

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

Period of Report: July 2006 to June 2007

- During the reporting period, UNESCO supported the African Union (AU) Commission in elaborating its sectoral programme in UNESCO's fields of competence. Main activities include: the 2nd Decade for Education; implementation of the decisions taken at the Khartoum Summit in the field of culture; and UNESCO's contribution to the implementation of the AU/NEPAD consolidated Action Plan for Science and Technology.
- These key sectoral platforms are now being integrated into the heart of the next UNESCO regional strategy for Africa and the Programme and Budget for 2008-2009.
- Important advocacy was carried out internally and externally to promote the integrative approach and regional initiatives in support of continental integration.

Institutional cooperation on the continental and regional levels

UNESCO maintained its cooperation with the AU, the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC), and the regional economic communities (RECs) through the regular meetings of the Director-General of UNESCO with the leaders of the AU and the Executive Secretaries of RECs; participation in the meetings of the different regional bodies; and the two important consultative mechanisms established by the Director-General of UNESCO: the UNESCO Committee for NEPAD, whose role is to monitor NEPAD-oriented strategies, programmes and activities carried out by UNESCO and to advise the Director-General on support to NEPAD; and the Forum of African Regional and Sub-regional Organizations in Support of Cooperation between UNESCO and NEPAD (FOSRASUN), conceived as a tool for cooperation between the RECs, AU/NEPAD and UNESCO in favour of regional integration through education, sciences, culture and communication.

The second meeting of the Forum took place on 4 September 2006. In the framework of the Forum, UNESCO will contribute to the development of human resource capacities of the RECs in the fields of competence of UNESCO. A first training workshop will be organized in 2007 at UNESCO Headquarters.

Cooperation agreements were signed with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and East African Community (EAC). The 2nd UNESCO-ECOWAS Joint Commission was held in Abuja in 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's support to the AU Decade of Education (2006-2015)

After making substantial contributions to the finalization of the Action Plan of the Second Decade of Education, UNESCO staff actively participated in the seven working groups that correspond to the Decade's areas of focus: Gender and Culture; Education Management Information Systems; Teacher Development, Education and Training; Tertiary Education; Technical and Vocational Education and Training; Curriculum, and Teaching and Learning materials; and Quality Management. The Plan of Action was formally adopted by the Conference of African Ministers of Education (COMEDAF) meeting in Maputo (September 2006) and the 8th AU Summit further authorized the establishment of an African Education Fund [Assembly/AU/Dec.139 (VIII)].

Special emphasis was placed on assistance to the Education Department of the AU Commission and the RECs through capacity-building. In this regard, UNESCO seconded a senior professional staff member to the Department for Human Resources and Development to assist in managing the implementation of the 2nd Decade.

Global coordination role

UNESCO plays a coordinating role in catalyzing the activities undertaken on the international level within the framework of the UN Literacy Decade (2003-2012) and the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). The Chairperson of the AU Commission, Prof. Alpha Oumar Konaré, is a member of a select Group of Eminent Personalities set up to give their opinions on the implementation of the Decade. The second meeting of this High Level Group took place in February 2007.

Education for All (EFA)

Three important EFA initiatives 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 Education and HIV/AIDS (EDUCAIDS). These three initiatives have deadlines extending to 2015. LIFE targets countries with low literacy rates and populations of over 10 million which have initiated literacy skills initiatives within the framework of the UN Literacy Decade (UNLD).

Support in the field of culture: "Contributing to the Regional Integration and African Renaissance"

UNESCO assisted the AU Commission and the RECs in the implementation of the important set of instruments adopted at the Khartoum Summit (i.e the Charter for the Cultural Renaissance of Africa, Plan of Action for the Promotion of Cultural Industries for Africa's Development, the African World Heritage Fund).

In the field of languages, UNESCO is supporting the African Academy of Languages in organizing five sub-regional workshops in Africa on African languages (the first of these

took place in May 2006 in Bamako), as well as events for the celebration of the Year 2006 as the African Year for Language.

UNESCO contributed financially to the preparation of the Second Conference of Intellectuals from Africa and the Diaspora (CIAD II), held in July 2006 in Brazil. Taking into account that the CIAD process can provide an important platform for increasing mutual understanding and cooperation between African and Diaspora countries in compliance with UNESCO's mandate and priorities, the Executive Board of UNESCO at its 175th session (Sep-Oct 2006) requested the Director-General to propose possible concrete follow-up activities in the next draft programme and budget.

UNESCO contributed to and participated in the 1st Pan-African Cultural Congress (PACC), held in Addis-Ababa, November 2006. The AU Summit requested UNESCO to provide necessary support to the Commission in its effort to institutionalize the PACC.

Contributing to the implementation of the Africa's Consolidated Plan of Action for Science and Technology

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 Consolidated Plan of Action for Science and Technology.

UNESCO supported the NEPAD Secretariat and the AU Commission in organizing several consultations and meetings in the preparatory process for the 8th AU Summit devoted to the theme 'Science, Technology and Scientific Research for Development', including the meeting of the AU/NEPAD African High-Level Panel on Modern Biotechnology (July 2006); the High-Level Panel on Centres of Excellence (August 2006); the first Meeting of the Inter-Governmental Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators (September 2006); the inter-Ministerial Dialogue on Building an African Network of Centres of Excellence in Water Sciences and Technology (October 2006); the 1st Congress of African Scientists and Policymakers (October 2006); and the extraordinary session of the African Ministers of Science and Technology (November 2006).

UNESCO, as the Convener of the UN Science and Technology (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, and other relevant partners met to discuss their visions, strategies and goals in relation to the contribution of science and technology to Africa's development, and how the UN system can best respond to the AU/NEPAD process leading up to the 2007 Summit and beyond.

Advocacy and awareness-raising

UNESCO continued to mobilize its institutional partners and, particularly, UNESCO's National Commissions in African Member States who are in a key position to help

Africans to 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.

Many activities were carried out to sensitize the National Commissions on NEPAD. A special session on AU/NEPAD was held during the Director-General's Consultation of African National Commissions on the preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2008-2009 (June 2006). During this session, the National Commissions were briefed on the ongoing process of integration of the NEPAD Secretariat into the structures of the AU Commission, and on the NEPAD implementation process at the sub-regional level.

Assessment of the key programmes and projects in 2005 and 2006

Most of the activities involved support to AU/NEPAD in reviewing and assessing the situation in UNESCO's fields of competence, elaborating sectoral action plans and launching their implementation. This lengthy process involved all the different stakeholders, and particularly the AU Commission and the NEPAD Secretariat, and consisted of a series of different consultations at the inter-UN agency level, inter-governmental meetings at the expert and Ministerial levels, and finally, at the highest level (AU Ordinary Session of the Heads of States and Government or HSGIC). The result was a range of different action platforms in the fields of competence of UNESCO:

In the field of education:

- the second Decade of Education 2006-2015 and its Action Plan;
- the historic decision on the linkage between culture and education;
- the creation of the African Fund for Education.

In the field of culture:

- the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN);
- the Language Plan of Action for Africa ;
- the Charter for the Cultural Renaissance of Africa;
- the Plan of Action for the Promotion of Cultural Industries for Africa's Development;
- the institutionalization of the Pan African Cultural Congress;
- the African World Heritage Fund.

In the field of science and technology:

- The Consolidated Plan of Action for Science and Technology.

In the field of environment:

- The Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of NEPAD.

In the field of communication and information

- the decisions of the WSIS and the African Regional and the Action Plan of the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE);
- the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF).