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Position Paper

Presented by the

DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1

The current state of the world warrants a contrasting, Janus-like diagnosis. The progress achieved in several areas of social and economic development is more than off-set by events and trends which threaten peace, hamper further social progress and even jeopardize the achievements of the past three decades.

2

Development is a human right and action to achieve sustainable social development is both an **ethical imperative** and a manifestation of political realism.

The international community, and especially the major industrial countries which control the international economic system, must **act now**, with determination, to meet the development challenge. Developing nations should **re-assess their national policy priorities**, and conclude national pacts between the government and opposition parties, so as to **provide continuity to development policies**, beyond election cycles. Sustainable development cannot be expected from unsustainable governance.

3

That development is a comprehensive process, as UNESCO has been advocating for decades, is now agreed upon by the international community. Beyond economic growth, which is an engine and not an end in itself, **development is first and foremost social**; it is also intimately linked to peace, human rights, democratic governance, environment, and last but not least, the culture and life styles of the people. Change only takes place in practical terms when behaviour patterns shift. Raising public

awareness about the globality and complexity of the main challenges and promoting feelings of compassion are necessary in order to transform everyday behaviour of individuals and communities.

Only such a **radically new approach to development policies** will allow the eradication of poverty and social exclusion, provision of adequate productive activities to individuals, reduction of rural exodus, control of explosive urban growth, and protection of the environment.

4

Development and peace are intimately linked. UNESCO implements a **Culture of Peace Programme** which involves social development actions towards peace-building in post-conflict situations, as well as towards preventive actions to avoid impending conflicts.

5

In UNESCO's field of competence, the main targets of action towards social development are:

- (i) **Endogenous capacity building** through fostering human resources, a thorough renovation of educational contents and systems at all levels, knowledge transfer and sharing within and between countries;
- (ii) Combating poverty and exclusion effectively by ensuring **people's participation in social development**, respect for human rights, tolerance, non-violence and democratic attitudes, through education, from early childhood onwards and support of citizens' organizations, as well as the pluralism and independence of the media;

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- (iii) **Recognizing cultural factors** as an integral part of balanced development strategies and paying due regard to the historical, social and cultural contexts of each society is essential for sustainable social development;
 - (iv) The promotion of a **new vision of employment and work** within the broader concept of “**active life**”, which includes production, as well as civic, social solidarity and leisure activities, as the basic principle of a “**caring society**”;
 - (v) **The improvement of the quality of life of rural populations** through formal and non-formal education and training, as well as raising their income levels, by promoting productive activities in cultural tourism and eco-tourism, shelter-building by using local materials, development of local social and health services, as well as community media;
 - (vi) The promotion of **environmental awareness** and people’s participation in the equitable and rational use of resources for sustainable human development and the preservation of the environmental rights of future generations;
 - (vii) **Science and technology** are resources which should be better harnessed and more equitably shared for social development;
 - (viii) **Communication** is an area deeply transformed by scientific and technological progress. Opportunities offered by communications networks and informatics should be put at the service of social development;
 - (ix) The promotion of **endogenous skills in social policy-making, evaluation and management**, evolving “early warning” devices to enable governments to monitor the implementation of social development efforts and progress from social exclusion to social cohesion.

I THE VISION OF UNESCO ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

1. A World of Contrasts

Humanity is currently reminiscent of the mythological figure of Janus, with both a bright and a sombre face. In many ways, it seems to be hesitating between progressing towards peace, justice, freedom and prosperity, and regressing on the way to conflict, segregation, exclusion and oppression.

We have covered quite a mileage along the first direction since the Second World War, even if the road ahead is still very long and progress achieved unevenly shared. The challenges are enormous, but overall, the world is a safer and freer place. With the end of the Cold War, the nuclear threat is a more distant prospect. Demilitarization progressed and military spending declined, even if the developing countries continue to devote an inordinate proportion of their resources to armaments and major industrial powers continue to produce and export arms to poorer nations. In the last fifty years, developing countries have experienced an economic growth three times faster than the industrial ones, and despite the increase in the world population from 2.5 to 5.5 billion, per capita income has tripled and the world GDP has been multiplied by seven.

