

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Experts Highlight Renewed Need for Interdisciplinary Action in Development

Edinburgh, UK – 23 March 2009. Over 130 policy makers, practitioners and academics from government, development organisations, and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) met in Edinburgh last week to discuss emerging issues of best practice in international development. The seminar, organised by the UK National Commission for UNESCO Scotland Committee, explored current practices in a range of development fields, with a focus on the key role interdisciplinary action must play in tackling today's global challenges.

"In these difficult economic times, it is particularly fitting that we share good practice in development," says Joanne Orr, Chair of the UK National Commission for UNESCO Scotland Committee. "Now more than ever, we must maintain our commitment to international development while striving to be more effective and efficient. UNESCO's interdisciplinary approach to complex issues has always been integral to good development practice."

Frederick Russell-Rivoallan of the UNESCO Bureau of Strategic Planning delivered the Keynote address, elaborating upon the role UNESCO plays in promoting longer-term, holistic approaches to development.

"UNESCO is not a funding agency. It is a development agency with technical competencies, so it has always strived to achieve its objectives through collaborative partnerships," Frederick Russell-Rivoallan said. "UNESCO's ability to ensure that Education, the Sciences, Culture and Communication are on, and remain on, the development agenda is essential, especially in the context of the current economic – and eventually social – crisis within which we are living."

During the seminar's afternoon session, a panel of academics and development practitioners lead a range of workshops covering issues including gender and diversity in development, local voices and knowledge in environmental development, the importance of higher education & lifelong learning, integrated approaches to water management in development, and the role of Culture in reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

The seminar, 'Good Practice in International Development From an Interdisciplinary Perspective', took place on 18 March at the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh.

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Notes to Editors

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- **The UK National Commission for UNESCO** is the focal point in the UK for UNESCO-related policies and activities. As an independent body, the UK National Commission brings together a network of nearly 250 experts from across the UK in the fields of education, culture, sciences and communication. Working closely in partnership with HM Government and UK civil society, the UK National Commission aims to provide expert advice to Government on UNESCO related matters, develop UK input into UNESCO policy-making and programme implementation, promote reforms within UNESCO, and encourage support in the UK for UNESCO's ideals and work.
- **UNESCO** is a United Nations Specialized Agency. Through its focus on education, culture, the sciences and communication and information, UNESCO applies an interdisciplinary approach to complex, global problems. UNESCO is not a Development Aid agency, but plays a crucial role in development by fostering international debate, supporting the establishment of global standards and indicators, and the sharing of analysis and experience.