

Hundred and forty-ninth 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/Decision 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 147th session of the Board.

In accordance with paragraph 4(b) of 103 EX/Decision 6.1-6.2, the Director-General has decided to include in the agenda the sub-items mentioned in the introduction to this document. These sub-items are dealt with in Part I of the document. The Board is invited to take note of Part II, which deals with other decisions and activities of relevance to UNESCO but that do not necessitate decision by the Board.

PART I

RESOLUTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR CONSIDERATION
AND DECISION BY THE BOARD

A. TOWARDS A CULTURE OF PEACE

4. In its resolution 50/173 on the *United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education: culture of peace*, the General Assembly expresses its satisfaction on resolution 5.2 adopted by the twenty-eighth session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which contains the transdisciplinary project entitled **Towards a culture of peace** and encourages the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to take all necessary action to ensure education for peace, human rights, democracy, international understanding and tolerance. The General Assembly therefore requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session on the progress of educational activities in the framework of the transdisciplinary project entitled **Towards a culture of peace**.

UNESCO action

5. The activities proposed in the framework of the transdisciplinary project **Towards a culture of peace** contribute in a direct manner to building a culture of peace - a culture based upon the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rejection of violence and all forms of discrimination as well as the fulfilment of the principles of justice and solidarity, tolerance and international understanding.
6. Within this transdisciplinary project, the main activities are oriented towards education for peace, promotion of human rights and democracy, cultural pluralism, conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building.
7. UNESCO's work in this domain goes far beyond the human rights field and foresees a comprehensive set of actions for peace-building. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that within the framework of the United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative on Africa, UNESCO will, in co-operation with OAU, ECA and other organizations, implement priority 8 of this initiative relating to peace-building, conflict resolution and national reconciliation through *inter alia* communication for peace building (see also document 149 EX/29 entitled **Priority Africa: Follow-up to Audience Africa**, item 7.7, for further details).
8. As far as strengthening democracy is concerned, UNESCO's Culture of Peace Programme Unit has undertaken training activities with the Parliaments of El Salvador and Mozambique, aiming at reinforcement of the pluralistic view and practice of civil society. The consolidation of the democratization process is directly linked to everyone's right to take part in the governing process of his/her country, either directly or through freely chosen representatives.
9. In Colombia, UNESCO has supported a municipal consultation to eliminate all forms of violence and become a model of peace for the country, thus assisting people in their right to life, liberty and security as well as their right to freedom of opinion and expression. The Colombian Constitution establishes that popular consultation is one of the mechanisms of participation for people in the exercise of their sovereignty. In this case the mechanism was used to stop the terror and violence of those groups which kill, threaten and call themselves

representatives of a defenceless population. In assisting with the popular consultation, UNESCO gave prominence to the power of democracy and human rights.

10. In Burundi, UNESCO elaborated teaching materials on education for peace, human rights and democracy for secondary schools and organized seminars for local government officials. Further information in this regard is reported in Part II.C. 2.: **Emergency assistance and special economic rehabilitation programmes concerning specific countries** (paras. 202-230 below).

11. In a similar vein as resolution 50/173, the General Assembly, recognizing the important role of education for peace and disarmament and international understanding in promoting international peace and security as well as the efforts of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and the United Nations Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in this respect, adopted resolution 71 C commending the activities of these two regional centres in the areas of peace, disarmament and development and requesting the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in consultation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to promote the development of activities within the programmes of the United Nations regional disarmament centres related to education for disarmament.

12. In response to this request, UNESCO is prepared to assist in disarmament education through its Culture of Peace Programme, the Division of Human Rights, Democracy and Peace, and the Division of Humanistic, Cultural and International Education, as well as through its Regional Offices. Considerable changes have occurred in disarmament matters since UNESCO hosted the World Congress on Disarmament Education in June 1980, followed by production of the UNESCO publication on disarmament education: **Armaments, arms control and disarmament**. More recently, in 1991, UNESCO commissioned a Swedish pilot project for a training programme on peace, disarmament, security and development, entitled 'Learning to Live in Security', which would also need to be revised in view of the rapid changes that have taken place since.

13. Having considered, in response to General Assembly resolutions 50/173 and 50/71 C UNESCO's interwoven strategies to contribute to the consolidation of peace, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 149 EX/23, Part I.A,
2. Recalling that in full respect of the Constitution of UNESCO, in which the governments of the States Parties affirm, while creating the Organization, its purpose to advance the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind,
3. Considering that the changed international environment has created new opportunities for the pursuit of disarmament, as well as presented new challenges which emphasize the important task of education for peace, disarmament and international understanding,
4. Bearing in mind that UNESCO's Mid-Term Strategy for 1996-2001 emphasizes peace-building and development, and

5. Recognizing that peace-building strategies encompasses a whole range of actions and activities as stipulated in UNESCO's General Conference resolution 5.2 on implementation of the interdisciplinary project **Towards a culture of peace**,
- (a) Welcomes General Assembly resolutions 50/173 and ^{recognizes} ~~50/71-C encouraging~~ UNESCO to pursue its work in education for peace, human rights, democracy, international understanding and tolerance, as well as to promote the development of activities related to education for disarmament within the programme of the United Nations Regional Disarmament Centres in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean;
 - (b) Takes note of the General Assembly requests to the Secretary-General, to report, together with UNESCO, to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session on the progress of educational activities;
 - (c) Requests the Director-General to report to the fifty-first session of the General Assembly on the progress of activities from all the units of the interdisciplinary project **Towards a culture of peace**;
 - (d) Invites the Director-General:
 - (i) to offer UNESCO's assistance to the United Nations Secretary-General in the promotion of education for disarmament; and
 - (ii) to prepare a report to the 150th session of the Executive Board concerning UNESCO's contribution to education for disarmament within the context of the United Nations system and in co-operation with Member States.

B. QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

14. In its resolution 50/130 concerning *communication for development programmes in the United Nations system*, the General Assembly recognizes the important role of communication for development programmes in the United Nations system in enhancing the transparency of system-wide co-ordination within the United Nations system, *inter alia*, for the development of the developing countries and emphasizes the need for the relevant agencies, organizations, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to develop a systematic approach to capacity-building in the development of communication capacities, particularly with respect to the training of field workers and development workers and technicians as well as communication planners and specialists, especially in the developing countries.
15. The General Assembly requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in accordance with that agency's mandate in the field of communication and with the relevant resolution adopted at its last General Conference, to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session, and on a biennial basis thereafter, on the implementation of the present resolution.