Social indicators on infant mortality, life expectancy, nutrition and education show remarkable improvements. 30 years ago, close to three quarters of humanity were living in conditions of abject poverty; today this proportion – still scandalously high – is about one third.

For the first time in history, a majority of the world population lives under pluralistic and relatively democratic regimes. The positive developments that occurred in Namibia, South Africa, the Middle-East, El Salvador and Cambodia, are encouraging.

Science and technology, which have made breath-taking advances, constitute enormous resources for the fulfilment of human needs.

However, the dark face of Janus is also very much part of the picture. Despite all the achievements, we shall enter into the twenty-first century without having attained the developmental goal of securing for everyone and for all, an active life, procuring the fulfilment of material and spiritual needs, in conditions of peace, and full respect for all human rights – political, civil, economic, social and cultural. New threats to international security are massive population displacements, environmental degradation and inter-cultural conflicts. Many countries are facing inter-ethnic tensions, resulting from years of oppression and dictatorship. Ethnic, cultural, religious and social conflicts are spreading and increasing within countries with the risk of disintegration of States and a further multiplication of wars. There is a serious risk that the bi-polar configuration, which went with the end of the Cold War, be replaced by an anarchical world scene, with the daunting prospect of a multiplication of local and regional conflicts, opposing several hundred entities, born out of the disintegration of nation-states.

The absence of an equitable and better shared economic growth has aggravated inequalities internationally between countries and domestically between social groups. This situation is at the origin of massive emigration from rural areas to cities and extreme poverty in peri-urban settlements. As a consequence, criminality has increased in urban areas. It has reached global dimensions, in the form of terrorism, large-scale drug and arms traffic. Cities and sprawling urban zones experience rising crime rates, violence and weakening of the social fabric and human solidarity.

Pollution and local and global environmental problems have reached the point where they raise the issues of human survival and the sustainability of the Earth system. If we cannot properly address the problems of excessive demographic growth, the world population may double by 2050, with the corresponding ecological strains. The socio-economic inequalities between and within nations are unjustifiably high. According to the UNDP *Human Development Report 1994*, the richest 20% of the world population controls 84.7% of GNP, 84.2% of world trade, and has an income 60 times higher than the poorest 20%, which controls only 1.4% of world GNP and 0.4% of world trade.

With the current labour framework, trade patterns and progressive automatization of production, unemployment and underemployment are growing, aggravating the dualization of societies and risks of social disintegration. Even the richest group of countries see their social problems getting worse, with some 40 million poor, 20 million unemployed and 3 million homeless people. The former communist countries, undergoing a process of transition to market economy – in the unfavourable context of an economic community of nations lacking political cohesion and vision – are experiencing considerable social problems. In most of the developing countries, dualization of societies and poverty are reaching alarming proportions.

The international community must act with determination and efficiency to reduce and, in the long run, overcome these problems. Solutions can be found. The technical and policy instruments exist. What is needed is to take ambitious and innovative initiatives for development. The United Nations family, with its specialized agencies, programmes and funds, has a special responsibility in

fostering the emergence of such a collective will.

The Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on “An Agenda for Development” (A/48/935, 6 May 1994), which UNESCO appreciates and supports, also insists on this point. In the present “Position Paper”, UNESCO elaborates upon a number of dimensions of, and action targets for social development, in its own fields of competence, which are complementary to the Secretary-General’s document.

2. The Necessity of A Radically New Approach to Development: Ethical Imperative and Political Realism

Development should be approached from a broad perspective. It calls for more decisive action.

To act for development is an **ethical imperative**. It is, at the same time, a requirement of political intelligence and realism. In our increasingly interdependent world, where few areas escape the impact of globalization, failure in development is bound to be detrimental to all parties, including the richer ones. Development requires an equitable sharing of opportunities as well as of available scientific, technological and financial resources. Only in this way will the interplay of nations turn into a positive-sum game, in which all countries, groups and individuals win.

Development is a human right. The World Conference on Human Rights, which took place in June 1993, in Vienna, recognized the **right to development** to be universal and an integral part of fundamental human rights.

