



United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization

2002-2007

Africa

Regional Strategy

Related to the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy

(31 C/4 Approved)

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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**Medium-Term Strategy
(2002-2007)
for the Africa region**

Contributing to peace and human development in an era of globalization
through education, the sciences, culture and communication

Document drawn up following the Director-General's consultation
with the National Commissions for UNESCO of the Africa region

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Medium-Term Strategy (2002-2007) for the countries of the Africa region is an essential programme axis of UNESCO's new decentralization policy. It forms an integral part of the Organization's overall strategic objectives defined by the Member States in the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007 (31 C/4), which aims to contribute to peace and human development through education, the sciences, culture and communication.

2. In the context of the overall priorities determined by the Organization, this Strategy corresponds to four objectives:

- adapting UNESCO's overall strategies to local characteristics, conditions and initiatives;
- serving as a framework for joint action for the preparation of biennial work plans by the cluster offices, regional offices and national offices;
- supporting and strengthening the new decentralization policy, aimed at involving Member States more closely in UNESCO's action;
- constituting an information and cooperation tool for Member States and all partners – United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks, bilateral donors, IGOs, NGOs and other elements of civil society – with particular reference to the pursuit of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

3. UNESCO's universal mission is bolstered by its capacity to initiate actions that take account of the diversity of its Member States and the distinctive nature of differing geographical regions. The Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007 therefore deserves to be spelt out in an Africa regional strategy in UNESCO's fields of competence. This is especially important for the sub-Saharan Africa region, which ranks as one of the Organization's priority areas. In terms of peace and human development, the region is confronted with enormous – and, in some cases, unparalleled – challenges that concern not only each of its constituent countries, but also the international community. Against this backdrop, Africa has embarked upon a fresh process of collective and concerted action geared to addressing the key issues involved in peace and development. The underlying momentum is most apparent in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), to which UNESCO's action in the region will make a leading contribution.

II. THE CHALLENGES CONFRONTING PEACE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA IN AN ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

4. Over the past 40 years or so, sub-Saharan countries have experienced all manner of trying events, and have made significant efforts in every area of development. They have entered the new millennium with a number of achievements to their name, but are still faced with tremendous and, above all, pressing challenges. Indeed, the contemporary world is forging a global system that exploits and marginalizes weaker countries. If African countries are to emerge from their marginalization by securing a measure of independence, they need to address the major challenges prevailing in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres.

In the political sphere:

Meeting the challenge of democracy, respect for human rights, peace and security:

- Great progress has been made in the democratization of political life in Africa, democratic transition being a slow and complex process in which each country has a distinctive profile stemming from its own particular history. Democratization processes have often been accompanied by painful transitions and readjustments that have thrown some of the countries concerned into socio-political disarray or even open conflict centred on reconstruction in the institutional and constitutional spheres or in the realms of political leadership, power sharing or wealth and knowledge distribution within society;
- Participation in the democratic process remains a remote prospect for a good many populations and groups, especially women. In 32 countries, women account for between 0% and 0.9% of elected representatives;
- The full extent of the challenge is illustrated by the situation in countries blighted by often long-running civil conflicts;
- War-torn countries affect their neighbours in many ways (refugee flows of some eight million people, arms dealing, proliferation of anti-personnel mines, accelerated destruction of the environment, disorganization of economies, etc.). Certain regional conflicts have had an impact and ramifications that extend way beyond their original causes and consequences.

In the economic sphere:

Meeting the challenge of growth for sustainable development:

- Three quarters of the population in sub-Saharan Africa is surviving on less than US \$2 a day, while economic growth in the 1990s amounted to just 2.1% per annum, which was less than the population growth rate (2.8% p.a.) and well short of the annual target of 7% needed for Africa to halve the number of people living in poverty by 2015;
- With scarcely 1% of the world's total GDP and 2% of international trade flows, Africa's share of exports in manufactured goods is almost non-existent. Average GDP per State barely exceeds US \$2 billion;
- Sub-Saharan Africa's foreign debt was US \$206 billion in 2000, with some countries posting a ratio of debt to exports of 180.2% and a ratio of debt to GDP of 66.1%;
- Thirty-four of the 49 least developed countries (LDCs) are African;
- Total net capital flows into Africa were lower in the 1990s than in the 1970s. ODA, however, would need to double (with an annual increase of US \$10 billion) for African economies to achieve the necessary growth to reduce poverty by half by the year 2015;
- Desertification and drought together with the deterioration of forests and the environment in general are seriously threatening the very survival of populations south of the Sahara. Another major problem is the rapid degradation of African coastal areas.

In the social sphere:

Meeting the challenge of poverty and women's empowerment in every field:

- Sub-Saharan Africa, more than any other region in the world, has been devastated by HIV/AIDS. Some 28.1 million inhabitants (adults and children) – out of a world total of 40 million people – had been affected by the pandemic by the end of 2001, a year in which the virus claimed 2.1 million lives;
- African populations are gradually becoming urbanized, with around 50% of people currently living in cities. This very frequently unplanned urbanization is leading to social marginalization and environmental degradation;
- There are worrying socio-economic disparities between rural and urban societies, with the Human Development Indicator (HDI) for rural areas in some countries being half as low as for urban areas;
- The economic and social status of women needs to be sharply improved. The gender-related development index is lower in sub-Saharan Africa than in any other region in the world: (0.459 compared to 0.634 for all developing countries);
- All 19 of the world's lowest HDI countries are in sub-Saharan Africa. The maternal mortality rate in 15 countries is between 1,000 and 1,800 per 100,000 births. The child mortality rate is 140 for every 1,000 children under the age of five;
- Some 51% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa will be living in absolute poverty by around 2005;
- The illiteracy rate for people over the age of 15 is 41%, with highly marked interregional, gender and rural-urban disparities;
- In 1998, the net primary education enrolment rate in sub-Saharan Africa was 60% (66% boys and 54% girls), and the number of out-of-school children was on the rise: 42 million compared to 65 million enrolled, the largest proportion in the world (EFA 2000 Assessment). In some countries, however, the enrolment rate is higher for girls. This is true of South Africa and Botswana, where the rate for girls is 3% higher, Swaziland 4% and Lesotho 10%;
- School dropout and grade repetition rates in sub-Saharan Africa are, on average, the highest in the world (Statistical Document, 2000), undermining the effectiveness of efforts to achieve universal primary education and burdening the countries concerned with extra expenditure;
- The average pupil/teacher ratio in Central and Western Africa rose from 50:1 in 1990 to 52:1 in 1998, with strong intra-regional disparities. Achieving the EFA objectives will require significant growth in the number of trained teachers and a marked improvement in their status.

In the cultural sphere:

Globalization largely tends towards standardization and homogenization, even insofar as lifestyles are concerned. The mass media play a key role here. But it is a trend that risks leaving humanity all the poorer.

- In 1997, 2.2 tons of cultural paper (newsprint, other printing and writing paper) was consumed per person in sub-Saharan Africa, against a world average of 21 tons (World Culture Report 2000, UNESCO);
- Almost 900,000 titles are published around the world each year, 73% of them in the developed countries and just 1.5% in Africa;
- With respect to telecommunications, Africa had an estimated 14 main telephone lines per 1,000 inhabitants in 1996, compared with a world average of 131;
- As far as equipment was concerned, the figures per 100 inhabitants were as follows: 17 radio sets against a world average of 36; 3.5 television sets against a world average of 23; 0.3 personal computers against a world average of 4.4 (*UNESCO Statistical Yearbook*, 1998).

