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EVALUATION OF UNESCO'S POLICY REGARDING WORLD REPORTS

SUMMARY

This document presents the report of external evaluation on UNESCO's policy regarding world reports, carried out in accordance with the proceedings of the 30th session of the General Conference (Vol. 2) and the Report of Commission I, paragraph 16, of that session of the General Conference.

It also presents the comments of the Director-General on the report.

Decision required: paragraph 11.

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DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S COMMENTS

1. The Director-General notes with satisfaction the results of the evaluation work carried out by the team of external evaluators representing a broad spectrum of professional expertise in the fields covered by the evaluation with intimate knowledge of UNESCO. His special thanks go to the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO for its active role in the formulation of the evaluation proposals and for the provision of excellent working conditions for the evaluation team.
2. He notes the appreciation by the evaluation team of the contribution made by the substantive divisions of the Secretariat and its relevant central services to the initial internal stage of the exercise.
3. He also notes with satisfaction the evaluators' analysis of the current situation summarized as follows: "... all of UNESCO's world reports are of very high professional standard. In most reports, a wealth of information, both quantitative and qualitative, is generally presented in an appealing way to many readers. This is a remarkable achievement in view of the financial and personnel constraints which were imposed on their preparation" and that "...world reports represent a potentially powerful tool for developing UNESCO's visibility and its role as the United Nations intellectual and ethical organization".
4. He agrees with the central message - though with some reservations regarding the wording - of the evaluation finding that there is "... considerable room for improvement of UNESCO's overall world reporting policies" and with the evaluators' concern about "... the inadequate and non-transparent way in which world reports are embedded in the Organization and in its overall communication strategies".
5. Indeed, he shares the evaluators' point of view that what is at stake is not so much the adequacy of individual UNESCO world reports but rather the systemic issue of "UNESCO reporting". Together with the evaluators, he believes that among the central issues to be given serious attention are the identification of the target audience and the elaboration of an appropriate communication strategy. In this respect, he fully shares the analysis of the present situation as contained in paragraph 44 and further developed in paragraphs 52 and 53 of the evaluation report.
6. The evaluation report recommends that in the future there should be "one single UNESCO world report" to be published "every two years on a specific issue to be chosen by the organs of the Organization in an interactive way and presented to the General Conference for further debate" (para. 76), while the existing world reports "should continue as analytical reports on the 'state of the art' in education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information in four- to six-year intervals" (para. 74). The Director-General agrees, in principle, with the general intent of this recommendation. However, he considers that models and patterns successfully applied elsewhere in the United Nations system - and taken by the evaluators as examples of good practices - cannot readily be transposed to the UNESCO context.
7. Changes recommended by the evaluators need to be examined in greater depth taking into account their possible implications in terms of the organization of work, budgetary and human resources needed, time frame, etc. Indeed, according to a preliminary estimate, the budget per issue would be closer to \$4 million to \$5 million (including staff costs and overheads) rather than to the figure of \$750,000-\$1,000,000 (quoted in para. 49), if the report is to offer a relevance and quality likely to attract the kind of public attention and policy impact comparable to UNDP's HDR or the World Bank's World Development Report.

8. Another caveat is that the evaluators seem to place the “world report” they propose in the same category as the “Delors” and “Pérez de Cuéllar” reports. This is misleading, the latter having been prepared by independent commissions, whereas the world report would be prepared by the Secretariat.

9. The recommendation to introduce another category, i.e “UNESCO reports” on education, science, social science, culture, communication, is also acceptable, in general. Further comprehensive study would be needed, however, regarding possible implications in terms of periodicity, number, content, staff and budget requirements, relationship with the world report, etc.

10. The evaluators suggest in paragraph 66 of their report that the General Conference’s debate around a topical theme could become a contribution to the elaboration of UNESCO world reports on that topic. While acknowledging the merit of this recommendation, the Director-General is of the opinion that its implementation falls under the prerogatives of the governing bodies of the Organization.

11. The following draft decision is submitted for consideration by the Executive Board:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 160 EX/45 “Evaluation of UNESCO’s policy regarding world reports”,
2. Noting with satisfaction the high quality of the work done by the team of external evaluators,
3. Taking note with utmost interest of the conclusions and recommendations put forward in the document,
4. Being of the opinion that their comprehensive, penetrating and constructive character is conducive to the elaboration of concrete measures aimed at radical improvement of the system of UNESCO world reporting,
5. Being aware of the fact that the measures recommended by the evaluators might have serious consequences for the Organization in terms of its working methods and processes, human and budgetary resources, time-related and other factors,
6. Invites the Director-General to appropriately apply the recommendations made by the evaluators to the work in progress related to the preparation of some of the UNESCO reports;
7. Also invites the Director-General to submit to the 161st session of the Executive Board a more detailed report on practical consequences for the Organization of all the recommendations made by the evaluators.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF UNESCO WORLD REPORTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. A resolution of the 30th session of the General Conference called for an internal evaluation of UNESCO's policy on world reports, followed by a review by a small group of external evaluators from Member States. The cost of the external review would be covered by contributions from the Member States concerned. The evaluation report was to be submitted to the Executive Board at its 160th session.

2. The team of external evaluators met in Oegstgeest, Netherlands, from 26 to 28 May 2000, hosted by the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO. In his opening address, the Chair of the Commission, Professor Pieter de Meijer, reminded the team that the General Conference resolution called for the evaluation of the UNESCO world reports' "political effectiveness, their position within the Organization and their relationship to reports of other United Nations organizations".

The present situation - an overview

3. In the 1990s, there was a significant increase in the number of world reports published by United Nations institutions. During the 1998-1999 biennium, UNESCO alone contributed five reports of which three appeared for the first time. All UNESCO's world reports are of a very high professional standard. In most reports, a wealth of information, both quantitative and qualitative, is presented in a way that appeals to their readers. This is a remarkable achievement in view of the financial and personnel constraints been imposed on their preparation.

