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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

The right to education

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly a report which has been communicated to him by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 34/170 of 17 December 1979.

ANNEX

Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on UNESCO activities in relation to support for education and training of national personnel of developing countries

1. This report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 34/170 of 17 December 1979, entitled "The right to education". By that resolution, the Assembly, inter alia, requested the Director-General of UNESCO to present to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session a preliminary report and, at its thirty-sixth session, a final report containing:

(a) Information on the activities of UNESCO in relation to support for education and training of national personnel of developing countries;

(b) His views and suggestions, in accordance with the organization's mandate and after consultation with Member States and specialized agencies, on the need for and the possibility of UNESCO reinforcing its programmes and activities for the purpose of co-operating with developing countries in their efforts to ensure adequate education networks at all levels as well as fellowships and facilities for the training of qualified national personnel;

(c) Information on the difficulties and obstacles encountered in the full implementation of the right to education, particularly in developing countries, in conformity with their own requirements of over-all progress and development, as well as his conclusions on action to be taken in that regard.

2. This action of the General Assembly was reported by the Director-General to the Executive Board of UNESCO at its 109th session, along with a summary of relevant UNESCO action. He indicated that the Board might wish to formulate directives on the way in which the Director-General should respond to the request of the Assembly, and more particularly to its invitation to carry out studies and prepare reports on that issue. In its decision on this question, 109 EX/Decision 7.1.1 (see appendix to the present report), the Executive Board, inter alia, invited the Director-General to draw up a brief report on the activities of UNESCO in relation to support for education and training of national personnel of developing countries and to submit it to the Assembly together with relevant reports and documents such as the Medium-Term Plan for 1977-1982 (19 C/4), the draft Programme and Budget for 1981-1983 (21 C/5), and the report of the Director-General on the activities of the organization in 1977-1978 (21 C/3). Since it is not possible for technical reasons to provide all documents in sufficient numbers for distribution, interested delegations are invited to consult them in the UNESCO Liaison Office to the Secretariat.

3. First of all, considerable similarity exists between the principles and lines of action embodied in resolution 34/170 and the general objectives and main thrust of the UNESCO programme since its foundation. The democratization of education

constitutes one of the principal points of the organization's programme. For example, the Medium-Term Plan for 1977-1982 (19 C/4 Approved, chap. V, para. 504) stressed the fact that this democratization took full effect only if it was carried out within the context of major social and economic changes. In his address to the sixth session of the Preparatory Committee for the New Development Strategy, the Director-General stated that in the field of education, it was necessary to proceed from the principle that all parts of the educational system formed a whole and should together enable the people to participate more and more consciously in development.

4. Although educational action may have seemed, during the 1960s, selective and partial, educational systems gradually took on a more comprehensive and global aspect, both within member States and in the programme which they established for UNESCO. That programme covers all levels, types and forms of education, in the broad sense of the term, including the training of qualified personnel and administrative staff at all levels, thus going beyond the framework of the school and the university. The achievement of universal and compulsory primary basic schooling and the elimination of illiteracy are two of the organization's main objectives in the field of education. These features of the global approach in education were emphasized in a note entitled "Endogenous development, culture and society" communicated by the UNESCO secretariat to the Preparatory Committee for the New International Development Strategy (A/AC.196/II/CRP.11).

5. This conception of the role of education, which underlies the whole of the UNESCO programme, is in fact linked with the relationship between education and development. Development is now considered multidimensional; no longer restricted to the field of economic growth, it has its roots in popular culture and is aimed at eliminating all forms of inequality and disparity. The Executive Board of UNESCO noted with satisfaction in decision 6.2 taken at its 108th session that the draft interim report to the General Assembly on progress made in UNESCO fields of competence towards the establishment of a new international economic order and on the obstacles impeding it (108 EX/24) adequately fulfilled its purpose and set forth clearly the lines of policy adopted by UNESCO. That document examined the way in which, in the context of its mutual relations with society as a whole, determined by the social, economic and cultural environment but at the same time representing an essential factor of change, education might be regarded as something necessarily bound up with efforts to establish a new international economic order.

6. The prospect of establishing a new international economic order implies both further striving against educational inequalities and instilling a new spirit into educational work. This spirit unites the ideal of the democratization of education - the achievement of which requires an ethical motivation and, at the same time, the use of innovative technical means in the educational process - with a dialectic between this process and that of development, with its twofold aims of individual advancement and collective progress.