UNESCO has, for decades, advocated a broad, non-reductionist approach to development, rejecting the fallacious opposition between so-called “hard” and “soft” development, which reflected an unrealistic and over-simplified view.

Development is a process bearing simultaneously on peace-building, economic growth, environmental sustainability, social justice and democratic governance, mindful of the wisdom inherited from the past and the welfare of future generations.

Development should be based on the will of each society, and cultural factors should be an integral part of all strategies designed to achieve balanced development.

No one can dispute the fact that economic growth is the engine of development. However, past development efforts, which have given primacy to economic growth to the detriment of the social dimension, have been unable to contain widespread poverty and provide adequate employment opportunities. Marginalization and exclusion of significant sections of the population, acceleration of the rural exodus, deterioration of the urban habitat, ghettoization of the suburbs, and degradation of the natural environment highlight the current crisis, resulting from the deficiencies of the global development process.

The 1993 General Conference of UNESCO expressed serious concern over past structural adjustment policies that have severely affected social sectors such as education and health, and even compromised the prospects of national economic recovery and development. Now, a world-wide “**social adjustment**” is to be achieved. Such a requirement is being increasingly taken into account in new structural adjustment policies.

There is an emerging consensus that economic growth should subserve the cause of social development and ensure environmental sustainability. Development must have a human face. Sustainable social development requires a radically reoriented programme of **human resource development**, not in the narrow managerial sense, but in a broader sense of improvement in the quality of life: better education, better health, respect for human rights, democracy, rational use of resources through the application of recent advances in science and technology, as well as a commitment to international solidarity and the promotion of a culture of peace. The International Development Strategy of the Fourth UN Development Decade is based on such a conception of human resource development.

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3. The Price of Development

Development efforts cannot succeed without the unfailing commitment of the international community. The powerful countries, which control most of the world’s economic, financial, commercial, scientific and technical resources, should contribute to the international development enterprise more generously, in ways commensurate with their power and responsibilities. Their economic policies should also respond to such responsibilities.

Developing nations should seriously review their **national policy priorities**, display accountability, transparency and rigour in their governance and, in particular, drastically reduce their military spending, to devote the greater part of their budget to social development in the fields of education, health, upgrading of rural areas and productive activity for all.



“**National pacts**” should be concluded in order to ensure that socially relevant national policies are pursued efficiently, over a sufficient period of time by the State, regardless of government terms of office. Reforms cannot be sustainable if governmental measures are not continued over time.

Developing countries’ efforts are hampered by the obstacles to their manufactured exports, by the wide fluctuations in prices of raw materials and adverse trends in terms of trade. While they are to respect the social rights of their workers and international labour norms and legislation, they should not be prevented from taking advantage of lower labour costs.

International co-operation for development should be strengthened and the developing countries should take part in global economic policy co-ordination.

The decreasing financing of development is a major problem. In this respect, the proposals formulated in the UNDP *Human*

Development Report 1994 must be actively supported and implemented. The most important of these proposals is the global taxation on international foreign currency transactions. Applied identically by all countries, at the modest rate of 0.05%, such a tax would generate annually 150 billion dollars for development. Professor James Tobin, the Nobel Economics Prize Laureate in 1981, who first proposed this scheme in 1978 – it is regrettable that it has not been seriously considered by the international community for 16 years – suggests, in a special contribution to the *Human Development Report 1994*, that the revenues of the tax be devoted to international development efforts and managed by international organizations. Together with other proposals of the UNDP *Report*, such as the 20:20 compact and the “peace dividend”, by a 3% annual reduction in global military spending over 1995-2005, international development co-operation can make a great step forwards.

3. The Main Areas of Social Development

Social development means policies and actions to reduce and eliminate dualization of societies, social exclusion, unemployment and poverty, and to provide opportunities for disadvantaged persons and groups for improving their living conditions.

- (i) **Endogenous capacity building**, especially concerning human resources, through education, training and knowledge sharing, both between and within countries, is a top priority for social development and social cohesion. Without access to knowledge for all, there cannot be development. Education provides a qualified work force, individuals capable of launching significant industrial and technological initiatives, and active citizens who engage in societal life and promote development. Education contributes to fostering equal opportunities and social equity.

