

FIFTY YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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I. INTRODUCTION: HIGHER EDUCATION WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF THE SIXTIES AND LATER

1. Though the UNESCO Draft Programme of the First session of the General Conference in 1946 contained the proposal for the creation of an international university, and though since its inception, UNESCO had been engaged in the development of teaching, training and research in selected disciplines, UNESCO's first overall activity in higher education consisted in the creation, in 1950, of the non-governmental organization called the International Association of Universities (IAU). The Joint UNESCO-IAU research programme in higher education, initiated in 1959, was formally established, when the Carnegie Corporation of New York decided, in January 1960, to appropriate a sum of \$250,000 for an International Study of University Admissions. This Programme was directed by a Joint Steering Committee having three members from each Organization under the Co-Chairmanship of the Director General of UNESCO and the President of the IAU.
2. UNESCO's Programme and Budget 1959-1960, adopted at the tenth session of the General Conference, carried, for the first time, a specific programme activity on higher education as part of the Education Programme. This document also provided for a "World Survey" on higher education begun in 1959; it was completed in 1963 and constituted the fourth volume of the survey covering all levels of education.
3. After the independence of countries in Asia, and the introduction of the Major Project on Primary Education in Latin America, the sixties saw the emergence of new States in Africa. The number of Member States augmented from 82 in 1958 to 124 in 1968. It constituted a turning point in the destiny of the Organization. New Member States adhered to the ideals of UNESCO, demonstrated their faith in its action and expressed hope in its work. Educational planning became an integral part of general planning in a number of Member States.
4. Henceforth, UNESCO convened regional conferences of Ministers of Education and Ministers of Planning to define educational priorities, establish educational targets and propose educational plans. In the wake of regional plans, and in view of the shortage of specialists in educational planning, UNESCO established international and regional research centres for senior educational administrators in Beirut, New Delhi and Santiago de Chile.
5. The Addis Ababa Conference had analysed Africa's needs; it paved the way for the organization, in 1962, of the Tananarive Conference exclusively devoted to higher education. It concluded that African institutions of higher education were "at once the main instrument of national progress, the chief guardian of the people's heritage, and the voice of the people in the international councils of technology and scholarship." The Conference recommended to africanise higher education in terms of academic personnel, contents of courses and adaptation of structures. Recommendations also covered training of university staff, research, equipment for libraries and science laboratories.

6. Another UNESCO Conference exclusively devoted to higher education concerned the Europe region. Held in Vienna in 1967, this Conference brought together Member States with a market economy and those with a planned economy, to consider problems of access to higher education. Its recommendations related *inter alia* to standardization of educational statistics, terminology and definitions relating to access to higher education; student welfare measures in order to abolish social, cultural and economic obstacles to education at both the secondary and higher levels; access to those who had not been able to benefit from the system of education, and the role of European institutions of higher education in regard to development aid.
7. The emergence of new nations and the need to accelerate their development resulted in an intensive mobility of students and staff from developing countries towards the developed ones. In spite of the bilateral agreements concerning equivalence of university qualifications existing between Member States, and the rules and regulations among the erstwhile colonial powers, evaluation of credentials had posed great problems at the receiving end. UNESCO, therefore, launched in 1966 an additional activity in its programme entitled "comparability and equivalence of matriculation certificates, diplomas and degrees in higher education." Over the years an entire new conception and programme was developed on the subject.
8. The launching in 1950 of the UN Technical Assistance Programme had involved UNESCO with the development effort of Member States. This operational activity began to serve as an instrument of their development. Since the beginning of its activities in higher education, UNESCO administered consultancy and advisory services to Member States, at their request, for the establishment of new and the development of existing institutions particularly in Africa and Central and South America.
9. UNESCO also published studies on the recruitment and training of University teachers with the help of an international non-governmental organization.
10. The early sixties were in a way "the golden age" of higher education; with an explosion of enrolments at the primary and secondary levels, there was a constant augmentation of numbers at the higher education level and increase in national budgets; governmental and non-governmental organizations and associations of higher education institutions were introducing initiatives for the renovation and innovations in higher education and out-of-school education for youth and adults.
11. Several countries began to review their system of higher education. India set up a Commission on Education and National Development (1964-1966) with the assistance of UNESCO. It treated problems of university education, the development of research, organization of university extension and relations between industry and higher education etc. It also pleaded that higher education be regarded as an integrated whole and therefore, it favoured a comprehensive plan for the development of education at this level. It underlined the need for improvement of standards of postgraduate courses and for training programmes for students and research related to problems of industry.
12. A reference should be made to a report prepared by Lord Robbins in the United Kingdom (1963). He recommended a co-ordinated national system of higher education comprising universities, colleges of education and training of teachers, higher technical institutes, and institutes for business studies etc. He observed that there was a growing dependence on the State for their finance and a greater social awareness that economic growth was dependent upon an educated population.