7. The organization's ethical aims, as defined in article I of its Constitution, are an inspiration for the whole of its programme. At its eleventh session, in 1960, the General Conference adopted the Convention a/ and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education. The adoption of these instruments provided a

a/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 429, No. 6193, p. 93.

momentum and a frame of reference for efforts to ensure to everyone, in complete equality and without discrimination, the right to education, one of the basic human rights. As at 31 July 1980, 68 member States had deposited an instrument of acceptance or ratification of the Convention. The texts of both the Convention and the Recommendation specify that reports are to be made periodically to the General Conference on the legislative and administrative provisions which have been made by Member States for the application of these normative instruments. For this purpose, the UNESCO secretariat, in accordance with procedures established by the Executive Board, has undertaken consultations of member States by questionnaire. The final report of the third such consultation will be made to the General Conference at its twenty-first session, to be held this year.

8. The adoption of the 1960 Convention and Recommendation coincided with the beginning of a series of regional conferences on educational planning at ministerial level. These meetings have, ever since, encouraged the elaboration and implementation of educational policies and plans with a view to ensuring equality of opportunity and treatment in education and relating education to economic and social development. These conferences have brought together the ministers of education of Africa in 1961, 1964, 1968 and 1976; of Asia in 1962, 1965, 1971 and 1978; of Latin America and the Caribbean in 1962, 1966, 1971 and 1979; of the Arab States in 1966, 1970 and 1977; and of Europe in 1967, 1973 and 1980 in order to reaffirm both the right of everyone to education and the objective of democratization, to assess achievements and difficulties and to study trends, problems, solutions and prospects for the development of education. Ministers or senior officials responsible for economic development also participated in these meetings, and the meetings provided an opportunity to discuss quantitative and qualitative objectives for the training of the qualified senior staff needed, particularly in recent years, for the development of developing countries, in the perspective of the establishment of the new international economic order.

9. At the last of the meetings held in the Latin American and Caribbean region (Mexico; December 1979), a statement was issued stressing the decisive role which should be assigned to education within a new style of development and the relationship between the final aims of education and the desire to achieve international equity and respect for human dignity. All recent regional conferences particularly emphasized the need to ensure to all, without any discrimination whatsoever, the enjoyment of the right to education, stressed the importance of the democratization of education, and they adopted various recommendations accordingly.

10. The privileged position of education, covering all phases and levels of the training of qualified staff in UNESCO fields of competence, was reaffirmed at the eighteenth session of the General Conference which, in resolution 9, section II, paragraph 24, stressed that nowhere did the role of UNESCO as a shaper of the future appear so clearly as in education. The importance attached to education can be seen from the constant increase in resources allocated to education under the Regular Programme of the organization, which, prepared on the basis of consultations with member States and taking into account the recommendations of various intergovernmental conferences, reflects the needs and problems of member

States, particularly of developing countries, in the field of education and training. These resources amounted to \$18,463,553 in 1969-1970; to \$33,951,150 in 1973-1974; \$45,707,000 in 1977-1978; and reached a total of \$56,052,000 in 1979-1980. The proposed appropriation for 1981-1983 amounts to \$87,890,000. b/

11. In accordance with a Guidance Note adopted by the General Conference at its nineteenth session in connexion with its approval of the Medium-Term Plan, an increased fraction of these resources have been devoted to the training of personnel. Thus, this fraction has increased by approximately 50 per cent between the biennia 1977-1978 and 1979-1980, and by an additional 20 per cent between 1979-1980 and the triennium 1981-1983. These augmented resources have been devoted to the training of national personnel in many areas - various types of educational personnel (e.g., planners, administrators, literacy workers, teacher trainers, adult education personnel), staff for rural development, etc. As concerns the training of educational planners and administrators, the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning has increased the number of participants in its annual training course from approximately 20 per year during the period 1969-1970 to the present level of approximately 45. The Institute has also augmented its training activities through the development of specialized courses of short duration (two to four weeks), both in Paris and in developing countries, in co-operation with the UNESCO Office of Education in the region concerned. Of these national-level courses, 10 were organized in 1977-1978 with a total of 280 participants and, by the end of the biennium 1979-1980, 16 short courses will have been organized with approximately 585 participants.

12. The resources under the Regular Programme of UNESCO in the field of education are only a fraction of the total resources in this field made available by the organization for co-operation with member States. As a part of the total programme, a large number of projects are financed from extrabudgetary sources; these projects are selected by the member States themselves in accordance with their national priorities and designed by them, with the technical co-operation of UNESCO, to meet their needs, including the training of national personnel. The extrabudgetary resources allocated to education have increased steadily, rising from \$28,510,000 in 1969-1970 to \$75,273,000 in 1977-1978. For the biennium 1979-1980, the corresponding figure estimated at the beginning of that period was \$92,657,000 and the estimate for the triennium 1981-1983 shown in the draft Programme and Budget is approximately \$173,000,000 c/ (more than \$115,000,000 from

b/ In relating the figures for the Regular Programme for the period 1981-1983 to those for earlier budgetary periods, it should be noted that: (a) the budgetary periods are of unequal duration, the earlier periods covering two years whereas 1981-83 is a three-year period; (b) the amounts given for 1981-83, taken from the draft Programme and Budget (21 C/5), are provisional figures expressed in "constant dollars" (with value equivalent to 1 January 1979) and, after the twenty-first session of the General Conference, will have to be adjusted to take account of inflation during the biennium 1979-80.

