

**UNESCO**

**MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY FOR THE ASIA AND  
PACIFIC REGION**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Objectives of the Regional Strategy

1.0.1 The purpose of the present document is to present proposals for the application of UNESCO's 31 C/4 Medium Term Plan to the specific situations to be found in Member States of the Asia and Pacific region. In a regional document covering five distinct sectors, however, it is not always possible to provide a detailed analysis of particular conditions in particular subregions, or to indicate in detail how UNESCO's programme will respond to country-specific conditions. The regional strategy provides a broad overview of regional and sectoral priorities and strategies offering a larger vision to guide programme development at all levels. Detailed outcomes and indicators will be identified in specific programme documents, in particular UNESCO's 32C/5, the Programme and Budget for 2004-2005.

1.0.2 The starting point of the document is a summary analysis of the global and regional situations and challenges to which UNESCO must respond during the current Medium Term programme cycle 2002-2007. Following this, through locating the specifics of the region within the global picture, the document then examines the consequences for programming priorities, both intersectorally and within each of UNESCO's sectors -- Education (ED), Science (SC), Social and Human Sciences (SHS), Culture (CLT) and Communication and Information (CI).

1.0.3 The Regional Strategy reflects a new approach to planning adopted by UNESCO. Based on resolutions recorded at the General Conference on UNESCO strategies, on experience of the Secretariat working across the region, and on preliminary consultations and technical assessments, the document proposes a medium-term strategy to Member States and their National Commissions at the start of the planning process for the next biennium. This is an element of the Director-General's strategy to decentralise UNESCO, bringing UNESCO's action closer to the Member States and their National Commissions, and to initiate a pro-active planning process that starts at the Member State level.

### 1.1 Regional challenges in the global context

1.1.1 The starting point for the Regional Strategy lies in UNESCO's Medium Term Strategy (31C/4). It analyses the global setting and identifies a number of challenges to which UNESCO must respond. The principal challenges include:

1.1.1.1 **Reducing poverty:** At the core of these challenges is poverty. The United Nations Millennium Declaration of September 2000 recognized that poverty has deepened and become more pervasive as populations have increased and as demand on finite global resources has intensified. Almost half of the world's population subsists on less than two dollars a day, and a quarter barely survives on less than one dollar a day. Most of these are found in the Asia and Pacific region. Seventy percent of the poor are women, and two-thirds are under fifteen years of age. The halving of poverty by 2015 is the overriding international priority within the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). UNESCO has a unique mandate to reduce poverty through educating the poor, increasing their communications capacity and overcoming their exclusion, applying scientific knowledge to their benefit, promoting sustainable income-generating activities, and removing social and cultural barriers to poverty reduction. Reducing poverty, therefore, becomes a target element for all sectors.

1.1.1.2 **Coping with globalisation:** Directly associated with worsening social and economic inequity are the economic and cultural forces of globalisation. It allows an increasingly rapid transfer of knowledge, capital and technology across all frontiers. On the positive side, remote nations, such as those in the Pacific, can benefit directly from increased trade, communications and access to

knowledge. On the negative side, unfettered international competition can destroy local industries. Increasingly, economic and cultural diversity at local levels, especially rich in Asia and the Pacific, is subjugated to the homogenizing effects of globalisation. The products of globalisation, unprecedented wealth and well-being, have increasingly become the privilege of rich countries and wealthier segments of populations—those most immediately connected to global action— while the poor are bypassed and marginalised. UNESCO has a unique mandate in the humanisation of globalisation -- in building and rebuilding the cultural and communications bridges between peoples, in assuring that significant cultural heritage is maintained, and in empowering and connecting those who are otherwise excluded from globalisation's benefits.

**1.1.1.3 Developing information and communications technology (ICT):** One of the driving forces of globalisation is the privileged gathering, commercial exploitation, and sharing of new knowledge and information through information and communications technologies. However, for many people and nations, especially the poorest in the region, access to the new knowledge dynamic is denied by the absence of scientific and technological capacity. Separated by a digital divide, found both within and across countries of the region, those without ICT will suffer as their access to new knowledge declines, their income-generating skills become outmoded, and their ability to compete in a globalising environment diminishes. Meanwhile, the social transformation stimulated by globalisation is disorienting and disempowering for those seeking to maintain the meaning of their lives according to local cultural expectations.

**1.1.1.4 Bridging the digital divide** is a social, technical, educational and cultural challenge, in particular bringing affordable ICT access and content to the unreached (e.g., the remote and “unconnected” rural poor) and ensuring that they have the skills to participate.

**1.1.1.5 Achieving sustainable development:** Poverty, exclusion and privileged control over knowledge, as well as over natural and human resources, all fundamentally impact on the sustainability of development -- where key resources in particular, fresh water, are managed poorly and within short-term perspectives. Consequently, much of the last decade's economic development in the region has come at the price of environmental degradation. Abuse of natural resources such as forests and oceans may produce short-term gain for a few, but it guarantees long-term problems for many. Without a sustainable environment, there can be no human security. Without a guarantee of human security, there can be no sustainable peace. UNESCO's multidisciplinary mandate, linking science and ecological knowledge with an understanding of community and social processes, can help confront the challenge of creating a sustainable world for future generations of the region to enjoy and, in the process, strengthen cultural diversity.

**1.1.1.6 Preventing the transmission of HIV/AIDS and reducing the impact of the epidemic:** Exacerbated by poverty and globalisation is the worldwide crisis of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It is not only a personal tragedy in every part of the world; in more and more families, communities, and societies, it is affecting provision of health and education services, wealth and security and development as a whole. Achievements of the last decade are being threatened and even reversed. The Asia and Pacific region faces a narrowing window of opportunity to ensure that the further transmission of the virus and the further impact of the pandemic are limited as much as possible. UNESCO must help to combat this threat by providing essential knowledge and changing negative attitudes and behaviour through education, advocacy, the media, and social and cultural strategies. UNESCO must also anticipate and then reduce the impact of the epidemic on the sectors covered by its mandate to prevent stigmatisation, and ensure the rights of HIV/AIDS-affected people, especially those of the most disadvantaged poor and cultural minorities. Efforts must also be made to reduce drug abuse, a major contributor to HIV infection rates, as well as a serious social issue in itself.

**1.1.1.7 Establishing a culture of peace:** Conflict among people and between nations continues to be a major global challenge. Countless lives have been lost in the last decade by armed conflicts in the region, and the lives of many more have been made worse by the conditions associated with conflict - - destruction of infrastructure, spread of disease (including HIV/AIDS), break-up of families,

increased flow of refugees and internally displaced persons, famine, disrupted education systems, and destruction of cultural and environmental heritage.

1.1.1.8 The causes of conflict in the region are deeply embedded in economic, ethnic, cultural, social, and religious forces associated with each of the challenges identified above and in population expansion, resource depletion, and inequity and exclusion. The General Conference at its 31<sup>st</sup> session affirmed in resolution 39 the values to be promoted by UNESCO, including the building of a culture of peace and a dialogue among civilizations. Addressing the core mandate of UNESCO, the promotion of peace and a culture of peace, -- before, during, and after conflict -- requires dealing with the challenges that follow from globalisation, poverty, and inequity of access to knowledge and natural resources, and the ethical values and attitudes that lie behind global action. Furthermore, there is a need to create an enabling environment for democratic dialogue and practices.

## **1.2 An interdisciplinary response**

1.2.1 Responding to the six challenges briefly described above clearly demands an approach that is comprehensive, both geographically and conceptually; it should be developed in all countries and woven into all strategies and programmes, regardless of sector. The regional strategies and activities of UNESCO are traditionally organised into the five programme sectors – education, science, social and human sciences, culture, and communication and information. In fact, each of the sectors addresses in very specific ways each of the global challenges. In addition to individual sector responses, however, there is considerable synergy to be obtained by interdisciplinary coordination and collaboration, including with other partners, directed at each of the global challenges. The following paragraphs describe an interdisciplinary approach to the challenges, and seek to demonstrate how each traditional sector can collaborate with and reinforce the others in a concerted attempt to address the regional challenges. (See Box I for a matrix showing some aspects of such an approach.)

