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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

"Education for All: Ensuring Universal Access to Education and to Information and Communication Technologies"

Welcome to the UNESCO,

What follows is a brief introduction to the Committee you will be working with:

Chairperson – Ronald Javurek

My name is Ronny, well this is how my friends used to call me. An introduction to myself seems to be quite difficult, probably my friends know better about it. Nobody does know me expect me, this is Ronny. I am studying romanic languages and political science.

My motivation during the days of the conference is the following: Vivid intercultural exchange, curiosity to the unknown and fascinating debates, which should help us imagine some problematic aspects of an important international issue: Searching for sense and material prosperity by education. I hold it with Bouthros Bouthros Kali who said: "Without having a roof about your head, liberty has no meaning.".

Co-Chairperson – Bernhard Zeilinger

My name is Bernhard Zeilinger (25). For me, as a political interested person, it was important to ask about the working processes of politics and how political decisions are made. The questions "how" and "why" which lead me also in my studies in political science, always helped me when I work on my main focus in studies, which is political communication. VIMUN offers me the chance to look behind the structure and the work of the UN. I am looking forward to the work in the committee of UNESCO and our work on the resolution to provide "Education for All".

Usher – Tadeja Prosen

My name is Tadeja Prosen and I am 20 years old. I come from Slovenia and I study political science and Russian language at the University of Vienna. My main points of interests are international relations, European Union and its relation with the Russian Federation, as well as different cultures, languages, religions, etc.

Our staff team is really excited to see you, dear participants, joining us at VIMUN 2005, where we will together negotiate and find a common resolution to our topic. Please read the following notes carefully to be able to enjoy the happenings during our stay in Vienna. With this writing we want to help you to prepare yourself to be in a position where you can state what your county's position is and what you think an appropriate way of development would be for your country as well as to give you some starting-points for the discussion that will take place in our committee.

The contribution that gives Tadejas, Bernhards and and mine committee the spirit of our conference lies in an old humanistic view, which was better developed in former days of german spoken culture, but now should rise our heads to discussion: It is the educational matter.

Ever since we all came to life we have been learning – from our parents, relatives, friends, from school and the environment of work - how to act and behave in this world. One of the main questions throughout our discussion forum is going to be whether our educational standards are due to the reproduction of social habits, rather than individual will or self-determination. Furthermore, we will take into consideration issues like: What seemed to be important to the UNESCO, when it postulated the "Education for All!" programme?; What kind of education are we talking about? Does everybody have the same idea of how education should be like, what it should include?... We all come from different countries and regions of this world, we truly have different ideas about what should be learned. But does everybody in the world really need education at all? When does education fail and when does it miss its target?

It is very important to understand that most of the projects of UNESCO are about giving possibilities to everybody to develop an independent and satisfying life. These objectives can only be guaranteed when children growing into this world understand how important the education behind is and willingly participate in educational programmes offered to them.

There is a clear target about this conference and about the heart of the discussion subject: To become greater, to be major. We believe that this is the real justice and quality criterea about education.

The target is to develop the inner eye of every inividual and to put in order a free environment in which the process can find its adequate space.

Dear delegates, the preperation paper is principally a compilation about what we found on the web pages of UNESCO in regard to the subject. It should offer you an elementary resume about the UNESCO in general and an overview over the subject – what has been done so far in the field of education for all.

In the first part (1.) of the Paper the UNESCO is represented as an organization, which primarily gives advice to its Member States and helps creating model projects on its Educational, Scietific and Cultural subjects. In the second part (2.) you will get a brief introduction to the issue of education. The third part (3.) is about the ICTs and its importance in the field of education. We want to give you an outline about the main and most important phrases, we should concern when we create the final resolution in our committee, which appear in the following:

This is about creating an international strategic partnership which is open and non-excusive. The real challenge is the human dimension of it behind. The main mission is to promote <u>the free flow of information</u> and data, to facilitate <u>access to information</u> and giving attention to <u>institutional capacity building</u>. The next phrases are the main issues of the subject and throughout the discussion process you should discuss them seperately, but in the end they should be linked together in the final resolution:

<div align="center">

Education for All
The freedom of information
The Memory of the world
Cultural diversity and pluralism on the Web
Media education
Problems promting Access for All
The 4 strategic objectives

</div>

The table of questions should help you to create a more philosophical discussion to the subject. The table of questions should help you bringing up your own thoughts in our debate to create a vivid conversation. We recommend that you use the Preparation Paper and the links in the biliography (5.) (for example the Vienna declaration and the WISIS pages!) as the basis of UN-terminology and to get familiar with your own idea about education and ICTs in the world. We do not want to vote on subjects already discussed, but find our particular new view in the final resolution.

<u>Table of questions / preliminaries:</u>

Please note that the debate during VIMUN is subjected to the strict Rules of Procedure. We kindly ask you to learn them carefully, since every misunderstanding during the debate may distract the vividness of the conversation. We expect you to be familiar with the topic the committee will be dealing with, but none the less should the perspectives of the country you will be representing at VIMUN 2005 be thoroughly researched and well considered. Your country's perspectives should be guided by the following questions:

Your country´s perspective should be guided by the following questions (education in general):

1. What kind of educational policy would you, as a prime minister or president of your country - taking its specific culture and resource possibilities into consideration - go about when it comes to educating your people at its best?

