

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATION, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL  
ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)**

**Support to NEPAD**

**Period of Report: July 2007 to June 2008**

During the reporting period UNESCO supported the African Union (AU) Commission, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Member States in the implementation of its sectoral programme in UNESCO's fields of competence. Salient activities include the implementation of the Plan of Action of the 2nd Decade for Education; UNESCO's contribution to the implementation of the AU/NEPAD Consolidated Action Plan for Science and Technology and the African Regional Action Plan for the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE); and the contribution to the implementation of the Decisions taken at the Khartoum Summit (2006) in the field of culture. These key AU/NEPAD sectoral platforms of action in the Organization's fields of competence are now integrated into the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 and are reflected in the Programme and Budget for 2008-2009.

**Institutional cooperation on the continental and regional levels**

UNESCO continued to maintain its cooperation with the AU, AU Commission (AUC), the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC), the NEPAD Secretariat, the RECs and the Regional Integration Organisations (RIOs), through regular participation at the meetings of the different bodies. The Joint Commission, which is the mechanism of consultation on the implementation of the recommendations provided in the agreement between UNESCO and the AUC signed on 24 January 2006, is scheduled to be organized during the second half of 2008.

UNESCO reinforced the two important consultative mechanisms to increase support for NEPAD established by its Director-General:

- The UNESCO Committee for NEPAD, which held its fourth meeting in July 2007 at UNESCO Headquarters. The role of the Committee is to monitor NEPAD-oriented strategies, programmes and activities carried out by UNESCO, and to advise the Director-General on support to NEPAD;
- Within the framework of the Forum of African Regional and Sub-regional Organizations in Support of Cooperation between UNESCO and NEPAD (FOSRASUN), UNESCO contributed to the capacity development of RECs/RIOs secretariats' staff through the organization of a training seminar (3 to 7 September 2007, UNESCO Headquarters). The FOSRASUN was conceived as a tool for cooperation between the RECs, AU/NEPAD and UNESCO in favour of regional integration through education, science, culture and communication. The third meeting of the FOSRASUN will be hosted by CEN-SAD in Tripoli, Libya, during

the third quarter of 2008.

### **UNESCO's support to AU/NEPAD in the field of Education**

UNESCO assisted the AUC, the RECs and Member States in the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education (2006-2015), the priorities of which are included in the Organization's Programme and Budget (2008-2009) and its Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013. The Organization provided strategic support to the work of AUC (particularly the Department for Human Resources and Development) in the implementation of the Second Decade of Education for Africa Action Plan, ensuring that it contributes to the achievement of the vision of the AU in complementarity with the global role of UNESCO. Specific interventions have already started on four of its seven focus areas, namely Gender and Culture, Educational Management and Information Systems, Teacher Development, and Tertiary Education.

Special emphasis was placed on assistance to the Education Department of the AUC and the RECs through capacity-building. In this regard, UNESCO seconded a senior Education Specialist to the Department for Human Resources and Development to assist in managing the implementation of the Second Decade of Education for Africa Action Plan.

**Global coordination role:** Within its core mission to promote education as a fundamental right, to improve the quality of education and to stimulate experimentation, innovation and policy dialogue, UNESCO coordinates global actions and efforts in a number of UN priority areas, notably the pursuit of the Education for all (EFA) goals and the focus on three key responsibilities – the United Nations Literacy Decade, the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, and the area of education and HIV/AIDS, including EDUCAIDS, UNAIDS, the Global Initiative on HIV/AIDS, and Education. These three initiatives have deadlines extending to 2015. In addition, two other important initiatives were implemented during the biennium 2006-2007: the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment and the Teacher Training Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Support in the field of culture: “Contributing to Regional Integration and African Renaissance”**

UNESCO assisted the AUC-Department for Social Affairs, the RECs and Member States in the implementation of the important set of instruments adopted at the Khartoum Summit (i.e. the Charter for the Cultural Renaissance of Africa, Revised Language Plan of Action for Africa, Plan of Action for the Promotion of Cultural Industries for Africa's Development, The African World Heritage Fund).

In the framework of the implementation of the Language Plan of Action for Africa, revised in Khartoum, the Organisation supported the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), the AU's scientific institution specializing in African languages, through the organization of sub-regional workshops on African languages in Central Africa

(Yaoundé, 9 to 11 October 2007), Southern Africa (Johannesburg, 5 to 7 March 2008) and Eastern Africa (Dar es Salaam, 17 to 19 March 2008) with a view to promoting and harmonizing national linguistic policies as a means of fostering regional integration.