13. Begun in the 1950s in the USA, higher education *per se* rapidly developed as a new interdisciplinary subject of study. The academic programmes leading to Master's and Doctoral degrees prepared specialists in institutional administration, instructional improvement, faculty development and student and personnel services. Subjects pursued included educational pedagogy, planning and co-ordination, management science and accountancy, statistics, behavioural sciences, collective bargaining and faculty unionisation. It was believed that research on the internal processes of higher education was necessary to comprehend the issues regarding its quality, efficiency and relevance in the socio-economic contexts. In the USA also, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education was established under the Chairmanship of Clark Kerr in 1967 to make recommendations on the subject in that country for the 1970s and ahead to the year 2000. It published several studies and reports. The Final Report of the Commission, published in 1973, contained "Priorities for Action". In addition, with the participation, in their individual capacity, of several senior staff members of UNESCO, the first International Encyclopaedia of Higher Education, in ten volumes, was issued in 1973-1977 in New York. This is a major reference work covering almost all aspects of higher education in the world.

14. However, by a strange coincidence of circumstances, higher education came face to face with a peculiar and complex situation studded with educational and social crises. In the emerging nations of Africa and Asia there was a general desire to get rid of "euro-centrism". Scientific and technological progress of the west created an awareness in the developing countries in regard to the inadaptation of their educational systems. Patterns of higher education were slow to cope with the change from an élitist concept to a mass higher education. Students were frustrated and dissatisfied with issues as different as fees, examinations, facilities, teaching programmes and methods etc. Students and staff resisted "pressure politics" of the States. Political leaders were unprepared for the rapid change which was the order of the day. In the USA the requirement for students and youth to participate in the Vietnam war spoiled the learning environment. France witnessed the most spectacular and destructive demonstration of the opposition of university students, of youth and of certain categories of people against the "Establishment". The reasons for campus unrest and support to extremist movements in other parts of the world had no similarity to the situation of western universities. Exercise of the democratic principles had often led to agitation and affirmation of rights on the part of students rather than the respect of their responsibilities. Finally the academic community claimed reform of the higher education system. The subsequent energy crisis and the instability of the international monetary system added to the problems of the world.

15. Following the educational crisis, UNESCO promptly undertook an intensive programme to examine problems of university students. Consultations with them and their representative organizations were organised and reports on students' movements and ideologies of the students' world were commissioned. Intra-university dialogue with the participation of students, teachers and administrators helped to examine possible ways and means for greater students participation in university governance and to analyse the experience of institutions in Latin America in the matter. In addition to the regular activities for youth, their leisure and sport, UNESCO initiated, in 1969, a first series of Summer Study Programmes for students, working either for the teaching profession or for educational research, to associate them with the Organization's activities in education. About a score of students benefited from this programme.

16. In due course, student unrest subsided for one or several of the following reasons: mobile and transient by their very nature, students' movements changed their composition and profile, or they had succeeded in sensitising society in regard to their problems and demands, or they were tired of violence, destruction and wastage.

