

World Conference on Higher Education

Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century Vision and Action

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Volume I

Final Report

Summary of the World Declaration on Higher Education

1. Higher education shall be **equally accessible** to all on the basis of merit, in keeping with Article 26.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As a consequence, no discrimination can be accepted in granting access to higher education on grounds of race, gender, language, religion or economic, cultural or social distinctions, or physical disabilities.

2. The core missions of higher education systems (to educate, to train, to undertake research and, in particular, to contribute to the sustainable development and improvement of society as a whole) should be preserved, reinforced and further expanded, namely **to educate highly qualified graduates and responsible citizens** and to provide opportunities (espaces ouverts) **for higher learning and for learning throughout life**. Moreover, higher education has acquired an unprecedented role in present-day society, as a vital component of cultural, social, economic and political development and as a pillar of endogenous capacity-building, the consolidation of human rights, sustainable development, democracy and peace, in a context of justice. It is the duty of higher education to ensure that the values and ideals of a culture of peace prevail.

3. Higher education institutions and their personnel and students should preserve and develop their crucial functions, through the exercise of ethics and scientific and intellectual rigour in their various activities. They should also enhance their **critical and forward-looking** function, through the ongoing analysis of emerging social, economic, cultural and political trends, providing a focus for forecasting, warning and prevention. For this, they should enjoy full **academic autonomy and freedom**, while being fully responsible and **accountable** to society.

4. **Relevance in higher education should be assessed in terms of the fit between what society expects of institutions and what they do**. For this, institutions and systems, in particular in their reinforced relations with the world of work, should **base their long-term orientations on societal aims and needs, including the respect of cultures and environment protection**. Developing entrepreneurial skills and initiatives should become

major concerns of higher education. Special attention should be paid to higher education's role of service to society, especially activities aimed at eliminating poverty, intolerance, violence, illiteracy, hunger, environmental degradation and disease, and to activities aiming at the development of peace, through an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach.

5. Higher education is part of a seamless system, starting with early childhood and primary education and continuing through life. The contribution of higher education to the development of the whole education system and the reordering of **its links with all levels of education, in particular with secondary education, should be a priority**. Secondary education should both prepare for and facilitate access to higher education as well as offer broad training and prepare students for active life.

6. **Diversifying** higher education models and recruitment methods and criteria is essential both to meet demand and to give students the rigorous background and training required by the twenty-first century. Learners must have an optimal range of choice and the acquisition of knowledge and know-how should be viewed in a **lifelong perspective**, based on flexible entry and exit points within the system.

7. **Quality in higher education is a multi-dimensional concept**, which should embrace all its functions and activities: teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, infrastructure and the academic environment. Particular attention should be paid to **the advancement of knowledge through research**. Higher education institutions in all regions should be committed to **transparent internal and external evaluation**, conducted openly by independent specialists. However, due attention should be paid to specific institutional, national and regional contexts in order to take into account diversity and **to avoid uniformity**. There is a perceived need for a new vision and paradigm of higher education, which should be student-oriented. To achieve this goal, curricula need to be recast so as to go beyond simple cognitive mastery of disciplines and include the acquisition of skills, competencies and abilities for communication, creative and critical analysis, independent thinking and team work in multicultural contexts.

8. A vigorous policy of **staff development** is an essential element for higher education institutions. Clear policies should be established concerning **higher education teachers**, so as to update and improve their skills, with stimulus for constant

innovation in curriculum, teaching and learning methods, and with an appropriate professional and financial status, and for **excellence in research and teaching**, reflecting the corresponding provisions of the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel approved by the General Conference of UNESCO in November 1997.

9. National and institutional decision-makers should place **students** and their needs at the centre of their concerns and should consider them as major partners and responsible stakeholders in the renewal of higher education. Guidance and counselling services should be developed, in co-operation with student organizations, to take account of the needs of ever more diversified categories of learners. Students who do drop out should have suitable opportunities to return to higher education if and when appropriate. Institutions should educate students to become well-informed and deeply motivated citizens, who can think critically, analyse problems of society, look for solutions to the problems of society, apply them and accept social responsibilities.

10. Measures must be taken or reinforced to ensure **the participation of women in higher education**, in particular at the decision-making level and in all disciplines in which they are under-represented. Further efforts are required to eliminate all gender stereotyping in higher education. To overcome obstacles and to enhance the access of women to higher education remains an urgent priority in the renewal process of systems and institutions.

11. The potential of **new information and communication technologies** for the renewal of higher education by extending and diversifying delivery, and by making knowledge and information available to a wider public should be fully utilized. Equitable access to these should be assured through international co-operation and support to countries that lack capacities to acquire such tools. Adapting these technologies to national, regional and local needs and securing technical, educational, management and institutional systems to sustain them should be a priority.

12. Higher education should be considered as a **public service**. While diversified sources of funding, private and public, are necessary, **public support for higher education and research remains essential** to ensure a balanced achievement of its educational and social missions. Management and financing in higher education should be instruments to improve quality and relevance. This requires the development of appropriate planning and policy-analysis capacities and strategies, based on **partnerships** between higher education institutions and responsible state authorities. Autonomy to manage internal affairs is necessary, but with clear and transparent accountability to society.

13. The **international dimension** of higher education is an inherent part of its quality. **Networking**, which has emerged as a major means of action, should be based on **sharing, solidarity and equality** among partners. The "brain drain" has yet to be stemmed, since it continues to deprive the developing countries and those in transition, of the high-level expertise necessary to accelerate their socio-economic progress. Priority should be given to training programmes in the developing countries, in centres of excellence forming regional and international networks, with short periods of specialized and intensive study abroad.

14. Regional and international normative instruments for the recognition of studies and diplomas should be ratified and implemented, including certification of skills, competencies and abilities of graduates, making it easier for students to change courses, in order to facilitate mobility within and between national systems.

15. Close **partnership** amongst all stakeholders - national and institutional policy-makers, governments and parliaments, the media, teaching and related staff, researchers, students and their families, the world of work, community groups - is required in order to set in train a movement for the in-depth reform and renewal of higher education.

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FOREWORD

For the world of education, science and culture, the dates from 5 to 9 October 1998 will go down in history as the period of the first-ever World Conference on Higher Education. Representatives of 182 States responsible for education and higher education, teachers, researchers, students, members of parliament, representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations from various sectors of society, the world of work and business, financial organizations, publishing houses, etc. - in all more than 4,000 participants - have come to Paris to discuss matters of higher education and to agree on the higher education we need for the next century: for whom, with whom, and why, for what kind of society and what kind of world.

No conference convened until now by UNESCO has brought together such a large number of participants nor - I believe I can safely say - has represented society as fully as this World Conference on Higher Education. These past five days have seen the largest international gathering on higher education held this century.

The interest shown by such widely different circles from across the world in the work of the Conference is the expression of a clear realization of the growing importance of education, and in particular of higher education, for the destiny of humankind and society itself. In a world in which inequalities between nations and countries are growing more acute, where economic considerations dominate and the absolute power of money and the pursuit of profit at all costs brush aside ethical values and all sense of human solidarity, and where violence, far from retreating, proliferates in various and often hitherto unknown forms, and thus constitutes a real threat to civil and international peace, all education systems, and higher education in particular, are directly challenged.

It is no longer necessary to demonstrate the importance of education and higher education for sustainable, endogenous development, for democracy and peace, for a strengthening of the defence of peace as a human value, and for the respect and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The far-reaching changes now taking place in the world, and the entry of human values into a society based on knowledge and information, reveal how overwhelmingly important education and higher education are. It is appropriate to note, as the head of the one of the delegations to the Conference has said, that "science and education are what will determine the future well-being of individuals and of nations." And it is above all within the framework of higher education that science and education meet, unite and stimulate one another, by advancing and disseminating knowledge. Because one of the tasks of higher education is to educate the educators, to further research into education and to make recommendations about the content, methods and organization of education at each of its different levels and in its various forms, higher education has a decisive contribution to make to the progress of the educational task within society towards lifelong education for all.

When I opened this Conference, I expressed the wish that we might make the completion of the long process of preparation for it a new beginning, that we might gather its harvest in order the better to use it, like food and seed, and that our Conference might plant the seeds of better education for the twenty-first century.

And that is what the Conference has done. It has answered the questions that were asked of it. It has set the direction needed to prepare higher education for the tasks that await it in the twenty-first century, and to help humankind, society and the community of nations to stride out towards a better future, towards a world more just, more humane, more caring and more peaceful. The Conference has established the principles and determined the ways of achieving this in the texts of the World Declaration and the Framework for Priority Action adopted at the close of its deliberations.

Several factors have come together to enable the Conference, despite different national and regional situations, to adopt texts of particular importance, which concern all participants. It

is the result of the work of five regional conferences, which took place in Havana, Dakar, Tokyo, Palermo and Beirut between 1996 and 1998. It is the result of the reflections and the commitment of vice-chancellors and presidents, and of the teachers, staff and students of universities and other institutions of higher education. It is also, and above all, the result of active and constructive enrolment by a number of States in various regions and by many intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the process of the development of draft declarations and action plans in particular within the framework of the two stages of consultation which preceded the Conference. It is largely the result of participants' commitment to opening up ways of renewing and transforming higher education in the direction that the history and development of the world require. It is the result of the will and the remarkable spirit of cooperation that everyone has shown throughout this Conference. Lastly, it is the result of the objective fact that, in the field of higher education, there is greater convergence and a greater community of problems, trends, challenges and concerns than national and regional differences and specificities would suggest, although the problems confronting many developing countries are more serious and more urgent than those experienced by the industrialized countries.

In their scope, in their global vision of the problems of higher education and in their constructive approach, the texts adopted by this first World Conference are probably without precedent.

This Conference has provided a forum for a wealth of debates and exchanges of views, and I should like to raise here some of the main ideas which have emerged from them.

The Conference was unanimous in considering that a **renewal** of higher education is essential for the whole of society to be able to face up to the challenges of the twenty-first century, to ensure its intellectual independence, to create and advance knowledge, and to educate and train responsible, enlightened citizens and qualified specialists, without whom no nation can progress economically, socially, culturally or politically.

As the Declaration of the World Conference emphasizes, since society is "increasingly **knowledge-based** (...), higher education and research now act as essential components of cultural, socio-economic and environmentally sustainable development of individuals, communities and nations." The development of higher education must therefore feature among the highest national priorities.

It is now clear that, to fulfil its mission, **higher education must change** radically, by becoming organically flexible, and at the same time more diverse in its institutions, its structures, its curricula, and the nature and forms of its programmes and delivery systems, and by mastering the information technologies which can help it achieve its purpose. Higher education must anticipate the developing needs of society and individuals, and it must be open to the needs of adults for continuing education and the updating of their knowledge and skills, whether in the pursuit of retraining, redeployment or cultural improvement in general. In short, **higher education in the twenty-first century must be seen to be part of the global project of continuing education for all**, it must become the motivating force of that project, the place where it all happens, and it must help to integrate into that project all other levels and forms of education by strengthening its links with them.

One central question which was present throughout the debates, and which is closely related to the preceding one, is that of **access** to higher education. This principle has been clearly defined by the World Declaration, which was itself inspired by the great prescriptive texts of the United Nations and above all by Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.¹ "Admission to higher education," the Declaration of the World Conference stipulates, "should be founded on the merit, capacity, efforts, perseverance and devotion showed by those seeking

¹ "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and **higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.**" (Article 26 (1)).

access to it, and can take place in a lifelong scheme, at any time, with due recognition of previously acquired skills". **The concern for equity** in this respect, strongly emphasized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), as **the first principle** governing access to higher education, is vigorously reaffirmed by the World Conference in its Declaration. It is the duty of all States, and of all those who have taken part in the Conference, to work, with the support of UNESCO, to promote the relevant provisions of the Declaration through legislative and national regulatory channels and through actual educational practice.

All citizens must be aware that, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is the merit and effort of the individual which should determine access to higher education. Anyone who possesses the "merit" and the means may be admitted to higher education, and is expected to contribute financially to the institution providing it; anyone who possesses the "merit" but not the means may be admitted to higher education, but society provides for its financing; lastly, anyone who possesses the means but not the "merit" must endeavour to acquire the "merit" and to have it recognized in order to enter higher education, which thus becomes a permanent space for higher learning. From élite-based to merit-based: these words accurately express, in my opinion, the new face of higher education.

Beyond these general principles governing access, the debates revealed particular emphasis on certain points. Above all, the importance of continuing and intensifying our efforts to extend and improve access for women to all areas of higher education, especially to scientific and technological studies, to teaching positions in higher education and to management responsibilities.

Another point concerning equity and social justice emerges from the discussions of the Conference. Economic, social and educational measures are needed throughout the educational careers of children and young people from underprivileged backgrounds and modest circumstances to enable them to acquire the necessary preparations for access to and success in higher education.

Lastly, Conference participants were clearly inspired by this same concern when they recommended appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination and to overcome the inequalities concerning access to higher education suffered by the disabled, minorities, refugees and peoples displaced following natural disasters or conflicts.

The question of access takes on a new dimension as we approach the twenty-first century, which will necessarily transform higher education and see the implementation of lifelong learning for all. The popularization of higher education, frequently mentioned during the debates, is only one manifestation of a marked trend, already well-established in the industrialized countries, and which appears to be irreversible in the long term. It is interesting to note in this respect that gross enrolment ratios in higher education in developed regions had already reached almost 60 per cent by 1995, and in North America 84 per cent. Overall, in developing countries, enrolment ratios rose between 1960 and 1995 from 1.8 per cent to 8.9 per cent and teacher numbers in the same period increased by a factor of more than eleven, revealing growth rates much higher than those observed in the developed countries. It should be added in this respect that these figures take only partially into account those adults taking various non-traditional post-secondary courses offered by establishments of higher education and other public or private organizations.

Several factors combine to produce this spectacular development in higher education. The expansion of secondary education is one of the most prominent. Although it has not reached the growth rates of higher education, secondary education is growing at a pace no less significant. Between 1960 and 1995, its student numbers worldwide increased from 91 million to 372 million, and gross enrolment ratios at secondary level doubled, from 29 per cent to 58 per cent. In the developed countries, where enrolment ratios have reached 99 per cent, secondary education has become almost universal. In developing countries during the same period, student numbers were multiplied by 6.7 and gross enrolment ratios have almost tripled. Everywhere, numbers of young graduates of secondary education have increased relentlessly.

However, in very many countries, most students in the secondary sector are concentrated in general subject areas where curriculum content too often continues to be designed solely to prepare students for entry into higher education. This leads many young people, on completion of their secondary studies, to move into higher education simply because they have not been prepared to enter the world of work. Not possessing any other skills, those graduates of secondary education who, for one reason or another, do not enter higher education are confronted with the risk of unemployment.

This situation, the far-reaching changes which higher education needs to undergo and the prospect of lifelong learning for all (which implies the possibility of lifelong access to higher education at any age, to supplement or bring up to date students' general or specialized skills, and/or to retrain or acquire new skills), create the need to reconsider the overall design of secondary education. The secondary sector must have a **twofold objective**: to prepare for the world of work and at the same time to prepare for the entry into higher education. This twofold objective will enable us to define the spirit and content of secondary education for the twenty-first century, its diversification and the role at this level of education of technical and vocational training.

The combined effect of the expansion of secondary education, the steady increase in the number and the proportion of jobs and professional activities which require high-level knowledge and skills, and the continuing increase in the need for higher studies and advanced learning, for updating knowledge, retraining and redeployment, is that, in the more or less long term according to country, practically everyone will undergo, at some time or other in life and probably more than once, post-secondary higher education in one form or another. In this sense, it is possible to speak of a trend towards the generalization of higher education, which will be supported and facilitated by a better mastery of information and communication technologies and increasingly broad use of these. This generalization will not result in a direct transition for all from secondary to higher education. It will be achieved using increasingly diversified methods, at different times in life, through curricula with different purposes, access routes and durations, and which will be increasingly varied, with studies within an institutionalized framework alternating with self-teaching and other forms of learning.

It is with this future in view that access to higher education will be widened, popularized and made more equitable, and efforts will be made to promote equal opportunities for success in higher studies.

The necessary transition of higher education into a space for higher learning in which everyone will be able to enjoy more flexible access at any age for intensive training, updating knowledge and the acquisition of new skills, or for the purposes of redeployment, constitutes one of the main aspects of the democratization and the renovation of higher education and education in general. At the same time, this development will make higher education an ideal meeting-place for the sharing of knowledge and the mutual enrichment of teachers at all levels.

Two other key ideas appear to me to deserve mention at this point: that of **the mission** of higher education, and that of how it should be opened up to the whole of society as a means of promoting **interaction** between the principal social actors and the main sectors of the economy.

As regards the mission of higher education, the debates have shown that it needs to be widened. Beyond its **traditional functions of teaching, training, research and study, all of which remain fundamental**, many heads of delegation made a point of asserting the importance of the educational mission of higher education, which consists in **promoting development of the whole person and training responsible, informed citizens, committed to working for a better society in the future**. Higher education also has a **contribution to make to the solution of the major problems of planetary, regional and local importance** (poverty, homelessness, worsening inequalities, environmental degradation, etc.), and to work to promote development, the sharing of knowledge, solidarity, the universal respect of human rights, democracy, equality of rights between women and men and a culture of peace and non-violence. The Conference stressed very strongly **the cultural and ethical mission** of higher

education, which, in the age in which we live, is one of the highest priorities of education in general.

On the vast subject of **the interaction of higher education with society**, I will confine myself here to mentioning, briefly, three points. The first relates to the relationship between higher education and the State, and society as a whole. The Conference has reaffirmed, as the essential condition enabling higher education to fulfil its mission, that institutional **autonomy** and **academic freedoms** must be guaranteed and respected by the State and society. The **corollary** is the duty placed on institutions of higher education **to account** to society for their activities and the use of the resources placed at their disposal. In this context also, the responsibility of the State for the financing of higher education as an essential public service, as well as the need for society to support it, were strongly reaffirmed by a number of speakers. At the same time, they emphasized the importance for institutions of higher education of securing additional sources of financing, implementing revenue-generating activities, strengthening their management, adopting forward-looking management practices to that end and using their resources in a more rational and more effective way. These positions are clearly emphasized in the Declaration of the Conference. The question of **financing** will clearly be **one of the major challenges** of the years to come.

This problem is particularly acutely felt in many developing countries, and measures aimed solely at reinforcing management and using resources more rationally will not be sufficient to solve it. A revision of national budget priorities also deserves to be envisaged. Other measures are necessary in order to make it possible for developing countries to release additional resources for education and for the solution of many social problems.²

Another major point which was widely commented upon relates to the interaction between higher education and **the world of work**. It is important that this interaction be conceived as a **partnership, a relationship of equals**, not as the subordination of one to the other. I would like to quote here Mr Lionel Jospin, Prime Minister of France, who challenged "the mercantile attitude whereby [higher education] could be market-led. (...) In this field, as in others," he declared, "the market economy is a fact of life within which we act. But it should not form the horizon of society. The market is an instrument; it is not the *raison-d'être* of democracy".

* * *

One of the speakers said in his contribution that **student enrolment in the business of higher education** is healthy, even though it may sometimes be "noisy". The Conference heard an **important declaration** from the representative of student organizations. That declaration expressed students' awareness of their responsibility for their studies, but also their responsibility for society and in society. This is good to hear, and we should make the point strongly that their participation, and that of their organizations, in everything that relates to higher education, are essential.

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In adopting its Declaration and the Framework for Priority Action, the World Conference has laid the foundations that will **guide the development of national higher education**

² The resources of many developing countries are to a large extent mortgaged by the burden of debt servicing and repayment. In 27 countries, debt exceeds GDP. Between 1990 and 1995, the countries of sub-Saharan Africa devoted on average 12 billion dollars per annum to debt repayment, whereas their total levels of indebtedness increased by 33 billion dollars. Some of these countries devote to debt repayment amounts practically equivalent to the totality of the government aid they receive for their development. In adopting at its twenty-fifth session the International Development Strategy for the Second Development Decade, the General Assembly of the United Nations fixed the objective for official development assistance by the industrialized countries at 0.70 per cent of their GNP. This objective of solidarity, since then confirmed several times, is far from having been achieved. In an interdependent world, solidarity is not only an ethical requirement. It is also a political necessity.

policies for the next century. The Conference has also promoted the emergence of an alliance between the university and educational communities and their principal partners within society. Parliaments, as the voice of the people, have an important role to play in consolidating this alliance and in making it widely known and effective. The time has now come for action, and I am pleased to note, as I meet with heads of state and government, ministers of education and higher education, and Permanent Delegates to UNESCO, that in their efforts to design and implement higher education reforms, Member States are beginning to draw inspiration from the orientations contained in the texts adopted by the World Conference.

Much will now depend on the speed of reaction of all those in the alliance - individuals and institutions - who must work together to promote change in higher education. UNESCO took the initiative of launching the process which led to the World Conference. UNESCO will do its best **to ensure**, in close cooperation with higher education authorities and the IGOs and NGOs concerned, **that the actions now to be undertaken are pursued as effectively as possible**. For my part, I have already taken a series of measures within the Organization to ensure that follow-up action to the World Conference will be given all necessary impetus.

We stand at the beginning of a new century and a new millennium. It is symbolic that they should have been preceded by the **International Year for the Culture of Peace**, which will be immediately followed by the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), both proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations. In the Declaration adopted by the World Conference, the point is made that "on the threshold of a new millennium, it is the duty of higher education to ensure that the values and the ideals of a culture of peace prevail". It is of the greatest importance that, true to their humanistic traditions and to their vocations, institutions of higher education the world over, their teachers, students and organizations, should be among the most active and the most committed of all those who will mark the Year and the International Decade by their efforts to promote a culture of peace and non-violence. May this Year and this Decade serve in particular to implement long-term programmes of action for solidarity, one of the fundamental values of a culture of peace, to the benefit of the institutions, teachers and students of the developing countries.

Federico Mayor

INTRODUCTION

In convening the World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, 5-9 October 1998), UNESCO's objective was to lay down the fundamental principles for the in-depth reform of higher education systems throughout the world. In our complex and rapidly changing global society, higher education must contribute to the building of peace founded on a process of development and predicated on equity, justice, solidarity and liberty. To attain this objective, access on the basis of merit, the renovation of systems and institutions, and service to society, including closer links to the world of work, must be the basis of renewal and renovation in this level of education. This requires that higher education enjoy autonomy and freedom exercised with responsibility.

When calling the Conference, Federico Mayor, the Director-General of UNESCO, had in mind that this initiative should contribute to transforming higher education, in its material and virtual manifestations, into an environment for lifelong learning, for cultural debate, for the affirmation and safeguarding of diversity, and for forging and confirming the values and principles laid down in the constitution of UNESCO for "the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind".

The analysis made by ministers and heads of delegations during the conference, the positive comments of the Executive Board of UNESCO immediately after the World Conference and the actions being taken all over the world by governments to include the principles of the Declaration in their policy statements and decisions concerning higher education show that the Conference gave the international community a powerful instrument to facilitate the reform of higher education.

The basis for these initiatives lies in the principle that higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit, in keeping with Article 26.1 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. As accepted by all participants at the conference, no discrimination can be accepted in granting access to higher education on grounds of race, gender, language, religion or economic, cultural or social distinctions, or physical disabilities.

The core missions of higher education - to educate, to train, to undertake research and to provide services to the community - must be preserved, reinforced and further expanded. The World Conference stressed that higher education institutions must seek to educate qualified graduates who are responsible citizens and to provide opportunities for higher learning throughout life. At the end of this century, we can see the devastating effects of a concept of economic development based on speculation. Thus, the adoption by the international community of a document stating clearly that higher education institutions must preserve their critical functions in the interest of democracy is timely and this must be taken seriously by policy-makers.

Relevance cannot be an abstract concept. As the Conference declared, relevance "should be assessed in terms of the fit between what society expects of institutions and what they do". In particular, relationships with the world of work should be based on long-term orientations and societal aims and needs, as well as on respect for cultures and environmental protection. Relevance means also a better integration of higher education into the whole education system: The Conference insisted on "the reordering of its links with all levels of education, in particular with secondary education" as a priority.

The search for quality is indispensable for a policy based on merit. But quality must be linked in a given context to relevance and to the solution of problems of the community, and assessments of quality should embrace all functions and activities of higher education. In this the role of research is especially essential. This will be the main subject of the World Conference on Science that UNESCO is organizing (July 1999, Budapest). Research must be enhanced in all disciplines as an instrument for the advancement of knowledge through approaches reinforcing interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity and innovation. In the follow-up of both world conferences, we

would like to see the expansion and networking of Centres and Chairs on Higher Education and on Science Policy in each region.

The Conference statements regarding the role of staff, in particular teachers, the importance of the involvement of students in the decision process and the measures that should be taken or reinforced to ensure the participation of women in higher education, constitute essential points of these documents and must serve as a guide to policy-makers and to all who have responsibilities in their implementation.

Finally, a key philosophical point but with concrete impact is the statement made by the Conference that higher education should be considered as a public good. Equally important is the affirmation that the international dimension of higher education is an inherent part of its quality. UNESCO gave the example with the launching of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme and its work on the recognition of studies, degrees and diplomas, based on close partnership, solidarity and co-operation among equals.

As stated in the preamble of the Declaration, the second half of this century will go down in the history of higher education as the period of its most spectacular expansion. The analysis of the implications of this reality was made by the UNESCO Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education launched in 1995. This document showed also that as we come to the end of the twentieth century, there are still flagrant inequalities in higher education, and a growing gap between the industrialized countries and the so-called developing countries.

In convening the World Conference on Higher Education, UNESCO reaffirmed its strong 50-year-old commitment to fostering the development of higher education and research. The Conference sought to generate a broad debate on higher education to complement other major conferences in the field of education that constitute landmarks in the process of its renewal, notably the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990), the 45th session of the International Conference on Education on the Role of Teachers in a Changing World (Geneva, 1996) and the International Conference on Adult Education (Hamburg, 1997). In addition, the World Conference reiterated the recommendations relating to the opening up of higher education of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, *Learning: The Treasure Within* (1996).

The Conference was preceded by a widespread mobilization of partners, of national policy-makers, institutional leaders, the professorate and researchers, including those involved in the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, the student community, and the economic and professional sectors as well as the civil society, including parliamentarians.

Regional Conferences were held in Havana in November 1996 (Latin America and the Caribbean), Dakar in April 1997 (Africa), Tokyo in July 1997 (Asia and the Pacific), Palermo in September 1997 (Europe) and Beirut in March 1998 (Arab States). The results of these conferences, their declarations and their plans of action were taken into consideration in the preparation of the documents adopted at the World Conference and were included in this report. The findings of these conferences were also utilized for the working documents and constituted the main base for the discussions of the Commissions of the Conference on relevance, quality, management and financing, and international co-operation. They confirmed that we are now facing global problems that call for solutions to be applied worldwide, even though in every region there are variations in the economic, social, cultural and political context. UNESCO will publish a series of documents, including one on the work of the Commissions.

