

## Chapter IV

## United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) continued in 2002 to promote cooperation in education, science, culture and communication among its member States.

The General Conference, which met biennially to decide on policy, programmes and budgetary matters, was scheduled to hold its thirty-second session in 2003. The 58-member Executive Board held its one hundred and sixty-fourth (21-30 May) and its one hundred and sixty-fifth (7-17 October) sessions, both in Paris.

In 2002, UNESCO membership remained at 188, with six associate members.

### Activities

#### Education

As follow-up to the 2000 World Education Forum [YUN 2000, p. 1416], UNESCO continued to coordinate international partners and sustain their momentum for achieving the education for all (EFA) goals. The *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002, Education for All: Is the World on Track?* stimulated discussion at the second meeting of the high-level group meeting on EFA (Abuja, Nigeria, 19-20 November). UNESCO launched a programme in support of national capacity-building for lead teacher-training institutions in sub-Saharan Africa; supported the preparation of EFA national action plans in 20 countries; and contributed to strengthening national capacities in education policy dialogue in least developed countries and countries in transition in South-East and Central Europe.

UNESCO participated in the Ministers of Education Conference (Cuba, 14-16 November), which adopted the Havana Declaration and approved a regional education project for Latin America and the Caribbean for 2002-2017, and in the Eighth Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States (Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, 2-6 December), which adopted a Statement of Commitment to make EFA one of the top development priorities. The General Assembly, by **resolution 57/254** (see p. 826), designated UNESCO as the lead agency to promote the United Nations Decade of Educa-

tion for Sustainable Development (2005-2015) and to draft an international implementation scheme. The International Conference on Secondary Education for a Better Future (Oman, 22-24 December), organized by the Government of Oman in collaboration with UNESCO, supported secondary education reorientation and reform. A network of government officers in charge of science and technology education at ministries of education was established to facilitate closer links among the ministries. The Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, established under the auspices of UNESCO to address new challenges to access, quality and equity brought on by the increase in private and commercial provision of higher education worldwide, held its first meeting (Paris, 17-18 October).

#### Sciences

Under the programme of sciences in the service of development, UNESCO continued to promote the advancement, sharing and transfer of knowledge. It emphasized the fostering of synergies between the exact and natural sciences and the social and human sciences.

#### Natural sciences

In 2002, UNESCO's activities in the natural sciences continued to focus on the advancement and transfer of scientific and technological knowledge, the training of scientists and the provision of advisory services and training programmes on science and technology policy-making and planning.

The International Centre for Synchrotron Light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East was established under UNESCO auspices; Jordan was selected to host the Centre and construction was expected to begin in 2003. In the environmental sciences, the number of sites within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves rose to 425 in 95 countries; in Africa, a trilateral transboundary reserve was approved in the region between Benin, Burkina Faso and the Niger.

Through its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, UNESCO continued to coordinate UN activities in ocean and coastal issues. The International Hydrological Programme focused on minimizing threats to sustainability and security of the world's vulnerable freshwater resources, particularly those of developing countries.

UNESCO organized and/or supported major conferences, including the Global Ocean Data Assimilation Experiment Conference (Biarritz, France, June); the first Indian Ocean Global Ocean Observing System (IOGOOS) Conference (Mauritius, 4-9 November), at which a Memorandum of Understanding on IOGOOS was signed by nine countries; a regional seminar on African-shared aquifer systems (Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, June); and an international conference with the theme "From Conflict to Cooperation in International Water Resources Management: Challenges and Opportunities" (Delft, Netherlands, November).

#### Social and human sciences

Since January 2002, UNESCO's World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology, which, in the past, had focused on the ethics of freshwater, outer space, energy and the information society, sought to advance ethical reflection and amplify the study of issues of concern by bringing them into the broader perspective of environmental ethics and sustainability.

UNESCO awarded the 2002 Prize for Human Rights Education to the Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos, a pioneer in human rights education in Mexico, and the 2002 UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence to Aung San Suu Kyi (Myanmar) for her non-violent struggle for democracy and tolerance.

#### Culture

In 2002, UNESCO extended the concept of heritage by promoting the oral and intangible heritage of humanity, and, for that purpose, organ-

ized a round table of ministers of culture on the intangible heritage: a mirror of cultural diversity (Istanbul, Turkey, 16-17 September). UNESCO drafted a new Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, and continued the programme entitled "Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity", which enabled UNESCO to draw up a list of certain manifestations of the oral and intangible heritage of exceptional value and threatened with extinction.

UNESCO convened a high-level round table on cultural diversity and biodiversity for sustainable development during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (see p. 821). UNESCO also launched the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity to unite partners from public, private and non-governmental sectors to work on projects, including music, publishing, cinema, multimedia and design.

#### Communication

UNESCO continued to promote activities in favour of press freedom, notably through the worldwide celebration of World Press Freedom Day on 3 May. It also participated in the preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, 2003; Tunisia, 2005) (see p. 836). In September, it launched the programme for creative content, to promote the expression of cultural and linguistic diversity in the media and cyberspace.

#### Secretariat

As at 31 December 2002, UNESCO had 2,130 full-time staff, of whom 1,009 were in the Professional or higher categories and 1,121 were in the General Service category.

#### Budget

The UNESCO General Conference, in 2001, had approved a budget of \$544,367,250 for the 2002-2003 biennium.

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UNESCO also maintained a liaison office in Geneva.