levels to make its action more coherent and focused, and to enable a step change in the quality and impact of UNDG support at the country level. They respond *inter alia* to UNGA resolution 62/208 on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR), which called for more inclusive system-wide inter-agency collaboration at country, regional and headquarters levels for an efficient and effective functioning of the United Nations development system, including through further alignment of the UNDAF cycle with national processes. Committed to maximizing the United Nations collective impact at the country level in order to accelerate achievement of internationally agreed development goals (IADGs), including the MDGs, the UNDG strategic priorities define a set of key UNDG system changes. These include increased agency incentives for contributions to UNCT work, deepened senior leadership engagement with regional UNDG teams and UNCTs, as well as measures to improve system capacity to deploy knowledge and know-how for country-level work.

60. Other important deliverables of the UNDG this year included the adoption of an annual **work plan** – achieving a better division of labour within the CEB pillars and creating synergies among them, as well as the preparation of the UNDG Results-Based Management (RBM) handbook, which helps to harmonize the use of result frameworks at country level across the United Nations system.

61. Furthermore, UNESCO has contributed to **the review process on the implementation of the Management and Accountability System for the United Nations Development and Resident Coordinator system**.

62. The **MDG Acceleration Framework** was launched to guide UNDG work at the country level in the wake of the 2010 United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) summit. The framework provides a systematic way for countries to develop their own action plan based on existing plans and processes to pursue their MDG priorities and helps governments to focus on disparities and inequalities, two of the major causes of uneven progress, by particularly responding to the needs of vulnerable countries. Ten countries (Belize, Colombia, Ghana, Jordan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Papua New Guinea, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Togo and Uganda) began to pilot the MDG Acceleration Framework in 2011.

63. The July 2011 session of ECOSOC will focus on education in a comprehensive manner and UNESCO has been spearheading the United Nations joint preparations for this important meeting, including the holding of preparatory meetings in various regions.

64. In addition to the United Nations' coordinated and coherent approach and inputs to the 2010 September United Nations Summit on the MDGs and its follow-up, inter-agency discussions have contributed to the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) or "Rio+20" (June 2012); the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV) (Istanbul, Turkey, May 2011) as well as the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Busan, Republic of Korea, November 2011).

United Nations humanitarian action

65. The **UNDG/ECHA Working Group on Transition** unites the development, political, peace-building, peace-keeping, and humanitarian actors of the United Nations system at large to develop policies, guidelines and methodological approaches to support countries in post-conflict settings. As such, it provides a unique forum for UNESCO and other multilateral organizations to consult and promote coherence with humanitarian and political actors on a broad set of issues. This has been particularly useful in the context of post-crisis transition and fragile situations. The Working Group has achieved progress in the following areas: (i) implementation of the capacity gap initiative has contributed to strengthening Resident Coordinators offices' capacity for coordination, analysis, and planning; (ii) drafting and implementation of the United Nations Secretary-General's report on peace-building, which recognizes the positive role of education in the immediate aftermath of conflict; (iii) the launch of the Post-Conflict Needs Assessment (PCNA) toolkit, as well as the PCNA training; (iv) progress in implementing the United Nations/World Bank Partnership on PCNA; and (v) engagement on developing guidance for UNCTs on natural resource management.

66. UNESCO has provided inputs to the strategy papers on the United Nations post-conflict activities, in particular in regard to education in emergencies, humanitarian information and the protection of cultural heritage. Furthermore, three UNESCO staff members have undergone the PCNA intensive training and are now included in the inter-agency roster of PCNA experts.

67. The **Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC)** is the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance, involving key United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian partners. Although UNESCO is not an official member, it has been actively involved through the UNESCO Geneva Office in IASC weekly meetings, which serve as a forum for information sharing among humanitarian actors. In addition, UNESCO participates in IASC country-specific working groups, which are United Nations Headquarters-based ad hoc mechanisms for coordination of humanitarian assistance and the Sub Working Group on the Consolidated Appeals system.

68. The **Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER)** was established following recommendations stemming from a review of the global humanitarian system, undertaken by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 2005. The review identified a gap of unmet needs following crisis, during the transition period from relief to long-term recovery and the CWGER is tasked with addressing this gap. The CWGER comprises 24 United Nations and non-United Nations active global partners from the humanitarian development communities, including UNESCO. UNDP is the designated cluster lead. The CWGER carries out inter-cluster needs assessment, strategic planning and coordination of early recovery and provides a "space" for all UNESCO PCPD efforts. UNESCO has engaged with Early Recovery coordination efforts during PCPD responses in Gaza, Haiti and Pakistan.