The results of the regional conferences were complemented by studies and analyses undertaken by some fifty governmental and non-governmental organizations charged with preparing a series of thematic debates on important issues on higher education at the end of this century. Twelve debates were structured in relation with three main domains:

Higher education and development

- The requirements of the world of work
- Higher education and sustainable human development
- Contributing to national and regional development
- Higher education staff development: a continuing mission

New trends and innovations in higher education

- Higher education for a new society: a student vision
- From traditional to virtual: the new information technologies
- Higher education and research: challenges and opportunities
- The contribution of higher education to the education system as a whole

Higher education, culture and society

- Women and higher education: issues and perspectives
- Promoting a culture of peace
- Mobilizing the power of culture
- Autonomy, social responsibility and academic freedom

The Thematic Debates raised a great interest among Conference participants. Their results will be disseminated separately.

In addition to the commissions and thematic debates, a series of special lectures and at plenary sessions speeches from ministers and chiefs of delegation reported on what is happening in their countries in the field of higher education and expressed their position on the themes of the conference. The Ministers addressed the following issues:

- The changing missions of higher education in the twenty-first century
- Interaction of higher education with society
- The impact of the change process on higher education, diversification and increased flexibility of systems, and their promotion of lifelong learning
- Access to higher education

All these contributions were taken into consideration in the final version of the Declaration and Framework for Action as well as the comments of all Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations with an interest in higher education, or invited to attend the Conference.

There is no doubt that the documents the participants adopted at the end of the conference, the "World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action" and the "Framework for Priority Action for Change and Development of Higher Education" represent an agreement between all stakeholders concerning the principal and key actions needed for the renewal of higher education in the twenty-first century. Now comes the time for action, for the execution of projects, for developing international co-operation based on solidarity and the building of an equitable society, in particular through research, training of specialists and community projects aiming at eliminating poverty, violence, illiteracy, hunger, intolerance, environmental degradation and disease, and the development of a culture of peace.

The World Declaration and the Framework for Priority Action will help set up the agenda both for higher education policy-making in Member States and for development strategies to be established or further strengthened by UNESCO and its partners.

As a result of the Conference process, a new coalition between the higher education community and its major partners has emerged. Contacts with Chiefs of states, Ministers of Education and Higher Education and delegates to UNESCO showed clearly that they have already started to utilize these documents in the implementation of reforms in higher education.

The long-term outcome of the Conference will be the efficient and effective renovation and renewal of higher education systems and institutions based on the principles of relevance and quality, and with a commitment to enhanced international co-operation and academic solidarity.

Much now depends on the dynamism of the coalition of all those - individuals and institutions - involved in the process of change in higher education. UNESCO took the responsibility of launching the process which culminated with the World Conference. UNESCO will make its best efforts to ensure an efficient follow-up, jointly with higher education authorities, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations interested in higher education.

ORAL REPORT

by Ms Suzy Halimi, Rapporteur-General,

at the closing ceremony of the
World Conference on Higher Education
(Friday, 9 October 1998)

Distinguished Ministers,
Mr President of the General Conference,
Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board,
Mr Director-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour as Rapporteur-General to offer you a synoptic account of the statements and addresses we have heard, of the analyses and critical considerations that have been expressed in the commissions and during the thematic debates, of the expectations and demands that have been formulated, and, finally, of the commitments made regarding the new vision which we have together forged for higher education. Allow me, therefore, to convey my wholehearted gratitude for this token of your trust.

This Conference has been attended by some 4,000 delegates and observers: representatives of Member States, to be sure, but also of a whole range of international organizations, institutions and agencies, as well as by all those who, in civil society, are involved in higher education - universities, academics and students, regional authorities, the private sector, associations, businesses and the world of work. This major international gathering has been the culmination of an ambitious project, of a process which began hesitantly but has continued to harness energies throughout its momentum-gathering course. The stimulating working documents that have been prepared for us, the insights we have contributed during the deliberations, the draft Declaration and draft Framework for Action we have examined and refined during the past week, have enabled us to reach a critical consensus, which is the hallmark of UNESCO. The fact that the Conference has taken place on the very eve of the third millennium, with all the challenges, uncertainties and promises pertaining thereto, can only extend its impact and raise the expectations which have been placed in it.

I should like in particular to highlight the fact that our World Conference has successfully combined policy presentations, in-depth expert reports, democratic participation, and statements reflecting a range of cultural sensibilities around four major topics, namely, relevance, improvement of quality, the management and financing of higher education with a view to ensuring justice and equity, and, finally, international co-operation.

Four commissions have focused on these four critical areas, in order to take stock of the current situation and to assess the latest developments and achievements. Their deliberations have served to enhance approaches, compare viewpoints and consider together a number of priority areas for action. In addition, thematic debates, bringing together various panels, were devised, organized and directed by the main actors involved in higher education and research. Reflected therein was the desire to consolidate dialogue and to strengthen its validity. A number of powerful expectations were expressed, and precise demands were put forward. As a result, the Conference took on the form of an open learning forum, one that proposed, over and above the officially programmed activities, a profusion of initiatives reflecting the sheer multifariousness of higher education on the eve of the third millennium.

In a bid to reflect this profusion of ideas, including the ministers' own statements, I shall first sketch in the context in which this wide-ranging process of mutual consultation took place, then highlight the salient points which emerged from our joint reflection, grouping them together around the four themes that served to structure the whole: relevance, quality, management and international co-operation.

I. The Context

The future of higher education cannot be usefully addressed without first taking stock of the national, regional and international context in which it is called upon to fulfil its missions, be they traditional or novel.

A. Globalization

We must be fully alive to the fact that higher education can no longer be conceived solely in terms of national situations and criteria. Research and training that are worthy of the name cannot henceforth be conducted in purely local terms.

The general problems that have been itemized, mainly within the framework of the statements by ministers and heads of delegation, reveal that, beyond the various situations specific to a particular country or group of countries, there exists a growing trend for problems to become globalized, a trend characterized by the extreme complexity of the situations involved.

'It may well be that globalization, despite the differences of opinion which surround it, is today an inescapable fact of life', Prince Talal Bin Abdul Aziz suggested, at the opening meeting of our Conference. It might also, as Mr Portella, President of the General Conference of UNESCO, added, constitute an ethical challenge and a vast arena for international solidarity.

Globalization, it must be emphasized, means not only economic globalization; it is also the internationalization of human exchanges and the circulation of ideas. The present Conference is a living witness thereof, by virtue of the number and the calibre of its participants, as Mr Pál Pataki, Chairperson of the Executive Board, stressed.

Humankind is faced with a series of problems that cannot be solved within the framework of isolated policies. That is what prompted the French Prime Minister to refer to the 'new and stimulating context' in which higher education must today perform its many different functions, and ensure its own transformation.

B. Democratization

It should also be recalled, as the Director-General of UNESCO reminded us, that higher education is faced with an upsurge of democratization and an extension of the rule of law in virtually all societies. The role of education in general, and of higher education in particular, in promoting and preserving democracy, and in educating the young and the less young for democratic citizenship, is now generally acknowledged.

This development is also marked by the prominence won by women in decision-making processes. The struggle being waged for recognition of complete equality is not without its difficulties and even sufferings, but it offers a major challenge for higher education in the twenty-first century. Many speakers raised this issue, notably in the group devoted to the matter, which drew attention to the need to empower women and to adopt measures that would enable them to combine access to positions of responsibility in professional careers with the demands of family life.

C. The progress of science and technology

A further challenge lies in the latest achievements of science, the sine qua non of sustainable development, as was stressed in particular by the Islamic Republic of Iran and Switzerland - a situation which should not obscure the fact that the development of individual countries may also be a precondition for the development of science. The ethical issues raised by scientific research and its applications provide higher education with a vast field of study and futurology. These aspects aroused great interest among those taking part in the second thematic debate, who saw in them a means of responding to the complexity and changes typical of the end of the century.

The same is true - as noted by many speakers - of the place acquired by communication technologies in our societies, with the consequences that the invasion of virtual reality has inevitably had on the widening gaps between industrialized and post-industrial countries and developing countries. It would be wise, while taking the measure of the radical disruptions introduced by the new technologies into society and hence into education, to refrain from excessive optimism.

D. The environment

Optimism is equally out of place when it comes to the state of the planet that we shall be bequeathing to future generations. Higher education cannot withdraw into itself and turn a blind eye to the damage being done to the environment, damage that we deplore without managing fully to put right. Population growth and galloping urbanization are, of course, not unconnected with the serious problem of the ecological future of our planet. These matters were dwelt upon by several delegations, including that of Côte d'Ivoire.

E. Social exclusion

The decline of agriculture and industry - varying from country to country - and the progression of the service sector, which were referred to in the debate on 'The requirements of the world of work', give rise to a further challenge relating to the evolution of the economy and the structure of the job market. More and more sectors of the population are having to contend with social exclusion, and young graduates are themselves not spared by unemployment. This is undoubtedly the most acute problem facing us today: indeed, the entire enterprise of democratization and the values of our societies are being undermined by it. We must, as the Director-General of UNESCO urges us, dare to share. Here again, higher education undoubtedly has a role to play in developing new capacities for adapting to economic trends, with a view to ensuring greater social cohesion and strengthening democratic citizenship. If there is to be sharing within countries, as between countries, a number of conditions must be met: there must be a determination to promote and respect basic human rights, the political will to commit resources to human development, a deep sense of solidarity, and the mobilization of all institutional and financial partners in both the public and private sectors.

F. The brain drain

For many developing countries, the brain drain is a daunting problem. While it is indeed essential to maintain mobility - which is a source of intellectual enrichment - measures must also be taken to encourage nationals to return to their country of origin and to take part in its economic, social and cultural development. The students gave extensive coverage to this dimension during their round table, as well as on the occasion of the thematic debate on their vision of the form that a new society should take.

G. Armed conflicts

Our societies are, alas, plagued by many conflicts, the most serious being regional and national wars. The acts of violence perpetrated in many countries are symptomatic of the difficulty

experienced by citizens, including many youngsters, in finding their place in a new society in which most of the old standards have vanished and values are no longer perceptible. As the representatives of Costa Rica and India in particular pointed out, the University has a role to play in bringing about a culture of peace. Having faith in youth, and in particular in students, is a challenge that higher education must meet in all our countries.

Such, then, is the complex context in which we are called upon to work out a new vision for higher education. And a question immediately arises: can higher education take on new functions while remaining as it was before? This issue was raised by Brazil, and formed the focus of Thematic Debate No. 6. What challenges must it meet at the dawn of the third millennium?

II. The major challenges facing higher education in the twenty-first century

How could we fail to seize the opportunity afforded by this great international gathering to pinpoint, in the observations formulated, in the initiatives taken here and there, in the successes as well as in the setbacks, the major issues facing the higher education of today and tomorrow? We here encounter once again the four main lines of inquiry that have been selected to structure this World Conference and the various events that preceded it.

A. Relevance

We are first faced with the task of establishing a mass higher education system integrated into lifelong education. Several of those who took the floor, including the representative of Chile, noted and applauded the general interest shown today in higher education, not least by the major funding agencies - itself a sign of a change in attitude. Higher education is acknowledged to be a factor of development in a knowledge-based society and economy. Of course we still need to be in a position to provide as many young people as possible with relevant and high-quality training that gives them access to the job market and enables them subsequently to update their skills and knowledge.

We have just alluded to the need to open higher education to a broader student population. This assumes, as the representative of Indonesia and several other speakers pointed out, that real opportunities exist to respond to the growing demand for higher education in the different countries of the world. Admittedly, the mass provision of higher education is already a reality in a number of countries. Others have undertaken to move towards this objective, one that calls for co-operation and solidarity. We shall return to the matter in the final section of this report.

Everyone found that the experience of democratizing higher education runs up against the criterion of relevance. The discussions demonstrated that relevance is a dynamic concept, varying according to context and from one target group to another, with particular attention needing to be paid to minority groups. The issue of who decides what is relevant lay at the heart of the discussions in Commission II and was also debated in plenary. The representatives of Canada, Colombia, Egypt and the Islamic Republic of Iran drew particular attention to this dimension. It emerged, in our view, from the deliberations that relevance can only be the outcome of dialogue and consultation among the different partners concerned, including the students themselves.

B. Quality and its evaluation

The quality of higher education is judged mainly by the strength of the ethical and pedagogical principles it embodies. It is riven by a number of conflicts and paradoxes: the contradiction between the explosion and fragmentation of demand on the one hand and the unemployment which affects an ever growing number of graduates on the other; between the duty of equality and justice, and the financial constraints upon the mass extension of this form of education; and

finally, the conflict between ethical and moral obligations and the various incitements to misuse knowledge and discoveries. Faced with such tensions and paradoxes, higher education must develop a new vision, take advantage of its adaptability, flexibility and imaginative resources in order to develop problem-solving and forward-looking capacities, equip itself with an ever watchful critical spirit and promote teamwork, without ever jettisoning its role as ethical watchdog.

The issue of quality cannot be dissociated from the quest for excellence and the need to establish evaluation criteria. Many countries are calling for international quality standards. Such criteria and standards should take account of the diversity of situations. The need to develop a culture of evaluation is inseparable from the concept of quality, itself intimately bound up with the successful democratization of the higher education system.

C. Management and financing

These particular problems were the responsibility of Commission III.

Education can no longer be - and in many cases no longer is - confined to an ivory tower. The **sharing of responsibilities** with all partners, both inside and outside the university, is essential.

Within the institution, responsibilities belong to all users, teachers, researchers, students and administrative staff and, more widely, to all who have management and advisory functions. New forms of management which strengthen collective responsibility and transparency must be introduced.

Outside the institution, **the multiplicity of partners** is now an established fact: business enterprises, regional authorities created by the decentralization process and scientific research establishments independent of the university. Higher education has developed its relations with the economic world; gone are the days when the two camps ignored or found fault with one another. But in this partnership, higher education must be careful not to adopt a mercantile attitude, as firmly pointed out by the Prime Minister of France: the market is of course an inescapable fact of life, but its demands must not be allowed to predominate. This problem seems particularly acute in the countries in transition.

The partnership with industry and other sectors of society can also help to vocationalize higher education. Internships in industry have become routine in many countries, while many business managers are currently involved in higher education. In addition, consultative arrangements under which companies take part in the management of universities can be put in place, research projects can bring universities and businesses closer together and assistance in job seeking can be jointly envisaged. All this calls for a different approach on the part of business enterprises, corresponding to the recognition by universities of the need for change.

In the context of this complex and demanding style of management, **the autonomy of universities** and the exercise of academic freedoms must be respected. At the national level, the growing number of very diverse institutions needed to meet the changing trends in demand cannot be properly managed without flexible mechanisms and some degree of decentralization.

The supervisory function must be exercised through a policy of encouragement and support rather than restraint. It is the only way of developing forms of higher education that are better adapted to demand: open universities, private service providers of various kinds, distance-education systems, virtual campuses, shared multi-site networks, etc.

Of course the thematic debates took up the question of the resources offered by the **new information and communication technologies**, including the possibility of setting up virtual universities such as the United Nations University. The debate on this question was highly instructive and produced a number of interesting proposals. A video conference demonstration

illustrated the fundamental changes that are already taking place - and will continue to do so in the future - as a result of the transition from the traditional to the virtual. These changes affect the three main pillars of higher education, namely courses, laboratories and libraries. The speakers drew attention to the impact of these new technologies, without losing sight of the ethical, cultural and geopolitical dimensions involved in access to these tools, in the generation of knowledge and in its dissemination. The establishment of North/South and South/South co-operation was recommended so as to facilitate the access of all to these technologies, to strengthen endogenous capacities and to make universally available the knowledge thus produced.

Technologies cannot solve every problem. As the representative of Algeria stressed, special efforts must be made on behalf of women who, in many countries, are still excluded from higher education and left out of the decision-making processes of society. Technologies can help, but the genuine democratization of higher education also requires the removal of the socio-economic, cultural and political obstacles that hinder women's full access to education and their full social integration.

The **financing** of higher education remains a major problem at the dawn of the twenty-first century. The flexibility sought after - and already largely obtained - by the universities is not a reason for failing to be accountable; a method should be found, according to some speakers, including the representative of Swaziland, that both respects university autonomy and provides accountability; performance-related financing is one of the many ways of achieving that end. Whatever the case, there must be no violation of academic freedoms or of the basic principles underlying them.

In view of the development of higher education, the state cannot hope to be the sole or even the main source of financing for the sector as a whole. This view was shared by several speakers, including the representative of Morocco. But it in no way detracts from the state's responsibility for ensuring that higher education is adequately financed. The contractual system, as practised in France, which links higher education institutions and the ministry responsible for a four-year period, may enable the latter to determine the extent of its financial commitment but does not prevent the institution from seeking other partners. Numerous speakers, such as the representatives of Cape Verde and Mali, were concerned by the withdrawal of the state. Of course, it is obvious that the state alone cannot supply all the requisite financing, so it is advisable to create at the decision-making level an atmosphere conducive to greater diversification of funding sources for higher education. The solutions will be many and varied. In any event, an effort should be made to foster an entrepreneurial spirit in institutions which are striving to raise funds not only by traditional research and training activities but also by commercial or production operations. In yet other cases, we see the ever growing development of a private higher education sector. New ways of diversifying resources, resulting from a variety of pressures and opportunities, are continually emerging; UNESCO and other networks could play a useful role by disseminating them.

All these possibilities of diversification are fraught with dangers that must be avoided. The most serious of all is that of undermining equality of access to higher education. Private education, for instance, while leading to wider access than would otherwise be available, tends to be fee-paying and therefore enrolls fewer underprivileged students. Involvement by the state and the retention of a public service are still the best guarantee of equal opportunities and the democratization of higher education.

D. International co-operation

At this stage in the analysis of the major changes in higher education we feel it is necessary - and the texts we are to adopt so invite us - to accord greater importance to international experience, partnership and solidarity, which several delegations, including that of South Africa, supported.

The working documents setting out the experiences of institutions, countries and regions all stress the contribution of co-operation to greater solidarity and genuine peace. This co-operation is necessary not only to reinforce the quality, relevance and internal effectiveness of higher education, but also to build bridges between local and national partners and between nations.

The participants in Commission IV welcomed the ideas in the working document submitted to them and, at the initiative of the International Association of Universities, strongly urged that higher education should include among its primary missions international co-operation and the need to promote plurality of cultures, global awareness of problems and sustainable development throughout the world.

At the international level, the networking of higher education and research institutions under programmes such as the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme was highlighted as an innovative approach to national and institutional capacity-building in the developing countries.

The open-doors approach to learning and training which encourages academic mobility appeared to many developing countries, and to some non-governmental organizations and foundations, to be the sole preserve of the industrialized world. The developing countries are suffering from the brain drain, which is a sort of exile of 'intelligence', and from its adverse effects on their ability to strengthen their institutions and shape critical and creative citizens. Without automatically linking those trends, the Conference endorsed this concern and launched an appeal for the promotion of mobility, while assisting countries deprived of their experts to retain and motivate their specialists at home, or encourage them to return, by setting up North/South co-operative links between institutions, and by creating centres of excellence in the developing countries. TOKTEN and TALVEN, which were presented during the proceedings, are interesting examples in this context.

Several speakers backed the idea of launching an 'Academics without Frontiers' initiative, referred to in one of the working documents, and hoped that this possibility would be explored.

In connection with work that could be carried out jointly on quality, it should be recalled that many countries were in favour of drawing up international standards for the evaluation of quality, but with all due respect for the diversity and specificity of individual countries. More generally, noting that six intergovernmental committees are resolutely addressing the question of the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education, speakers felt that similar bodies should be set up to look into the evaluation of international co-operation. As pointed out by the representative of Morocco, it is crucial for UNESCO to commission an evaluation report on the forms and practices of such co-operation in relation to the specific needs of each region.

Emphasis should also be given to the task of providing expert advice and assistance in institutional capacity-building that falls to UNESCO in higher education, as in its other fields of competence. In addition, the participants requested UNESCO to continue its work on academic freedom, with particular attention to the follow-up to the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel adopted by the Organization at its General Conference in 1997. They also raised the question of a permanent study group to draw up a Universal Charter of Academic Freedoms.

Conclusion: a call to action

We have reached the end of the proceedings of the World Conference on Higher Education.

The texts we have just adopted are, for our governments, our higher education institutions, the non-governmental organizations, and all the partners here present, lines of action that we undertake to pursue in each of our countries and in the context of international co-operation.

However, this whole exercise, which has involved manifold consultations and has culminated in this international gathering, will have been in vain if it were to cease this evening.

Our first task will be to explain, and if necessary defend, and then to convince. In order to do so, the Declaration and Framework for Action must be widely distributed to those in charge of higher education, to academics, to all the specialists concerned, and to the many relevant institutions of civil society. In our home countries we will probably have to organize debates and set up working groups to look more deeply into particular aspects of the Declaration and Framework for Action, and to consider how the reforms can be put into practice.

Our texts do not stop there. They call for greater regional and international co-operation and active solidarity with countries that are lagging behind in development. We must make sure that in a few years' time we are not driven to the bitter conclusion that the divisions and gaps have widened even further, that still more skilled personnel from the countries of the South have headed into exile, thus diverting an essential and stimulating mobility from its true purpose, and that higher education in many countries is still unable to make an effective contribution to the development of the education system as a whole and to the quality of basic education.

That is why we must shape a new generation of models of co-operation, based on local needs, taking account of economic and social realities and cultural specificities, and providing advisory services and expertise without imposing conditions and without imposing themselves. Co-operating means working together to carry out co-ordinated action. That is what we are called upon to do.

As the work of this World Conference draws to a close, it is extremely important that the curtain should not fall, without lasting impact, on this vision of higher education in the twenty-first century. The concluding Declaration and Framework for Priority Action that we have adopted are there to call to action all those who have worked so intensely and constructively during this week of October 1998. It is up to them, in their own fields and with their own responsibilities, to make sure that these texts are followed up, so that together we can meet the challenges of the next millennium.

On concluding this report, I should like to thank the drafting group, the members of the UNESCO Secretariat and all those who have worked with me throughout the week. For their commitment, support and the pertinence of their contributions, and for the confidence you have placed in me by entrusting me with the uplifting task of Rapporteur-General of the Conference, may I offer you all my most sincere gratitude.

Suzy Halimi

World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action

and

Framework for Priority Action for Change and Development in Higher Education

adopted by the

World Conference on Higher Education

Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action

9 October 1998

World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action

Preamble

On the eve of a new century, there is an **unprecedented demand for and a great diversification in higher education, as well as an increased awareness of its vital importance for sociocultural and economic development**, and for building the future, for which the younger generations will need to be equipped with new skills, knowledge and ideals. Higher education includes 'all types of studies, training or training for research at the post-secondary level, provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent State authorities'.¹ Everywhere higher education is faced with great challenges and difficulties related to financing, equity of conditions at access into and during the course of studies, improved staff development, skills-based training, enhancement and preservation of quality in teaching, research and services, relevance of programmes, employability of graduates, establishment of efficient co-operation agreements and equitable access to the benefits of international co-operation. At the same time, higher education is being challenged by new opportunities relating to technologies that are improving the ways in which knowledge can be produced, managed, disseminated, accessed and controlled. Equitable access to these technologies should be ensured at all levels of education systems.

The second half of this century will go down in the history of higher education as the period of its most spectacular **expansion**: an over sixfold increase in student enrolments worldwide, from 13 million in 1960 to 82 million in 1995. But it is also the period which has seen the gap between industrially developed, **the developing countries and in particular the least developed countries** with regard to access and resources for higher learning and research, already enormous, becoming even wider. It has also been a period of increased socio-economic stratification and greater difference in educational opportunity within countries, including in some of the most developed and wealthiest nations. Without adequate higher education and research institutions providing a critical mass of skilled and educated people, no country can ensure genuine endogenous and sustainable development and, in particular, developing countries and least developed countries cannot reduce the gap separating them from the industrially developed ones. Sharing knowledge, international co-operation and new technologies can offer new opportunities to reduce this gap.

¹ Definition approved by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 27th session (November 1993) in the Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education.

Higher education has given ample proof of its viability over the centuries and of its ability to change and to induce change and progress in society. Owing to the scope and pace of change, society has become increasingly **knowledge-based** so that higher learning and research now act as essential components of cultural, socio-economic and environmentally sustainable development of individuals, communities and nations. Higher education itself is confronted therefore with formidable challenges and must proceed to the most radical **change and renewal it has ever been required** to undertake, so that our society, which is currently undergoing a profound crisis of values, can transcend mere economic considerations and incorporate deeper dimensions of morality and spirituality.

It is with the aim of providing solutions to these challenges and of setting in motion a process of in-depth reform in higher education worldwide that UNESCO has convened a World Conference on Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action. In preparation for the Conference, UNESCO issued, in 1995, its Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education. Five regional consultations (Havana, November 1996; Dakar, April 1997; Tokyo, July 1997; Palermo, September 1997; and Beirut, March 1998) were subsequently held. The Declarations and Plans of Action adopted by them, each preserving its own specificity, are duly taken into account in the present Declaration - as is the whole process of reflection undertaken by the preparation of the World Conference - and are annexed to it.