In the context of the follow-up to the third meeting of the UNESCO Committee for NEPAD, an international symposium on “Dialogue among endogenous religions, Christianity and Islam in the service of a culture of peace in Africa”, took place in Cotonou, Benin, in August 2007. This meeting, which adopted the Cotonou Declaration, brought together political decision makers, religious leaders, NGOs, women and young people around innovative interreligious strategies that promote dialogue at the local, national and international levels.

UNESCO provided regional capacity-building to African Member States to encourage the ratification of the main UNESCO standard-setting instruments in the field of culture, and particularly the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2003 and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of 2005. Moreover, technical assistance was provided to some regional institutions such as the Centre international des Civilisations Bantu (CICIBA), to reinforce its capacity in the area of intangible cultural heritage.

Taking into consideration the need to associate the Diaspora in the development of the continent and as a follow-up to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conferences of Intellectuals from Africa and the Diaspora, CIAD (Dakar, Senegal, October 2004, Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, July 2006), the 34<sup>th</sup> session of UNESCO’s General Conference (October 2007) adopted a resolution calling upon the Director-General to collaborate with the AUC and its Member States to support the implementation of the recommendations of CIAD II.

UNESCO is particularly assisting this year, the AUC (Department for Social affairs) in the preparation of the 2nd Conference of African Ministers for Culture to be held in Algiers in October 2008.

### **Contributing to the implementation of Africa’s Consolidated Plan of Action for Science and Technology**

UNESCO supported the NEPAD Secretariat and the AU Commission in organizing several consultations and meetings in follow-up to the 8<sup>th</sup> African Union Summit devoted to the theme “Science, Technology and Scientific Research for Development”.

As a follow-up to the decisions adopted by the 8<sup>th</sup> Summit, UNESCO formulated a Plan of Action concerning UNESCO’s participation in the implementation of the decision and declaration by the African Union Summit on “Science, Technology and Scientific Research for Development”. Following consultations with the Africa Group of UNESCO, and with a view to concentrate efforts in certain priority areas, the UNESCO Plan of Action was designated to focus on three flagship activities namely: 1) capacity-building in science policy, 2) science and technology education; and 3) establishment of an African Virtual Campus (AVC). Once approved by the 177<sup>th</sup> session of UNESCO’s

Executive Board, the Plan of Action was taken into account in the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013, and its Programme and Budget for 2008-2009.

During the 34<sup>th</sup> session of UNESCO's General Conference, a Ministerial Round Table on "Science and Technology for Sustainable Development and the Role of UNESCO" was organized on 26 and 27 October 2007. The African Union was represented by Professor Nagia Essayed, AU Commissioner for Human Resources Sciences and Technology, who presented Africa's Consolidated Plan of Action for Science and Technology.

In cooperation with the AUC Department for Human Resources, S&T (AUC/HRST), UNESCO convened the third meeting of the UN S&T Cluster on 29 April 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. UNESCO, as the Convener of the UN S&T Cluster, was invited for the first time to present the activities of the Cluster to the African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology (AMCOST) Bureau meeting on 1 May 2008. In recognition of its important role in the implementation of the CPA, UNESCO was unanimously nominated as a member of the AMCOST which approved the establishment of the African Cluster for Science and Technology (ACST) as a mechanism to harmonize activities in Africa that contribute to the implementation of the CPA for science and technology, in line with AUC decision-making procedures and structure. The ACST is composed of the AU represented by its HRST, the Office of S&T of NEPAD (OST), UNESCO and UNECA. The ACST was formally endorsed by the AU Summit of Heads of States and Government (Egypt, July 2008) and officially launched on 18 July 2008.

In order to harmonize activities in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy, UNESCO will convene another meeting with AUC/HRST and AU/NEPAD for UN Agencies working on STI policies and indicators, in August 2008.

### **Advocacy and awareness-raising**

UNESCO continues to mobilize its institutional partners (Ambassadors, NGOs, Associated Schools, Chairs, etc.), and particularly the National Commissions for UNESCO in African Member States, which are, as per their charters and functions, in a key position to help Africans internalize the principles and objectives of the AU and NEPAD, since they cooperate with the governmental and other structures responsible for the implementation of NEPAD in the various areas of competence of UNESCO. The latest regional consultation with African National Commissions for UNESCO was held in Cotonou, Benin (7-9 July 2008).

Important advocacy was carried out internally and externally to promote the harmonized approach and regional programmes / initiatives in favour of continental integration and the importance of the key domains of competence of UNESCO, namely education and culture, to reach these endeavors. In view of this, the 34<sup>th</sup> session of UNESCO's General Conference (October 2007), was an important period of exchanges, mobilization and cooperation between UNESCO and its different partners, notably through the many side events organized. The Africa Group of UNESCO was particularly involved in this regard.