



United Nations  
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pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

**DIRECTOR GENERAL'S CONSULTATION OF  
NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA 2008**

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE PREPARATION OF THE  
DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2010-2011 (35 C/5)**

**United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO**

**RESPONSE**

**July 2008**

**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

1. The UK National Commission wholeheartedly supports UNESCO's ideals and aims. Over the last four years we have demonstrated considerable support and have contributed many ideas to the debate on UNESCO's future role and work in order to make it a far more effective and respected organisation within the UN system. Much, though not all, of this contribution has been made in full cooperation with the UK Government, with whom we work in close collaboration. Many of our views are shared by other National Commissions and some of our ideas have been taken on board in UNESCO, and are reflected in both the current C/4 and C/5 documents. But in important areas, in the current C/5 in particular, there is still not enough substantive change from the last C/5. Hence we have used the opportunity of the regional consultations to clarify our views further and to ensure a full debate on them during the consultative process.

2. This introduction expands on our previous contributions. An introduction is necessary because the format of the questionnaire is still not right. It does not pose some fundamental questions and, because it is so closely tied to current work and structures, imposes something of a straitjacket on respondents – which is likely to perpetuate a status quo with which this National Commission is far from satisfied.

3. UNESCO was set up at a critical juncture in world history. Its role now is just as significant. But many recognise that it is not assuming that role. In short, it is not exerting leadership, nor is it even seen as a world authority, in many areas of its competence. Those areas of competence are essential to attaining the internationally agreed development goals – and as a UN body of universal membership, UNESCO needs to regain its authority and leadership. That is why the UK National Commission has been saying for some time that a better definition of UNESCO's role and key responsibilities is necessary. The current C/4 goes some way in doing this – but not far enough and as a rolling document should be improved. And the latest C/5, though better than before at the level of the key objectives, does not really set out what steps are necessary for UNESCO to push those objectives at the highest level (i.e. by the DG and ADGs) to exert world leadership in areas where the UNESCO Constitution expects such leadership, nor to translate the work at the more detailed programme level into streamlined key responsibilities for the Organisation. The essential matter is that the Organisation has above all to be an authoritative world leader in the areas for which it has competence. It must decide what the challenges are, what are realistic goals to meet those challenges, discuss and promote the best policies, set the necessary agreed international standards, measure all our efforts and help build capacity in countries which are having difficulty. This does not mean a series of rather random activities as at present; instead, it needs a clear idea of the key goals and a systematic approach to helping countries in difficulty. The latter demands a good overview of what is necessary at the country level, which countries have the greatest difficulties and where help can be of most value.

4. The situation is made worse in UNESCO's current programme by the many scattered, small projects which are of no comparative advantage and have virtually no impact for UNESCO as a multilateral agency. Indeed such presence creates expectations which cannot be realised. In the main, they should be terminated and the effort and funds used far more productively on defined major issues. UNESCO should continue to carry out some small programmes and projects but only when these have significant leverage on the bigger

whole. And it is really UNESCO's greatest task to define what that bigger whole is.

5. The UK National Commission believes that the moves towards more dynamic UNESCO leadership on EFA, and the model of the Education Global Monitoring report, have lessons for UNESCO as a whole. The most fundamental of these is that UNESCO should – if the efforts of the past two years get it right – begin to lead the EFA movement, and through the GMR have a clear view of what our collective objectives are, of where the gaps are in resources, of where better policies are needed, and what those policies should be. At no point is anyone suggesting that UNESCO should provide all the finances in order to meet the EFA goals – there are hundreds of organisations doing that, and the financial position is not going to change significantly for UNESCO. But the World desperately needs a leader for EFA efforts – and we have been trying to push UNESCO into that position.

6. Similarly, UNESCO has such a leadership role in its other Sectors: the same role at the global or Headquarters level of defining the challenges and objectives, of promoting good policy and research, of setting standards, of monitoring efforts; and at the country level of helping build capacity where it is most needed. But not only do we not have a GMR in the other Sectors, we do not really have top level objectives to encourage world efforts and hence no systematic approach to tackling the issues. The UK National Commission believes it would be helpful to use the model of the Education GMR to help re-impose UNESCO's leadership in its other Sectors, both by clarifying to all those involved in the debate on UNESCO's future exactly what its role and responsibilities are, and what that means for its detailed work.

7. This implies continued radical change for UNESCO. But for those who are concerned about the visibility of the Organisation, that visibility will not return until UNESCO is once again at the head of world efforts in its domains, nor is it worth worrying about visibility until it is ready to exert such leadership. To take the example of Culture, there are good initiatives and schemes (notably the World Heritage listings). But do we really have a clear view of what the challenges are that we face in the area of Culture, what good cultural policies are, what efforts are being made, what we are collectively and as individual members achieving, and which countries are in the greatest difficulty? What UNESCO does is currently often random and unsystematic – maybe the negotiation of a new Convention at the behest of a member state or a little programme support in the aftermath of a natural disaster. But when did we last have a clear top-level pronouncement on the cultural challenges faced by the World? When did we have a discussion of the latest developments in good cultural policy or any guidance on best practice? When did we monitor efforts? And when will we get round to a systematic approach in building capacity in countries which need help – even in areas such as World Heritage, where at least we have an idea of where the gaps are, and where help is necessary? UNESCO cannot do everything but it can set out the problems, set goals for us all, gird efforts, urge resources to be mobilised, set standards, assess efforts, and provide targeted help in countries which are struggling.