**BOX 1: Possible Interdisciplinary Responses to Global Challenges**

Global Challenges	Sectors				
	Education	Science	Social Sciences and Humanities	Culture	Communications and Information
<b>Reducing poverty</b>	Provides literacy and basic skills	Promotes income from ecological resources	Provides essential data on poor and marginal groups	Promotes income from local cultural resources	Enhances access of the unreached to essential information
<b>Coping with globalisation</b>	Promotes rights and empowerment through literacy and basic education	Develops research and knowledge-generation capacity	Provides information on effects of globalisation on society	Protects traditional local culture and values	Facilitates access to and sharing of information as part of the globalisation process
<b>Developing information and communication technology (ICT)</b>	Develops essential skills and uses ICT for improving educational access and quality	Makes use of ICT for capacity building through virtual universities	Uses ICT for information dissemination on social issues	Facilitates access to ICT for use in cultural resource management	Promotes development of national ICT policies
<b>Achieving sustainable development</b>	Develops environmental education curricula and teacher training programmes	Develops ecological knowledge for sustainable income generation	Examines social and political impact of development projects affecting the environment	Promotes sustainable management of cultural and ecological resources	Encourages greater access to media and information to promote environmental awareness
<b>Preventing transmission of HIV/AIDS and reducing the impact of the epidemic</b>	Develops HIV/AIDS prevention materials for formal and non-formal education	Ensures accuracy of information for preventive education	Undertakes research on determinants of vulnerability	Develops culturally sensitive strategies to combat HIV/AIDS transmission	Facilitates transmission of information about HIV/AIDS to the public through various media
<b>Establishing a culture of peace</b>	Prepares curriculum and teaching materials for peace and values education	Promotes better resource management to reduce conflict	Provides research on social and ethical issues underlying civil conflict	Promotes skills in resolution of culture-based conflicts	Encourages dialogue among civilizations through greater access to media

**1.2.2 Reducing poverty:** Poverty has many interrelated and interacting dimensions that require a multi-pronged strategy. Social science research provides essential information on the scope and nature of poverty and social exclusion as a basis for preparing an overall strategy to reduce poverty. Education is universally acknowledged as one of the main instruments in poverty alleviation because acquisition of literacy and basic knowledge and skills are empowering both socially and economically. The main focus of the education strategy is to improve access to and quality of education for poor and marginalised groups, including education oriented to the needs of rural areas. Similarly, the science sector plays an essential role because it focuses on science as a means of solving local problems and using science to learn from traditional knowledge. By concentrating on developing sustainable development strategies, the science sector directly contributes to identifying ways for the poor to earn an income, while maintaining the environment on which the income is based. The emphasis of the culture sector on promoting empowerment through culture clearly recognises the linkages between traditional, indigenous environmental resource management and poverty reduction. Culture is conceived not only as something to be preserved merely for its own sake, but as something that should contribute directly to community development and empowerment. The promotion, development, and commercialisation of cultural industries, as well as the adoption of appropriate legal frameworks of protection for the creators of these works will be vigorously supported. Another dimension of poverty is the lack of access to knowledge -- a lack that the communication and information sector aims to reduce by promoting better access for the poor to information through such means as low-cost community radio.

**1.2.3 Coping with globalisation:** Globalisation is a complex process with complex results, both positive and negative. Each sector can contribute to maximising the former and mitigating the latter through its strategies and activities. Education provides the foundation since no person or society can begin to cope with globalisation without literacy and basic education. With better education comes better understanding of rights and increased empowerment. Science is a driving force of globalisation since it generates much of the knowledge that fuels the globalisation process. Strengthening science education and research capacity helps countries to compete in the globalisation process by enabling them to generate their own knowledge and lessen dependency on others. Social science research provides better understanding of the impact of globalisation on societies and leads to more effective strategies for coping, as well as contributing to the development of national strategies for dealing with globalisation. One frequent attribute of globalisation is the apparent “homogenisation” of culture and loss of traditional cultural values and interests. The culture sector deals directly with this by developing local capacity to maintain and manage cultural resources in a sustainable manner, thus helping to ensure respect for the preservation of cultural diversity. Globalisation is in many ways about the free exchange of knowledge and information, a process that is facilitated by the communication and information sector’s emphasis on promoting equitable access to the media, especially for poor communities.

**1.2.4 Developing information and communication technology:** UNESCO’s ICT strategy gives high priority to promoting the establishment of an enabling policy environment at the national level to facilitate development of the sector. The education sector makes extensive use of ICT, and distance education programmes at all levels are increasingly important elements of education strategy. The science sector also, through its support for the ASEAN virtual university, directly supports development of ICT. The social and human sciences sector recognises the importance of information dissemination and continues to support activities in this area, including use of ICT. Similarly, there is great potential for the culture sector to apply ICT in mobilising grass roots support for heritage conservation, cataloguing cultural resources, promoting cultural industries, sharing information on culture through an internet data base, using distance education techniques for training cultural resource managers, and developing public cultural education programmes through websites.

**1.2.5 Achieving sustainable development:** Each sector contributes to the challenge of sustainable development in specific ways. The theme is particularly prominent in the science sector where the interaction between water and people and between people and their environment are major entry points for programmes such as the development of ecological knowledge to promote sustainable tourism, waste recycling for profit and renewable energy application for rural electrification. The education sector concentrates on environmental education through curriculum development and teacher training activities designed to heighten learners’ awareness of environmental issues. The social and human sciences sector collaborates with the science sector on research designed to explore social and political impact of the timber and fisheries industries, to help strengthen technical strategies for improving environmental management. The culture sector contributes to sustainable development through its emphasis on supporting culture and cultural diversity as a means for such development. Sustainable cultural and ecological resource management is a main thrust of the culture sector strategy. The communication and information sector strategy of increasing public access to media, including community radio, helps to create an important means of educating the public about sustainable development. Improved access to information can result in improved community knowledge for managing sustainable development.

**1.2.6 Preventing the transmission of HIV/AIDS and reducing the impact of the epidemic:** In Asia and the Pacific, the HIV/AIDS pandemic – with the exception of a few notable countries – is largely invisible, at least to planners and policy-makers at the top of the system. It is a pandemic reaching into every corner of community life and therefore requiring a multi-faceted response. The education sector aims to reduce transmission of the virus and prevent stigmatisation of those affected by it through preventive education and through initiatives to change values and behaviour which promote transmission and stigmatisation. The science sector helps to ensure that the knowledge transmitted in prevention activities is accurate and appropriate. The social and human sciences sector promotes

research on determinants of vulnerability and reviews strategies related to trafficking of drugs and of women and children and on revitalising social capital in AIDS-affected communities. The culture sector focuses particularly on the pandemic's impact on already vulnerable ethnic communities and on cultural strategies to combat this impact by identifying cultural factors that lead to increased vulnerability and stigmatisation. The communication and information sector assists in the transmission of essential knowledge through a variety of media to limit the spread of the disease, change personal values, and promote public policies designed both to limit the scope of the pandemic and protect the rights of those affected by it.

**1.2.7 Establishing a culture of peace:** In addressing the core mandate of UNESCO—peace—each of the five sectors has identified strategies and activities that contribute directly to the establishment of a culture of peace. The education sector helps to develop curriculum, prepare teaching materials, and train teachers in such areas as conflict resolution and values education. The social and human sciences sector undertakes research into ethnic relations and social exclusion -- areas directly related to conflict. The sector also deals with issues of the ethics and human rights -- including gender discrimination, racism and religious intolerance -- that often lie beneath civil conflict. The science sector recognises that rapid population growth increases competition for scarce resources and therefore increases the likelihood of conflict. Strategies for the sector thus promote broad-based participation and governance on environment. The culture sector aims to find ways to facilitate resolution of conflicts that are often rooted in historical or culture-based claims to resources. The communication and information sector promotes dialogue among civilizations through the media, recognising that the media are an important influence in any peace initiative. The media also provide an opportunity for information-sharing and for reducing the stereotyping that often contributes to cultural conflict.