4. World reports represent a potentially powerful tool for developing UNESCO's visibility and its role as the intellectual and ethical organization of the United Nations system. If there is one United Nations organization whose core business includes world reporting, it is UNESCO.

5. Nevertheless, the team found considerable room for improvement in UNESCO's overall world reporting policies. They expressed concern about the inadequate and non-transparent way in which world reports are embedded in the Organization and in its overall communication strategies. Moreover, UNESCO does not at present have a clear-cut conception of what it considers to be a UNESCO world report, and it is not always clear who addresses what kind of messages to whom and why.

6. The flagship reports of other United Nations institutions generally maintain very high standards and are also part of their overall organizational strategies. These institutions want their reports to be well-planned, well-timed and well-publicized, and their impact on important policy discussions to be considerable.

7. Measured against the major flagship reports of other United Nations institutions, UNESCO's world reports stand out in number and in size, but not in policy impact.

8. Furthermore, other UNESCO world reports have been announced or are in the process of production. The team is deeply concerned about the high growth rate of UNESCO world reports within a relatively short period of time. It necessarily reduces the added value of a world report - despite the intrinsic quality of the UNESCO world reports and the dedication and expertise of its editors and/or authors.

9. The internal evaluations of UNESCO world reports indicated important bottlenecks, in production and dissemination.
10. The team concluded that UNESCO's world reports are presently short of the critical mass needed to fulfil a prominent role in setting the global policy agenda. The team wonders whether all reports are sustainable - while retaining their status as world reports - if current funding and staff are not drastically raised.
11. The team noted that the sales figures of some of UNESCO's world reports are relatively low, that not all world reports are on the Internet, and that the excessive size of some of UNESCO's world reports reduces their communicative impact.
12. UNESCO has not really made up its mind as to what information needs to address in its world reports. The information contained in its world reports is generally well received by practitioners and academics but with rare exceptions, general social policy-makers, both at national and international level, have so far not been well served by UNESCO's world reports.
13. The formal status of the UNESCO world reports is not always clear. The General Conference has authorized all world reports, either by explicit decisions or through approving the corresponding budgets, but it is not clear who takes responsibility for the contents and who is formally expected to take note of the contents.
14. More generally, the team has the impression that UNESCO lacks a communication strategy with respect to its world reports, whereas the flagship reports of other United Nations institutions tend to be part of the overall strategies of the organizations to confront world opinion with global challenges, and elicit reflection and action on the part of decision-makers. In fact, UNESCO's world reports are ignored by its own organs and hardly have any impact on the programme of the Organization itself. If UNESCO ignores its own world reports, it cannot expect the global community to pay a great deal of attention to them.
15. The team concluded that UNESCO's world reports demonstrate a high professionalism on the part of the Secretariat and an excellent academic level on the part of the authors. It also concluded that world reports should and could be an indispensable policy tool for the Organization. On the other hand, the team concluded that UNESCO presently fails to treat its world reports well by denying them the importance they deserve, both on the production side and on the dissemination side. It also concluded that the current proliferation of world reports is not sustainable. It fragments the resources and adds to the lack of transparency of the Organization's message, while failing to serve the major national and international policy-makers, the press and the general public, who view UNESCO as a single communicator. This constituency requires a transparent world reporting policy on the part of UNESCO.

Towards a framework for UNESCO world reporting

16. The team developed a framework for "UNESCO world reporting", within which the place and identity of UNESCO world reports as specific products can be specified.
17. World reporting is an essential part of UNESCO's functions. It is a means to assess global developments in its fields of competence against the goals of the world community, to mobilize the world community and to determine its own future action.

18. The team agreed upon a distinction to be made between: data; information; knowledge; visions and values.

19. With regard to UNESCO world reporting, one may distinguish two types of knowledge. The first is knowledge about the discipline itself (“state of the art”). This sort of knowledge is presently contained in most of the published UNESCO world reports and is highly relevant to a rather limited number of professionals.

20. The second type of knowledge concerns not the disciplines as such, but their outcomes. UNESCO’s niche lies in realizing the potential added value of combining the strengths of its disciplines, in the service of one of UNESCO’s main functions, i.e. to develop visions and defend values in the spirit of UNESCO’s Constitution, such as occurred with the Report of the World Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, and the Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, *Our Creative Diversity*.

21. The team thinks that there are more themes of the same magnitude to be addressed, that *transcend* the various disciplines of UNESCO, and UNESCO is well placed and legitimized to address them.

22. As examples, the team mentions: access to knowledge; a global culture (and its relation to local cultures); social cohesion; conditions for peace; the intangible assets of the economy; education, culture and science against poverty. Most if not all of UNESCO’s disciplines are of relevance to each of these themes. Discourse and debate about these themes would therefore require a multidisciplinary preparation at the “knowledge-level”.

23. The team suggests that UNESCO organizes a debate every two years around the chosen theme, half a year prior to the General Conference. The theme would have to be chosen well in advance so as to provide sufficient preparation time to those involved in handling the relevant data and information, and to those providing the necessary multidisciplinary, critical analysis. The latter would require a joint effort from UNESCO staff from various disciplines, and could involve external authors as well. The resulting report would be the flagship activity in UNESCO’s system of world reporting, and would truly deserve the name world report in its proper sense. This UNESCO world report would be embedded in a wider process of communication. The Director-General of UNESCO would bear the responsibility for the quality of this process, but not for the content of all of the documents nor for the positions that are taken by participants in the debate. The Director-General could, however, draw his policy conclusions from the debate and submit them to the General Conference for discussion and adoption.

Recommendations

24. The following recommendations should be interpreted:

- (a) within the framework of UNESCO’s present policy changes in a period of dramatic and rapid changes within UNESCO’s environment; and
- (b) with regard to the position and relationship of UNESCO world reports to the world reports of other United Nations institutions.