8. Another example is in the Natural Sciences. The Overall Review of the Sciences Programmes, strongly welcomed by Member States, clearly pointed to such reform. But despite UNESCO's claims to the contrary it has not really yet translated this advice into specific action which has shifted the Organisation onto the lines we have set out above: in the plans of the two Science Sectors it is evident that the current C/5 continues more or less as before. As a particular case with great potential for improvement, UNESCO has access to external material assets within its separately constituted major environmental science programmes which collectively represent an enormous and wide-ranging research and monitoring resource: IOC's oceans research and monitoring systems from space and ground, MAB's 531 biosphere reserves in 105 countries, 162 natural World Heritage sites, IHP's extended range of HELP, G-WADI and FRIEND centres, etc, with IGCP's geosciences capability underpinning all. Add to this the enormous expertise base from the IOC, MAB, IHP, IGCP National Committees, UNESCO's related category 1 and 2 institutes and UNESCO Chairs and Networks, and indeed the National Commissions. All of these, if facilitated by UNESCO to work in strategically coordinated ways, could together become an effective force for targeted research and monitoring that will achieve new understanding and enable urgent policy recommendations for optimised action on many acute global concerns.

UNESCO could then, as one example, be a major contributor in the critical matter of climate change. At the same time, we do not see such a wealth of networks in the Social and Human Sciences Sector and we see little opportunity here for UNESCO to fulfil the type of intergovernmental work we describe above. With the notable exception of the Ethics of Science and Technology programme, there is ongoing overlap with other UN agencies on a number of small scale programmes and little effectiveness for UNESCO.

9. All the above would require quite major organisational change. For a start there would need to be strengthening at HQ, around the DG and ADGs, to provide a much enhanced policy and leadership capacity. The challenge would be to produce an organisation which really was on top of world developments in each of its Sectors, and which could command considerable respect in leading global efforts – much as the OECD does for policy work in its areas for a much smaller membership. Each Sector would also have to develop the skills to have within it the capacity to work in the same way the GMR team does – and we do have the GMR model to replicate. Furthermore, as the review of Education work pointed out, UNESCO's in-country staff would also need to be boosted so that they would also be much more respected and influential in providing advice to governments. Since we lack the resources to do this in a large number of countries, we are recommending a very strategic approach which would determine seriously where efforts have to be concentrated and which countries have the greatest needs – and to concentrate high calibre personnel in that restricted group of countries.

10. Furthermore, in its decision-making process a culture of timely evaluation and accountability is still lacking in the Organisation. In current documents – C/5 and C/3 in particular – Member States are not provided with sufficient and transparent data on the resources used, results actually obtained and critical evaluation of successful or failing programmes or projects. Nor is it possible to judge from the information provided the extent to which UNESCO's stated priorities are actually reflected in the way it commits its limited resources, or whether its programmes are subject to any rigorous use of sunset clauses. It is therefore not possible to ascertain the potential effectiveness of programmes relative to declared aims. Built-in programme monitoring, evaluation and clear resource information, with key expected results formulated with meaningful performance indicators of improved measurability (quantitative as well as qualitative) and that are time-bound, should be applied throughout to enable informed decisions about renewing programme funding from one biennial programme and budget cycle to the next.

11. We also believe that resources are still not allocated sufficiently to the key priorities of the Organisation, principally to Education, and should be obtained from less important or effective activities in the Sectors and by allocating to programmes as much as possible of the proportion (currently 38%) of core budget costs which are held centrally outside the programmes. More concentration in the programmes is also necessary: the number of MLAs is still too high and their associated expected results too dispersed. Consensus should be reached on how optimally to reduce the numbers further.

12. Our responses to individual questions below explain further our approach and are formulated in the context of this overall framework.

#### DETAILED RESPONSE

In the following, where useful we include for coherency and clarity the narrative of the questionnaire's numbered paragraphs that directly relate to the posed questions.

### **III. The main programming principles and features**

8. Document 34 C/5 has aimed at simplification, streamlining and concentration by **limiting the number of programming levels** to two: major programme (MP) and main line of action (MLA). Appropriations are being made at the major programme level, thereby enhancing flexibility in implementation, both at Headquarters and in the field. Intersectoral engagement will be promoted through a number of intersectoral

platforms dealing with priority themes identified by the governing bodies (see paras. 8000-8017 of document 34 C/5 Approved – and section V below).

Q.1 Do you have suggestions for further adapting or streamlining the overall structure of document 35 C/5?

#### Response

The current overall structure of the C/5 is still not right. Although better than before at the level of the key objectives, it does not really set out what steps are necessary for UNESCO to push those objectives to exert world leadership in its areas. The document should be drafted on the lines laid out in our introduction, namely: enabling policy work; monitoring; standard setting. It should be set out clearly in those modalities, within a framework which states what the key challenges are globally in the different Sectors, with (a) the biennial sectoral priorities based on rigorous analysis of needs and clearly achievable both qualitatively and quantitatively through focused MLAs and (b) the programmes rigorously assessed in terms of how they will actually achieve the expected results of the MLAs.

Q.2 Do you have proposals for strengthening further programme concentration and focus?