69. Since the establishment of the **Education Cluster** in 2006, UNICEF and Save the Children have co-led the Cluster and UNESCO has been a key coordinating partner – a role that is compatible with the Organization's human and financial resources, mandate, and capacity. UNESCO is one of the 50 members representing 31 organizations that constitute the Education

Cluster Working Group. Working Group members are representatives of organizations actively engaged in education in emergencies and form task teams and thematic groups which advise on and work towards a more coordinated response in education in emergencies. At the global level, UNESCO participates in the Strategic Advisory Task Team; the Capacity Building Task Team and the thematic groups on Protection, Psychosocial, Prevention and Peace-building; and Disaster Risk Reduction. At the country level, UNESCO continues to participate in Education Clusters where the organization has a presence. In 2010, UNESCO contributed to the reactivation of the Education Cluster in Haiti and hosted Cluster meetings within UNESCO's office in Port-au-Prince. In 2010, UNESCO also participated in Education Clusters and joint agency education responses to emergencies in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Congo Brazzaville, South Sudan, Namibia, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Pakistan, Iraq and Zimbabwe.

70. During late 2010 and early 2011, UNESCO also participated in a strategic planning exercise of the global Education Cluster. As host to the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Working Group on Education in Fragility, UNESCO was well positioned to contribute to the Cluster strategic planning process in parallel with INEE's strategic planning process. UNESCO colleagues from Headquarters, IIEP and UNESCO Dhaka in Bangladesh participated in a joint workshop in Washington D.C. in October 2010 for the Education Cluster Working Group (ECWG); the cluster's Steering Group, and INEE representatives. The workshop took stock of the current and changing humanitarian environment, identified priority issues, and examined past accomplishments and challenges.

71. UNESCO's overall engagement in humanitarian action is coordinated by the PCPD platform which brings together representatives of programme sectors, corporate services and the Field.

Human rights

72. Since the launching of the **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** mechanism in April 2008, UNESCO has been member of the OHCHR-hosted inter-agency network on the UPR and has contributed to the reviews of Member States through UNCTs and regular reporting. Several UNESCO field offices (Beirut, Kathmandu, Moscow, New Delhi and Rabat) participated in the preparation of country specific contributions within the coordinated process undertaken by the UNCTs. UNESCO's contribution focuses on the implementation of those human rights which fall within its mandate, in particular the rights to education, to take part in cultural life, to benefit from scientific progress and its application, to freedom of opinion and expression with emphasis on the enjoyment of these rights by the most vulnerable groups, including women and young girls, children, minorities, etc. UNESCO's official information (e.g. concerning the state of ratification of the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education, as well as data included in the *Education for All Global Monitoring Reports*) is regularly presented in the compilation of the United Nations information for the States under review.

73. In addition, UNESCO submitted specific contributions to the UPR as concerns the areas under its purview for the countries to be reviewed at the 12th session of the UPR in October 2011. The UPR recommendations make a useful contribution to the identification of priorities of UNESCO's action at the national level and to the strengthening of its cooperation with the authorities concerned and civil society.

Harmonization of business practices

74. Over the past years, UNESCO has taken an active part in inter-agency activities as concerns **the human resources issues**. For several years now, UNESCO has been one of the co-chairs of the HR Network, representing the specialized agencies. In this capacity, UNESCO is one of the HR Network representatives at the HLCM sessions.

75. Bringing together Directors of Human Resources of the United Nations agencies, the HR Network plays two major roles: (i) it prepares, on behalf of the CEB, inputs and exchange with the

International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), which is responsible for the regulation and coordination of the conditions of service of the United Nations system organizations; and (ii) provides strategic advice to the Chief Executives on human resources management developments, ensuring the best practices across the system.

76. Besides its active participation in the HR Network, UNESCO participates in the work of the “Field Group”, a sub-group of the HR Network where United Nations agencies with staff in the field deal with common operational issues (such as R and R). The Field Group provides a useful mechanism to achieve consistency of approach at operational/field level; it also serves as a forum for consultation and harmonization of HR policies, practices and administrative arrangements at the field level. The HR Network has recently strengthened the terms of reference of the Field Group, in order to ensure a harmonized implementation and interpretation of entitlements in particular those related to serving in hardship – D, E and non-family duty stations.

77. The HR Network’s current lead project is the harmonization and reform of HR business practices to facilitate the United Nations delivering as one. In the first phase, the HR Network completed a comprehensive review of the **contractual arrangements** used by the United Nations agencies for staff and non-staff personnel; as well as a **review of the Staff Regulations and Rules, policies and practices in relation to issues related to Delivering as One** pilot projects, namely recruitment and selection, performance management and evaluation, job grading and classification. The report contains 40 recommendations to be implemented by the end of 2012.

