



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

2030 perspective

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Greater focus on priority areas in the lead-up to the coming decade



● Interview with
Jean-Yves Le Saux
**DIRECTOR OF UNESCO'S BUREAU
OF STRATEGIC PLANNING**

What do you think are the biggest global challenges and concerns that UNESCO should focus on in the lead up to 2030? Will the Preliminary Proposals for the next Medium-Term Strategy reflect them?

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus the inadequacy of the global response in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, and in meeting the global environmental crisis, marked by biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and climate change. We also suggest including the fight against inequalities in the mission statement, in response to the pressing global demand for inclusive and equitable approaches, especially in access to knowledge. UNESCO therefore approaches the new Medium-Term Strategy period (2022-2029) with a mandate of historical significance: frame a multilateral model in which education, culture, the sciences and information are acknowledged as “common goods” and areas of strategic investment for sustainable development.

How is the consultation process with the Member States going, and are you satisfied with it so far?

The Preliminary Proposals for the next 41 C/4 and C/5 benefited from all the very fruitful dialogues held with Member States, which took place over a year period. Our online Questionnaire received an unprecedented level of responses by Member States, NGOs and IGOs. We received very rich contributions from National Commissions. In addition, we have also had very lively internal discussions within the Secretariat, and with the High Level Reflection Group.

The challenges that the world is facing today are highly complex and require UNESCO to rethink its way of working in order to respond to them effectively.

What in your view is the best way to go about this?

We are proposing a limited set of cross-cutting strategic objectives, with related outcomes, to which all sectors can contribute based on their expertise, areas of competence and clear comparative advantage. They address some of the most pressing global challenges of our times: educational, environmental, democratic and digital. This greater focus on priority areas will serve to advance UNESCO's strategic, normative and programmatic contribution as a specialized agency of the UN system. This will also facilitate, where appropriate, interdisciplinary engagement in areas where the Organization has a strong comparative advantage, and where transversal approaches can bring integrated, gender transformative solutions. The responses by Member States show the necessity for us to conduct in this planning process a more refined exercise of mapping the Organization's contribution to the SDGs, targeting where we can concentrate efforts and resources.

How do we build stronger partnerships to help support UNESCO?

The focus on UNESCO's comparative advantages, I believe, must become a key feature of the Organization's programmes – but also of corporate communication. This is reflected in the Preliminary Proposals, with a strong focus on outreach and partnerships issues.

This is the beginning of a process which will be taken up by Member States during the next Executive Board. It is a great opportunity to shape and deliver innovative messages addressing the realities and challenges of the contemporary world, and to lay the foundation for new dynamic partnerships and coalitions.

UNESCO's improved efficiency provides a strong foundation for a new strategic direction

While COVID-19 challenges reveal UNESCO's transformative strengths, an innovative and inclusive approach is helping shape its new strategic direction.

UNESCO's ongoing Strategic Transformation is taking place under exceptional circumstances. COVID-19 and its impacts on health and well-being, work, and international cooperation have put the Organization's many transformative actions to the test.

A new communication strategy aimed at public awareness and advocacy led to the success of several online initiatives. There were also notable projects, including the #LearningNeverStops "Girls back to school" video, which was viewed over 6 million times and became the most viewed campaign in the history of UNESCO, as well as the #DontGoViral initiative, which mobilised artists in Africa to combat misinformation and rumours linked to the pandemic.

Other transformative actions such as senior staff leadership development, revised performance management, a new mobility policy, and a new digital workplace have also assisted UNESCO in responding to the pandemic. This demonstrates UNESCO's strong foundation of improved efficiency and effectiveness for pursuing its new strategic direction.