2. What kind of plan would you suggest?

3. How does your country want to contribute? With which countries do you expect to form coalitions?

4. Why can the economies of countries contradict themselves by raising educational methods? Where are the problems?

These questions should help thinking about the relation of ICTs and education:

1. What does the term "information society" mean?

2. How can the data (statistics about the information gap) missleading the discussion?

3. Where are the problems thinking about the question: "Does really everybody need ICTs? Why? Under which circumstances and Who? (Is the issue of ICTs an ethic one?)

This is a simulation conference; take it as an opportunity to learn how difficult it could be to put your own opinion across and make it a part of the final resolution. Think about arguments why your ideas are more important than the ideas of others and find contrary points to negotiate with people of other views. In the end of the conference an award is going to be represented to the best speaker of each committee. This should be a good motivation to really prepare yourself well. After that we will have a final VIMUN party in Vienna!

1. Introduction to the UNESCO

1.1. The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNESCO was founded on the 16 November 1945. For this specialized United Nations agency, it is not enough to build classrooms in devastated countries or to publish scientific breakthroughs. Education, Social and Natural Science, Culture and Communication are the means to a far more ambitious goal: to build peace in the minds of all people.

Today, UNESCO functions as a laboratory of ideas and a standard-setter to forge universal agreements on emerging ethical issues. The Organization also serves as a clearinghouse – for the dissemination and sharing of information and knowledge – while helping Member States to build their human and institutional capacities in diverse fields. In short, UNESCO promotes international co-operation among its 190 Member States and six Associate Members in the fields of education, science, culture and communication.

1.2. UNESCO - a unifying theme

UNESCO has set itself to contribute to peace and human development in an era of globalization through education, sciences, culture and communication. For, if peace is to exist, it must first of all be desired by the women and the men of the entire world. But before that idea takes shape in the minds of each one of us, a long road remains to be travelled. All individuals, no matter where they live, must have the opportunity to learn how to reason and to cultivate humanistic values, the first as the motor for material progress, the second to lay the foundations for peace and respect for human rights. An educated population, aware of its fundamental rights, is more likely to share in the fruits of democracy. And sharing the benefits of science and technology equally among the peoples of the world will improve their well-being. However, harmony between peoples is still fragile. Day after day we are forced to recognize that this goal of peace and the common welfare is still distant. Solidarity and sharing are therefore cardinal values more than ever. UNESCO then fosters these values by multiplying and reinforcing educational, scientific and cultural relations, pursuing two closely linked objectives: development which, beyond the simple demands of material progress, must also respond to a full range of human aspirations without jeopardizing the heritage of future generations; and establishment of a Culture of Peace, based on education for responsible citizenship and full participation in democratic processes.

To achieve its objectives and put them across the world, three main strategic thrusts have been moulded:

- developing and promoting universal principles and norms, based on shared values, in order to meet emerging challenges in education, science, culture and communication and to protect and strengthen the "common public good"
- promoting pluralism, through recognition and safeguarding of diversity together with the observance of human rights
- promoting empowerment and participation in the emerging knowledge society through equitable access, capacity-building and sharing of knowledge

1.3. Five functions of the UNESCO

Throughout its activities and projects, UNESCO performs and assumes a range of functions corresponding to its role as the international lead agency for education, the sciences, culture and communication. Seeking primarily to serve the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, including the least-

developed countries, notably in Africa, and women and youth, five functions have been defined by the Medium-Term Strategy for the period 2002-2007:

A laboratory of ideas

The origins and consequences of the profound changes taking place today must be fully understood along with the place occupied by education, science, culture and communication. UNESCO plays a key role in anticipating and defining, in the light of the ethical principles that it champions, as a kind of "laboratory of ideas", the most important emerging problems in its spheres of competence and in identifying appropriate strategies and policies to deal with them. Only then can these changes be channelled and UNESCO's actions become effective.

A clearing house

UNESCO has a role in gathering, transferring, disseminating and sharing available information, knowledge and best practices in its fields of competence, identifying innovative solutions and testing them through pilot projects. It is one of the most crucial functions of the Organization. It is here that UNESCO launches and co-ordinates regional or worldwide networks serving a threefold purpose: research, exchange of research results, and training. At international conferences, international experts also formulate new and common approaches to the major issues confronting UNESCO and Member States, mobilizing their talents and resources to attain common objectives.

A standard-setter

When, quite apart from their cultural differences and traditions, States agree to common rules, they can draw up an international instrument: an agreement or convention, both of which are legally binding, a recommendation or a declaration. UNESCO participates in this effort through its standard-setting action, serving as a central forum for coordinating the ethical, normative and intellectual issues of our time, fostering multidisciplinary exchange and mutual understanding, working – where possible and desirable – towards universal agreements on these issues, defining benchmarks and mobilizing international opinion. UNESCO also helps to draw up or revise the instrument, works towards its adoption or revision, sees that it is respected and, occasionally, assists Member States in putting it into practice. The Executive Board's Committee on Conventions and Recommendations can and does act upon violations of human rights in UNESCO's fields of competence. It has examined nearly 500 cases since 1978 of which half have been settled through contacts with the States concerned.