17. Now, trends, problems and prospects of higher education became the subject of renewed reflection. Questions were posed: higher education for what? for what kind of an individual? for what kind of society? what exactly was the role of higher education in society? what was development? how does higher education best serve development? etc. Economic approaches to development had been characteristic of the 1950s and 1960s. It was believed that economic factors dictated the progress of development. But it came to be recognised also that growth in a situation of accelerated change engendered unwanted disparities. Gradually social considerations of development began to enter the debate. Reflection on development was particularly stimulated in 1968 when, at its fifteenth session, the General Conference asked the Director General to prepare the First Medium Term Plan. The crucial principle was to concentrate on the development of man and society.
18. In view of the immense ferment when educational aims and institutions were being challenged, life-long education as well as democratization and regeneration of education became the guiding principles for educational innovations and diversification.
19. The concept of life-long education was consequently pioneered not only for those concerned with adult literacy but for the benefit of those deprived of the educational stream. The basic principle is that education of an individual does not conclude with the end of primary, secondary or higher education, that one's life cannot be divided into a rigid period of preparation and another of action, and that education continues "from the cradle to the grave". The dimensions of life-long education were both vertical for learning through different stages of life as well as horizontal for the integration of educational experiences in different situations. This principle is particularly applicable in the professional field and professional recycling. On the whole, it responds to new patterns of behaviour in the world of work and is responsible for innovations in the educational system. It also announced the beginning of articulation between formal and non-formal education.

II. THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOCIETY

20. Traditionally, education is a means by which a society perpetually renews the conditions of its existence depending on a sufficient homogeneity and cohesion among its members. This is done by fixing in the child the essential similarities which characterise collective life. The educational system also tends to preserve and transmit a specific cultural heritage together with a system of values and a code of conduct peculiar to a society.
21. Similarly, linked to a national and social framework, higher education intends to develop a certain creativity that permits students to acquire the desire, the capacity and the means to contribute to the evolution of the society. And through a process of advancement of scientific, technological and professional knowledge, and utilization of new information technology, higher education is expected to endow students with skills to participate in social renaissance and economic progress. Thus, it is an invaluable instrument of human resource development. Through exchange of ideas, information and persons, it furthers regional and international co-operation. The higher education sector of performance can be really effective if a reciprocal relationship between education and society is admitted and voluntarily promoted.
22. But recently the emphasis on the needs and demands of individuals and societies has changed, even though institutions of higher education would continue with their fundamental mission to shape the individual in the fullness of his being, to put him in tune with himself and his environment, and simultaneously to promote the transmission and advancement of knowledge and provide training for professional service to the community. They have to demonstrate that they have a better understanding

of the community's expectations, and that, depending principally on public funds, they can be cost-effective by "doing more and better with less".

23. But these institutions can acquit themselves of their responsibilities to society if the latter is determined to allocate to them adequate resources. The society in general should perceive the force these institutions represent for the improvement of social and national life. Indeed, they are the instruments for shaping and sharpening its most precious resource, i.e. "the intelligence of men and women". They are also well-placed to propagate universal values of understanding, tolerance and peace, as well as the development and protection of earth's environment, etc.
24. In view of the role of education at this level in society the concept of higher education structurally should be understood to include universities and non-university institutions and programmes both formal and non-formal. During the past decades, UNESCO's programmes in higher education were directed to ensure this role as well as its internal efficiency and external relevance.
25. Respect and practice of the basic principles of autonomy and academic freedom are conducive to internal efficiency. But in some quarters, academics prefer not to be disturbed by public authority which, on its part, demonstrates a certain lack of confidence in the ability of the academics to handle problems of administration. In the interests of institutional development and efficiency, this mutual distrust should be dissipated. It cannot be denied that institutions of higher education must be free as far as the internal decision-making process is concerned with regard to admission of students, disbursement of student-aid, appointment of academic and administrative personnel, choice of programmes and research projects and eventually search for additional resources from the corporate sector and for partnership with industry and, of course, for the maintenance of overall discipline and a congenial learning environment. It must also be recognized that "accountability of the university is ultimately no different from that of any other social sector, it must demonstrate the relevance of its role to social needs, and the effectiveness with which it performs that role". (F. Mayor). At any rate any dissent and tension should be resolved through consultation, dialogue and mediation. The subject of academic freedom and university autonomy was examined at length by the International conference organized by the UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education, Bucharest, at Sinaia (Romania) in 1992.
26. The efficiency of institutions depends on the quality and capacity of administrators since the administrator's function is an organizational one involving the formulation of institutional policies and their effective implementation. The fundamental task of management is to deal rationally with change. No institution can remain both static and relevant indefinitely. Institutional management must be able to adjust the balance between forces of change and resistance continuously. Academics appointed as Chief Executive Officers and other administrative personnel should receive proper initiation and training. On this subject, UNESCO published a Programme Guide based on an interdisciplinary approach (1970). The participation of women in higher education administration was the subject of a study undertaken with the collaboration of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Canadian International Centre for the Development of Research (1993).
27. Much depends on the performance of the higher educational personnel. It comprises two complementary branches: the administrative and the academic. They have common functions in as much as they ensure the efficiency of the institution. The former include persons at different levels of authority and responsibility, rank and gradation, and include support and auxiliary staff; the latter principally include those responsible for teaching, training and research as well as non-teaching academics such as librarians, those working in museums and science laboratories. Internal cohesion and collective action, as well as professional and inter-personal relations among them, on the one hand, and between them