25. In so doing, a clear distinction should be made between

- (a) reporting mechanisms about the “state of the art”; and

- (b) world reports which concentrate on specific issues to be dealt with as of highest policy relevance.

26. This proposal implies that the existing and/or planned series of UNESCO world reports will no longer be continued under the label of UNESCO world reports, but as analytical UNESCO reports on the state of the art in the various disciplines. They would appear at four- to six-year intervals, unless the circumstances of a particular discipline determined more frequent publication.

27. In future, UNESCO should publish a single UNESCO world report every two years on a specific issue to be chosen by the organs of the Organization in an interactive way and presented to the General Conference for further debate.

28. These recommendations demand an explicit overall policy which sets the framework conditions and offers the necessary guidance for all activities concerned.

29. The thematic, biennial UNESCO world report could be prepared within the Secretariat by a highly qualified ad hoc group with complementary skills reflecting the different areas of UNESCO's competence, supervised by an external advisory group. The intellectual independence of the authors must be absolutely guaranteed, as well as a sufficient level of financial and logistic support.

30. The team also observed the lack of a clear policy in the production and dissemination of present UNESCO world reports. In future, the relationships with and policy of the UNESCO Publishing Office (UPO) must be clearly defined.

I. INTRODUCTION

31. The team of external evaluators started its work in Oegstgeest, Netherlands, from 26 to 28 May 2000 - a meeting hosted by the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO. In his opening address, the Chair of the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO, Professor Pieter de Meijer, welcomed the participants; he stressed the importance of detecting both new developments and reporting about the state of the art through the publication of world reports. These activities must be seen within the context of UNESCO's new overall policy. Furthermore, he reminded the team of the wording of the resolution submitted by the Netherlands and adopted by the 30th session of the General Conference calling for the evaluation of the UNESCO world reports, specifically concerning their "political effectiveness, their position within the Organization and their relationship to reports of other United Nations organizations".

32. According to the report of Commission I, the draft resolution, as amended, calls for an internal evaluation of UNESCO's policy regarding world reports. This evaluation will be reviewed by a small group of experts from Member States (no more than five or six persons). The cost of this external review will be covered by contributions from the Member States concerned. The evaluation report must be submitted to the Executive Board at its 160th session.

33. Five members of the team of external evaluators (Annex I), appointed by the Director-General, participated in the meeting: Ms Mirja Liikkanen, Senior Researcher in the Unit for Culture and Media, Statistics Finland; Mr Claude Sauvageot, Chef de Mission, Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, France; Professor Dr Klaus Hüfner, President of the German Commission for UNESCO, Germany; H.E. Ambassador Dr Ahmad Hussein, Permanent

Delegate of Malaysia to UNESCO, Malaysia; and Dr Trevor Coombe, Former Deputy Director-General: Systems and Planning, Department of Education, South Africa.

34. Three other members of the team: Professor Dr Layla Takla, Chairperson of the International Council of Women, Egypt; Mr Federico Reys Heroles, Editor “El País”, Mexico, and Dr E. Iagodkine, Deputy Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, Russian Federation, were not able to participate in the meeting (Annex I). The team elected Mr A. Hussein as Chairman and Mr K. Hufner as Rapporteur. In addition, five resource persons participated in parts of the meeting whose contributions were highly appreciated (Annex I).

35. The team based its discussions on the following documents:

- (a) the most recent edition(s) of the UNESCO world reports (the 2000 issue of the *World Education Report* was not available at the time and could not be taken into consideration);
- (b) a paper on “World reports in the United Nations system”, prepared by one member of the evaluation team;
- (c) a UNESCO consultant’s report on the organization, modalities and logistics utilized by ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, World Bank and WHO in preparing their annual world reports;
- (d) two internal reviews of United Nations Economic and Social “Flagship” Reports prepared by WIDER and UNRISD in late 1997;
- (e) two communication notes received from Ms Lourdes Arizpe, Mexico; and
- (f) the internal evaluations of five UNESCO world reports.

36. The team expressed its appreciation for the internal evaluations of UNESCO’s world reports as conducted by the Secretariat’s Evaluation Unit. Jointly with some additional information, which was also provided by the Evaluation Unit on the request of the team, the internal evaluation provided an excellent starting point for the evaluation of all of UNESCO’s world reports.

37. The participants also expressed their thanks to the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO for their kind hospitality and all their organizational efforts which allowed such a stimulating and fruitful meeting.

II. THE PRESENT SITUATION - AN OVERVIEW

38. In the 1990s, there was a significant increase in the number of world reports being published by United Nations institutions. During the 1998-1999 biennium, UNESCO alone contributed five reports of which three appeared for the first time (among them the 1999 *World Communication and Information Report* as the result of the merger of the *World Communication Report* and the *World Information Report* (Annex II)). So far, only the *World Education Report* (in April 2000, the fifth report was published) and the *World Science Report* (in 1998, its third edition was published) can be interpreted as UNESCO world reports appearing at regular intervals. The team realized that all of UNESCO’s world reports are of very high professional standards. In most reports, a wealth of information, both quantitative and qualitative, is generally presented in an appealing way to many readers. This is a

remarkable achievement in view of the financial and personnel constraints which were imposed on their preparation (Annex III).

39. As to the individual reports, the *World Education Report* demonstrates its continuity and thematic coherence in each of its issues and the *World Culture Report* shows ambition to monitor global developments in culture and development in the wake of the Pérez de Cuéllar report and the Stockholm Conference while having to develop the empirical tools from scratch, for example, key performance indicators. The *World Social Science Report* emphasizes a historical perspective, while the *World Science Report* concentrates in some of its chapters on problem-oriented, contemporary issues. The *World Communication and Information Report* is particularly well embedded in the sector and provides an excellent view on the rapid developments which are taking place in this field.