A capacity-builder in Member States

UNESCO organizes international cooperation for serving its stakeholders, especially its Member States, in building human and institutional capacities in all its fields of competence, in the form of "technical cooperation". When Mauritius seeks to renovate its education system, when Kazakhstan decides to prepare legislation on press freedom, or El Salvador to provide civic instruction to its police force, these countries request technical assistance from UNESCO. This advisory function generally concerns the development of policies, national strategies, projects, feasibility studies, raising funds for their execution and, finally evaluation.

A catalyst for international cooperation

UNESCO, as a technical multidisciplinary agency, assumes a catalytic role for development cooperation in its fields of competence, for the convergence of work which otherwise would be dispersed, thus less effective, and risk being ignored by those needing it most. To that end it seeks to ensure that the objectives, principles and priorities it promotes are adopted by other multilateral and bilateral programmes and that projects are implemented, particularly at regional and national levels, through innovation, effective interventions and wise practices.

Beyond the stimulation of personal contacts among specialists, or through the reinforcement of education systems, UNESCO contributes to the dissemination of knowledge by serving as a centre for the collection and worldwide distribution of specialized information in its various fields of action, using written materials and, to an increasing extent, electronic means. UNESCO publishes about 50 bulletins and some 20 periodicals, publishes or co-publishes each year about 100 titles and produces biennial global reports on the state of education, science, culture and communication. The *Statistical* Yearbook is an essential reference tool for information on the situation in these same fields in all countries and regions of the world.

1.4. Strategic objectives

UNESCO is divided in 4 different sections and its action is therefore separated in the fields of Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture, Communication and Information. Twelve strategic objectives have been set in the Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007 for the functioning of UNESCO:

Education
- Promoting education as a fundamental right in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Improving the quality of education through the diversification of contents and methods and the promotion of universally shared values
- Promoting experimentation, innovation and the diffusion and sharing of information and best practices as well as policy dialogue in education

Sciences
- Promoting principles and ethical norms to guide scientific and technological development and social transformation
- Improving human security by better management of the environment and social change
- Enhancing scientific, technical and human capacities to participate in the emerging knowledge societies

Culture
- Promoting the drafting and implementation of standard-setting instruments in the cultural field
- Safeguarding cultural diversity and encouraging dialogue among cultures and civilizations
- Enhancing the linkages between culture and development, through capacity-building and sharing of knowledge

Communication and Information
- Promoting the free flow of ideas and universal access to information
- Promoting the expression of pluralism and cultural diversity in the media and world information networks
- Access for all to information and communication technologies, especially in the public domain

1.5. Millennium Development Goals

The United Nations Millennium Declaration of September 2000, which serves as an overarching guide for UNESCO's Strategy, consolidated the broad consensus reached and agreed on specific time-bound targets. A set of International Development Goals (IDGs) defines select major components of a global agenda for the twenty-first century.

By 2015 all 191 United Nations Member States have pledged to:
- *Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger:* Halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and who suffer from hunger
- *Achieve universal primary education:* Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling
- *Promote gender equality and empower women:* Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015
- *Reduce child mortality:* Reduced by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five
- *Improve maternal health:* Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio
- *Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases:* Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
- *Ensure environmental sustainability:* Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources. Halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020

1.6. The Principles of UNESCO's Action

UNESCO concentrates its resources on realistic objectives and focuses its efforts on the kinds of activities where it has a comparative advantage. A balance between reflection and action will be sought in

formulating the objectives, which will be implemented in four areas: studies and research, formulation of principles or standards, pilot projects and, lastly, awareness-raising, dissemination and training activities.

2. Education For All – EFA

Currently, UNESCO's main thrust in the field of national educational policies and strategies is to provide a focused support in the development and/or reinforcement of national education sector plans for achievement of the *Education For All (EFA) Goals*. These plans should be integrated into a wider poverty reduction and development framework, and should be developed through transparent and democratic processes. Within the program, the problems associated with the chronic under-financing of basic education by establishing budget priorities that reflect a commitment to achieving EFA goals and targets at the earliest possible date, and no later than 2015 shall be addressed.

The Education for All movement took off at the World Conference on Education for All in 1990. Since then, governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies and the media have taken up the cause of providing basic education for all children, youth and adults in the following decade. Unfortunately, these goals were only partially reached: Some 10 million more children went to school every year during that decade; the overall adult literacy rate rose to 85 per cent for men and 74 per cent for women; enrolment in primary school rose from 599 million in 1990 to 681 million in 1998; the number of out-of-school children fell from an estimated 127 million children to 113 million children, etc. Despite the visible progress in actual numbers, illiteracy rates still remain too high: at least 875 million adults remain illiterate, of which 63.8 per cent are women – exactly the same proportion as a decade previously.

2.1. The Strategy

The strategy at the national level is that UNESCO will provide a systematic and high quality policy advice in cooperation with the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, bilateral agencies and NGOs. The aim is to strengthen national capacity to develop policy reform plans and education legislation, and to manage the resources of basic education systems efficiently. Another is to support innovations for reaching the unreached and disadvantaged. UNESCO will facilitate the full participation of all relevant ministries and national civil society organizations in the EFA process.