and the students, on the other hand, are indispensable. Society must recognize this crucial role of higher education personnel and accord them appropriate status. UNESCO's action in this was initiated by a study on "the advisability of developing an international normative instrument concerning the status of higher education personnel" presented to the General Conference at its twenty-fifth session in 1989. UNESCO recently issued a publication on the experiences from several countries relating to "Higher Education" Staff Development: directions for the twenty-first century" (1994).

28. The success an institution achieves in responding to the demands of students is the measure of its efficiency. They crave for access to an institution for their personal development, social mobility, economic security, and in general, for participation in the life of the society to which they belong. An appropriate learning environment is, therefore, necessary. Some dimensions with this regard were emphasised by UNESCO in its activities related to new methods in teaching and learning, student study assistance and counselling and guidance.
29. With the expansion and diversity of student population no longer limited to the traditional age-group of 18-24 years, and to facilitate self-study, group-teaching and education of adults and workers in the context of lifelong education, UNESCO devoted its attention to innovative methods, processes and resources such as television, language laboratories, other audio-visual resources and feed-back devices, computers and computer-assisted learning, etc. The Organization sponsored a pilot project launched by Poland in 1965 on the utilization of television for transmission of programmes of technological higher education. Based on close collaboration among State and academic authorities, the project was aimed at student-employees to enable them to obtain higher diplomas. It was evaluated by a UNESCO team in 1970. With the "University of the Air", conceived in the UK, and officially created in 1969 under the name of the Open University, the model has been adopted in several countries of the world, often with the assistance of UNESCO. This has been the harbinger of Distance Education. UNESCO also published a "World-wide Inventory of Non-traditional Structures and Programmes" available for initial study and in-service training, such as "sandwich courses", and "co-operative education" programmes with alternating periods of study and training. UNESCO programmes and publications have established the pivotal role of learning as a dynamic process.
30. Based on a number of selected country situations, problems and types of student-study assistance were the subject of reflection in a 1973 publication on the democratization of secondary and higher education. Organization and administration of such assistance to needy and meritorious students is helpful in avoiding loss of talent. The same publication underlined the importance of counselling and guidance as a major factor in democratization and as a means to move from selection at admission or failure at termination of studies towards "guided choice". The subject was examined by UNESCO at a number of international meetings organized by a non-governmental organization.
31. External relevance of higher education can be judged by the quality of its graduates, its research and the service it renders to the community and society. Constantly vigilant to the needs of society it should train manpower capable of contributing to the growth of different vocational sectors e.g. agriculture and veterinary science, industry, commerce and business, administration and services, science and technology research and development, educational sciences, social work, informatics and cultural industries, etc. Besides, development of human resources should be adapted to the demands of modernization with the production of responsible and cultured citizens endowed with knowledge, skills and attitudes, on the one hand, and commitment, initiative and perseverance, on the other. As the pattern of manpower requirements change because of scientific and technological progress and the development of the communication media and their impact on the structure and growth rate of agriculture, industry, the services and leisure activities, personnel is required to possess qualifications in

the traditional and modern fields. The utilization of educated manpower being intimately related to the strategy of economic development and national goals, institutions of higher education should take into account manpower and research needs, and attempt to establish a balance between the supply of graduates and the capacity of the economy to absorb them. Maldistribution of students by courses of study resulting in a surplus of students in fields which are saturated and in a persistent deficiency in certain sectors of economy has often caused unemployment and under-employment. In many countries, it is a serious problem even though the disorderly expansion of educational opportunity is not the only responsible factor. The introduction of career guidance and placement services might be helpful in the matter. The UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning carried out significant research and published several country studies on the problem of higher education and employment.

