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1996

Medium-Term Strategy

2001



III Medium-Term Strategy for 1996-2001

0.12 Medium-Term Strategy for 1996-2001¹

The General Conference,

I

Reaffirming the determination set out in the Charter of the United Nations, to 'preserve future generations from the scourge of war',

Recalling that UNESCO was created 'for the purpose of advancing, through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind for which the United Nations Organization was established',

Recognizing the specific nature of UNESCO's mission, which is to construct the defences of peace upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind,

Considering:

- that the construction of peace is more than ever necessary for the preparation of the future,
- that the resolute defence of the democratic principles of the dignity, equality and mutual respect of men is the most decisive means in the struggle against exclusion, discrimination, intolerance and violence which, in their extreme forms, fuelled by ignorance and prejudice, threaten the cohesion of societies and induce peoples to engage in deadly conflicts,
- that new perils now threaten international security, perils whose names are intolerable inequalities between nations and within societies, ethnic conflicts, poverty, unemployment, social injustice, rural decline and urban decay, mass migrations, environmental degradation, new pandemics or arms and drug trafficking,
- that the path to international peace and security today is development conceived on a global scale, in which the prosperity of societies would be based on the enhancement of human resources and would serve to promote the blossoming of the abilities of everyone, without distinction of any kind,
- that human dignity therefore requires, today even more than yesterday, education for all, mutual knowledge and understanding among peoples, the free flow of ideas, and access for everyone to the fruits of knowledge and particularly to scientific and technical progress - since education, science, culture and communication today represent the surest means to promote development, prevent conflicts, consolidate democracy and, hence, gradually to establish an authentic culture of peace,

Convinced that the major challenge at the close of the twentieth century is to begin the transition from a culture of war to this culture of peace:

- a culture of social interaction and sharing, based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, tolerance and solidarity,

1. Resolution adopted at the eighteenth plenary meeting, on 13 November 1995.

- a culture that rejects violence, endeavours to prevent conflicts by tackling their roots and to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation,
- a culture which guarantees everyone the full exercise of all rights and the means to participate fully in the endogenous development of their society,

II

1. *Solemnly renews* its commitment to the principles on which UNESCO is built and to the purposes which sustain it, as set out in its Constitution;
2. *Reaffirms* the significance and relevance of UNESCO's mandate, which is 'to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion';
3. *Considers* that UNESCO may take pride in its contribution in the course of its first 50 years of existence towards the construction of peace, in spite of the many obstacles which it has encountered in carrying out its tasks;
4. *Reaffirms* that the human being is at the centre of the processes of development and peace;
5. *Considers it indispensable* for UNESCO to continue to fulfil its specifically ethical calling in a world seeking new landmarks and common values, now that greater vigilance is necessary in view of the grave violations of the most fundamental rights in its fields of competence;
6. *Reaffirms* in this connection the urgent need to strengthen the moral solidarity of mankind in order to safeguard its common heritage - natural and cultural, tangible and intangible, intellectual and genetic;
7. *Expresses its conviction* that international intellectual co-operation must be strengthened, and *stresses* the key role that UNESCO should continue to play in this regard:
 - as an *intellectual forum*, encouraging the efforts of the international community to gain a better grasp of the changes occurring in the world today, in all their complexity, and to devise innovative strategies to meet the emerging challenges in the Organization's fields of competence;
 - as a *motivating force*, prompting decision-makers, especially political leaders, to make firm commitments concerning the adoption and implementation of those strategies at both national and international levels;
 - as a *standard-setting body*, promoting the adoption and application of international norms and instruments in its fields of competence and assisting Member States in the modernization of their legislation in these fields;
 - as a *clearing house*, fostering the worldwide dissemination of specialized information on the state of the art and trends in the Organization's fields of competence;
 - as a *catalyst*, promoting research, training and teaching activities contributing to the advancement, transfer and sharing of knowledge;
 - as an *adviser*, supporting Member States in their development efforts by providing high quality technical expertise in its fields of competence;

III

8. *Welcomes* the fact that the Medium-Term Strategy for 1996-2001 is the result of collective thinking, which resulted in a fruitful debate between the Member States themselves, through their National Commissions, and between the Member States and the Secretariat and in which the non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, the academic and scientific institutions concerned and prominent independent figures were closely involved;
9. *Also welcomes* the fact that the Strategy has taken account of the findings of the major international conferences organized, under the auspices of the United Nations in particular, between 1990 and 1995, which enabled the international community to examine in depth the great challenges associated with development and human rights;
10. *Recognizes* the quality of UNESCO's contributions to those debates, and *welcomes* the fact that, through such forums as the ad hoc Forum of Reflection of the Executive Board, 'Audience Africa', the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century, the