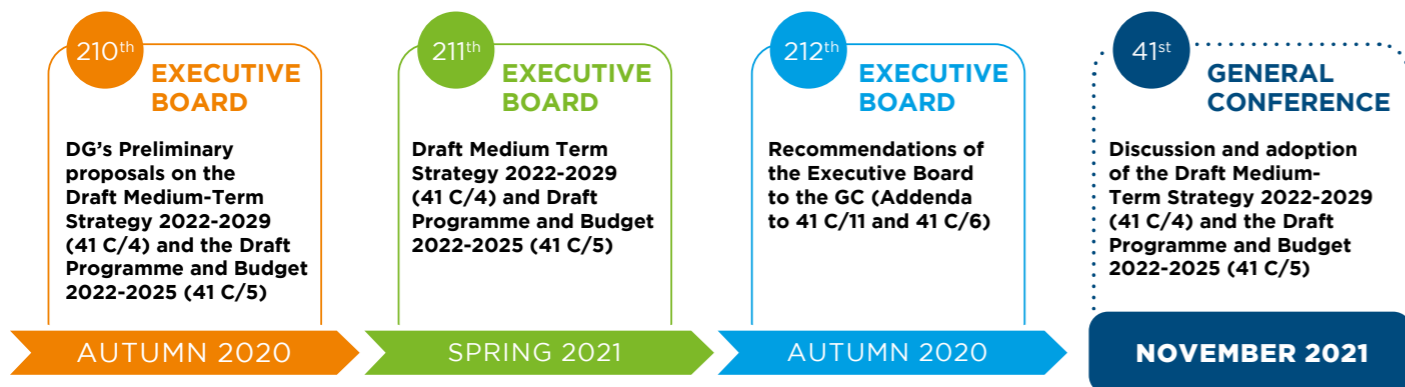
The ongoing consultation process for the next Medium-Term Strategy, incorporating a variety of collaborations within the framework of UNESCO's Strategic Transformation, commenced with a series of dialogues with Member States in mid-2019, followed by several official consultations, including a digital questionnaire directed at Member States. It allowed countries to share their perspectives and help delineate UNESCO's overall vision, leadership role and strategic objectives for the 2022-2029 period.

The High-Level Reflection Group has met on several occasions to identify and discuss major global challenges, including quality education, environmental risks, growing inequalities, international scientific cooperation, the ethics of emerging technologies, and the fight against racism. The most recent online meeting took place in October 2020, alongside a series of interviews available on UNESCO website.