32. As centres of national ethos for the study and research on local and national problems, institutions should also attempt to internationalize their activity to cover world problems through interdisciplinary research. UNESCO has developed a number of programmes on peace and human rights, development studies, demography, social communication, new sources of energy, biotechnology, microbiology and environment etc. In this connection, reference should be made to the first major International Conference UNESCO organized in 1968 on "the rational use and conservation of the resources of the biosphere". It was recognized that human beings were a key element of the biosphere, and that several factors and human activities were breaking the established systems and relations in the biosphere of the earth. Leading to the creation in 1978 of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere programme (MAB), this conference in fact was the precursor of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21 for "sustainable development". Education indeed is the *sine qua non* of "sustainable development" and higher education must be an indispensable participant in its realisation.
33. Activities of students in civic and extension services including literacy action projects and evening classes for adults etc. can render external relevance to higher education institutions. They allow them to perceive concrete realities of practical life, to acquire respect for work and to develop team-spirit. The programme of "Study Service" initiated in the 1960s by some countries drew the attention of UNESCO, when the general conference adopted, in 1976, a resolution on the subject. The Secretariat undertook a study on the origins, principles, trends and types of programmes as well as on problems and difficulties encountered in their implementation. "Study Service" represents an innovative experience and integrates higher education with socially useful and productive work for the benefit of students and the community. UNESCO issued a publication on the subject containing twenty-one country studies.

III. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL CO-OPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

34. International intellectual co-operation is one of the principal means for UNESCO to serve its Member States. The organization of conferences of ministers responsible in the fields of its competence helps Member States to get together to take the measure of their preoccupations and problems and look for means to solve them. Periodically, higher education has been the unique theme of some conferences e.g. on the future of higher education in Africa, Tananarive, 1962, on access to higher education in Europe, Vienna 1967, and on problems of higher education in Europe, Bucharest, 1973. The subject has also been dealt with in conferences devoted to education, science, culture and communication. The conference of the International Bureau of Education, in 1989, examined the theme of "the diversification of post-secondary education in the light of the employment situation". Independent of or within the framework of technical assistance, and programmes of co-operation, UNESCO provided Member States with advisory and expert missions, scholarships and equipment, at their request, in the field of higher education. UNESCO enlists participation of their official representatives or specialists in various kinds of programme activities and conferences, meetings and seminars. With the assistance of UNESCO, inter-

institutional programmes have multiplied, the latest example being furnished by the UNITWIN/UNESCO-Chairs Programme. In collaboration with the Organization of American States, UNESCO helped in the establishment, in 1987, of the Association of Amazonian Universities (UNAMAZ); this is a realization of an ambition first voiced in 1955 and is an offshoot of the Amazonian Co-operation Treaty of 1978.