UNESCO's contribution to the goals of NEPAD

5. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is "a pledge by African leaders, based on a common vision and a firm and shared conviction, that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development, and at the same time to participate actively in the world economy and body politic". Unlike the other initiatives seeking to further the development of Africa, NEPAD is an endogenous African initiative, managed at the highest level by Heads of State representing democratic transition. The political will that they have demonstrated is likely to enable NEPAD to mobilize each and every development actor at the level of the various African countries. NEPAD is an open initiative that has been well received by the international community, which provides support at the level of every governing body through to that of the G-8.

Goals and strategy of NEPAD

6. The long-term objective of NEPAD is to eradicate poverty in Africa and to place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development, thus halting the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process. Its objectives are the following:

- To achieve and sustain average growth in gross domestic product (GDP) of above 7% per annum over the next 15 years.
- To ensure that the continent achieves the agreed international development goals:
 - Halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty between 1990 and 2015;
 - Ensuring that all children of school age are enrolled in primary schools by 2015;
 - Making progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment by eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary school enrolment by 2005;
 - Reducing infant and child mortality by two thirds between 1990 and 2015;
 - Reducing maternal mortality by three quarters between 1990 and 2015;
 - Securing access for all to reproductive health services by 2015;
 - Implementing national strategies for sustainable development by 2005 and, hence, reversing the loss of environmental resources by 2015.

7. In order to make up for the accumulated delays and disparities in Africa's development, massive investment has been envisaged in what African leaders deem to be ten priority areas. These

include good political governance (democracy, respect for human rights, transparency); good economic governance (an independent justice system and the honest and transparent management of private companies); education; health; new information and communication technologies; energy; and access to developed-country markets.

8. UNESCO, particularly the Education Sector, will contribute to the realization of NEPAD goals in each of its fields of competence. With this in mind and in accordance with the recommendations of the international seminar on “Forward-looking approaches and innovative strategies to promote the development of Africa in the twenty-first century” (Paris, 8-9 November 2001), a number of working ideas have emerged so that practical responses can be made to the continent's priority needs.

Africa in UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy

9. UNESCO's strategic objectives for 2002-2007 are spelt out in document 31 C/4. As far as **Africa** is concerned, action will focus on four main thrusts presented in the box below. It will be supplemented by activities in aid of the least developed countries (LDCs), women and youth.

10. With respect to the LDCs, two thirds of which are in Africa, UNESCO will seek to: (i) target the most disadvantaged groups; (ii) spread and replicate successful examples of alternatives to traditional formal education; (iii) encourage the use of science and technology to improve material living conditions in the LDCs; (iv) use culture as a political lever for poverty alleviation (promoting artistic creation, developing cultural industries and intellectual property rights); and (v) facilitate the development of LDCs and their access to ICTs.

Addressing Africa's needs

With respect to **Africa**, UNESCO's action will be structured around four complementary objectives:

- *Promoting* human capacity-building in the region's Member States and, at subregional level, fostering initiatives to facilitate the coordination of programmes in the field of science and technology education and, to make basic education accessible to all;
- *Helping* African countries to establish a strategy for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases by developing and implementing national education plans and acknowledging cultural values;
- *Mobilizing*, and acting as a catalyst for, international cooperation in support of initiatives by Member States by fostering exchanges and cooperation, particularly with the OAU, African subregional organizations, the United Nations system, the World Bank and the African Development Bank with a view to drafting and implementing common policies and strategies in the Organization's priority fields in order to establish a sustainable culture of peace and to ensure sustainable development in Africa;
- *Promoting* the active participation of communities and representatives of civil society in the planning and implementation of development programmes, as well as their involvement in decision-making at national and local levels; and encouraging practices designed to strengthen the process of peaceful coexistence, democratization, democratic governance and tolerance.

11. As far as **women** are concerned, the Organization's action will primarily seek to: (i) promote their empowerment and achieve gender equality; (ii) develop programmes and activities that benefit girls and women of various ages; and (iii) promote and implement the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Lastly, as regards **youth**, the principal objective of UNESCO's efforts is the empowerment of young people so as to ensure and enhance their full participation as equal and valuable partners in community life, especially in the design and shaping of the knowledge society.

12. By identifying, in the framework of the present strategy, a deliberately limited number of action priorities at the regional level, UNESCO will focus on addressing the specific needs of the region in the fields of education, science, culture, communication and information in close correlation with NEPAD's goals. This regional strategy is based on the strategic objectives contained in document 31 C/4, including those relating to the two cross-cutting themes: the eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty, and the contribution of information and communication technologies to the development of education, science, culture and the construction of a knowledge society. It will help in particular to create greater synergy in the implementation of initiatives for education in Africa, and improve cooperation mechanisms in the field; assist in the formulation of science policies geared to scientific and technological development; promote acknowledgement of the cultural dimension of development; encourage the use of information and communication technologies to reduce the digital divide; support conflict prevention measures, and promote a culture of peace and tolerance. It is also based on an active mobilization of a wide variety of partners at the regional, interregional and international levels.

III. EDUCATION

Background

13. The challenges for development in Africa are reflected, in terms of both causes and effects, in the field of education.

- Early childhood development is, in most countries, left to private sector actors primarily working in urban areas in aid of more advantaged social groups.
- Almost 50% of countries may not attain the goal of universal primary education by 2015; nearly 40 million children are not going to school.
- HIV/AIDS is likely to claim the lives of 10% of teachers within the coming five years, and 20% of school-age children will be AIDS orphans.
- Illiteracy among individuals over the age of 15 stands at 41%; gender disparity in education prevails in 75% of countries.
- The gross secondary school enrolment rate exceeds 20% in 50% of countries, yet remains below 8% in 10 countries.
- Higher education and other levels and forms of education are experiencing problems with respect to access, quality and even relevance (with respect to the integration of graduates into socio-economic life).

UNESCO's contribution to NEPAD goals in education

14. Investment in education and the training of human resources is one of the cornerstones of the NEPAD strategy. NEPAD's specific goals with respect to education are to:

- work with donors and multilateral organizations to achieve the international development goal relating to universal primary education by 2015;
- contribute to improvements in curriculum development, quality improvements and access to new information and communication technologies (ICTs);
- expand access to secondary education and improve its relevance to Africa's development;
- promote networks of specialized research and higher education institutions;
- support measures for conflict prevention and management and promote a culture of peace, reconciliation and tolerance by enhancing UNESCO's capacity to cater for the needs of the countries and regions in a situation of crisis or conflict in the international community, primarily by supporting national and regional programmes and projects for a culture of peace.