Within the framework of the ongoing decentralization process, UNESCO field offices will play a more active role in coordination and consultation with other development partners in countries, especially during donor consultations and round tables. UNESCO's regional bureaux will take the lead in strengthening EFA partnerships, building on each comparative advantage. Regional networks will provide technical support to governments through multi-skilled teams in defining implementation strategies and translating EFA plan priorities into action at national and subnational levels. UNESCO will facilitate and prepare regional and subregional EFA coordinators' meetings, policy briefs and guidelines. It will continue promoting EFA programmes in the E-9 countries and supporting initiatives such as Parliamentary Forums and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Inter-agency flagship programmes will be a resource available to countries. Support to countries in post-conflict situations, particularly in Africa, will be reinforced through UNESCO's Programme of Education For Emergencies and Reconstruction (PEER). The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) will maintain a broad and information-rich base to allow experts, practitioners and government officials to better meet the education needs of countries in crisis. UNESCO, in collaboration with its international partners, will accompany countries' strategic planning and implementation processes. It will promote and facilitate national policy dialogue and participatory consultation for revision or updating of the EFA strategies. UNESCO will assist civil society networks in capacity-building to engage fully with the EFA process, through the Collective Consultation of NGOs (CC/NGO).

2.2. Education throughout a person's life

From the early childhood to a life-long learning, UNESCO has managed to consider each stage of people's life as a separate unit where education plays an important role and had therefore developed programs to support education on all levels – from formal to informal to education as a part of culture and sports.

The role of education and its development is at the heart of present debates, such as sustainable human development, poverty reduction, the promotion of universal human values and tolerance, and the

challenge of new information and communication technologies. Policy and decision-makers are responsible for developing a clear vision and relevant implementation strategies to take up the challenge of achieving the mission they are given, especially in the context of the Education for All. The formation of educational policies is complex by nature. The complexity owes not only to the fact that education is a sector where it is difficult to identify the underpinnings and their effects to be foreseen, but also to the diversity of interests that education represents for the different actors in society.

Compared to other socio-economic sectors, educational development involves more difficult and multidimensional problems. Faced with financial constraints, governments in many countries are not able to meet the broad social demands without adopting restrictive measures within the education sector in order to rationalise the use of allocated resources. In the dynamics of educational management of student flows, as well as that of public finance, they have to make difficult decisions to regulate the utilisation of resources, without in any way leading to serious disruptions and dysfunctions. Because there are too many actors, variables and the interrelations between these, it is necessary to have not only a reliable information system but also many other technical tools to facilitate policy consultations and policy-making.

Taking into account the diversity of national contexts, UNESCO's support in helping to achieve a universal access to education primarily depends on the need expressed by countries themselves. According to the contexts, it can be a question of delivering technical assistance for the design of an education development plan, or for the preparation of a programme/project for rehabilitation and rebuilding of an education system in the case of a country in emergency or crisis. In certain cases, the support can specifically relate to the reinforcement of national capacities in the area of policy formulation, educational planning, or in the management of technical, human and financial resources.

3. Communication and Information

Regarding communication and information, UNESCO's action will be in line with the objectives set out in the resolution of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (July 2000) on "the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy" and in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (September 2000). These texts call for the creation of an international strategic partnership to bridge the digital divide and establish a knowledge society that is open and non-exclusive. For UNESCO, the main objective in this perspective must be to build a knowledge society based on the sharing of knowledge and incorporating all the socio-cultural and ethical dimensions of sustainable development. Beyond the technological aspects, the real challenge is to take account of the human dimension of the digital divide. In this respect, education constitutes a priority objective because there can be no information for all without education for all. ICTs affect every field of action of the Organization, as reflected in the cross-cutting strategy for this theme, which deals with the contribution – including in its societal aspects – of these technologies to the development of education, science and culture and the construction of a knowledge society.

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), scheduled to be held in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005, under the auspices of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), will allow taking stock of all the issues at stake, to draw up a balance sheet of achievements and to define strategies for future action. In this connection, the horizon of the Medium-Term Strategy seems relatively distant when one considers the dynamics of the information revolution and the rapid pace of technological innovation: only eight years ago there were 50 sites on the Web; now there are several million. Furthermore, it is estimated that the number of Internet users, who were around 407 million at the end of 2000, will exceed 1 billion by 2005. It is UNESCO's mission to promote the free flow of information, knowledge and data, to encourage the creation of diversified contents and to facilitate equitable access to information and to the means of sharing knowledge while at the same time giving attention to institutional capacity-building. Access to information and the management of knowledge and "contents" shall be a major focus for action in the years to come.

The Organization will pursue its action at three distinct but interdependent levels:
- the ethical, standard-setting and legal fields;
- the contents and applications of ICTs within its fields of competence, including development and democratic governance;
- Methodological tools and accessibility to information and knowledge.

Since 1980 the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) assisted developing countries to enhance their communication capacities and improve training in this area. The new intergovernmental programme "Information for All" (IFAP), established in January 2001 as a platform for reflection and action to help reduce the digital divide, will be a complementary instrument for this

purpose: it is expected to provide a frame of reference and to help define the main lines of action in this field. Cooperation between IPDC and IFAP will be strengthened to ensure an optimal use of available resources and know-how.