40. The team also observed that world reports represent a potentially powerful tool for developing UNESCO's visibility and its role as the United Nations intellectual and ethical organization. World reports are an indispensable instrument for confronting and interpreting the norms and values of the world community, for which UNESCO is the principal global advocator, with the actual developments taking place in the domains of its competencies. If there is one United Nations organization whose core business includes world reporting, it is UNESCO.

41. Notwithstanding the considerable merits of UNESCO's individual world reports' intellectual quality and the appropriateness of world reporting to the Organization, however, the team found considerable room for improvement of UNESCO's overall world reporting policies. They expressed concern about the inadequate and non-transparent way in which world reports are embedded in the Organization and in its overall communication strategies.

42. The team realized that UNESCO does not at present have a clear-cut conception of what it considers to be a UNESCO world report. The formats of UNESCO's world reports vary considerably. Some of them limit themselves to presenting the state of the art of the corresponding disciplines or professional fields. Others also focus to a certain extent on global problems affecting the corresponding domains. Some reports treat only one central theme in each issue, other reports cover the full domain of the corresponding sector. Most reports consist of contributions individually signed by their authors; one report is anonymous. Some reports have been prepared under the overall responsibility of an independent external editorial team; others have been prepared under the responsibility of the ADG of the Sector. Some reports draw heavily on statistical data; others have the character of a collection of essays. Although all reports claim to target decision-makers besides various other audiences (such as students, professionals, general readers), the way in which these are addressed varies strongly between the reports. In brief, for UNESCO's world reports as a whole, it is not always clear who addresses what kind of messages to whom and why.

43. The team acknowledges that UNESCO's individual world reports vary in accordance with the disparate information needs of the constituencies which UNESCO is expected to serve. They therefore hesitate to call for uniform standards for all of UNESCO's present series of world reports. Certainly, the frequency of issuance of the reports may vary between sectors. The field of communication and information, for example, is faced with turbulent developments in its environment which require intensive monitoring and more frequent coverage, whereas developments in culture, sciences and education can possibly afford to be monitored at a somewhat slower rate.

44. The team wishes to point out that there is an important constituency, comprising major national and international policy-makers, the press and the general public, which views

UNESCO as a single communicator, not as a loose collection of sectors. This constituency requires a transparent communication policy on the part of UNESCO so as to be reached in an effective way. To the members of this global policy constituency, UNESCO's present world reporting policies are not transparent. It is difficult to identify how UNESCO's world reports are supposed to fit in between all the other messages of the Organization, such as the reports of World Commissions (on Culture and Development, on Education in the Twenty-first Century) on the one hand, and UNESCO's Statistical Yearbook and comparable surveys as well as its important journals on the other. It is difficult to explain, for example, why the contributions in the *World Communication and Information Report* have not been published by a major publisher as an important professional publication, or in what respect the contents of the *World Social Science Report* are different from those of the contributions published in UNESCO's prestigious *International Social Science Journal*.

III. WORLD REPORTS IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

45. Moreover, to the global policy constituency, UNESCO is a member of the broader family of major international agencies, many of which publish their own series of flagship reports. These reports are sometimes called world reports, such as the *World Health Report* of WHO and the *World Development Report* of the World Bank. But even those that have different titles, such as the *Human Development Report* of UNDP, share the same claim to be of universal relevance to important global problems for their contents. The flagship reports of other agencies often do not only live up to very high standards as far as their contents is concerned but are also part of the overall strategies of their organizations. These agencies want their reports to be well-planned, well-timed and well-publicized, and their impact on important policy discussions to be considerable.

46. In many cases, the publication of a world report has a clearly defined function: since 1990 the annual *Human Development Report* of UNDP, for example, offers an explicit alternative paradigm against the GNP per capita oriented development concept of the World Bank; since 1979 the annual *UNICEF Report on the State of the World's Children* intends to undertake both to serve as a forceful advocacy document as well as a research publication to influence debates on development policy; the annual *World Health Report* of WHO which has appeared since 1995 and is submitted to the World Health Assembly, the legislative body of WHO, serves for policy debates. In contrast to clear functions and/or mandates of those world reports, the team realized that the production and publication of UNESCO world reports has been undertaken so far without a focused mission statement, without clearly defined guidance, without clear-cut policy goals. As a result, UNESCO's world reports tend to contain a rather heterogeneous set of elements, serve diverse information needs of diverse target groups, and use a single communication mode (a biennial or triennial volume) that does not seem to be the most appropriate in all cases.

47. Measured against the major flagship reports of other United Nations agencies, the team considered UNESCO's world reports stand out in number (the team found no other agency with as many as five series of world reports) and in size. They do not, however, match the major world reports in policy impact. None of UNESCO's present series of world reports, not even the *World Education Report*, has so far succeeded in reaching the global policy community to the extent to which the aforementioned reports have succeeded in doing so, in terms of influencing its agendas or becoming a reference standard.

48. Furthermore, other UNESCO world reports are announced or in the process of production, such as a *World Languages Report*, a *World Technology Report*, a *World Water Development Report*, a *World Bioethics Report* and a *World Solar Report*. The team wishes to

express its deep concern about the high growth rate of UNESCO world reports within a relative short period of time. It seems that an infection effect has motivated so many units within the UNESCO Secretariat to publish “world reports” for the sake of visibility. This inflation phenomenon necessarily leads to a proliferation of attention. It necessarily reduces the value added of a world report - despite the intrinsic quality of the UNESCO world reports and the dedication and expertise of its editors and authors.

49. The causes of the failure of UNESCO’s world reports to live up to the ambition which is implied by the title *world report* are transparent from the information contained in the internal evaluations. The team found important bottlenecks, both on the production side and on the dissemination side. On the production side, the team noted that each of UNESCO’s world reports is rather understaffed as compared to its counterparts elsewhere (Annex III). Even where outside experts take care of most of the authoring and editing, which is not always the case, a substantial dedicated core group in the Secretariat, essential to warrant consistency and deadlines, is lacking for all of UNESCO’s world reports. Finance is even a more serious bottleneck. Compared to the flagship reports of most other United Nations agencies, UNESCO’s world reports are under-funded. Although it is difficult to present exact comparisons of reported expenditure here since the basis of calculation for the available figures varies between organizations, the team estimates that, whereas expenditure on the production of one world report in other organizations tends to be between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000 per issue, UNESCO spends much less on the preparation of most of its world reports (for some proxies see Annex III).