c/ Indications of extrabudgetary resources for the period 1981-1983 are, in contrast with those for the Regular Programme (see foot-note b/), expressed as estimates of the amounts in current dollars that may be available during the period indicated.

sources within the United Nations system and nearly \$78,000,000 from other sources such as funds-in-trust).

13. The activities financed from extrabudgetary sources have been devoted for the most part to training staff in varying specializations and at a variety of levels in developing countries, for example the training of teachers and other educational staff. According to the statistics collected during the preparation of the Medium-Term Plan for 1977-1982 (19 C/4), the number of teaching staff members trained with assistance from UNESCO, between 1960 and 1970, was 134,523 in Africa, 19,863 in the Arab States, 69,840 in Asia and 42,080 in Latin America, i.e. a total of 288,983, of which 268,983 were in developing countries. According to the 1979 estimate, the total figure for the period 1970 to 1980 should be approximately 650,000. In Africa alone, UNESCO has co-operated or is still co-operating with more than 65 institutions (mostly teacher-training colleges) for the training of educational personnel, and in this region half the total number of secondary-school teachers have been trained or have received further training in institutions associated with UNESCO.

14. A large number of the extrabudgetary projects in education have also been concerned, entirely or in part, with technical and vocational education. At the time of the preparation of the Medium-Term Plan, approximately 75 projects were devoted, wholly or in part, to technical and vocational education. Member States, especially but not exclusively developing countries, have been giving increasing priority to this area in the expansion and reform of their educational systems. At its twentieth session (1978) the General Conference of UNESCO decided to make technical and vocational education, which up to that point had been only one part of one of the objectives of the Medium-Term Plan, a separate objective and to accord to it an average biennial growth rate of 23 per cent of Regular Programme resources, a rate considerably above that previously accorded to the area and also above the growth rate for the programme of the organization as a whole.

15. In addition to the Regular Programme and extrabudgetary resources of the organization, other programme sectors also contribute in significant ways to the training of national personnel, for example the area of the natural sciences and their application to development. Under the Regular Programme in this area, the resources for which were approximately \$32,670,000 for 1979-1980, with \$56,170,000 proposed for 1981-83, the percentage of these funds which are devoted directly or indirectly for training purposes exceeds that of the education field. Extrabudgetary resources in the natural sciences and technology were about \$48,000,000 for 1979-1980 and are estimated at approximately \$132,000,000 for 1981-1983 (nearly \$112,000,000 from United Nations sources and about \$20,000,000 from other sources).

16. Resources such as those in science and technology have been used to develop an integrated programme involving regional and international co-operation, which has since 1968 made it possible to improve quantitatively and qualitatively the training of engineers and technicians through the reform of curricula, co-operation between industry and education, and life-long education. The organization of

advanced university-level training courses has enabled a large number of scientists to improve their technical knowledge. Programmes for developing countries have been mainly designed, from the start, to assist them in organizing their own training courses for the scientists, engineers and technicians which they require for their development, UNESCO co-operates with many institutions which train specialists in science and technology in the developing countries, e.g., 6 in the Arab States, 14 in Latin America, 13 in Asia and 16 in Africa. In Africa, two regional projects involving training activities have also been carried out.

17. The total resources of the organization devoted to the fields of education and of natural sciences and technology for 1981-1983 will be approximately \$450,000,000. d/ They are none the less far from sufficient for UNESCO to meet the demands of member States for co-operation in achieving their development goals, including enabling all citizens to enjoy fully the exercise of the right to education and the training of national personnel. All the regional conferences of ministers of education and of economic planning stressed the need to increase co-operation, both between developing countries and within the whole international community, so that greater resources can be devoted to education and training. In its resolution 1.113 the UNESCO General Conference, at its fifteenth session, in 1968, invited the Director-General to study the possibilities, ways and means of establishing, having recourse to extrabudgetary resources and voluntary contributions, an education fund for promoting the qualitative and quantitative improvement of education in the developing countries in fields covered by UNESCO programmes.