World Commission on Culture and Development and the International Bioethics Committee, it has lent fresh impetus to international intellectual co-operation;

11. *Notes with satisfaction* the innovative character of this Strategy, which presents in a clear and concise manner the general policy of the Organization, its mission, priorities and overall strategies;

12. *Appreciates* the central place given in the Medium-Term Strategy to UNESCO's contribution to the promotion of development and peace, the twin objectives common to the whole United Nations system;

13. *Expresses the conviction* that peace and development are inseparable and that the two sets of strategies proposed for contributing to development and to peace must therefore be seen as intimately linked and complementary so that their implementation can contribute to the simultaneous advancement of peace, development and democracy;

14. *Emphasizes* the necessity and urgency of wide-ranging action on behalf of women, young people, the least-developed countries and Africa, and *invites* the international community as a whole to mobilize its energies and resources in order to provide practical answers to the needs and aspirations of these four priority groups;

15. *Approves* the main lines of emphasis of the Medium-Term Strategy for 1996-2001 and the overall structure of the document;

16. *Adopts* the recommendations which the Executive Board has made in this regard, as they appear in documents 28 C/9 and 28 C/(6&9) Add., and *invites* the Director-General to incorporate them in the final version of the Medium-Term Strategy for 1996-2001;

17. *Requests* the Director-General to present to the Executive Board, starting at its 149th session, proposals for the adaptation of the Organization to support the implementation of the Medium-Term Strategy, taking account of: resource availability; the need for an effective accountability framework which makes known the results achieved; and the expressed wish of Member States to avoid overlap and duplication with other international organizations and for further concentration and focus on programme areas of established UNESCO competence;

18. *Launches* an urgent appeal to all Member States to ensure that the strategies proposed are effectively taken into account when policies relating to UNESCO's fields of competence are framed at national level, and to muster the necessary resources, human, technical and financial, in order to guarantee their effective implementation;

IV

19. *Recognizes* that the success of the strategies proposed will depend *inter alia* on the solid commitment of Member States to their implementation, their ability to secure, nationally and internationally, the resources necessary for that purpose and their determination to ensure the widest possible dissemination of the ideals of UNESCO so that they can be known to and shared by the greatest possible number of people;

20. *Emphasizes* the major role that the National Commissions have to play in this connection in setting up new partnerships with competent bodies representative of society, particularly national parliaments, municipal authorities, the private sector and local non-governmental organizations, in order to secure their active co-operation in promoting the ideals of UNESCO and to increase the relevance, scope and effectiveness of its action at local level;

21. *Urges* Member States to strengthen their National Commissions by providing them with the status, capacity and resources which they require to discharge their functions effectively, so that they can play an increasing role in the design, implementation and evaluation of the Organization's activities, including those concerned with co-operation for development;

22. *Reaffirms* the need to develop a 'united thrust' of multilateral co-operation for development and, at the highest decision-making levels in the United Nations system, to frame co-ordinated policies and strategies, and to establish frameworks for joint action at regional and national levels, based on regard for the responsibilities of the various institutions concerned;

23. *Considers* that consultations and co-operation with intergovernmental organizations and funding sources should aim to generate increased investment in UNESCO's fields of competence, particularly within the framework of regional and national development plans, and to facilitate the co-ordination and harmonization of activities at national level;

24. *Recommends* the strengthening of collaboration with non-governmental organizations on the basis of a more flexible and more dynamic approach aimed at assisting the integration of local non-governmental organizations into international co-operation networks;
25. *Emphasizes* also the continued importance of an efficient cost-effective, programme-oriented Secretariat, committed to meet the stated needs of Member States in the fields of UNESCO's competence;

V

26. *Reiterates* its deep conviction that the only viable peace is a peace based on 'the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples', as stated in the Constitution;
27. *Solemnly reaffirms*, on the eve of the celebration to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution, that the completion of UNESCO's supreme mission of constructing the defences of peace in the minds of men requires a strengthening of the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind, for only in this way will the ideals that inspired the States to create UNESCO become, within peoples, the driving force capable of securing the commitment of all to the goal of peace.