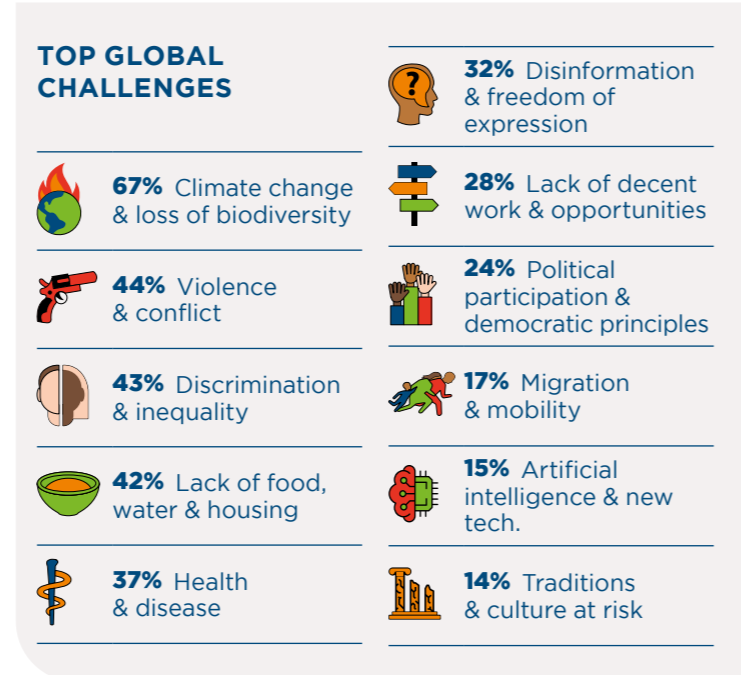
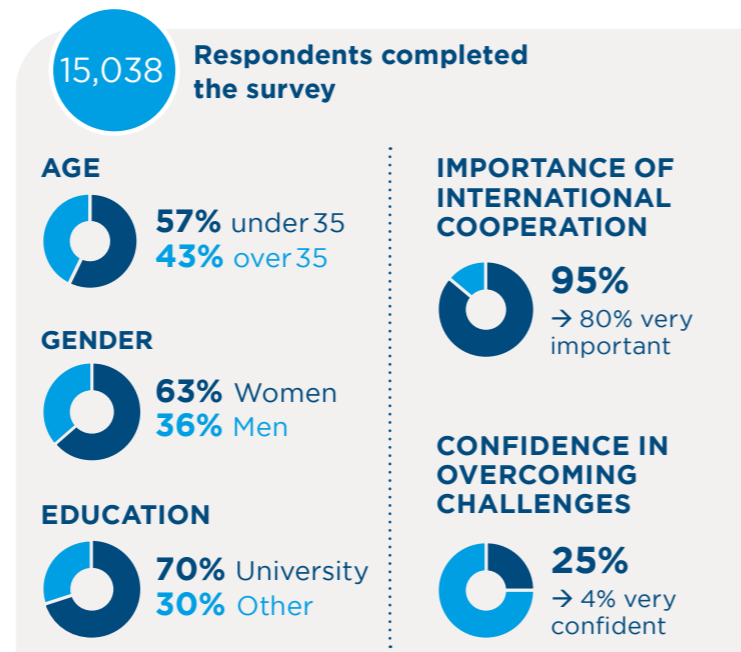
Young UNESCO have also been meaningfully engaged in preparations, meeting with senior executives and presenting their own contributions to the process of elaboration of the Medium-Term Strategy. The recent staff survey, whose major results were released in the previous edition, indicating strong confidence in UNESCO's effectiveness, as well as support for many of UNESCO's transformative projects. The "World in 2030" public survey, open from May until September this year, was a similarly valuable undertaking, with more than 15,000 complete responses submitted. Climate change and loss of biodiversity, violence and conflict, and discrimination and inequality were listed as the three biggest global challenges.

Following this process, the Director General has formulated the Preliminary Proposals concerning the Draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029, which will be examined by the Member States at the 210th session of the Executive Board.

[SEE "WORLD IN 2030" PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS →](#)



"World in 2030" Public Survey



Climate Change Biggest Global Concern by Far

The preliminary results are in from the UNESCO "World in 2030" Public Survey: climate change and loss of biodiversity, violence and conflict, and discrimination and inequality are the three biggest challenges that people around the globe are most concerned about for a peaceful society in 2030. And while people overwhelmingly believe in the importance of international cooperation, very few report feeling confident that these challenges will be overcome.

Held from late May until mid-September, more than 15,000 people from every region responded to the survey, with results remarkably consistent across regions, gender, age and other demographics. Well over half of the respondents were under 35 years of age, with more than one-third under 25.

Out of a list of eleven major global challenges, climate change in particular came across as by far the most urgent – more than two-thirds of respondents picked it among their top challenges, compared with 44% for violence

and conflict and 43% for discrimination and inequality. Respondents specifically pointed to increasing natural disasters and extreme weather, loss of biodiversity, pollution of the ocean and rising sea levels, as well as the risk of conflict or violence as their biggest specific concerns when it comes to climate change. Education featured among the top solutions for each and every challenge. It was also the top solution chosen for 7 out of 11 challenges.