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We, participants in the World Conference on Higher Education, assembled at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, from 5 to 9 October 1998,

Recalling the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

Recalling also the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states in Article 26, paragraph 1, that 'Everyone has the right to education' and that 'higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit', and endorsing the basic principles of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), which, by Article 4, commits the States Parties to it to 'make higher education equally accessible to all on the basis of individual capacity',

Taking into account the recommendations concerning higher education of major commissions and conferences, inter alia, the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century, the World Commission on Culture and Development, the 44th and 45th sessions of the International Conference on Education (Geneva, 1994 and 1996), the decisions taken at the 27th and 29th sessions of UNESCO's General Conference, in particular regarding the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel, the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990), the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), the Conference on Academic Freedom and University Autonomy (Sinaia, 1992), the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995), the fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), the International Congress on Education and Informatics (Moscow, 1996), the World Congress on Higher Education and Human Resources Development for the Twenty-First Century (Manila, 1997), the fifth International Conference on Adult Education (Hamburg, 1997) and especially the Agenda for the Future under Theme 2 (Improving the conditions and quality of learning) stating: 'We commit ourselves to ... opening schools, colleges and universities to adult learners ... by calling upon the World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, 1998) to promote the transformation of post-secondary institutions into lifelong learning institutions and to define the role of universities accordingly',

Convinced that education is a fundamental pillar of human rights, democracy, sustainable development and peace, and shall therefore become accessible to all throughout life and that measures are required to ensure co-ordination and co-operation across and between the various sectors, particularly between general, technical and professional secondary and post-secondary education as well as between universities, colleges and technical institutions,

Believing that, in this context, the solution of the problems faced on the eve of the twenty-first century will be determined by the vision of the future society and by the role that is assigned to education in general and to higher education in particular,

Aware that on the threshold of a new millennium it is the duty of higher education to ensure that the values and ideals of a culture of peace prevail and that the intellectual community should be mobilized to that end,

Considering that a substantial change and development of higher education, the enhancement of its quality and relevance, and the solution to the major challenges it faces, require the strong involvement not only of governments and of higher education institutions, but also of all stakeholders, including students and their families, teachers, business and industry, the public and private sectors of the economy, parliaments, the media, the community, professional associations and society as well as a greater responsibility of higher education institutions towards society and accountability in the use of public and private, national or international resources,

Emphasizing that higher education systems should enhance their capacity to live with uncertainty, to change and bring about change, and to address social needs and to promote solidarity and equity; should preserve and exercise scientific rigour and originality, in a spirit of impartiality, as a basic prerequisite for attaining and sustaining an indispensable level of quality; and should place students at the centre of their concerns, **within a lifelong perspective**, so as to allow their full integration into the global knowledge society of the coming century,

Also believing that international co-operation and exchange are major avenues for advancing higher education throughout the world,

Proclaim the following:

MISSIONS AND FUNCTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Article 1. Mission to educate, to train and to undertake research

We affirm that the core missions and values of higher education, in particular the mission to contribute to the sustainable development and improvement of society as a whole, should be preserved, reinforced and further expanded, namely, to:

- (a) educate highly qualified graduates and responsible citizens able to meet the needs of all sectors of human activity, by offering relevant qualifications, including professional training, which combine high-level knowledge and skills, using courses and content continually tailored to the present and future needs of society;
- (b) provide opportunities (*espace ouvert*) **for higher learning and for learning throughout life**, giving to learners an optimal range of choice and a flexibility of entry and exit points within the system, as well as an opportunity for individual development and social mobility in order **to educate for citizenship and for active participation in society**, with a worldwide vision, for endogenous capacity-building, and for the consolidation of human rights, sustainable development, democracy and peace, in a context of justice;
- (c) **advance, create and disseminate knowledge through research** and provide, as part of its service to the community, relevant expertise to assist societies in cultural, social and economic development, promoting and developing scientific and technological research as well as research in the social sciences, the humanities and the creative arts;
- (d) **help understand, interpret, preserve, enhance, promote and disseminate national and regional, international and historic cultures**, in a context of cultural pluralism and diversity;
- (e) help protect and enhance **societal values** by training young people in the values which form the basis of democratic citizenship and by providing critical and detached perspectives to assist in the discussion of strategic options and the reinforcement of humanistic perspectives;
- (f) contribute to the development and improvement of education at all levels, including through the training of teachers.

Article 2. Ethical role, autonomy, responsibility and anticipatory function

In accordance with the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel approved by the General Conference of UNESCO in November 1997, **higher education institutions and their personnel and students** should:

- (a) preserve and develop their crucial functions, through the exercise of ethics and scientific and intellectual rigour in their various activities;
- (b) be able to speak out on ethical, cultural and social problems completely independently and in full awareness of their responsibilities, exercising a kind of intellectual authority that society needs to help it to reflect, understand and act;
- (c) enhance their critical and forward-looking functions, through continuing analysis of emerging social, economic, cultural and political trends, providing a focus for forecasting, warning and prevention;
- (d) exercise their intellectual capacity and their moral prestige to defend and actively disseminate universally accepted values, including peace, justice, freedom, equality and solidarity, as enshrined in UNESCO's Constitution;
- (e) enjoy full academic autonomy and freedom, conceived as a set of rights and duties, while being fully responsible and accountable to society;
- (f) play a role in helping identify and address issues that affect the well-being of communities, nations and global society.

SHAPING A NEW VISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Article 3. Equity of access

- (a) In keeping with Article 26.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, admission to higher education should be based on the merit, capacity, efforts, perseverance and devotion, showed by those seeking access to it, and can take place in a lifelong scheme, at any time, with due recognition of previously acquired skills. As a consequence, no discrimination can be accepted in granting access to higher education on grounds of race, gender, language or religion, or economic, cultural or social distinctions, or physical disabilities.
- (b) Equity of access to higher education should begin with the reinforcement and, if need be, the reordering of its links with all other levels of education, particularly with secondary education. Higher education institutions must be viewed as, and must also work within themselves to be a part of and encourage, a seamless system starting with early childhood and primary education and continuing through life. Higher education institutions must work in active partnership with parents, schools, students, socio-economic groups and communities. Secondary education should not only prepare qualified candidates for access to higher education by developing the capacity to learn on a broad basis but also open the way to active life by providing training on a wide range of jobs. However, access to higher education should remain open to those successfully completing secondary school, or its equivalent, or presenting entry qualifications, as far as possible, at any age and without any discrimination.
- (c) As a consequence, the rapid and wide-reaching demand for higher education requires, where appropriate, **all policies concerning access to higher education** to give priority in the future to the approach based on the merit of the individual, as defined in Article 3(a) above.
- (d) Access to higher education for members of some special target groups, such as indigenous peoples, cultural and linguistic minorities, disadvantaged groups, peoples living under occupation and those who suffer from disabilities, must be actively facilitated, since these groups as collectivities and as individuals may have both experience and talent that can be of great value for the development of societies and nations. Special material help and educational solutions can help overcome the obstacles that these groups face, both in accessing and in continuing higher education.

Article 4. Enhancing participation and promoting the role of women

- (a) Although significant progress has been achieved to enhance the **access of women** to higher education, various socio-economic, cultural and political obstacles continue in many places in the world to impede their full access and effective integration. To overcome them remains an urgent priority in the renewal process for ensuring an equitable and non-discriminatory system of higher education based on the principle of merit.
- (b) Further efforts are required to eliminate all gender stereotyping in higher education, to consider gender aspects in different disciplines and to consolidate women's participation at all levels and in all disciplines, in which they are under-represented and, in particular, to enhance their active involvement in decision-making.
- (c) Gender studies (women's studies) should be promoted as a field of knowledge, strategic for the transformation of higher education and society.
- (d) Efforts should be made to eliminate political and social barriers whereby women are under-represented and in particular to enhance their active involvement at policy and decision-making levels within higher education and society.

Article 5. Advancing knowledge through research in science, the arts and humanities and the dissemination of its results

- (a) The advancement of knowledge through **research** is an essential function of all **systems** of higher education, which should promote postgraduate studies. **Innovation, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity** should be promoted and reinforced in programmes with long-term orientations on social and cultural aims and needs. An appropriate balance should be established between basic and target-oriented research.
- (b) Institutions should ensure that all members of the academic community engaged in research are provided with appropriate training, resources and support. The intellectual and cultural rights on the results of research should be used to the benefit of humanity and should be protected so that they cannot be abused.
- (c) Research must be enhanced in all disciplines, including the social and human sciences, education (including higher education), engineering, natural sciences, mathematics, informatics and the arts within the framework of national, regional and international research and development policies. Of special importance is the enhancement of research capacities in higher education research institutions, as mutual enhancement of quality takes place when higher education and research are conducted at a high level within the same institution. These institutions should find the material and financial support required, from **both public and private sources**.

Article 6. Long-term orientation based on relevance

- (a) **Relevance** in higher education should be assessed in terms of the fit between what society expects of institutions and what they do. This requires ethical standards, political impartiality, critical capacities and, at the same time, a better articulation with the problems of society and the world of work, **basing long-term orientations on societal aims and needs, including respect for cultures and environmental protection**. The concern is to provide access to both broad general education and targeted, career-specific education, often interdisciplinary, focusing on skills and aptitudes, both of which equip individuals to live in a variety of changing settings, and to be able to change occupations.
- (b) Higher education should **reinforce its role of service to society**, especially its activities aimed at eliminating poverty, intolerance, violence, illiteracy, hunger, environmental degradation and disease, mainly through an **interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach** in the analysis of problems and issues.
- (c) Higher education should enhance its contribution to **the development of the whole education system**, notably through improved teacher education, curriculum development and educational research.

- (d) Ultimately, higher education should aim at the creation of a new society - non-violent and non-exploitative - consisting of highly cultivated, motivated and integrated individuals, inspired by love for humanity and guided by wisdom.

Article 7. Strengthening co-operation with the world of work and analysing and anticipating societal needs

- (a) In economies characterized by changes and the emergence of new production paradigms based on knowledge and its application, and on the handling of information, the links between higher education, the world of work and other parts of society should be strengthened and renewed.
- (b) Links with the world of work can be strengthened, through the participation of its representatives in the governance of institutions, the increased use of domestic and international apprenticeship/work-study opportunities for students and teachers, the exchange of personnel between the world of work and higher education institutions and revised curricula more closely aligned with working practices.
- (c) **As a lifelong source of professional training, updating and recycling**, institutions of higher education should systematically take into account trends in the world of work and in the scientific, technological and economic sectors. In order to respond to the work requirements, higher education systems and the world of work should jointly develop and assess learning processes, bridging programmes and prior learning assessment and recognition programmes, which integrate theory and training on the job. Within the framework of their anticipatory function, higher education institutions could contribute to the creation of new jobs, although that is not their only function.
- (d) Developing entrepreneurial skills and initiative should become major concerns of higher education, in order to facilitate employability of graduates who will increasingly be called upon to be not only job seekers but also and above all to become job creators. Higher education institutions should give the opportunity to students to fully develop their own abilities with a sense of social responsibility, educating them to become full participants in democratic society and promoters of changes that will foster equity and justice.

Article 8. Diversification for enhanced equity of opportunity

- (a) Diversifying higher education models and recruitment methods and criteria is essential both to meet increasing international demand and to provide access to various delivery modes and to extend access to an ever-wider public, in a lifelong perspective, based on flexible entry and exit points to and from the system of higher education.
- (b) More diversified systems of higher education are characterized by new types of tertiary institutions: public, private and non-profit institutions, amongst others. Institutions should be able to offer a wide variety of education and training opportunities: traditional degrees, short courses, part-time study, flexible schedules, modularized courses, supported learning at a distance, etc.

Article 9. Innovative educational approaches: critical thinking and creativity

- (a) In a world undergoing rapid changes, there is a perceived need for a new vision and paradigm of higher education, which should be student-oriented, calling in most countries for in-depth reforms and an open access policy so as to cater for ever more diversified categories of people, and of its contents, methods, practices and means of delivery, based on new types of links and partnerships with the community and with the broadest sectors of society.
- (b) Higher education institutions should educate students to become well informed and deeply motivated citizens, who can think critically, analyse problems of society, look for solutions to the problems of society, apply them and accept social responsibilities.
- (c) To achieve these goals, it may be necessary to recast curricula, using new and appropriate methods, so as to go beyond cognitive mastery of disciplines. New pedagogical and

didactical approaches should be accessible and promoted in order to facilitate the acquisition of skills, competences and abilities for communication, creative and critical analysis, **independent thinking and team work in multicultural contexts**, where creativity also involves combining traditional or local knowledge and know-how with advanced science and technology. **These recast curricula should take into account the gender dimension and the specific cultural, historic and economic context of each country.** The teaching of human rights standards and education on the needs of communities in all parts of the world should be reflected in the curricula of all disciplines, particularly those preparing for entrepreneurship. Academic personnel should play a significant role in determining the curriculum.

- (d) New methods of education will also imply new types of teaching-learning materials. These have to be coupled with new methods of testing that will promote not only powers of memory but also powers of comprehension, skills for practical work and creativity.

Article 10. Higher education personnel and students as major actors

- (a) A vigorous policy of staff development is an essential element for higher education institutions. Clear policies should be established concerning higher education teachers, who nowadays need to focus on teaching students how to learn and how to take initiatives rather than being exclusively founts of knowledge. Adequate provision should be made for research and for updating and improving pedagogical skills, through appropriate staff development programmes, encouraging constant innovation in curriculum, teaching and learning methods, and ensuring appropriate professional and financial status, and **for excellence in research and teaching**, reflecting the corresponding provisions of the **Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel approved by the General Conference of UNESCO in November 1997**. To this end, more importance should be attached to international experience. Furthermore, in view of the role of higher education for lifelong learning, experience outside the institutions ought to be considered as a relevant qualification for higher educational staff.
- (b) Clear policies should be established by all higher education institutions preparing teachers of early childhood education and for primary and secondary schools, providing stimulus for constant innovation in curriculum, best practices in teaching methods and familiarity with diverse learning styles. It is vital to have appropriately trained administrative and technical personnel.
- (c) **National and institutional decision-makers should place students and their needs at the centre of their concerns**, and should consider them as major partners and responsible stakeholders in the renewal of higher education. This should include student involvement in issues that affect that level of education, in evaluation, the renovation of teaching methods and curricula and, in the institutional framework in force, in policy-formulation and institutional management. As students have the right to organize and represent themselves, students' involvement in these issues should be guaranteed.
- (d) Guidance and counselling services should be developed, in co-operation with student organizations, in order to assist students in the transition to higher education at whatever age and to take account of the needs of ever more diversified categories of learners. Apart from those entering higher education from schools or further education colleges, they should also take account of the needs of those leaving and returning in a lifelong process. Such support is important in ensuring a good match between student and course, reducing drop-out. Students who do drop out should have suitable opportunities to return to higher education if and when appropriate.

FROM VISION TO ACTION

Article 11. Qualitative evaluation

- (a) **Quality in higher education is a multidimensional concept**, which should embrace all its functions, and activities: teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship,

staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community and the academic environment. Internal self-evaluation and external review, conducted openly by independent specialists, if possible with international expertise, are vital for enhancing quality. Independent national bodies should be established and comparative standards of quality, recognized at international level, should be defined. **Due attention should be paid to specific institutional, national and regional contexts in order to take into account diversity and to avoid uniformity.** Stakeholders should be an integral part of the institutional evaluation process.

- (b) Quality also requires that higher education should be characterized by its international dimension: exchange of knowledge, interactive networking, mobility of teachers and students, and international research projects, while taking into account the national cultural values and circumstances.
- (c) To attain and sustain national, regional or international quality, certain components are particularly relevant, notably careful selection of staff and continuous staff development, in particular through the promotion of appropriate programmes for academic staff development, including teaching/learning methodology and mobility between countries, between higher education institutions, and between higher education institutions and the world of work, as well as student mobility within and between countries. The new information technologies are an important tool in this process, owing to their impact on the acquisition of knowledge and know-how.

Article 12. The potential and the challenge of technology

The rapid breakthroughs in new information and communication technologies will further change the way knowledge is developed, acquired and delivered. It is also important to note that the new technologies offer opportunities to innovate on course content and teaching methods and to widen access to higher learning. However, it should be borne in mind that new information technology does not reduce the need for teachers but changes their role in relation to the learning process and that the continuous dialogue that converts information into knowledge and understanding becomes fundamental. Higher education institutions should lead in drawing on the advantages and potential of new information and communication technologies, ensuring quality and maintaining high standards for education practices and outcomes in a spirit of openness, equity and international co-operation by:

- (a) engaging in networks, technology transfer, capacity-building, developing teaching materials and sharing experience of their application in teaching, training and research, making knowledge accessible to all;
- (b) creating new learning environments, ranging from distance education facilities to complete virtual higher education institutions and systems, capable of bridging distances and developing high-quality systems of education, thus serving social and economic advancement and democratization as well as other relevant priorities of society, while ensuring that these virtual education facilities, based on regional, continental or global networks, function in a way that respects cultural and social identities;
- (c) noting that, in making full use of information and communication technology (ICT) for educational purposes, particular attention should be paid to removing the grave inequalities which exist among and also within the countries of the world with regard to access to new information and communication technologies and to the production of the corresponding resources;
- (d) adapting ICT to national, regional and local needs and securing technical, educational, management and institutional systems to sustain it;
- (e) facilitating, through international co-operation, the identification of the objectives and interests of all countries, particularly the developing countries, equitable access and the strengthening of infrastructures in this field and the dissemination of such technology throughout society;

- (f) closely following the evolution of the 'knowledge society' in order to ensure high quality and equitable regulations for access to prevail;
- (g) taking the new possibilities created by the use of ICTs into account, while realizing that it is, above all, institutions of higher education that are using ICTs in order to modernize their work, and not ICTs transforming institutions of higher education from real to virtual institutions.

Article 13. Strengthening higher education management and financing

- (a) The management and financing of higher education require the **development of appropriate planning and policy-analysis capacities** and strategies, based on partnerships established between higher education institutions and state and national planning and co-ordination bodies, so as to secure appropriately streamlined management and the cost-effective use of resources. Higher education institutions should **adopt forward-looking management practices** that respond to the needs of their environments. Managers in higher education must be responsive, competent and able to evaluate regularly, by internal and external mechanisms, the effectiveness of procedures and administrative rules.
- (b) Higher education institutions must be given autonomy to manage their internal affairs, but with this autonomy must come clear and transparent accountability to the government, parliament, students and the wider society.
- (c) The ultimate goal of management should be to enhance the institutional mission by ensuring high-quality teaching, training and research, and services to the community. This objective requires **governance that combines social vision, including understanding of global issues, with efficient managerial skills**. Leadership in higher education is thus a major social responsibility and can be significantly strengthened through dialogue with all stakeholders, especially teachers and students, in higher education. The participation of teaching faculty in the governing bodies of higher education institutions should be taken into account, within the framework of current institutional arrangements, bearing in mind the need to keep the size of these bodies within reasonable bounds.
- (d) The promotion of North-South co-operation to ensure the necessary financing for strengthening higher education in the developing countries is essential.

Article 14. Financing of higher education as a public service

The funding of higher education requires both public and private resources. The role of the state remains essential in this regard.

- (a) The diversification of funding sources reflects the support that society provides to higher education and must be further strengthened to ensure the development of higher education, increase its efficiency and maintain its quality and relevance. **Public support for higher education and research remains essential** to ensure a balanced achievement of educational and social missions.
- (b) Society as a whole must support education at all levels, including higher education, given its role in promoting sustainable economic, social and cultural development. **Mobilization for this purpose depends on public awareness and involvement of the public and private sectors** of the economy, parliaments, the media, governmental and non-governmental organizations, students as well as institutions, families and all the social actors involved with higher education.

Article 15. Sharing knowledge and know-how across borders and continents

- (a) The principle of solidarity and true partnership amongst higher education institutions worldwide is crucial for education and training in all fields that encourage an understanding of global issues, the role of democratic governance and skilled human resources in their resolution, and the need for living together with different cultures and values. The practice of

multilingualism, faculty and student exchange programmes and institutional linkage to promote intellectual and scientific co-operation should be an integral part of all higher education systems.

- (b) The principles of international co-operation based on solidarity, recognition and mutual support, true partnership that equitably serves the interests of the partners and the value of sharing knowledge and know-how across borders should govern relationships among higher education institutions in both developed and developing countries and should benefit the least developed countries in particular. Consideration should be given to the need for safeguarding higher education institutional capacities in regions suffering from conflict or natural disasters. Consequently, an international dimension should permeate the curriculum, and the teaching and learning processes.
- (c) Regional and international normative instruments for the recognition of studies should be ratified and implemented, including certification of the skills, competences and abilities of graduates, making it easier for students to change courses, in order to facilitate mobility within and between national systems.

Article 16 - From 'brain drain' to 'brain gain'

The 'brain drain' has yet to be stemmed, since it continues to deprive the developing countries and those in transition, of the high-level expertise necessary to accelerate their socio-economic progress. International co-operation schemes should be based on long-term partnerships between institutions in the South and the North, and also promote South-South co-operation. Priority should be given to training programmes in the developing countries, in centres of excellence forming regional and international networks, with short periods of specialized and intensive study abroad. Consideration should be given to creating an environment conducive to attracting and retaining skilled human capital, either through national policies or international arrangements to facilitate the return - permanent or temporary - of highly trained scholars and researchers to their countries of origin. At the same time, efforts must be directed towards a process of 'brain gain' through collaboration programmes that, by virtue of their international dimension, enhance the building and strengthening of institutions and facilitate full use of endogenous capacities. Experience gained through the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme and the principles enshrined in the regional conventions on the recognition of degrees and diplomas in higher education are of particular importance in this respect.

Article 17. Partnership and alliances

Partnership and alliances amongst stakeholders - national and institutional policy-makers, teaching and **related** staff, researchers and students, and administrative and technical personnel in institutions of higher education, the world of work, community groups - is a powerful force in managing change. Also, non-governmental organizations are key actors in this process. Henceforth, **partnership, based on common interest, mutual respect and credibility, should be a prime matrix for renewal in higher education.**

We, the participants in the World Conference on Higher Education, adopt this Declaration and reaffirm the right of all people to education and the right of access to higher education based on individual merit and capacity;

We pledge to act together within the frame of our individual and collective responsibilities, by taking all necessary measures in order to realize the principles concerning higher education contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Convention against Discrimination in Education;

We solemnly reaffirm our commitment to peace. To that end, we are determined to accord high priority to education for peace and to participate in the celebration of the International Year for the Culture of Peace in the year 2000;

We adopt, therefore, this World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action. To achieve the goals set forth in this Declaration and, in particular, for immediate action, we agree on the following Framework for Priority Action for Change and Development of Higher Education.

Framework for Priority Action for Change and Development of Higher Education

I. PRIORITY ACTIONS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

1. States, including their governments, parliaments and other decision-makers, should:

- (a) establish, where appropriate, the legislative, political and financial framework for the reform and further development of higher education, in keeping with the terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which establishes that **higher education shall be 'accessible to all on the basis of merit'**. **No discrimination can be accepted**, no one can be excluded from higher education or its study fields, degree levels and types of institutions on grounds of race, gender, language, religion, or age or because of any economic or social distinctions or physical disabilities;
- (b) reinforce the links between higher education and research;
- (c) consider and use higher education as a catalyst for the entire education system;
- (d) develop higher education institutions to include lifelong learning approaches, giving learners an optimal range of choice and a flexibility of entry and exit points within the system, and redefine their role accordingly, which implies the development of open and continuous access to higher learning and the need for bridging programmes and prior learning assessment and recognition;
- (e) make efforts, when necessary, to establish close links between higher education and research institutions, taking into account the fact that education and research are two closely related elements in the establishment of knowledge;
- (f) develop innovative schemes of collaboration between institutions of higher education and different sectors of society to ensure that higher education and research programmes effectively contribute to local, regional and national development;
- (g) fulfil their commitments to higher education and be accountable for the pledges adopted with their concurrence, at several forums, particularly over the past decade, with regard to human, material and financial resources, human development and education in general, and to higher education in particular;
- (h) have a policy framework to ensure new partnerships and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in all aspects of higher education: the evaluation process, including curriculum and pedagogical renewal, and guidance and counselling services; and, in the framework of existing institutional arrangements, policy-making and institutional governance;
- (i) **define and implement policies to eliminate all gender stereotyping in higher education** and to consolidate women's participation at all levels and in all disciplines in which they are under-represented at present and, in particular, to enhance their active involvement in decision-making;
- (j) **establish clear policies concerning higher education teachers**, as set out in the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel approved by the General Conference of UNESCO in November 1997;
- (k) recognize students as the centre of attention of higher education, and one of its stakeholders. They should be involved, by means of adequate institutional structures, in the renewal of their level of education (including curriculum and pedagogical reform), and policy decision, in the framework of existing institutional arrangements;
- (l) recognize that students have the right to organize themselves autonomously;
- (m) promote and facilitate national and international mobility of teaching staff and students as an essential part of the quality and relevance of higher education;

- (n) provide and ensure those conditions necessary for the exercise of academic freedom and institutional autonomy so as to allow institutions of higher education, as well as those individuals engaged in higher education and research, to fulfil their obligations to society.

2. States in which enrolment in higher education is low by internationally accepted comparative standards should strive to ensure a level of higher education adequate for relevant needs in the public and private sectors of society and to establish plans for diversifying and expanding access, particularly benefiting all minorities and disadvantaged groups.

3. The interface with general, technical and professional secondary education should be reviewed in depth, in the context of lifelong learning. Access to higher education in whatever form must remain open to those successfully completing secondary education or its equivalent or meeting entry qualifications at any age, while creating gateways to higher education, especially for older students without any formal secondary education certificates, by attaching more importance to their professional experience. However, **preparation for higher education should not be the sole or primary purpose of secondary education, which should also prepare for the world of work**, with complementary training whenever required, in order to provide knowledge, capacities and skills for a wide range of jobs. The concept of bridging programmes should be promoted to allow those entering the job market to return to studies at a later date.

4. **Concrete steps should be taken to reduce the widening gap between industrially developed and developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, with regard to higher education and research.** Concrete steps are also needed to encourage increased co-operation between countries at all levels of economic development with regard to higher education and research. Consideration should be given to making budgetary provisions for that purpose, and developing mutually beneficial agreements involving industry, national as well as international, in order to sustain co-operative activities and projects through appropriate incentives and funding in education, research and the development of high-level experts in these countries.

II. PRIORITY ACTIONS AT THE LEVEL OF SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS

5. **Each higher education institution should define its mission according to the present and future needs of society** and base it on an awareness of the fact that higher education is essential for any country or region to reach the necessary level of sustainable and environmentally sound economic and social development, cultural creativity nourished by better knowledge and understanding of the cultural heritage, higher living standards, and internal and international harmony and peace, based on human rights, democracy, tolerance and mutual respect. These missions should incorporate the concept of academic freedom set out in the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel approved by the General Conference of UNESCO in November 1997.

6. In establishing priorities in their programmes and structures, higher education institutions should:

- (a) take into account the need to abide by the rules of ethics and scientific and intellectual rigour, and the multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach;
- (b) be primarily concerned to establish systems of access for the benefit of all persons who have the necessary abilities and motivations;
- (c) use their autonomy and high academic standards to contribute to the sustainable development of society and to the resolution of the issues facing the society of the future. They should develop their capacity to give forewarning through the analysis of emerging social, cultural, economic and political trends, approached in a multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary manner, giving particular attention to:
 - high quality, a clear sense of the social pertinence of studies and their anticipatory function, based on scientific grounds;
 - knowledge of fundamental social questions, in particular related to the elimination of poverty, to sustainable development, to intercultural dialogue and to the shaping of a culture of peace;

- the need for close connection with effective research organizations or institutions that perform well in the sphere of research;
 - the development of the whole education system in the perspective of the recommendations and the new goals for education as set out in the 1996 report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century;
 - fundamentals of human ethics, applied to each profession and to all areas of human endeavour;
- (d) ensure, especially in universities and as far as possible, that faculty members participate in teaching, research, tutoring students and steering institutional affairs;
 - (e) take all necessary measures to reinforce their service to the community, especially their activities aimed at eliminating poverty, intolerance, violence, illiteracy, hunger and disease, through an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach in the analysis of challenges, problems and different subjects;
 - (f) **set their relations with the world of work on a new basis** involving effective partnerships with all social actors concerned, starting from a reciprocal harmonization of action and the search for solutions to pressing problems of humanity, all this within a framework of responsible autonomy and academic freedoms;
 - (g) ensure high quality of international standing, **consider accountability** and both internal and external **evaluation**, with due respect for autonomy and academic freedom, **as being normal and inherent in their functioning**, and institutionalize transparent systems, structures or mechanisms specific thereto;
 - (h) as lifelong education requires academic staff to update and improve their teaching skills and learning methods, even more than in the present systems mainly based on short periods of higher teaching, establish appropriate academic staff development structures and/or mechanisms and programmes;
 - (i) **promote and develop research, which is a necessary feature of all higher education systems**, in all disciplines, including the human and social sciences and arts, given their relevance for development. Also, research on higher education itself should be strengthened through mechanisms such as the UNESCO/UNU Forum on Higher Education and the UNESCO Chairs in Higher Education. Objective, timely studies are needed to ensure continued progress towards such key national objectives as access, equity, quality, relevance and diversification;
 - (j) remove **gender inequalities and biases in curricula and research**, and take all appropriate measures to ensure balanced representation of both men and women among students and teachers, at all levels of management;
 - (k) **provide**, where appropriate, **guidance and counselling, remedial courses, training in how to study and other forms of student support**, including measures to improve student living conditions.

