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PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL CONCERNING THE DRAFT MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY FOR 2022-2029 (41 C/4) AND THE DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2022-2025 (41 C/5)

SUMMARY

In pursuance of 40 C/Resolutions 102 and 103 of the General Conference, the Director-General hereby presents her preliminary proposals concerning the Draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4) and the Draft Programme and Budget for 2022-2029 (41 C/5).

These proposals are based on the results of a broad and inclusive consultative process undertaken in accordance with the roadmap approved by the General Conference at its 40th session. The summary of these consultations are presented in the information document 210 EX/22.INF.

This document puts forward a strategic transformative vision for the Organization in order to enable it to meet the multiple challenges of the twentieth century, to exercise leadership in its fields of competence, and thus to contribute concretely, visibly and effectively to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Agenda 2063 of the African Union, and other internationally agreed development goals.

Decision required: paragraph 267.

Job: 202002428

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INTRODUCTION: AN UNPRECEDENTED CONSULTATION PROCESS

1.   Strategic reflection on the programme and future orientations began quite early on in the context of Pillar 3 of UNESCO's strategic transformation, a reform process which was initiated in the spring of 2018 by the Director-General with the support of Member States and which aims to strengthen the Organization and enable it to meet the emerging challenges of the twenty-first century.

2.   Pursuant to 206 EX/Decision 5.II.F, by which Member States encouraged the Director-General "to ensure that future discussions on Pillar 3 take a transparent, dialogue-based approach", a series of informal dialogues with the permanent delegations were held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in July and October 2019. These dialogues enabled fruitful exchanges regarding the major trends, the main challenges and the opportunities which have had and will have an impact on UNESCO's work over the next 10 years; they also enabled fruitful exchanges regarding UNESCO's comparative advantages and the strengthening of its role, globally, regionally and nationally. The main ideas expressed and the views exchanged were summarized in document 40 C/INF.18. This provided a basis for reflection and a source of information which subsequently fed into the debates at the 40th session of the General Conference and helped Member States to formulate their decisions on the overall strategic orientation and the principles which should govern the preparation of the Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4) and the Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 (41 C/5). Summaries of the work of the General Conference on this subject are set out in document 40 C/INF.30, and the corresponding resolutions of the General Conference are 40 C/Resolution 102 and 40 C/Resolution 103 (see 40 C/Resolutions).

3.   In accordance with the roadmap adopted by the General Conference pursuant to 40 C/Resolution 102 and 40 C/Resolution 103, the consultation process was launched in early 2020. First, consultations conducted through three online questionnaires were launched to request the input of Member States and Associate Members, as well as that of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), regarding UNESCO's future strategic orientations and programmatic focus. By the closing date of this consultation phase, 130 Member States and Associate Members, 101 NGOs and foundations, and 13 IGOs had replied to the questionnaires, despite the worldwide crisis precipitated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Thus, this historic result, which surpasses those of previous years, attests to the interest which Member States and all UNESCO's partners have in the Organization and its future.

4.   At the same time, regional and subregional consultations were held with the representatives of nearly 160 National Commissions for UNESCO, thus making it possible to discuss regional and subregional priorities, and to formulate recommendations concerning the strategic direction of UNESCO's future action and the future priorities of its Programme (documents 41 C/4 and 41 C/5).

5.   The summaries of the replies to the UNESCO questionnaires, together with the reports on the regional and subregional consultations with the National Commissions for UNESCO, are presented in document 210 EX/22.INF. In addition, and as indicated in document 40 C/11, other consultations and initiatives have taken place within the framework of the programme review with the aim of contributing to internal programmatic reflection, such as the consultations of the members of UNESCO's intergovernmental and international bodies[1] and the results of the work of the high-level reflection group, and including an analysis of the global situation with recommendations on how to respond thereto (see document 210 EX/5.III.D on UNESCO's strategic transformation). A staff survey, entitled "UNESCO 2030" was also conducted.

6.   In addition, and still in accordance with the roadmap, the discussions held by the Executive Board at its 209th session with regard to the Strategic Results Report (209 EX/4.I.B), together with

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[1]   Pursuant to the recommendation regarding this matter which was issued by the working group on governance (39 C/Resolution 87).

the corresponding decision, provided greater clarity as to future approaches, including the identification of new priorities and actions needed to strengthen the Organization's programmes.

7. The Executive Board also considered other items and formulated decisions, some of which have direct implications for the Organization's future Medium-Term Strategy and Programme and Budget, particularly as regards global priority Africa (document 209 EX/32) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Action Plan (209 EX/5.I.D). The Executive Board's decisions on these matters were taken into account in the preparation of this document.

8. Thus, to date, this consultative process has resulted in the preliminary proposals for documents 41 C/4 and 41 C/5 which are set out in the present document and submitted for the consideration of the Executive Board at its 210th session. The objective of these preliminary proposals is to provide an overview of a new Medium-Term Strategy for the Organization which is fully aligned with both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union and which outlines the main strategic thrusts for the next eight years (2022-2029) and the programmatic directions for the 2022-2025 period.