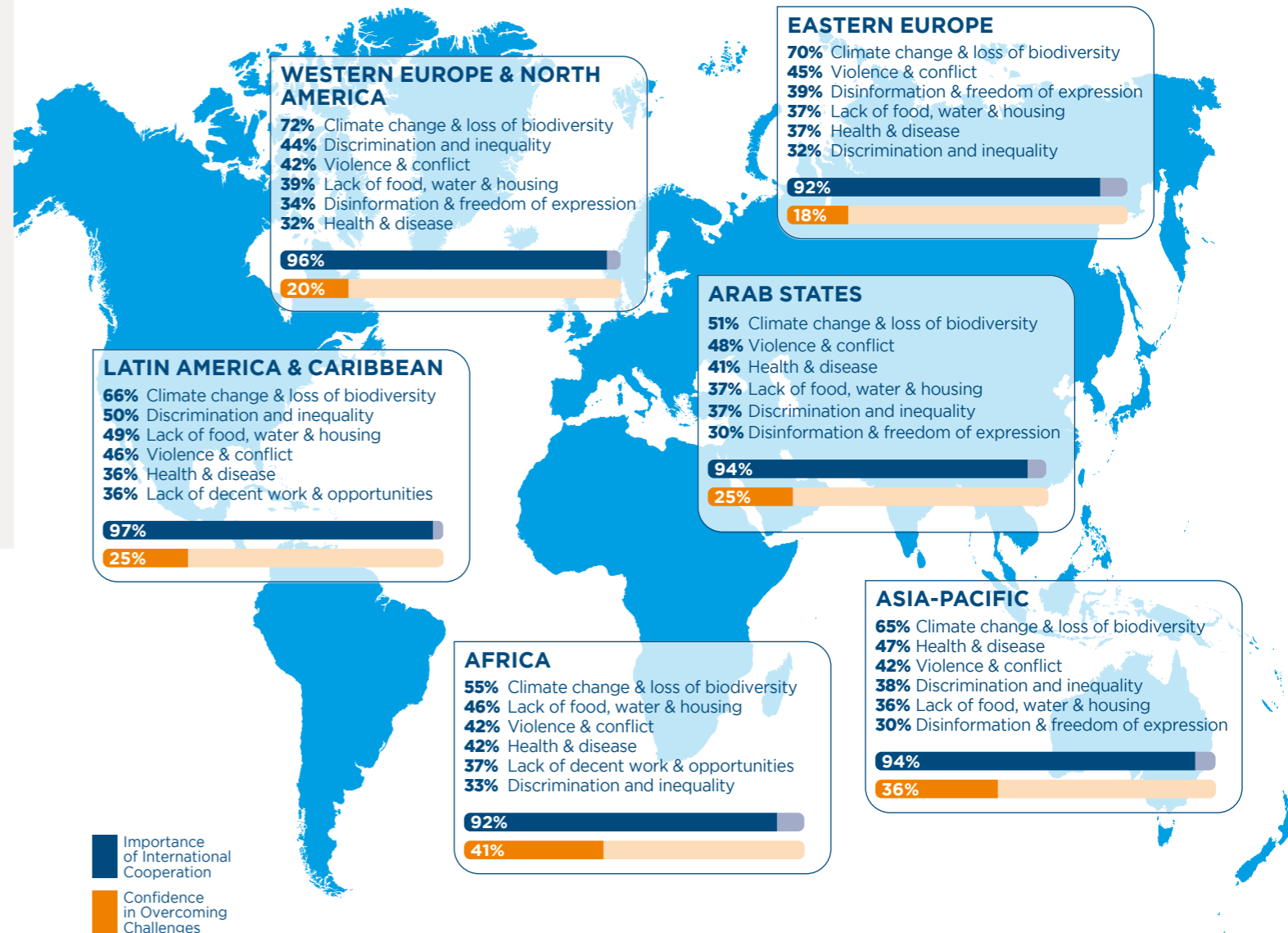
The results showed almost total unanimity that cooperation between countries over

the next decade will be important to overcome the various challenges. In total, 95% of respondents feel that it is important, including 80% who say it is very important. Furthermore, more than four-in-ten are more concerned about the impact of these challenges on the world as a whole, rather than their region, community or family. However, despite this overwhelming feeling of global solidarity, only one-in-four respondents feel confident that this will be possible, including only 4% who feel very confident.

Insights were also gained into people's awareness of UNESCO, as well as the areas of society that most need to be rethought following the COVID-19 crisis. The Survey was developed by the Strategic Transformation Support Unit in the context of the planning for UNESCO's upcoming C/4 Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029.