Development requires well-trained individuals. Indeed, development initiatives, especially in technology and industries, can be better undertaken by qualified citizens, particularly if appropriate incentives exist, than by citizens without access to knowledge.

When accompanied by other measures to reduce poverty, education is the most powerful single factor in moderating population growth. The International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, September 1994) emphasized the necessity to make progress on this crucial issue.

Women's education and participation in active life are particularly important for **gender equality**, as well as **reducing**

excessive population growth, as pointed out in the Declaration and Framework for Action of the Education for All Summit of Nine High Population Countries of the World, organized by the Government of India and sponsored by UNESCO, UNICEF and UNFPA in December 1993, in New Delhi. The Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, to be held in Beijing, in 1995, will give a further impetus to gender equality and the role of women in development.

Strategic investment in education at all levels is an absolute requirement for social development. However, the global demand for education, which is rising at a fast rate, cannot be met only through formal education systems. In many developing countries, the total national budget would be insufficient to finance Education for All. New solutions, low-cost "delivery systems" need to be developed to provide educational opportunities on a massive scale, but of adequate quality to meet humanity's ever-evolving learning needs.

In the field of **basic education**, the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All (EFA) and its Framework for Action, adopted in March 1990, set an ambitious but crucial goal for social development which requires the mobilization of the international community. Basic education is now defined in a broad sense, to include the whole of compulsory education as well as early childhood development, adult literacy and also basic training and acquisition of life skills. EFA is to be seen in a life-long perspective. In addition to schooling, it provides learning opportunities for those not having access

to, or not successful in, formal education through the promotion and validation of education and training in non-formal environments.

As primary education enrolments expand, social demand increases for **secondary education** which is gradually transforming itself into mass education, but with difficulties in responding to individual and societal needs. Yet it is at this level of education that important behavioural changes operate that affect fertility rates, active citizenship and social responsibility.

It is also at this level that **vocational education** could become a major factor in the struggle against unemployment and underemployment by preparing students for present and future job opportunities and developing basic entrepreneurial skills.

Higher education is fundamental for the development of transfer and sharing of knowledge, and needs to assume a leading role in the renovation of the entire education system. New roles for higher education may need to be defined to provide life-long learning opportunities at the highest level. Less formal and more flexible ways of advanced training and up-dating knowledge and skills must be found. The possibilities offered by the new communication technologies should be exploited in this endeavour.

Another important phenomenon is the establishment of networks amongst universities and new partnerships between industries, vocational training centres and higher technical education.

In an open society and a market economy, graduates who enjoyed the

privilege of access to higher education should not only rely on the government to provide them with a job. The equation Degree = Job no longer applies in a highly competitive context, which requires constant updating of knowledge and skills. **Higher education graduates must become entrepreneurs**, and both civil society and the state must encourage and facilitate the entrepreneurial approach, through such incentives as loans to students with the highest grades or who commit themselves to an industrial initiative, agreements with the private sector, etc.

The International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century, set up by UNESCO, is currently working on the new roles of, and demands for, education. Its report, due in 1995, will suggest new directions in education for social development. UNESCO programmes such as UNITWIN and UNESCO inter-university networks, UNEVOC in vocational education, SCIENCE 2000 in scientific and technical education, are working towards innovation and reform in these fields. The biennial UNESCO *World Education Report* monitors and surveys the trends in education and identifies emerging challenges, drawing on the work of the Organization in collecting, analyzing and disseminating educational data.

- (ii) **Democratization and respect for human rights** are now recognized as being at the core of the development process. This is probably the most significant of all the changes that have occurred in developmental thinking since the end of the Cold War. The voluntary participation of the NGOs, citizens' movements, grass-roots groups and

underprivileged people, as actors, as well as partners of public authorities, in the decision-making and implementation concerning development actions are key indicators of the quality and relevance of such actions. Fostering education for human rights and democracy are therefore of the utmost importance.