9. The present document is divided into two main parts: the first part contains a detailed presentation of the main elements of document 41 C/4 as well as proposals concerning the strategic and programmatic orientations of the Organization for the first quadrennium, 2022-2025; and the second part of the document concerns the proposals concerning the preparation of the budget and a proposal for improved presentation of document 41 C/5, pursuant to 40 C/Resolution 103.

PART A

I.   Responding to a new global environment

I.1   A complex and rapidly changing global environment

10.   These preliminary proposals are set in a complex and rapidly evolving international context. They are aimed to focus UNESCO's action on assisting the international community and supporting its Member States in achieving the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Organization's fields of competence, and in contributing to a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. More than six months after being declared a public health emergency of international concern, this crisis has now developed into a lasting health crisis but also threatens to turn into the worst international economic, social and human rights crisis of our lifetimes, compelling us to build back better, to reaffirm the relevance of international cooperation in UNESCO's fields of competence, and to affirm the need for solidarity with those most vulnerable and most affected by the crisis.[2] This document was prepared under exceptionally difficult circumstances resulting from the global health crisis caused by COVID-19. The situation continues to evolve and has yet to be fully assessed in order for the finalization of the Organization's new strategy to take them into account in a more focused manner.

11.   There is a broad consensus regarding the key global trends and challenges of the new global environment, which call for UNESCO to respond in its Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4)[3]. The most significant include:

- extreme poverty and growing inequalities, particularly in terms of gender, but also in terms of equitable, continuous and inclusive access to education, to information and culture, to knowledge, and to technology;

- the need for inclusive quality education for all, particularly for girls and women, and reinforced coordination of efforts to achieve SDG 4;

- global climate change mitigation by means of the sustainable management of the environment and ecosystems, biodiversity, water and oceans;

- countering hate speech and rising extremism, promotion of cultural heritage and the diversity of cultural expressions;

- the need for ethical reflection on the impact of artificial intelligence and innovative technology and for an answer to digital divides;

- the contribution of science and technology to developing and sharing scientific knowledge;

- addressing the global decline in press freedom and the emergence of new forms of disinformation, particularly in the digital sphere;

- the commitment to stand with cities in order to provide integrated responses to the challenges of sustainable development, creativity and social inclusion;

- the need for quality data in UNESCO's fields of activity;

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[2]   See: "Impact of the Covid-19 crisis on UNESCO's programme and activities", (document 209 EX/31).

[3]   See "UNESCO towards 2030 and beyond: major challenges and opportunities" (document 40 C/INF.18), summarizing a series of Dialogues with the Permanent Delegations to UNESCO between July and October 2019, and the "Summary of debates on the future Medium-term Strategy (41 C/4) and the future Programme and Budget 2022-2025 (41 C/5)" (document 40 C/INF.30).

- the importance of partnerships;

- the importance of providing targeted response to protracted conflicts and crisis.

I.2   Responding to the challenges: UNESCO's renewed relevance and the key principles for the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 (41 C/4)

12.   The preliminary proposals which follow are in line with the recommendations adopted by the General Conference in November 2019 for the preparation of the Draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4) [4] . The Member States thereby established the main features of the Organization's Medium-Term Strategy, reaffirming in particular *"the abiding relevance of UNESCO's mandate to the achievement of sustainable development and international peace"*, and stressed *"the importance for UNESCO to support its Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as other relevant internationally agreed development goals"*. The Member States also emphasized *"the importance of aligning UNESCO's* action *with the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Samoa Pathway"*, as well as to *"continue to dedicate adequate attention to UNESCO's global priorities Africa and gender equality, and to priority groups, particularly small island developing States (SIDS) and youth"*. They are also informed by the findings and recommendations of the consultation process outlined above and reflect the main findings of the Strategic Results Report 2020 and the related Executive Board discussions and decision thereon. The preliminary proposals are guided by the following key principles:

I.2.1 Working as One UNESCO towards common goals

13.   In order to help Member States resolve complex contemporary challenges, and in the context of the United Nations system-wide repositioning, UNESCO will facilitate cooperation and collaboration within its sectors, across sectors, across disciplines, and step up its engagement with other United Nations agencies, with civil society actors and private sector partners. Member States precisely called on UNESCO to "*further harness its multidisciplinarity, its expertise and experience in its fields of competence, stressing the importance of inter- and intra-programmatic approaches, where appropriate, in order to strengthen its position within the United Nations development system, and achieve synergies and greater impact*"[5].

14.   The proposed framework for the next Medium-Term Strategy – with four common Strategic Objectives for the entire Organization and nine related Outcomes for the next Programme and Budget – is designed to help the Organization promote that approach, to act as One to face the complexity of today's challenges and propose integrated, better adapted responses, acting in a coherent, strategic, cooperative and agile manner through all of its programmes, at and away from Headquarters, at its field offices at regional, subregional and national level, tapping on the specialized expertise of its category 1 institutes and centres and international intergovernmental programmes, to achieve synergies and maximize impact.

