

DG/2002/98
Original: English/French

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Address by
Mr Koïchiro Matsuura

Director-General
of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
(UNESCO)

165th session of the Executive Board

Items 3.1.1. and 4.1

UNESCO, 7 October 2002

Madam Chairperson of the Executive Board,
Mr President of the General Conference,
Distinguished Representatives of Member States,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all know with what active commitment the United States of America contributed to the birth and growth of this Organization. We are aware of the immense contribution that country made to reconstruction and reconciliation in the war-torn world of the 1940s and 1950s and beyond. And we have constantly valued the wealth and diversity of expertise, creativity and drive that are at work in American society and among the American people.

That is why the whole UNESCO family so warmly welcomed the announcement by President George W. Bush on 12 September 2002 of the return of the United States to membership in this Organization. We very sincerely welcome the United States back in our midst.

The spontaneous applause of the United Nations General Assembly on hearing this announcement was most heartening. So were the words that President Bush used. He referred to the pursuit of “human dignity”, and said the United States was rejoining a “reformed Organization” in order to “participate fully in its mission to advance human rights, tolerance and learning”.

President Bush’s announcement gives us at least two good reasons to rejoice. The first is because of the way he characterizes UNESCO’s mission in terms of the advancement of human rights, tolerance and learning. Since the events of 11 September last year, too many examples have highlighted the uniqueness of UNESCO’s mission in today’s troubled world of promoting human dignity and intercultural understanding through all our fields of competence. Hence, also, the ever-increasing recognition that UNESCO’s longer-term concerns, which too often are ignored or sidelined in the whirl of day-to-day international politics, should no longer be overlooked if the world of today is to have any chance of ridding itself of the scourge of terrorism.

For one thing, the resolution on terrorism agreed at the last General Conference has certainly influenced the work and recommendations of the Policy Working Group on the United Nations and Terrorism, whose report was published recently. Set up in the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001, the Policy Working Group recommends that the United Nations system should adopt a tripartite strategy of dissuasion, denial and cooperation in addressing the question of terrorism. Under the heading of “dissuasion”, Recommendation 10 calls for greater prominence to be given to the work of UNESCO and other United Nations system bodies in regard to education initiatives that seek to increase understanding, encourage tolerance and

respect for human dignity, and reduce mutual mistrust between communities in conflict.

I have already followed up on this matter, making clear to the United Nations Secretary-General and the United Nations Department of Political Affairs our willingness to respond positively and actively to the Policy Working Group's recommendation. Mr Annan has written to me welcoming our proposal to convene an inter-agency meeting on the development of a coherent programme in the field of education and the fight against terrorism.

UNESCO has long been engaged in education for human rights, democracy and peace, focusing on tolerance, intercultural dialogue and conflict resolution, as an integral part of the quality of both formal and non-formal education. One of our tasks now is to further develop our approaches and methodologies in these areas and adapt them to the actualities of today's world, which is marked by "new ignorances" generated by rapid globalization and the uneven distribution of its benefits. In this regard, the area of curriculum reform and renewal will be a particularly important aspect of UNESCO's action to promote shared values and encourage greater intercultural understanding, tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. Textbooks must be a clear object of our attention but so too must be the generation of practical capabilities of dialogue, debate, cultural interaction and participation.

It has also become clear that there are interconnections to be better understood between poverty, cultural identity and diversity, and sustainable development, if only because they are all part of the overarching concept of human security.

The second main reason for taking particular pleasure from President Bush's decision is that it represents a clear recognition that the efforts and sacrifices we have all been making to enhance UNESCO's relevance and impact are really producing results. May I seize this opportunity to express my thanks to all those who have played their part in visible and less visible ways in securing this major achievement.

President Bush's announcement is to be seen as an encouragement for us all to press ahead with our reform in programme, management and working culture so that we constantly improve our service to all our Member States. I shall not repeat the information to be found in my written summary regarding progress made in different areas of reform. I would nevertheless like to address, in the first part of my presentation this morning, some key aspects of our reform agenda relating in particular to decentralization. In Part II, I shall focus on Africa, Afghanistan and the Middle East as these deserve our particular attention. In the third part, I shall examine certain issues pertaining to the next C/5 document.