Democratic governance, respect for human rights, tolerance and the freedom of the press are the surest ways to regulate political, cultural, economic, social and ethnic tensions. UNESCO is actively promoting, as the lead Agency, the **United Nations Year for Tolerance (1995)**. It is also implementing programmes in support of the free flow of information in the world. Authentic democratic governance is also the best way to eliminate discrimination and social exclusion and therefore reinforce social cohesion.

Full participation of all members of society in the decision-making process, particularly in development-related decisions, is the surest way to ensure long-lasting development. It is also the best guarantee of an equitable development that benefits all, bringing in the marginalized and excluded. Here again, even though the presence of women is now taken for granted in any process of development, especially in the rural and informal sectors, they are often neither seen nor heard. This situation not only contravenes basic human rights, it contradicts any hope of in-depth, sustainable development.

Social development requires the **active and voluntary participation of the people** and particularly the under-privileged populations such as

the poor, the unemployed, the disabled, and migrant workers. The empowerment of these groups must be a priority, through provision of education and training in the management of their own communities, financial resources and technical facilities. They should benefit from well-targeted capacity-building programmes. The basic communities, grass-roots movements and NGOs must be actively supported by public funding.

It is essential that indigenous populations be the agents of their own development and participate as full partners in the formulation of national social policies. Cultural minorities must participate fully, without any discrimination of any kind in national development strategies and socio-cultural policies.

Education for active citizenship, forging democratic attitudes and respect for human rights, tolerance and non-violence must be promoted from early childhood and maintained on a life-long basis.

Social conflicts and unrest hamper development efforts. **Anticipatory and preventive** approaches must be promoted, by creating an **“awareness of the intangible”**, both upstream, at the government level, and downstream, in public opinion.

- (iii) **Recognizing cultural factors** as an integral part of balanced development strategies and paying due regard to the historical, cultural and social contexts of each society is a complex but essential process in formulating sustainable social development policies.

Safeguarding the cultural heritage and the indigenous knowledge of traditional

cultures is one of the priorities in UNESCO's vision of social development. The "New Strategy for Safeguarding Campaigns", whilst retaining the core element of safeguarding *per se*, puts the emphasis on training of local personnel, on cultural tourism and on the economic protection and enhancement of cultural heritage.

As lead agency for the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997), the Organization is co-ordinating activities in Member States to enhance the cultural dimensions of development policies and programmes.

The World Commission on Culture and Development, set up by UNESCO, works on the role of culture in development and its report, to be published in 1995, will provide guidance for the future in this field.

- (iv) **Employment, and more generally participation in active life** are the most effective ways of struggling against social exclusion and poverty and of fostering social cohesion.

An urgent task is to modify the current pattern of a "jobless growth", supported by employment-destroying technologies. The point is not to try to put a brake on technological progress, but monitor and assess its utilization and regulate the market so as to foster **labour-intensive approaches and labour absorbing technologies**, particularly in certain sectors like large infrastructural construction work. Machines should replace people only when unavoidable and work really cannot be done efficiently by men and women, or to alleviate the hardships of work. Otherwise, given the difficulty of recycling workers whose educational

background is weak, the number of permanently unemployed people is the huge social price to be paid and one of the principal roots of social exclusion, marginality and violence.

Fostering micro-industries in rural zones, the use of bio-mass as a source of energy; promoting new employment opportunities such as eco-jobs at the municipal level, concerning water resources and treatment of industrial waste and pollution; activities aiming at improving the quality of life in cities and countryside, processing of waste, maintenance of equipment and habitat are likely to provide new jobs.

The reduction of jobs in industry and the modern service sector should be compensated by new forms of employment – in social solidarity services to help the elderly and disadvantaged groups, or in environmental protection (eco-jobs), as well as by job-sharing. New ways of taking care of social needs by the civil society itself, in the form of partnership arrangements between users, the associative sector, the private sector, local authorities and the State, are to be promoted. Such efforts, which should partly compensate the constraints of the Welfare State, by **fostering a "caring society"**, will create increased employment opportunities.

Not only the quantity but also the quality of employment and gender equality in work are important factors of social development. Increased participation of women in active life at all levels is fundamental.