### 1.3 Sectoral responses

1.3.1 UNESCO's response to these global challenges is represented in the 12 strategic objectives and the strategies for the two cross-cutting themes contained in the Medium-Term Strategy, 2002-2007 (31C4). The *Draft Programme and Budget 2002-2003* (31C/5) sets out how UNESCO's resources are allocated across the programme areas. The draft regional strategy provided by each sector, together with the situation analysis for each sector, is based on the broad principles, objectives, priorities and strategies laid out in the 31C/4 and C/5 documents. Each of the five programme sectors provides a brief analysis of regional challenges and priorities, followed by a discussion of how the sector will respond to these challenges. Each sector aims to contribute, with particular reference to the Asia and Pacific region, to meeting the major global challenges. The collective sector strategies constitute UNESCO's regional response to the global challenges.

1.3.2 A number of common themes are apparent in the analyses and strategies of each sector. These integrating themes include: (i) support for policy development, (ii) a focus on poverty and marginalized groups, (iii) efforts to contribute to a culture of peace, and (iv) attention to issues in sustainable development. They establish coherence in the overall regional strategy and reflect the global challenges. Implementing these strategies successfully, however, will require addressing a number of additional issues. These include

- **maximizing collaboration and networking** with Member States, including with the National Commissions;
- **ensuring coordination** among the activities of the regional, cluster, and country offices of UNESCO;
- **strengthening efforts to gain extra-budgetary support** from multi-lateral and bilateral agencies in the region, as well as from selected private sector sources;

- **developing more effective public advocacy and outreach activities** to promote UNESCO policies and responses to regional challenges;
- **monitoring and evaluating activities** on a regular basis; and
- **reviewing and revising all activities and processes**, particularly towards the end of a biennial programme cycle, to help ensure continuing relevance and quality.

1.3.3 The overall regional strategy must therefore be more than a summary of the strategies of each sector. It must coherently address the issues of coordination among the sectors, coordination between the various offices, collaboration with the Member States, and development and implementation of standards and processes to ensure programme quality.

1.3.4 The five sectors, despite their diverse nature, identify certain common modalities of approach, including:

- **enhancing capacity-building** in areas related to both policy reform and management in all sectors to improve quality and effectiveness;
- **enhancing collaboration with partners** (including carefully selected and monitored private sector partners) by making a greater effort at the regional, cluster, and country levels to establish closer working relationships with key partners including other UN agencies, bilateral donors, the multilateral development banks, and a host of non-government and civil society organisations;
- **strengthening regional networking processes** by (a) providing essential technical support for field offices and Member States; (b) strengthening UNESCO's own internal information sharing network through an expanded website and information clearing house services; (c) enhancing collaboration, information sharing, and coordination among UNESCO offices and programmes in the region; and (d) supporting existing regional networks;
- **promoting more intersectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration** within and across field offices while attempting to consolidate efforts in a more concentrated range of programmes. Given the increasingly complex issues which UNESCO and its partners are addressing (e.g. conflict resolution, HIV/AIDS, poverty), better ways to ensure such collaboration must be found; and
- **continuing to focus on youth, women and minorities** to ensure equal access to and full participation in their country's development opportunities.

1.3.5 Within the framework set within UNESCO's C/4 Medium Term Strategy by the 12 strategic objectives and the cross-cutting themes, the **education sector** concentrates on promoting and supporting education system reform and capacity building, with a special focus on marginal groups, especially girls and women, in recognition that education is not only a human right but also a key element in improving both individual quality of life, and national economic and social development. The **science sector** highlights transformation of the principles and ethics that guide science and technology for development; the improvement of human security through social change and better management of the environment (with a particular emphasis on water); and the enhancement of scientific, technical and human capacities to participate in the emerging knowledge societies. The **social and human sciences sector** aims to strengthen civic consciousness and revitalize social capital through activities in curriculum development, research, networking, and governance, among others. The **culture sector** seeks, among other things, to extend international protection to vulnerable minority cultures and cultural expressions, localise and empower the culture profession to develop and implement standards, mobilise grass roots support for sustainable management of cultural resources, develop capacity in structuring arbitration of culture conflicts, support a shift towards

cultural and environmental tourism, and stimulate cultural industries in poor communities. The **communication and information sector** seeks to enable the development of adequate ICT policy environments, improve equity of access to ICT, strengthen ICT content, develop capacity for knowledge management, and build the investigative capacity of media.

## 2.0 EDUCATION

### 2.1 Regional Situation and Challenges

2.1.1 The region has made substantial progress in education in the last three decades. Gross primary enrolment rates have increased from 84% to 106%, and literacy rates, from 51% to 75% (for females from 38% to 67%) – though Asia still accounts for 70% of the world illiterates. Secondary and higher education enrolments have increased. However, large numbers of children lack access to basic education, and in some countries many children drop out of school even before completing primary education and are thus condemned to lives of poverty and illiteracy. Literacy rates, especially for women in South Asian countries, remain low and require urgent further attention. Enrolment rates for girls and women at all levels of education are still far below parity with males in many countries. Moreover, boys who have finished formal schooling but lack employable or income-generating skills are not likely to be well integrated into society; particularly in the Pacific region. It is no coincidence that most out-of-school children are from minority groups, from the poor and disadvantaged, from remote geographical areas, from the disabled, and above all, are girls. It is these groups that have been excluded from Education for All (EFA) and must comprise the principal target for subsequent interventions.

2.1.2 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes have increased their coverage very slowly, vary in quality, and often focus on urban areas and more elite population groups. The need for expansion of ECD becomes even more acute if children from disadvantaged groups are to be prepared adequately for entry into basic education. Pressure on secondary education and technical-vocational education is increasing as primary enrolment rates climb. Expansion and reform of these levels of education must reflect the needs of all youth, and not only those destined for higher education. Particular attention needs to be given to technical and vocational education, including (i) strengthening links between training and on-the-job experience, (ii) helping to ensure a level of quality that is internationally accepted in order to facilitate recognition and transfer of employment qualifications; and (iii) finding new modes of delivery, such as community colleges. Vocational training as well as enterprise training are in themselves important means of fighting poverty. Quality of and access to higher education must be improved rapidly if the region is to prosper through the application and development of ICT and other technologies and knowledge. Because the formal system of education is still unable to cater to all learners, more non-formal approaches must be developed to reach underserved groups. More attention needs to be given as well to developing lifelong learning, especially in the area of skills development since skills can quickly become obsolete in an era of rapid economic transformation. Finally, rural education catering to the special needs of rural populations should not be ignored.

2.1.3 There is a continuing problem of poor quality education -- education that excludes, pushes out, or is unable to retain learners; that is provided in unsafe, unhealthy, unfriendly, and gender-insensitive environments; that does not provide essential skills and knowledge; and that is irrelevant to the needs of learners. The consequences of poor quality are: (i) vast wastage of scarce public and private resources, (ii) continuing inability to meet successfully the demands of a changing and globalising society, and (iii) the condemnation of millions of children to continuing poverty and lack of empowerment. Improving quality will require (i) more efficiently allocated and utilised funds, (ii) more flexibility in delivery and teaching methods through formal, non-formal, and informal approaches, and (iii) special attention to the needs of learners from disadvantaged groups. Support for reforming and improving teacher education must be a major element in any programme to improve the quality of basic education.

2.1.4 Many countries in the region increasingly recognise that policy reform is essential to improving efficiency, relevance, and quality; and to reaching marginal groups. Many are decentralising their education systems with the aim of empowering local units to make their own decisions and thus use resources more effectively. Many are initiating alternative means of education delivery, and there is a rapidly increasing recognition of the need for ICT development at all levels of education, not to increase disparities in access and quality but to reduce them. ICT is a relatively new focus for education and needs considerable attention if it is to achieve its full potential as a means of improving education access and quality. The policy reform and implementation process itself -- including research, planning, monitoring, and management and administration -- often needs to be strengthened.

2.1.5 One defining characteristic of the region is its diversity. In Central Asia the challenge is to maintain the existing high level of literacy, especially among adults, while promoting national languages and a change to Latin script, and adapting more flexibly to a rapidly changing context. In South Asia, problems of low primary enrolment rates and adult literacy, usually to the disadvantage of girls and women, remain critical. The situation in Afghanistan demands a special response. In most countries of Southeast and East Asia, increased access to education and achievements in literacy have been significant, but serious disparities in access, and even more so in quality, continue to exist based on gender, ethnic and linguistic status, economic status and the special needs of individual learners. Educational quality is also a major concern of Pacific nations. Science and technology education, curriculum and assessment reform, and improved teacher training and professional development are all priorities.