PART I: REFORM

I would like to make reference here to the United Nations Secretary-General's report on "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further reform", which he recently submitted to the United Nations General Assembly. The United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has announced a new set of measures in pursuit of the reform process he set in train in 1997 when he took office. While it is mainly addressed at the United Nations secretariat and associated programmes and funds, it will have a significant impact for the United Nations system as a whole. It is evident from the report that we share the same concerns, face the same difficulties and seek the same objectives. We are, in effect, in the same line, though I must say that UNESCO does not compare badly with the United Nations in the matter of reform.

Decentralization is a crucial dimension of the reform process within all parts of the United Nations system. Under an implementation plan to be completed by 2003 by UNDG, the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes working in each country seem to be expected to pool their resources and undertake joint programming to a far greater extent than hitherto.

In addition, the specific roles and responsibilities of the various United Nations entities at field level are to be clearly defined; a document spelling out "who does what" in terms of technical cooperation will be completed by September 2003. While somewhat ambiguous as to the inclusion of the specialized agencies in this approach, it is nevertheless clearly stated that "lead responsibility for a given issue or activity should rest with the entity best equipped substantively to assume it", while "technical cooperation should be delivered to the maximum extent possible by the entities that have an established field presence and experience".

There are implications here for UNESCO for which we must prepare ourselves. We have to acknowledge that, given the current state of UNESCO's financial and human resources, it is not realistic for UNESCO to claim that it is technically operational everywhere in the field. My determination to drive for greater focus and enhanced decentralization in the 32 C/5 stems in part from these considerations.

I am firmly committed to strengthening the staffing and resourcing of multidisciplinary cluster offices. But the field comprises much more than cluster offices, national offices and regional bureaux. UNESCO, in fact, has large-scale, and often underutilized, human and institutional resources in the field. In addition to our offices, institutes and National Commissions, there are centres under UNESCO auspices, UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN networks, national committees of intergovernmental programmes, UNESCO clubs and federations, the Associated Schools Project network, and so forth. These resources form part of a larger and more encompassing vision of UNESCO's presence in the field, a vision which is particularly attuned to the dynamics of expanding civil societies and the dialogue between government and a variety of non-governmental constituencies. Thus, there

are many alternative forms of UNESCO presence in countries, even where there are no offices as such.

There is the basis here of an innovative re-conceptualization of UNESCO's methods of work, one which staff in the field and at Headquarters need to share and develop. It is a vision of a networking organization capable of mobilizing a range of human and institutional resources from within the UNESCO family. Modern information and communication technologies facilitate such networking.

Such networking, moreover, would enhance UNESCO's capacity to act as a broker of partnerships and as a catalyst of cooperation. UNESCO would certainly be better equipped to participate in United Nations joint programmes in ways that go far beyond traditional field office modalities.

Let me reinforce once again how imperative it is for our actions to be attuned to United Nations system-wide changes and to the coordination mechanisms, particularly at the level of field operations, which the United Nations puts in place. This is especially crucial in regard to our role in and contribution to the United Nations system endeavours towards reconstruction and reconciliation in countries emerging from conflict. In the cases of Afghanistan and the Middle East, it appears more and more clear that reconstruction and reconciliation are interwoven and that, in particular, the first step towards reconciliation is reconstruction. These observations also apply to those parts of Africa that are crisis-torn or emerging from conflict, although any remarks concerning this vast continent must take account of the diversity of situations and conditions to be found there.

PART II

Africa

The World Summit on Sustainable Development was an opportunity to focus attention on the problems facing the world's poorest continent and also to showcase Africa's huge potential and its own efforts to fashion its own destiny. We are heartened by a number of significant developments in Africa during recent months. The launch of the African Union (AU) in Durban, South Africa, in July 2002 was a momentous occasion that promises to be a turning point for the entire continent. The commitment of African Union leaders to democratic principles, good governance, the rule of law, economic empowerment and respect for human rights provides a foundation for progress. The greatest challenge facing the African Union is whether it can resolve the violent conflicts and tensions that hinder the growth of stable societies and prevent them from dealing effectively with poverty, disease (especially HIV/AIDS), inadequate provision and quality of education, and abuses of human rights.