35. In accordance with the policy of decentralization, regional co-operation in higher education for the promotion of inter-country exchanges of experiences, expertise and information and documentation, for the development of human resources and economic and social development in countries concerned, has substantially benefited from the establishment of UNESCO Centres and Regional Offices. Mention should be made of the European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES), Bucharest, and the Regional Centre for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRESALC), Caracas, and of the intense activity carried out by the Regional Office for Education in Africa (BREDA), Dakar, Unesco Regional Office for Education in the Arab States (UNEDBAS) which was originally based in Beirut and was subsequently transferred to Amman and then to Paris, and the Principal Regional Office in Asia and the Pacific (PROAP), Bangkok. UNESCO also gave financial support to the Arab Centre for Higher Education established by the Organization of Arab States for Education, Culture and Science (ALECSO). For strengthening relations between education, training and research, UNESCO undertook a series of activities for the establishment of a co-operative network of higher education institutions dealing with the pedagogical in-service training of academic personnel in the Latin American and the Caribbean region (REDESLAC).
36. UNESCO's operational action in higher education first developed in the form of North-South co-operation. Subsequently, it was realised that together with this "vertical" co-operation, impetus should be given to a new system of "horizontal" co-operation among countries finding themselves in more or less similar conditions of underdevelopment, but with variations in the quality, the distribution and volume of human and financial resources. This Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC) represented a new dimension in international relations and had diverse implications at the political, geographical and psychological levels. It was also considered that such kind of co-operation could encourage the participation of specialists from among developing countries and also enlist participation in higher education projects of non-resident persons having their origins in developing countries.
37. In addition to the statutory co-operation within the UN family, UNESCO co-operated with the United Nations in the creation and development of two international universities viz. the United Nations University in Tokyo, and the University for Peace in San José de Costa Rica.
38. Though the idea of the creation of an international university was first examined in 1921, the UN University at Tokyo became a reality in 1975 after a proposal made by U. Thant, the then Secretary General of the UN in 1969 was jointly pursued by the UN and UNESCO, and generously supported by the Government of Japan and several other Member States. This is a unique institution in several ways. Problem-oriented, it is an international community of scholars engaged in research, post-graduate training and dissemination of knowledge in furtherance of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It functions under the joint sponsorship of the UN and UNESCO through a central programming and co-ordinating body and a network of research and post-graduate centres and programmes located in several parts of the world. It enjoys autonomy within the framework of the UN, as well as "academic freedom required for the achievement of the objectives, with particular reference to the choice of subjects and methods of research and training, and selection of persons and institutions to share in its tasks, and freedom of expression". Its programmes and activities do not lead to the award of degrees and diplomas.

39. The initiative for the creation of the University for Peace came from the President of Costa Rica and was again pursued jointly by the UN and UNESCO. The University came into existence in San José in 1981. According to its statutes, this institution offering post-graduate courses has been established to contribute to the task of educating for peace through teaching, training, research and dissemination of knowledge, fundamental to the development of the human person and societies through inter-disciplinary study of all matters relating to peace. The University enjoys autonomy and academic freedom in its operations in keeping with its humanistic purpose within the framework of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It grants master's degrees and doctorates, as well as honorary doctoral degrees.
40. UNESCO co-operates with the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP). It had jointly launched, in 1975, a programme for the development of an awareness of environmental problems and for the promotion of environment education as a key component of formal and non-formal education. Following upon the UNESCO Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education in Tbilisi, in 1977, and in collaboration with UNEP and the IAU, and at the invitation of the Government of Hungary and the National University of Budapest, UNESCO organised a seminar on the role of the university in environmental education, in October 1983.
41. Begun with the creation of the association, co-operation with the IAU continued unabated under the auspices of the Joint UNESCO-IAU Research Programme on Higher Education. The International Study of University Admissions, begun in 1960 and completed in 1963, was followed by another study on the role of institutions of higher education in the development of countries in South-East Asia, with the assistance of the Ford Foundation. Its principal recommendation concerned the establishment of a regional institute of higher education and development in South-East Asia. The recommendation was supported by the Asian Ministers' conference in 1965 and by the general conference of UNESCO the following year. The Institute (RIHED) was consequently established in 1970 at the invitation of the Government of Singapore. Unique because of the participation of representatives of governments concerned and universities in its governing body, the RIHED benefited from contributions from participating governments and from the Ford Foundation for the first six years. As part of co-operation with the IAU, UNESCO initiated in 1985 a study on the impact of satellite technology on university training and research. The UNESCO-IAU Information Centre on Higher Education co-ordinates the electronic TRACE network, allowing the inter-linking of national and international databases.
42. UNESCO co-operated with the Association des Universités partiellement ou entièrement de langue française (AUPELF). As with the IAU, a Joint Programme of Co-operation with this NGO was launched in 1979 after several years of intellectual collaboration. UNESCO participates, since 1991, in its Joint Fund for Higher Education to train professors in Lebanon and limit "brain drain" from that country. UNESCO provides technical and administrative help for the fund-raising campaign.
43. UNESCO's co-operation with the International Association of University Professors and Lecturers (IAUPL), the only international fraternity among university teachers across national and faculty boundaries, is devoted to the study of status of university teachers and the protection and independence and freedom of teaching and research.
44. Co-operation with the Association of African Universities which began with a joint UNESCO-IAU study, on university co-operation in Africa in the sixties has been developed through BREDA. Under the auspices of the "Priority Africa, a programme of action, (1990-1995)", three seminars were organised in co-operation with this NGO on the development of higher education in Africa, in Accra, 1991, Dakar, 1992 and Alexandria, 1993. Reports of these seminars have produced syntheses of the

recommendations highlighting a new outlook for action-oriented proposals. An action plan (1992-2002) has also been developed.