#### Response

The whole basis of our response is for programme concentration and focus to enable UNESCO to provide world leadership in its mandated areas. Despite the stated intentions for 34 C/5 virtually nothing new has been delivered, either in terms of a true systematic approach and focus on key goals or in avoidance of minor endeavours of no real impact.

As a related point, for UNESCO to become recognised as a leader in its specific areas the Programme ADGs must be world figures in their fields, and be supported by small but high calibre teams around them which are capable of acting like the GMR team does in setting out the challenges, defining good policies and monitoring our efforts.

9. Document 34 C/5 places emphasis on **programme delivery** through: (i) policy advice and institutional capacity-building; (ii) normative and standard-setting activities, including a reflection of normative-operational linkages, especially at the country level; (iii) monitoring and benchmarking responsibilities; and (iv) contribution in support to national development plans through United Nations common country programming processes. **South-South cooperation** is encouraged as an important mechanism for learning and sharing experience and enhancing attainment of UNESCO's goals, especially in the field of education.

Q.3 Should UNESCO preserve and strengthen these modalities for programme delivery and if so, how?

#### Response

This approach is entirely right and a real improvement over past practice. The main challenge is to put it now into effective practice, as explained in our introduction and again in our response to Q.1. But little significant has yet happened in terms of setting out the work within the framework of these modalities.

Q.4 Given the increased focus and priority placed on capacity-building (especially at the institutional level) in all its areas of competence, how can UNESCO best respond to the expectations and needs of Member States?

#### Response

UNESCO's resources are extremely limited. Its support must therefore be very selective. In terms of detailed work by country teams on the ground, efforts should be concentrated

systematically to helping countries of greatest need. Maximum use needs to be made of more cost-effective methods, e.g. joint work within UN country teams, secondments of staff to these, and medium-length (3-6 weeks) visits from HQ experts. Other countries which do not have dedicated country teams would derive their support directly from HQ (for example, for policy facilitation by visits or in applying a UNESCO Convention).

Q.5 *What should be the balance between global, regional and country-level activities in UNESCO's programmes?*

#### Response

We see global and country activities as the two core areas for UNESCO's help and regional initiatives as less important. All countries benefit from the global work carried out at the HQ level (e.g. the Conventions that are agreed and discussions on best policies). Only a limited number of countries can be helped in detail at the country level – and this has to be worked out in a systematic way.

10. *The two global priorities of document 34 C/4, **Africa** and **gender equality**, have been translated into operational and concrete terms under each major programme in document 34 C/5 and are visibly captured in text boxes, summarizing strategic orientations, key programmatic contributions, and, for Africa, expected results.*

11. *Action in favour of **Africa** is addressing the exigencies of regional integration articulated by the African Union, including through its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Programme, and by subregional organizations. Particular attention is given in 2008-2009 to the outcomes and recommendations of the African Union Summits on Culture and Education (Khartoum Summit) and on Science and Technology (Addis Ababa Summit), including through the intersectoral platform "Priority Africa" set up for coordinating and monitoring UNESCO's plan of action to benefit Africa. Action will also respond to national development needs, especially in the context of common United Nations system country programming exercises.*

Q.6 *Are you satisfied with the focus and manner in which Africa as a global priority has been addressed in document 34 C/5? Would you suggest any changes and amendments to the present approach – and if so, which?*

#### Response

No, definitely not satisfied. The text boxes merely collect incidental, unfocused actions that are scattered haphazardly among the programmes. In aggregate there is relatively little resource directed to help for Africa. With Africa as a top level priority this is a major flaw.

Consideration should be given to setting a target share of budget / programme resources to be spent on Africa, both at Major Programme level and for UNESCO as a whole.

The approach has to be systematic and targeted, with the actions crystal clear in the programme formulation without the need to resort to piece-meal claimers in text boxes. UNESCO has first to decide which countries in Africa have the greatest need, then assess where it has the comparative advantage for effective action, and then put in a big effort at local level for substantive assistance. Where UNESCO does have this capability in its current programme the work is notably under-resourced.

12. *For document 34 C/5, UNESCO is reinforcing its action in favour of **gender equality** both in and through its fields of competence, as mandated by document 34 C/4. Efforts will follow a two-fold approach: pursuing gender mainstreaming in all major programmes; and promoting women's and girls' empowerment in all programme priority areas, including at the country level. This implies that gender equality considerations are integrated into the strategies for each biennial sectoral priority under the relevant major programmes and reflected as appropriate, in the results chain for the various main lines of action. This approach is currently being developed and elaborated in the **Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2008-2013**.*

Q.7 Do you have suggestions for improving the integration and presentation of gender equality actions and expected results in document 35 C/5?

**Response**

**Fundamentally this is a mainstreaming function – it should be embodied in the way of doing things.**

13. In accordance with document 34 C/4, specific targeted interventions are to be foreseen for **youth**, the least developed countries (**LDCs**), small islands developing States (**SIDS**) – also through the Intersectoral Platform contributing to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Sustainable Development of SIDS –, and **disadvantaged and excluded groups**, including indigenous peoples.

Q.8 Do you have suggestions for specific targeted interventions benefiting youth, LDCs, SIDS and disadvantaged and excluded groups, including indigenous peoples?