The African Union's endorsement of NEPAD shows that there is serious intent to grapple collectively with the political and economic reforms required if lasting development is to be achieved. It is to be noted that the United Nations General Assembly, in a special session last month, gave its blessing to the NEPAD initiative.

UNESCO, of course, has expressed its support for both developments and has already undertaken practical forms of collaboration. For example, we worked closely with NEPAD in the preparation of its education proposals to the G8 Summit in Kananaskis, Canada, in June 2002, particularly through contacts with Algeria which is responsible for advancing NEPAD's human development policies. We have encouraged NEPAD's engagement with other areas falling within the competence of UNESCO, such as ICTs, poverty eradication, HIV/AIDS preventive education, and culture.

We have also endeavoured to integrate NEPAD's objectives and priorities into meetings organized by UNESCO. A case in point is the way NEPAD has been incorporated into the very conceptualization of the programme of MINEDAF VIII, which will be held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in early December 2002. Some 53 African Member States, non-governmental organizations, international organizations and United Nations agencies have been invited. President Mkapa of Tanzania has agreed to inaugurate the Conference. Other prominent speakers include President Bouteflika of Algeria, Mr Amara Essy, Interim Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr Omar Kabbaj, President of the African Development Bank, and Ms Carole Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF.

MINEDAF VIII is a major opportunity to focus the minds of Africa's educational leaders on the challenge of EFA and on the importance of integrating education within national development strategies and within bilateral and multilateral partnerships aimed at promoting education's contribution to development in Africa. In addition, on the eve of the Conference there will be a meeting of FAPED (Forum of African Parliamentarians for Education), a recently-created mechanism for enlisting the active support of African legislators for the cause of education.

Africa's educational needs will certainly be discussed at the meeting of the High-Level Group on EFA that will take place in Abuja, Nigeria, on 19 and 20 November 2002. The findings and recommendations of the Abuja meeting will be fed into the deliberations of MINEDAF VIII.

In reviewing these various developments and initiatives in Africa, I am struck by the need to reinforce a particular emphasis that UNESCO has, to its credit, championed over many years. I refer to the need for the agenda of political, economic, social, cultural and educational change to be owned by the civil societies of Africa and not just by political leaders. Development, in all its forms, must be a society-wide task that all may contribute to. It is important, therefore, that NGOs, community groups, social and religious institutions, and private companies, along

with the media, are encouraged to engage actively with Africa's development agenda. There is a wellspring of creativity, energy and dynamism to be tapped from these sources. UNESCO, I believe, has much to offer regional institutions and national authorities when it comes to fashioning strategies for enhancing the participation of non-State actors in the tasks of African development.

It is therefore vital that we find the most effective ways to enhance UNESCO's presence and action in Africa, where a new scheme of UNESCO offices is in place. Along with the two regional offices and a certain number of national offices, there are now several cluster offices which we particularly want to strengthen and make as effective as possible. In addition, we wish to continue strengthening the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa (IICBA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, especially in the area of teacher education and training. We are also seeking to enhance centres of excellence for capacity-building such as the Guidance, Counselling and Youth Development Centre for Africa in Lilongwe, Malawi, which I visited early last month. The vision of a networking organization, which I outlined earlier, is especially appropriate for Africa where the Organization's human and institutional resources, if properly marshalled, can have a major impact.

Afghanistan

Madam Chairperson,

I now come to the action we are carrying out in Afghanistan. The last few weeks have shown how precarious the situation there remains. It is vital for the future of Afghanistan that the international community should ensure that the movement of solidarity over the past year in support of the reconstruction of that country is sustained and boosted. It is also essential that all these efforts should be perfectly orchestrated so as to avoid any dispersal or duplication. It is for this reason that the United Nations has set up a coordination team, under the enlightened leadership of Mr Brahimi, of which UNESCO is a very active member. Thanks to the strengthening of our Kabul Office, which now comprises six very competent and highly motivated professionals, including three seconded for periods of nine months, UNESCO's capacity for action on the ground has been stepped up considerably. The recent establishment of a National Commission for UNESCO in Kabul is also very good news, bearing in mind what an important partner such a structure is for the implementation of our programmes.