## 2.2 Regional Priorities and Strategies

2.2.1 The broad regional priorities in the education sector are:

**2.2.1.1 Support EFA with special emphasis on removing barriers to participation and learning for girls and women, out-of-school youth, the disadvantaged, the disabled, and the poor:** In some countries of the region, especially in South Asia, support for continued expansion of the system is needed because education access and system capacity remain low. In other countries, especially in Central, East, and Southeast Asia and the Pacific, the target must shift to excluded groups, and the strategy must shift to supporting ways to make education available to them through both formal and non-formal approaches. Particular attention should be given to the five E-9 countries located in Asia (Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan) because meeting global EFA targets – and, in the long-run, reducing poverty -- depends on meeting enrolment targets in these countries. Efforts to promote literacy in the broader context of the International Decade of Literacy are particularly important. Recognising that there are large differences between and within countries in the region in the status of educational development, some countries may be able to contribute to the development of certain subsectors in other countries even as they themselves may need assistance in other subsectors. The knowledge and experience of countries within the region should be seen as a valuable resource to be tapped. Special attention should be given to the needs of adult learners and community empowerment through such innovative approaches as Community Learning Centres (CLC).

**2.2.1.2 Improve quality at all levels by seeking to address selectively some of the causes of poor quality:** Genuinely inclusive, quality education is essential if learners are to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to improve the quality of their lives and to contribute to economic, social, and political development. UNESCO's general strategy should be to focus on those inputs that maximise its comparative advantage (such as policy reform support and the development and dissemination of good practices) and secure the greatest impact for UNESCO's investment of resources. A focus on curricular areas of particular importance to UNESCO's mandate – HIV/AIDS prevention, values education, moral education, citizenship education, sustainable development, human rights, the promotion of a culture of peace and respect for diversity – is an essential part of this priority as is seeking to improve the quality of teacher training. In addition, UNESCO will assist efforts to apply

international standards for skills development to facilitate cross-border recognition and transfer of qualifications.

**2.2.1.3 Promote development of more effective and efficient education systems through policy reform, dialogue, and capacity-building.** UNESCO recognises that ultimately the achievement of a country's educational aims relies upon the development of effective policies and strategies with simultaneous attention to improved planning, data analysis, research, and capacity-building.

2.2.2 Given these broad priorities, UNESCO proposes to focus its efforts on the following strategies in an attempt to ensure the greatest impact for its relatively limited resources in the region. These strategies should be applied to the extent possible across all education subsectors (early childhood care and education; primary, secondary, technical/vocational, and higher education; literacy; non-formal education; and life-long learning) and programme activity areas (gender equality, HIV/AIDS prevention, and curriculum development and reform, particularly in peace and values education).

2.2.3 The main strategies are:

**2.2.3.1 Supporting “upstream” activities** for system-wide reforms (e.g., policy dialogue and advocacy, planning, data analysis, policy reform, monitoring of policy implementation) to take advantage of UNESCO's traditional strengths and contribute to a major regional challenge of improving quality (without diminishing recognition of the need to maintain knowledge of field conditions and activities through involvement in selected “downstream” activities);

**2.2.3.2 Maximising ICT applications** in all activities (teacher training, higher education, literacy, community learning, etc.), including greater use of ICT in the clearinghouse function of collecting, analysing, repackaging and disseminating information in support of UNESCO programmes and projects; and in internal communications as well, in order to set an example as an ICT-oriented and proficient organisation, also promoting greater application of ICT at the school levels as exemplified by the “smart school” concept of Malaysia—keeping in mind that UNESCO's work in ICT is intended to reduce disparities in educational access and quality rather than increase them.

**2.2.3.3 Improving the quality and scope of evaluation and monitoring** of all programme activities under implementation in an effort to ensure quality and cost-effectiveness, and to provide a sound basis for decision-making under results-based management;

**2.2.3.4 Establishing a quality control process** within UNESCO to enhance quality of output at each stage of programme planning and activity development, possibly including, for example, internal peer review and setting of clear minimum standards;

**2.2.3.5 Developing a systemic regional data base and information system for policy-making and monitoring** among UNESCO offices in the region to help ensure quality of input and outcome with regard to their activities. In a decentralising structure where cluster and country offices have greater responsibilities but may lack technical expertise in specialised areas, the regional bureau in particular should serve as a source of needed technical support as well as information; and

**2.2.3.6 Identifying and disseminating appropriate adaptations** of successful innovations and best practices at all levels in an effort to encourage and support system change, including support for pilot projects planned and developed in such a way as to maximise their potential for system-wide adaptation through networking and inclusion in education policies. CLCs, for example, are a successful innovation whose broader development would help to address many issues in community and adult nonformal education.

**2.2.3.7 Encouraging experimentation and innovation**, recognising that the demands of a rapidly changing region require systematic efforts to find new and better solutions to both familiar and emerging challenges especially solutions that incorporate new knowledge and technologies such as ICT. The “smart schools” approach pioneered in Malaysia provides a good example of how ICT can

be used to improve education quality. Networking and information-sharing are important contributions to this aim. In addition, UNESCO can support innovative pilot projects with the aim of collaborating with other donors to take successful initiatives to scale.

**2.2.3.8 Promoting greater resource mobilisation and more effective resource allocation:** Achieving priorities requires resources. The mobilisation of these resources through internal and external funding, therefore, becomes a priority in itself. More active involvement in multi-agency activities (such as UNAIDS) and with development banks, the development of more visible and coherent regional positions and programmes appropriate for bilateral funding and more links with potential private sector funders can all be promoted. Effective and efficient allocation of available resources is also essential, implying that resource allocation decisions will be made at local levels as a key feature of decentralisation.

### 3.0 SCIENCE

#### 3.1 Regional Situation and Challenges

3.1.1 Within the three 31 C/4 strategic objectives for the Science Sector, ‘normative and ethical concerns’, while of equal relevance to all countries - from richest to poorest - are appropriately dealt with at the global level from Headquarters.

3.1.2 The other two strategic objectives form the platform for UNESCO’s Regional Strategies in Science. These objectives were ‘the improvement of human security through better management of the environment (with a particular emphasis on water) and social change’; and ‘the enhancement of scientific, technical and human capacities to participate in the emerging knowledge societies’. The objectives are translated into programmes at the regional level to address the three core challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century for science and the inequities that are associated with them at local levels: sustainable development; globalisation; and water security. All are linked in one way or another with population growth and pressure and access to wealth. With a perspective drawn from the 1999 World Conference on Science, a new contract is required between science and society: such a contract implies deep seated change in the organisation of science globally and the voice of communities; application of science to ‘real world’ problems; and enhancement of equity of participation in a ‘knowledge society’.

3.1.3 Nowhere is the impact of population pressure more visible than in the Asia and Pacific region. It contains five of the nine most populated countries in the world. **Southeast and East Asia** was dramatically affected by the economic collapse of 1997 along with rapid political change and uncertainty. A key impact in Southeast Asia, in particular, was a sudden collapse in funding of science systems that were just emerging to a new maturity and to strong linkages with industry. Worsening environmental conditions have also been experienced, including deforestation and forest fires, destruction of coastal ecosystems, and urban, industrial and freshwater pollution.

3.1.4 The **Central Asian region** has been tentatively emerging into globalised economies and societies, and is also confronting both economic and political uncertainty, a condition that contributes to weaknesses in establishing new directions for their science systems. Furthermore, in this context of economic and political change, consequent impacts on income access and poverty have been associated with worsening environmental conditions, among others, urban and industrial pollution. Although the region inherited a scientific infrastructure of a very high quality from the Soviet period, state support for the sciences and for science teaching has declined since independence.

3.1.5 In some areas, in particular **South Asia**, the accelerating demand of population pressure on scarce land and water resources is a root cause of both local and political conflicts. Within the dynamic of globalisation, the trend towards culturally homogenous megacities is increasingly straining internal water supply, energy supply, and equity of access to space—all of which turn full circle back to heighten further the political and social premises for conflict and social inequity.