What is really necessary is a **new vision of work**, within the framework of the **broader concept of "active life"**, which



would include not only productive employment but also the notions of job-sharing, as well as activities devoted to civic life, social solidarity and leisure.

Exclusion from active life is the most potent factor of social exclusion, dualization, violence, and ultimately the weakening of social fabric. Job-destroying economic and technological policies involve a heavy social cost. We must radically reorient such policies, through international co-operation and agreement.

- (v) **The promotion of social development in rural areas** is a top priority. Both in rural zones and urban areas there are specific social development problems. They should be approached in their own right but also in terms of **rural–urban articulations**. Major cities have become, particularly but not only in developing countries, hard to manage, fragmented, sprawling urban zones, where problems of unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, weakening of human solidarity, crime and violence become concentrated. The governance of cities should be improved, by appropriate policies, but the problems of urban zones in developing countries are linked to those of the rural zones. The unmanageable growth of cities is due both to the “urban bias” in national economic policies and to the problems of rural zones, where poverty, inequitable distribution of resources such as land, credit and technologies, force peasants to emigrate massively into the urban areas, where the majority of the world population is expected to live in the 21st century. Development of rural areas is a potent factor in reducing excessive migration resulting in mega-cities and huge slum areas.

However, in most of the developing countries, the majority of the population still lives in rural zones, and a majority of this rural population is poverty-stricken. Therefore, the promotion of these areas and the improvement of the quality of life of their inhabitants, through appropriate economic, social and educational policies, aiming at improving the living conditions and encouraging rural populations to stay in their home regions. Particularly needed are measures in formal and non-formal education and training. The promotion of cultural tourism and eco-tourism, as well as handicrafts and cultural goods, shelter-building based on local techniques and materials, development of local social and health services and of community press, radio and television, can be “economic propellers”, providing additional jobs and welfare.

UNESCO’s **MOST** Programme (Management of Social Transformations) carries research and policy-relevant activities on the problems of cities and urban–rural interactions. Its programme on Human Habitat is focused on stimulating the formulation of urban policies aimed at enhancing social integration and on rehabilitation of underprivileged settlements.

- (vi) **Society and Nature relations** are a basic dimension of development. As a follow-up of Agenda 21, efforts should be redoubled to promote **environmental awareness** and the rational use of resources in view of **sustainable human development**. The viability of the Earth should be secured for the sake of its current inhabitants and for the future generations.

Economic, social and environmental dimensions of development are

inter-related. The types of economic growth and industrialization which have been pursued endanger ecosystems, tend to exhaust non-renewable natural resources, and deteriorate the local and global environments, as does rapid population growth. Extreme poverty, which prevails amongst large populations of developing regions is a factor of environmental degradation, the poor being both agents and victims of ecological problems. The success of sustainable development policies depends on the participation of all segments of society and particularly of local populations and communities.

Controlling and mitigating the impact of natural hazards and technological risks is extremely important. Research, training and the dissemination of policy-relevant, accurate information on Man–Nature relationships in different parts of the world should be actively pursued. Measures should also be encouraged for bringing together modern scientific and traditional ecological knowledge, with a view to producing enduring resource use systems which combine efficiency, environmental integrity and equity.

UNESCO's scientific programmes such as the Man and the Biosphere (**MAB**), Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (**IOC**), International Hydrology Programme (**IHP**), International Geological Correlation Programme (**IGCP**), Management of Social Transformations (**MOST**) and the Inter-Agency and Interdisciplinary Project on "Education and information on environment and population for human development" are actively working on various dimensions of environmental issues,

in an interdisciplinary perspective.

A pioneering activity of the Organization is in the field of desertification. As of the late 1940s, it started awareness-raising, and initiated scientific research and action programmes from the 1950s onwards in this area which is still at the top of the environmental agenda in many regions.

- (vii) **Science and technology** constitute enormous resources for development. They have been effective in health, economy and environmental protection. They can, however, be better and more intensively utilized. On the one hand, scientific and technological knowledge and skills constitute resources concentrated in certain parts and in the hands of certain groups. The majority of countries and populations have very limited access to such resources. This situation must be improved by effective policies of and mechanisms of knowledge and information sharing.