7. While the need for closer links between higher education and the world of work is important worldwide, it is particularly vital for the developing countries and especially the least developed countries, given their low level of economic development. Governments of these countries should take appropriate measures to reach this objective through appropriate measures such as strengthening institutions for higher/professional/vocational education. At the same time, international action is needed in order to help establish joint undertakings between higher education and industry in these countries. It will be necessary to give consideration to ways in which higher education graduates could be supported, through various schemes, following the positive experience of the micro-credit system and other incentives, in order to start small- and medium-size enterprises. At the institutional level, developing entrepreneurial skills and initiative should become a major concern of higher education, in order to facilitate employability of graduates who will increasingly be required not only to be job-seekers but to become job-creators.

8. **The use of new technologies should be generalized to the greatest extent possible** to help higher education institutions, to reinforce academic development, to widen access, to attain universal scope and to extend knowledge, as well as to facilitate education throughout life. Governments, educational institutions and the private sector should ensure that informatics and communication network infrastructures, computer facilities and human resources training are adequately provided.

9. **Institutions of higher education should be open to adult learners:**

- (a) by developing coherent mechanisms to recognize the outcomes of learning undertaken in different contexts, and to ensure that credit is transferable within and between institutions, sectors and states;
- (b) by establishing joint higher education/community research and training partnerships, and by bringing the services of higher education institutions to outside groups;
- (c) by carrying out interdisciplinary research in all aspects of adult education and learning with the participation of adult learners themselves;
- (d) by creating opportunities for adult learning in flexible, open and creative ways.

III. **ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL AND, IN PARTICULAR, TO BE INITIATED BY UNESCO**

10. **Co-operation should be conceived of as an integral part of the institutional missions of higher education institutions and systems.** Intergovernmental organizations, donor agencies and non-governmental organizations should extend their action in order to develop inter-university co-operation projects in particular through twinning institutions, based on solidarity and partnership, as a means of bridging the gap between rich and poor countries in the vital areas of knowledge production and application. Each institution of higher education should envisage the creation of an appropriate structure and/or mechanism for promoting and managing international co-operation.

11. UNESCO, and other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations active in higher education, the states through their bilateral and multilateral co-operation programmes, the academic community and all concerned partners in society should further **promote international academic mobility** as a means to advance knowledge and knowledge-sharing in order to bring about and promote solidarity as a main element of the global knowledge society of tomorrow, including through strong support for the joint work plan (1999-2005) of the six intergovernmental committees in charge of the application of the regional conventions on the recognition of studies, degrees and diplomas in higher education and through large-scale co-operative action involving, inter alia, the establishment of an educational credit transfer scheme, with particular emphasis on South-South co-operation, the needs of the least developed countries and of the small states with few higher education institutions or none at all.

12. Institutions of higher education in industrialized countries should strive to make arrangements for international co-operation with sister institutions in developing countries and in particular with those of poor countries. In their co-operation, the institutions should make efforts to ensure fair and just recognition of studies abroad. UNESCO should take initiatives to develop higher education throughout the world, setting itself clear-cut goals that could lead to tangible results. One method might be to implement projects in different regions renewing efforts towards creating and/or strengthening centres of excellence in developing countries, in particular through the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, relying on networks of national, regional and international higher education institutions.

13. UNESCO, together with all concerned parts of society, should also undertake action in order to **alleviate the negative effects of 'brain drain' and to shift to a dynamic process of 'brain gain'**. An overall analysis is required in all regions of the world of the causes and effects of brain drain. **A vigorous campaign** should be launched **through the concerted effort of the international community** and on the basis of academic solidarity and should encourage the return to their home country of expatriate academics, as well as the involvement of **university**

volunteers - newly retired academics or young academics at the beginning of their career - who wish to teach and undertake research at higher education institutions in developing countries. At the same time it is essential to support the developing countries in their efforts to build and strengthen their own educational capacities.

14. Within this framework, UNESCO should:

- (a) **promote better co-ordination among intergovernmental, supranational and non-governmental organizations, agencies and foundations that sponsor existing programmes and projects for international co-operation in higher education.** Furthermore, co-ordination efforts should take place in the context of national priorities. This could be conducive to the pooling and sharing of resources, avoid overlapping and promote better identification of projects, greater impact of action and increased assurance of their validity through collective agreement and review. Programmes aiming at the rapid transfer of knowledge, supporting institutional development and establishing centres of excellence in all areas of knowledge, in particular for peace education, conflict resolution, human rights and democracy, should be supported by institutions and by public and private donors;
- (b) jointly with the United Nations University and with National Commissions and various intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, become a forum of reflection on higher education issues aiming at: (i) preparing update reports on the state of knowledge on higher education issues in all parts of the world; (ii) promoting innovative projects of training and research, intended to enhance the specific role of higher education in lifelong education; (iii) reinforcing international co-operation and emphasizing the role of higher education for citizenship education, sustainable development and peace; and (iv) facilitating exchange of information and establishing, when appropriate, a database on successful experiences and innovations that can be consulted by institutions confronted with problems in their reforms of higher education;
- (c) take specific action to support institutions of higher education in the least developed parts of the world and in regions suffering the effects of conflict or natural disasters;
- (d) make renewed efforts towards creating or/and strengthening centres of excellence in developing countries;
- (e) take the initiative to draw up an international instrument on academic freedom, autonomy and social responsibility in connection with the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel;
- (f) ensure follow-up to the World Declaration on Higher Education and the Framework for Priority Action, jointly with other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and with all higher education stakeholders, including the United Nations University, the NGO Collective Consultation on Higher Education and the UNESCO Student Forum. It should have a crucial role in promoting international co-operation in the field of higher education in implementing this follow-up. Consideration should be given to according priority to this in the development of UNESCO's next draft Programme and Budget.

DECLARATION AND ACTION PLAN ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA

We, participants at the **African Regional Consultation** preparatory to the World Conference on Higher Education,¹

1. **Recalling** the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 26, of which affirms that, 'Everyone has the right to education'... and that 'higher education shall be accessible to all, on the basis of merit', and further recalling the Convention Against Discrimination in the field of Education, adopted by UNESCO in 1960, which calls on Member States to 'make higher education accessible to all, based on individual abilities';
2. **Taking into account** UNESCO's Constitution, which encourages inter-institutional exchanges in the field of Education;
3. **Adhering to** the conclusions and recommendations of the Policy Paper on Change and Development in Higher Education published by UNESCO in 1995, as well as the major conclusions of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, which stipulate that, 'Universities in developing countries have a duty to carry out research that should contribute to solving the most serious problems facing these countries';
4. **Taking into account** the desire of the United Nations to improve co-ordination of the actions of organisations of the United Nations system in order to reinforce their impact on the development of the Africa region, by mobilising every effort (in the same vein as the creation of an Africa Department by UNESCO) and allocating necessary funds for in-depth reform of higher education in Africa;
5. **Having taken note of** the conclusions of the Priority Africa seminars on Higher Education in Africa (Accra: November 1991; Dakar: November 1992; Alexandria: April 1993) summary papers (such as Higher Education in Africa: Trends and Challenges for the 21st Century: Dakar 1992 and publications like Future Directions for Higher Education in Africa published by BREDA in 1994 and Audience of Africa. Social Development: Priorities for Africa, Final Report (1995) and taken further into account the findings of the Second World Congress on and Education and Informatics organised by UNESCO in Moscow in July 1996, and other reports by various international and African institutions which have also carried our diagnosis and developed guidelines for action;
6. **Observing** that significant but not quite remarkable progress has been made in Africa through the efforts of higher education institutions to wit: progress in implementing democratic structures, improved access to higher education, training of senior management level personnel for the public and the private sectors, development of programmes of African studies, rediscovery and promotion of the historical and cultural heritage, etc.;
7. **Recognising** at the same time, the persistence of problems needing urgent solutions (e.g. poverty, hunger, disease, unemployment, illiteracy, the debt burden, unfavourable trading conditions, inflation, all forms and types of conflicts, environmental degradation, etc.);
8. **Observing** that Africa is more seriously affected than the other regions of the world by the deep-seated societal changes of our time, viz:
 - the upsurge of economic liberalism, globalisation, and the prevailing world order which serves the interests of the strongest economic and financial powers, deregulation the African market, the rise of an uncontrolled and perhaps uncontrallable underground economy;
 - outsourcing, which is of little benefit to Africa, in view of the trend for fund managers to associate Africa with political instability and an insufficient of qualified and skilled persons;

¹ Dakar, Senegal, 1 – 4 April 1997

- structural adjustment policies leading to loss of jobs in the public sector, (loses not fully absorbed by the private sector) and which have tended to devalue the degrees awarded by institutions of higher education;
- an upward demographic surge which has tended to increase the demand for education, uncontrolled urban and an population growth;
- displaced populations, the result of economic difficulties or the trauma of wars - a situation difficult to manage by the countries receiving such displaced persons;
- exponential growth in knowledge, with very little direct contribution from the Africa region;
- rapid development of new information and communications technologies, with the risk of widening the gap between Africa and the other regions of the world;

9. **Pointing out** that the challenges facing the Africa region and the sweeping changes in society make the structural problems of higher educational institutions all the more critical.

The problems include:

- coping with surging numbers of students in the face of declining budgets;
- excessively high student/teacher ratios, which make individual attention to learners difficult;
- undue attention to municipal and social services, which reduces funds available for teaching and research;
- deterioration of infrastructure, due to lack of maintenance;
- insufficient remuneration of academics, leading to loss of motivation, moonlighting and brain drain;
- imbalance in students enrolments between science and technology based programmes and the humanities;
- gender inequity at all levels: within the student body, within academic staff, and within the decision-making cadre;
- insufficient attention to, and the insufficient resources for research;
- lack of a long-term vision in the planning and management of teaching and research activities;
- insufficient pedagogical training of teachers in higher education, coupled with a lack of systematic management training for institutional and system-wide managers;
- teaching-learning procedures often in the form of memorisation and to the neglect of inculcating the analytical and problem solving skills needed for tackling societal problems.

10. **What is therefore needed** is the development of new guidelines focusing on the following key issues: relevance, quality, management/finance, and co-operation.

11. **Relevance** is the number one problem, for, should African higher education institutions and the authorities responsible for them interpret their missions wrongly, they will not be able to take up the above challenges: the institutions could in fact become obstacles to development. First of all, it is imperative that they adapt their missions to the needs and constraints of the local, national, regional, and international environments. This is one of those external efficiency indicators by which institutions are judged. This entails links with the 'town': promoters of economic activities and all groups and persons working to ensure the reign of equity and better living conditions for Africans, those engaged in promoting responsible citizenship and ensuring a culture of peace and sustainable human development.

Relevance also requires better articulation with the world of work and with other efforts geared towards improving the contribution of higher education to the entire educational system, especially through teacher training and research in education.

12. **Quality** is the second area needing thought and action. It is closely linked to the issue of relevance but entails the operationalisation of the envisaged outcomes (a clear definition of goals and objectives) of the inputs the institutions will work with (thus a review of admissions criteria) and the processes and procedures for working with the inputs (the way the management system co-ordinates structures, resources and the institutional culture to obtain the required products). A policy of total quality can be implemented through comparisons between observed and intended outcomes (in terms of quantitative and qualitative internal efficiency) and constant analysis of the sources of dysfunction. This will require a culture of Autonomy for higher education institutions as well as of their constituent units. It will also require careful attention to the problems of students and teachers and solidarity and responsibility towards the institution as a project for promoting local development and for ensuring a take-off for national and regional development. Thus the need for accountability, which is indissociable from the concept of quality.

13. **Management and Funding** constitute the third major concern. An institution could undertake an in-depth analysis on its mission and translate this into product, process and quality indicators. If, however, the institution fails to built quality into its entire *modus operandi*, and if financial resources are inadequate, it is likely to achieve very little and so very unlikely to be able to meet the challenges of Africa's development. We would therefore urge that higher institutions accept the imperative of adopting forward-looking management practices which respond to the needs of the environment, as specified in their missions.

14. **Co-operation** at the national, regional and international levels is the fourth key issue. Co-operation projects have often been mere juxtaposition of disparate efforts not sufficiently linked to an overall strategic plan, specifying priorities, deadlines and the constraints arising from the relationships between various projects or components of projects. We would expect that the organisation of African institutions into co-operative networks, using appropriate products of new technologies, should be a major priority area.

15. **On basis of these observations** we would suggest the following areas of concrete action:

To Improve Relevance:

16. We recommend that Member States develop educational programmes capable of meeting the challenges of sweeping societal changes and the principal challenges which Africa is bound to face in the immediate future.

17. We would suggest that Member States create 'observatories' to monitor changes in the employment market, of imminent social changes, of new approaches to research and development-related activities. Such observatories would help the process of developing national educational plans, as data would be made available to institutions of higher learning, to improve their capacity to align their missions with national priority areas.

18. We would suggest that national education programmes aim at diversification with a greater emphasis on a regionalisation of specific disciplines. This could be a means of getting institutions to serve the specific needs of disadvantages areas and groups. These programmes should target specific needs that will generate employment or create jobs; training programmes and structures should be flexible in order to adapt rapidly to changing needs. It would also be necessary to develop (in consultation with appropriate stakeholders) a wider variety of short duration programmes.

19. We feel that appropriate steps ought to be taken to convince Member States that investment in institutions of higher education is worthwhile, as long as the institutions are oriented to meet the needs of society. International organisations like UNESCO will have to make strong moves to sensitise top political and financial authorities on this issue.

20. Institutions of higher education should define their mission statements in the form of overall general guidelines. These should be closely linked with the national education programmes and based on a thorough analysis of needs, in co-operation with the institution's internal and external actors. They should be presented in the form of observable outcomes.

21. It would be more profitable to define educational programmes henceforth in terms of expected outcomes, and not simply in terms of facts to be transmitted and reproduced, or in terms of mere course titles. This will contribute to the evolution of genuine education programmes with special emphasis on analysis of complex situations, teamwork, higher cognitive skills, the inculcation of responsible citizenship and the development of a culture of peace.

22. Institutions of higher education should make special efforts to develop scientific and technological programmes to help meet the demands of the accelerated development of new technologies, especially new information and communication technologies. These programmes should be supported by intensive research activities, from which the critical mass of the expertise needed for the region's development as it faces the pressures of globalisation. We suggest that institutions already having expertise in these areas create a network, with the assistance of UNESCO and other organisations.

Existing potentials on information and communications technologies should be boosted to give rise to virtual universities, which could considerably improve access, while at the same time providing world-class educational resources.

23. Higher education institutions should also make special efforts to promote integrated programmes aimed at seeking appropriate solutions to the major problems of the progressive evolution of a culture of peace and promotion of sustainable development oriented towards reducing hunger and protecting the environment. Such programmes should build on the fruits of social research and designed to the promotion of research, the strengthening of expertise and consultancy services.

24. We recommend that research be made to bear a closer relation to the needs of African societies, so that basic research can be more closely linked with applied and development-oriented research stressing genuine partnerships with public and private institutions and the civil society. This would be one way of ensuring the active involvement of higher institutions in societal development efforts.

25. We recommend that higher degree programmes be organised around a quantitative and qualitative critical mass of committed academics, working together in a qualitatively conducive environment on subjects relevant to Africa's development. Doctoral training programmes can be restructured using team work or networking strategies.

26. We would like to stress the importance and urgency of carrying out a series of case studies on Africa's priorities, in which higher education institutions should play an important role. These include : the type of leadership to be promoted, strategic management and planning, systemic interactions between primary, secondary, tertiary and continuing education, revision of programmes of education and training, the relative importance and feasibility of face-to-face and distance teaching programmes, strategies for ensuring improved participation of women in education and in decision making bodies, town and country planning, measures against the security problems of Africa (such as poverty, displaced populations, the trauma of war...). The Association of African Universities could undertake this task, with the assistance support of UNESCO and the possible collaboration of other organisations working in the field of higher education in Africa.

27. To become more responsive to the needs of society, and in order to acquire greater financial autonomy, we recommend that higher education institutions create structures for the development and management of consultancy activities, which are an essential part of their missions. For this to happen, higher institutions should develop an entrepreneurial spirit as a means of strengthening their service functions which are in themselves complementary to their teaching and research functions.

28. We recommend that Member States organise regional conferences of ministers in charge of higher education, heads of institutions, and organisations or associations involved in the development of higher education.

To Improve the Quality:

29. We recommend that each Member State establish a mechanism for evaluating the quality of higher education institutions, building on existing practices in the region. Such a body will be responsible for evaluating training, research and consultancy activities in the light of institutional missions, national education programmes and the needs of changing times. This should be a control rather than a punitive mechanism, and should use a combination of internal and external evaluation strategies.

30. In order to ensure the quality of programmes, institutions of higher education will required to establish minimum teaching-learning guidelines for each course module. They should explicitly state learners, entry and exist behaviours in terms of skills, values and attitudes, the teaching and evaluation methods, all within a specific time frame. They will constitute a point of reference and a form of moral contract between various internal and external actors.

31. It would be necessary for every institution to develop a data base on the quantitative and qualitative movement of students. This data base should include any information that could be used to evaluate internal (and even external) efficiency, as well as trends in progress or non-progress in terms of the equity of the system. The data base should provide decision-makers at various levels with the information needed for the development of a total quality policy, or with the involvement of all stakeholders.

32. We expect that, with assistance from UNESCO and other regional or international organisations, every higher education institution will establish a teaching-learning resource unit staffed by skilled personnel charged with the task of pedagogical skill development and other forms of teaching-support activities.

33. We also hope that every institution will create appropriate structures for evaluating and controlling the quality of its curricula (including the performance of students), in keeping with agreed guidelines.

34. We recommend that UNESCO call on Member States to improve the living and working conditions and emoluments of academics and, more importantly, to guarantee the autonomy of higher education.

35. We declare our support for the project on the conditions and status of higher education personnel, recently approved by an international committee of intergovernmental experts and which will be at the 29th General Conference of UNESCO (Paris, November 1997).

36. Having observed the undesirable effects of conflicts and strikes in universities, we suggest that institutions should create an enabling climate for dialogue with a strong emphasis on prevention rather than repression.

37. Convinced that research (as a fundamental mission of higher institutions) will need to be reinforced, we call for a substantial increase in the number of academic journals and the implementation of a coherent publications policy at sub-regional and regional levels. UNESCO could call on the organisations which took part in the present Consultation to submit concrete proposals on this issue.

38. Efforts to improve quality in each institution will be facilitated if Member States could develop regional networks for education and training activities as well as for research and consultancy activities. We call on UNESCO to lend its full weight to such networks.

39. We suggest that, at the regional level, existing institutions and organisations (such as CAMES for example) whose aim is to harmonise qualifications and certification procedures be strengthened, so that the potential for mobility is increased for both students and teachers, in line with the practice in other regions.

To Improve Management and Funding:

40. We suggest that Member States guarantee equal rights to higher education based on ability and aptitude (i.e. merit). Member States should take on principal responsibility for funding for higher education. However, since it will be difficult for Member States to bear the entire financial burden, additional sources should be sought using the political and administrative mechanism of each State, whose sovereignty should be respected. We strongly advise that the economic conditions of families be taken into consideration, and that the only criteria for access or non-access should be merit.

41. To improve efficiency and strengthen the management of higher education institutions, it would be necessary to develop appropriate mechanism for regular dialogue between the institutions and their partners, particularly State structures, without compromising the autonomy of the institutions.

42. It is important to build the habit of forward-looking management and planning into higher education institutions in Africa. This means that appropriate training opportunities should be provided for administrators, whether they occupy a permanent or an elected position. It also means that necessary computer database should be developed as soon as possible to ensure high-quality forward-looking management and planning. The institutions should find either within themselves or through co-operation the necessary skills to create, maintain and develop these data banks. UNESCO should seek support from organisations such as the Association of African Universities, the International Institute of Educational Planning, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the Commonwealth Secretariat, etc., in this aspect of its work. The goal is for, African universities

could be managed like high-performance service businesses able to play a crucial role in solving the problems besetting the Africa region.

43. We believe quality management is not the sole responsibility of top academic authorities. Each sub-system (faculty, department or other structures) should also take on responsibility for forward-looking management and planning. This means that each unit must clearly define its missions to bring them in line with the overall mission of the institution, translate them into observable indicators, and allocate the resources available in accordance with the mission and with a clear order of priority. They should also prepare regular activity reports, which they should be shared with staff and supervising authorities. This mode of management entails a certain degree of autonomy (thus a margin for manoeuvre) and full commitment to institutional goals. The culture of evaluation and responsibility must therefore be strengthened, or established in those institutions that still practise the rigid centralisation inherited from certain colonial structures.

44. We feel that, despite the prevailing financial crisis, the management of higher education institutions cannot be reduced to financial management based on purely economic criteria. One should take in account some criterion of equity (such as women's or underprivileged persons' access to higher education) and the criterion of social relevance applied to teaching, research and consultancy activities. We would expect each institution's activity reports to include actions taken towards this end and the results obtained, in order to promote awareness in the appropriate ministerial authorities and obtain recognition and support for relevant actions.

45. Since WOMEN have a major role to play in the development of the Africa region, we request that international organisations, Member States and higher education institutions develop well-articulated policies, remove gender inequity in education and more importantly promote the advancement of women in the entire society. This should include measures implemented, by the institutions of higher education themselves. We suggest that meaningful affirmative action be taken in all possible directions. Women's associations and networks should be fully supported. A systematic and coherent policy of gender research and case studies should be implemented and their findings widely publicised and ploughed back into the teaching, management and overall development work of higher education institutions.

46. We recommend that measures be taken to double the number of women (students, teachers and decision-makers) in higher education, within the next ten years. Particular attention should be paid to orienting women towards scientific and technological disciplines.

47. We consider that student involvement in decision-making bodies should be given a considerable boost, with greater attention paid to their needs by taking into consideration students' perspectives which are often relevant to the analyses of problems and to the search for viable solutions. Student involvement is also equally a means of inculcating the leadership skills needed in after-school life as workers and as citizens.

48. At the regional level, it would be necessary to organise regular meetings under the aegis of organs like the Association of African Universities, for exchanges on problems related to the management and funding of institutions of higher education. These meetings should be used to improve the operation of the institutions themselves and to develop the capacity for meaningful pressure on ministerial authorities in charge of higher education. The authorities should themselves be involved in these meetings.

49. We would suggest that, at the regional level, a student association forum be organised as a means of mobilising students to contribute to current efforts aimed at making higher education institutions more forceful, more active and more efficient partners, in the promotion of sustainable development in Africa. The conclusions of the forum could form Africa's contribution to the International Students' Forum to be held in Paris in 1998, as part of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights and at the World Conference on Higher Education.

To Reinforce Co-operation:

50. We invite existing associations of institutions and of subject specialists as well as national, regional and international organisations to support and co-ordinate actions and projects aimed at

establishing or strengthening inter-African and intercontinental networks working to reduce the gap between Africa and other regions by solving key regional development problems. Institutions of higher education should adopt a proactive policy in this connection and invest all their energy into fighting poverty, environmental degradation, discrimination of all kinds, and the ravages of conflicts.

51. We recommend that institutions of higher learning create networks of centres of excellence responding to the most pressing needs of the African continent, in terms of training, research and consultancy. Each institution should focus on an area of expertise in which it is likely to excel, as its contribution to a regional skill-sharing network. Such strategies of solidarity/complementarity could enable Africa to meet some of its contemporary challenges.

52. It would be necessary for UNESCO to organise in the near future an exchange and evaluation meeting for all existing networks such as the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs programme, UNISPAR, and the Commonwealth Secretariat. The meeting would promote the sharing of experience, reveal the factors responsible for their relative successes or failures, and co-ordinate and strengthen projects that offer the most viable solution to the problem of the Africa region.

53. The African Regional Convention and the international recommendation on the recognition of studies and diplomas should be strengthened through the promotion of academic and professional mobility of students, and academics. This would support the on-going regional integration process by using culture and education as a basis for political and economic unity. It would be desirable to strengthen associations whose aim is to harmonise the qualification awarded by higher education institutions in Africa (e.g. CAMES). UNESCO should take the lead in mobilising major regional and international organisations to create a region-wide mobility programme for students and academics. This has been done on other regions, one example being RIMA (Réseau International de Mobilité Académique or the International network for academic mobility) established by MERCOSUR.

54. We would further suggest that UNESCO works in concert with bilateral and multilateral co-operation agencies like the Commonwealth Secretariat and AUPELF-UREF, etc., for the early creation of priority area networks. These should include a research network on the use of new information and communications technologies, a network of teaching-learning resource units, a network of research units in education devoted to priority areas for Africa development, which could be grouped under UNESCO Chairs in Education. UNESCO should whenever possible, mobilise resources for co-operation on areas of common concern.

55. To respect the right to cultural diversity, we would urge UNESCO to assist in the creation of a network of lusophone institutions of higher education and to intensify its support to the activities of association of Portuguese and Spanish speaking universities as one other means of reinforcing South-South co-operation. The development of graduate programmes in Portuguese-speaking countries should be supported. Other regional networks could contribute their expertise in this area.

56. It goes without saying that the participation of students, teachers and researchers in the meetings and networks depends on relative ease of procedures for obtaining visas. We urge UNESCO to sensitise its Member States to this particular problem, so that they can simplify existing administrative procedures for obtaining visas.

57. Given these challenges and the expected roles of institutions of higher education, it would be necessary to reinforce the higher education unit of the Regional Office of UNESCO in Dakar (BREDA). The unit should play a more active role in the envisaged regionalisation strategies and also be the key actor in the synergy-building missions described in the above proposals. The Regional Advisory Committee on Co-operation in Education in Africa should include representatives of government organisations and NGOs working in the field of higher education.

58. It is further suggested that, as part of the NGO consultation process, UNESCO/Dakar organise a meeting with the participation of AAU, AUPELF-UREF, ACU, AULP and AIUP, as well as sub-regional organisations and bilateral co-operation and inter-governmental organisations such as CAMES, OAU, ECA, the Commonwealth Secretariat, etc., as a means of facilitating co-ordination into operative action plans as soon as possible.