**Response**

**Currently, this process is random. Help and targeted interventions depend on a strategic approach that is systematically informed as to needs and what other agencies and bodies are doing, and demonstrably brings significant advantage from UNESCO's actions.**

**IV. Sectoral programme priorities for document 35 C/5**

14. Document 34 C/5 has been informed by and benefited from results of **programme evaluations** conducted during the previous biennium, **strategic reviews and reform initiatives**. The reform of Major Programme I (Education) has led to a sharper focus and concentration of resources on key priorities. In the same vein, the results of the overall review of MP II (Natural sciences) and MP III (Social and human sciences) have been fully taken on board and have helped the Organization to redirect and focus its efforts on capacity-building and policy advice to Member States. Similarly, the restructuring of the Culture Sector around four main entities is designed to ensure greater consistency between structures and main lines of the programme, thereby ensuring better programme delivery.

15. **Major Programme I – Education** is providing leadership in pursuing **overarching objective 1** of document 34 C/4: “Attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning”, and in contributing to its two related **strategic programme objectives (SPO) – SPO 1: Strengthening UNESCO's global lead and coordination role for EFA and providing support to national leadership in favour of EFA; and SPO 2: Developing policies, capacities and tools for quality education for all and lifelong learning as well as promoting education for sustainable development.**

17. Major Programme I is articulated around **two biennial sectoral priorities**: (a) leading education for all (EFA) by ensuring global coordination and providing assistance to Member States to achieve the EFA goals and education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) based on the Global Action Plan (GAP); and (b) fostering literacy and quality education for all at all levels and through both formal and non-formal lifelong learning, with particular emphasis on Africa, gender equality, youth, LDCs and SIDS, as well as the most vulnerable segments of society, including indigenous peoples, and education for sustainable development.

18. In document 34 C/5 the biennial sectoral priorities in education are operationalized through the following **four main lines of action (MLA)**, including related expected results, performance indicators and benchmarks:

- **MLA 1:** Global leadership in EFA, coordination of United Nations priorities in education, and development of strong partnerships
- **MLA 2:** Development of a global framework and networks for capacity development in planning and management of education systems
- **MLA 3:** Promote policy dialogue, research, set norms and standards
- **MLA 4:** Provide capacity development and technical support to assist national efforts in achieving the Dakar goals

Q.9 Do you favour maintaining the biennial sectoral priorities of document 34 C/5 for Major Programme I in document 35 C/5? Or would you suggest to modify their scope and/or focus for the further attainment of the overarching and strategic programme objectives of the Medium-Term Strategy?

#### Response

The qualitative scope of the biennial sectoral priorities is appropriate. As we state in our introductory remarks, this is a Sector which has really made a start on better, more focused and results-driven programming, and this should be appreciated as a model for UNESCO as a whole.

However, on focus, the reform of the Sector must be extended by making a further strategic retreat from its wide spread of activity to enable greatly stronger focus on MLA 1 – much depends on UNESCO achieving truly effective, universally recognised, global leadership in EFA. At the same time, much enhanced attention should be given to higher education and research.

Q.10 How can UNESCO best support national dialogue in the education sector and serve as a catalyst for better coordination among international partners?

#### Response

If UNESCO is to be an effective agent for assistance in countries it needs the presence of good people for the job. It cannot act as a catalyst for coordination unless it has the respect of national governments and engaged international bodies. This means (a) re-skilling the Sector work force so as to achieve a step up in capability and expertise and (b) co-ordinating more effectively with its category 1 institutes and using their expertise.

Q.11 Do you favour maintaining the four MLAs for Major Programme I in document 35 C/5? If not, what changes in focus would you like to suggest?

#### Response

See our responses to Q.6, Q.9 and Q.10.

MLAs 1 to 4 are linked and clearly relevant to the overarching and strategic programme objectives but need to be rationalised to enable real success for MLA 1 as the dominant line of action by far.

MLA 4 is too widely drawn and, as with all, needs a strategic framework to identify which countries need help the most, and a commitment to deploy experienced people with policy expertise in-country.

19. **Major Programme II – Natural Sciences** is leading in the pursuit of **overarching objective 2**: “Mobilizing science knowledge and policy for sustainable development” and three strategic programme objectives of document 34 C/4 – **SPO 3**: Leveraging scientific knowledge for the benefit of the environment and the management of natural resources; **SPO 4**: Fostering policies and capacity-building in science, technology and innovation; and **SPO 5**: Contributing to disaster preparedness and mitigation.

21. The two following **biennial sectoral priorities** have been approved for Major Programme II in document 34 C/5: (a) Promoting research and technical capacity-building for the sound management of natural resources and for disaster preparedness and mitigation; and (b) Strengthening national and regional research and innovation systems, capacity-building, the use of technologies, and scientific networking, and encouraging the development and implementation of science, technology and innovation policies for sustainable development and poverty eradication.

22. These biennial sectoral priorities are operationalized into **four MLAs** in document 34 C/5:

- *MLA 1: Fostering policies, technical capacity-building, research, networking, education and international cooperation in the fields of water, ecological and earth sciences for enhancing societal responses*
- *MLA 2: Oceans and coastal zones: improving governance and fostering intergovernmental cooperation through ocean sciences and services*
- *MLA 3: Promoting science, knowledge and education for disaster preparedness and mitigation, and enhancing national and regional coping capacities, including through support for the development of risk reduction networks and monitoring and assessment measures, such as tsunami early warning systems*
- *MLA 4: Supporting science, technology and innovation policies for sustainable development and poverty eradication, and developing capacities in basic sciences, energy and engineering*

Q.12 Are you in favour of maintaining the biennial sectoral priorities of document 34 C/5 for the natural sciences in document 35 C/5? Or would you suggest to modify their scope and/or focus for the further attainment of the overarching and strategic programme objectives of the Medium-Term Strategy?