15. Education is a precondition for development, economic growth and poverty elimination. It is the most powerful leverage for the promotion of welfare, for civic and social advancement, for the progress of democracy and respect for human rights, the building of peace and the promotion of an environment that allows pluralism and cultural diversity to prosper. Pursuing the six goals of Education for All, as defined at the World Education Forum in Dakar, is the principal strategic objective for UNESCO over the next six years, covering as it does both formal and non-formal education. Ensuring an effective follow-up to EFA in Africa, including through the preparation and implementation of EFA National Action Plans (NAP), is indeed at the heart of UNESCO's work in this field and corresponds fully to the expectation articulated in NEPAD. Broadening EFA to include secondary technical and vocational and higher education, the financing of education and the introduction of new technologies also constitute priority fields of action for UNESCO.

Education for All ♦ The six Dakar goals

(adopted by the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000)
(Dakar Framework for Action, para. 7)

“We hereby collectively commit ourselves to the attainment of the following goals:

- (i) expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- (ii) ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- (iii) ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
- (iv) achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
- (v) eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
- (vi) improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.”

16. Through education, especially preventive education, UNESCO is also committed to making a significant contribution to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS, drawing on its expertise not only in education, but equally in the sciences, in culture and in communication and information. UNESCO has already contributed to the formulation of specific strategies for Africa, as agreed at the Abuja conference, and will continue to intensify its action as a leader in the global effort to combat HIV/AIDS, as agreed at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly in June 2001.

17. UNESCO will contribute to NEPAD by fostering synergy between all of the initiatives for Africa: the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa (UNSI), the Organization of African Unity's Decade for Education in Africa, the African Literacy Decade, priority programmes of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), actions of the African Development Bank and so on. UNESCO will cooperate with African subregional organizations with a view to implementing their education programmes. It has collaborative arrangements to this effect with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), and the Portuguese-Speaking African Countries (PALOP); it maintains cooperation-based relations with such subregional organizations as the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CAEMC); and it is seeking to build partnerships in the near future with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD).

Education-related components of the regional strategy

18. UNESCO, in accordance with its three strategic objectives in the field of education, will strive with priority to meet the goals of the Dakar Framework for Action. Sub-Saharan Africa currently has more countries than any other region in the world that are in danger of failing to achieve the international goals of universal primary education and gender equality by the year 2015. Furthermore, Africa is the region that has been the worst hit by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which is affecting its population, its development and all of its human and institutional capacities, especially in the education sector. If current trends continue, it is unlikely to meet the international goal of halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. Furthermore, inequality and lack of access to the new information and communication technologies is a further factor contributing to the marginalization of the continent. These challenges – universal provision of primary education; taking account of the educational needs of countries in a situation of conflict or prolonged socio-political crisis; elimination of gender disparity in education; combating HIV/AIDS and transmissible diseases; development of the appropriate use of ICTs for educational purposes – will all be priority fields of action for UNESCO.

Strategic objective 1: Promoting education as a fundamental right in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

19. UNESCO's action will specifically concentrate on the following sub-objectives and areas:

- (i) **Facilitating EFA follow-up coordination at regional, subregional and national levels**, in close cooperation with all EFA partners and follow-up mechanisms existing at global level. UNESCO will, in consultation with all interested partners, contribute to the drafting of a regional action plan for follow-up to the World EFA Forum with a view to promoting the full range of EFA goals in the region, encouraging information-sharing on EFA at regional level, monitoring progress towards EFA goals at regional level and supporting efforts at country level. With respect to promoting compulsory primary education, priority will be given to improving effective primary school completion rates.

- (ii) **Facilitating the national capacity-building needed to achieve the six goals of the Dakar Framework for Action.** UNESCO will help provide Member States with technical support for the drafting of national EFA plans to be embedded both in overall national education and in poverty reduction strategies, especially through national statistical capacity-building in cooperation with the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS). The Organization will support policy reforms promoting EFA at every level, especially in the field of achievement in primary education.
- (iii) **Prioritizing education-oriented action on behalf of the poor, the marginalized, girls and women.** UNESCO will strive, above all, to eliminate gender disparities in line with the commitments made in Dakar. It will help to implement the ten-year United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) and seek to produce and promote specific projects on: (a) access to basic education and vocational training for children in difficult circumstances; (b) inclusive education; and (c) literacy and non-formal education for youth and adults, and especially women in order to strengthen their participation in the economy.
- (iv) **Advancing the right to lifelong education for all.** UNESCO will pay particular attention to monitoring implementation of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960). It will encourage the implementation of the Hamburg Declaration adopted by CONFITEA V. It will equally help to ensure that education becomes truly inclusive with a view to achieving universal literacy and to enhancing the skills needed to improve people's quality of life. To that end, it will seek to promote technical and vocational education for youth and adults as a sine qua non for developing professional competence and acquiring essential life skills. The Organization's action will accordingly prioritize preventive education against HIV/AIDS in both the formal and non-formal sectors.
- (v) **Building partnerships for EFA** with all partners concerned (Member States, mayors, members of parliament, bi- and multilateral donor agencies, NGOs and CSOs, the private sector, etc.) and facilitating the involvement of the populations concerned at every level of the policy reform process.

Expected outcomes

- ↳ Greater synergy among the key EFA partners in Africa, and increased internal and external financial assistance for education.
- ↳ National EFA plans drafted and implemented, with the requisite resources mobilized.
- ↳ Meaningful progress towards free access for all to primary education of good quality, and a 100% primary school completion rate by 2015.
- ↳ Meaningful progress towards eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult illiteracy by 2015.
- ↳ Education programmes implemented for marginalized people.

Strategic objective 2: Improving the quality of education through the diversification of contents and methods and the promotion of universally shared values

20. UNESCO will focus its action on the following goals:

- (i) **Promoting universally shared values through education.** UNESCO will concentrate on strengthening and consolidating the achievements of projects and programmes launched in various countries in the fields of culture of peace, human rights and democracy. It will encourage the inclusion of education for peace in school curricula, and the Organization will pay very special attention to the implementation of programmes in countries in situations of conflict or emergence from conflict, more particularly through the Regional Programme for Emergency Education and the Culture of Peace (PEER) and subregional and national programmes, together with projects emphasizing the importance of intercultural dialogue and social concord.
- (ii) **Improving and diversifying the contents and methods of education.** UNESCO will encourage the use of appropriate languages in teaching, and in particular the use of African languages as a medium of instruction, and will support the activities of the African Academy of Languages in Bamako (Mali).
- (iii) **Encouraging the training of qualified teachers.** UNESCO will back the development of higher education and teacher training, especially by revitalizing African teacher training college networks and supporting African centres of excellence. It will lend support to the activities of the International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa (IICBA) in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). It will also support the development of distance training.
- (iv) **Promoting science and technology education for all.** UNESCO will contribute to the implementation of programmes and projects in the field of science and technology education.
- (v) **Developing effective preventive education strategies.** UNESCO will strive to mainstream preventive education against HIV/AIDS into national policies so as to tailor education to the diversity of contexts and encourage responsible behaviour. Within the framework of UNAIDS, UNESCO will seek to implement projects that help to identify the cultural problems inherent in the epidemic, to curb stigmatization linked to HIV/AIDS, to draw up culturally sensitive policies and projects, to create and strengthen networks of specialized researchers, and to prepare guides on using the cultural approach.