18. The UNESCO Executive Board, at its 89th session (May-July 1972), concluded from these studies that, while the prospects for obtaining contributions for a single specialized voluntary fund were not favourable, the trends in much of the development assistance to education increasingly supported the objectives of such a specialized fund. Further, interested potential donors could consider a variety of channels through which support could be given to research and the application of modern technology to education in developing countries: namely the International Institute for Educational Planning, the Asian Centre of Educational Innovation for Development and funds-in-trust arrangements, as well as contributions made directly to the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank/International Development Association and UNESCO.

19. More recently, the possibilities of establishing a literacy fund were explored. Two basic questions were examined in this connexion: (a) would a fund be more effective than the present forms of co-operation, and (b) would it make it possible to channel new resources towards education and training programmes? The UNESCO General Conference at its twentieth session (1978), in part II of resolution 1/6.1/2 endorsed the conclusions contained in document 20 C/71, according to which the setting up of an international literacy fund would not help to bring about a marked increase in the amount of resources earmarked for the literacy programme.

d/ This approximate figure should be interpreted in the light of foot-notes b/ and c/.

20. In general, the question of resources rests ultimately in the hands of the member States. In education, the special field of competence of UNESCO within the United Nations system, the member States, acting through the deliberative bodies of the organization, have full power of decision over the programme and budget - directly maintained by their contributions - and full control over its implementation. They also control various possible uses to which extrabudgetary resources can be put, particularly resources from UNDP. In this way the organization co-operates with member States in the identification, preparation and implementation of education and training projects receiving loans from the World Bank and the regional banks. It also provides advice and technical services to member States within the framework of their co-operation with the United Nations Children's Fund and with the World Food Programme. The United Nations system therefore has a variety of ways of mobilizing resources to support the developing countries in their effort to develop education and training. The problem is to decide upon the means of making optimum use of this network of institutions, programmes and funds, rather than to set up new ones.

21. At the tenth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to disarmament, in May 1978, the Director-General of UNESCO said that the General Conference, at its twelfth session (1962), had endorsed the conclusions of the group of expert consultants appointed by the Secretary-General to study the economic and social consequences of disarmament. At the same session, the General Conference also called for the establishment of long-term programmes in education, scientific research, the mass media, the eradication of illiteracy, etc., taking into account the major responsibilities which UNESCO would be called upon to assume when substantial resources made available by disarmament were assigned to international programmes for economic and social development. At the same time, the Director-General was authorized to inform the Secretary-General that UNESCO was ready to supply him with any information and studies within its fields of competence which the Secretary-General might require in his consideration of the economic and social consequences of disarmament. That offer was renewed at the extraordinary session of the General Assembly in 1978.

22. The objectives which resolution 34/170 seeks to attain have been central to UNESCO action since its foundation. The programmes of the organization have for many years given high priority to helping developing countries train their national staff and establish educational systems which correspond to their needs. This is also true of action to achieve respect for the right to education. Both the Medium-Term Plan and the programmes and budgets for successive biennia (including the draft Programme and Budget for 1981-1983) have given due prominence to these objectives, and their importance has always been duly emphasized by the UNESCO General Conference and Executive Board. The question of expanding UNESCO programmes and activities in these fields is essentially one of resources available for that purpose.

APPENDIX

Decision 7.1.1 of the Executive Board of the United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its
109th session

The Executive Board,

1. Having been informed of resolution 34/170 on "The right to education" adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations at its thirty-fourth session,
2. Having examined the Director-General's report thereon (109 EX/32, paras. 1-16),
3. Notes with satisfaction the interest shown by the General Assembly of the United Nations in measures such as will ensure the full implementation of the right to education and in UNESCO's activities in the field of education and the training of national personnel;
4. Reaffirms that UNESCO is, within the United Nations system, the Organization with overall competence in education, in accordance with the provisions of Article 1 of its Constitution and expresses the wish that the deliberative organs of the other organizations of the system should consult the competent organs of UNESCO before adopting decisions concerning education;
5. Invites Member States to ensure respect for the way in which technical competence and operational responsibilities are distributed among the organizations of the United Nations system, a division which is essential to the effectiveness of their action in the service of the international community;
6. Invites the Director-General to draw up a brief report on the activities of UNESCO in relation to support for education and training of national personnel of developing countries, on the basis of information contained in document 109 EX/32, and to submit it to the General Assembly of the United Nations, together with relevant reports and documents such as the Medium-Term Plan for 1977-1982 (19 C/4), the Draft Programme and Budget for 1981-1983 (21 C/5) and the Report of the Director-General on the Activities of the Organization in 1977-1978 (21 C/3);
7. Invites the Director-General to include in the consultation he will be holding with Member States and Specialized Agencies prior to the establishment of the draft Medium-Term Plan for 1984-1989 such points as will enable him to meet the desires expressed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in paragraphs 3 (b) and 3 (c) of resolution 34/170.