On the other hand, technology has been, and still is, utilized for destructive purposes, particularly in the arms industry. Technologies which induce ecological risks should be abandoned. The harnessing of science and technology for the promotion of sustainable human development, for better shared productive employment and active life, and a more rational use of natural and human resources must be high on the international agenda.

UNESCO publishes a biennial *World Science Report* to monitor developments in this field. It has also supported the establishment of regional and international networks of scholars and research institutions in physical, biological and social sciences.

(viii) One area, deeply transformed by science and technology, is **communication**. Social development focuses on people and societies and places the source of most development goals at the level of individuals and communities. It depends, in a large measure, on creating a participatory communication process and establishing a system for communication of objectives and consensus-building within communities and societies. Communication technologies are essential to the generation of, access to, and sharing of knowledge and information. The free and voluntary participation of people, which is a prerequisite of social development, partly depends on the accessibility and reach of communication and information facilities. Investing in improving these facilities, expanding their access to different segments of society and providing people with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to make their

views and concerns known should, thus, be considered as essential factors in social development, social integration and cohesion.

Support must be given to efforts to create communication and information networks which facilitate the generation and exchange of information, pluralism and multiplicity of ideas and viewpoints and which enhance dialogue, transparency and democracy in the governance of society.

Training, research and other programmes and activities geared towards building and strengthening communication and information capacities in every society should be encouraged. UNESCO is active in these fields through its International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), General Information Programme (GIP) and Intergovernmental Informatics Programme (IIP).

III PRIORITY TARGETS FOR ACTION

In UNESCO's field of competence, actions on the following priority targets are to be implemented, to make progress towards social development:

A

Endogenous capacity building

- (i) **Education and training** policies should be assigned top priority and investments in education be augmented and strategically targeted so that socially and geographically disadvantaged populations have access to knowledge, through the use of both formal and non-conventional institutional mechanisms such as intensive learning and the promotion of diversified approaches to education. The goal is that nobody "misses the boat"¹.
- (ii) In particular, social policies should focus on the education and empowerment of **girls and women** which are key factors in **promoting gender equity** and the development of their full potential, as well as **curbing the population growth**².
- (iii) To prepare for the 21st century, and overcome the present crises, a thorough review and renovation of the **content and methods of education and restructuring of entire educational systems** are to be undertaken urgently. Teacher training and retraining are particularly important to maintain the required levels of quality. Another requirement is adequate preparation for new types of employment, such as eco-jobs³. New education programmes should contribute to evolving a **new approach to employment and work**, as part of the broader concept of "**active life**" which should be the basic principle underlying the organization of work and leisure in society.

- (iv) Efforts should continually be made to secure rapid **transfer and sharing of knowledge**, particularly in the area of science and technology, towards their better utilization, to promote progress and to bridge the knowledge gap.
- (v) Actions towards diversification of **higher education** are fundamental. **Networks** among universities and new **partnerships** between industries and the vocational training centres as well as higher technical institutes become indispensable elements in this respect⁴.
- (vi) The design of **human resource development strategies** should be reoriented to realize the potential and creativity of all individuals in society. Development strategies should be based on the will and life styles of each society, and pay due regard to the historical, social and cultural contexts of each society⁵.

B

Development of rural areas

To improve the quality of life of rural populations and also prevent emigration at its roots actions should, in rural zones, particularly focus on

- (i) formal and non-formal education facilities;
- (ii) promotion of productive employment, including areas such as handicrafts and cultural and eco-tourism;
- (iii) development of indigenous cultures;
- (iv) utilization of armies' facilities for social development efforts, such as improved health services and infrastructure building;
- (v) promotion of building local-material-based shelter for all;

- (vi) decentralization of the management of education and social services at municipal level.

C

Institutional, economic and social policies are to be evolved, **to foster people's participation and empowerment** which are key factors in combating marginalization and exclusion. Educational systems should promote human rights, tolerance and non-violence, as well as democratic attitudes starting from early childhood. Inter-cultural dialogue and freedom of the press and of expression, as well as respect for the diversity of opinions should be supported⁶. Such long-term policies will be the best way to create an enabling environment for social development and preventing exclusion and inequalities. **Democratization and respect for human rights** are now at the core of the development process. They are key indicators of the relevance of social development policies.