UNESCO will draw on a wide range of partners: the organizations of the United Nations (in particular UNDP, ITU, WIPO and the World Bank), other international and regional intergovernmental organizations (such as the European Union), non-governmental organizations and professional communities active in UNESCO's fields of competence and, of course, the private sector. The Organization will make a special effort to strengthen its relations with civil society organizations.

The Organization will seek to encourage international debate and reflection regarding the impact of globalization on access to information services and communication processes. It will also help to explore existing or future mechanisms to foster universal access to information and communication and the expression of cultural diversity in the knowledge society. To that end, it will endeavour to combine traditional and new media, especially through community-based development.

3.1. Promoting the free flow of ideas and universal access to information

Globalization and the ICTs affect the free flow of ideas and universal access to information in two ways. For one, there are new dangers and threats arising from the use of the new media, such as incitement to violence, intolerance and hatred or a rise in cybercrime. Beyond, the increasing concentration and growing number of mega-mergers between major media companies may well lead to restrictions on the freedom of expression and thought, and to limits in the free flow of ideas and access to information. On the other hand, by multiplying the opportunities for linking individuals and communities and by facilitating access to information, ideas and knowledge, ICTs can enable these groups to overcome exclusion and escape from their isolation. By the same token, ICTs increase and broaden possibilities for citizens' participation in governance and decision-making processes.

UNESCO's role will be to foster international intellectual cooperation and to mobilize world public opinion and all its partners for the promotion and defence of the freedom of expression and the right to information – which is closely linked to the right to education. To this end, UNESCO will foster the formulation of universally recognized principles and common ethical standards related to the use of ICTs. This work will be part of the Organization's contribution to the preparation of WSIS. An effective strategy for the promotion of the public domain will be a key element of its action, based on the principle of free access to information. In this context, the Organization will focus on the following sub-objectives:
- Promoting freedom of expression
- Freedom of the press
- Pluralism and independence of the media

UNESCO will continue to promote and uphold the freedom of information, by encouraging the work of professional and non-governmental organizations active in this field. Major advocacy efforts in that regard will be aimed at the general public worldwide, decision-makers, parliamentarians, civil society organizations and institutions for the training of journalists. Global awareness-raising will seek to strengthen the freedom of expression and of the press, especially in countries in transition and in conflict or post-conflict zones. Particular support will be given to independent media in view of the important role they are able to play in conflict prevention and resolution as well as in promoting the values of peace, tolerance and mutual understanding. Similarly, a fresh impulse will be given to initiatives aimed at creating in Member States conditions for the functioning of the media in a democratic setting, in accordance with the declarations and plans of action of the five regional seminars (organized between 1991 and 1997 at Windhoek, Almaty, Santiago, Sana'a and Sofia) on the promotion of independent and pluralistic media. The Organization will continue to support and promote the traditional media which play a fundamental role in developing countries, especially as regards the consolidation of freedom of expression and of pluralism. It will also contribute to the establishment or strengthening of alert networks for the protection of freedom of expression and of the press so as to provide greater security for journalists and intellectuals.

3.2. Fostering the application of human rights and fundamental freedoms in cyberspace

With its long experience in defending freedom of expression and democracy in the traditional media, UNESCO will also promote in cyberspace respect for the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: freedom of expression, respect for privacy, security of the person, the rights to information and education, protection of the moral and material interests inherent in intellectual work, fair use of works, respect for legality, universal principles of law and ethics, social responsibility of the

providers of information and use of the Internet to advance democracy. Given its functions as a discussion forum and an intellectual clearing house, the Organization will further promote reflection on the ethical and societal implications of the information society. It will analyse the main trends in this area as well as positions and documents by governmental authorities and international governmental and nongovernmental organizations. This may lead to the formulation of draft standard-setting texts or instruments on which international agreement can be attained. UNESCO is the only organization in a position to bring together creators, artists, publishers and the users of knowledge, such as librarians, teachers and researchers. It is therefore particularly well placed to take part, in close consultation with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), in the ongoing debate on intellectual property and the fair use of works, legal exceptions to copyright for purposes of teaching and research, and the promotion of works in the public domain. This debate, involving all actors concerned, may culminate in joint recommendations on the subject to be taken into account in the context of the preparation of WSIS. At the same time, various actions will be undertaken to sensitize the general public as well as specific target audiences.

3.3. Promoting and extending the public domain of information

Without a market value, the public domain of information offers a priceless though poorly exploited reservoir of data, information, knowledge and documents of all kinds resulting from research financed by public funds or made available in the public domain. ICTs radically transform the conditions for exploiting this "common public good", which can now be made accessible to the public at large, exchanged and shared. As an organization for international intellectual cooperation with a worldwide mission, UNESCO will champion the promotion of the public domain of information by encouraging the formulation and adoption of policies and legislation aimed at enlarging universal access to this "public good" in fields essential to the knowledge society. Furthermore, it will foster the preservation, digitization, accessibility and wider dissemination of works in this category, including works in the *Memory of the World* programme. At the same time, it will seek to improve national and international practices relating to the public domain by seeking to establish common standards for registration, storage and exchange and by formulating pertinent policies, guidelines and legislative texts.