59. We recommend that, with the assistance of UNESCO, stakeholders and organisations involved in the development of higher education in the region should translate these proposals into operative action plans as soon as possible.

60. We suggest further that the report of the Regional Consultation in Dakar be tabled at the next MINEDAF and the next summit of the OAU.

61. Finally, we request UNESCO to convene a meeting of experts at the end of the year 2001, to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations of this Regional Consultation.

Adopted in Dakar
4th April 1997
The Regional Consultation

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAU:	Association of African Universities
AUPELF-UREF:	Agence francophone pour l'enseignement supérieur et la recherche
ACU:	Association of Commonwealth Universities
AULP:	Association of Universities in Portuguese-speaking countries
AIUP:	Association Internationale des Présidents d'Universités
CAMES:	Conseil Africain et malgache pour l'enseignement supérieur
ECA:	Economic Commission for Africa

BEIRUT DECLARATION ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE ARAB STATES FOR THE XXIst CENTURY¹

We, the participants to the Arab States Regional Conference on Higher Education for the XXIst Century, held in Beirut, Lebanon, from 2 to 5 March 1998,

1. Recalling the terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that 'higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit' (article 26.1), and that such 'education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms' (article 26.2); Ratifying the contents of the Convention on the struggle against discrimination in the field of education (1960), which states that the Signatory States commit themselves 'to ... offer all people alike higher education on the basis of a real equality and to the skills of each individual ...' (article IV);
2. Recognizing the importance of the analysis and recommendations of the UNESCO Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education, the International Commission on Education for the XXIst Century, and the World Commission on Culture and Development;
3. Pointing out the view of the International Commission on Education for the XXIst Century that education throughout life should be based on four pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be, and that universities have a duty to carry out research that should contribute to solving the most serious problems facing developing countries;
4. Taking into account the recommendations made in United Nations, via (a) An agenda for peace, that contains principles and suggestions bearing on the preventive measures that will protect peace, as well as effective actions for restoring peace when uncontrollable conflicts emerge, and (b) An agenda for development, that sets the conceptual bases for fostering a sustainable and permanent human development. Also highlighting the need of the Region for a just and comprehensive peace allowing for learning opportunities for all and paving the way for the attainment of development;
5. Noting that the Arab States share common historical, language and cultural traditions and heritage, yet they show diversity with regard to demography, economic means, and educational traditions;
6. Pointing out that the globalization of economies and professional services and the rapid growth and in-depth transformation of information and communication technologies have resulted in increased demands for specialized professionals in every endeavour of life capable of sustaining high standards, calling for an increased appreciation of the role of higher education in the development and advancement of societies and for a revision of training and working methods of higher education graduates;
7. Acknowledging that significant progress has been made in recent years in the development and strengthening of higher education in the Arab States, leading to improved student access and more equitable representation of different social groups among graduates;
8. Supporting the initiative taken by H.R.H. Prince Talal bin Abdel-Aziz Al-Saud concerning the establishment of an Open Arab University as a model for unifying Arab efforts in the field of higher education;
9. Emphasizing the recommendations of the six ALECSO conferences of Ministers responsible for Higher Education and Scientific Research in Arab States since 1981, and those of the Fifth Regional Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Economic Planning (Cairo, 1994);

¹ Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education, Beirut, Lebanon, 2 - 5 March 1998

10. Noting that the main issues in higher education in the Arab States encompass the following:
- a- Higher education in the Arab States is under considerable strain, due to high rates of population growth and increasing social demand for higher education, which lead states and institutions to increase student enrolment, often without adequate allocated financial resources;
 - b- A number of Arab States are facing blockade, occupation, and external impediments and constraints limiting the expansion and development of higher education;
 - c- Although general rate of female enrolment in higher education is close to those observed at the international level, all Arab States look up to increasing this rate;
 - d- Management of higher education institutions is still heavily centralized, calling for more flexibility and for the participation in decision-making of all concerned parties;
 - e- The lack of close links between higher education institutions and general education and between universities and other post- secondary institutions, and weaknesses in students' orientation into the various streams of higher education on the basis of their skills and interests, have contributed to inflated enrolment in some disciplines and to obvious lower enrolment in applied and technological disciplines, to low internal efficiency, and to low quality of graduates, and led to pressures on institutions to provide remedial programmes in order to improve the quality of enrolled students;
 - f- Higher education institutions have, in most cases, not developed adequate programmes and projects to serve local communities and participate in their development;
 - g- The development of private and open universities, and of non-university institutions, is recent in most of the Arab States, and, thus far, has not alleviated pressures on public universities in such a manner as to permit the development, the diversification, and the expansion of higher education;
 - h- Status and conditions of higher education teaching personnel, while enormously varied among Arab States, do not often match some of the international standards as set in the Recommendation concerning the Status and Conditions of Higher Education Teaching Personnel adopted in 1997 by UNESCO General Conference;
 - i- Higher education institutions should be more sensitive to students' concerns, taking into account their needs in all endeavours of life during years of study, as to selection, curricula, teaching, and transition to working life. These institutions should allow students and their representatives to actively participate in decision-making concerning their academic and social life within the institution;
 - j- There is a need to promote new teaching and learning processes that better serve the development of scientific thinking skills;
 - k- As a result of international developments in science and technology, new demands have emerged for teaching personnel and researchers to increase co-operation with industry, and for continuing education of graduates;
 - l- Lack of highly qualified graduates in some disciplines is often accompanied with unemployment and under-employment of great numbers of graduates in other disciplines, while significant numbers of highly qualified Arab scholars lead academic careers abroad with little impact on higher education and scientific research in the Arab States;

In view of the above, we do hereby declare the following:

1. Higher education is essential for any country to achieve sustainable and global development. It is also essential for the enhancement of citizens' participation in public life, for social mobility, and for the achievement of harmony, justice, and just and comprehensive peace, at both internal and international levels, on the basis of the respect for human rights, active participation of citizens, and mutual respect.
2. Higher education should aim at the following: (a) to educate well-aware, autonomous and responsible citizens committed to national and universal principles, capable of dealing with the challenges of the Century and of lifelong learning, (b) to provide highly trained professionals to

meet the needs of government, the professions, and the productive and service sectors, (c) to provide expertise to assist in economic and social development, and in scientific and technological research, (d) to help conserve and disseminate national and regional cultures, drawing on the contributions from each generation, (e) to provide critical and detached perspectives concerning the strategic options and to contribute to human renewal by active contribution to the production of scientific knowledge, taking into account ethical issues, and addressing planetary challenges (such as population growth, peace, environment, etc.), (f) to undertake research and scholarship which contribute to the understanding, the anticipation and the solving of the most serious problems of the Region.

3. Determined efforts are necessary to further increase access to higher education to all groups of society. Open learning systems and other systems of education relying on modern technology can play a major role in widening access and can contribute to higher cultural achievements of Arab States citizens, if they are provided with the means to ensure quality. Diversification of institutions and programmes can also play a significant role on alleviating the strains put on traditional institutions by the ever growing social demand for higher education due to rapid growth rate of population and appeal of higher education for large sectors of society.
4. Arab States should devote determined efforts to improve general education as to ensure that graduates of this level of education master the essential competencies needed for life, including those necessary for the pursuit of higher education endeavours. Higher education institutions should actively participate in the efforts leading to improvement of pre-university education.
5. Arab States and their higher education institutions should adopt specific national and institutional plans of action in order to increase the participation in higher education of disadvantaged groups at all levels and in all disciplines, particularly females and the citizens under strenuous conditions due to occupation or blockade. They should work in co-operation with regional and international agencies in order to provide learning opportunities to deprived students and to permit them enrolment in higher education institutions within their countries.
6. All higher education systems and institutions should give a high priority to ensuring the quality of programmes, teaching, and outcomes. Structures, procedures, and standards for quality assurance should be developed at the regional and national levels commensurate with international guidelines while providing for variety according to the specificities of each country, institution, or programme. Further, higher education institutions need appropriate financial and human resources to achieve higher quality of education.
7. Modern information and communications technology (ICT) is already making radical changes in methods of teaching and learning in higher education by both on-campus and distance education students. It has the potential to make positive impact on quality, relevance, access and cost of higher education, if direct access to technical and cultural information resources is provided, and rapid communication among teachers and researchers is facilitated. These technologies allow for the establishment of networks between institutions and scholars and enhance their development and efficiency. They also contribute in the provision of courses and degree-awarding programmes through multiple and advanced means, thus breaking through the traditional barriers of space and time. The virtual capacity of these developments in teaching tools is almost limitless for improving distance, open and life-long learning, if the adequate conditions are ensured.
8. Access to scientific knowledge is an essential element of cultural and intellectual understanding and the further development of higher education institutions. With the increased emergence of digitalization and the increasing reliance on communication technologies as a means of storage and transfer of scholarly information, open and affordable access to communication networks becomes an important and indispensable element of quality of higher education institutions and programmes. Governments of Arab States should ensure that informatic and communication network infrastructure, personal computer facilities, and human resources training, now a globally recognized prerequisite for the normal functioning of higher education institutions and research centers, are adequately provided. Regional and international co-operation and development organizations are called upon to allocate technical and financial resources to support these developments in the Arab States.

9. While recognizing that globalization is a trend that could not be ignored nor avoided, it should not lead to dominance of some cultures and value systems on some others, nor to the emergence of new forms of hegemony. To this effect, it is of vital importance that every effort should be made to protect and promote the strengths of the Arab and Islamic culture and civilization as part of the major intellectual cultures in the world; at the same time, dialogue and cultural exchanges between the Arab States and the other world states should be maintained.
10. The concept of lifelong learning is of utmost importance. In rapidly changing economies, the labour market will constantly require new and various skills. Hence, mechanisms must be developed at higher education level to allow workforce in all fields to upgrade their skills and develop new competencies at regular intervals throughout their lives. Higher education institutions must offer learning opportunities in response to diverse and new demands and work co-operatively with other agencies and employers to ensure that appropriate and flexible programmes and courses are widely available and accessible to all citizens who need to update their knowledge and skills in order to effectively deal with such matters as population, labour, environment, etc. At the same time, higher education must take a leading role in the evolution of the world of work to better meet sustainable development requirements.
11. The involvement of all key stakeholders in decision-making in higher education institutions is of utmost importance, particularly the academics, the students, and the productive and service sectors, alongside with representatives of governmental agencies. Experience has demonstrated the value of such participation in enlightening the visions necessary for decision-making and the formulation of balanced higher education policy, both system wide and institutionally.
12. In view of its multiplier effects on social, cultural and economic development, public funding of higher education should be considered as an investment, the return of it being as much important as investment in all sectors. However, better use of allocated resources and other funding sources must be sought after as well as developing partnerships with the private sector and the society.
13. Co-operation among the Arab States, especially in higher education, through academic exchanges, twinning and networking arrangements, can make significant contributions in addressing major higher education policy matters, and facilitating the sharing of pioneering expertise and experiences. Arab co-operation is made easier in view of the common linguistic and cultural heritage of the Arab States. This co-operation should be reinforced especially at graduate studies, scientific research programmes, institutional research and development.
14. Freedom of movement of students and access to academic institutions across Arab States frontiers will strengthen the Arab cultural development and contribute efficiently to Arab integration in higher education.
15. There is a pressing need to develop a plan of action and guidelines to further develop higher education in the Arab States, especially related to the key issues of relevance, quality, management and finance, and co-operation which are defined as follows:

RELEVANCE refers to the fit between what higher education institutions provide and what society expects from them. Relevance requires from higher education to make an enhanced contribution to the development of the society as a whole, encompassing the development of the education system. Relevance also requires reciprocal harmonization with the world of work and the requirements of sustainable global development. Relevance requires higher education to contribute to the preservation, the enlargement, the deepening, and the dissemination of knowledge in such a manner as to help humankind solve the problems it faces. It also requires safeguarding cultural diversity, the quest for just and global peace and respect of human rights.

QUALITY refers to standards of inputs, processes, and outputs of a system, an institution, or a programme. It has no meaning without relevance. Quality is a multi-dimensional concept and embraces all the functions and activities of higher education, i.e. academic programmes, research, and community services, in all their features and components: infrastructure, equipment, human resources, students, objectives, nature and content of programmes, delivery modes and implementation practices, academic and socio-cultural environment, etc. Quality mechanisms are implemented through continuous assessments and comparisons

between observed and intended processes and constant search for the sources of dysfunctions to correct them.

MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE cover, on one hand, issues related to internal management of institutions, funding and resources, and, on the other hand, the relations of higher education institutions with the state, and other stakeholders. Higher education authorities and institutions need to adopt long-term strategies aiming at embodying the institutions in the whole social tissue they serve, i.e. the Governmental bodies, the professions, the education sector, the productive and service sectors, and the socio-cultural environment. As for financing, despite the general trend towards diversifying sources of funding, governmental support for higher education and research remains essential to ensure achievement of educational and social missions of educational institutions. Furthermore, with the extension of private investment in higher education, appropriate mechanisms of accreditation and monitoring should be developed to guarantee access, equity, quality, and the rights of students.

CO-OPERATION at the national, regional, and international levels through advanced methods and mechanisms fit for the XXIst Century is essential for higher education institutions in order for them to adequately fulfill the missions entrusted with them.

PLAN OF ACTION

Based on the principles, observations, and recommendations set out in the Declaration on Higher Education in the Arab States for the XXIst Century adopted by the Conference, and considering the need for the renewal of systems through the adoption of new policies and paradigms for higher education founded on such concepts as globalization of knowledge, lifelong learning, sustainable development, preservation of cultural diversity, transparency and accountability, and involvement of all stakeholders, the following recommendations were adopted by the Conference:

First: The Arab States must fulfill their commitments to higher education and meet the pledges made at regional and international conferences with regard to the provision of adequate structures and human and financial resources as to enable higher education to adequately face the challenges of the XXIst Century. This includes the following:

- a) setting up of policies and legislations as well as establishment of effective mechanisms dealing with the overall governance of higher education system and institutions, with due consideration to the promotion of institutional autonomy and the participation of all sectors concerned;
- b) establishment of rules and regulations to ensure the protection, at higher education institutions, of basic rights (e.g., access by merit, equality of treatment, etc.) and freedoms, especially academic freedom;
- c) establishment of accountability measures proper to achieve stated goals, and to ensure quality of inputs, processes and outcomes;
- d) enabling higher education institutions fulfill their multiple duties towards society;
- e) providing for modern communication technology in order to ensure unconditional access to accumulated human knowledge;
- f) promoting partnerships with industry, and productive and service sectors, and other governmental or non-governmental relevant institutions.

Second: Higher education institutions must define their missions in harmony with the overall aims and principles as defined by the Declaration and Plan of action approved by the Conference. These missions should be translated into well-defined objectives, with allocation of the required resources, and the establishment of concrete mechanisms proper to ensure adequate monitoring and evaluation of progress and achievements based on observable indicators. A framework for evaluation and monitoring should thus be established and strengthened in all institutions, with proper structures and resources.

Third: Joint Action Plans must be established to ensure the further development of higher education in the Arab countries, optimize efficiency, and prevent duplication of efforts. Co-operation between organizations which promote the development of human resources, particularly within the framework of institutionalized networks, at the global, regional, and national levels, offers great potentials for the enhanced mobilization of resources.

Responsibility for this mobilization lies on international and regional organizations dealing with inter-university co-operation, as well as the associations of universities and higher education institutions, private and public universities, institutions of research, development organizations and agencies, governmental and non-governmental institutions. Concerned agencies active in the Arab Region, particularly ALECSO, ISESCO, ABEGS, the Association of Arab Universities, the Arab Federation of Councils for Scientific Research, and the Arab Federation for Technical Education, could play an important role in strengthening existing networks and in building new regional networks leading to the solution of pressing problems of higher education and of the societies of the Arab States. The Association of Islamic Universities, and other cross-regional and international organizations could also play a role in finding solutions to problems of common interests. Partnerships with world organizations and institutions are particularly sought after. The mass media should also be called on to support these initiatives.

Fourth: UNESCO, through the joint efforts of Headquarters, Regional Offices, and its centres, institutes or units specialized in higher education in other regions, in co-operation with other UN agencies such as UNDP and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Higher Education NGOs, and UNESCO Chairs and Networks, must reinforce its programmes of higher education in the Arab States, including its contribution to the development of the whole education system. In particular, UNESCO must reinforce its unit in Higher Education at its Beirut Office, so that this may, in conjunction with the other relevant bodies and units:

- a) encourage studies, projects and research activities to support the elaboration of public policies and other initiatives related to higher education, and promote public understanding of the value of higher education. In particular, UNESCO should sponsor regional projects aiming at (1) the development and implementation of new ideas concerning the governance of higher education systems and institutions, (2) the development and sustainable implementation of a framework for quality assurance, (3) the implementation of structures dealing with research and institutional development, (4) the elaboration of common understandings as regards to the role, functions and functioning of higher education private institutions, and (5) the elaboration of programmes aiming at establishing close links between social problems and concerns and higher education institutions and support for their implementation;
- b) provide managers of higher education with opportunities for the discussion of issues, current problems, and long-term challenges related to higher education;
- c) foster training for teaching personnel and managers of higher education institutions;
- d) co-ordinate the implementation of UNESCO/UNITWIN Chairs Programme in the Arab States and, in particular, stimulate the development of centres of excellence, through the creation of specialized networks, with special attention given to networks for distance education, teachers training, the utilization of information and communication technologies, and institutional development in higher education;
- e) work in partnership with regional and international organizations, associations, and networks.

In addition, UNESCO is called upon to reinforce its current programmes, carried out by the UNESCO Cairo Office, for assisting Arab universities in developing their co-operation infrastructure and acquiring the knowledge and skills of information and communication technologies and in using these technologies for upgrading the quality of their teaching in fundamental and applied sciences.

Member States and donor organizations of the Arab Region are called upon to support UNESCO to enable it carry on the above mentioned programmes and activities for the benefit of all Arab States.

Fifth: The elaboration of decisions and plans taken by all the bodies mentioned above should be based on the principles stated below.

1- RELEVANCE

i. Access to higher education

1. Arab governments must expand and diversify opportunities for every citizen to upgrade his or her qualifications and develop higher-level personal, academic and citizenship competencies such as those provided in higher education institutions. Appropriate strategies should be elaborated and implemented and serious efforts should be made to increase participation rates in higher education, particularly for those already involved in the world of work or drop-outs of the educational system, through flexible programmes and schedules, allowing for part-time study and diversified short qualifying or diploma-driven programmes.
2. Distance education and open learning constitute important alternative delivery systems of higher education. Governments should provide the legislative and regulatory frameworks in order for such schemes to be developed. They also should encourage such initiatives and facilitate their operation through easy access to modern communication networks and recognition of the qualifications earned without neglecting the basic requirements for quality assurance and the relevance of outcomes.

ii. The world of work

3. In order to facilitate the elaboration of national educational plans and to improve the capacity of higher education institutions to align their policies with national priorities, governments should create or reinforce planning mechanisms to monitor trends and needs of the labour market, in close, continuous, and interactive partnership with higher education institutions and the productive and service sectors. "Observatories" may be created to monitor short- and long-term trends of the world of work and the harmonization needed between these trends and higher education policies and programmes.
4. Higher education institutions must help shape the labour market by identifying the needs of the social and economic sectors for new professionals and specialists. New disciplines and specializations should be introduced into the curriculum of higher education institutions. At the same time, job opportunities should be created for the graduates of these disciplines by a joint effort of governments, enterprises, and the higher education community. Higher education institutions should also provide school dropouts and those already in the workforce flexible opportunities to upgrade their competencies and knowledge levels, as well as to profit from retraining and career-switching.
5. Special attention should be given to the development of study programmes at the professional level, particularly by introducing or expanding higher colleges of technology, and at the graduate level, by expanding master's and Ph.D. programmes, with due regard to designing specialized learning material of specific disciplines of high quality relevant to societal needs and delivered through new information and communication technologies.
6. Curricula should be organized to stimulate the entrepreneurial skills of students, grounded on flexible, innovative, and interdisciplinary approaches, as to break the general trend towards the dependence of most graduates on public employment. Incubator projects which help create new enterprises should be fostered with the support of governments, the productive and service sectors, and local communities. In addition, more industry-based projects and new paradigms of university-industry partnership must be instituted. UNESCO, UNIDO, UNDP, the World Bank, AGFUND, Islamic Development Bank, and other development funding agencies could be sought after to assist in this matter.

iii. Responsibility towards other education levels

7. Higher education must take up its duties towards other levels of education. This is needed not only to ensure that students are better prepared for higher education, but also to ensure that pupils experience less failures, stay longer in schools, and are given educational and guidance services appropriate to their abilities and interests. To this effect, auxiliary educational services should be created at all levels of education and services should be provided to all students who require them. Moreover, in view of the ever increasing rates of illiteracy in some Arab States, of the negative effects of illiteracy on economic and social development, and of the enormous human potential of the hundred thousands of students

enrolled in higher education, higher education community should take a leading role in combating illiteracy, particularly among girls and women.

8. To act on its responsibility and role towards the whole education system, higher education in the Arab States should actively participate (a) in the improvement of the quality of general education, (b) in the renovation of teacher and other educational personnel training schemes aiming at more professionalization, (c) in conducting research on social and educational variables that may reduce school failure and dropout, and in recommending appropriate educational approaches and policy alternatives, etc., (d) in the development, in close, continuous, and interactive partnership with education authorities and institutions, of activity programmes and direct services to the education community aiming at helping the education system reach the objectives of education for all as set in Jomtien Conference (1990). Networks and Chairs in educational sciences should be created and reinforced as part of the strategy to achieve these ends.

iv. Major social problems

9. Higher education institutions should contribute to the development of students' personal awareness, commitment, and capacity to cope, at the personal as well as at the professional levels, with the major social issues facing humankind, such as population, poverty, illiteracy, public health, protection of the environment, protection of cultural diversity, social participation, human rights and international understanding, etc. All higher education study programmes should include courses dealing with these issues with appropriate concrete applications according to students' fields of specializations.
10. Arab higher education should take active part in facilitating access to and harnessing of modern technology and scientific discoveries by all members of the educational community and by the public at large. It has a special responsibility, alongside with the media, towards the passage of Arab societies to information and communication age. In particular, all higher education teaching, technical, and administrative personnel, and all students of all disciplines must be provided with the necessary training that enables them to integrate new information and communication technologies into their work.

v. Regional integration

11. Higher education institutions must promote processes aiming at Arab integration, starting at the cultural and educational levels, with the view to attain economic and political integration. The adoption of common standards for quality assessment and recognition of educational and professional qualifications constitutes a step forward towards such an integration, as well as the adoption of common core study programmes in the various professional fields. The implementation of common research projects may constitute another way towards this end. Intensive efforts should be devoted to studying the economic, social, cultural, ecological and political obstacles to integration and the strategies and actions needed to overcome these obstacles.

2- QUALITY

12. Each Arab State should establish a mechanism for evaluating the quality of its higher education at the systemic, institutional, programme, personnel, and outcomes levels. Quality assurance methods may include academic accreditation, institutional evaluations or sector reviews by disciplines and professional areas, performance funding, competency-based approaches to professional education and training.
13. Appropriate emphasis needs to be placed on the renewal of curricula, on continuous assessment of teaching and learning approaches and the adoption of new ones, as well as the promotion of multidisciplinary studies. The utilization of multi-media and the Internet must all be used, with due consideration to promote interaction between students, teachers, and managers.
14. Governments and institutions of higher education must adopt appropriate strategies for the recruitment and training of teaching personnel, for their further professional development and for recognition of their achievements. Legislative bodies, governments, and higher education institutions should take the necessary measures to implement the Recommendation

concerning the Status and Conditions of Higher Education Teaching Personnel, approved by the 29th Session of UNESCO General Conference (Paris, 1997).

15. Each higher education institution should establish a center for the professional development and the improvement of the teaching performance of its teaching personnel.
16. Higher education institutions should modernize libraries and take the necessary measures to provide for scientific equipment and guarantee its modernization within the framework of their long-term plans. In this context, regional and international co-operation should particularly be enhanced as to ensure to students and academics from Arab States adequate access to scientific equipment and information that could not be made available due to limited budgets and resources.
17. Higher education institutions must provide each student with orientation and study skills training, and pave the way for him to play an efficient role in society.
18. Appropriate strategies should be developed in order to strengthen research capacity at higher education institutions, including research aiming at the acquisition, the broadening, and the deepening of knowledge and publishing its results. Conducting such research should be an obligation to all members of the teaching personnel at higher education institutions. States and institutions should provide for proper structures, equipment, and staff, as well as the necessary financial support as to ensure the involvement of teaching personnel in research and publication activities. Co-operative programmes at the national, regional, and international levels should be encouraged, including linking of higher education institutions, centres, and laboratories to government and industry research laboratories.

3- MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

i. Governance and management systems

19. Autonomy of higher education institutions of the Arab States should be fostered. This includes, among other things, the freedom to select staff and students, to determine the conditions under which they remain in the institution, to determine the curriculum and degree standards, to allocate resources for different activities, and to select research topics. Institutional autonomy should be accompanied by a high level of responsibility and accountability and the widest possible participation of students, faculty, and administration in decision-making.
20. Governments should consider creating or reinforcing agencies that act as buffer between concerned ministries and higher education institutions and provide advice on such matters as organization, accountability and quality assurance, allocation of resources, and the administration of grants and financial assistance, with due consideration to the fact that higher education implies that its appraisal cannot be restricted to economic quantitative indicators alone.
21. Opportunities should be given, wherever possible, to government, and the professional and productive sectors to participate in decision-making concerning management and organization of higher education.
22. Management capacities in higher education should be strengthened by appropriate training and staff development programmes for all managers, especially those in executive positions, the adoption of clear job descriptions and decision-making channels, the improvement of managerial procedures, and the introduction of computerized management systems.
23. Each higher education institution should establish a unit staffed with experienced qualified personnel with the mandate to conduct the necessary studies and research and to propose strategies and actions aiming at the institutional development and the improvement of management. Its studies can include, inter alia, such matters as planning and management, evaluation of training and service programmes and the introduction of new ones, the development of distance education schemes, the condition of women and the strategies to enhance their participation at the different levels of the institution. To this end, UNESCO Chairs and Networks could be developed and implemented in the Arab States.

ii. **Financial resources**

24. Arab States must renew the commitments made by them at the social Development Summit in Copenhagen and at other world bodies to "make new and additional resources available" and thus increase their budgets allocated to education in general and to higher education in particular, measured as a percentage of their gross national product.
25. Even though the state should remain the main party responsible for funding higher education, diversification of funding sources, in particular, through cost recovery of extra-academic activities, and encouragement of various income-generating activities, such as contract research, cultural and academic services, short-term courses, etc... should actively be sought after. This could only be achieved by the involvement of all stakeholders, the public and private sectors, local communities, academic associations, and non-governmental organizations. Legislative bodies should play a leading role in the matter by the adoption of appropriate measures to encourage diversification of funding sources with due consideration to ensuring access to higher education according to merit, and equity.
26. In order to assure high-quality research, it is required to adopt adequate systems for public and private support to research undertaken at higher education institutions, as well as to double the existing level of funding.
27. The complementary role of private institutions of higher education must be recognized. Governments should provide a legal framework to regulate private higher education institutions and develop appropriate mechanisms for accreditation, diploma recognition, and licensing, in addition to setting standards for quality assurance and adequacy of the required educational facilities and services.