Meanwhile, even in the smallest of states, such as in the **Pacific**, the pressures on natural and water resources continue to grow, again in the context of global pressures and the impact of global warming on the erosion of coastal ecologies. In particular, the Pacific faces challenges in water pollution, waste management, and energy renewal.

3.1.6 There is, therefore, a critical need in the Asia and Pacific region for science to deal with these ‘real world’ problems as a way of empowering people to deal with the impact of globalisation and to engage in a ‘new social contract’ at local community levels. Such a social contract involves capitalizing on existing traditional knowledge capacities and exploring solutions that are appropriate to the situation.

3.1.7 At the same time, the new social contract also implies *access* at local levels to the latest and best of international scientific evaluation and data, which are essential inputs to timely responses to complex environmental and development problems.

3.1.8 However, the available local scientific resources are poorly developed (except in Japan and now the Republic of Korea). Small states of the Pacific are particularly disadvantaged by the absence of employment opportunities for local scientists, and thus heavily dependent on assistance from outside the region. Serious attention must be paid throughout the region to capacity building in science education at all levels; building relations between science and communities; and targeting limited scientific resources through effective policy and governance. Capacity should be developed in the formal education system as well as through programmes such as Science for the Masses under which science and technology museums provide outreach to students, out-of-school youth, and adults.

3.1.9 Indeed, in the Asia and Pacific region, attention to capacity building, science education and effective science and technology policies provides a central opportunity for long-term impact on access of the poor to development benefits. Already the lessons of Japan and the Republic of Korea testify to the potential and strength of this opportunity.

3.1.10 Furthermore, recognising that emphasis is needed on values and their part in conflict resolution, serious attention has to be paid throughout the region to building new methodologies for the prevention and resolution of conflicts over natural resources, and to building platforms for scientific cooperation across political boundaries using science as an entry point for political dialogue.

### **3.2 Regional Sector Priorities and Strategies**

3.2.1 The strategy to address these challenges and priorities is designed to capitalise on the strengths already present within the region, such as nurturing and utilising the UNESCO networks of experts to target programmes for the most disadvantaged Member States and communities. These networks cover all areas of science sector activities and link with global programmes: the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme, for example, as well as with regional programmes, such as the Science and Technology Policy Asian Network (STEPAN), and discipline-based networks. Emphasis will be on local solutions and relevance, on bringing the power of science to the people directly, on developing education resources and information, and on building wise practice demonstrations as a basis for wider and informed development assistance.

3.2.2 **Interaction between People and Water:** Particular emphasis is proposed, as in UNESCO’s global priority, on water and the interactions between people and water. One side of this programme would be set within international scientific information activities as under the International Hydrology Programme (IHP); the other side would focus on community-based approaches to water management and security.

3.2.3 **People and their Environment:** Complementary priority will also be given to the development of productive and sustainable relations between people and their environments through consolidating and further targeting the contributions and concepts of UNESCO’s established scientific programmes,

along with the application of science education and application within communities to assist in poverty alleviation.

**3.2.4 Science and Traditional Knowledge:** In keeping with the World Conference on Science, contemporary science will be used to evaluate, learn from, complement and apply for economic and health benefit, the traditional knowledge systems that already exist in many developing countries of the region.

**3.2.5 Response to Natural Hazards:** Priority in reducing the risks that natural hazards pose to poor communities will be placed on capacity building of early warning systems and provision of timely information to decision makers, in parallel with community-focused earthquake/cyclone proof building design.

**3.2.6 Science for Peace:** Conflicts arising from resource scarcity and competition will be addressed through ‘science for peace’ perspectives, with particular emphasis on the development of cross-border biosphere reserves and/or ‘peace parks’, and innovative mechanisms to promote broad-based participation and governance on environment.

**3.2.7 Building Capacity:** Finally, directing scarce scientific resources towards their most beneficial impact, and building capacity at all levels, is essential. Cooperation between Member States will be fostered in science and technology policy and management through the STEPAN programme, while an increasingly strong emphasis will be placed on science education, particularly in the least developed countries, as well as to fostering capacity building in the basic sciences through education and scientific exchange programmes. Benefits of communications technologies will be utilised, particularly in strengthening the ASEAN ‘Virtual University’ for Science and Technology focus on post-degree training of professionals in the environment, renewable energy and water areas. Emphasis should be placed on capacity building for women and girls.

## **4.0 SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES**

### **4.1 Regional Situation and Challenges**

**4.1.1** Poverty is the over-riding issue facing the region in which an estimated 900 million people live below the dollar-a-day poverty line. Associated with this issue is unequal access of the poor to the benefits of innovations in education, medicine, communications, science, technology, and governance. The reduction of poverty in the region should therefore be the ultimate goal of all programmes. Poverty has both ethnic and ethical dimensions that must be addressed, and the Social and Human Sciences programme is designed to address aspects of each of these dimensions of poverty.

**4.1.2** At the macro-level, sustainable economic growth is an essential prerequisite to development. Without strong and growing economies, governments cannot afford to provide services in health and education, general infrastructure, including water and sanitation, local government and justice. These services are essential tools for promoting human development and for rapidly lifting people out of poverty. The 2001 World Development Report has a strong social focus, highlighting the need to build social institutions and reduce the forces of social exclusion that perpetuate poverty. The history of development in the region since the 1960s demonstrates that growth alone is an insufficient precondition. Worldwide, human development occurs most rapidly where economic growth has been combined with stable, prudent and efficient government.

**4.1.3** The aftermath of economic crisis, economic stagnation, the cost of foreign debt, trade barriers, and the effects of high-level corruption and bureaucratic mismanagement have prevented governments from meeting the expectations of their citizens. In recent years misplaced rage against globalisation, expressed in mass demonstrations at international forums, has reinforced and

encouraged resistance to the essential public policy reforms needed to redress the structural causes of poverty.

4.1.4 Another destabilising effect of mass poverty is civil conflict, which can be best understood in the region as a social response to uneven distribution of diminishing resources. Sections of the populations who perceive that they enjoy an advantage over others become anxious to defend these advantages for themselves against encroaching groups who have less. This has contributed significantly to the proliferation of "ethnic violence". Endemic civil conflicts stifle progress by inhibiting a sense of national purpose and collective will. Recognising this, many governments in the region respond to the threat of civil instability by using the repressive force of the state to inhibit dissent. In these situations abuses of human rights flourish. If there is a downward shift in national fortunes or a sudden change of government, those who feel themselves oppressed may find an opening to seek violent redress. Anger that has been repressed by force may come boiling to the surface. In the resulting civil strife, decades of development endeavours can be (and have been) wiped out in a few weeks, and the climate for future development is severely undermined.

4.1.5 A great many countries in the region have social institutions based upon deeply embedded systems of kinship, patronage and hierarchy, often legitimised by religious beliefs. These cultural systems have worked effectively in centuries past at the community level, but have proved resistant to the spread of broader, more inclusive value systems that support democratic institutions, the rule of law, and shared notions of public good at the national level. Furthermore, the rapid social and economic changes subsumed in the term 'globalisation' are eroding old forms of social cohesion in communities, leaving people in confusion and uncertainty.

4.1.6 The importance of social capital has become more widely recognised in studies of international development. This term refers to social participation and co-operation, drawing on evidence that a society that relies on generalised reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful, fragmented society. Through membership in different organisations and networks, individuals develop joint interests and shared norms which in turn will create opportunities for collective action, lead to better understanding of differences between cultures, background and life styles, which in turn stimulates democratic values. At the national level the concept of social capital focuses on how the social and political environment shapes institutional structures, including those of law, government, and political expression.

## **4.2 Regional Priorities and Strategies**

4.2.1 The proposed core strategy of UNESCO Social and Human Sciences programmes in the Asia Pacific region is to assist governments to alleviate poverty and mitigate the socially fragmenting effects of economic change by promoting research, policy development and practical activities to strengthen civic consciousness and revitalise social capital. Projects should seek to empower the poor, the powerless and the unrepresented people, or at least not to disempower them. Economic development should be accompanied by social development. Planning for implementation of all policies and programmes should be accompanied by a social impact assessment. The programme will promote research on the social and cultural context of economic development, from the bottom up.