Expected outcomes

- ↳ Peace and democratization consolidated in post-conflict situations.
- ↳ Capacity of teaching staff enhanced with respect to curriculum development and the monitoring and evaluation of learning achievement.
- ↳ Support for the training of qualified teachers and improved teacher learning performances.
- ↳ Greater access to science and technology education, especially for girls and women.

- ↪ HIV/AIDS infection rates reduced by 25% in the 15-24 age group, and progress made towards reducing the prevalence of infectious diseases.
- ↪ Improvement of access by young men and women in the 15-24 age group to the information, education and services needed to acquire the life skills that will help reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection.

Strategic objective 3: Promoting experimentation, innovation and the diffusion and sharing of information and best practices as well as policy dialogue in education.

21. UNESCO's action will focus on the following sub-objectives and priority fields:

- (i) **Supporting the enhancement of innovation in and reform of education policy.** UNESCO will, in liaison with other partners, contribute to efforts to identify and study new trends in education, and underpin innovation in Member States by focusing on the six EFA goals:
 - expanding programmes of quality for early childhood care and development;
 - setting up structures, contents and methods leading to greater access to good quality basic education; HIV/AIDS prevention within a formal and non-formal setting; and meeting educational needs in situations of crisis and conflict;
 - devising alternative models of basic education for out-of-school learners in the 9-15 age-group (dropouts or having had no access to school), especially through non-formal skill training;
 - formulating innovative and integrated education and literacy programmes at community level, with a priority focus on rural girls and women, or aimed at eliminating disparities in primary and secondary education;
 - setting up comprehensive integrated programmes designed to improve the quality of technical and vocational education, together with courses aimed mainly at developing the cross-cutting skills demanded in the contemporary world of work;
 - drafting and implementation of higher education development projects in Member States.

Moreover, emphasis will be placed, in educational content, on “learning to learn”, in order to provide learners with the ability to look ahead so as to cope more effectively with the new educational requirements.

- (ii) **Encouraging policy dialogue.** UNESCO will help to foster wider dialogue on education policy, especially through the development of models for the organization and participation of NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the formulating and implementation of EFA plans and policies. This dialogue will target the most disadvantaged groups. It will also seek to improve the management and governance of educational institutions by promoting greater decentralization and paying greater attention to the needs of learners.
- (iii) **Promoting the use of information and communication technologies.** UNESCO will facilitate access to information for women and youth and enhance their ability to use ICTs.

Expected outcomes

- ↳ Enhanced cooperation between African countries in the field of education.
- ↳ Enhanced education policy dialogue with all partners concerned (implementers and beneficiaries).
- ↳ Strengthened national capacities for implementing reforms and improving quality in higher education.
- ↳ Increased capacity in Member States to develop policies incorporating the use of ITCs in education.
- ↳ More people capable of using ITCs for education and training.

IV. SCIENCES

A. NATURAL SCIENCES

Background

22. The socio-economic growth of African countries is hindered by a number of obstacles: poverty, illiteracy, disease, exclusion and social conflicts. There are a multiplicity of factors influencing the ways in which these problems are addressed. They are all interconnected. Each is directly or indirectly both the cause and effect of the others. This interrelationship calls for a holistic and multidisciplinary approach. They are long-term problems and can only be resolved through a sustained effort over a period of several years, not through isolated activities. Moreover, given the scale of the challenges to be met, it is vital to strengthen local capacity-building and to mobilize new human and financial resources.

23. At present, African countries have been unable to invest sufficiently either in scientific and technological research and development (R&D) or in the human and institutional infrastructures for science and technology. Many invest as little as 0.01% of their GDP in R&D, compared with over 2% of larger amounts of GDP in some industrialized countries. This lack of investment basically stems from a scarcity of financial resources.

NEPAD goals in science and technology

24. In the field of science and technology, NEPAD has set out to:

- promote cross-border cooperation and connectivity by utilizing knowledge currently available in existing centres of excellence across the continent;
- develop and adapt information-gathering and analysis capacity to support Africa's productive activities and exports;
- generate a critical mass of technological expertise in targeted areas that offer high growth potential, especially in biotechnology and natural sciences;
- assimilate and adapt existing technologies in order to diversify manufacturing production.

UNESCO's contribution

25. UNESCO's activities in the field of the natural sciences can contribute to reducing poverty, eradicating illiteracy, combating AIDS and reducing social conflicts. Science creates technologies, which in turn can generate wealth. Natural science programmes will be based on local initiatives seeking to help to eradicate poverty through efficient and sustainable use of natural resources. Scientific education, especially at primary and secondary levels, needs support in order to broaden the scientific knowledge base. This education will be provided in an integrated manner and will involve the use of information and communication technologies (e.g. the Internet), which enable greater access to knowledge. In addition to the preventive approaches pursued as part of the effort to combat HIV/AIDS, the science programmes will contribute to raising awareness of the danger by providing the necessary prevention-oriented knowledge and information. Finally, by fostering sustainable management of resources, such scientific programmes can perform a major role in eliminating poverty and reducing the social conflicts that result therefrom.

Components of the strategy in the natural sciences

26. Based on the three strategic objectives in regard to science, namely:

Strategic objective 4: Promoting principles and ethical norms to guide scientific and technological development and social transformation;

Strategic objective 5: Improving human security by better management of the environment and social change;

Strategic objective 6: Enhancing scientific, technical and human capacities to participate in the emerging knowledge societies,

the actions as well as objectives defined within the framework of strategies relating to the two cross-cutting themes and, more particularly, the elimination of poverty, will be geared to four specific sub-objectives.

(i) Widening the knowledge base

27. Science and technology programmes in Africa, engineering included, will seek to widen the region's knowledge base through existing traditional institutions (especially universities) and through recourse to the opportunities provided by the new information and communication technologies, including virtual learning. The application of traditional knowledge and fostering of greater participation in scientific work, while underpinning human and scientific capacity-building, will be supported.

28. In the light of the recommendations of the International Seminar on Forward-looking approaches and innovative strategies to promote the development of Africa in the twenty-first century, efforts will be focused on creating or rebuilding scientific institutions and networks in order to address critical problems (fellowship and grant programmes; creation of centres of excellence in Africa with a particular emphasis on girls). Support will be provided for renovating the African science education system through the demystification of science beginning with basic education and through encouraging the teaching of science and technology that is in harmony with the sociocultural environment (use of local languages and introduction of ICTs). Special attention will need to be given to higher education, since it is vital for the development of science and technology, particularly R&D.

Expected outcomes

- ↳ Increased access to all knowledge ensured through the creation of an appropriate evaluation system.
- ↳ Setting up of new and pertinent curricula.
- ↳ Improved conditions for teachers and learners at national institutions.

(ii) Alleviating poverty

29. The programmes will contribute to the alleviation of poverty by promoting training and research on sustainable and more productive use of available resources, and by exploiting the opportunities created by new fields of science and technology. The actions will aim to (i) encourage the creation and consolidation of scientific associations and NGOs on the African continent; (ii) foster the recognition and development of indigenous scientific and technological knowledge; (iii) mobilize African expatriate scientists to contribute to the development of science and technology in Africa; and (iv) orient science and technology towards poverty alleviation, women being in this respect the most affected group.

