

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL
ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)
Support to NEPAD**

Period of Report: August 2005 to August 2006

Support in the field of education

UNESCO assisted the AU Commission in the finalization of the review of the African Decade of Education, and restructuring of the Commission's Department for Human Resources, Science and Technology. The AU Assembly, at its 6th session in Khartoum (23-24 January 2006) devoted first and foremost to education and culture, adopted the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) and the framework for the Plan of Action of the Decade. UNESCO will support the AUC, the RECs and the Member States in the finalization of the Action Plan of the Second Decade of Education 2006-2015 and its implementation.

UNESCO is playing a coordinating role in catalyzing the activities undertaken at international level within the framework of the UN Literacy Decade (2003-2012) and the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014).

Education For All (EFA)

Three important initiatives that are relatively neglected in the EFA Agenda are being implemented during the biennium 2006-2007: the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE); the Teacher Training Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA); and the Global Initiative on HIV/AIDS and Education (GIHAE). These three initiatives have timelines extending to 2015. LIFE is a programme of action targeting countries with low literacy rates and high populations (over 10 million) which have initiated literacy skills initiatives within the framework of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD). They include 18 countries from Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone.

For the Teacher Training Initiative, half of UNESCO's teacher education programme for the biennium 2006-07 will serve Sub-Saharan Africa. A High-Level Experts' Meeting on TTISSA was held from 19 to 21 October 2005 at UNESCO Paris Headquarters to define concrete action plans and strategies in the field of teacher education for the next four years. An International Conference on Accreditation, Quality Assurance and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in Africa was organized by UNESCO in collaboration with several international organizations and higher education institutions on 6-8 February 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya. The major objective of the conference was to take stock of international, regional and national experiences in order to inform development of effective mechanisms for accreditation, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications in Africa.

Support in the field of culture

Apart from its current numerous activities implemented in Africa in the field of handicrafts, cultural industries development, books, literature and reading, copyright and neighbouring rights, and the fight against piracy, all in line with the NEPAD initiative, UNESCO has been working since August 2005 with the AU Commission to assess Africa's status in the field of culture. These interactions led to the meeting of experts and Ministers of Culture in Nairobi, Kenya, in December 2005 and to the adoption by the AU Assembly at its 6th session in Khartoum of important decisions including *the revised Charter for the Cultural Renaissance of Africa, the launching of 2006 as the Year of African languages, the status of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), the creation of an African World Heritage Fund and the "Plan of Action for the Promotion of Cultural Industries for Africa's development"*. The latter recommended, in particular, facilitating new institutional partnerships between the public and private sectors and civil society. UNESCO also provided assistance to the AU encouraging States to ratify UNESCO's normative instruments on the protection and promotion of African cultural heritage, and stressing the importance of African languages. Africa is actively involved in the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity. 20 projects in the field of book, music, and film industries are implemented in 30 countries in order to develop local capacities and strengthen cooperation.

The AU Assembly further took a decision on re-instating the **link between culture and education**. UNESCO has contributed by preparing a document entitled "Education and Culture in Africa's Quest for Development" which sought to demonstrate the linkages existing between the two sectors as key ingredients for sustainable development of the continent. In its decision, the AU Assembly invites UNESCO and other relevant partners to provide support to ministries of culture and education in their efforts to strengthen the interface between culture and education.

Support in the field of science and technology

UNESCO supported the NEPAD Secretariat and the AU Commission in organizing the second meeting of African Ministers of Science and Technology (AMCOST), in Dakar, Senegal, from 12-17 September 2005. The 6th AU Summit in Khartoum endorsed the establishment of a high-level AU-NEPAD-UNESCO-Working Group to prepare a comprehensive Programme for the establishment and funding of Centres of Excellence in Africa for the implementation of Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action. Several consultations and meetings will be organized in preparation for the summit of African Heads of State devoted to Science, Technology and Research for Africa's Socio-Economic Development, to be held in January 2007.

UNESCO as the **Convener of the UN S&T Cluster in support of NEPAD** organized a meeting on 9 June 2006, where representatives of the AU and NEPAD, UN Cluster agencies working in S&T in Africa (UNECA, UNCTAD, UNIDO, UNEP, IAEA, WIPO) and other relevant partners (DFID, IDRC, CERN, WBI, S&D Network) met to discuss

the different partners' visions, strategies and goals in relation to the contribution of Science and Technology to Africa's development and how best the UN system can respond to the AU/NEPAD process in S&T leading up to the 2007 Summit and beyond.