4.2.2 Programmes and activities are proposed to strengthen civic consciousness and the revitalisation of social capital at two levels: (i) research and dissemination of knowledge; and (ii) policy advice and practice. In this way the sector is involved in the pursuit of solutions to the issues described above by promoting intellectual enquiry and disseminating information on best practice, and by providing technical advice to government agencies and NGOs and supporting programmes of action.

4.2.3 It is extremely important to devise mechanisms for monitoring the nature and effectiveness of all programmes to ensure that they are formulated to capture contemporary realities and to contribute to new perspectives in understanding them, to identify future trends and needs, and to provide practical advice on how to deal with emerging issues.

4.2.4 UNESCO's regional social science and humanities programme will be built around the following strategies, reflecting the principal strategy stated above:

**4.2.4.1 Research Partnerships and Dissemination of Knowledge:** The productive relationships between UNESCO and academic associations and institutions in the Asia and Pacific region will be strengthened. Successful long-standing partnerships will be further supported, and work will continue in support of the newly established International Council for Pacific Island Studies. Special efforts will be made to communicate UNESCO's research findings to maximise their utilisation by leaders and by communities, thus strengthening the connectivity between research and policy.

**4.2.4.2 Social Science Curriculum Reviews:** In consultation with other divisions of UNESCO, National Commissions, and other relevant agencies, it is proposed that UNESCO promote and seek resources for a new strategic cornerstone programme. This will aim to encourage all governments of the region to undertake participatory reviews of their social sciences curriculum in schools and tertiary institutions throughout the region to ensure that the content, pedagogy and goals of basic education parallel citizenship requirements. These reviews will focus on making changes in both content and pedagogy to strengthen teaching and learning towards strengthening of civic consciousness and the revitalisation of social capital.

**4.2.4.3 Multicultural Studies:** Multicultural studies will be promoted within the school social science curricula (linked to Urbanization, Migration Education, Citizenship Education, Values Education, and Inclusive Education) throughout the region. The work in multicultural studies will aim to ensure that programmes reflect the latest knowledge, that teachers are properly trained to teach them, and that they are taught creatively in schools. Research into ethnicity will be undertaken concentrating not only on crises resulting from the break down of ethnic relations, but on cases where communities successfully coexist despite their seeming incompatibility.

**4.2.4.4 Governance:** Familiarity with what constitutes good governance among leaders is not a major issue. It would be useful, however, to document what counts as tolerable and what as unconscionable behaviour by officials, in diverse cultural and economic political contexts. Equally useful to document is what provokes changes in public perception, and in policy and behaviour, and how the trade in opiates skews these perceptions and behaviour.

**4.2.4.5 Management of Natural Resources:** Given the high priority in development of environmental and conservation issues in the Asia and Pacific region, the management of natural resources is proposed as a priority area for SHS in close cooperation with the science sector, through the promotion of multi-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research and social science curriculum development. Trans-national research proposes to explore both the management and the environmental, social, and political impacts of the timber industry and fisheries.

**4.2.4.6 Prevention of HIV/AIDS and Trafficking:** A review of current strategies and programmes in HIV/AIDS, trafficking of illegal drugs, and exploitation of children and women in the Asia Pacific region will be undertaken to ascertain whether there are educational gaps to be filled in the context of the strategic focus on strengthening civic consciousness and revitalising social capital. A possible area for programme development will be to commission and publish a set of "best practice" studies on social strategies for HIV/AIDS prevention and trafficking.

**4.2.4.7 Social Exclusion:** All programmes will contain objectives for the inclusion, empowerment and mainstreaming of the disabled, youth, women and ethnic minorities. Efforts will be made to incorporate the strategic focus on the strengthening of civic consciousness and revitalisation of social capital into the youth leadership programme.

**4.2.4.8 Social Safety Nets:** The strategy will provide practical suggestions and initiatives for, and through, member states to strengthen social safety net programs aimed at providing immediate relief

for the victims of exclusion. The programme will capitalise on the lessons learned from projects carried out in the last two years, in which work was undertaken directly with poor communities and women's groups for poverty alleviation and for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and trafficking in children and women.

**4.2.4.9 Formalisation of Property:** The programme will develop a proposal to fund the commissioning and publication of a set of case studies on initiatives for the formalisation of property rights among the poor in Asia and the Pacific. The objective is to promote reform of land and property legislation and land distribution among member states in the Asia Pacific region. This is a long-term but ultimately effective approach to empowering marginal communities.

**4.2.4.10 Ethics:** This is one of the priority areas in the social sciences programmes and strategy in the 31 C/4 and C5. The sector's strategy, in collaboration with the International Council of Bioethics and the Inter-governmental Council on Bioethics, will focus on three areas: (i) bioethics (focusing on promoting awareness of the Universal Declaration on Human Genome and Human Rights); (ii) ethics of Science and Technology focusing on providing answers to ethical problems linked to the development and progress made in science and technology; and (iii) economic ethics (eco-ethics) which aims to stimulate dialogue on a fairer system/s of sharing the benefits and/or disadvantages of growth-oriented economics. The focus is to promote research in these areas with full participation of affected and interested communities and organisations.

**4.2.4.11 Human Rights:** This has also been prioritised in sectoral programmes and strategy. Among other things, the sector's activities will try to stimulate proactive government policies to implementing internationally sanctioned agreements on Human Rights. The current strategy focuses on (i) Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (particularly in the struggle against poverty and exclusion); (ii) Women and Gender Equality (oppression of women in different forms -- domestic violence, sexual, physical and mental abuse); and (iii) Racism and Discrimination (fresh outbreaks of intolerance and violent nationalism, religious intolerance, discrimination against ethnic minorities and other marginalised groups, to be resolved through reinforcing social connections and not just managing the differences).

## 5.0 CULTURE

### 5.1 Regional Situation and Challenges

5.1.1 The three major strategic objectives of the 31C/4 for the culture sector are (i) promoting the drafting and implementation of standard-setting instruments in the cultural field; (ii) protecting cultural diversity and encouraging pluralism and dialogue among cultures and civilizations; and (iii) enhancing the linkages between culture and development through capacity-building and sharing of knowledge.

5.1.2 The Asia and Pacific regional context intensifies the global issues of cultural survival, poverty eradication and peace building. It is the region with the greatest cultural diversity and the densest cultural heritage. These latter characteristics are the region's comparative strengths, but they can also be the region's weaknesses as evidenced by the intensely cultural construction of the conflicts that have existed in Sri Lanka, Afghanistan or East Timor. Fortunately, the region's cultural strengths coincide with UNESCO's cultural mandate, therefore forming an appropriate foundation for the culture sector's inter-disciplinary programme strategy, as exemplified and codified in the UNESCO International Conventions in the field of culture heritage protection, and in the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted by the General Conference at its 31<sup>st</sup> session.

5.1.3 In **Central Asia**, the transition of the countries of the sub-region from the Soviet model into something new, has resulted in a reversion to deep-rooted traditional modes of reaction and interaction. However, the traditional response is no longer entirely relevant because over the past century, traditions have not been allowed to develop and therefore have atrophied. The challenge now

is to use what is still relevant from tradition to build new social contracts relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

5.1.4 In **South Asia**, the decentralisation and economic liberalisation in recent years has had very positive results for the creative enterprises and has fuelled a resurgence of interest in local cultural heritage. In India, in particular, the contribution of cultural industries to GDP has risen rapidly and at an accelerating rate. The challenge now for the region will be to create and maintain a competitive edge in the global marketplace. This will require investment in both education and information technology for innovation.

5.1.5 In **East Asia**, rapid economic growth has brought about unimaginable social changes in these societies long-steeped in tradition. In particular, the mass migration of young men to urban areas has resulted in the breakdown of the traditional family structure which has for centuries been the backbone of political, economic and social stability. These changes have profoundly disrupted traditional cultural and social structure in the sub-region. But it is also clear that traditional cultural values are still strongly held and inform individual choice, as well as collective decision-making.