In the sphere of education, one of our priority fields of action, several important initiatives have recently been taken.

At this very moment, a training workshop for some 30 Afghan curriculum specialists is taking place in Tehran, organized by our Kabul Office in cooperation with the International Bureau of Education and the Iranian National Commission.

This training course, financed by UNESCO, marks the launching of a major project aimed at helping the government to renew school curricula in their totality and to strengthen the capacities of the Afghan Ministry of Education. In this regard, I must warmly thank the German Government, which has just allocated the sum of \$450,000 to this ambitious project. Curriculum development is one of our essential fields of specialization in education. It is fundamental in a country so long riven by conflict in order to consolidate the national sense of belonging, social cohesion and openness to the rest of the world.

In addition, some 30 Afghan specialists from all parts of the country will attend a training course in Kabul from 19 October next, this time provided by the International Institute for Educational Planning. This course will be aimed at developing planning capabilities in higher education. Other projects are envisaged by IIEP in the near future to strengthen the capabilities of the Ministries of Education and Higher Education. With the rehabilitation of the University of Kabul and the creation of an Institute of Vocational and Technical Training, we think we can offer the Afghans a renewed possibility of training a critical mass of qualified people capable of contributing to the reconstruction process.

Within the United Nations coordination team, UNESCO, as you know, is principally responsible for action in the sphere of culture and communication.

On 27 May this year, just when the 164th session of the Board was taking place, a seminar bringing together the leading world experts on the Afghan cultural heritage and potential contributors was organized in Kabul on the initiative of UNESCO and the Afghan Ministry of Information and Culture. Its aims were to review knowledge in this domain, to identify possible lines of action for heritage conservation and rehabilitation, and to mobilize funds to that end. These objectives were attained: \$7 million were pledged to fund priority projects. And the participants suggested that an international coordination committee be set up under the auspices of the Afghan Government and UNESCO. Its statutes will be submitted for your consideration at this session.

Another favourable development in this regard is the inscription, at the 26th session of the World Heritage Committee, of the first Afghan property – the Minaret and Archaeological Remains of Jam – on the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger. This recognition, while it cannot heal the still open wound of the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, is nevertheless a significant milestone that we should welcome. I wish here to thank the Italian Government for the substantial support it has just extended to the Afghan cultural heritage in the form of an allocation of \$3 million. This is a major gesture of solidarity on the part of Italy towards Afghanistan and follows very substantial contributions previously made by Japan, Greece, France and the Agha Khan Foundation.

The international seminar on the Afghan cultural heritage, and the exhibition that accompanied it, organized on the initiative of Professor Hirayama in Tokyo last August, was another high point in the mobilization of support for this heritage, which is particularly welcome in the context of the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage.

We have also worked intensively for the promotion of independent and pluralistic media. I should mention the fact that the international seminar organized in Kabul from 3 to 5 September 2002 on the initiative of the Ministry of Information and Culture and coordinated by UNESCO was a resounding success, which says much for the deep commitment of the Afghan authorities to openness and reform.

Attended by 120 journalists, media professionals and NGOs from Afghanistan and abroad, the seminar ended with the adoption of an ambitious Declaration calling, for example, on the Afghan authorities to undertake a radical review of all the laws currently limiting the work of journalists and, furthermore, to transform Afghan Radio and Television into a public service with a Board of Governors reflecting the diverse strands of Afghan national life, and the Bakhtar News Agency into an independent public entity. A significant step has thus been taken in a very sensitive area. Afghanistan is in this way demonstrating its determination to build the foundations of a genuine democracy.

Here again we must thank the Italian authorities, who last week signed a memorandum with UNESCO for the development of educational radio and television in Afghanistan for a total amount of \$4 million.

All these initiatives require a great deal of energy and strength. But I believe this to be a duty. If we fail today to provide Afghanistan with substantial aid, I am very much afraid that the chances of reconstructing the country will be gravely compromised for a long time to come.

Middle East

Madam Chairperson,

The debates at the last session clearly brought out the priority which should be accorded to UNESCO's action in the Near East, as part of the United Nations system's joint efforts in that region.

