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URL_ID=6793&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL_ID=6793&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

**Item 14 of the Provisional Agenda:
UNESCO Strategy on Climate Change and MAB and WNBR activities**

The UNESCO Climate Change Initiative

(Extract on UNESCO and the global action on climate change from the report by the Director-General on the follow-up to decisions and resolutions adopted by the Executive Board and the General Conference at their previous sessions (184 EX/5))

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IX. UNESCO and the Global Action on Climate Change

(Follow-up to 35 C/Resolution 33)

46. Prior to the fifteenth Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Copenhagen, 7-19 December 2009, the Director-General developed a UNESCO climate initiative, which she had announced in her inaugural speech. This initiative built on the UNESCO Strategy for Action on Climate Change and was designed as a contribution to the concerted global effort towards the outcome of COP 15. The text of the initiative is annexed.

47. The initiative focuses on a limited number of strategic issues and seeks to produce concrete results in select key areas of UNESCO's competence as called for by 35 C/Resolution 33. The initiative comprises four pillars – scientific, educational, environmental and ethical – and seeks to strengthen the scientific, mitigation and adaptation capacities of countries and communities that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The initiative will give special attention to UNESCO's two global priorities, Africa and gender equality, as well as to the increased vulnerability of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and will focus on climate science, impact of climate change on water resources, biological diversity, cultural heritage, ethics and social dimensions. Ultimately, the initiative shall contribute to the emergence of less carbon-intensive green societies.

48. Through coordination of observation, monitoring, climate research and forecasting related to the oceans and the water cycle, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO/IOC) and the International Hydrological Programme (UNESCO/IHP), in collaboration with relevant United Nations partners, will continue to address gaps in the knowledge base towards a refined climate forecasting and early warning at global, regional, national and local levels. UNESCO will provide decision-makers with policy advice, practical guidelines, selected good practices and technical assistance to help Member States address the impact of climate change on sustainable water resources management. The Organization will also draw upon the iconic values of the MAB biosphere reserves and UNESCO World Heritage sites for showcasing adaptation and conservation measures, as well as their potential contribution to mitigation and compensation efforts benefiting from a functioning international REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) finance mechanism. Especially vulnerable sites will serve as learning laboratories to nurture sustainable livelihoods.

49. In education, UNESCO will develop a climate education programme aimed at assisting Member States to integrate into curricula, teacher training and education strategies at all levels key information on the findings of climate science as well as on values and lifestyles supporting a transition to low-carbon, green societies. UNESCO will also, in close cooperation with UNFCCC and international stakeholders, maintain a clearinghouse/knowledge hub to make climate change education resources and materials more widely available to Member States. This particular work is a follow-up to the Denmark-funded International UNESCO Seminar on Climate Change Education (July 2009) focusing on SIDS and will continue to involve close cooperation among the UNESCO Intersectoral Platforms on Climate Change, Education for Sustainable Development and SIDS.

50. Finally, the initiative will address emerging social and ethical challenges posed by global climate change, including climate-induced migration, through its networks of leading experts in the social and human sciences. In this context and following a series of consultations including

with other United Nations agencies, UNESCO will explore the advisability of preparing a draft universal declaration of ethical principles in relation to climate change.

51. At COP 15, the Director-General presented the UNESCO climate initiative at an international press conference and participated in a high-level panel discussion on the “United Nations system delivering as one on climate change” together with the United Nations Secretary-General and other Executive Heads of United Nations system organizations. Detailed information on UNESCO’s participation at the Copenhagen United Nations Climate Change Conference is available at the following address www.unesco.org/en/climatechange.

Annex
UNESCO’S CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE
PRESENTATION AT THE COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE
 December 2009

UNESCO has a longstanding involvement in climate-relevant issues and activities. In particular, it has contributed over the years, through its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), to the scientific work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and it will continue to do so in the future. Other areas such as in freshwater management and early flood warning systems have equally had high relevance for better understanding climate change and to help prepare countries in mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Recent trends in global warming make it imperative for UNESCO, as for the entire United Nations system, to mobilize its skills and capacities to assist Member States and communities, especially in developing countries and in small island developing states, to cope with the impact of climate change.

To this end, UNESCO’s Executive Board at its 180th session in 2008 has adopted a global strategy for action on climate change. Based on this strategy, UNESCO will pursue a climate change initiative with a limited set of specific action to be taken immediately. UNESCO, as the specialized agency of the United Nations system for education, the sciences, culture and communication and information, is committed to bringing together all of its interdisciplinary expertise to strengthen the scientific, mitigation and adaptation capacities to assist especially the world’s poorest countries and communities that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Special attention will be given to UNESCO’s two global priorities, Africa and gender equality.

