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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Towards the preparation of the

WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Priority Targets for Action



WORLD SUMMIT
FOR SOCIAL
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Past development efforts, which have given primacy to economic growth, have been unable to contain widespread poverty and provide adequate employment opportunities. Marginalization and exclusion of significant sections of the population, often leading to violent conflict, acceleration of the rural exodus, deterioration of the urban habitat, ghettoization of the suburbs, and degradation of the natural environment highlight the current crisis, resulting from the deficiencies of the global development process.

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

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

A

Endogenous capacity building

- (i) **Education and training** policies should be assigned top priority and investments in education be augmented and strategically targeted so that socially and geographically disadvantaged populations have access to knowledge, through the use of both formal and non-conventional institutional mechanisms such as intensive learning and the promotion of diversified approaches to education. The goal is that nobody “misses the boat”.
- (ii) In particular, social policies should focus on the education and empowerment of **girls and women** which are key factors in **promoting gender equity** and the development of their full potential, as well as **curbing the population growth**¹.
- (iii) To prepare for the 21st century, and overcome the present crises, a thorough review and renovation of the **content and methods of education and restructuring of entire educational systems** are to be undertaken urgently. Teacher training and recycling are particularly important to maintain the required levels of quality. Another requirement is adequate preparation for new types of employment, such as eco-jobs².

1 Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs (World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO meeting, Jomtien, Thailand, March 1990)

2 The New Delhi Declaration and Framework for Action for the Nine High Population Countries in December 1993 have given great impulse in this respect (New Delhi, India, December 1993).

3 The International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century set up by UNESCO under the chairmanship of Mr Jacques Delors, President of the European Commission, is currently reflecting on the new roles of education and new demands made on education in a world of accelerating economic, environmental, and social change. The Report of the Commission, due in early 1995, will provide directions to reorient education to meet the goals of Social Development. UNESCO's biennial World Education Report will continue to monitor and survey the trends in education and identify emerging challenges

New education programmes should contribute to evolving a **new approach to employment and work**, as part of the broader concept of “**active life**” which should be the basic principle underlying the organization of work and leisure in society.

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

4 UNESCO's programmes such as UNEVOC, Science 2000, UNITWIN and UNESCO Chairs are designed in pursuance of this goal. It has also encouraged setting up regional and international networks of scholars and research institutions in education, physical and biological sciences, social sciences, culture and communication. UNESCO has launched a series of World Science Report, published biennially; the first Report was issued in February 1994.

5 UNESCO's efforts contributed to the linking of the two concepts of “culture” and “development”. The 1982 MONDIACULT held in Mexico elaborated that principle. During the present World Decade for Cultural Development, UNESCO is propagating this orientation. The World Commission on Culture and Development set up by UNESCO and the United Nations under the chairmanship of Mr Javier Pérez de Cuéllar is working on both urgent and long-term proposals to meet cultural needs in the context of development. Its Report, due in 1995, should contribute towards the pursuit of this goal.

B

Development of rural areas

To improve the quality of life of rural populations and also prevent emigration at its roots actions should, in rural zones, particularly focus on (i) formal and non-formal education facilities; (ii) promotion of productive employment, including areas such as handicrafts and cultural and eco-tourism; (iii) development of indigenous cultures; (iv) utilization of armies' facilities for social development efforts, such as improved health services and infrastructure building; (v) promotion of building local-material-based shelter for all; (vi) decentralization of the management of education and social services at municipal level.

C

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

6. UNESCO's governing organs have repeatedly emphasized this point. Through the recently held meetings in Montevideo (1990), Prague (1991), Tunis (1992) and Montreal (1993), UNESCO has evolved a Plan of Action on Education for Human Rights and Democracy. It was endorsed by the UN World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna (June 1993). UNESCO is the lead Agency and promotes various activities for the International Year of Tolerance (1995).

D

Efforts should be redoubled, as a follow-up of Agenda 21 and in other contexts, to promote **environmental awareness and people's participation in the rational use of resources for sustainable human development**. Policies to eliminate poverty – a factor of environmental deterioration – are necessary for sustainable development. Decreasing the impact of natural hazards (especially the recurrent ones) is extremely important for social development. Research and training on the Man-Nature relationship in different parts of the world should be carried out in a transdisciplinary framework .

E

Communication and information resources and infrastructures are essential for fostering individual and social awareness and attitudinal change, as well as for promoting social dialogue, integration and cohesion. To enhance their impact and contribution to the process of social development, communication must be improved world-wide, especially through the use of new information communication technologies. In this regard, countries should elaborate comprehensive media and information policies⁷.

- 7 The Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the Management of Social Transformations (MOST), as well as the inter-institutional and intersectoral project on "Education and information on environment, population and human development", are examples of UNESCO's transdisciplinary approaches to environmental issues.
- 8 Investment in developing and strengthening communication capacities, increasing access to information sources and providing people with knowledge, skills, and opportunities to articulate their concerns are important areas of UNESCO's work through its International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). UNESCO will bring out an updated version of its World Communication Report in 1996.

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

F

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

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- 9 UNESCO has launched a programme, MOST (Management of Social Transformations), to respond to the growing demand from the developing countries and the countries-in-transition for the building up of endogenous capabilities in social sciences and for assisting them in the monitoring of social change and transition. MOST develops interdisciplinary and comparative projects on social policy, social experiments and social analysis in different parts of the world