4- **CO-OPERATION**

28. Each institution of higher education must envisage the creation of a specialized unit for managing Arab and international co-operation. These units must develop international linkages, such as those for the exchange of students and teaching personnel, and other academic co-operation activities. As well, they must co-operate within the framework of the activities of international organizations and bilateral agreements.
29. International and Regional organizations must support projects aiming at reinforcing co-operation between higher education institutions through the establishment and strengthening of higher education networks, and support to the activities of existing associations, especially the Association of Arab Universities, the Arab Federation of Councils for Scientific Research and the Arab Federation for Technical Education
30. Higher education institutions should strengthen their endogenous and co-operative capacities related to priority issues in the Arab States. Centers of excellence can have a positive impact on the solution of major social problems related to the environment, demographic growth, sustainable development, research on higher education, educational research, institutional management, teaching staff professional development, arabization of higher education, provision of communication technologies, technology transfer, the protection of cultural heritage, etc...
31. The exchange of knowledge and experience between higher education institutions in the Arab States must be carried out in a spirit of solidarity and be the basis for co-operation agreements between them. Within their capacity, UNESCO and other international and regional governmental and non-governmental organizations should respond to the request to provide technical assistance to smaller and poor countries.
32. A special effort must be undertaken to re-build the higher education system in Palestine and in occupied territories, to remove the barriers which the military occupation places that prevent the free movement of students and faculty members, and that hinder access to research and study. Concerned parties should endeavour to stop all measures that threaten the safety and security of students and staff of institutions of higher education. At the same time, appropriate pressures must be exerted to remove obstacles to the free exchange of students and academics between Palestine and the Arab States. Finally, Arab institutions of Higher education are urged to continue their policies supporting access of qualified Palestinian students to higher education.

33. The establishment of the Arab Open University must be encouraged in the light of the results of the studies pertaining to it.
 34. Regional co-operation projects in the field of teaching staff personnel and their professional development should be reinforced. Arab States are urged to encourage the establishment of the Arab University for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research.
 35. A series of actions should be undertaken by governments and higher education systems in the Arab States following the recommendations of the Regional Committee responsible for the application of the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees of Higher Education in the Arab States; in particular:
 - exchange of information and documentation with regional committees of other regions;
 - development of inter-regional co-operation among national documentation centers for the recognition of studies and diplomas;
 - development of capacities in view of collection, treatment and dissemination of information in order to facilitate the recognition of studies and diplomas in higher education;
 - development of research aiming at facilitating the recognition of studies and diplomas, on subjects or themes such as academic and professional mobility, recognition of skills and experiences, etc...
 36. Within the framework of the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees of Higher Education, governments, institutions of higher education, professional bodies and international organizations must encourage student, academic and professional mobility to benefit the process of economic, educational, political and cultural integration in the Arab States and to develop mutually accepted standards for the recognition of diplomas. In this action, attention should be paid to incorporate the Arabic dimension as an integral part of teaching and research. Furthermore, all efforts should be made to remove practical, administrative and legal obstacles to academic exchange at institutional, national and international levels.
- 5- **FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**
37. Governments, higher education institutions, and all stakeholders concerned with the development of higher education in the Arab States must translate the recommendations of this plan of action into operational projects as soon as possible.
 38. For improving the systems of co-operation in the Arab States, an evaluation of existing networks, including those established within the framework of UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs programme, should be carried out.
 39. UNESCO, with the support of governments and other organizations, must convene a meeting of experts in 2002 or 2003 to evaluate and follow-up the implementation of the recommendations of Beirut Conference.

DECLARATION ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

We, participants of the Asia and Pacific Regional Conference on Higher Education National Strategies and Regional Co-operation for the 21st Century,¹

1. **Recalling**, on one hand, the terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states in article 26 that "every person has the right to education"...and that "higher education shall be accessible to all, on the basis of merit", and, on the other hand, the UNESCO Constitution which encourages institutional exchanges in the area of education;
2. **Recognizing** the importance of the analysis and recommendations of the Policy Paper on Change and Development in Higher Education launched by UNESCO in 1995 and resulting from a world-wide reflection on the role of higher education in society; the view of the International Commission on Education for the XXI Century that "Universities in developing countries have a duty to carry out research that should contribute to solving the most serious problems facing these countries"; and the conclusion of the World Commission on Culture and Development that development is "a far more complex undertaking than had been originally thought" and that it should not be "seen as a single, uniform, linear path, for this would inevitably eliminate cultural diversity and experimentation, and dangerously limit humankind's creative capacities in the face of a treasured past and an unpredictable future";
3. **Noting** the exceptional diversity of and variety within the Asia and Pacific region with regard to demography, religion, culture, ethnicity and education, with the most populous nations existing alongside small states, and the region including not only some of the fastest growing and wealthiest economies but also some of the poorest; and further noting that this region has been characterized as the cradle of civilization, of the world's great religions and philosophies, and the earliest educational systems,
4. **Pointing out** that the rapid growth and in-depth transformation of societies and of key regional economies has resulted in a new appreciation of the role of higher education in technological development and increased demands for specialized professionals, while the increasing use of new information and communications technologies provides exciting possibilities for innovation in course design and delivery, for access to intellectual resources and for building new networks of experts and institutions, thus requiring that the concept and practices of lifelong learning be further developed;
5. **Acknowledging** that as the countries of the region draw closer together through trade, improved transportation and rapid communications into a seemingly common destiny, each one is consciously fostering its own sense of identity and nationhood, and rediscovering its cultural heritage and the value of its languages. In recent years, the region has demonstrated impressive capacity for innovation, especially in the application of science and technology, and exceptionally high rates of economic growth. In 1960, Asia had only 4 per cent of the world-wide GNP, whereas it now accounts for 25 per cent, with this figure being predicted to reach 30 per cent by the year 2000. However, in many professional fields there are on-going serious shortages in the supply of qualified professionals while rapid growth has resulted in major urban and social problems, and serious degradation of the environment.
6. **Observing** that significant progress has been made in recent years in the development and strengthening of higher education within the countries of the region, particularly leading to improved student access, strengthened research and postgraduate programmes, more equitable representation of different social groups among graduates, renewed curricula and adoption of new teaching and delivery methods, and enhanced institutional management and strategic planning capacity. At the same time, many nations of the region are still far from achieving a desirable number and quality of graduates required by the new economic situation.

¹ Tokyo, Japan, 8 - 10 July 1997

7. **Noting** that the main trends in higher education in the region include the following:
- Higher education across the region is under considerable strain. Student enrolments continue to increase resulting in further pressure on public funding for higher education institutions; the level of financial resources is often considered inadequate and there is widespread evidence of experimentation to diversify funding sources, including reinforced links with the productive sector;
 - Gender inequality, particularly among students, academic staff and senior management, continues to be an issue of considerable concern at all levels in the majority of countries. In a number of countries at the undergraduate level, female participation has approached or exceeded 50 per cent of enrolments, but generally female students are concentrated in "traditional" feminine disciplines. In many countries, women constitute no more than 20 per cent or 30 per cent of academics, while in other instances women are practically excluded from participation in higher education at all;
 - In many countries, higher education institutions are heavily concentrated in urban areas, whereas the majority of the population lives in rural areas, thus requiring new mechanisms to address rural disadvantage; other disadvantaged sectors of society, such as those with disabilities, are not adequately served;
 - As a result of international developments in science and technology and their impact on both economic development and social lifestyle, new demands have emerged for researchers, technicians and other specialised professionals and for an increased level of co-operation with industry in R&D. Frequently there are serious mismatches in the demand for and supply of highly trained personnel, especially in countries undergoing rapid economic growth and industrialization;
 - Dramatic increases have occurred in the number of private higher education institutions, with accompanying diversification in structures, curriculum and teaching methods and management approaches resulting from both internal factors (such as changes in academic disciplines and new instructional methods) and external factors (such as population growth, the need to cater for more diverse clienteles and changing labour market requirements). Particularly important has been the development of non-university institutions and the establishment of open universities and distance learning systems;
 - There is increasing concern in many countries with regard to the quality of courses, facilities, staff and graduates and the deterioration of infrastructure (laboratories, buildings and libraries) and a lack of scientific equipment;
 - Unemployment of graduates especially in countries undergoing rapid transition, and lack of highly qualified professionals from less developed nations, have unfortunate long-term consequences for a number of countries of the region;
 - Many leaders of higher education in the region see the need for better integration of western concepts and values with Eastern philosophy and culture;
 - In many countries, teaching and learning procedures are often based largely on memorization and recall, which do not develop analytical and problem-solving skills. Frequently, undue emphasis is placed on the immediate utility of knowledge rather than on fundamental wisdom while the persistence of dogmatic approaches in education seriously hinders the development of enquiring minds;
 - The lack of close links, in many countries, between universities and other post-secondary institutions, and between higher education institutions and secondary school is a matter of on-going concern;
8. **Recognizing** the various initiatives taken over the past decade by several governmental and non-governmental organizations and higher education institutions (e.g. debates in the framework of APEC for the formulation of a regional programme in higher education for human resource development; restoration of the activities of the SEAMEO Regional Institute for Higher Education and Development (RIHED); the recent formation of the Association of Universities of Asia and Pacific (AUAP); establishment of the UMAP University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific Programme (UMAP) which aims at promoting student mobility at undergraduate level; the formation of the UNESCO-supported Asia Pacific Higher Education

Network (APHEN) to foster research collaboration; progress with the UNESCO Chairs, UNITWIN and UNISPAR Programmes and the conclusions of various conferences on higher education issues and reforms hosted by different countries of the region;

9. **Taking into account** the conclusions of the Sixth Regional Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Economic Planning in Asia and the Pacific, organized by UNESCO in co-operation with ESCAP, which called for support for regional and national programmes to encourage mobility, networking and quality monitoring in higher education; Resolution No. 1.6 adopted by the twenty-eighth session of the General Conference of UNESCO in November 1995, which called for the strengthening of regional co-operation in higher education in Asia and the Pacific notably by taking appropriate measures to establish a Regional Programme in Higher Education in UNESCO's Bangkok Office and which invited the Director General to ensure that development of the programme be discussed "in a regional conference on higher education for the preparation of a world conference on higher education planned for 1998"; and the results of various recent major meetings within the region, including those at Armidale, Penang, Tokyo and Xiamen, and the instructional Conference which took place in Manila where a special Declaration was approved;

We, the participants of the Asia and Pacific Regional Conference on National Strategies and Regional Co-operation for the 21st Century, assembled in Tokyo, Japan, from 8 to 10 July 1997, do hereby declare that:

- 1- Higher education is essential for any country to reach the necessary level of economic and social development and social mobility in order to achieve increased living standards and internal and international harmony and peace based on democracy, tolerance and mutual respect. At the end of the century, we reaffirm that the aims of higher education can be summarised as follows: to educate responsible and committed citizens, to provide highly trained professionals to meet the needs of industry, government and the professions; to provide expertise to assist in economic and social development, and in scientific and technological research; to help conserve and disseminate national and regional cultures, drawing on the contributions from each generation; to help protect values by addressing moral and ethical issues; and to provide critical and detached perspectives to assist in the discussion of strategic options and to contribute to humanistic renewal;
- 2- All higher education systems and institutions should give a high priority to ensuring the quality of provision and outcomes. However, great care should be taken in making comparisons between the achievement of different higher education systems and institutions since it is not possible to arrive at one set of standards applicable to all countries and institutions and against which institutions can be assessed. Further, higher education institutions need appropriate financial and human resource to achieve quality of provision;
- 3- Modern information and communications technology provides considerable promise to enhance teaching and learning in higher education by both on-campus and distance education students, and disabled students who tend to be denied access to traditional institutions, provide access to technical and scholarly information resources, and to facilitate communications among researchers and teachers and the establishment and enhancement of networks of institutions and scholars. Already the notion of the virtual university is being actively explored within the region. At the same time, harnessing this technology will require considerable investment in hardware, software and staff development, while deliberate efforts to ensure that the human and social interaction elements of education are not undervalued.
- 4- Access to scholarly communication is an essential element of cultural understanding and the further development of higher education institutions. With the increased emergence of digitalization and the increasing reliance on telecommunications as a means of scholarly communication, it is important that access to communication be open and affordable. Governments of the region should work to ensure that control of telecommunications links and software infrastructure is widely shared;
- 5- While recognizing that globalization and internationalization are irreversible trends, support for these concepts should not lead to dominance or new forms of imperialism by major cultures and value systems from outside the region; rather, it is of vital importance that every effort should be taken to protect and promote the strengths of local cultures and intellectual and scholarly traditions;

- 6- Regional co-operation among the countries of the region, especially in higher education, can make significant contributions in addressing major policy problems, strengthening national capacity in economic and social development, and facilitating the sharing of important expertise and experience. Regional co-operation is especially desirable in view of the diversity of the region and the potential for dynamic collaboration. In addition, higher education institutions should explore opportunities to promote processes aiming at regional integration without losing diversity;
- 7- Involvement in decision-making by all key stakeholders of higher education institutions is of utmost importance. Experience has demonstrated the value of such participation in bringing to decision-making a variety of different perspectives.
- 8- The concept of lifelong learning is of utmost importance. In rapidly changing economies, the labour market will constantly require new and different skills and so mechanisms must be enhanced to allow professionals to upgrade their skills at regular intervals and develop new competencies. People's needs of lifelong learning have expanded in all countries of the region. Higher education institutions thus must offer learning opportunities in response to diverse demands and work co-operatively with other agencies and employers to ensure that appropriate courses are widely available. Ready access and flexibility in timing are of utmost importance.
- 9- Determined efforts are necessary to increase access to higher education, especially for groups currently poorly represented. Distance education and open learning can play a major role in widening access.
- 10- There is an urgent need to develop a plan of action and accompanying guidelines for co-operation especially related to the key issues of relevance, quality, management and finance, and co-operation which are summarised as follows:

Relevance refers to the fit between what higher education institutions do and what society expects of them. Relevance requires higher education to make an enhanced contribution to the development of the whole education system, notably through improved teacher education and educational research, and through reinforcement of its community service functions, including activities to eliminate poverty, hunger and disease. Relevance requires better articulation with the world of work and democratization of access to higher education, wider opportunities for participation during the various stages of life as well as the full involvement of the higher education community in the search for solutions to pressing human problems, such as population control, environmental degradation, and the quest for peace, international understanding, democracy and human rights. Academic freedom and responsible institutional autonomy particularly in the core academic functions are crucial for the achievement of the goal of relevance.

Quality refers to standards of resourcing and provision, and the achievements or outputs of an institution or system. Quality is a multi-dimensional concept and it is not possible to arrive at one set of quality standards applicable to all countries and against which institutions can be assessed. Quality embraces all the main functions and activities of higher education: teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, infrastructure and the academic environment. It can be implemented through comparisons between observed and intended outcomes and constant analysis of the sources of dysfunction. Both internal self evaluation and external review are vital components of any well developed quality assurance system. The concept of accountability is closely allied with quality. No system of higher education can fulfil its mission unless it demands the highest quality of itself. Continuous and permanent assessment is necessary to reach this objective. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that great care must be exercised in making quality assessments since it involves matters of judgement, academic values and cultural understanding.

Management and Finance covers both internal institutional management, funding and resource issues, as well as relations of higher education institutions with the state and national planning and co-ordination. Higher education institutions need to adopt forward-looking management practices which respond to the needs of their environments and which are articulated in their missions. Today, despite the general trend towards diversified sources of funding, public support for higher education and research remains essential to ensure achievement of educational and social missions. Both institutions and national agencies can

develop appropriate strategies to strengthen management, planning and policy analysis capacities.

Co-operation at the national, regional and international levels is essential as, today, no institution can realistically expect to attain the highest standard in every field by itself. Furthermore, the steady advance of information and communication technologies must facilitate inter-university co-operation. Society as a whole must in a democratic system support education at all levels. Mobilization for this purpose depends on the awareness and involvement of Parliaments, the media and governmental and non-governmental organizations.

PLAN OF ACTION

Based on the principles, observations and recommendations set out in the Declaration of Higher Education approved by the Conference, and considering that strong support is needed for the renewal of systems through new policies and new paradigms for higher education founded on such concepts as sustainable development, lifelong education, globalization of knowledge, continuity of the reform process, anticipatory capacity, transparency and accountability, involvement of Parliaments and the media, and preservation of cultural identity and values, the following is recommended:

Joint Action Plans must be established, in order to prevent duplicated efforts, to optimize efficiency and to ensure the further development of higher education through the enhanced mobilization of additional resources, by international and regional organizations dealing with inter-university co-operation and strengthening of global networks, by all regional, sub-regional and national associations of universities and higher education institutions, by the representatives of private and public universities, by networks of institutions for research and teaching, as well as by development organizations and agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations. The United Nations University and, in particular, the Institute of Advanced Studies in Tokyo, should co-operate with higher education institutions of the region in strengthening networks and in building global networks leading to the solution of pressing global problems of human survival and welfare. The mass media of the region should be called on to support these initiatives.

Governments and Parliaments must fulfil their commitments to higher education and be accountable for pledges made at regional and world conferences over the past decade with regard to the provision of human and financial resources. This includes, inter alia, the establishment of effective new mechanisms to deal with policy and legislation, appropriate follow-up activities, monitoring and evaluation of progress towards the achievement of stated goals and the promotion of institutional autonomy.

Each higher education institution must define its mission in harmony with the overall goals of the sector itself, translate this mission into observable indicators and allocate the required resources. The culture of evaluation should thus be established or strengthened in all institutions. These plans of actions should be based on the principles mentioned above and on the principles and considerations of the Declaration approved by this conference and on the proposals stated in this plan of action.

UNESCO, through the joint efforts of Headquarters, PROAP and other regional offices in Asia and the Pacific and specialised agencies such as the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), and in co-operation with other UN agencies such as the Economic and Social Council of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), must reinforce the programmes of higher education in Asia and the Pacific, including its contribution to the development of the whole education system, and, in particular, must reinforce its Unit in Higher Education at its Bangkok Office, so that this may:

- carry out studies, analyses, projects and research activities to support the elaboration of public policies and other initiatives related to higher education in the region. In particular, UNESCO should sponsor a regional process to explore the possibility of developing a framework for quality assessment to feed into the 1998 UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in Paris;
- provide a venue for the discussion of issues, current problems, long-term challenges and opportunities related to higher education in the region;

- foster training for leaders and senior managers of higher education institutions in the region;
- function as information centre that supports both the work of research groups and of the academic community in the field of higher education in Asia and the Pacific, as well as that of civil society, the state and the productive sector.
- co-ordinate the implementation of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme in the region and, in particular, to stimulate the development of regional centres of excellence, through the creation of thematic or geographical networks (with special attention given to networks for innovation, for the utilization of new technologies and for distance education and also for studies on higher education issues);
- work in partnership with regional institutions, associations and networks;
- act as a regional clearing house for inter-country information on higher education institutions and systems in Asia and the Pacific.

The elaboration of plans and decisions taken by the organizations mentioned above should be based on the principles stated below:

Relevance

Major social problems of humankind

1. Higher education must give every student the philosophical, historical, psychological and anthropological foundations of knowledge with regard to humankind, its environment and its different societies. In addition, the motivations, aspirations, transactions and achievements of different peoples, within the context of their respective histories and cultures must be communicated.
2. Higher education must support research and pilot curriculum projects which provide expertise to facilitate access to modern technology and scientific discoveries, but which also lead to the understanding, appreciation, internationalization and dissemination of human and societal values, with special attention to the goals of peace and democracy and the protection of the environment.

Responsibility towards other education levels

3. Higher education must act on its responsibility and role towards other levels of education. This is needed not only to ensure that students are better prepared for higher education, but also to bring to bear the resources and expertise of the higher education community to the tasks of teacher training, socio-economic research on such education variables as school retention and repetition, appropriate pedagogies, and educational policy alternatives, thereby improving education at all levels.

Regional integration

4. Higher education institutions must promote processes aimed at regional integration. Furthermore, cultural and educational integration should be the bases for political and economic integration. In a global environment, higher education institutions must approach their studies on regional integration in the light of the specific economic, social, cultural, ecological and political aspects involved.

Access

5. Governments must expand and diversify opportunities for every citizen to benefit from higher-level skills, training, knowledge and information which are the qualifications for entry into the world of work. Serious efforts should be made to increase participation rates in higher education. Appropriate strategies should be taken for increasing the participation of disadvantaged groups, including women, who must be encouraged to undertake higher degrees and enter academic and graduate employment. Similar efforts are also needed to encourage the participation of ethnic minorities.

The world of work

6. Higher education institutions should promote continuous and interactive partnerships with the productive sector using both reactive and proactive approaches. They must adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of the workplace and ensure that new disciplines and specializations are incorporated into its content. Also, they must help shape the labour market on one hand by identifying, independently of conjunctural interests of enterprises, new local and regional needs, and on the other hand by designing mechanisms for retraining and career-switching. Curricula should be organized to stimulate the entrepreneurial skills of students. This requires flexible, innovative and interdisciplinary approaches.
7. Countries should create 'observatories' to monitor changes in the labour market in order to facilitate the elaboration of national educational plans and to improve the capacity of higher education institutions to align their policies with national priorities. Special attention needs to be given to career prospects and job conditions of students in course areas of high skills such as engineering and technology for long term development.
8. Governments, the productive sector and local communities should, based on experience gained within and outside the region, encourage institutions of higher education to foster incubator projects which help create new enterprises. Governments, in particular, should provide incentives for the creation of micro-enterprises and fostering of university-industry links.
9. Greater emphasis should be given to the regionalization of specific disciplines, through programmes which target specific needs that will generate employment. In addition, more industry-based projects and new paradigm of university-industry partnership must be instituted, specially in developing countries. UNESCO, UNIDO, UNDP, World Bank, other regional development banks and other funding agencies must be sought in these activities.
10. Innovative approaches such as those of community colleges need to be encouraged. In countries with a large affiliated college system, specific attention needs to be given to strategies for improvement of colleges. Special efforts are needed to strengthen programmes to assist under-privileged groups in society.

Autonomy

11. Responsible institutional autonomy should be stimulated in the region. This principle upholds the freedom to select staff and students, to determine the conditions under which they remain in the university and select research topics. Freedom to determine the curriculum and degree standards and to allocate funds (within the amounts available) across different categories of expenditure are other aspects to be respected. At the same time, institutional autonomy should be accompanied by a high level of responsibility and accountability.

Quality

12. Appropriate, and if so required, greater emphasis needs to be placed on the renewal of the curriculum, on new approaches to both classroom and distance education teaching, on interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary studies and on vocational education programmes as alternatives to traditional university courses. Innovative approaches to higher education, such as community colleges, international collaboration, and twinning arrangements, need to be encouraged as appropriate.
13. The experience of certain countries regarding the creation of co-operative research centres linking higher education institutions, government research laboratories and industry should be the subject of case studies, the results of which should be available to all countries in the region.
14. Pedagogical programmes should be established to encourage students to be more entrepreneurial and initiative-oriented.
15. UNESCO along with other intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations specialized in higher education must carry out a series of case studies on the region's priorities in the field of higher education. These can include, inter alia, strategic management and planning, interaction among all levels of education, the revision of programmes and training, strategies to enhance the participation of women in higher education and in decision-making bodies, and the development of distance education schemes. Distance education and Open Learning provide

important alternative mechanisms of higher education access and learning. In particular, such approaches provide opportunities for those already in the work-force to upgrade their competencies and knowledge levels. The possibilities of these approaches for school leavers, however, needs further analysis and experimentation.

16. Each country of the region should establish a mechanism for evaluating the quality of its higher education institutions. Countries must introduce quality assurance methods at both institutional and systemic levels. These may include academic accreditation, academic audits and institutional evaluations, performance funding, review of disciplines and professional areas, qualifications frameworks and competency-based approaches to vocational education and training.
17. Each higher education institution should establish a teaching and learning resource unit staffed by qualified personnel and charged with the development of pedagogical skills and other forms of teaching-support activities.
18. Countries and institutions must stimulate, through the creation of networks, the development of regional postgraduate studies.
19. Governments and institutions of higher education must adopt appropriate strategies for the recruitment of staff, for their further professional development and for the recognition of their achievements. Governments, Parliaments and institution of higher education should pay particular attention to the draft Recommendation concerning the Status and Conditions of Higher Education Teaching Personnel, approved recently by a governmental experts meeting, which will be submitted to the General Conference of UNESCO in November 1997.
20. Higher education institutions must provide orientation and counselling, remedial courses, study skills training and other forms of student support, including measures to improve their living conditions.
21. Higher education institutions must modernize libraries and scientific equipment and include measures for the purchase and replacement of scientific equipment in their long-term management plans.
22. Higher education institutions must adopt new approaches for the packaging of information, for course delivery, and for rethinking traditional approaches to teaching and learning. The utilization of multi-media, CD-ROM, the internet and interactive video is necessary to promote interaction between students and their lecturers. Agreements should be stimulated among regional institutions to exchange programmes and to organize joint debates and symposia.
23. Teachers, professors and technical and administrative staff must be given training that enables them to integrate new information and communication technologies (NICTs) into their teaching programmes, and to examine the multiplier effect with regard to their use. Frequently, the staff development needs of technical and administrative staff are not properly approached.

Management and Finance

24. Governments must formulate national action plans to enhance both access to and the relevance and quality of higher education institutions. As a consequence, institutional management should improve. The concept of higher education as a public asset implies that its appraisal cannot be restricted to economic quantitative indicators alone. These plans must foresee a diversification of funding sources through, in particular, the encouragement of various income-generating activities, such as contract research, a broad range of academic and cultural services, short-term courses and, if so appropriate, the operation of scientific and technology enterprises. Public support to higher education remains essential to ensure its educational, social and institutional missions. Therefore, the state should take the main responsibility for funding this sector. But, since the challenges for higher education concern society as a whole, the solution to this problem must involve not only the state but all stakeholders - students, parents, the public and private sectors, local and national communications, authorities and academic association, as well as regional and international organizations.
25. Where appropriate, governments should consider creating, or reinforcing, agencies to act as a buffer between ministries and higher education institutions and to provide advice on resource needs and allocation, regulatory frameworks and the administration of grants and financial assistance.