50. The team concluded that, due to the indicated circumstances, UNESCO’s individual series of world reports are presently short of the critical mass needed to fulfil a prominent role in setting the global policy agenda, and they wonder whether this goal can be reached if UNESCO continues its present practice. For the first time, all five of UNESCO’s present world reports have appeared within a single biennium. Since all world reports are intended to appear on a biennial basis, financial efforts are required to publish new issues in the current biennium. Experience has taught that the preparation and production of a world report takes time and should appear at a regular frequency in order to grow and gain its position in the global discussion. The team wonders whether all reports are sustainable - while retaining their status as world reports - if current funding and staff are not drastically raised.

51. On the dissemination side, too, the character of UNESCO’s world reports is different from that of the prominent world reports of other United Nations agencies. The team noted that the sales figures of the hard copies of UNESCO’s world reports are relatively low, that not all world reports are on the Internet, and that the excessive size of some of UNESCO’s world reports reduces their communicative impact (Annexes III and IVb).

52. At the receiving end, “priority readership” of nearly all reports, as reported in the internal evaluations, comprises a heterogeneous collection of persons: (1) professionals, experts, practitioners (in the corresponding fields); (2) professors and students (in an academic environment); (3) government officials, administrators, decision-makers, policy-makers (at the local, national and international levels); (4) interested observers, educated readers (“interested in society and the individual human being”). The *World Culture Report* also targets National Commissions and civil society, thus intending to address NGOs besides governments. Addressing different groups with indistinct priority entails a loss of urgency. Policy-makers, for example, can only be expected to use the information offered in the world reports and to act accordingly if it appeals to their frame of reference and their modalities of action. In preparing its world reports, UNESCO hardly seems to take this aspect into account.

53. This also affects the contents of the world reports. Practitioners, academics and policy-makers have different information needs. Also, there is a difference between the information needs of policy-makers for the sector, such as ministers of education and science, and those outside the sector who are confronted with developments in society at large, such as globalization or the looming water crisis. UNESCO has not really made up its mind as to what information it needs to address in its world reports. The information contained in its world reports is generally well received by practitioners and academics (whose information needs are also generally taken care of quite well by UNESCO's specialized publications, such as *Prospects* or the *International Social Science Journal*). Besides, most of UNESCO's world reports seem to target limited groups of policy-makers, namely those in the sectors themselves. Thus, the information contained in the *World Social Science Report* is relevant to policy-makers for the social sciences. As to general social policy-makers, both on the national and international level, this broader group is so far hardly served by UNESCO's world reports, although the *World Culture Report* intends to do so, and the "contemporary issues" chapters in the *World Science Report* represent a notable exception.

54. The lack of focus of UNESCO's world reports is reinforced by their formal status, which is not always clear. The General Conference has authorized all world reports, either by explicit decisions or through approving the corresponding budgets. (The impetus for the *World Culture Report* came from outside of UNESCO: the World Commission for Culture and Development recommended it.) The editors of each world report do not always state who precisely takes responsibility for the contents of the report and who is formally expected to take note of (and act on) the contents.

55. More generally, the team has the impression that UNESCO, unlike other United Nations agencies, lacks a communication strategy with respect to its world reports. Whereas the flagship reports of other United Nations agencies tend to be parts of overall strategies of the organizations to confront world opinion with global challenges and to elicit reflection and action on the part of decision-makers, the actual world reports being just an element of a broader communication process, UNESCO seems to regard the production of world reports as a goal in itself. It concentrates most of its efforts on producing the texts. More seriously, UNESCO rarely makes an effort to secure an impact for a report by organizing discussions and bringing the problems to the fore. In fact, UNESCO's world reports are ignored by its own organs. None of the recent world reports has given rise to a discussion on substance at a General Conference. Although ample time was reserved for in-depth discussion during the 159th session of the Executive Board, no time was spent on the excellent and highly topical 2000 issue of the *World Education Report* which had just been published. Also, most of UNESCO's world reports hardly have any impact on the programme of the Organization itself. If UNESCO ignores its own world reports, it cannot expect the global community to pay a great deal of attention to it.

56. The team concluded that on the one hand UNESCO's world reports demonstrate a high professionalism on the part of the Secretariat and an excellent academic level on the part of the authors. It also concluded that world reports should and could be an indispensable policy tool for the Organization. On the other hand, the team believed that UNESCO presently fails to treat its world reports well by denying them the importance they deserve, both on the production side and on the dissemination side. It also concluded that the proliferation of world reports presently taking place is not sustainable, increasing both fragmentation of resources and lack of transparency of the Organization's message, while at the same time failing to serve the constituency which assesses the Organization's comparative advantage with respect to other agencies: the major national and international policy-makers, the press and the

general public, which view UNESCO as a single communicator. This constituency requires a transparent world reporting policy on the part of UNESCO.

IV. TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK OF UNESCO WORLD REPORTING

57. The team of external evaluators has searched for a way to overcome the lack of coherence and transparency in UNESCO's arrangement for world reports. By rejecting *as an axiom* the notion that UNESCO world reports should be large volumes that cover all kinds of contents for all of UNESCO's disciplines separately, a framework for "UNESCO world reporting" was developed instead. World reporting is interpreted as a continuous process by which UNESCO:

- (a) informs its constituencies about the major global challenges in its fields of competence;
- (b) develops and maintains a sound empirical basis for the information it provides;
- (c) addresses its various constituencies in a more focused way;
- (d) provides the contents and applies the communication modes that serve these particular groups best;
- (e) facilitates and promotes discussion on the challenges at hand; and
- (f) sets the agenda of policy-makers in Member States and NGOs as well as for UNESCO itself.