### Response

Here we stress yet again that all programme delivery must be organised as we advocate in our introductory remarks and as given in paragraph 9 of the questionnaire.

The biennial sectoral priorities as drafted do not convey well UNESCO's necessary policy-driving focus which indeed is the message contained in the overarching and strategic programme objectives. Biennial sectoral priority (b) actually confuses the issue by merely adding as a closing item the notion of "encouraging" policy development when properly this should be the modality for all encompassed within it.

We draw attention to the claim in paragraph 14 of the questionnaire, reproduced above, that the results of the overall review of the sciences "have been fully taken on board". This is very far from the case as we point out in our introductory remarks. Consequently we give the issue some detailed attention here. Particular, continuing, deficiencies among many that have been pointed out in the review and need correction in 35 C/5 are:

- funding is grossly inadequate for concrete action on policy work for sustainable development and capacity building in countries of most need, foremost in Africa; the importance of this activity was the key recommendation from the review;
- coordination among the major environmental programmes (IHP, IOC, MAB, IGCP) is inadequate and there is not enough attention given to rationalisation of work with the extensive UN counterpart activities; and in general there is inadequate focus on core requirements or positive exploitation of the related array of influential inscribed country resources (see the case in our introductory remarks);
- too much of the programme remains fragmented, over-ambitious, unfocused and lacking a clear vision and scientific strategy, with too many small projects, of little value in UNESCO's global or country roles, propagating from previous biennia and continuing without critical assessment. A full audit of the programme is needed to rebalance resources to the Sector's work of major effect.

Overall, as stressed in the review of the sciences, the programme must be far more strongly focused on the key objectives and more properly engaged through the modalities given in paragraph 9 of the questionnaire.

Another key finding of the review is the synergistic way that UNESCO's science portfolio could bring together the natural and the social & human sciences in programmes and activities designed to tackle the multidimensional aspects of poverty and development as well as environmental issues and maintenance of natural resources. The establishment of an external scientific advisory committee for MP II and MP III was proposed to facilitate this process but has not transpired. This, also, needs to be taken up in 35 C/5.

Q.13 Do you favour maintaining the four MLAs for Major Programme II in document 35 C/5? If not, what changes would you propose?

#### Response

See the responses to Q.6 and Q.12. The MLAs, with the approach and detailed workplans that they embody, need substantial revision.

MLAs 1 and 2 represent the major environmental programmes but there is great untapped potential for positive interaction (see our introductory remarks and the response to Q.12; see the report of the sciences review). As another particular case, coastal zones identified with IOC in MLA 2 has overlapping interests among IHP, MAB and IGCP, with expectation of enhanced outcomes from combined action.

The Sector's work in MLA 1 on water needs to be far more strongly focused on its global work embodied in the core work of IHP, with cessation of other, minor, activities in water which dissipate resources.

MLA 3 gives an overambitious expectation of what is possible within the very little funding and staffing support. This work should be subsumed into MLAs 1 and 2 where it can achieve critical mass and synergy.

MLA 4 requires greatly boosted financial support from the regular budget for the key policy driving work on capacity building in science (and, necessarily, basic sciences), technology and innovation in countries of most need (see response to Q.12), which has considerable demonstrated success in the Sector. At the same time the work to build significant capacity in countries relating to alternative sources of energy is grossly overambitious given the very minor resource this has and can yield little of value compared with the vast ongoing global efforts. Equally, the existing minor effort on building engineering capacity should be subsumed into the core policy driving work where it can be rightfully mainstreamed.

23. **Major Programme III – Social and Human Sciences** provides leadership in pursuing **overarching objective 3** of the C/4 document: "Addressing emerging social and ethical challenges" and the corresponding three strategic programme objectives – **SPO 6: Promoting principles, practices, and ethical norms relevant for scientific and technological development; SPO 7: Enhancing research-policy linkages on social transformations; and SPO 7: Fostering research on critical emerging ethical and societal issues.**

24. Three **biennial sectoral priorities** have been approved in document 34 C/5: (a) promoting principles, practices and ethical norms relevant for scientific, technological and social development; (b) strengthening national and regional research systems in order to provide policy-oriented research on social and ethical issues; and (c) contributing to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures and to a culture of peace through philosophy, the human sciences, good governance, the promotion of human rights, and the fight against discrimination. These priorities are translated into **three MLAs**, as follows:

- **MLA 1:** Promoting the ethics of science and technology, with emphasis on bioethics
- **MLA 2:** Enhancing research-policy linkages in the field of social development and policies relating to physical education and sports
- **MLA 3:** Promoting philosophical reflection, human rights in UNESCO's fields of competence and the fight against racism and discrimination

Q.14 Are you in favour of maintaining the biennial sectoral priorities of document 34 C/5 for Major Programme III in document 35 C/5? Or would you suggest to modify their scope and/or focus for the further attainment of the overarching and strategic programme objectives of the Medium-Term Strategy?