That is why, even before the end of the Board session on 31 May, I decided on a series of measures aimed at meeting, as far as possible, urgent needs in the Palestinian territories and contributing to the process of reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis. I set up a special high-level intersectoral Task Force, which I am personally chairing, in order to establish a collegial decision-making process at

the highest level of the Secretariat, to provide more effective intersectoral coordination and to develop an integrated overall strategy for reconstruction and reconciliation.

I shall not go back over the measures which have been decided on in this context and which are summarized in documents 165 EX/43 and 165 EX/7.

Nevertheless, for over two months, because of the situation in the region involving serious security problems and difficulties of access to the Palestinian territories for UNESCO staff and experts, it has not been possible to take action on the ground as quickly and effectively as I would have wished.

Yet the educational needs are urgent and pressing.

As stated in the recent report by Ms Bertini, Kofi Annan's personal humanitarian envoy in Palestinian territory, "there is a very serious humanitarian situation ... in Gaza and the West Bank", which, as the two parties recognized, is the result of a lack of mobility and access, the harmful effects of which, according to Ms Bertini, are very considerable. UNICEF considered in a recent communiqué that, one month after the start of the new school year, although the great majority of the one million Palestinian students have returned to school, some 226,000 of them and more than 9,300 teachers have been unable to rejoin their classes and more than 580 establishments have been closed.

I cannot but join with UNICEF in emphasizing that the right to education is an inalienable right which must be guaranteed for all Palestinian children. The situation is all the more worrying in that, as we all believe, education is a powerful tool for changing attitudes root and branch and sowing the seeds of tolerance and mutual understanding in the minds of all. Without these attributes, any hopes of lasting reconciliation are vain.

It is worth noting that Israeli leaders have recently promised to take steps to improve the lot of the Palestinian population and to facilitate the work of the various agencies of the United Nations system. In this connection we must commend the representatives and special envoys of the Secretary-General for what they have achieved. UNESCO received the same assurance in the course of the contacts made with the Israeli authorities by a mission of the Sector for External Relations and Cooperation which I sent to Israel and the Palestinian territories in September.

Recently, indeed, I have dispatched several missions to the region. The addendum to document 165 EX/43 provides a summary of their conclusions and reports on the discussions with the competent Palestinian and Israeli authorities. This document, in English and French, will not be available until Wednesday morning.

The mission of the Sector for External Relations and Cooperation was led by the Sector's Deputy Assistant Director-General. She informed the two parties about the

programmes and projects which UNESCO is considering for the region and reviewed the ways and means of implementing them, including the facilities that would be provided to UNESCO staff and consultants to carry out the activities concerned. Another aim of the mission was to re-establish contacts with the representatives of civil society – intellectuals, associations, young people – with a view to strengthening dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians.

One of our colleagues in the field of communication also travelled to the region in September in order to conduct an evaluation of needs in the Palestinian territories and to prepare projects encouraging dialogue and cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian journalists and building up their professional solidarity. The free flow of information and the diffusion to all of objective and non-partisan data are part of the mandate set out in UNESCO's Constitution. That is why the Organization encourages the existence and maintenance of an independent press, free from sabre-rattling and incitement to hatred, particularly during a period of conflict.

In the field of culture, a mission led by the Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre is now in the region. Its purpose is to make a general inventory of the Palestinian cultural and natural heritage, its state of conservation and of the steps that should be taken to restore it. For it is clear that, in addition to current activities, such as the restoration and enhancement of various archaeological monuments and sites in Jericho, Nablus and Bethlehem, we must do more to preserve the Palestinian heritage as a whole.

In the field of education, further to the mission carried out in May by the Director of the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), I shall be sending a high-level mission to the Palestinian territories in November. This mission will cover the various aspects of the education system and its main purpose will be to make a start on the activities envisaged within the limits of the carry-over of funds.

It would be impossible to achieve these objectives without strengthening the UNESCO Office in Ramallah. An education specialist has just been appointed there, and will be joined shortly by a culture specialist. I also intend to second certain members of the Secretariat to the Ramallah Office on a temporary basis, along the lines of what we did in Kabul. This strengthened presence on the ground will help the Palestinian Authority to carry through the renovation and reconstruction of infrastructures and continue with the reform of the education system.