UNESCO is contributing to the process of establishing a centre of excellence in water sciences. In 2005, UNESCO in partnership with UNEP and the NEPAD Secretariat organized a workshop on "developing centres of excellence in water science" with the view of determining the procedures for identifying the centres and the mechanism for financing them. The process will continue in 2006.

In November 2005, UNESCO also organized a consultative forum of university leaders to discuss ways and means to revitalize African Universities and make them more relevant to economic development.

The UNESCO/SADC Flagship Programme on Sustainable Integrated Management and Development of Arid and Semi-Arid Regions of Southern Africa (SIMDAS) was created in support of the development of activities in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries as a follow up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg 2002) and the Third World Water Forum (Kyoto 2003).

Support in the field of communication and information

Significant contribution has been made to improve information and knowledge access for communities through 29 Community Multimedia Centres (CMC) in Africa.

UNESCO contributed media assistance to enhance good governance in post-conflict countries, such as Liberia, Sudan, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In particular, these initiatives included technical advice, assistance in media legislation and the establishment of self-regulatory media frameworks, the training of journalists, as well as the capacity-building of independent media associations.

On 28-30 October 2005, UNESCO supported an international conference in Accra, Ghana, organized by Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), Media Rights Agenda (MRA), *Journalistes en danger (JED)*, the Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA) and attended by the UN Special Rapporteur on Free Expression for the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Participants discussed media freedom and freedom of expression issues in Africa and launched the "Network of African Freedom of Expression Organizations (NAFEO)", an initiative of more than 33 African and international organizations set up to campaign for media freedom and independence.

Challenges and constraints in mobilizing financial resources to support NEPAD

One of UNESCO's major challenges in raising resources is the difficulty it faces in ensuring that education, sciences, culture and communication retain their deserved visibility and importance in regard to the developmental agenda of the operational bodies of the UN which tend to deal with cross-sectoral issues. Lack of visibility leads to lack of

priority to funding these issues both within the UN system and among the bilateral funding agencies and donors, which also have a cross sectoral development-oriented approach. **The recent session of the AU Summit in Khartoum will from this point of view have been a watershed in that it has placed culture alongside education among the top priorities of African leaders .**

Furthermore, the mobilisation of funds for science in Africa has in the past faced a lot of difficulties because attention was turned away from development agenda to emergency activities in the region. As the number of conflicts declines and as the awareness of the role of science and technology in development gains ground, it is expected that funding for science and technology will grow.

Advocacy and awareness-raising

UNESCO is mobilizing its institutional partners (National Commissions, Chairs, NGOs, Clubs, etc.), and is continuing to conduct future-oriented studies, reflections and analyses. It is also organizing conferences and participating in meetings in order to contribute to a better understanding of the African Union's Programme with a view to supporting the implementation of NEPAD.

Strengthening cooperation with the AU and the RECs

- On 23 January 2006, during the 6th AU Summit of Heads of State and Government in Khartoum, Sudan, the UNESCO Director-General and the President of the African Union Commission signed an agreement which broadens and strengthens the cooperation framework between UNESCO and the African Union (then OAU) which was set up in 1968.
- Cooperation agreements with IGAD, ECCAS, UEMOA and EAC will be signed in 2006. The 2nd UNESCO-ECOWAS Joint Commission was held in Abuja on 21 June 2006, to evaluate implementation of the recommendations made at the first meeting in 2000, and to discuss coordination of the future activities of the two organizations.
- UNESCO has demonstrated its commitment vis-à-vis Africa by creating within the Organization a Department that deals specifically with African issues.
- UNESCO has established two important bodies to increase support for NEPAD: i) the UNESCO Committee for NEPAD, the role of which is to monitor the NEPAD-oriented strategies, programmes and activities carried out by UNESCO and to advise the Director-General on support to NEPAD; ii) the Forum of African Regional and Subregional Organizations in Support of Cooperation between UNESCO and NEPAD (FOSRASUN), conceived as a tool of cooperation between the RECs, African Union/NEPAD and UNESCO, meant to promote regional integration through education, sciences and culture.