3.4. Setting up a UNESCO knowledge portal

A public, Internet-based portal serves many purposes. It may be an objective, a means of action and an outcome. Through it, the Organization can demonstrate how access to a content-rich public domain may be an important asset in the construction of the knowledge society. Its purpose will be to prove the feasibility and usefulness of a global site which can host a vast range of information and documents available in the public domain and which attests to the diversity of the forms, the national, cultural and linguistic origins and, of course, the contents of the materials made available. The information and items presented (policies, statistics and data, methodologies, etc.) are primarily aimed at users in the developing countries. In this connection, the various experiments in electronic democracy and online governance and the opportunities for improving public administration and citizen participation through the use of ICTs, especially in the developing countries, will be collected with a view to disseminating best practices. In view of its high cost, the portal project will be carried out in cooperation with other partners.

3.5. Promoting the expression of pluralism and cultural diversity in the media and world information networks

In pursuit of this objective, which is closely linked to strategic objective 8, UNESCO will continue to encourage cultural and linguistic pluralism and the vitality of the various forms of cultural expression by giving support to the production and dissemination of media and information products at the local, national and regional levels. In the case of the media, as indeed for all communication and information techniques, the promotion of pluralism is a supreme challenge. The production and dissemination at the local, national and subregional levels of educational, recreational and cultural products that meet the expectations of particular social groups constitute an important means of ensuring authentic cultural diversity and promoting genuine pluralism. In helping to produce and disseminate programmes geared to different social contexts, public radio and television services can also reduce the risks of cultural uniformity. To that end, UNESCO will articulate principles; assist with policy formulation; raise awareness of governmental authorities and professional circles; promote partnerships among the public and private sectors and civil society for the development and dissemination of cultural products; and, lastly, undertake vigorous and effective action at the country level to conduct pilot projects.
Encouraging the production and dissemination of audiovisual programmes

In partnership with specialized international nongovernmental organizations, the aim will be to elaborate policies and strategies for the production and dissemination of audiovisual programmes that take account of the needs of target audiences – women and youth – and reflect the concerns of specific groups such as ethnic or linguistic minorities and disadvantaged rural or urban communities. By virtue of its specific mission and at least partly of being independent of commercial interests, a public radio and television service which respects criteria of diversity and quality of content can make a significant contribution to meeting popular concerns and expectations regarding communication and information. Efforts will therefore be pursued to strengthen public radio and television services through respect for editorial independence. Stress will be laid on improving the quality of products and programmes and on broadening distribution channels. Media education is of particular importance for UNESCO and it will also be given priority in this context. Action will firstly deal with raising the awareness of and mobilizing decision-makers and media professionals pertaining to the themes mentioned above. Emphasis will be placed on the need to foster the expression of cultural and linguistic pluralism in media content. While supporting initiatives aimed at reducing "violence on the screen", UNESCO will promote the concept of "the educational and cultural dimension of the media". Other action, within the framework of regional and interregional strategies and in partnership with specialized organizations, will encourage productions and co-productions of developing countries, foster exchanges of programmes, experience and expertise and facilitate the access of endogenous productions to world markets. These actions will be supplemented by pilot projects designed to support the training of professional staff and the development of installations and facilities.

3.6. Access for all to information and communication technologies, especially in the public domain

UNESCO will respond to the challenge of the digital divide by supporting institutional and human capacity-building in developing countries, the least developed countries and countries in transition, in particular through a regional and decentralized approach. Access to knowledge and to the media and genuine participation in the knowledge society is impeded for the greater part of humanity by a variety of obstacles: inappropriate infrastructure, both with respect to energy and hardware availability, telecommunications and mass dissemination facilities; insufficient financial resources; persistent illiteracy; the absence of a scientific environment conducive to the use of such technologies; lack of training in the use of ICTs; unreliable maintenance or assistance; contents which are unsuitable or even impossible to use for linguistic or cultural reasons. UNESCO's contribution to bridging the digital and media divides will compromise the formulation of policies to strengthen institutional capacities and creating the conditions for equitable access for all to information, knowledge and the underlying technologies. For this purpose, all partners involved in international cooperation will be mobilized.

Formulating integrated regional and national policies and strategies for communication, information and informatics

Efforts will mainly focus on the development of local contents, human resources and infrastructure. The cooperation with regional organizations will be a key element of these strategies, which will give priority to fostering or strengthening local capacities in terms of equipment, human resources and methodology. In this context, strong emphasis will be placed on training in information and communication technologies through formal and informal means, at local, national and regional levels, with a view to facilitating access to learning, to boost capacity-building, to help eradicate poverty, to support economic development and to reduce the digital divide. The objective will be to create and disseminate media products for local, national, subregional and regional communities. At the same time, encouragement will be given to the formation or strengthening of existing networks of archives, libraries and other documentation services through institutional support. Priority will be given to the potential offered by cyberspace for regional cooperation and access to local information. In this context, encouragement will be given to set up a world network of developers and users of digital information management and processing tools. Within all these strategies, training for women and young people will be assigned priority so as to facilitate their participation in communication processes.

