

Hundred and sixty-fourth Session

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**RECENT DECISIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE
ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM
OF RELEVANCE TO THE WORK OF UNESCO**

SUMMARY

In accordance with paragraph 3 of 103 EX/Decisions 6.1-6.2 and 124 EX/Decision 6.1, the Director-General informs the Executive Board of decisions and activities of the organizations of the United Nations system of interest to UNESCO that have been adopted or have taken place since the 161st session of the Board.

In accordance with 103 EX/Decisions 6.1-6.2, paragraph 4(b), the Director-General has decided to include in the agenda the sub-items included in the table of contents of this document. Other decisions and activities of relevance to UNESCO but that do not require a decision by the Board are included in separate documents 164 EX/INF.4 and 164 EX/INF.5 for information.

Decisions required: paragraphs 13, 22, 26, 30, 40, 47, 52 and 59.

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The Executive Board,

1. Takes note of the United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/97 on the subject,
2. Expresses its regret that the resolution omitted reference to the adoption of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage;
3. Invites the Director-General to continue UNESCO's work on these important subjects.

7.1.6 Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

41. By its resolution 56/227, the United Nations General Assembly decided on the creation of the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and requested all the organizations of the United Nations system to mainstream the implementation of the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action for the LDCs for the Decade 2001-2010 within their programmes of work as well as in their intergovernmental processes.

UNESCO action

42. As stated in its Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007 (31 C/4) the Organization is firmly committed to mainstreaming throughout all its programmes the needs and requirements of the LDCs, in particular by “targeting the most disadvantaged groups (women and youth) and identifying specific actions for them; spreading and replicating successful examples of alternatives to traditional formal education; encouraging the use of science and technology in order to improve material living conditions in the LDCs; using culture as a political lever for poverty alleviation (promoting artistic creation, developing cultural industries and intellectual property rights); and fostering the development of LDCs and their access to ICTs”. Furthermore, in the framework of the Organization's strategies concerning the two cross-cutting themes (Eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty and The contribution of information and communication technologies to the development of education, science and culture and the construction of a knowledge society) the needs of the LDCs are to be addressed explicitly and as a matter of priority.

43. In the Approved Programme and Budget for 2002-2003 (31C/5) due attention has been given in the different Major Programmes to the importance of programming in favour of LDCs. The same applies to the projects relating to the two cross-cutting themes.

44. Furthermore, with a view to ensuring a more efficient coordination of activities relating to the LDCs, the Bureau of Strategic Planning, which has responsibility for coordinating the Organization's response pertaining to the mainstreaming of LDCs' needs, in cooperation with the Africa Department, as appropriate as well as with the cluster and national offices in the field concerned, is currently engaged in the process of elaborating more focused needs assessments in the fields of competence of the Organization, duly taking account of the Plan of Action for Least Developed Countries (2001-2010), UNDAFs as well as national strategic documents, in particular those relating to poverty eradication. Three pilot studies are currently being prepared in Cambodia, Haiti and Niger. The first two countries belong to the “small number of countries (...) which have been identified as the target of increased, coordinated efforts by the Organization for a specified period” (31 C/4, para. 31). On the basis of the results of those pilot studies, efforts will be made to solicit extrabudgetary resources in support of UNESCO programmes in the different countries concerned.

45. Concerning the LDC countries in Africa, the Africa Department and the Bureau of Strategic Planning are cooperating closely to ensure that the needs of African LDCs are fully taken into

account by the Programme Sectors, especially in the new work plans, and to reinforce and provide support to the implementation of NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) in the Organization's fields of competence, in particular on the basis of the recommendations of international seminar on Africa organized by UNESCO in November 2001. (More information on this aspect is provided in document 164 EX/4 Part I and document 164 EX/47.) In addition, human security indicators for the African LDCs are currently being developed in cooperation with the Institute of Security Studies of South Africa.

46. Finally, a dedicated bilingual website has been created for LDCs (<http://www.unesco.org/ldc/>). Also, an information booklet on the mainstreaming of the LDCs within the Organization's programmes is also under preparation, envisaged for publication in May 2002.

47. In the light of the foregoing information concerning the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and its follow-up by UNESCO, the Executive Board may wish to consider the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Recognizing the importance of the mainstreaming of the needs of LDCs in all the Organization's programmes, in particular in the framework of the Organization's contribution to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010,
2. Taking note of the ongoing efforts made by the Organization to better focus and reinforce its action in favour of the LDCs,
3. Requests the Director-General to ensure that UNESCO fully cooperates with the newly appointed High Representative of the Secretary-General for Least Developed Countries, Land-locked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing Countries in the discharge of his duties, especially the follow-up to the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs, held in Brussels in 2001;
4. Further requests the Director General to inform the Executive Board at its 166th session on progress made by the Organization in its contribution to the implementation of the Brussels Plan of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010.

7.1.7 Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

48. In resolution 56/220 B under the above title, the General Assembly, responding to the situation in Afghanistan, called upon the United Nations system to coordinate closely its humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and appealed to donors and other humanitarian organizations to cooperate with the United Nations. In addition to the special appeals and donor alerts already issued by the United Nations, the resolution urgently appeals to all States, the United Nations system and international and non-governmental organizations to provide, in close collaboration with the interim authority and Afghan civil society, all possible humanitarian, financial, technical and material assistance for the Afghan populations especially in the areas most affected by drought, and to respond generously to the donors alert, Consolidated Appeals as well as long-term needs for rehabilitation and reconstruction.

49. The resolution called upon the international community to ensure coordinated efforts in various areas especially demining, resettlement of refugees and displaced Afghans, and to ensure