D

Efforts should be redoubled, as a follow-up of Agenda 21 and in other contexts, to promote **environmental awareness and people's participation in the rational use of resources for sustainable human development**.

Policies to eliminate poverty – a factor of environmental deterioration – are necessary for sustainable development. Decreasing the impact of natural hazards (especially the recurrent ones) is extremely important for social development. Research and training on the Man–Nature relationship in different parts of the world should be carried out in a transdisciplinary framework⁷.

E

Communication and information resources and infrastructures are essential for fostering individual and social awareness and attitudinal change, as well as for promoting social dialogue, integration and cohesion. To enhance their impact and contribution to the process of social development, communication must be improved world-wide, especially through the use of new information communication technologies. In this regard, countries should elaborate comprehensive media and information policies⁸.

The accessibility of communication to different segments of society, particularly disadvantaged communities and social groups in developing countries, is to be expanded, especially through modern information technologies including computer, satellite and other telecommunications facilities.

F

Actions to improve **endogenous skills in social policy-making, evaluation and management of social transformation** are necessary. Appropriate methodologies for investigation in all types of societies should be evolved, for elaborating “early warning” devices to enable the governments to monitor the implementation of the resolutions to be adopted at the World Summit for Social Development⁹.

- 1 Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs (World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO meeting, Jomtien, Thailand, March 1990).
- 2 The New Delhi Declaration and Framework for Action for the Nine High Population Countries in December 1993 have given great impulse in this respect (New Delhi, India, December 1993).
- 3 The International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century set up by UNESCO under the chairmanship of Mr Jacques Delors, President of the European Commission, is currently reflecting on the new roles of education and new demands made on education in a world of accelerating economic, environmental, and social change. The Report of the Commission, due in early 1995, will provide directions to reorient education to meet the goals of Social Development. UNESCO's biennial World Education Report will continue to monitor and survey the trends in education and identify emerging challenges.
- 4 UNESCO's programmes such as UNEVOC, Science 2000, UNITWIN and UNESCO Chairs are designed in pursuance of this goal. It has also encouraged setting up regional and international networks of scholars and research institutions in education, physical and biological sciences, social sciences, culture and communication. UNESCO has launched a series of World Science Report, published biennially; the first Report was issued in February 1994.
- 5 UNESCO's efforts contributed to the clarification of the two concepts of "culture" and "development". The 1982 MONDIACULT held in Mexico elaborated that principle. During the present World Decade for Cultural Development, UNESCO is propagating this orientation. The World Commission on Culture and Development set up by UNESCO and the United Nations under the chairmanship of Mr Javier Pérez de Cuéllar is working on both urgent and long-term proposals to meet cultural needs in the context of development. Its Report, due in 1995, should contribute towards the pursuit of this goal.
- 6 UNESCO's governing organs have repeatedly emphasized this point. Through the recently held meetings in Montevideo (1990), Prague (1991), Tunis (1992) and Montreal (1993), UNESCO has evolved a Plan of Action on Education for Human Rights and Democracy. It was endorsed by the UN World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna (June 1993). UNESCO is the lead Agency and promotes various activities for the United Nations Year for Tolerance (1995).
- 7 The Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the Management of Social Transformations (**MOST**), as well as the inter-institutional and intersectoral project on "Education and information on environment, population and human development", are examples of UNESCO's transdisciplinary approaches to environmental issues.
- 8 Investment in developing and strengthening communication capacities, increasing access to information sources and providing people with knowledge, skills, and opportunities to articulate their concerns are important areas of UNESCO's work through its International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). UNESCO will bring out an updated version of its World Communication Report in 1996.
- 9 UNESCO has launched in 1994 a programme, **MOST** (Management of Social Transformations), to respond to the growing demand from the developing countries and the countries-in-transition for the building up of endogenous capabilities in social sciences and for assisting them in the monitoring of social change and transition. **MOST** develops interdisciplinary and comparative projects on social policy, social experiments and social analysis in different parts of the world.

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