Expected outcomes

- ↳ Creation of inter-institutional networks and the establishment of an evaluation system to assess the effectiveness of their operations.
- ↳ Effective channels developed for the commercialization of research results and technology transfers.

(iii) Improving resource management

30. The actions will strive to improve the management of ecosystems and natural resources, especially water. Environmental sciences in general hold a great potential as a starting point for developing African science. Water is the most crucial natural resource since it is related to all major issues confronting Africa. One area deserving priority attention is the lack of infrastructure (dams, hydropower, irrigation systems), so as to accelerate development and provide sustainable livelihoods. Water is also a domain in which traditional knowledge could be used in an efficient way.

31. The coastal and marine environment is also of great importance for the people of Africa in terms of food, economic security and socio-political stability. In the context of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the African Process is a mechanism for the protection and development of the coastal environment that addresses the major constraints to sustainable development along Africa's 12,000 km coastline.

32. Strategic entry points for improving resource management could include:

- **Women in science and technology:** in traditional Africa, women interact better with the environment than men and may also prove to be better transmitters of best practices for so doing.
- **Indigenous knowledge systems:** in many areas such as medicinal plants; this could include the practice of combining traditional and non-traditional knowledge; similarly,

thought needs to be devoted to the involvement of grass-roots communities in decision-making.

Actions will be specifically geared to strengthening and encouraging regional cooperation in S&T, including the related implementation of programmes, and South-South cooperation. Moreover, priority will be given to the building of capacities in innovation management and the management of technology transfer.

Expected outcomes

- ↳ Establishment of efficient management systems developed and implemented by all of the stakeholders.
- ↳ Contribution of partnerships, and mobilization of resources for science and technology with private sector involvement.
- ↳ Stronger regional cooperation in science and technology.

(iv) Combating environmental degradation

33. Awareness will need to be raised as to the fragility of the African environment and its rapid degradation; reversing this trend is crucial to its long-term survival. Special attention will be paid to environmental monitoring in order to ensure that nature and its resources are effectively conserved for future generations and for the safeguarding of human security. Support will be provided for the development and utilization of better environmental indicators for the purposes of national planning. Furthermore, traditional knowledge will be used for resolving the environmental problems in Africa.

34. Among the actions considered, special attention will be paid to the priority that sustainable development – above all in the wake of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg – and the conservation and sustainable management of environmental resources represent for the region. Efforts will be made to facilitate the increased utilization of renewable energies that offer great potential for Africa. In this context, UNESCO's future programmes will encourage initiatives geared to promoting the rational management of natural resources, following the example of SIMDAS. This programme is aimed at the "management and sustainable development of arid and semi-arid regions of southern Africa". For the most part, NEPAD's priority interventions attach importance to combating desertification by rehabilitating degraded land; conserving wetlands, which are extremely high-yielding in terms of social and ecological benefits; preserving the integrity of natural ecosystems by preventing invasive alien species from taking root; managing coastlines so as to protect coastal resources and ensure that they are utilized to optimal effect; monitoring the impact of climate change (global warming); and underpinning environmental governance (institutions, legislation, planning, training and capacity-building).

Expected outcomes

- ↳ Establishment of quantifiable indicators for gauging the state of the environment.
- ↳ Establishment of reliable instruments for environmental monitoring.

Implementation methods

35. Collaboration: In all of these programmes, UNESCO will work with existing capacities and structures. It will systematically use proactive and multidisciplinary approaches to mobilize local resolve, while facilitating regional and subregional cooperation.

36. Target groups: A key entry point identified for the pursuit of these strategic objectives is the involvement and empowerment of women in science and technology. Women will therefore occupy a pre-eminent place in future activities. Youth, who represent a significant proportion of knowledge-seekers, will form a target group for the implementation of a good many activities.

37. Partnerships: United Nations agencies work closely together in the field within the framework of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), Common Country Assessment (CCA) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Partnerships will be established between UNESCO and other agencies in both the public and private sectors with whom it shares similar or complementary objectives, both as co-sponsors of programmes and as co-actors in their delivery.

B. SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Background

38. Among the problems already mentioned concerning the present-day African context, emphasis can be laid on the following four problems which have a noticeable impact in the field of social and human sciences:

- The spectre of poverty: 14 of the of 42 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have what are regarded as average human development indices of 63 to 126. The other 28 have low human development indices – the lowest in the world: 128 to 162. The globalization process is marginalizing Africa and driving it into deeper poverty;
- The African debt burden: 30 to 34 countries in sub-Saharan Africa are currently defined as Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). Debt relief initiatives are launched on their behalf, provided that they draw up and implement strategic poverty-reduction programmes. Reducing the debt burden, however, will have no great impact in the realm of poverty reduction unless the countries concerned are achieving around 7% growth;
- Social unrest and wars caused by poverty: armed conflict and acts of violence are directly linked to the deepening impoverishment. War causes widespread damage across whole regions, even affecting stable and relatively wealthy countries. It also breaks up populations, resulting in vast numbers of refugees and displaced persons (5.1 million in sub-Saharan Africa out of the 21.1 million worldwide by the end of 2000);
- The HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa: HIV/AIDS has become one of the major causes of mortality in Africa. Wars have also contributed to its spread. The devastating impact that HIV/AIDS is having on every aspect of long-term social and economic development has led to declare it a “State of emergency in the continent”.

39. From the above emerge two crucial interdependent challenges. First, establishing peace and democracy by ending wars and conflicts and by fostering societies founded on the principles of

social justice and tolerance; and second, eradicating poverty by, *inter alia*, combating HIV/AIDS and facilitating debt relief.

Objectives of NEPAD

40. In this respect, African solutions are emerging at four levels:

- **The African research community**, which is advocating a radically new vision and a set direction for the continent's development. It is contributing to this by refocusing research on peoples' needs;
- **African civil society and NGOs**, which are advocating a dramatic change in political governance, so that it takes account of the aspirations of the populations concerned and enables them to participate in their own development;
- **National policy-making**, which is increasingly tending towards pluralism in parliaments, with a greater interest in development issues; dialogue at local and national levels; and sound progress towards decentralization;
- Progress towards **regional and continental integration**: NEPAD has responded to the above-mentioned objectives at regional level by setting itself targets within the framework of three initiatives and a regional approach to development:
 - The Peace and Security Initiative, involving: the prevention, management and resolution of conflict; peacemaking and peacekeeping; post-conflict reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction; and combating the illicit proliferation of light weapons and landmines;
 - The Democracy and Political Governance Initiative, involving: consolidating basic good governance processes and practices; strengthening parliamentary oversight; promoting direct, participatory democracy; and combating corruption and embezzlement;
 - The Economic and Corporate Governance Initiative, involving the preparation and implementation of appropriate standards and codes of conduct, and capacity-building for the implementation of mutually agreed standards and codes of good practice;
 - Subregional and regional approaches: the strengthening of subregional economic groupings, and the provision of regional services in priority areas (infrastructure, human resources, health, NICTs, agriculture and energy).

