

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

**Support to NEPAD**

**Period of Report: July 2008 to June 2009**

**Institutional cooperation and support**

UNESCO continued to develop its cooperation with the African Union Commission (AUC), the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the NEPAD Secretariat. The second Joint AUC-UNESCO Commission took place from 9 to 11 March 2009, at UNESCO Headquarters. On this occasion, the AU Chairperson, Jean Ping, signed a Joint Communiqué with the Director-General of UNESCO. The third meeting of the Forum of African Regional and Subregional Organizations to Support Cooperation between UNESCO and NEPAD (FOSRASUN) took place on 24 February 2009 in Tripoli, Libya. The High-Level meeting was convened under the main theme “The Education/Culture interface in the heart of regional integration” and offered the opportunity to review the Second Decade of Education in Africa (2006-2015), the Consolidated Plan of Action for science and technology in Africa and the follow-up of decisions made by the African Union in the field of culture adopted at the Khartoum Summit (2006).

**Education**

UNESCO provided strategic support to the work of AUC in the implementation of the Plan of Action of the Second Decade of Education. Furthermore, UNESCO facilitated the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the AUC and Association of Donors of Education (ADEA). UNESCO facilitated the education sector policy dialogue in Africa at the ADEA Biennale held in May 2008 as well as through its chairing of the working groups on ICT and education and early childhood.

Specific activities with the RECs are Education Management Information System (EMIS) joint action plan for quality in the SADC region; HIV/AIDS curricula in the ECCAS region; Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the ECOWAS region; and Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP) in East and Southern Africa. UNESCO also supported the meeting of the Ministers of Education of the CEMAC Region in October 2008, in Douala, Cameroon, which contributed to the harmonization of the curricula on HIV/Aids in the CEMAC member States. Furthermore, UNESCO supported the ECCAS study on the improvement of the education system in the ECCAS region.

In Higher Education Development UNESCO provided technical support in drafting the revision of the Arusha convention. The AUC is a member of the special task force of the Director General of UNESCO for the preparation of the World Conference on Higher Education which will give special attention to the revitalisation of higher education in Africa. Meanwhile, the feasibility study on the creation of a Pan African university proposed by AUC has been carried out.

## Culture

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa (BREDA) supported the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) in promoting the use of African languages as medium of instruction and communication – commission on the use of Kiswahili as language of communication is set up in Zanzibar and the Tanzanian government has offered training facilities at the State University of Zanzibar.

UNESCO assisted the AUC, the RECs and Member States in the implementation of the important set of instruments adopted at the Khartoum Summit through the following activities:

- UNESCO supported ACALAN through the organization of sub-regional workshops on African languages in the five regions with a view to promoting and harmonizing national linguistic policies as a means of fostering regional integration.
- UNESCO facilitated the establishment of a steering committee for the celebration of the International Year of Languages in February 2008 in Paris. Moreover, in the framework of the African Week organized by UNESCO in May 2008, the conference « *Les langues africaines, facteur d'intégration* » was organized. ACALAN also participated in the Launch of the Chirac Foundation and its Programme for the Protection of Endangered Languages (France, June 2008), the International Conference « Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace » (Russian Federation, July 2008) and the UNU-UNESCO Conference « *Multilingualism and Globalization* » (Japan, August 2008).
- UNESCO assisted the AUC and its Member States in organizing events for the celebration of the 2008 Year of African Languages. In view of protecting indigenous languages from extinction in Nigeria, UNESCO carried out capacity building workshops to safeguard endangered Nigerian languages. In Swaziland, from April 2008, the National Commission of Swaziland in partnership with the Ministry of Education of Swaziland, has undertaken a general assessment of the vitality of SiSwati, in view of elaborating a strategy aiming at both reinforcing the use of SiSwati in the curriculum and reinforcing and implementation an overall language policy.
- UNESCO and the African Network of Cultural Promoters and Entrepreneurs (RAPEC) organized a debate on « Culture, Economy and Regional Integration », devoted to culture as a foundation for the development in Africa, in December 2008 at UNESCO. More than 300 people, most of them from the African Diaspora, participated in the meeting.
- UNESCO, through the World Heritage Centre has continued to assist The African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) in the implementation of its activities for the protection of World Heritage in Africa. UNESCO participated in the first advocacy meeting which was organized in April 2008 in Abuja (Nigeria). Financial contribution was provided to support a training course on preparation of nomination dossiers for inscription of African sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List in October 2008. Through the Africa 2009 programme, a joint initiative of UNESCO and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), and the Centre international de la construction en terre (CRAterre), conservation activities and training of African experts working in cultural Heritage are currently being carried out.