78. The first priority is to ensure harmonization in the grading and classification of posts at field level. This can be achieved through a consistent application of the ICSC classification standards and by the provision of dedicated training and briefing on the application of the standards. For UNESCO, this initiative and the related training are very timely and relevant, as well as of potential immediate benefit in the context of adjustment to its Field architecture and the resulting staffing/job reviews. As a second priority, the HR Network will strive to harmonize the advertisement for General Service positions, using harmonized announcement formats and to pilot the opening of vacancies on a reciprocal basis to candidates from other volunteer United Nations Organizations, focusing on functional clusters (e.g. administrative cluster). UNESCO will lead this initiative to be completed in 2012. The third priority, related to performance evaluation, is twofold. First, to ensure that UNCT collaboration is integrated into the Organization’s mission down to the individual level by adding UNCT collaboration as a standard objective to the performance appraisal of senior managers. Second, to develop a set of standard elements that all participating agencies can add to their performance appraisal systems in support of harmonization, as well as an analysis of possible reward mechanisms. UNESCO has already integrated UNCT collaboration in the performance agreements for heads of field offices, and will closely follow up on the policy initiatives related to the performance appraisal systems and the reward mechanisms. The fourth priority concerns the contractual arrangements, in particular the harmonization of the conditions/criteria for granting continuing appointments.

79. The HR Network has also undertaken an in-depth analysis of the issue of the personnel employed under other types of contracts than staff contracts (e.g. Service Contracts). In March 2011, the Network started a comprehensive review of the types of contracts, conditions of service and benefits of non-staff contracts. The review, which UNESCO strongly supported, should be completed by June 2011. It will be very useful for UNESCO, as the expected outcome would be a greater harmonization of the conditions of service for this type of personnel, including the remuneration level and package, and given that personnel employed on SSA and Service Contracts in the field constitute a significant part of UNESCO’s workforce in the field.

80. An important aspect on the United Nations reform process concerns evaluations and audits. UNESCO participates in the work of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), which held its recent meeting at UNESCO Headquarters, and its various task forces. As part of its 2010-2011 work plan, the UNEG Delivering as One Task Force provided quality assurance on the country-led evaluations in the pilot countries. The UNEG Harmonization of Evaluation Task Force is working to

develop guidance on the UNDAF evaluations and strategies for promoting joint evaluations between two or more United Nations agencies. The United Nations Representatives of Internal Audit Services (United Nations-RIAS) continues to be an effective forum for collaboration and harmonization initiatives concerning United Nations joint programmes and multi-donor trust funds.

81. The **United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS)** constitutes a unified system-wide management structure which allows for conduct of activities of the United Nations while ensuring security, safety and well-being of its personnel, premises and assets in a coherent and consolidated manner. UNESCO participates in UNSMS along with all other United Nations system organizations and complies with all policies, practices and procedures developed collectively by the IASMN, which brings together the United Nations security focal points. It is through this inter-agency cooperation that many new developments and innovations in United Nations security management are made possible. UNESCO holds the current co-chairmanship of the IASMN. Common to these developments is an emphasis on a security management system that enables programme delivery by defining “critical activities” that determine the required personnel who needs to be kept in the crisis environments (conflicts, disasters) and as safe as possible. These changes emanate from the fundamental shift in mindset from “when to leave” to “how to stay”. UNESCO has actively participated in joint exercises for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

82. Following a recommendation of the Independent Panel on the Safety and Security of the United Nations Personnel and Premises Worldwide (“Brahimi Report”), the 2007 version of the **Framework of Accountability for the United Nations Security Management System** was approved by the CEB and presented to the General Assembly in August 2010 (cf. Report A/65/320). The revised framework recognizes that managers have also to assume responsibility for security matters. The Framework serves to support the decisions that need to be made and the actions to be taken while clearly stating that in accepting responsibility and accountability for security management, fatalities and/or casualties may still occur regardless of the preventive measures taken. The UNESCO Table of Delegated Authority and Accountability on Field Security Management is being updated accordingly.

83. As of 1 January 2011 the entire **Security Level System (UNSMS)** has adopted a new system for assigning a grade or level to areas where the United Nations operates in order to identify the overall level of danger in that area. SLS is an outcome of the coordinated system-wide effort and represents a unique tool for measuring security threat which is applicable worldwide.

84. In April 2006, the CEB endorsed the HLCM recommendation that all United Nations system organizations adopt **International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS)**. The recommendation was driven by a need to move to improved, independent and universally accepted accounting standards. UNESCO began its IPSAS implementation project in 2007 and was among the few agencies to have completed it by the 2010 deadline.

85. Inter-agency discussions on IPSAS are mostly held through the forum of the United Nations Task Force on Accounting Standards. UNESCO is an active participant, and at the last meeting hosted a working group on controlled entities. The implementation project at UNESCO has required a detailed review of accounting policies, significant IT developments and a wide-ranging training programme. Amendments to the Financial Rules and Regulations have been made to bring them into line with IPSAS.