Strategy components in social and human sciences

41. The social and human sciences within UNESCO have always contributed to research, reflection and policy dialogue as much on global problems as on issues specific to the region. UNESCO has, for example, considered racism and discrimination as priority areas since its creation; and it played a key role in combating apartheid by means of research and training. Research, training and institutional capacity-building in the social and human sciences will also provide UNESCO with the means to help tackle the current challenges that have been identified. UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences Sector is in the process of reflecting on the short- and long-term orientations of its action. As part of the Organization's three strategic objectives for science (see paragraph 26), the following four lines of action could ultimately form the programme framework:

- identifying long-term trends and their implications – anticipation and prospective studies (globalization, science and technology policies, natural resources, etc.);
- shaping world views and views of society – philosophy and human sciences;
- analysis of social transformations and policy advice – social sciences (good governance, multicultural and multi-ethnic societies, human insecurity, etc.);
- definition and promotion of rules and standards – human rights, ethics of science and technology (new forms of discrimination, life sciences, etc.).

42. These lines of action could revolve around three specific sub-objectives geared to: (i) **poverty alleviation**; (ii) promoting the principles of **democracy, peace, tolerance and social justice**; and (iii) **combating HIV/AIDS**.

(i) Contribute to the improvement of poverty reduction strategies

43. Social and human science research findings can serve to improve decision-making in certain areas of poverty reduction strategies and policy work. Particular encouragement will be given to research on the nature, causes and extent of poverty and to prospective studies on African Futures, using a variety of development scenarios. Emphasis will also be put on the elaboration of holistic poverty reduction strategies and approaches, with the chief concern being the increasing marginalization and vulnerability of certain groups. Experience and knowledge-sharing will be encouraged among researchers, regional research organizations and political decision-makers in such critical areas as globalization and its impacts, poverty, bioethics and the ethics of science and technology.

Expected outcomes

- ↳ Development of regional and national capacities for prospective analysis.
- ↳ Better use and integration of social and human science research results in development and poverty eradication strategies.

(ii) Promoting the principles of democracy, peace, tolerance and social justice

44. Social science research should provide an understanding of the root causes of conflict and suggest in advance measures likely to prevent conflicts and preserve social cohesion. Actions could be envisaged, in this connection, aimed at promoting reflection on the respective roles of governments and civil society so as to foster democracy, participatory governance and responsible citizenship; combating all forms of racial and ethnic discrimination, exclusion, xenophobia and intolerance; encouraging the use of traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution; advocating awareness of social injustice and efforts to promote human rights and gender equality.

Expected outcomes

- ↳ Consolidation of peace and democratic processes in countries in post-conflict situations.
- ↳ Greater protection of women's rights.

(iii) Combating HIV/AIDS

45. The impact of HIV/AIDS on every part of society closely resembles its destructive effect on the individual. The social and human sciences can play an important role in halting the spread of the epidemic and in remedying as much of the damage as possible. Thus research could be conducted on the social impact of HIV/AIDS and prospective studies could be carried out on African Futures in the light of the challenges posed by the epidemic. Assistance could be provided for the development and implementation of projects in support of AIDS orphans and research programmes and policies designed to secure access to affordable drugs.

Expected outcomes

- ↳ Formulation and adoption of national policies to combat HIV/AIDS
- ↳ A 25% reduction in HIV/AIDS infection among people in the 15-24 age group.

Partnerships

46. For the implementation of activities in the field of the social and human sciences in Africa, partnerships must be established at various levels: (1) better coordination of action within UNESCO itself; Headquarters and field; and exchanges among the regional advisers in social and human sciences; (2) strengthening of cooperation with National Commissions for UNESCO; the various United Nations agencies; the African subregional and regional agencies; and the African scientific community as a whole through universities and research centres.

V. CULTURE

Background

47. Cultural factors and assets feature centrally in efforts to combat poverty, especially in the process of globalization. However, it is clear that the diversity, values and integration mechanisms of African cultures are not sufficiently taken into account in present development strategies. Apart from being a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity widens the range of options open to everyone. Hence it is one of the roots of development not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means of achieving a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.

48. Nowadays, African cultures seem threatened by the effects of rapid socio-economic transformation processes and by the invasion of foreign models and mass cultural products. The ways of life, the ancestral values, the endogenous forms of solidarity and expression, the traditional knowledge and know-how are marginalized or lost. The rich diversity of local cultures, oral traditions and languages as well as the African cultural and natural heritage are also seriously endangered.

49. In many countries, no national cultural policies have been formulated. In others, official cultural policies are not adapted to the populations' needs and situations. The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted by the General Conference at its 31st session, provides a new platform for the protection and promotion of cultural diversity to inspire national and sub-regional policies on the African continent.

50. The much hindered African cultural industries and media are unable to provide effective support for the creation and distribution of cultural and artistic goods and services. Consequently,

the African cultural sector and creativity are not participating in the continent's economic development and in international cultural exchanges to the best of their potential.

Origins and underpinnings

51. The World Conference on Cultural Policies (MONDIACULT) condemned the narrow conception that classical culture is confined to the realm of belles-lettres, and advocated a broader notion incorporating into the cultural dimension the global endeavour of human beings to tame nature and become acquainted with it, albeit with a view to reinterpreting and recreating it in their own image and likeness. The World Commission on Culture and Development's report, *Our Creative Diversity* (1996), the Action Plan adopted by the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (Stockholm, 1998) and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) are at the heart of the approach that the Organization has constantly upheld and continues to promote in its efforts to assist Member States in the formulation of their cultural policies, while stressing the need for dialogue between cultures and civilizations in their creative diversity.

52. Special attention must be paid to the development and strengthening of endogenous capacities, as well as to the promotion of traditional cultural activities: developing the arts and artistic education, museums, literature and religions.

NEPAD and culture

53. "Culture is an integral part of development efforts on the continent. Consequently, it is essential to protect and effectively utilize indigenous knowledge that represents a major dimension of the continent's culture, and to share this knowledge for the benefit of humankind. NEPAD will give special attention to the protection and nurturing of indigenous knowledge, which includes tradition-based literacy, artistic and scientific works, inventions, scientific discoveries, designs, marks, names and symbols, undisclosed information and all other tradition-based innovations and creations resulting from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary or artistic fields. The term also includes genetic resources and associated knowledge. NEPAD's leaders will take urgent steps to ensure that indigenous knowledge in Africa is protected through appropriate legislation. They will also promote its protection at the international level, by working closely with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)."¹

54. NEPAD, in its present form, barely touches on the role and place of culture in the continent's development. This may appear to be a serious shortcoming, but culture is actually fundamental to the underlying philosophy of its approach. Does the African renaissance go beyond a rereading and enactment of its history and culture in the light of the contemporary Africa that the continent has set out to render fruitful and illustrious?

Culture-related components of the regional strategy

55. Under the culture-related strategic objectives in UNESCO's Medium-term Strategy for 2002-2007, operations will also be based on the policy guidelines produced by the International Seminar on Forward-looking approaches and innovative strategies to promote the development of Africa in the twenty-first century:

- take account of the values and integration mechanisms specific to African cultures and societies;

¹ New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) [paragraphs 144-145].