26. In countries where privatization is accepted, governments should provide a legal framework to regulate institutions, to develop appropriate accreditation and monitoring mechanisms, and to ensure academic freedom and maximum autonomy. The complementary and supportive role of private universities and colleges must be recognized.
27. Management capacities should be strengthened by, inter alia, the recruitment of new senior staff with specialized expertise, appropriate training and staff development programmes for all line managers (and especially for those in executive positions), the introduction of greater clarity in job descriptions and reporting channels, improved management procedures, and the introduction and enhancement of computerized management systems.
28. At the regional level, an association or forum should be created to mobilize the contribution of student organizations to current efforts aimed at making higher education institutions more forceful, active and efficient partners in the promotion of sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.
29. Staff involvement in decision-making bodies should be considerably strengthened through greater recognition of their needs and by taking into consideration their perspectives, which are often relevant to the analysis of problems and to the search for viable solutions. In the case of students, appropriate consultation is of great importance.
30. Countries of the region must renew the commitments made by them at the Social Development Summit in Copenhagen and at other world bodies to "make new and additional resources available" and thus effectively increase their budgets allocated to education in general and to higher education in particular, measured as a significant percentage of their gross national product.

Co-operation

31. Individual institutions must develop international linkages, such as those for the exchange of staff and students and for academic co-operation. As well, they must support the activities of international organizations and bilateral agreements between countries within the region.
32. International and regional organizations should support projects aiming at establishing or strengthening university networks. For their part, institutions of higher education - with the support of national, regional and international organizations dealing with inter-university co-operation - should network centres of excellence which respond to the most pressing training and research needs of the Asia and Pacific region. The transfer and exchange of knowledge and experience between higher education institutions, carried out in a spirit of solidarity, should be the basis for these initiatives. It is recommended to establish an evaluation of existing networks in the region, including those covered by the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme.
33. In the framework of the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific and the International Recommendation on Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education, there is a need to encourage student, academic and professional mobility to benefit the process of economic, educational, political and cultural integration within the region and to develop mutually accepted standards for the recognition of credentials. This will need collective effort by governments, professional bodies and international organizations;
34. Each institution of higher education, as well as all professional associations, must envisage the creation of specialized units for managing international co-operation.
35. Higher education institutions should strengthen their endogenous and co-operative capacities related to priority issues in the region. In particular, centres of excellence can have a positive impact on the solution of major social problems related to the environment and sustainable development, on research in higher education institutions, on educational research in general, on institutional leadership, staff development and teacher training, on the diffusion of new communication and information technologies, on human rights and democracy, on technology transfer, on patents and intellectual property and on the protection of cultural heritage, as well as on the strengthening of education for all and of social development in general.
36. Attempts should be made to develop under the leadership of the Asia and the Pacific distance and multi-media education network under AUAP a general pool of programmes of study for Asia and the Pacific region to cut the cost of distance education.

37. Within their capacity, UNESCO and other international and interregional governmental and non-governmental organizations should respond to the requests to provide technical assistance to smaller and poorer countries in the region, in particular those of island nations, and to collaborate with them in the preparation of joint plans of action with a view to the development of higher education institutions.

**A EUROPEAN AGENDA FOR CHANGE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE XXIst CENTURY:
RESULTS OF THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL FORUM AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNESCO
WORLD CONFERENCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
(Palermo, Italy, 24 - 27 September 1998)**

Preamble

In the framework of the preparation of the 1998 UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education, the Association of European Universities (CRE) and UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES) organized the European Regional Forum in Palermo that brought together almost 400 university leaders, teacher representatives and students, representatives of public authorities and the world of work, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations interested in higher education and its development. The Conference was prepared on the basis of twenty case studies of how European higher education institutions of different types and from different regions are addressing the issues of teaching and learning, preparation for the world of work, advancement of knowledge through research, and the transmission of cultural values in a European and a global context, as well as of how they intend to deal with these issues in the future.

A further input for the discussions was provided by a comparative analysis of these case studies. The keynote address entitled "Europe in a Period of Mutation and Change –The Role of Higher Education" focused on the future role of higher education from the point of view of a large industrial concern, underlining the importance of lifelong learning and the importance of graduates with both professional skills and broad personal competencies. A panel of stakeholders added its comments.

The discussions were based on these various inputs organized around the four case study themes while taking into account the four main dimensions of the World Conference on Higher Education, namely relevance, quality, internationalization, and finance and management.

European Agenda for Change – Main Directions

I. Mission

No chain being stronger than its weakest link, higher education should be a strong part of a strong educational system, as well as play a key role in opening new futures by contributing, in close collaboration with other partners, to the innovation chain. Similarly, higher education institutions have a key role to play in European society by contributing to equitable and sustainable development and to the culture of peace. They should act critically and objectively on the basis of rigour and merit, actively promoting intellectual and moral solidarity by serving individual needs. In a world of in-depth transformations, higher education institutions are expected to act responsibly and responsively. They are to foresee, anticipate, and influence changes in all quarters of society and be prepared and able to differentiate and to adapt accordingly.

II. Teaching and Learning

General Assumptions

Given the growing individual demand for higher learning and the resulting pressures on higher education institutions, there is a need for ever more institutional diversification, for new policies of access to higher education, and for a structured development of lifelong learning. In order to better respond to the needs of diversification, a wider and more imaginative institutional profiling is expected to occur within higher education systems, thus leaving less room for categorization of institutions. At the same time, more programmatic diversification within the institutions is required.

Lifelong learning for personal and professional development, for career change, transferable skills, and matching supply and demand for highly trained personnel is essential. Higher education institutions must be able to offer corresponding courses in continuing education and in alliance with employers and other social partners so as to ensure that they are widely available and contribute to a

coherent system of higher education. Thus it is essential to define the links in the overall "educational chain" and the relations between them so that individuals can independently manage their learning at whatever level.

In response to this increasingly differentiated demand, coherence means flexibility with regard to: access, content, breadth, depth, and duration of programmes, means of delivery, examination, and validation. Thus, new policies of access should be designed on the basis of merit and equal opportunities, expanding student profiles, and reaching out to hitherto underprivileged groups of society.

Higher education institutions should pay increased attention to promoting strategies for the conceptualization and the management of educational innovation, particularly with reference to organization of contents, learning materials, teaching methods, and graduates' personal profiles as a response to the multiple challenges of their environments.

Required Action

The shift from teaching to learning implies self-managed learning, a coaching role for the teacher, professional support services, investment in new delivery, and quality assurance mechanisms, especially in off-campus operations. It should also lead to a new definition of scholarship balancing discovery and transmission as well as the integration and application of knowledge. A crucial lever for change is a creative and well-defined personnel policy which opens up teaching as a career, supported by appropriate staff development programmes. Particular attention should be paid to the promotion of opportunities for women, including in top positions in higher education.

It also involves a new approach to curriculum development taking into account multi- and interdisciplinarity and flexibility of choice, but in a coherent system which allows for modularization, credit transfer, the validation of work experience, and the organization of the academic year in semesters both at national and international level.

Modern information and communication technologies have major implications for the provision of education and training and require a fundamental restructuring of the ways in which teaching and learning objectives are delivered. Higher education institutions have a key role to play in exploiting, for themselves and together with other partners, the potential of innovative information and communication technologies for academic development.

Given the increased demand for higher education and its democratization, there is a pressing need to share good practice and to ensure academic quality standards by incorporating a culture of quality and the instruments for quality assurance at both systemic and institutional level.

The new roles both of the teachers and of the students as well as the changing relationship to government and world of work imply the definition of a new and explicit "educational contract" between the different partners, setting out rights and responsibilities for all concerned. It will be especially important to ensure that the voice of the students is heard at all stages of the learning process.

The paradigmatic shift from teaching to learning requires an investigation of the desirability of establishing a European Centre for Teaching and Learning to act as an observatory of good practice and innovation bringing together higher education institutions and their stakeholders at local, national, and international level.

III. Research

General Assumptions

Research, seen as the process leading to the systematic development of new knowledge, is central to the effectiveness of all higher education, while the type of research and the resources and time allocated to its promotion may vary according to the mission statement of the institution and its position within a coherent system of higher education. Accordingly, uniformity of research missions should give way to differentiated institutional policies focused on achievable and competitive performances.

Research is important for the contribution of higher education to the innovation chain, by a strategic mobilization of multilateral co-operation between city and regional governments, higher education institutions, industry, and business. In addition, it contributes to a constant supply of qualified young

researchers. At the same time, a strong link between research and teaching opens opportunities for involving good researchers in the teaching process.

Multi- and interdisciplinary research is required more and more to solve pressing societal problems, thus also contributing to sustainable human development. There is, however, increasing concern about the ability of the public purse to provide adequate finances to meet these escalating needs.

Required Action

To ensure continued high quality research, governments need to provide adequate funding for basic research infrastructure, but within a competitive framework. Research funding allocations should be based on quality criteria and transparent auditing procedures. Care should be taken to avoid a mismatch between stakeholders' needs for interdisciplinary research and governmental/peer processes of research, audit, and funding, which may be focused on single disciplines. Research in the social sciences and the humanities should not be neglected.

Support mechanisms at national and international level to stimulate and sustain research groups in less developed systems of higher education should be strengthened in order to support institutional development rather than exacerbating brain drain phenomena.

Institutions are encouraged to develop Codes of Practice together with their partners for resolving questions of intellectual property regarding the results of externally funded research. Similarly, Codes of Ethics for the choice and conduct of research projects should be elaborated.

Strategies for diversifying funding sources should be actively sought. Institutions attracting research funding in this way should ensure that their services are realistically costed and priced and that a percentage of this extra income is used to build up an internal development fund for emerging projects or poorly funded areas.

Networking with corporate laboratories, multinational corporations, especially at regional level, has a particular role to play in enhancing the quality and scope of institutional research as well as its resource base.

IV. World of Work

General Assumptions

In a labour market which is dynamic and heterogeneous, universities should not base their long-term orientations on labour market or manpower planning, but on social demand. They therefore have to prepare their students for meeting the challenges of an intrinsically uncertain labour market. In addition to their professional qualifications, graduates require a broad set of attributes in terms of personal and transferable skills and competencies in order to increase their employability in a knowledge society.

Required Action

To sustain a well-rounded individual development, full participation of stakeholders, in particular representatives of students, teachers, the world of work, and public authorities in higher education policy formation, and curriculum development is essential. As intelligent providers, higher education institutions need to develop their knowledge of markets, anticipate needs, be aware of competition, and invest in processes of quality assurance.

Students have to prepare for an increasingly diversified market, from employment in large industrial concerns to small enterprises, from working in the public sector to the service sector, and not forgetting individual entrepreneurship. There is a special need for the promotion of more constructive relations of higher education institutions to the world of small and medium size enterprises as the sector employing the largest number of graduates.

Higher education institutions should provide systematic information in schools and enterprises to guide student choices, provide placements as an integral part of degree courses, and offer research training in a work environment, as well as career guidance services at all times.

V. Transmission of Cultural Values in a European and Global Context

General Assumptions

Higher education institutions are as much concerned with the creation as with the transmission of cultural values. Although it is misleading to speak of "European" values per se, in the specific European context and in terms of the European university tradition, a framework does exist in terms of cultural unity through diversity. This means agreeing to disagree in order to pursue open, critical, and constructive dialogue.

As a consequence, higher education institutions have a key role to play, not only as centres, but also as incubators of cultural diversity and of multiracial harmony and understanding. This means they have a particularly important role to play in creating a civil society and in preparing young people for shaping and living in a democratic society, a place where higher education plays an active role in public debate on ethical and policy questions.

Required Action

These values should permeate all higher education curricula; their transmission, especially as far as ethical considerations are concerned, should not be limited to special courses. Special emphasis should be placed on language training, multi-disciplinarity, and independent and critical learning associated with teamwork. With the help of higher education institutions, this process should start in primary and secondary education.

Attention should be paid to incorporating the European dimension as an integral part of teaching and research and of sustaining the diversity of the learning experience through student and staff mobility. This means strengthening existing provision for the recognition of degrees and diplomas, in particular through the implementation of the UNESCO/Council of Europe Joint Convention, and supporting the further development of a coherent credit transfer system. Furthermore, all efforts should be made to remove practical, administrative, and legal obstacles to academic exchange at institutional, national, and international level. In this respect, the importance of networking and true international partnerships for co-operation in teaching, research, or service is paramount.

VI. Organizational Change and Development

A constructive partnership between government, business and industry, and higher education institutions is a critical element in the implementation of an Agenda for Change in Higher Education. The role of government is expected to shift from bureaucratic control to policy steering, stable funding formulae, quality monitoring, project-based investment, and providing a cushion against the wider excesses of the demands of the free market. Business and industry should be encouraged to define more clearly their needs as clients and to work together with higher education institutions as training providers. Higher education institutions should be entrusted with a greater institutional autonomy, thus enhancing their capacity for change, for acting responsibly, effectively, and entrepreneurially as "learning organizations", while making them more accountable in terms of performance. Inter-institutional alliances should be a substantial lever for institutional change and development.

In view of the common assumptions on trends affecting future university development in Europe, the growing systematization of institutional management is a welcome development as is the corresponding awareness of the need for internal strategic planning and rethinking, both for intrinsic reasons and in response to initiatives from national higher education planners.

DECLARATION ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN¹

Ratifying the terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states in its article 26, paragraph 1 that 'every person has the right to education' ... and that 'the access to higher education studies will be equal for all, on the basis of their corresponding merits'. Ratifying, in turn, the contents of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), which states in its article IV, that the signatory States commit themselves 'to ... offer all people alike higher education on the basis of a real equality and pursuant to the skills of each individual

Starting by assuming the trends identified in the Policy Paper for Change and Development of Higher Education, published by UNESCO in 1995. And on the bases of the studies, debates and reflections on that document that have been performed since that date in the region, which have set forth the recommendation of strengthening equity, quality, relevance and internationalization of higher education.

Taking into account the fact that as we enter the XXI century, and faced with the growth of unemployment, poverty and misery, mankind must actively address the following issues: growth with equity, the protection of the environment and the peace-building process. Furthermore, following the recommendations made by the United Nations, via: (a) the Programme for Peace, that contains principles and suggestions bearing on the preventive measures that will protect peace, as well as effective actions for restoring peace when uncontrollable conflicts emerge, and (b) the Programme for Development, that sets forth the conceptual bases for fostering a sustainable and permanent human development.

Highlighting that human development, democracy and peace are inseparable elements -as stated in the medium-term strategy of UNESCO (1996-2001), that aims the higher education programmes of the Organization at three objectives: expanding access to higher education with no discrimination whatsoever, as well as expanding permanence in the system and the possibilities of having success; improving its management and strengthening the links with the labour work; while at the same time contributing to build peace and foster a development founded on justice, equity, solidarity and freedom.

Taking up the report submitted to UNESCO by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century. The latter, in fact, does not only reaffirm the above mentioned options. It also sets forth that the universities of developing countries have the obligation of carrying out a research that can help solve the most serious problems that those countries are suffering. This is due to the fact that 'they are the ones that should propose new approaches for development, so that they can build a better future and do so in a more effective manner.'

Acknowledging that economic and social development highly depend on training a highly skilled staff, specifically in this most special stage in history, characterized by the emergence of a new production paradigm based on the power of knowledge and the adequate handling of information. Acknowledging, in turn, that it depends on the potential to create a knowledge that satisfies the specific needs and lacks of the region, and that the latter is derived almost solely from higher education institutions -the knowledge instances that generate, criticize and disseminate it.

Accepting, on the one hand, that the gap that is currently setting aside the countries of the region from the developed nations, is evidenced -among other aspects- in the following elements: education (rates of third-level schooling), technological research and development (size of the scientific and technical staff, investment in R&D), as well as information and communications. In fact, these aspects are set forth in the Report on Human Development of the United Nations Development Programme, that was published in 1996. Likewise, accepting, on the other hand, that the source of R&D in almost all the countries in the region is public and that the highest percentage of research units operates within the framework of universities, as set forth in the World Report on Science published by UNESCO in 1993.

¹ Regional Conference on Policies and Strategies for the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, Havana, Cuba, 18-22 November 1996

Warning that, without adequate higher education and research institutions, developing countries can not expect to adopt and apply the most recent development. And warning, likewise, that it would be even less feasible for them to make contributions of their own to development and to close the gap that keeps them away from industrialized nations.

Taking due note of the fact that higher education in the region evidences the following trends: (a) an outstanding expansion of the student roll; (b) a persistence of inequalities and difficulties when attempts are made at democratizing knowledge; (c) a relative restriction of public investments in this sector; (d) a fast-paced increase and diversification of institutions that work in the field of third-level education; and, (e) a growing participation of the private sector in the composition of the education offer.

Estimating that efforts have been made by higher education institutions, the governments of some Latin American and Caribbean countries, or else, the societies themselves of several countries that make up the region, aimed at increasing the rates of post secondary education. And further estimating that, despite those efforts, many of these nations are still far from achieving the coverage and quality required by globalization, regionalization and economic opening processes, as well as from achieving a real democratization of knowledge.

Specifying that these trends are also evidenced at an international level. And, further, specifying that they coincide with simultaneous, though sometimes contradictory processes, namely: internationalization, regionalization, polarization, democratization, isolation and fragmentation, that have an effect on the development of higher education. And specifying, in turn, that the burden of the foreign debt, the increase in the value of imports of goods and services, the drop in the share of world trade, are elements evidenced in the region leading to a situation of social inequality. Furthermore, specifying that the countries of the area make attempts at facing the latter problems with regional and sub-regional groups and implementing several social policies.

Highlighting that, in these times of economic, political or social change -both positive and negative in nature- higher education is called to take up a leading role and to critically study these changes, while at the same time making prospective efforts aimed at predicting and even conducting them via the creation and dissemination of the pertinent knowledge. And, further highlighting that, to this end, higher education must take up its own transformation with the help of society as a whole, not only that of the education sector alone.

Reminding that in the case of Latin America, the Cordoba Reform (1918) -though responding to the needs of a society that was completely different from our own- was characterized by its clear support to the movement of university democratization. Reminding, in turn, that it insisted on the need to create solid and diversified links between university activities and the needs of society -a process that is currently re-emerging to guide the process of transformation of higher education that is underway in the region. And, further reminding that the latter is seen as a continuous phenomenon aimed at designing an original institutional scheme adapted to satisfy the current and future needs of their countries.

Pointing out that any attempt at improving the quality and relevance of higher education requires a significant transformation of the education system as a whole. Furthermore, pointing out that the solution of the financial problems faced by higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean will not stem from redistributing the scarce resources that are allocated to the different levels in this sector. Likewise, pointing out that, on the contrary, they will be the result of transferring resources of other sectors that are not a real priority, while at the same time improving the distribution of income and diversifying financing sources. Pointing out, in turn, that all this has to be the result of a search undertaken with the participation of the State, the civil society, professional and business communities in order to respond -jointly and equitably- to the needs of the different sectors that make up society.

The participants of the Regional Conference of UNESCO on Policies and strategies for the transformation of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean, coming from 26 countries, and assembled in Havana, Cuba, from November 18 to 22, 1996, do hereby declare that

1. Education, in general, and higher education, in particular, are essential instruments for facing up with success the challenges posed by the modern world and for educating citizens that can thus build a more open and fair society. It will be a society based on solidarity, respect for human rights and the shared use knowledge and information. At the same time, higher

education is an unavoidable element for social development, production, economic growth, strengthening the cultural identity, maintaining social coherence, continuing the struggle against poverty and the promotion of the culture of peace.

2. Knowledge is a social asset that can only be generated, transmitted, critized and recreated for the benefit of society, in plural and free institutions that have a full autonomy and academic freedom. However, the latter must also have a clear awareness of their responsibility and a will of service that cannot be turned down. Hence, they will be prepared to search for solutions to the demands, needs and lacks of society. This is indeed a society it should be accountable to - as a requirement - in order to exercise fully its autonomy. Higher education will be able to fulfil this important task only if it demands itself the highest quality. In this respect, a continuous and permanent assessment is indeed a most valuable instrument.
3. Higher education must strengthen its capacity to perform a critical analysis, to anticipate and to have a prospective vision. It must do so in order to prepare alternate development proposals and face the emerging problems of a reality undergoing a process of continuous and rapid transformation, in a long term horizon.
4. Higher education institutions must adopt organizational structures and education strategies that render them highly dynamic and flexible, thus enabling them to respond with both the timeliness and anticipation needed to creatively and efficiently face an uncertain future. They are called to facilitate an exchange of students between institutions and between different degree courses of the same institution. They will have to take up -without any further delays- the paradigm of permanent education. They will have to turn into pertinent centres for facilitating professionals to be up to date, duly retrained and reconverted. Hence, they will have to offer a solid training in the basic disciplines, along with a wide diversification of programmes and studies, intermediate diplomas and links between courses and subjects. Likewise, they must endeavour to ensure that the activities of extension and dissemination are an important element of the academic life.
5. The nature itself of contemporary knowledge -in a process of constant renewal and most sudden and dramatic growth - fully agrees with the current notion of permanent education. This must be an indissoluble supplement of studies aimed at obtaining degrees and titles. They offer graduates the possibility of taking refresher courses and of adapting to changing realities that are very difficult to anticipate. Besides, permanent education should also enable any person -at whatever stage of his/her life- to go back to the classrooms and to find in them the opportunity to be a part of the academic life once again. In this way, people are allowed to attain new levels of professional training. In fact, the competence acquired has a value in itself that goes beyond the mere credential.
6. Higher education must implement pedagogical methods based on knowledge, in order to train graduates that learn how to learn and how to undertake. In this way, they will be better prepared to generate their own jobs. They might even be able to create production entities that can help combat the scourge of unemployment. There is a clear need for promoting the spirit of inquiry. Hence, the student will have the tools to search for knowledge in a permanent and systematic manner. In turn, this implies revising the pedagogical methods that are currently in effect and the emphasis now placed on the transmission of knowledge will switch to the process for generating it. In this way, students will count on the instruments they require in order to learn how to learn, how to know, how to live together and how to be.
7. A changing society demands people to have a comprehensive, general and professional education. The latter must encourage the development of a person as a whole and should favour his/her personal growth, autonomy, socialization and the skills to turn the assets that perfect it into elements having real value.
8. A higher education system will be fulfilling its responsibility and conscientiously carry out its mission - thus turning into a profitable social element - if a part of its teaching staff and institutions also performs intellectual creation (scientific, technical and humanistic) activities. The latter, in turn must be in agreement with the specific objectives of the institution, its teaching capabilities and its material resources.
9. It is absolutely necessary to introduce a solid culture of information in the higher education systems of the region. The adequate combination of information and communication redefines the need to update pedagogical practices at a university level. Besides, its players need to participate in the major academic networks and have access to the pertinent exchange with all

the related institutions. Likewise, they must increase their degree of opening and their interactions with the international academic community. At the same time, higher education institutions must take up the main task of preserving and strengthening the cultural identity of the region. In this way, the above mentioned opening will not endanger the cultural values that are typical of Latin America and the Caribbean.

10. Among the challenges posed by this turn of the century, higher education is now facing the need to participate resolutely in the qualitative improvement of all the levels of the education system. Its most concrete contributions can be made a reality via: training teachers; transforming students into active agents of their training; promoting socio-educational research into problems as could be the case of early school drop-out and repeating; and ensuring its contribution to the design of State policies in the field of education. Every higher education policy must be comprehensive and must address and take into due account all the components of the education system. Most specifically, it must do so under the umbrella of an 'education for all', as set forth in the Conference of Jomtien (Thailand, 1990) - at a world scale - and in the Main education project for Latin America and the Caribbean - at a regional level.
11. Higher education institutions of our region must instil in their graduates the awareness that they really belong to the community of Latin American and Caribbean nations. Hence, they must promote processes aimed at regional integration. Furthermore, cultural and educational integration should be the bases for political and economic integration. Faced with the formation of new economic spaces within the current framework of globalization and regionalization, higher education institutions must address their studies of Latin American integration in the light of their economic, social, cultural, ecological and political aspects, among others. This will be their main task and they should address the problems with an interdisciplinary approach.
12. Founded on the Regional convention and the international recommendation on validation of studies, degrees and diplomas, there is a need to encourage academic and professional mobility. The purpose is no other than that of favouring the process of economic, educational, political and cultural integration of the region.
13. Both the transfer and the exchange of experiences between higher education institutions -key elements of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs programme - are indispensable for promoting knowledge and ensuring that the latter is applied to encourage development. Interuniversity co-operation can be further facilitated by the constant progress evidenced in the field of information and communication technologies. In turn, it can be strengthened by the current economic and political integration processes, as well as by the growing need for a real inter-cultural understanding.
14. The considerable expansion of different types of networks and other instruments and mechanisms for linking up institutions, professors and students is a key issue in the collective search for equity, quality and relevance in higher education. This is specifically the case now, when no institution can hope to master all the areas of knowledge.
15. Public support for higher education is still indispensable. The challenges faced by higher education are also challenges for society as a whole. They include governments, the production sector, the labour world, the organized civil society, academic associations, along with regional and international organizations that are responsible for the training, research, development or financing programmes.
16. On account of all the considerations above, all the social players must combine efforts and start acting so as to foster the process of in-depth transformation of higher education. To this end, they must be based on a new 'social consensus' that enables higher education institutions to be better positioned and thus have respond to current and future needs for a sustainable human development. In the immediate future, this aspiration will gradually turn more concrete, as the action plan designed in this Conference will be executed.

PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Introduction

Any attempt to transform the Latin American and Caribbean higher education systems and institutions (HEIs) must take into account the fact that due to their origins, history, location and fundamental objectives, they present a great diversity which must be recognized and dealt with. Hence, the institutions require particular strategies in accordance with their stage of development and their future goals. Consequently, the process furthered by UNESCO since 1994 through its Regional Centre for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRESALC) has focused on the promotion of comparative research, the provision of spaces of dialogue, reflection and debate among the principal actors of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the gradual achievement of a consensus as regards strategic guidelines and regional objectives which can help the institutions in the management of their particular transformation.

Among the activities carried out by UNESCO particularly worthy of note is the Regional Conference on Policies and Strategies for the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Havana, Cuba, in November 1996. In its preparatory phase over 4,000 persons connected with higher education and government of the region were mobilized, by holding 36 meetings at the national and subregional level. The wealth of documents generated both by the preparatory seminars and by the Conference itself, which was attended by 688 individuals, constitutes the most important source of information available on the problems, challenges and possibilities of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean today.

The principal documents stemming from that Conference - the 'Final Report', the 'Declaration on higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean' and the 'Guide for the formulation of a Plan of Action' - emphasize and discuss the nature of higher education as a social asset; highlighting its nature as an instrument which is 'irreplaceable for human development, production, economic growth, the strengthening of cultural identity the maintenance of social cohesion, the struggle against poverty and the promotion of a culture of peace'; and assume most of the principles defended by UNESCO in its 'Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education' (1995) and in the General Introduction to the Regional Conference drafted by CRESALC (1996).