5.1.6 The **Southeast Asia** sub-region is very diverse and provides a laboratory for policies based on principles of multi-culturalism. The economic turmoil of the late 1990s provided a sharp shock to many of the sub-region's governments with the positive result that societies were forced to re-examine what were their comparative strengths in a competitive world, and found that these strengths were to be found in their unique and diverse cultures. This has resulted in a single-minded focus on the development of heritage as a tourism resource, an approach which is already proving unsustainable because it is based on an extractive model. One of the most urgent matters for UNESCO in the Southeast Asian sub-region will be to engender a paradigm shift in the tourism and crafts industry towards an industry whose basic objective is to sustain, and even augment, the culture and heritage and ecological resources of the region.

5.1.7 In the **Pacific**, the isolation of the various cultural communities has been in some ways fortunate, as it has preserved their distinctiveness. However, migration from the small island states to Australia, New Zealand and the United States threatens to undo this advantage, to homogenise the distinctive Pacific cultures in their new culturally-mixed environments, while reducing the populations at home to levels below which they are culturally sustainable. UNESCO can assist the Pacific Member States in meeting this challenge through support to local cultural industries, especially those based on traditional knowledge of the unique environmental resources available in the Pacific.

5.1.8 The common theme which runs through the culture sector programming needs of all sub-regions is the need to make *much* greater use of cultural resources for development. In order to accomplish this, the available cultural resources must be identified and inventoried from the local community base, rather than top-down by the central political administration. Such stock-taking will inevitably result in a re-definition of the concept of cultural resources, broadening considerably the cultural resource base. With this new awareness of the extent of the culture resource base, expanded opportunities will come to harness the power of culture for development, and also a new responsibility for the conservation and sustainable management of these resources. While emphasis has been given to cultural minorities, the cultural needs of the majority should not be forgotten. Mainstreaming cultural activities can promote cultural understanding, strengthen cultural values, build social solidarity, and contribute to national identity.

5.1.9 There is also implicit in this strategy the need to increase the number and professional competence of culture resource managers, in order that culture is everywhere integrated into development planning and that culture impact assessments are routinely carried out whenever social, economic or spatial changes are proposed in the human landscape. This is tantamount to the creation of a new endogenous profession. These programmatic challenges of the culture sector are congruent with the current region-wide trend towards decentralisation of administration and governance, a trend which itself has been enabled by the strides made in general and professional education over the past generation.

## 5.2 Regional Priorities and Strategies

5.2.1 Within the context of these new and continuing challenges within the region, it is proposed that the regional culture sector strategy will have three strategic objectives and six pillars of action with each objective supported by two pillars:

**Strategic objective 1:** Promoting the drafting and implementation of standard-setting instruments in the cultural field.

**Asia-Pacific Pillar 1:** Extending international protection not only to tangible heritage, but also to endangered, vulnerable and minority cultures and cultural expressions

**Asia-Pacific Pillar 2:** Localisation and empowerment of the culture profession to develop and implement standards

**Strategic objective 2:** Protecting cultural diversity and encouraging pluralism and dialogue among cultures and civilizations.

**Asia-Pacific Pillar 3:** Grass-roots mobilisation for indigenous, sustainable management of cultural resources

**Asia-Pacific Pillar 4:** Capacity building in structuring arbitration for culture conflict resolution

**Strategic objective 3:** Enhancing the linkages between culture and development through capacity-building and sharing of knowledge.

**Asia-Pacific Pillar 5:** Engendering a paradigm shift in tourism in favour of culture and nature conservation

**Asia-Pacific Pillar 6:** Stimulating creative enterprises and cultural industries in the poorest communities

5.2.2. Specific objectives for each pillar then follow:

**5.2.2.1 Pillar 1: Promoting empowerment through culture:** The overall objective of the regional programme for culture is *empowerment through culture*. This means first and foremost that the cultural rights of all people must be safeguarded. The goal is to create everywhere in the region a grass-roots, mass movement for the conservation of the heritage of all cultures as the inspiration for the skills in problem-solving, innovation and creative thinking necessary for dealing with the challenges of the future. These challenges imply that the aims of UNESCO's cultural programme in the region must be to (i) achieve universal application and implementation by developing a mass base, particularly among youth; (ii) make conservation of cultural heritage an economically and socially sustainable undertaking; (iii) mobilise cultural industries and cultural creators for economic development; (iv) professionalize and systematize cultural and ecological heritage resource management; and (v) politically empower cultural specialists and cultural mediators.

**5.2.2.2 Pillar 2: Enhancing endogenous technical capacity, especially in management:** The need for greatly increased and improved endogenous capacity, especially in *culture resource management*, will continue to be a major challenge for UNESCO's culture sector programme. Empowerment of endogenous culture resource managers is key if the use of culture and ecological heritage resources is to be a long-term, sustainable development strategy in the region.

**5.2.2.3 Pillar 3: Mobilizing grass roots support for heritage conservation:** The current trend towards decentralization and localization of governance opens an opportunity which UNESCO must not miss for the mainstreaming of culture. A parallel may be drawn with the environmental movement which in the 1960s and 1970s struggled to mainstream environment conservation in society. Similar strategies and similar tactics are required to mainstream culture. Primary among these tactics is to mobilise local communities at the grass roots level, for local heritage conservation by demonstrating and facilitating how local cultural and ecological heritage resources can be successfully utilised for social and economic development. (MS) Preservation of oral history is especially important in this context. In addition, it is important to maintain linguistic diversity as a part of cultural diversity through documenting, promoting, and teaching indigenous languages.

**5.2.2.4 Pillar 4: Promoting culture conflict resolution:** Another enduring concern will be to find more structured ways and means to facilitate the resolution of culture-based conflicts. These conflicts are often over competing historical or culture-based claims to resources -- land, water, or other means of production. The ability to resolve these conflicts without violence will be an essential component in the sustainability of the culture resource base, and the ability to utilize culture resources for development. The simple promotion of dialogue among cultures is not sufficient to produce the results needed in this culturally volatile region. Traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution and arbitration need to be given a modern face to enable conflicts to be resolved.

**5.2.2.5 Pillars 5 and 6: Supporting culture as a primary means for sustainable development:** The new challenge for UNESCO is to embed culture at the base of the sustainable development paradigm. This challenge is greatest in the Asia and Pacific region precisely because of the diversity of cultural and ecological heritage resources, knowledge and skills available in the region and the fact that these resources are markedly under-mobilized for development. In addition, indigenous cultural expressions of the region are endangered. Greater attention needs to be given as well to preserving underwater cultural heritage. A scan of the World Heritage List reveals an under-representation of Asia and Pacific sites, particularly those of non-monumental character. The illicit trade in cultural property is rampant. Cultural minorities commonly lack protection of their basic human rights, such as rights of citizenship or access to education and public health, but instead are marketed as tourism products. Cultural icons are targets for sectarian and political violence. UNESCO's programme must seek to *mainstream culture* in all social, political and economic spheres of governance throughout the region.

## 6.0 COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

### 6.1 Regional Situation and Challenges

6.1.1 Information and communication have become major issues, not only as they affect trade, development and peace, but also as they contribute to the construction of a more just society with strong democratic orientations, equal opportunities and social solidarity. However, the capacity of nations to generate knowledge through scientific research and cultural production, to transmit it by means of formal, informal, initial or continuing education, and to share it through the media and information systems varies considerably between and within countries. The disparities combined with the developmental gap are more likely to produce new forms of exclusion and marginalisation. It is in the rural areas that the digital divide makes itself felt most acutely. Therefore, the critical issue is the provision and appropriation by local communities of ICT as a development tool.

6.1.2 UNESCO has a major role in developing the enabling environment for a knowledge society and this requires a regional strategy with priority areas of actions that can be implemented in close coordination with other UN agencies, professional organisations, civil society and Governments. A number of challenges will have to be addressed through this regional strategy. The most important challenge is to reach the unreached and to include the excluded in efforts to create an information society for all. Subregional strategies reflecting particular situations will also need to be developed. The Pacific, for example, characterized by many small island states scattered over an enormous ocean area, has special ICT requirements.

6.1.3 A major obstacle to promoting an inclusive knowledge society is the lack of specific national policies and strategies to ensure access to information and to develop appropriate localized tools, technologies and methodologies in the ICT field. The lack of policy support and political will is also due to lack of awareness of the economic, political and social benefits ICT can bring. The level of awareness among professionals and decision makers in the region about the role of ICT in development is generally low.