Africa matters

UNESCO attaches top priority to Africa because it is likely to suffer most from climate change. Climate change threatens to roll back development gains of recent years, exacerbates poverty and fuels civil strife as access to natural resources gets tighter. Action will be taken in a number of diverse fields, such as: the creation of scientific capacities in climate sciences; the operations of drought monitoring systems; the climate change and groundwater nexus; a range of initiatives in education for sustainable development, including curricula, teacher training and TVET; the building of capacities for management of natural resources and tropical forests; the management of World Heritage sites and biosphere reserves in the face of climate change; the support to more than a dozen journalism schools, with an essential part of their curriculum being the reporting on climate change.

Gender equality matters

UNESCO will sensitize governments to the gender dimensions of climate change through global policy dialogue and by advocating their involvement in climate change negotiations and other related decision-making processes. UNESCO will collaborate with other United Nations organizations to assist Member States in building capacities for gender-responsive climate

policies and actions. As women are disproportionately affected by climate change, UNESCO will include in all its climate change action a special gender lens.

What is UNESCO doing concretely to assist countries? The principal pillars of UNESCO climate change action are:

Climate science and knowledge matter

- Through observation and monitoring of the oceans and the water cycle, UNESCO (in particular through the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the International Hydrological Programme and more than 20 water-related institutes under the auspices of UNESCO) will continue providing information and the knowledge base allowing a refined climate forecasting and early warning at regional, national and local levels.
- Based thereon, UNESCO is committed to support all stakeholders, especially in Africa, to cope better with the impact of climate change, to be more resilient and less vulnerable to natural hazards and disasters and to enhance their adaptation capacities.
- Communities matter: Through the Climate Frontlines Forum, UNESCO will empower small island, indigenous and other vulnerable communities to build a network of community based projects on climate change impact and adaptation, allowing the sharing of knowledge and grass roots experiences and bringing to bear their voice in the global climate change debate.

Education for sustainable development (ESD) matters

- UNESCO will assist Member States to integrate into curricula, teacher training and education strategies at all levels key information on the findings of climate science as well as on values and lifestyles supporting a transition to low-carbon, green societies (in line with New Delhi work programme).
- Moreover, by promoting technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Member States, UNESCO together with partners will facilitate access of youth and adults to green jobs, especially in endangered ecosystems where the workforce needs to be relocated and retrained as a consequence of climate change impact, especially in small island developing states (SIDS) and coastal regions.
- Training the next generation of climate scientists and practitioners, particularly from Africa and least developed countries, in the areas of water management (through UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education in Delft and the water-related institutes under the auspices of UNESCO); Earth science and meteorological modelling (Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP)), and integrated land and resource management focusing primarily on tropical forests (ERAIFT – Kinshasa, and the proposed IRAIFT in Cote d'Ivoire).
- Maintaining a clearinghouse/knowledge hub, in close cooperation with UNFCCC and international stakeholders, to make climate change education resources and materials more widely available to Member States.
- Media matter: UNESCO will build capacities for science journalism and public service and state broadcasters to report on climate change in an informative and professional way. Community media centres will be used to provide training and knowledge for local populations.

Culture and biological diversity as well as cultural heritage matter

- UNESCO will assist Member States to harness the iconic values of World Heritage sites and biosphere reserves for showcasing adaptation and conservation measures.

- The World Network of Biosphere Reserves and the natural and mixed natural-cultural World Heritage sites account for some 300,000,000 hectares of forested landscapes and represent a unique source for field-based activities. UNESCO will assist Member States to use especially vulnerable sites as learning laboratories to nurture sustainable livelihoods and as a potential contribution to mitigation and compensation efforts benefiting from a Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD) mechanism that may be adopted in Copenhagen. The mitigation impact results from such efforts may under a REDD framework eventually receive compensation for the value of the CO₂ emissions reduced or sequestered.
- UNESCO will assist Member States to assess the risk of the effects of climate change on World Heritage sites and biosphere reserves and to integrate adaptation measures into management plans.
- UNESCO will provide support to Member States and their communities to develop cultural industries and cultural entrepreneurs as a means of promoting the emergence of low carbon societies.

Other climate-relevant action by UNESCO

Ethics matters

UNESCO as the international organization dealing with ethical issues has also launched a consultative process aimed at judging the advisability of preparing a declaration of ethical principles in relation to climate change drawing on both the natural and social and human sciences.

Social dimensions matters

UNESCO will examine the social and human dimensions associated with climate change, including climate-induced migration, through its network of leading experts in the social and human sciences.