Promoting access to information and means of communication

Within the framework of inter-institutional cooperation and a broader partnership with multilateral institutions such as UNDP, ITU, the World Bank, regional intergovernmental organizations and other actors, UNESCO will seek to promote initiatives aimed at fostering the use of ICTs for educational, scientific, cultural and communication purposes. A greater effort will be made to mobilize international technical cooperation for the purpose of capacity-building in the fields of communication and information, in particular through IPDC and the Information for All Programme. More particularly, the experiment of

multipurpose community telecentres set up to encourage the assimilation of ICTs in disadvantaged urban or rural areas will be pursued and extended by way of support for development programmes. Pilot projects will demonstrate the combination of traditional means of communication (especially radio) and new information technologies (especially the Internet) through telecentres at community level. This will make it possible to test the conditions necessary for their success for a range of applications, including education, health, daily life, poverty alleviation, participatory management and local decision-making.

3.7. The contribution of information and communication technologies to the development of education, science and culture and the construction of a knowledge society

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) play a significant role in development efforts, in poverty alleviation – underlining the linkage between both cross-cutting themes – and in all the fields of competence of UNESCO. ICTs open up new horizons for progress and the exchange of knowledge, education and training, and for the promotion of creativity and intercultural dialogue. The opportunities to accomplish the Organization's core missions – to promote "the free exchange of ideas and knowledge" and to "maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge" – have possibly never been greater. These technologies could also help to strengthen social cohesion and reinforce the capacity for self-development of individuals and groups within each society. Nevertheless, the growing digital divide is actually leading to greater inequalities in development. This is giving rise to paradoxical situations where those who have the greatest need of them – disadvantaged groups, rural communities, illiterate populations, or even entire countries – do not have access to the tools which would enable them to become fully fledged members of the knowledge society.

Education, science and culture are at the heart of the trend towards a knowledge society as are the media and information; thus this theme will be fully addressed by and integrated into all UNESCO programmes. Indeed, all sectors have a role to play in this process. The goal of this crosscutting strategy is to show how the Organization intends to provide a coordinated response, based on an interdisciplinary approach.

3.8. Strategic objectives

UNESCO will not be acting alone. It will be joining forces with many institutions – intergovernmental organizations of the United Nations system or the Bretton Woods system, regional development banks, private and public sector partners, non-governmental organizations – which are competent to act in these fields. But UNESCO must apply itself precisely where the impact of ICTs is most strongly felt: in the activities and products of the human mind. Its approach must unfailingly incorporate all the sociocultural and ethical dimensions and help to bridge the digital divide by placing the individual at the centre of development objectives. These issues will be further developed and form the basis for UNESCO's contribution to the preparation of WSIS and for other international initiatives. Within this framework four strategic objectives will be pursued:

- agreeing on common principles for the construction of knowledge societies;
- enhancing learning opportunities through access to diversified contents and delivery systems;
- strengthening capacities for scientific research, information-sharing and cultural exchanges;
- promoting the use of ICTs for capacity-building, empowerment, governance and social participation.

Principles of action

UNESCO shall concentrate its resources on realistic objectives and focus its efforts on the kinds of activities where it has a comparative advantage. A balance between reflection and action will be sought in formulating the objectives, which will be implemented in four areas: studies and research, formulation of principles or standards, pilot projects and, lastly, awareness-raising, dissemination and training activities:

- Studies and research will focus on gathering essential data at the international level, examining trends, and stimulating interdisciplinary and multicultural reflection on the potential for action at the international, regional and national levels.
- The rate at which principles and standards are formulated will vary widely in the envisaged areas of priority since the obstacles to be overcome may vary considerably. Fair use raises essentially legal issues whereas the preservation of the heritage involves the solving of material problems. Finally, the provision of assistance for policy-making at national level will always remain an essential task.

- Pilot projects will aim at exploring the possibility of multisectoral action in the field. They will make it possible to analyse real difficulties and the most pressing problems and to explore potential solutions taking into consideration different sociocultural contexts.

UNESCO's efforts would be to no avail if they did not bring about genuine change. For that to be possible the outcome of activities must be made known to and applied by the international community. This calls for two complementary operations: diffusion and advocacy, which may take various forms: raising the awareness of government authorities, professional associations and the public through the media or specialized documentation, publications, and initial or advanced training within education systems, formal or informal, in the classroom or through distance education.

4. Organizations relevant to the topic under discussion

Three observers will take part in our Committee: Education International (EI), International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), and International Organization for the Right to Education and the Freedom of Education. All of them have been cooperating with the UN for a long time in helping to achieve effective educational policies and equal access to education for all. The function of the observers at the conference is to comment the debate process, guided by delegates from different countries and share their opinion from a different point of view, in particular their common international perspective. Furthermore, they should be able to give more objective statements about the topic throughout the discussion and broach some of the more controversial subjects. For instance, they would be welcome to engage in the caucus session, when each delegate - due to the current situation in the representing country – introduces the delegates and the chair committee to their subjective position, whereas they should present a more broad overall status.

Education International – EI

As the world's largest Global Union Federation, with 348 member organisations in 166 countries and representation of more than 29 million teachers and education workers, Education International unites all teachers and education workers no matter where they are, protects their rights as well as the rights of students, assists in the development of democratic organisations for teachers and other education workers and build solidarity and mutual co-operation. Moreover, the EI helps combat racism and discrimination in education and society and sees itself as "the voice for the education sector world-wide".