6.1.4 Connectivity and access at an affordable cost in the region is still a problem, especially in rural and remote areas.

6.1.5 Computer literacy is low and the common model based on individual computer access in most cases is unfeasible due to high computer costs and lack of energy sources. Low-cost devices such as handhelds, can contribute to mitigating this problem, but they are not available in many marginalized or rural societies. Another major challenge is the lack of appropriate local content and diversity in the Internet, including local language context. Tools to convert analogue content into digital form for many Asian languages are yet not available and this has slowed the digitalisation of existing analogue content in text mode and the development of pages containing indigenous knowledge. Incapacity to develop local content is equally a challenge for many electronic media and in particular for cultural and educational programmes suitable to local audiences.

6.1.6 Freedom of the press continues to improve in the region as a whole. There is a continuing need for authorities to recognize the essential role played by media in a democracy and to realize the need to raise the investigative capacity of media as an essential requirement to promote democratic values. In this regard, freedom to receive information as a legal right has become a vital issue.

6.1.7 Human resource development in the field of ICT and media structures remains a critical need. Lack of trained local trainers capable of imparting various skills related to ICT, content development and media operations is a challenge which makes it difficult to extend the information society beyond affluent citizens in the region.

## **6.2 Regional Priorities and Strategies**

6.2.1 Communication and information strategies for the region are derived from the strategic objectives for the communication and information programme as set in the medium term strategy. They are:

**6.2.1.1 Promoting development of an enabling policy environment:** UNESCO will assist Member States to develop holistic national policies promoting an enabling environment for a knowledge society for all. In the policy development process, special efforts will be taken to address equitable access, human resources and application development. Also the linkages between the knowledge society and media and, in particular, public service broadcasting as a conduit for educational and cultural content will be addressed as an integral part of the policy formulation process and media law revisions. In formulating policies, UNESCO will encourage and assist Member States in establishing a transparent dialogue with all stakeholders including the civil society, communities, and private and public sector agencies. To facilitate policy formulation, UNESCO will facilitate surveys in selected countries

to obtain comparative data on information policies and best practices and develop a resource kit with sample policies and guidelines for related legislation, etc.

**6.2.1.2 Promoting equitable access:** UNESCO will promote shared access through community multi-media centres. UNESCO will support innovations in low cost community access targeted especially at marginalised groups. Development of an appropriate business model to ensure the sustainability of community access points and to test the model at least with five different locations preceded by the assessment of the access models will be a key activity of CI strategy. With the possibility of using ICT, librarians and archivists offer great potential as knowledge workers. For archives, a more active regional Memory of the World (MOW) programme can help to change their role. Many libraries and archives in the region do not provide online access to their readers. Libraries, if properly equipped with ICT, can become an effective gateway to the information society. There is a great need throughout the region to train librarians for this purpose and help reposition the services provided by libraries to optimize access to information through networks. Establishing Multipurpose Community Telecentres will be another activity to implement the strategy of promoting ICT access.

**6.2.1.3 Developing appropriate content:** UNESCO's regional strategy to promote content development relies on creating proactive partnerships with extension services (education, agriculture and health), government agencies, NGOs and media and professional organisations. UNESCO should support the development of content templates for various community needs. The universal access cannot be achieved without promoting multilingualism in cyberspace. Therefore, UNESCO will support the efforts of public institutes and universities to identify and to promote technologies and tools capable of digitising local contents.

**6.2.1.4 Enhancing knowledge management capacity:** The process of "knowledge management" is an essential part of modernisation. Human resource development in information management for knowledge workers should take a central place of UNESCO's Communication and Information programme. To support capacity building, particularly in the area of Human Resource Development, UNESCO will support training of local trainers in ICT at various levels. Also UNESCO proposes to promote specialized training programmes for disadvantaged groups to reap the benefits of ICT, particularly in ICT-enabled learning and entrepreneurial opportunities.

**6.2.1.5. Establishing digitisation and e-publishing strategies:** There is a vast array of digital formats through which information can now be distributed. Moreover, there are several unreleased technologies on the horizon. UNESCO will establish and suggest software solutions for the whole range of e-production steps.

**6.2.1.6 Developing Public Service Broadcasting (PSB):** The challenge to transform Public Service Broadcasting as a democratic platform and an enabling tool for masses to migrate into an eventual knowledge society remains relevant. This is more so with the potential to use broadcasting as a disseminating technology for distance-learning in remote rural areas with the possibility of simultaneous data casting of distance-learning modules. Repositioning public service broadcasting to act as an interface, bringing the benefits of ICT to the greatest number of people, is a real challenge because it requires PSBs which are editorially and financially independent from governments and private interests. UNESCO, in collaboration with regional partners, will strive to introduce sharing of high quality educational content through the PSB systems in the region. There is also a need to ensure a greater gender balance and to continue supporting media training for women.

**6.2.1.7 Promoting community radio:** The central public interest principle in broadcasting is that of universal access. This principle of access should allow people to participate meaningfully in their community and society. It also includes greater access to the means of production and participating in broadcasting. Community-owned and operated radio networks can make radio a truly participatory communication tool. Community radio (i) stimulates community participation; (ii) raises the efficiency of decentralisation, enhances local level transparency and accountability; and (iii) involves people in the design, implementation and evaluation of local development programmes. Some

countries have already introduced community radio as a grass-roots participatory tool. UNESCO will continue to promote community radio as a catalyst in the development of rural and underprivileged urban communities. Community radio also has the potential to act as an interface between communities and the Internet. Converting community radio into multi-media centres with access to information networks will be a main thrust of UNESCO's approach to promoting community radio.

**6.2.1.8 Using ICT to facilitate poverty reduction:** Local development institutions working in poor areas should be encouraged to use ICT across their organisations and to provide unified electronic services. However, the challenge is to encourage these institutions to become service-oriented entities based on the life events of poor communities. Community radio can accelerate this transformation through involving these institutes in broadcast programmes and making them accountable to the people they serve. Therefore UNESCO, in collaboration with other UN Agency programmes, particularly those which are directed to strengthen good governance, proposes to promote community and grassroots media.

**6.2.1.9 Creating an enabling environment for democratic dialogue:** The investigative capacity of media reflects the degree of democratic values and accountability enjoyed by society. It also helps the media to strengthen prospects for peace through accurate and professional reporting and by providing opportunity for expression of differing viewpoints. Media contribute to peace through investigation and through expression of alternative points of view. UNESCO will continue to support media organisations to increase their investigative capacities and promote dialogue, including support for media pluralism and professionalism with assistance from the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).

**6.2.1.10 Continuing efforts to promote the free flow of information and freedom of the press:** Free flow of information and freedom of the press are essential to guarantee best practices of a democratic society and good governance. UNESCO will maintain its efforts to promote the free flow of information and press freedom across the region through advocacy, training for media professionals, provision of technical assistance to improve the media legislation process (including those related to the freedom to receive, share, and impart information), and facilitating the independence and pluralism of the media. The amalgamation of three existing information networks in the region—ASTINFO, RINSCA, and RINSEAP—into the Asia and Pacific Information Network (APIN) should help the process. There is also concern about the availability of inappropriate material on the Internet.

**6.2.1.11 Maintaining an ICT Materials Database:** UNESCO will also create a pilot project within the Information for All programme to keep abreast of the developments in ICT and to increase the collections of multi-media materials by maintaining and adding CD-ROM databases and electronic publications. A supplementary mechanism will be set up in existing networks for the exchange of experiences through meetings and best practice visits.

**6.2.1.12 Establishing a regional flagship programme:** The ICT programme will include three flagship activities selecting countries representative of UNESCO's regional community: (i) **ICTs for reaching the unreached** will focus on developing sustainable operational models for the unreached groups to access knowledge resources. Models will be tested in five different sites in the region; (ii) **Supporting development of national information and communication policies** will develop a resource kit for information and communication policy formulation leading to a knowledge society. It will include comprehensive guidelines on the policy development process with civil society participation; and (iii) **Human resource development** will include development of interactive self-learning training courses to increase the skills of local trainers, as well as increasing access to knowledge resources through a UNESCO regional portal.

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