- The first phase of the pedagogic adaptation of the General History of Africa has been launched, owing to extra-budgetary funding of US\$2 million provided by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

### **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”. UNESCO formulated a plan of action that defines specific activities with emphasis on three priority areas: capacity building in science, technology and innovation policy; fostering science and technology education; and the establishment of an African virtual campus in the five regions of the continent.

UNESCO has launched the African Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Initiative (ASTIPI) to build capacities in STI policy formulation. 18 African Member States have made requests to UNESCO to assist them in their STI policy reviews and re-formulation. UNESCO organized a platform for SADC countries to exchange views on national STI policy review and formulation in Botswana in September 2008.

UNESCO organized a Ministerial Roundtable Breakfast in July 2008 in New York on the theme “Science, Technology and Innovation Policy: Key to Sustainable Development”. The Round Table debate focused on harnessing scientific knowledge through effective science policy as a key lever for achieving sustainable development in Africa and was used to raise awareness among the UN family and donors of the need to invest in STI policy in Africa.

African Virtual Campus (AVC) project was developed – UNESCO is using contemporary Information, Communication and Technology (ICTs) to enhance the capacity of the Member States to train teachers of science, engineering and technology through e-learning by means of an AVC. The first AVC centre was established in Sub-Saharan Africa in Cotonou, Benin, in July 2008; the second in November 2008 at the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal. The first training session for personnel (directors, technical and pedagogical experts) of the e-learning centres in West Africa was held at the UNESCO Office in Dakar in November 2008.

Furthermore, an MoU has been signed under the auspices of Spain and UNESCO at the III World Biosphere Reserves Congress in Madrid in February 2008 between Uganda and DRC aiming to create the *“Central Albertine Rift Transboundary Biosphere Initiative”*. The objective is to promote environmental peace-building and conflict resolution through great apes conservation, in particular by encouraging transboundary cooperation in sensitive regions, such as DRC-Rwanda-Uganda. Furthermore, UNESCO provided financial support for the First All Africa Congress on Biotechnology, held in Nairobi in September 2008.

### **Social and Human Sciences**

In support of Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO contributed to the signing of an agreement between the Greater Horn Horizon Forum and the Government of Djibouti in May 2008, which will allow the Forum to work independently as a regional think tank. Furthermore, a workshop on “Identity, Citizenship and Regional Integration” involving experts and researchers from the region was held May 2009, followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Executive Committee.

Furthermore, 5 out of 15 books entitled “The Nation-State Facing the Challenges of Regional Integration in West Africa” have been published.

**West Africa Institute:** ECOWAS, ECOBANK, the Republic of Cape Verde and UNESCO have proposed the establishment of the West Africa Institute (WAI), which will focus on research on regional integration in West Africa and act as an observatory of policy implementation in the different States and in ECOWAS as a whole. The launching of the Institute is planned for 2010.

### **Communication and Information**

UNESCO, in collaboration with UNECA and AUC, organized a 2-week training event for over 30 information professionals from public service institutions in Ethiopia in the use of the Greenstone Software suite. A local on-line user group for sharing experiences and continuing capacity-building has been established with UNESCO support.

In support to the African Youth Charter, within the framework of the UNCT in Ethiopia, UNESCO supported the development of SpeakAfrica, a continental on-line platform for mobilizing African youth involvement in development activities. UNESCO provided training for over 35 young people from across Africa in digital reporting and youth advocacy. Under the banner of SpeakAfrica, UNESCO in concert with other Agencies has helped to organize trainings, moderated on-line discussion forums, regional consultations, and supported the participation of African youth at key policy forums in Addis Ababa.

25 media development projects worth US\$ 707,150 were supported in 22 African countries by the International Programme for Development of Communication (IPDC) in April 2008. In partnership with Rhodes University (South Africa) and Highway Africa, UNESCO organized a capacity building meeting in journalism training in Africa in March 2008 in South Africa to explore the ways in which the capacities of African journalism schools can be boosted through aid and exchange programmes, partnerships, networking and twinning initiatives.

An International Training of Trainers Workshop on Communication for Development was organized in cooperation with the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center in Haifa, Israel, in December, 2008. A lot of activities were implemented in support to the Community media, through the training of radio newscasters on radio editing and digital broadcasting; the launching of CMCs projects with IPCD support or the creation of campus radios.

Among the projects in the area of Press freedom, freedom of expression and professional journalism in cooperation with African Member States is UNESCO support to the first working congress of Federation of African Journalists (FAJ) that was organized by the Eastern Africa Journalists Association, in Nairobi, Kenya in November 2008. UNESCO also co-organized a conference of the media in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, entitled ‘The Challenges of Media Development, Promoting Media Freedom and Professionalism within the ICGLR Member States’, in November 2008, in Kigali, Rwanda.