#### Response

Biennial sectoral priority (a) is good and translates into a valuable programme. Although (b) has general relevance, many of the programmes (often projects) actually run under this heading seem of little relevance at country level and also overlap with the work of other UN agencies and carry little impact for UNESCO. Both (b) and (c) do not appear to contain a

coherent set of actions where UNESCO can take a leading or even significant role; (c) also overlaps in large part with work done in the Education and Culture Sectors as well as with other UN agencies. Little of the work in the current C/5 has yet been formulated on the lines of the agreed modalities set out in paragraph 9 of the questionnaire (and see our introductory remarks).

As already referenced in our response to Q.12, a key finding of the review of the sciences is the synergistic way that UNESCO's science portfolio could bring together the natural, social & human sciences. The establishment of an overarching scientific advisory committee proposed to facilitate this process has not transpired. This needs to be taken up in 35 C/5.

Q.15 Do you favour maintaining or modifying the three MLAs for Major Programme III in document 35 C/5? If not, what changes would you propose?

### Response

See our response to Q.14.

MLA 1 is important but logically is inseparable from the natural sciences; and promoting ethical standards applies in similar way to all UNESCO's Sectors. To rationalise the work in this Sector proper coordination of action across the Organisation must be observed.

Equally for MLA 3, the issue of human rights has broad application among all of UNESCO's activities and should have been mainstreamed across the current C/5, although there is little evidence that this has happened. But in general for UNESCO this is an area of very weak effectiveness and value-added in relation to other entities, e.g. the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Other aspects of MLA 2 and MLA 3 need significant modification. The addition of "physical education and sport" to MLA 2 seems a rather random administrative decision. For the Sector, many of these activities seem to have little relevance or little potential for practical development.

25. **Major Programme IV – Culture** is providing leadership in pursuing **overarching objective 4**: "Fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace" of document 34 C/4 and the related strategic programme objectives – **SPO 9**: Strengthening the contribution of culture to sustainable development; **SPO 10**: Demonstrating the importance of exchange and dialogue among cultures to social cohesion and reconciliation in order to develop a culture of peace; and **SPO 11**: Sustainably protecting and enhancing cultural heritage.

26. Two **biennial sectoral priorities** have been approved for Major Programme IV in document 34 C/5: (a) Promoting cultural diversity through the safeguarding of the heritage in its various dimensions and the enhancement of cultural expressions; and (b) Promoting social cohesion by fostering pluralism, intercultural dialogue, and a culture of peace, as well as the central role of culture in sustainable development.

27. These priorities are translated into document 34 C/5 into **six main lines of action**:

- **MLA 1**: Protecting and conserving immovable cultural and natural properties, in particular through the effective implementation of the World Heritage Convention
- **MLA 2**: Safeguarding living heritage, particularly through the promotion and implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
- **MLA 3**: Enhancing the protection of cultural objects, the fight against illicit trafficking in them, and the development of museums, particularly in developing countries
- **MLA 4**: Protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions through the implementation of the 2005 Convention and development of cultural and creative industries
- **MLA 5**: Promoting the understanding and development of intercultural dialogue and peace
- **MLA 6**: Mainstreaming within national policies of the links between cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and sustainable development

Q.16 Are you in favour of maintaining the biennial sectoral priorities of document 34 C/5 for Major Programme IV in document 35 C/5? Or would you suggest to modify their scope and/or focus for the further attainment of the overarching and strategic programme objectives of the Medium-Term Strategy?

#### Response

The biennial sectoral priorities are well-defined and the associated MLAs fit logically with these. What is less clear is whether all the programmes, especially the smaller activities, will really make strong contributions to their achievement. While the qualitative scope of the biennial sectoral priorities is appropriate none of the work in the current C/5 has yet been formulated on the lines of the agreed modalities set out in paragraph 9 of the questionnaire.

Q.17 Would you favour maintaining the present six MLAs for Major Programme IV in document 35 C/5? If not, what changes would you propose?

#### Response

See our specific introductory remarks and our response to Q.16.

In MLA 5 and MLA 6 there are fundamental linkages with the other Sectors, requiring proper coordination of action. These are genuinely intersectoral or cross-sectoral programmes and should be maintained in a smaller, more tightly focused, set of such programmes.

28. **Major Programme V – Communication and information** is the leader in pursuing document 34 C/4's **overarching objective 5**: "Building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication" and the two related strategic programme objectives of the C/4 document – **SPO 12**: Enhancing universal access to information and knowledge; and **SPO 13**: Fostering pluralistic, free and independent media and infostructures.

30. In document 34 C/5, Major Programme V is articulated around two **biennial sectoral priorities**: (a) Fostering free, independent and pluralistic communication and universal access to information and (b) Promoting innovative applications of ICTs for sustainable development. These priorities are being operationalized through four main lines of action:

- **MLA 1**: Promoting an enabling environment for freedom of expression and freedom of information
- **MLA 2**: Fostering universal access to information and the development of infostructures
- **MLA 3**: Promoting the development of free, independent and pluralistic media and community participation in sustainable development through community media
- **MLA 4**: Strengthening the role of communication and information in fostering mutual understanding, peace and reconciliation, particularly in conflict and post-conflict areas

Q.18 Are you in favour of maintaining the biennial sectoral priorities of document 34 C/5 for Major Programme V in document 35 C/5? Or would you suggest to modify their scope and/or focus for the further attainment of the overarching and strategic programme objectives of the Medium-Term Strategy?

#### Response

None of the work in the current C/5 has yet been formulated on the lines of the agreed modalities set out in paragraph 9 of the questionnaire (and see our introductory remarks).