- ensure balanced promotion of the resources of all national cultures by establishing a programme for the collection, presentation and dissemination of that knowledge, especially in the context of educational institutions, the media and museums;
- establish dynamic links, using the new information and communication technologies, between the African Diaspora and its continent of origin, with the aim of helping to produce an inventory of specialized cultural institutions and associations in the countries of the Diaspora;
- conduct major studies on African languages perceived as the foundation of cultural identities in their pluralism and diversity, with a view to integrating them into social and educational policies;
- undertake a clear and responsible policy to review the education programme and to redefine the outstanding function of African languages in development strategies;
- recognize the status of researchers in the fields of science, technology and culture by improving their working conditions and encouraging exchanges by creating appropriate infrastructures and mechanisms;
- promote traditional values that instil in young people a feeling of solidarity and openness to others; take systematic action to codify traditional law and thus guarantee intercultural dialogue;
- support the efforts of regional and subregional organizations and regional NGOs such as the African Academy of Languages, the Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa and so on;
- establish databases of best practices in carrying out cultural policies that are responsive to the challenge of pluralism in the sustainable development process;
- identify and promote traditional knowledge and technologies as references and sources of inspiration for contemporary creators;
- utilize cultural resources in social, economic and political development projects;
- train specialized staff in the field of culture, with a particular emphasis on museum training, artistic education, traditional know-how and crafts; train cultural managers with a view to endogenous capacity-building.

56. On this basis, a whole range of actions can be contemplated, geared to three sub-objectives: (i) **safeguarding the heritage**, (ii) promotion of **cultural pluralism and cultural diversity**, and (iii) strengthening **links between culture and development**.

Strategic objective 7: Promoting the drafting and implementation of standard-setting instruments in the cultural field

57. Emphasis will be placed on raising awareness on the **cultural heritage** as being crucial to identity-building, economic development and the forming of multicultural and multiethnic societies. More specifically, the Organization will concentrate its action on the following areas:

- Rehabilitate and conserve the cultural heritage as the key component of identities and a decisive factor for economic growth, development, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence;
- Introduce heritage education into schools and universities in order to underscore the values of intermixing, dialogue and the heritage as sources of inter-community reconciliation;
- Protect, promote and revitalize the intangible cultural heritage in all its dimensions, such as languages, oral traditions, values, know-how for the creation of material culture and performing arts, as well as traditional knowledge relating to ethical, economic, socio-political and ecological life, including methods of conflict resolution, environmental protection and healing;
- Launch major studies on African languages perceived as the foundation of cultural identities in their pluralism and diversity, with a view to integrating them into social and educational policies, in particular by preparing school textbooks, translating the great classical works of the various cultural groups into African languages, and promoting the languages and cultures of minority groups.

Expected outcomes

- ↳ Greater and measurable participation of decision-makers and citizens in the protection of the cultural heritage to counter cultural and economic impoverishment.
- ↳ Promotion of cultural diversity, and appropriate cultural policies formulated at country and subregional levels.

Strategic objective 8: Safeguarding cultural diversity and encouraging dialogue among cultures and civilizations

58. UNESCO will strive to make decision-makers and civil society aware of the ways in which respect for cultural diversity must guide and inspire the creation of new social mechanisms that foster cultural pluralism, equity and social creativity in Africa at local, national and regional levels. The following actions will be carried out:

- Widely promote and disseminate the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity;
- Actively participate in the implementation of its Plan of Action through a variety of projects and initiatives at local and national level, and support specialized cultural institutions (regional, subregional and NGOs), emphasizing the links between culture, diversity, pluralism and sustainable development;
- Promote cultural tourism and consolidate its central position in national cultural policies, since it contributes both to economic, social and cultural development and to poverty alleviation;
- Ensure the balanced promotion of the resources of all national cultures by establishing a programme for the collection, presentation and dissemination of that knowledge, especially in the context of educational institutions, the media and museums, and by actively involving national and expatriate researchers and other expertise in broad-based intercultural dialogue.

Expected outcomes

- ↳ Visible and quantifiable initiatives carried out with a view to formulating national policies that foster cultural pluralism based on respect for democratic principles and human rights.
- ↳ Solid and quantifiable assistance provided to communities with a view to enabling them to reconstruct and promote their identities where these have been disrupted by conflict, migration or intense urbanization.

Strategic objective 9: Enhancing the linkages between culture and development through capacity-building and sharing of knowledge

59. Action here will be geared to strengthening the crucial role of culture in national and regional development strategies. In the political sphere, actions will aim at promoting cultural rights, participation in cultural life, conflict prevention and resolution, and the definition of mediation mechanisms to facilitate participation in decision-making processes. In the economic sphere, actions will be designed to regenerate traditional know-how, promoting crafts and setting up cultural micro-enterprises with a view to creating jobs and alleviating poverty. Efforts will be made to strengthen the involvement of local communities in ecological protection, urban conservation, integrated planning and cultural tourism projects, and thus to enhance sustainable development and help to alleviate poverty.

Expected outcomes

- ↳ Enhanced cooperation among all partners with a view to better responding to the needs for cultural planning, information, education, management and financing.
- ↳ Formulation of cultural indicators for assessing changes to policies, strategies and programmes at local and national levels, together with related support for institutional capacity-building in the field of culture.

VI. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Background

60. It is UNESCO's mission to promote the free flow of information, knowledge and data, to encourage the creation of diversified contents and to facilitate universal access to information and the means of sharing knowledge, while at the same time giving attention to capacity-building in order to ensure that communities and citizens have the communication and information they need to be able to effectively participate in their society's democratic life. The Organization's strategic objectives are set out in document 31 C/4.

61. In most parts of the world, especially on the African continent, access to information and to the media as well as genuine participation in the knowledge society are known to be impeded by a variety of obstacles: poor, if any, telecommunications and mass dissemination infrastructure; insufficient financial resources; persistent illiteracy; shortage or complete lack of training in the use of ICTs; unreliable maintenance; an almost total lack of data conservation.

62. UNESCO, in keeping with the objectives set out in the resolution of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (July 2000) and in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (September 2000), will contribute to the creation of an international strategic partnership to enhance

means of communication, bridge the digital divide and establish a knowledge society that is open and non-exclusive. As in the case of its other activities in aid of Africa, the Organization will carry out its action in this area in strict synergy with the priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

63. A few facts and figures:

- in the field of telecommunications, the estimated number of main telephone lines per 1,000 people in Africa in 1996 was 14, against a world average of 131, with an estimated 2.1 mobile phone subscribers (world average: 25.7);
- newsprint consumption that year came to an estimated 1.6 kg per inhabitant (world average: 20.9);
- and there were 17 radio sets per 100 people against a world average of 36; 3.5 television sets against a world average of 23; and 0.3 personal computers against a world average of 4.4;
- Internet access is five to ten times more costly in Africa than in the countries of the North.

The African agenda in the field of communication and information

64. UNESCO's work on behalf of the African continent was critical in the period immediately after its fledgling States had gained independence. In many respects, it has continued to provide the crucial underpinnings of their education and social communication systems. In the 1990s, as lead agency for two components of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa (UNSLIA), i.e. "harnessing information technology for development" and "communication for peace-building", UNESCO – in close coordination with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), UNDP, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and other partners – helped to mobilize the necessary resources for their implementation. In the years ahead, the formulation and implementation of integrated communication and information policies and strategies will be accorded high priority, in line with the objectives of the African Information Society Initiative (AISII).