58. Within this framework, the place and identity of UNESCO world reports as specific products could then be further elaborated which, presently, are not integrated in the Organization itself.

59. According to the team of external evaluators, world reporting is an essential part of UNESCO's functions. It is a means to assess global developments in its fields of competence against the goals of the world community, to mobilize the world community and to determine its own future action. More specifically, the goals of world reporting are:

- (a) to assess:
 - (i) whether and to what extent existing practices in the domains of UNESCO's competence are in accordance with the values enshrined in UNESCO's Constitution;
 - (ii) whether and to what extent existing international norms are in accordance with the values enshrined in UNESCO's Constitution;
 - (iii) whether and to what extent existing policies are in accordance with the existing international norms in UNESCO's domain of competence;
 - (iv) whether and to what extent existing policies based on UNESCO's norms and values are being translated into practice;
- (b) to present these assessments to a public discussion, to pinpoint urgent problems and to indicate options for policy action on the part of UNESCO, Member States' governments and other UNESCO partners in dealing with these problems; and

- (c) to organize UNESCO's world reporting activities in such a way as to secure the highest possible degree of effectiveness in pursuing these goals.

60. In order to help organizing its thinking about the contents of world reporting, the team adopted a simple scheme that distinguishes between: (a) data; (b) information; (c) knowledge; and (d) values and visions. The team recognized that all data are not necessarily statistical in form, and that information may be expressed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

61. Data, isolated facts, can be transformed by statistical or narrative processes into information. In its turn, information can gain meaning through a process of reasoning and become knowledge. Finally, knowledge (although not knowledge alone) can be the terrain on which values and visions are constructed.

62. Clearly, data and information are gathered, processed and disseminated by discipline. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics is the place where much of it comes together, but the complex process of handling data and information involves a relatively small (although global) community of people who are specialized by discipline. The team recommends that this process of handling data and information reaps the fruits of further digitization. It deserves to benefit fully from the new possibilities that information and communication technologies have to offer.

63. Paper volumes might still be needed to disseminate data and information, given the present uneven distribution of access to digital data and information. But these publications could appear, for example, only every four to six years, as statistical indicators tend not to change dramatically over a few years time. The number of copies could be rather limited, especially if "outsiders" who want to confer with UNESCO statistics are given (limited) access to the digital space of UNESCO statistics. The selectivity of the reporting process would be further enhanced if these paper publications were specialized by discipline. Moreover, future developments in information and communication technologies might lead to paper volumes which will contain limited selections of data being published tailor-made to meet the needs of specific groups of users.

64. With regard to UNESCO world reporting, two types of knowledge can be distinguished. First, there is knowledge as generated by professionals in the disciplines and used within the disciplines. The team thinks that world reports should not deal with this type of knowledge. UNESCO should not enter a market which is full of excellent journals and books offering this type of knowledge. UNESCO itself should limit itself to exercising a certain unifying role in disseminating important knowledge for professionals in such journals as *Prospects*, the *International Social Science Journal* and *Diogenes*.

65. Second, there is knowledge about the state of the art of the disciplines and their social and political contexts. For example, a publication about the social sciences could address the issues of the general development of the social sciences, their esteem and application, the investment in social sciences in terms of time and money, and factors enhancing or impeding these investments. This sort of discipline-oriented political knowledge is presently contained in most of the published UNESCO world reports. It is highly relevant to policy-makers for the discipline as well as for those professionals in the discipline who wish to view the discipline in a broader perspective. In general, these target groups have little overlap with those involved in the process of handling data and information. In spite of the importance which the team attaches to UNESCO's role in collecting and disseminating this knowledge, and although such activities should certainly be part of the world reporting process, the team does not believe that such sectoral knowledge is to be published in UNESCO world reports. The team recommends that UNESCO:

- (i) continues to disseminate this kind of knowledge;
- (ii) develops to this end specialized sector-specific UNESCO reports (e.g. the *UNESCO Social Science Report*) that address policy-makers and experts for the sectors in particular;
- (iii) creates within its sectors the infrastructure which is necessary to sustain these reports;
- (iv) adjusts the frequency of these publications to both the needs of their readerships and to the pace of the developments within the disciplines.

66. Besides producing and disseminating knowledge, the team considers that UNESCO is uniquely positioned to develop *visions* on the basis of universal values in the fields of its competence. Examples are the Report of the World Commission on Education in the Twenty-First Century, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, and the Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, *Our Creative Diversity*. In both cases, authoritative persons from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds defined the new global challenges and its consequences for action in UNESCO's fields of competence. The team thinks that there are more issues with a similar global scope to be addressed and that UNESCO is well placed to address these issues. As examples, it would like to mention: access to knowledge, a global culture (and its relationship to local cultures); social cohesion; conditions for peace; the intangible assets of the economy; education, culture and science against poverty. The team considers that UNESCO should take on such themes in a systematic way and that it should address the issues on a sound empirical base. This is the place where the team thinks UNESCO world reports should be positioned; they should contain authoritative visions on global challenges based upon sound empirical knowledge.

67. Clearly, most if not all of UNESCO's disciplines are of relevance to each of the themes mentioned above. Discourse and debate about these themes would therefore require a multidisciplinary preparation at the knowledge level. In other words, the issues tend to *transcend* the various disciplines of UNESCO. The team observes that the predominantly disciplinary approach of UNESCO in its world reports *and* its internal organizational set-up impedes UNESCO from addressing these themes in a thorough way which is required to result in a global impact. As opposed to UNESCO's sectoral reports mentioned in paragraph 35, UNESCO world reports should be prepared in the "heart" of the Organization.