86. The **Financial Statistics Database** project, launched recently, is aimed at harmonizing financial reporting within the United Nations for both the reports issued by the CEB and the Department of Social and Economic Affairs (DESA). The project will review the current financial reports and their presentation to meet the various needs of our stakeholders. Based on the preliminary discussions held, UNESCO with its current enterprise resource planning (ERP) system and the introduction of IPSAS is well placed to meet the new reporting requirements being considered under the project.

87. The aim of **Feasibility Study for Common United Nations Treasury Services** is to institutionalize the best treasury management practices in the United Nations system and explore the establishment of common treasury management services for the United Nations organizations in the area of investments, currency management, payments and banking. UNESCO plays an active role in the Steering Committee for the Feasibility Study that is currently being conducted by KPMG. KPMG has finalised the data collection and site visits of all 19 participating agencies and the next important step in the process is the Advanced Solution Design meeting in Geneva from 4 to 5 April 2011. The final report on the Feasibility Study should be issued by the end of May 2011.

88. Within the context of the Delivering as One (DaO) initiative, UNESCO has committed to implement the **Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT)** in the DaO pilots and the countries voluntarily adopting the DaO approach. It is a risk-based management depending on outcome of joint assessments at country level followed by periodic on-site quality control. HACT's purpose is to significantly reduce transaction costs and lessen the burden that the multiplicity of United Nations procedures and rules creates for its partners.

89. On the operational side, UNESCO will continue to implement required key changes regarding management and business practices in line with DaO principles while having the option to monitor and give accurate financial reports and programmatic assurance to Member States, donors or administrative agencies. The current challenges at UNCTs level are to compile an assurance plan and to develop capacities to mitigate identified risks at implementing partners' level.

90. UNESCO has actively contributed to discussions on budget-related issues through its chairmanship from 2003 to 2009 of the HLCM Working Group on Cost Recovery Policies, its participation in the initial design of the "Common Budgetary Framework" and a number of field missions organized by the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO).

91. Since its inception, the Delivering as One process has been regarded as an opportunity to **reduce transaction costs** with a view to ploughing the economies made on administration back into programmes.

92. In this regard, UNDG-HLCM fielded interdisciplinary missions, in which UNESCO participated, to two pilot countries, highlighted that savings on transaction costs may be achieved, but only following the implementation of a common cost accounting and budgetary framework and the harmonization of business practices of the United Nations agencies. The report, shared with field colleagues, is the outcome of an inter-agency effort directed to define, identify and measure such costs. It provides recommendations that should help UNCTs improve their decision-making in relation to business process harmonization and streamlining.

93. Highlighting the benefits of the DaO experience and the necessary initial start-up costs arising, the focus of the inter-agency discussions has moved from transaction costs savings to efficiency gains as the main impact of the DaO experience.

94. The CEB ICT Network, of which UNESCO is an active member, follows up the **Information Technologies** implication of HLCM discussions on the harmonization of business practices and in particular the possibility of harmonizing ERPs (UNESCO's ERP is based on SAP, which is also the product chosen by the UNESCO Secretariat); the possibility of establishing a common data centre for United Nations organizations (United Nations International Computing Centre – UNICC – being a strong candidate); a common desktop configuration and negotiation of a joint long-term agreement for the provision of desktop equipment; the establishment of common help centres for United Nations organizations; the establishment of common network infrastructures (UNESCO is already connected to the common network in Maputo and Dar es Salaam) and a Common Directory (initiated by the UNDG ICT Task Force for the implementation of the DAO offices).

95. At its recent meeting in Paris, HLCM endorsed a **Model Policy Framework (MPF) on Vendor Eligibility** as developed by the Procurement Network. This MPF deals with all aspects of restriction of vendors to business with the United Nations in case a company applies unethical business practices, is involved in terrorist activities or does not otherwise conform with the ethical requirements of the United Nations (e.g. involvement in production of landmines and child labour). It also provides guidance and practical tools for dealing with the legal aspects of such restrictions, as well as with sharing of information among the members. The CEB is expected to soon issue guidance to its members asking for the MPF to be adapted by all United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

96. The HLCM also identified a need for revitalization of **collaborative procurement**. This concept existed for various frequently purchased items, with field motor vehicles as the most prominent one, but is no longer used since the merger of UNDP/IAPSO and UNOPS. Based on the example of SAP licenses where the supplier managed to impose different terms, conditions and costs to United Nations entity, the participating agencies called for the extension of the range of products and services to include transport, insurance, licenses, etc. The Procurement Network will give this issue the highest priority. Benefiting from the respective long-term agreements concluded by other United Nations entities, UNESCO's field offices will be able to avoid lengthy tendering processes and benefit from the best prices obtained at the global level and based on the united purchasing power of the United Nations.