45. UNESCO's co-operation has also developed with several other major NGOs concerned with the growth and development of institutions, with academic staff and the role of students. As a matter of fact, UNESCO launched a series of collective consultations with major NGOs in 1988 in order to plan, organise and execute its programme in higher education, as adopted by the General Conference, on the one hand, and to promote intellectual co-operation and to assist member states in their efforts to develop their higher education systems and institutions, on the other.
46. International exchange and mobility of academics has been inherent in their quest of knowledge across geographical frontiers since the earliest days of the history of higher education. This mobility has developed in the modern times. Bilateral and multilateral agreements concluded between countries include clauses providing for academic mobility, but considerable differences existing among countries and systems of higher education, as well as methods and practices of evaluation and recognition of degrees and diplomas, have caused difficulties with regard to their comparisons, not to speak of the outdated notion of equivalence. The aim of the Organization has been to establish the basic norms which would facilitate and possibly regulate academic mobility and exchange. The notion and conception of qualification should be based on flexible criteria established on the "stage" of training reached. It covers theoretical and practical studies followed, experience gained and personal achievements of an individual, conferring on him a certain maturity and sufficient competence to cover the following "stage" to pursue further study and research or to undertake a certain professional activity or further training or new training in another field. Even though individual decisions regarding comparison and recognition of degrees and diplomas is the prerogative of an institution of higher education exercising its autonomy, the general policy regarding mobility is an affair of the state and is, therefore, a subject of negotiations among them. Consequently, UNESCO undertook to prepare and establish regional conventions between states having similar conceptual approaches so as to strengthen regional integration. The five regional conventions on the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education adopted under the auspices of UNESCO during the decade of 1974-1983 are a testimony to UNESCO's concern for the promotion of international intellectual co-operation in higher education. The application of regional conventions is the responsibility of inter-governmental committees created for this purpose by the conventions themselves. Another international convention (1976) and an international recommendation also need mention. "The World Guide to Higher Education" including a comparative survey of systems, degrees and qualifications is a significant UNESCO publication to assist those concerned with this complex problem of comparison and recognition of degrees and diplomas.

IV. CONCLUSION: LOOKING AHEAD

47. The foregoing account attempts to indicate briefly the evolution over the past decades of UNESCO's programme and activities in higher education, essentially with regard to institutional efficiency, external relevance and regional and international co-operation including academic mobility. Action up to date has confirmed the role of higher education in society. On the part of UNESCO, reflection and analysis of world problems and their inter-relationships, as well as action for the solution of those falling in the fields of its competence, have not been wanting. For, "the human being is at the centre of the process of development and peace", and education in the broadest sense is therefore, crucial for the improvement of individuals and societies everywhere.