65. NEPAD communication and information policy guidelines hinge on the following objectives:

- double the density of telephone lines to two lines per 100 people by 2005, with an adequate level of access for households;
- lower the cost and improve reliability of service;
- achieve "e-readiness" for all countries in Africa;
- develop and produce a pool of ICT-proficient youth and students;
- develop local content software, based especially on Africa's cultural legacy.

66. Debate on the subject of ICTs at the Seminar of November 2001 drew attention to the fact that the new interactive media (CD-ROM and the Internet), newspapers and, above all, radio remained essential tools for fostering freedom of expression and pluralism in order to create a favourable environment for the expansion of the "knowledge society" and to promote communication for development.

Communication and information-related components of the regional strategy

67. It has become necessary, in an increasingly competitive international environment, to concentrate efforts on a limited number of high priority areas. Strategic choices need to be made to ensure that programmes implemented at regional and subregional levels have a lasting effect. Based on the priorities identified for the African continent, consideration could be given to the following specific strategies, which form part of UNESCO's strategic objectives for 2002-2007, including those relating to the two cross-cutting themes: "Eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty", and "The contribution of information and communication technologies to the development of education, science and culture and the construction of a knowledge society".

Strategic objective 10: Promoting the free flow of ideas and universal access to information

68. The recommendations of the Windhoek seminars of 1991 and 2001 on the "promotion of independent and pluralistic media" will be taken into account. The Organization will continue to provide Member States and professional organizations with input for drafting and adopting media legislation. Meanwhile, communication strategies for peace-building will be developed, involving NGOs and civil society organizations. Special emphasis will be placed on training for media professionals.

69. Efforts will also be made to broaden access to global sources of information, especially in the public domain, with a specific view to increasing the production and dissemination of local contents in the media and via electronic networks. The workshop on "Equitable access to information in Africa: Ethical and legal challenges" (Bamako, 2000), the Africa Regional InfoEthics workshop (Addis Ababa, 2000) and the Regional NGO Workshop (Bamako, 2002) held in conjunction with the ITU Ministerial Pre-Conference for the preparation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) (Geneva, 2003; Tunis, 2005), stressed the importance of open and more affordable access to information for socio-economic development, and called upon African Member States to develop appropriate ICT and information society policy frameworks, taking particular account of "infoethical" concerns and the need to facilitate ICT support for governance and improvement of public services.

Expected outcomes

- ↳ More pluralistic and independent media (newspapers, radio and television), both public and private, and stronger sources of information, including in conflict or post-conflict zones.
- ↳ Better training for communication and information professionals.
- ↳ More extensive alert networks to combat press freedom violations and a reinforced network of UNESCO Chairs in Communication at African universities to better defend freedom of the press.
- ↳ Greater interactive access to information through libraries, archives, information services, networks and communication centres, and through the setting up of Internet-based knowledge portals offering services to professional organizations and to communities and groups within civil society.
- ↳ Progress made in the drafting and adoption of policies aimed at ensuring more equitable access to information.

- ↳ Improved participation in the knowledge society through increased production of endogenous content on interactive media.

Strategic objective 11: Promoting the expression of pluralism and cultural diversity in the media and world information networks

70. Policies and strategies will be drawn up in partnership with professional organizations for the production and dissemination of audiovisual programmes that take account of the needs of target audiences (especially women and youth) and reflect the concerns of specific groups such as ethnic or linguistic minorities and disadvantaged rural or urban communities.

71. Priority will be given to strengthening public service media so as to reinforce their educational and cultural dimension; improve the quality of programmes; expand the distribution channels; and enhance production of the educational, scientific and cultural content to be disseminated via global networks. The Organization will strive to encourage the harnessing of ITCs for education and development, especially in disadvantaged regions.

Expected outcomes

- ↳ Adoption and harmonization of national legislation concerning public service radio and television; research on the challenges brought to bear on public service radio and television by advances in ICTs; and experience-sharing with respect to best practices in this field.
- ↳ Subregional, regional and interregional strategies set up to support the productions and co-productions of African countries and to facilitate their access to world markets.
- ↳ Telematics applications developed for communities with special needs; development of methodologies that can be adapted to other contexts; diversification of “African content” on the Internet and other digital products.

Strategic objective 12: Access for all to information and communication technologies, especially in the public domain

72. Support will be provided for efforts to formulate and implement integrated communication and information policies and strategies that will help bridge the digital and media divides. Information materials will be increasingly digitized and electronic libraries will be set up. Action will also be taken to strengthen local capacities in terms of equipment, human resources and methodology. Great importance will be attached to formal and non-formal training at local, national and regional levels. Efforts here will focus mainly on improving the quality of communication and information education, especially through UNESCO Chairs; on setting up networks and academic exchange programmes; establishing centres of excellence and virtual learning at university level; introducing long-term specialized training, primarily supported by the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), as well as the training of trainers. Meanwhile, special attention will be paid to promoting a culture of maintenance and the preservation of printed, archival and audiovisual material.

73. Furthermore, efforts will be made to develop communication and information in rural and disadvantaged areas so as to increase social participation and promote the creation of Community Multimedia Centres (CMCs) within the framework of poverty alleviation and development programmes. ICT training for women and youth will remain a priority for all of these strategies.

Expected outcomes

- ↪ Communication and information strategies, action plans and development projects drafted and implemented at regional and subregional levels.
- ↪ Greater international cooperation for bolstering communication and information capacities in Africa through, among others, the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) and the Information For All Programme (IFAP).
- ↪ Increased participation in regional information-sharing networks and improvement of their technical quality.
- ↪ Virtual training needs evaluated at regional level.
- ↪ Educational content developed for e-learning courseware, and the required infrastructure set in place.
- ↪ Methodologies devised for distance learning and for establishing virtual universities.
- ↪ Increased participation of citizens in decision-making by means of ITCs.
- ↪ Growth in the number of websites and CDs produced and offering local content at community level, and in the number of pilot projects launched to develop Internet-linked community radio.

Partnership

74. Implementing these programmes demands enormous amounts of human and financial resources. New techniques will need to be envisaged to produce a substantial increase in extrabudgetary funding for information and communication development programmes. A project development, monitoring and evaluation mechanism will need to be set up. It must be based on a multidisciplinary approach and combine the respective contributions of the various partners: United Nations system agencies, financial institutions, development banks, bilateral donor agencies.

75. As far as regional and subregional organizations are concerned, the main partners will be the OAU/African Union, NEPAD and the specialized regional organizations (URTNA, PANA, CIRTEF, AMARC). Synergies will be developed with regional and subregional programmes, and cooperation will continue with the African Development Bank (ADB), the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CAEMC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community for Central Africa (CEAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the Portuguese-Speaking African Countries (PALOP) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

76. There will be sustained collaboration with NGOs: regional and subregional-level partnerships involving Article 19, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Reporters Without Borders (RWB), the Union of African Journalists (UJA) and the Union of West African Journalists (UJAO).

77. Finally, at national level, working relationships will be developed with civil society organizations (gender and youth), community-based organizations, government departments, IT schools, NGOs, polytechnical institutions, professional journalists' organizations and schools and institutes of journalism.