The organisation Education International has been active on many different fields with many programmes and projects helping the people around the world. EI sits on the Editorial Board of UNESCO's Education For All Global Monitoring Report, a publication which provides a yearly assessment of the EFA process, and is part of the UNESCO High Level Group on EFA. Cooperating with UN as well as some other IGOs and NGOs in order to successfully fulfil the goals of Education for All by the year 2015, EI launched the "Global Campaign for Education (GCE)". They organize a yearly "Global Education Week" with the purpose to bring the agenda of EFA by 2015 closer to national governments and politicians.

Amongst other activities of EI is also research of the work with ICT and its affiliates on finding ways to benefit from it in the teaching profession and education, and use it as a tool to bridge the knowledge gap. Even though the use of ICT might be considered as a commodity, the quality of education cannot be compromised through the use of ICT in education. EI insists that education is more than act of transmitting facts, and requires the presence of properly qualified teachers.

EI represents the importance of Education where development is concerned. Education is one of the most important tools to combat poverty and establish democratic political system. Promoting democracy, sustainable development, fair trade, basic social services and health and safety through solidarity and cooperation among member organizations and activities in the civil society, EI is focusing on creating equal conditions for all through assuring the access to education all over the world. Following this mission, the more important issues the EI deals with are Education as prevention for the spread of HIV/AIDS with different projects in the parts most affected, prevention of human rights violation and gender equality. Education International believes that tolerance and respect for diversity form the basic foundation of a peaceful world. Through education they seek to eradicate all forms of discrimination based on gender, race, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, political affiliation or opinion, social or economic status, national or ethnic origin.

A further achievement of the EI is the "Solidarity Fund", which functions as an assistance to member organisations in emergencies such as natural disasters, famine, war, persecution or other life threatening situations in their home countries, to help ensure the survival of organisations and their members.

Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance – IAEVG

The Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) is aware that the right to education is an essential part when it comes to peace in the world. With an effective educational and vocational guidance and counselling, IAEVG can assist individuals to understand their talents and potential and enable them to plan the appropriate steps to develop essential skills that will lead to personal, educational, economic and social advancement for an individual, family, community and even a whole nation. Educational and vocational guidance as well as counselling contribute to equality of opportunity.

The IAEVG is responsible for the quality of the practitioners of educational and vocational guidance in their training and qualifications, in the development of methods and materials of educational and vocational counselling for persons of different ages and settings, in the conduct of research and development, and in the advocacy of client's needs for educational and vocational guidance with governments and institutions. The mission of IAEVG is mainly aimed at students and adults to help them through education to achieve better self-image, integration in the society and the working community. Their objectives are to:

- advocate that all citizens who need and want educational and vocational guidance and counselling can receive this from a competent and recognized professional,
- recommend the basic nature and quality of service that should typify the service provided for students and adults,
- recommend the essential training and other qualifications that all counsellors in educational and vocational guidance should have,
- urge governments to enhance, facilitate or establish agencies, institutions, or offices with responsibility to develop and maintain the policies and development of educational and vocational guidance.

With the help of IAEVG in the field of education the UNESCO and UNEVOC (United Nations International Project on Technical and Vocational Education) are coping with the problem of providing equal opportunities in the professional world successfully.

International Organization for the Right to Education and the Freedom of Education – OIDEL

International Organization for the Right to Education and the Freedom of Education was founded in 1985 by different political personalities, educational experts and parents. It has consultative status with the United Nations, UNESCO and the European Council, and collaborates with the European Union and international non-governmental organisations. It's prime objective is the promotion of the right to education as a fundamental human right. Such a right cannot exist without the presence of the state benefits and the protection of individual liberties, which is why OIDEL mainly focuses on the promotion of the freedom of education, but also on creation of novel educational models and policies, as well as new financing options for schools.

OIDEL aims to:

- contribute to research in the field of the right to education, of freedom of education and educational policies
- Promote the right to education and freedom of education, in collaboration with human rights international organisations
- Offer training programmes on the right to education and develop a network of concerned individuals and institutions
- Counsel those who wish to create, manage or finance independent schools
- Inform public opinion on progress and violations of the right to education and freedom of education

The activities of OIDEL include oral and written interventions, collaboration with experts and lobbying in certain decision-making bodies in the field of education and educational programs.

For further information on the three observers taking part in our committee, please visit their homepages listed in the Bibliography.

5. Bibliography

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)
http://www.unesco.org/

IIEP (International Institute for Educational Planning)
http://www.unesco.org/iiep

IITE (Institute for Information Technologies in Education)
http://www.iite.ru/iite

IBE (International Bureau of Education)
http://www.ibe.unesco.org/

IPDC (International Programme for the Development of Communication)
http://www.unesco.org/webworld/ipdc

IFAP (Information for ALL, an intergovernmental programme of UNESCO
UNESCO's Information for All Programme provides a platform for international policy discussions and guidelines for action on:
http://www.unesco.org/webworld/ifap

UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre
specialised for TVET-programmes (technical and vocational education and training)
http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/

EFA (Education for all)
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Ad WSIS:
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