68. The team suggests that UNESCO organizes a debate around a theme of the kind that is indicated by the examples given in paragraph 66. This debate could be held every two years, for example, half a year prior to the General Conference. The theme would have to be chosen well in advance so as to provide sufficient preparation time to those involved in handling the relevant data and information, and to those providing the necessary multidisciplinary, critical analysis. The latter would require a joint effort from UNESCO staff from various disciplines, and could involve external authors as well. The acceptance and impact process would undoubtedly benefit from contributions by reputable scientists, excellent artists and world leaders. The resulting report would be the flagship activity in UNESCO's system of world reporting, and would truly deserve the name *world report* in its proper sense. This UNESCO world report would be embedded in a wider process of communication. Various media could be applied such as: panel discussions and interviews, broadcast on television; (regional) conferences; speeches; preliminary discussion papers; e-mail discussion, well-managed websites; chat rooms, etc. The Director-General of UNESCO would bear the responsibility for the quality of this process, but not for the content of all of the documents nor for the positions that are taken by participants in the debate. He could not possibly do so, since it is

essential for the debate to allow controversy. The Director-General could, however, draw his policy conclusions from the debate and submit them to the General Conference for discussion and adoption.

69. An interdisciplinary team, recruited for the purpose from UNESCO staff members, should be given responsibility for conceptualizing the theme, managing the debate, ensuring that the issues are effectively investigated, bringing the world report into production, and planning follow-up activities. Recruitment to the world report team would represent a high professional honour within UNESCO, a mark of distinction within the Organization. Although the evaluators were not mandated to make specific organizational recommendations, the expectation would be that members of the UNESCO world report team should be detached from normal duties in order to devote their full intellectual and professional energies to the task. Achieving a common conceptual understanding of the theme, across many disciplines, will require intellectual engagement of a high order. The UNESCO world report team would be expected to work closely with an advisory group of external specialists, in order to invest their work with the necessary currency and authority.

70. Referring to the production and dissemination of UNESCO world reports the team constructed comparative tables based on the information contained in the five internal evaluations of UNESCO world reports (Annexes III-IV(c)). The team noted that the data given lack coherence and should be interpreted with caution. To a certain extent they mirror the present situation which is characterized by a non-existent overall accounting system. In some cases, the print run by co-publications is known (e.g. for the *World Education Report 1998* and the *World Science Report 1998*), in other cases not (Annex IV(a)). Also, the sales numbers in UNESCO's official languages other than English and French are often unknown or refer only to UNESCO's sales (Annex IV(b)). Very often, the number of free copies is higher than or equals the sales number (Annexes IV(b) and IV(c)). Looking at the print run in comparison with the sales and the free distribution, certain inconsistencies can be observed which require further information concerning the marketing strategies; this is especially important for the French-speaking market. As mentioned above, the information contained in Annexes III-IV(c) does not offer a clear and full picture; this can only be to a certain extent explained by the fact that some UNESCO world reports appeared quite recently.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

71. The following recommendations should be interpreted:

- (a) within the framework of UNESCO's present policy reorientation in a period of dramatic and rapid changes within UNESCO's environment; and
- (b) with regard to the position and relationship of UNESCO world reports to the world reports of other United Nations organizations.

72. In doing so, a clear distinction should be made between:

- (a) UNESCO reporting mechanisms about the "state of the art"; and
- (b) UNESCO world reports which concentrate on specific issues to be dealt with as of highest policy relevance.

73. The first approach, being a kind of compendium model presently exercised by all UNESCO world reports with the exceptions of the *World Education Report* and the *World*

Culture Report, is a major activity of the Organization and should be maintained through a reporting mechanism at longer intervals (e.g. every four to six years), whereas the second approach demands an appropriate timing as well as addressee, such as the General Conference of UNESCO, at two-year-intervals. It is essential for the Organization to clarify its overall publication policy for both print and electronic media, as the effectiveness and impact of both UNESCO's "state-of-the-art" reporting and its world reports depend on a clear policy framework for publication and dissemination, and highly efficient management of these processes.

74. This proposal implies that the actual existing and/or planned series of UNESCO world reports will no longer be continued under the label of *UNESCO world reports*. The experts felt, however, that those reports should continue as analytical reports on the state of the art in education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information in four- to six-year intervals. They should contain either a (multi-) disciplinary analysis, based on statistical empirical material produced by UNESCO and other sources, or reflective disciplinary knowledge about the state of a discipline.

75. New policy recommendations (*visions and values*) depend on knowledge, knowledge depends on information, which in turn depends on data. Policy-oriented world reports demand a top-down strategy which implies new theoretical paradigms and, most probably, the construction of new indicators and corresponding data gathering strategies. In the case of state-of-the-art reporting systems the process is bottom-up oriented, and the focus is related to a solid interpretation of collected routine data. In both cases, close cooperation with the newly founded UNESCO Institute for Statistics will be of utmost importance.

76. The team was confronted with a continuum of basic options ranging from a continuation of UNESCO world reports on the activities of all sectors on the one extreme to a complete stop of all UNESCO world reports in their present state on the other. Since the team realized that none of the UNESCO world reports succeeded in being policy-oriented in terms of focusing on specific issues, being problem-oriented and not theme- or discipline-oriented, the team would like to recommend that, in future, UNESCO publishes one single UNESCO world report every two years on a specific issue to be chosen by the organs of the Organization in an interactive way and presented to the General Conference for further debate.

77. As already mentioned, these recommendations demand, first of all, an explicit overall policy which sets the framework conditions and offers the necessary guidance for all activities concerned. These also include detailed programming activities well in advance with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics as the most important partner as well as with available documentation services.