Biennial sectoral priority (a) gives appropriate focus to the main work of the Sector.

UNESCO is playing a lead role in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) but progress to date has been limited.

Biennial sectoral priority (b) cuts across all Sectors and all efforts must be made to avoid overlap and to achieve proper coordination in focusing on the countries of greatest need.

Q.19 Would you favour maintaining the present MLAs for Major Programme V in document 35 C/5? If not, what changes would you propose?

**Response**

The MLAs can be maintained in principle. But see our response to Q.18.

**V. Fostering interdisciplinary and intersectoral action**

32. The following **12 intersectoral platforms** are being implemented during 2008-2009: (a) science education; (b) HIV and AIDS; (c) education for sustainable development; (d) contribution to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS); (e) fostering ICT-enhanced learning; (f) strengthening national research systems; (g) languages and multilingualism; (h) contributing to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures and a culture of peace; (i) support to countries in post-conflict and post-disaster (PCPD) situations; (j) Priority Africa: coordinating and monitoring the plan of action to benefit Africa; (k) UNESCO action to address climate change; and (l) foresight and anticipation.

Q.20 Should UNESCO continue to develop and pursue these platforms during document 35 C/5? Are there other priority topics/themes that should be pursued in a similar organized intersectoral and interdisciplinary manner during the next biennium?

**Response**

It is clear that structural embodiments using the intersectoral label risk overburdening the Organisation and leading to very little. This has been the case in previous years with just a few intersectoral aspirations. The very large number of what are now called platforms gives little confidence that much will be achieved beyond managerial dissipation and distraction. Such activities as are identified above generally should not be isolated into platforms but be mainstreamed into how people think across the Organisation and factored into the core programmes as appropriate – e.g. the dialogue among civilisations and cultures, and ICT-enhanced learning – with simple partnerships between Sectors when necessary.

Q.21 Do you consider the present arrangements for intersectoral platforms, including the provision of financial resources, appropriate or would you propose changes? If so, which ones?

**Response**

No, in general not appropriate – see our response to Q.20.

**VI. Delivering the Programme**

**(a) UNESCO's role within the United Nations system and partnerships**

Q.22 What other measures or modalities could be deployed to ensure UNESCO's effective participation in joint United Nations system activities at the country level?

**Response**

UNESCO needs the country presence of people good enough to earn the respect of other colleagues in the UN system and the credibility enough to have the ear of governments. UNESCO therefore needs to be strategic in the way it deploys people, deciding where intervention is most necessary and concentrating the appropriate effort to be effective in those countries.

Q.23 *Given the trend towards increased harmonization and integration of United Nations system activities at the country level, do you have particular suggestions for further enhancing UNESCO's involvement and impact, including also in countries where UNESCO is non-resident?*

#### Response

**Engage experts in HQ with targeted visits and by close communication to boost UNESCO's involvement in UN Single Programmes at country level. Where not already resident in countries, focus on those with the most need – see response to Q.22.**

**In other important cases, and not only where UNESCO is non-resident, use temporary assignments from HQ to UN integrated Country Teams, and missions by other field staff, to cover short-term needs.**

**Significantly increase the applied expertise and dedicated budget (currently 2% of the resources available to the five major programmes) to boost UNESCO's participation in country-level programming exercises.**

Q.24 *Which measures could be taken to envisage contributions by National Commissions and their involvement in those United Nations programming exercises?*

#### Response

**Developing synergies with field offices and regional offices by provision of local expertise, notably in science and culture, and general engagement with civil society to enhance UNESCO's contribution. But UNESCO needs to lead through strong representation by experienced people with policy expertise in-country.**

Q.25 *Do you have suggestions for initiatives or modalities that could further the role of National Commissions, including in the context of common United Nations country programming exercises, and enhance the interaction between National Commissions and the Secretariat, in particular cluster and national offices and regional bureaux?*

#### Response

**See our response to Q.24. Further, developing partnerships and coordinating roles with UNESCO bodies including the intergovernmental programmes' National Committees, category 2 centres and UNESCO Chairs and Networks.**

Q.26 *Do you have suggestions for increasing bilateral, subregional, regional and interregional cooperation among National Commissions? If so, in which areas?*

#### Response

**Engagement of strategic clusters of National Commissions for specific assistance in regional development, working in partnership with HQ and country or regional offices.**

39. *Given the scope and complexity of challenges facing the global community in general and UNESCO in particular, **partnerships, alliances and other cooperative mechanisms with intergovernmental entities, non-governmental organizations, actors of civil society and the private sector**, are increasingly seen as a modality for addressing global issues and achieving strategic programme objectives. Partnerships can provide a vehicle for accessing resources, expertise and outreach that the Organization would not otherwise obtain. Beyond, the value of partnerships lies in ensuring coherent and coordinated joint responses by multiple stakeholders to existing needs, based on a division of labour that respects core mandates and competencies, thereby achieving greater impact and synergy. Over the past years UNESCO has developed*

*a wide range of partnering relationships, with a large number of organizations and entities, including public-private partnerships (PPP), in all its domains.*

*Q.27 Do you have specific suggestions on programmes areas in which UNESCO should seek to develop further partnerships to achieve greater impact and results for document 35 C/5?*