Lastly, I shall do my best to mobilize other extrabudgetary funding sources. I should like to take this opportunity to launch a solemn appeal to the Member States, to show their solidarity with the Palestinian people by supporting the various reconstruction projects which UNESCO intends to undertake in its fields of competence.

UNESCO's strength resides, however, not so much in its financial and human resources as in the values of social justice and human dignity that it can promote. It must, above all else, give its backing to all those disposed to work for reconciliation in the region.

I welcome the results achieved to that end by the various missions which I have recently sent, particularly the mission by the Sector for External Relations and Cooperation. Many of the partners whom we met in Israel and in the Palestinian territories have not abandoned their hopes for peace and want to grasp every opportunity for dialogue in order to re-establish a climate of trust and mutual respect. The determination to work together which was shown by representatives of NGOs, educational and research institutions, journalists and the Israeli Commission for UNESCO makes our role and our work for reconciliation today more vital than ever. I myself will continue to give very firm encouragement to all possibilities of reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis by building bridges between intellectuals, academics and young people. Sooner or later, I am sure, such "peace-seeking" activities will bear fruit.

An encouraging sign is offered by the mission which the Director of the World Heritage Centre is now leading to Jerusalem, where he is meeting with the various institutions responsible for the conservation of the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem: the Waqf, the representatives of the Christian Churches and the Israeli Antiquities Authority. These preliminary meetings will, I hope, create favourable prospects for the initiative which I launched a year ago for the safeguarding of the Old City of Jerusalem.

I have no more ardent wish than to see the vision proposed by the Security Council become a reality: "a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders". In order for this political project to become reality, it is necessary to engage people's hearts and minds: that is our present endeavour.

PART III

I now come to the final part of my statement, on the preliminary proposals concerning the next Programme and Budget, namely document 32 C/5. These proposals have been based on a broad consultation comprising, as usual, a series of regional meetings of National Commissions together with written replies from Member States and international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

While maintaining continuity with document 31 C/5 and pursuing the policy objectives of the Medium-Term Strategy, the proposals seek to strengthen specific features of the present programme – here I am thinking mainly of concentration, since we are all aware of its continuing inadequacy – and to remedy particular

shortcomings, such as the fact that there are no explicit links with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), intersectorality or decentralization.

A big step has been taken towards concentration with the determining of five principal priorities, one for each sector, which have – under the present programme – come in for substantial budgetary reinforcement. It would seem to me to be altogether too early, after barely nine months of implementation, to modify the choice of these priorities, even though I have seen fit, in culture and in communication, to enlarge upon their definition and scope. Given the impact of UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, it seems to me that it is in the combined promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue that UNESCO's specific "niche" today lies; and while equitable access to information must remain our major objective, we now know that such information is pointless unless it generates knowledge.

I therefore propose to build the next programme around the same five principal priorities; basic education for all; water and ecosystems; ethics of science and technology; cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; equitable access to information and knowledge. These five priorities have, in the present programme, been decisively strengthened with the allocation of 30% or even 50% more resources. It would seem difficult to repeat the operation, short of scrapping all the other programmes. Hence I propose for document 32 C/5 to carry out selective budgetary reinforcement concerning "priorities within priorities", such as, in the case of education for all, the education of girls, non-formal education and the quality of education; and where culture is concerned, the intangible heritage, the activities of the World Heritage Centre and follow-up to the Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

With this targeted approach, to be supplemented by the identification of a small number of "secondary priorities", I hope that document 32 C/5 will mark a decisive step towards greater concentration and hence greater impact. For impact is what really counts in the end. The effort to assess such impact more effectively, through the shaping of clear and precise "expected results", must be pursued and fleshed out with the identification of performance indicators that I wish henceforth to see in the C/5 document itself.

Another principle of concentration – and this is one of the major shortcomings that will have to be put right – is clear definition of the contribution of each programme to achievement of the goals set in the Millennium Declaration. For the Millennium goals must structure the activity of all the institutions that go to make up the United Nations system. It is in relation to these goals that an appreciation is possible of how consistent and complementary their respective action is. I note that, in his reform document, Kofi Annan intends to review all the United Nations programmes in the light of these objectives. We must do likewise.