78. The actual preparation of a thematic, biennial UNESCO world report could be undertaken internally or externally, depending upon an assessment made in each case. But, whether the writing is done internally or commissioned out, it will be essential to recruit a multidisciplinary team of the highest calibre from within the Organization in order to undertake the conceptualization, planning and execution of the world report, including the management of the preparatory debates and the design of follow-up activities. Membership of each successive UNESCO world report team would be a mark of high honour and recognition within the Organization, since the team would bear a serious responsibility for the conduct of a worldwide conversation on a theme of fundamental importance to the mission and values of the Organization, and thus a re-interpretation of the universal mandate of UNESCO in contemporary terms. In both cases, an external advisory group of experts and leaders will be needed to give critical advice and lend authority to the enterprise. In both cases also, the

intellectual independence of the authors of the UNESCO world report must be absolutely guaranteed. Each world report production will also need a sufficient level of financial and logistical support.

79. The team also observed the lack of a clear policy in the production and dissemination of present UNESCO world reports. Therefore, incentive structures should be developed with the target that sales cover at least the printing costs. Furthermore, calculations of the overall costs will be necessary, for example, through the introduction of separate cost units accounting schemes.

80. In future, the relationships with the UNESCO Publishing Office (UPO) must be clearly defined; they include, *inter alia*, sales pricing, free copy policy (especially for developing countries), an agreed Internet policy, issues concerning distribution arrangements with sales agents (e.g. in the United States), the translation policy, etc.

81. The recommendations of the team imply:

- (a) further digitization of the handling of data and information, possibly accompanied by low frequency, discipline-oriented publications;
- (b) UNESCO reports containing knowledge about the various disciplines as such;
- (c) thematic, biennial UNESCO world reports, supported by multidisciplinary, critical analysis and embedded in a wider communication process;
- (d) a comprehensive UNESCO publication and dissemination policy;
- (e) recruitment of a high calibre interdisciplinary UNESCO world report team every two years from among the Secretariat professional staff;
- (f) budget and support staff commensurate with the importance of the disciplinary UNESCO reports and the interdisciplinary UNESCO world reports;
- (g) Director-General to present these reports to the main organs of UNESCO with a statement of views and policy recommendations.

ANNEX I
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ANNEX II

UNESCO WORLD REPORTS, 1989-1999/
YEAR OF PUBLICATION AND NUMBER OF PAGES

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
World Communication Report (WComR)	1st 551 pp.								2nd 298 pp.		
World Education Report (WER) ¹			1st 149 pp.		2nd 172 pp.		3rd 174 pp.			4th 174 pp.	
World Information Report (WIR)									1st 390 pp.		
World Science Report (WSR)					1st 278 pp.			2nd 356 pp.		3rd 280 pp.	
World Culture Report (WCuIR)										1st 488 pp.	
World Communication and Information Report (WCIR)											1st 302 pp.
World Social Science Report (WSSR)											1st 352 pp.

¹ The 5th Report, 178 pp., appeared in April 2000.

ANNEX III

PRODUCTION OF UNESCO WORLD REPORTS

Report	Programme Budget (US \$)			Expenditure	Permanent Staff	
	Regular programme C/5 Approved	Extra-budgetary	Total		Professional	Secretarial
World Communication and Information Report 1999-2000	220,000	-	220,000	199,400	1	1
World Culture Report 1998	145,000	344,000	489,000	389,000	2	2
World Education Report 1998	650,000	-	650,000	304,217	2	1
World Science Report 1998	205,800	-	205,800	143,556	2 (part time)	1 (part time)
World Social Science Report 1999	250,000	-	250,000	219,257	3 (part time)	2 (part time)

ANNEX IV(a)

DISSEMINATION OF UNESCO WORLD REPORTS

Report	Print run						Total
	Arabic	Chinese	English	French	Russian	Spanish	
World Communication and Information Report 1999-2000	(CP)	(CP)	3,000	3,000	(CP)	(CP) (to appear on 31/08/00)	6,000
World Culture Report 1998	(CP)	(CP)	3,500	3,000	(CP)	(CP)	6,500
World Education Report 1998	1,000 (CP)	3,000 (CP)	5,130	1,650	1,000 (CP)	4,000 (CP)	15,780
World Science Report 1998	-	2,000 (CP)	5,000 (CP)	3,500 (CP)	-	4,000 (CP)	14,000
World Social Science Report 1999	-	-	5,000 (CP)	-	-	-	5,000

Explanatory remarks: CP = Co-published; the print run by co-publications is decided by each co-publisher. UNESCO Publishing buys a certain number of copies for distribution.

ANNEX IV(b)

DISSEMINATION OF UNESCO WORLD REPORTS

Report	Sales							UNESCO Bookshop price FF	Freely Reproducible	On Internet
	Arabic	Chinese	English	French	Russian	Spanish	Total			
World Communication and Information Report 1999-2000	-	-	300	58	-	-	358	250	-	yes
World Culture Report 1998	-	-	1,718	657	-	148	2,523	260	-	-
World Education Report 1998	5	-	2,065	666	2	331	3,069	150	-	(yes) ¹
World Science Report 1998	-	1,500	1,200	300	-	2,400	5,400	430	-	-
World Social Science Report 1999	-	-	607	-	-	-	607	295	-	-

1. The English and French editions of the Report have been placed on the Internet beginning with the World Education Report 2000.

ANNEX IV(c)
DISSEMINATION OF UNESCO WORLD REPORTS

Report	Free distribution						Total
	Arabic	Chinese	English	French	Russian	Spanish	
World Communication and Information Report 1999-2000	-	-	1,059	421	-	-	1,480
World Culture Report 1998	-	-	1,021	698	-	139	1,858
World Education Report 1998	719 ¹	-	2,392	541	839	660 ²	5,151
World Science Report 1998	-	500	1,605	540	-	463	3,108
World Social Science Report 1999	-	-	669	-	-	-	669

1. Includes 650 shipped directly by the printer in Beirut to UNESCO field offices in the Arab States region.
2. Includes an estimated 200-220 copies sent direct from the printer to UNESCO/OREALC for distribution at the Summit of the Americas, April 1998.