The participants in the Regional Conference requested CRESALC to prepare a Plan of Action for the transformation of higher education in the region, which must include common aspects of the national plans and promote inter-institutional interaction and collaboration at the regional and subregional level. The Plan of Action must serve as an instrument of facilitation and catalysis which can bring together in a coherent way the studies and experiences carried out in the HEIs of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The document presented here is the result of a process of consultation and concerted action which CRESALC launched to fulfil that mission. It incorporates the recommendations of the Regional Conference of Havana and contains the input of several workshops held after said Conference, which were attended by government officials responsible for higher education policies, experts in this field and representatives of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of the region. It also received the contribution of the professionals of CRESALC and of the UNESCO-Caracas Office, the Director of the Department of Higher Education of UNESCO and the members of the Advisory Group of CRESALC.

Its basic purpose is to outline guidelines which can help to integrate the multiple activities carried out in the region and promote co-operation between institutions in order to increase their efficacy and efficiency, avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts and raise new financial resources. Likewise, the assistance of the various actors and institutions is sought for furthering the changes to meet the challenges posed by adjustment policies, the opening of the economies, the globalization and regionalization processes, increasing poverty; human migrations, vulnerability of democracies, and the collapse of ethical values, which appear as distinctive signs of the end of the millennium in the region.

In order that this be feasible, it is necessary to achieve the proactive and concerted action of governments, parliaments, HEIs and their constituencies, the majority of social actors (workers, entrepreneurs, NGOs) and international organizations interested in improving the capacity of the societies of the region to cope with the aforementioned challenges. The Member States of UNESCO,

through their governments and parliaments, with the active participation of the HEIs and within the framework of the new dialogue which we propose, must help to formulate and strengthen educational projects aimed at coping with the needs and challenges identified in their respective countries, ensuring the necessary human, material and financial resources for their uninterrupted execution.

Higher education needs to be considered as an integrated system, comprising various sub-systems in constant interaction. Among these, one has to acknowledge the existence of a constellation of university institutions and other HEIs (technological institutes, polytechnic schools, institutes of high studies, technical-professional centres, institutes for the training of teachers, etc.). Each institution must define its mission in harmony with the objectives of sustainable human development, and fulfil its substantive functions using the available resources as efficiently as possible. At the same time, it must provide students with a professional training with a sound ethical and general basis.

It is expected that this Plan will also help to orient action on the part of the international co-operation in order to strengthen the regions capacity to understand and overcome the principal problems of higher education.

I. FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS

Latin American and Caribbean countries are undergoing rapid processes of change which have led to important modifications in their political, economic and social structures. Extraordinary advances are taking place today in terms of technological, scientific and productive capacity, but at the same time, profound inequalities are observed in the levels of progress and development in the various regions of the world.

An international context marked by what has been called globalization has given rise to both opportunities and difficulties for Latin American and Caribbean countries. In the past few years they managed to improve their economic growth rates, control inflation, achieve a certain monetary stability, adjust their fiscal accounts and establish democratic regimes. But on the whole, they were unable to occupy a larger space in international trade, nor were they able to achieve a significant reduction of the persistent levels of poverty and social inequality. Hence new strategies are sought today to cope with the challenge of a really sustainable and socially equitable economic development in which priority is assigned to the maximization of the capacities of all human beings.

The region is not alone in this quest, for the benefits of development seem to be concentrated more and more in a limited sector of the world's population, and profound and growing gaps are witnessed in terms of the standard of living and access to the economic and cultural assets between the different social strata, both in the industrialized and the developing countries.

HEIs can be of the utmost importance for the achievement of a new strategy of economic and social development. There is a broad consensus that the future of countries will depend to a large extent on their capacity to maximize the generation of new knowledge. The capacity to create, adapt and adopt new technologies constitutes a strategic element for the achievement of greater collective well being, as well as increased competitiveness of the region and the improvement of its possibilities of insertion in the world economy. Hence the expectations to which universities, technical and professional institutes and other tertiary institutions are subject today require the redefinition of policies, plans, programmes, guidelines, curricula, management capacity and, above all, a commitment to innovation and profound broad-scope transformation.

Knowledge - generated mainly from academic spaces - and technological/productive innovation are of fundamental importance for the achievement of a new stage of economic development, productivity and competitiveness. In order to achieve a better integration between the programmes of higher education and those of science and technology, both in research and in the transfer of knowledge, it will be necessary to reorganize academic and scientific research structures in all areas and at all levels and eliminate the present isolation and fragmentation. It will also be indispensable to allow for scholarly exchange between disciplines and link the projects of transformation of higher education to the needs of the whole society, including those of the social and private productive apparatus. Likewise, the series of demands and needs arising in the region will call for a true reappraisal by the HEIs of the institutional contents, methods and forms, enabling greater flexibility and capacity to respond to the challenges of regional and subregional integration, and to the ever-growing higher education demand.

It is also necessary to reappraise the dialogue between the State and the HEIs, particularly universities, in terms of the emergence of other important actors and of processes which impair

excellence in higher education. Only a consensual strategy, in which each entity commits resources and efforts, will enable the necessary transformations. The transformation is more likely to be successful, if it is generated from within the HEIs themselves than if it is imposed or simplistically based on alien institutional models. The challenge lies in the reinvention of institutions in order that they satisfy the demands and deficiencies of Latin American and Caribbean societies, preserving the wealth of traditions, the cultural values and the great diversity and creativeness of their people.

It is important to emphasize that the debate on the transformation of higher education requires a framework, conditions and guarantees, as well as a creative and plural environment to share ideas and reach a consensus as regards strategies of change. In this respect, responsible autonomy is a necessary condition which must be ensured and increased. This condition requires an adequate level of financing by the State, enabling, as a counterpart, the fulfilment of the purposes and objectives of each institution. Within this framework, access to a higher education of quality and its permanence must be ensured for meritorious individuals coming from the less privileged social sectors; in this way the HEIs would be contributing to the achievement of greater social equity. To achieve these objectives remedial or adequate policies could be required to correct the eventual deficiencies of certain social groups.

II. CONCEPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This Plan provides a frame of reference for various types of actions and is aimed at achieving general objectives common to the region. Five major programmes are suggested here, defined on the basis of the main subjects studied in the Havana Regional Conference on Higher Education.

For each Programme, general and specific objectives are identified and principal lines of action are suggested which will enable the development of specific projects by the HEIs, NGOs, international organizations, and governments - key actors in the process of transformation - which will be responsible for taking these proposals to a more specific and operational level.

The objectives and strategic lines of action contained in this Plan will be inserted in the preparations, discussions and follow-up of the World Conference on Higher Education, convened by UNESCO for the month of October 1998.

A. General objective

To achieve a profound transformation of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean, in order that it become an effective promoter of a culture of peace, based on a sustainable human development founded on justice, equity, democracy and liberty, improving, at the same time, the relevance and quality of its teaching, research and extension functions, offering equal opportunities to all by means of a permanent education without frontiers, in which merit is the basic criterion for access, within the framework of a new regional and international co-operation.

B. Specific objectives

- 1 To generate the bases and conditions for the higher education of the region, in these times of cultural, economic, political and social changes, to assume a leading role in the critical analysis of those changes and in the effort of prevision and even conduction, by means of the creation and transmission of relevant knowledge, assigning, to this end, priority to its own transformation and development.
- 2 To contribute to the transformation and improvement of the conceptions, methodology and practices related to: (i) the social relevance of higher education; (ii) quality, evaluation and accreditation; (iii) management and financing; (iv) the knowledge and use of the new information and communication technologies, and (v) international co-operation, at the institutional, national, subregional and regional level, in all the functions, and areas of activity of higher education.

III. PROGRAMMES

In accordance with its specific objectives, the Plan, as a general framework of operational reference, must implement the following programmes progressively:

- A. Improvement of relevance.
- B. Improvement of quality.

- C. Improvement of management and financing.
- D. Academic management of the new information and communication technologies.
- E. Reorientation of international co-operation.

This set of programmes takes fully into account the fact that the 'Declaration on Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean' (Havana, November 1996) stipulated the following: 'All the social actors must unite their efforts and undertake the process of profound transformations of higher education, based on the establishment of a new 'social consensus' which places the HEIs in a better position to respond to the present and future needs of sustainable human development, which process would at once begin with the implementation of the Plan of Action conceived in this Conference'. The next meetings to be held in the Caribbean sub-region will in all likelihood serve to further enrich the programme proposed in this document.

The following description is based on the proposals contained in the 'Guide for the formulation of a Plan of Action' (Havana, November 1996), those stemming from the Consultation Meeting with the Non-governmental Higher Education Organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean (Caracas, April 1997) and the workshop of experts convened by CRESALC on 28 and 29 January 1998, specifically to discuss the preliminary version of the Plan and polish it. Furthermore, the developments in the region in the field of higher education in the period between the Regional Conference (November 1996) and the drafting of the present Plan of Action (February 1998) were taken into account. Evidently, many of the strategic guidelines to which priority has been assigned in this Plan for a programme can overlap with those of other programmes. The intention is, precisely, to stimulate initiatives which have a greater capacity to disseminate and create systemic synergy in favour of an integrated process of transformation.

These programmes will serve as frameworks of action for each of the agents interested in the transformation of higher education in the region to identify the respective projects.

A. Programme of improvement of relevance

According to the contents of the Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education (UNESCO, 1995), 'Relevance is considered particularly in terms of the role of higher education as a system and of each of its institutions towards society, as well as in terms of the latter's expectations with regard to higher education'. The relevance of higher education refers to the capacity of the educational systems and of the institutions to respond to the needs of their locality, region or country, and to the demands of the new world order, with diverse outlooks, instruments and modalities. In this plan of action the institutions are called upon to make the necessary changes to ensure greater relevance of higher education.

1 General objectives

- 1.1 To guarantee that education in general, and higher education in particular, will be essential instruments, of strategic value, to cope successfully with the challenges of the modern world and to form citizens capable of building a fairer and more open society based on solidarity, the respect of human rights and the shared use of knowledge and information.
- 1.2 To ensure that higher education will constitute an effective, and at the same time an irreplaceable element for social development, production and economic growth, and for the strengthening of cultural identity, the maintenance of social cohesion, the struggle against poverty and the promotion of a culture of peace.

2 Specific objectives

In order to achieve these aims, projects and activities will have to be designed and implemented which will lead to the achievement of the following specific objectives:

- 2.1 To guarantee that higher education institutions can become or be consolidated as plural and free entities which, in accordance with the respective national legal systems, enjoy full autonomy, and which, deeply aware of their responsibility, show an unwaivable will to serve in the search for solutions to the demands, needs and deficiencies of the society; to which they must account, as a necessary condition for the full exercise of autonomy.
- 2.2 To facilitate the capacity of the higher education institutions for critical, anticipatory, and prospective analysis, enabling them to cope, from a long-term horizon, with the challenges of a reality subject to rapid and continuous transformation.

- 2.3 To make changes in the organizational structures and in the educational strategies in order to achieve a high degree of renovation and flexibility in the curricular offer, teaching programmes and methods, providing students with a permanent education of excellence, borderline research, the spirit of investigation, intellectual creation and integral training.
 - 2.4 To induce the region's higher education institutions to take up the challenge of participating resolutely in the qualitative improvement of the educational system at all levels, resorting, among other measures, to the training of teachers; the transformation of students into active agents of their own training; the promotion of socio-educational research, and the contribution to the formulation of State policies in the educational field.
 - 2.5 To help higher education institutions to stimulate in their graduates an awareness of belonging to the community of Latin American and Caribbean nations, promoting the processes which lead to regional integration, and making cultural and educational integration a founding block of political and economic integration.
 - 2.6 To promote research and interdisciplinary studies on the processes of globalization, regionalization, Latin American and Caribbean integration in their economic, social, cultural, ecological and political aspects, as the basis of programmes of inter-institutional co-operation and collaboration at the regional level.
- 3 Strategic lines of action
- 3.1 To promote studies, provide permanent follow-up and propose a solution to the problem of access and drop-out on the part of the poorer sectors.
 - 3.2 To design instruments to increase the linkage between pre-school, elementary and secondary education and higher education, and between the different sub-systems.
 - 3.3 To promote innovations in the teaching systems, the programmes and curricula, enabling the active participation, personal transformation and full development of the potential of each student.
 - 3.4 To stimulate research and the exchange of experiences related to educational innovations, enabling the accumulation and evaluation of experiences.
 - 3.5 To implement new study programmes which in the medium term ensure a universal post-secondary education of quality. It is proposed that short careers be designed which increase the possibilities of insertion in the labour market and which, with a view to updating skills education, enable the continuity of studies.
 - 3.6 To encourage the creation of postgraduate courses, programmes of non-formal education and updating courses which make lifelong education a reality.
 - 3.7 To design plans for the dissemination of results and experiences of the HEIs, showing clearly the social and economic benefits which they contribute, for the purpose of facilitating their evaluation by society and promoting support from new social actors.

B. Programme of improvement of quality

According to the aforementioned UNESCO Policy Paper (1995), 'quality embraces all its main functions and activities: quality of teaching, training and research, which means the quality of its staff and programmes and quality of learning as a corollary of teaching and research ... the search for quality ... It therefore also implies attention to questions pertaining to the quality of students and of the infrastructures and academic environment ... Finally it is essential to indicate that the principal objective of 'quality assessment' is to achieve institutional as well as system-wide improvement'.

1 General objective

To guarantee the complete and prompt adaptation of higher education to what it must be, bearing in mind that the quality of higher education is a multidimensional concept, which includes universal and particular characteristics related to the nature of the institutions and of knowledge, and to the problems which arise with regard to the different social contexts within the framework of national, regional and local priorities.

2 Specific objectives

In order to achieve this general objective, projects and activities will have to be designed and implemented enabling the achievement of the following specific objectives:

- 2.1 To ensure that the quality of the systems, institutions and programmes of higher education is essentially linked to social relevance, to the preparation and commitment of professors and researchers, to the social responsibility involved in the work of the institutions, and to their accountability vis-à-vis the society with regard to their global performance.
- 2.2 To identify mechanisms to ensure that higher education recovers its roots as an indomitable patrimony, in a globalized world in which the mass media affect the national, subregional and regional cultural identities.
- 2.3 To initiate forms of interconnection between higher education and the other subsystems, in order that they cope jointly with their problems, and to collaborate in the design and implementation of solutions, in the understanding that the quality of higher education is, moreover, contingent upon the rest of the educational system, with which it interacts.
- 2.4 To construct the quality of teaching fundamentally on the basis of the improvement of academic training and an integrated training in the design and development of curricula, in order to provide creative, thoughtful, polyfunctional and enterprising graduates, within the framework of systems of advanced, continuous, open and critical training, in which the students assume their role as active subjects, actors of their own learning, and managers of their life project.
- 2.5 To further the consolidation of common multinational academic spaces for the development of subregional or regional postgraduate studies, the implementation of co-operative research, and the edition of joint publications.
- 2.6 To achieve a culture of evaluation of performance which, by means of different strategies ranging from self-evaluation and self-regulation to state accreditation, will enable the systems and institutions to achieve their fundamental objectives and strengthen responsible autonomy.
- 2.7 To promote the creation of mechanisms enabling, on the one hand, the financing of the costs of evaluations and, on the other hand, the allocation of the necessary resources to solve the problems detected in the feasible projects presented by the institutions themselves as a result of evaluation.
- 2.8 To obtain, in the short, medium and long term, an improvement of the educational service by assimilating the technologies of computer science, telematics and distance education and by placing the merits of the teaching activity on the same footing as those of research and extension.

3 Strategic lines of action

- 3.1 To promote regional postgraduate studies, in particular around issues of strategic value to the region.
- 3.2 To facilitate the exchange of students and the insertion of graduates of different specialities in the labour market, based on the results of the accreditation experiences of each country.
- 3.3 To promote integral plans for the training of teachers and researchers, ensuring their full dedication to academic life and institutional development.
- 3.4 To make a great effort to introduce the culture of evaluation, ensuring the most extensive participation of the academic community and the dissemination of results in order to reflect, and guide the institutional policies, and to guarantee the fulfilment of objectives and goals of each institutional programme.
- 3.5 To maintain the principle of voluntary support of the process of evaluation in the institutions which enjoy autonomy.
- 3.6 To promote evaluations of a formative nature, both in the institutional aspect and in the tasks performed by students and teachers, in order to improve the quality of their academic performance.

- 3.7 To consider the international aspect in the processes of evaluation, taking into account the needs and possibilities of co-operation between institutions.
- 3.8 To create mechanisms for financing costs of evaluations and to overcome the deficiencies identified, in the event that such deficiencies exist.
- 3.9 To increase the use of the new technologies of computer science for innovation and pedagogic experimentation and the strengthening of access to information and documentation resources.

C. Programme of improvement of management and financing

In order to achieve the objectives of relevance, quality and equity of this Plan of Action, a significant improvement of the managerial capacity and the level of financing of the HEIs will be required, within the framework of a joint effort on the part of the whole society. At present, the management of an HEI, particularly that of the most complex ones, encompasses not only the administrative aspect, but also the governmental and academic aspects. Since the investment in education in the region is below the level agreed upon by governments themselves, and in view of the current requirements of an education of excellence, measures must be taken to increase the level of resources, diversify their origin, achieve a better distribution among institutions, and increase the efficiency of expenditures.

1 General objectives

- 1.1 Bearing in mind the unavoidable responsibility of the State in the financing of public higher education, to contribute to the improvement and transformation of management capacity of higher education by means of the adoption of appropriate policies and the diversification of its sources of financing. Strategies to this end are needed in all areas and levels of activity, supported by research on higher education.
- 1.2 To develop strategies aimed at stressing the importance of higher education as a key sector for the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean, helping higher education institutions to obtain official support in the quest for sources in addition to public financing and achieving greater flexibility in the use of public funds in accordance with the objectives of the respective allocations.
- 1.3 To produce the necessary orientations for the strategic and anticipatory management of higher education institutions to help the system fully identify the current changes and future trends and adapt to the speed with which the phenomena occur in different areas.

2 Specific objectives

- 2.1 To promote comparative studies and research on management and financing of higher education experiences at the national, subregional and regional level, in order that the institutions establish and finalize explicit policies in this field.
- 2.2 To favour the formulation of models of allocation of resources which take into account specific objectives such as quality, equity and balanced regional development from the point of view of the actors of the programmes of higher education and to validate their use in negotiations with multilateral development and financing organizations and with national financial institutions.
- 2.3 To design and propose new systems of financing of the HEIS via the national financial institutions.
- 2.4 To formulate new models of management of systems, institutions and financial resources for higher education in the region and establish a permanent action of formation and intensive training of directors and administrators to contribute to the adoption of flexible and transparent management practices.
- 2.5 To ensure that the new models of academic management combine research and postgraduate activities with undergraduate ones, in order to facilitate social integration, extension and transfer of knowledge.

3 Strategic lines of action

- 3.1 To favour a State policy for the distribution of incremental resources based on specific programmes or projects presented by the institutions which can be financed, bearing in mind the need to ensure transparency in the allocation, control, verification, and dissemination of results.
- 3.2 To achieve commitment on the part of the State to pluri-annual programmes of financing of higher education, ensuring the fulfilment of goals and objectives.
- 3.3 To identify, in accordance with the respective national legislation, possible complementary sources of funding, which can be obtained by means of new taxes, incentives to donations to the HEIs or taxation of certain financial transactions. The institutions themselves must carry out studies and research to quantify the potentiality and viability of these proposals
- 3.4 To promote by adequate means the marketing of the products, services and technological developments generated by the HEIs, protecting intellectual property and collaborating in the management of patents and certificates.
- 3.5 To design flexible systems to facilitate collaboration and the sale of the services of HEIs to public and private organizations in projects destined to overcome needs, deficiencies and demands of the society.
- 3.6 To promote an efficient management of national and international co-operation in order to take better advantage of operating capacities.
- 3.7 To further new mechanisms of student scholarships and/or loans, particularly to poor ones, in order to facilitate their academic performance.
- 3.8 To favour the creation of various types of incentives to reward excellence and productivity of both teachers and officials.
- 3.9 To introduce new administrative techniques which increase rationality in decision-making, including the preparation of budgets, allocation of resources and the implementation practices, in order to increase the transparency and control of management. To develop training programmes and monitoring to that end.
- 3.10 To promote flexible administrative entities in order to ensure the concept of lifelong education, in programmes of non-formal education, training, re-skilling of workers, teaching of adults, and co-operation with trade unions, among others.

D. Programme of academic management of new information and communication technologies

The new telematic technologies are opening up extraordinary possibilities for higher education but they also raise serious questions regarding the very functioning of the institutions. The possibilities of immediate interaction and exposure to vast sources of information which they open, necessarily modify the inputs, processes, and products of higher education as we have known them. Hence, it is essential that a perfect understanding be achieved of how the region can use, generate and adapt the new technologies to improve the quality, relevance of, and access to higher education without running the risk of generating an even greater difference between social sectors and between countries, in terms of the capacity to handle these new tools.

1 General objectives

- 1.1 To produce pertinent policies and strategies to base the social and economic development of the countries on, among other factors, knowledge and use of the new information and communication technologies (NICT).
- 1.2 To induce the region to make the necessary investments for an adequate infrastructure of telecommunications and teleinformatics, enabling flexible and cheap connections to the global networks for the HEIs, favouring access to INTERNET, and the promotion of INTRANETS.
- 1.3 To achieve the integration of the new technologies by the HEIs in all the areas of their work.

- 2 Specific objectives
 - 2.1 To formulate policies which assert the right to information and communication as a central element of an education for all, without exclusions.
 - 2.2 To achieve the development of a Latin American network for higher education and the consolidation of the national university networks.
 - 2.3 To strengthen a culture of exchange, collaboration and academic work by means of electronic networks and to succeed in having these serve as a vehicle to disseminate the cultural values of Latin America and the Caribbean.
 - 2.4 To modernize higher education in all its aspects - contents, methodology, management, and administration - by the rational use of the NICTs. Likewise, that the HEIs consider these new technologies as an object of study, research and development.
- 3 Strategic lines of action
 - 3.1 To establish national and regional systems of information, with data bases and statistics regarding the priority areas of common academic interest, taking into account especially the particular needs of the Caribbean region.
 - 3.2 To organize presential and virtual training for teachers, researchers, students, and administrators, in order to ensure the full utilization of the NICTs in higher education.
 - 3.3 To explore the creation of postgraduate studies of excellence on priority subjects by means of collaborative consortia among institutions of the region, making use of the possibilities offered by work in networks and distance education.
 - 3.4 To further the creation, via the NICTs, of HEI consortia in the region for major research projects which require resources and critical mass beyond the capacities of one single institution.
 - 3.5 To promote the creation of centres of excellence in the production of multimedia for teaching activities, information services and the preservation and dissemination of the Caribbean and Latin American cultural patrimony.
 - 3.6 To strengthen the academic networks and other mechanisms of liaison between institutions, professors, and students, since few institutions can dominate all the areas of knowledge, for the collective quest for equity, quality and relevance for higher education.
 - 3.7 To identify the centres of excellence in NICT, stimulate their work through a network, and help to disseminate their experiences.

E. Programme of international co-operation

International co-operation has been an important mainstay of the Latin American and Caribbean HEIs. Nevertheless, it has also served sometimes to support foreign models of generation of knowledge, curricular construction, views, methodology and work styles. On the other hand, there has been an evident flow of financial resources from the South to the North and, in many cases, instead of contributing significantly to the strengthening of the systems of education and of science and technology of the region, the co-operation has brought about an important and sustained emigration of professionals and scientists with high levels of academic training from the region to the industrialized countries. In this new historical context, it is important to promote relations of mutual learning and greater horizontality. Many institutions of the region have accumulated valuable experiences which can be transferred to other institutions via new systems of international co-operation, seeking to reduce the existing asymmetries.

- 1 General objectives
 - 1.1 To redirect international co-operation to the strengthening and maximization of the intellectual, cultural, scientific, technological, humanistic and social capacities of the region by means of the development of higher education and science and technology.
 - 1.2 To overcome the existing asymmetries, within a new framework of collaboration, assigning priority to a logic of solidary integration which overcomes the differences and leads to work in

priority areas with shared resources and proactive horizontal structures enabling the launching of innovative programmes of research, teaching and social projection.

2 Specific objectives

- 2.1 To ensure that inter-institutional co-operation is facilitated by the constant progress of the information and communication technologies and strengthened by the current processes of economic and political integration, and by the growing need for intercultural understanding.
- 2.2 To ensure the transfer and exchange of information and experiences between HEIs - essential elements of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs - in order to promote knowledge in favour of sustainable human development in the countries of the region.
- 2.3 To ensure support of governments, HEIs, NGOs connected with postsecondary education, and the Latin American and Caribbean inter-university networks, to the UNESCO International Institute of Higher Education for Latin America and the Caribbean which is being established.
- 2.4 To stimulate academic and professional mobility in favour of the economic, educational, political and cultural integration of Latin America and the Caribbean, based on the Regional Agreement and the International Recommendation on the accreditation of studies, degrees and diplomas.
- 2.5 To increase the presence of higher education within the framework of UNESCO's activities in the region and strengthen the links in this field between Latin America and the Caribbean.
- 2.6 To promote the learning and use of the different languages of the region in order to, improve the quality of academic and cultural exchange.

3 Strategic lines of action

- 3.1 To design a system whereby information regarding the total operating capacity of human, scientific and managerial resources in the Latin American and Caribbean HEIs is easily available, which can serve as a basis of programmes of regional inter-institutional co-operation, and to keep it permanently up to date.
- 3.2 To strengthen the entities of exchange of information and experiences between HEIs in terms of the ideal of regional integration.
- 3.3 To extend and help to consolidate the work of the networks of horizontal co-operation in higher education already existing in the region, as well as that of others which may emerge, and to promote exchange between them and other regions of the world.
- 3.4 To facilitate academic mobility (teachers, researchers and students), emphasizing the recognition of partial studies, degrees, diplomas, based on flexible mechanisms of accreditation.
- 3.5 To favour the launching of specific horizontal co-operation projects and the signing of agreements enabling better use of the physical resources and the human capital.
- 3.6 To create postgraduate networks enabling the training of teaching and scientific personnel in the HEIs which do not have this type of infrastructure and the reformulation of shared programmes recognized at the regional level.
- 3.7 To form new university networks like the AUGM in other subregions as soon as possible, and a programme of scientific and technological academic strengthening by launching megaprojects like those of the European Union.
- 3.8 To prepare personnel specialized in the management of horizontal co-operation with the support of international organizations and experts.
- 3.9 To make rational use of the financial resources available in development agencies and organizations, and in the HEIs themselves.
- 3.10 To create in CRESALC a focal point for the Caribbean community with a view to an advantageous integration of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- 3.11 To promote and sustain a programme of development of skills in the use of the languages of the region within the higher education communities, both academic and institutional.

In the course of the different stages of the process of consultation which resulted in this Plan of Action, the eminent persons who took part in it, members of both the academic and the governmental domain, deemed it advisable to recommend that CRESALC, as a regional centre of UNESCO, adopt this Plan of Action and that it dedicate all its experience, capacity, creativity and commitment to the progress of higher education to the fulfilment of the objectives and strategic lines of action set forth in this document, making it an instrument for the guiding of its own activity and the orientation of co-operation with the governments and with HEIs in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

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