48. The series of works constituting an “end of millennium review” of education, science, culture and communication, foreseen in the “Medium-term Strategy for 1996-2001” (28C/4) would provide matter for thought on UNESCO’s past and future. It is assumed that such a review would include an evaluation of UNITWIN/UNESCO-Chairs Programme. The contemporary reality in its complexity has demonstrated that the world of today is not the same as the one that led to the birth of UNESCO fifty years ago. It is encouraging to observe that the document 28C/4 and the resolution 0.12 adopted on the Medium Term Strategy by the general conference at its twenty eighth session (1995), as well as other documents, such as the “Deliberations of the Ad Hoc Forum of Reflection” of the Executive Board, and the reports of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, and of the World Commission on Culture and Development indicate the possibilities for future action of UNESCO.
49. Referring to the “Policy paper for Change and Development in Higher Education”, the Medium-term Strategy highlights several objectives and adds emphasis on important activities to be pursued. Within the framework of this strategy, the approved programme and budget for 1996-1997 (28C/5) on “Higher Education and Development” provides for activities to contribute to the reform and diversification of higher education systems and to strengthen their role in society, and to improve the status of higher education personnel and their academic mobility. It also provides for the reinforcement of the UNITWIN/UNESCO-Chairs Programme, and the strengthening of the status and improvement of women in professional fields directly related to development. It mentions that the inter-sectoral character of activities would be ensured. It indicates that a World Conference on Higher Education is foreseen in 1998.
50. The above-mentioned strategy and programme inspire the following observations. The Higher Education Sector has to face and adapt itself to the present world which is in disarray: inter-dependence in international relations, globalization of commerce and trade and other factors have created a feeling of uncertainty about the future; societies are marked by conflicts of ethnic, cultural, religious and social origins; intolerance, violence, organised crime, drug abuse and AIDS and other health hazards vitiate humanity; unemployment and under-employment are menacing economic growth; disintegration of families and difficulties in inter-generation relations are destabilising communities; and pollution and deterioration of environment are disfiguring the face of the earth. As agents of constructive change and of an equitable social order institutions of higher education and those responsible for their policies and practices must deliberately endeavour to rise up to the occasion and respond to the challenges of societies. This could be done by the review of policies and remodelling of structures, programmes and methods adapted to the welfare of individuals and societies under their orbit. UNESCO should assist them in making an individual in-depth analysis of their difficulties and requirements, perhaps with the help of NGOs. It should organise more advisory services, provide for equipment and the personnel to service and maintain it, and all this not only for the LDCs and Africa, but also for other needy countries such as those of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Institutions of higher education should be made aware, as stated in the Manifesto of Seville, 1986, that the necessary transformation of society which could liberate humanity from a pessimistic view of life is a matter which principally depends on collective responsibility as well as on individual conscience.
51. Higher education usually lays emphasis on the training of skilled manpower, market forces requiring “marketable products” and consequently on, “specialization”. But this has its own limitations, and general education of the individual is as necessary. As economy progresses, techniques alter rapidly. Hence the need for individuals capable of adjusting themselves to changing conditions. Higher education should be capable of striking a balance between professional training and general education. Individuals have, henceforth, to adapt themselves to multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies. Discovery and experience of diversity of cultural identities is an imperative for mutual understanding, tolerance and peace among peoples, for neutralising the risks of uniformisation and for the affirmation of universal

unity of mankind. Institutions should not only develop qualifications but human qualities in students. In the words of Julian Huxley, the first Director-General, UNESCO itself should have a general policy of “a universal scientific humanism”.

52. In fact, there is a need for a new kind of human person coming out of the portals of institutions at this level. It is suggested that the first year of post-secondary education should be devoted to grooming young students with the principles of international education and programmes promoting tolerance and respect for difference among individuals and societies. This preparatory year could also serve the institution to introduce efficient mechanisms for counselling and guidance of students for canalising them to studies suited to their inclination, aspirations and capacities, and to the needs of society. Principles and programmes of this kind should also be encouraged in institutions of non-formal education.
53. It is suggested that Member States should be encouraged to plan an increasingly integrated higher education sector and to apply new procedures and methods of management and administration to all its components. At the policy level, it may be advisable to review the organisational matters regarding institutions managed at different levels by different bodies covering different disciplines and activities. Teaching, training, research and service to the community should be organised both within and outside formal higher education institutions. It seems desirable that a high-level national “umbrella” organism co-ordinate action, without sacrifice for components of their autonomy. It could arrange for the harmonisation of action for national development through enhancement of the collective performance and individual productivity and utility.
54. Mobilisation of higher education conceived as a composite factor for individual and societal development is indeed the task of the Inter-Sectoral Committee on Higher Education within the UNESCO Secretariat. In preparation for the World Conference on Higher Education in 1998 it is suggested that the Committee should consult with and receive inputs from all sectors and units concerned with disciplinary and inter-disciplinary teaching, training and research, as well as problem-oriented projects at the higher education level, and particularly those concerning the priority target groups viz. women, youth, LDCs and Africa.

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