I do not know whether intersectorality should be termed a "shortcoming" or "potentiality" of UNESCO. Obviously, we must do more and even better in that

regard. In addition to intersectoral projects relating to the two cross-cutting themes (eradication of poverty and the contribution of information and communication technologies to the development of education, science and culture and the construction of a knowledge society), we must emphasize other types of intersectoral action and make them more visible. It is probably not advisable to increase the number of “cross-cutting themes” *ad infinitum*. We will nevertheless need to show clearly how some cross-cutting objectives, such as sustainable development, are approached in an interdisciplinary and intersectoral manner under each major programme: a summary table or a system of cross references might come in useful here.

Our greater presence in the field is certainly one of the major objectives of my endeavours in the years ahead. This must be reflected in document 32 C/5 not only through a net increase in the volume of decentralized activities and posts but also, as I mentioned just now, better understanding of the specific roles and objectives of the various components of UNESCO: Headquarters, field units, the UNESCO Institutes and Centres under UNESCO auspices, whose own contributions to the various programmes must be clearly shown in document 32 C/5.

Budget

As far as the budget for the 32 C/5 is concerned, my proposals have been drawn up on a zero real growth assumption. Allow me, in this regard, to clarify one or two points, since the terminology used in the United Nations, and therefore in UNESCO, can sometimes be misleading. Paradoxically, zero real growth does not mean any additional resources: it merely stands for holding purchasing power at the same level as in the ongoing biennial budget, and working into the budget base such increases as stem from statutory factors or inflation. In other words, when we propose to go for a zero real growth budget, we are not proposing any increase in the budget, just the current budget at the price levels that will prevail in two years' time.

The technical estimates presented in Part III of document 165 EX/5 set the level of additional costs to be incurred over the next biennium at an expected amount of \$52.9 million for the same volume of activities and the same number of posts as in this biennium. Out of these \$52.9 million, over 70% (i.e. \$37.8 million) correspond to statutory increases to which UNESCO is bound as a result of its participation in the United Nations Common System. These are, in particular, as follows:

- (1) the **11 million-dollar adjustment** that occurred in 2001, following the revision of the post adjustment for Paris and the introduction by the United Nations of a new field security cost-sharing system. This adjustment was approved by the General Conference, and thus increases the technical base for the 2002-2003 budget to \$555 million, even though I committed myself to absorbing this adjustment over the current biennium within the overall staff costs budget. This is why so many posts have had to be kept vacant

over the first six months of the biennium, a fact which has had a serious impact on the Secretariat's implementation capacity, particularly in the field;

- (2) the **increase in pension costs**, amounting to \$8 million at a low estimate, at a time when, the world over, the cost of financing retirement payments is rising uncontrollably;
- (3) the **probable increase in the salaries** of professionals and directors, which will have an estimated impact of around 10 million dollars on the 32 C/5. This increase, recommended by the ICSC, will soon be examined by the United Nations General Assembly. It could come into effect as early as 2003.

In addition to the compulsory statutory increases, which mainly affect staff costs, the estimated impact of inflation on goods and services is \$15.1 million – i.e. around 3.2% annual inflation. You may ask why this figure, and not the inflation as prevailing in the host country? The answer is that inflation in France is calculated on the basis of what is called the “shopping basket”, which contains products that are very different in nature from the type of goods and services UNESCO uses. These inflation rates, which are estimated overall at 3.2% per annum, are in fact calculated for each object of expenditure, based on the official inflation indices of international organizations as well as those published for France by the INSEE.

If I have wished to give you these detailed explanations, it is because they respond to questions I am often asked, and I felt it was important to demonstrate that the amount of \$52.9 million in nominal growth is fully justified from a technical point of view. In this regard, I am delighted that the Group of Experts of the FA Commission has duly recognized this.

The resulting total of \$597 million therefore corresponds to the current 31 C/5 budget as adjusted to take 2004 and 2005 prices into account. This is a **technical estimate**. It is without prejudice at all to the budget's content in programmatic terms. It simply means that if certain areas or activities are to be reinforced, there will have to be a corresponding reduction in other expenditure, since overall resources remain unchanged.