**Response**

**It is most important that UNESCO rationalise its role in the UN system. In the programme there is much overlap among the agencies and equally much scope for advantageous partnerships among them (as one urgent example, 24 UN bodies including UNESCO are engaged in water issues). UNESCO's lack of diligence in this matter has been a constant issue of concern. If in its areas of competence UNESCO gave serious attention to which agency best does what and which agencies should join together in given actions, it would have a leading role in enhancing the effectiveness of the UN.**

**However, in the general context, UNESCO could be overburdened and its efforts dissipated if it takes on more than the most needed strategic partnerships for effective action. There can also be a considerable overhead in hidden cost of partnership engagements. UNESCO should therefore take steps critically to assess its current "wide range of partnering relationships" for confirmation of added value or need of rationalisation.**

*Q.28 What kind of arrangements and approaches would you consider important to establish effective partnerships?*

**Response**

**See our response to Q.27.**

*40. **Category 2 institutes and centres**, as defined in 33 C/Resolution 90, are not legally part of the Organization, but are associated with it through formal arrangements by the General Conference. There is a growing number of **category 2 institutes and centres** under the auspices of UNESCO. The full list is contained in Annex III. In line with the criteria of the overall strategy for category 2 centres, their activities should make a substantial and effective contribution to UNESCO strategic objectives and programme priorities and the scope of their activities must be global or regional so as to ensure sufficient outreach and impact. Resolution 90 adopted by the General Conference at its 34th session called for an updating of the comprehensive strategy taking into account the need to ensure long-term strategic planning in line with the Organization's C/4 objectives and C/5 priorities; ensure improved quality through regular evaluation of their contribution and regular reporting on their activities and the results achieved; and enhance UNESCO's visibility globally through the activities of the institutes and centres.*

*Q.29 How could UNESCO draw more effectively on the capacities, work and contributions of category 2 institutes and centres in the pursuit of the Organization's strategic programme objectives and expected results under the respective MLAs, especially at the country level?*

**Response**

**Currently category 2 institutes and centres operate largely in isolation from UNESCO. A big gain can be made by strategic coordination of research efforts to yield evidence for policy formulation in many fields. Examples in the Sciences are given earlier in our response.**

**However, much more careful assessments need to be made of the case for approving category 2 Institutes, and there should be provision for detaching those institutes whose work no longer fits closely with UNESCO programmes. Also, the criteria for creating category 2 institutes need strengthening, especially as regards defining and limiting closely the financial and staff engagement implications for UNESCO.**

**(b) Improving the visibility of the Organization**

Q.30 What is your opinion with regard to the factors that could make the Organization's information and communication activities more effective and consequently afford it greater visibility?

**Response**

**See our introductory remarks. This cannot be an empty process – UNESCO's visibility will not return until it is once again at the head of world efforts in its domains. The need to think about it will arise when the Organisation is demonstrably more effective.**

Q.31 How could the Organization's visibility be strengthened at the country level?

**Response**

**See our response to Q.30.**

Q.32 What type of arrangements could be envisaged that would lead to improvements in the way the Secretariat and national actors, including National Commissions, promote the Organization's visibility?

**Response**

**See our response to Q.30.**

**(c) Extrabudgetary resources**

43. **Extrabudgetary contributions** received from the United Nations system organizations, multilateral development banks, bilateral contributors, foundations, civil society actors and the private sector will continue to be an important source of support enabling UNESCO to achieve its objectives and accomplish the necessary outreach and impact, especially at the regional and country levels. A major challenge is therefore to ensure the full alignment and harmonization between the overarching and strategic programme objectives of the Medium-Term Strategy, including UNESCO's two global priorities (i.e. Africa and gender equality), the sectoral and intersectoral priorities defined in the biennial regular programme and budget and the activities proposed for extrabudgetary funding. As a guiding principle, all extrabudgetary action should reinforce the Organization's main programmatic priorities set by Member States in the C/4 and C/5 documents.

44. The preparation in 2007-2008 of the **additional programme of targeted/projected extrabudgetary activities** pursuant to 34 C/Resolution 72 of the General Conference is a major innovation. This additional programme, together with the corresponding Extrabudgetary Resource Mobilization Strategic Plan for activities foreseen under this programme, is a main feature of the action plan of improved management of UNESCO's extrabudgetary funds. The proposed activities will reinforce the expected results defined at the level of MLAs and intersectoral platforms in document 34 C/5. The additional programme is aligned with the work plans for document 34 C/5 and fully informed by UNESCO's contributions to the various country-level programming exercises, as carried out by the United Nations country teams concerned.

Q.33 Do you have suggestions as to which further measures could be introduced to ensure further alignment in programming of all available resources, i.e. regular and extrabudgetary resources, around the strategic programme objectives and priorities and expected results defined in the C/5 document?

**Response**

**We still see that there is insufficient linkage between extrabudgetary resources and key priorities and that extrabudgetary resources are being used for random, small projects.**

*Q.34 What specific measures could be envisaged to enhance resource mobilization at the country level, also in a context where resource mobilization is driven increasingly by the Resident Coordinator on behalf of the member organizations of United Nations country teams?*

**Response**

**The essential thing is for UNESCO to be a strong member of the country team – with good, highly skilled people – and to have a strong part in ensuring that UNESCO’s Sectors are included in the overall country strategy. It is then that resources should be more easily obtained, largely through donor funds allocated at the country level for the UN single country programme / budget.**