The survey "World in 2030" was produced thanks to the financial contribution of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

TOP CHALLENGES PER REGION



Secretary Generals of the National Commissions reflect on regional responses to the “World in 2030” survey



Nicolas Mathieu
SWITZERLAND

How can we picture ourselves in 2030 from the vantage point of an uncertain present? The results of the UNESCO survey reveal an awareness of the global nature of our challenges, exacerbated locally by the pandemic crisis. While these challenges seem to be taking on their true dimension in the eyes of the world, they have long

been the concern of National Commissions. For Switzerland, I am thinking of our actions to promote quality and reliable information, the strengthening of scientific cooperation, and the respect of fundamental rights through education for global citizenship. On the front line, as close as possible to realities and networks, the action of the National Commissions requires the full support and carry-through of UNESCO to make the link between the present and the future, in order to design and contribute to the next Medium-Term Strategy of the Organization.



Everton Hannam
JAMAICA

The results of the public survey – like those relating to climate change, violence and discrimination – capture the general sentiments in the region. These sentiments are in addition to other ongoing issues which have not yet been resolved, despite the MDGs and SDGs. New challenges have arisen, some of which can be

associated with present policies of many countries, longstanding cultural values, and new and developing pandemic challenges.

The approach to be taken in addressing the challenges of social cohesion, discrimination and violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean cannot be addressed in a wholesale manner, as each situation or challenge has its own particularity depending on the region or country. Notwithstanding, at the international level UNESCO and other UN Agencies must continue to strengthen their programmes, strongly supporting initiatives geared towards education concerning, and reduction and eventual elimination of, the mentioned challenges. Member States should be continuously encouraged.



Mai Phan Dung
VIETNAM

The “World in 2030” survey is a meaningful and practical activity as results of the survey prove the importance of, and common international concern for, one of the global issues: climate change. To address this problem, it is necessary to have comprehensive solutions at three levels: national, regional and global. At the same time,

solutions need to be interdisciplinary with the participation of many stakeholders, from policy makers to state agencies, local authorities as well as experts. In addition, the participation of the community, youth and private sector plays an important role. Finally, there is a need to strengthen the roles and responsibilities of each country and strengthen cooperation at the regional and international levels because climate change cannot be dealt with by a single country.



Alexandre Costa
ANGOLA

This global survey is a good initiative, one that reflects a global vision for the future of humanity up to 2030. Sub-Saharan African respondents identified the problem of access to water, food and housing as one of the

most pressing. Addressing this problem is only feasible with employability solutions and supporting infrastructure. In view of the high rate of unemployment associated with the current pandemic crisis, this issue may worsen, especially for vulnerable households and informal workers.

The creation of “The Biennial of Culture of PEACE in Africa” inspired by the African Cultural Renaissance Charter should be seen as the best way for Africa to increase its participation in the world, in scientific production and in meeting the challenges of globalization. It fits into a showcase where cultures of various nations interact by establishing dynamics that foster respect for human life, the eradication of hunger and poverty, and good governance, to become a global, fundamental, inclusive and concordant movement essential to promoting sustainable development.



Tala Zein
LEBANON

Looking at survey results for the Middle East and North Africa, we find clearly that the major challenges in this region require advanced educational approaches. For climate change

and biodiversity loss, as well as violence, conflict, discrimination and inequality, education remains the common solution. It is first and foremost through education that the values of non-violence, tolerance, democracy, solidarity, and justice, which are the very lifeblood of peace, can be passed on to individuals from an early age. Education should promote open-mindedness, which is vital in a world where our interdependence is becoming more evident each day.

Education planning must therefore go beyond traditional mechanisms, in accordance with the unpredictable nature of our times: be flexible and rapid in implementation, and responsive to varying local needs. Training and research in sustainable development, peaceful inter-human relations, good governance, conflict prevention and peace building are priorities, particularly in our country. It is also important that UNESCO consider the voices of youth and their role in preventing conflict. As such, education plans should aim to work with youth, by harnessing and respecting their contribution as future leaders.