My proposal to reduce that amount from \$597 million to \$576 million is a **political proposal**, which takes into consideration the current economic and budget situation of certain groups of Member States and their actual payment capacities. The figure of \$576 million

was established by deciding to absorb – voluntarily – certain statutory adjustments concerning staff costs. This figure of \$21.3 million corresponds to the cost of between 120 and 140 posts. Yet I am convinced that we have reached a point

where any additional reduction in our staff would seriously affect our programme delivery capacities.

As a benchmark, let me recall that under a zero *nominal* growth assumption (i.e. a budget ceiling of \$544 million), the shortfall would be equivalent to the abolition of between 320 and 340 posts. I say this deliberately in the conditional tense, for under such a scenario, it would be out of the question for the staff to bear, once again, the full effects: it would be the programme that would be hit, and hit hard.

I feel that I must react to certain comments that are coming my way about “efficiency gains”. During the current biennium, I have accepted the “absorption” of the entirety of the additional costs – both statutory and nominal – in the context of zero nominal growth. I have further accepted the absorption of \$11 million worth of last-minute adjustments. And I have accepted the absorption of all the “investments” which far-reaching reform entails. Now, for the next biennium, I am proposing yet again to absorb statutory cost increases to the tune of \$21 million, not to mention the costs of reform. And yet I hear talk of efficiency gains! The answer is that they are built into the very design of the budget from the outset. To go any further would be no doubt to cross the red line between the notion of “efficiency gains” and that of “effectiveness losses”.

To conclude, allow me to stress how much I share the concerns of those countries that are facing such economic and financial uncertainty. It is precisely the reason why I have spontaneously made a gesture in their direction. I trust they will do the same.

To go for a zero nominal growth budget – in other words, I repeat, for a decreasing budget – would be to give a public sign of distrust towards UNESCO, towards the international cooperation model it proposes and the objectives it pursues just at a time when the United States of America is showing renewed interest and confidence in the Organization.

Is that really the message you wish to deliver to international public opinion?

It goes without saying that these proposals were drawn up well before President Bush’s announcement that the United States was re-joining UNESCO. That announcement changes the situation radically, even though it is too early to speculate about its implications, since the date on which this return will take effect is not yet known, nor are the positions of the US Administration concerning UNESCO’s programme and budget. It would therefore be premature to launch into hypotheses concerning the possible budget level for the Organization with US membership. Consultations on this matter are only at a very preliminary stage.

But one thing should be made clear as of now: **the budget of this Organization cannot be the same with American membership as without it.**

The United States' return into UNESCO's community of nations should be consonant with the emotion to which the announcement gave rise: it should mean something for our Organization; it should give renewed momentum to the drive for change and should act as a powerful catalyst for our impact in key areas such as basic education, the quality of education, water or cultural diversity.

I therefore propose that the next draft programme and budget should be built according to two scenarios. The first would be based on a budget ceiling that would not include the US contribution, and could be discussed at this session of the Executive Board. My wish is that this figure be \$576 million, for all the reasons I have set out earlier.

The second scenario would be based on the United States' renewed membership in UNESCO, and would highlight the potential such a return would entail for us, the "added value" it could bring to our action in the areas recognized as priorities by the entire international community.

It is too early to speculate at this juncture as to the budget ceiling upon which this second scenario could be built. That will need to be the subject of consultations at a later date among all concerned parties, and first and foremost with the American authorities themselves.

What is clear is that that budget ceiling cannot be the same as the one that would have been determined without the United States. If that were to happen, if the main effect of US re-entry were simply to be to bring about a cut in the contributions of the wealthy Member States, then I fear President Bush's decision would not be of much interest to the American citizen, and would be a distinct disappointment when one considers the huge wave of enthusiasm this announcement has engendered, and which we continue to witness day by day.

What I can promise, as of now, is that any such return to real growth – however modest – will be used, not to sit back and relax in our reform efforts nor to return to the practice of scattered and fragmented programmes, but visibly to boost the drive for focus and effectiveness already under way.

I truly hope that the long-awaited return of the United States is seen today as an historic opportunity given to us to "make a difference" by enabling us to propose global responses to global issues. I hope that this giant step we have just made towards universality will also lead us towards excellence and the recognition of this Organization's crucial role in the 21st century.