15.   UNESCO will not seek forced and standardized intersectorality, but rather collaboration based on the identification and analysis of complex challenges which warrant the contribution of several sectors and/or disciplines. This approach constitutes a comparative advantage within the United Nations system. Intersectoral (and sometimes intrasectoral) engagement will be carried out as appropriate and in a variety of ways. The preliminary proposals indicate a number of programmatic areas where the engagement of several sectors will be necessary, and where sectors will work in a cooperative manner towards the achievement of shared goals, working in an agile and flexible manner, especially in the field offices, bringing together their specialized expertise to design and implement joint programmes and projects, reflecting the Organization's priorities. Funding and

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[4]   UNESCO, General Conference, 40 C/Resolution 102.
[5]   UNESCO, General Conference, 40 C/Resolution 102.

resource allocation will be based on solid sectoral and interdisciplinary proposals, which are based on detailed and agreed implementation plans.

16.   A single shared ambition underpins this unity of action: to respond to Member States' priority needs and expedite the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in UNESCO's fields of competence. Five years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), no country worldwide is on track to achieving all 17 Goals[6]. While considerable progress has been made over the last years, it has been uneven and too slow. With ten years left to realize the 2030 Agenda, the world is off-track to end poverty by 2030. Progress has been stalled or reversed on a number of areas, in particular on climate action and the reduction of inequalities – an effect worsened by the ongoing crisis. Hard-won gains must be protected. The limited advances made over the recent years in favour of gender equality and women's rights are in danger of being rolled back due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Maintaining and accelerating the momentum towards the Sustainable Development Goals is a human rights imperative, a development imperative, and a peace imperative. UNESCO's next Medium-Term Strategy should therefore be guided by the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

I.2.2 Focusing more on UNESCO's leadership and comparative advantages

17.   In order to optimize UNESCO's action, and as requested in 40 C/Resolution 102, it is proposed to continue and intensify the ongoing efforts made to give a greater priority to UNESCO's work in a limited number of areas where the Organization has a clear comparative advantage and unique role, in particular where it fulfils strategic coordination, leadership and expert roles under the 2030 Agenda and other international mandates. Details are provided under each strategic objective (see Section III).

18.   Greater focus on priority areas will serve to eliminate duplication and limit the dispersion of financial and human resources. It will also enable a targeted and coordinated positioning of UNESCO vis-à-vis other partners and will also facilitate a results-based articulation of UNESCO's action, with high benefits for the Organization's accountability, governance and "branding"/visibility. The focus on UNESCO's comparative advantages and core messaging shall be a key feature of the Organization's corporate communication. Within the framework of these two key principles, it is advisable to:

I.2.3 Positioning UNESCO strategically in the United Nations system

19.   The General Conference at its 40th session stressed the need for UNESCO "to align the Organization with the United Nations reform process in line with United Nations General Assembly resolutions 71/243 and 72/279, including as regards ongoing operational reform of UNESCO comprising sustainability management, and to advance UNESCO's strategic, normative and programmatic contribution as a specialized agency at the country and regional levels"[7]. As a specialized agency of the United Nations system, UNESCO will develop its cooperation with the United Nations system at the thematic, global, regional and national levels, striving for synergies, effectiveness and greater programme coherence, and working within United Nations action frameworks, such as the COVID-19 response framework. In the period of the next Medium-Term Strategy, UNESCO will commit to intensify its work as an active member of the United Nations system and its United Nations Development Group at all levels, participating in United Nations-wide initiatives, regional cooperation frameworks, and country-level United Nations Country Teams and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF). It will seek to develop cooperation with individual United Nations organizations on joint actions, working in a complementary and synergistic fashion with them.

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[6]   See: United Nations, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020*
[7]   UNESCO, General Conference, 40 C/Resolution 102.

I.2.4 Reinforcing international cooperation in the Organization's fields of competence

20. Virtually all of the great challenges of our time – fostering inclusive societies in the face of persistent poverty and growing inequalities; access to quality education, knowledge and information; intercultural dialogue and recognition of cultural diversity; water crisis; global climate change; biodiversity loss; environmental degradation; access to scientific and technological knowledge; the technological revolution; the current COVID-19 crisis – can only be sustainably addressed through international cooperation and solidarity, transcending borders and regions. At a time when the multilateral system is under increasing pressure, UNESCO remains committed to furthering international cooperation in its fields of competence, guided by a vision of global solidarity of humanity.

21. The Medium-Term Strategy will fully mobilize the Organization to work towards renewed international cooperation and multilateralism in which education, the sciences, culture and communication and information are promoted and recognized internationally as common goods which are key for sustainable peace and development, and given increased priority for investment at the global, regional and national levels. It will be a matter of, for example: reaffirming the value of the global environmental commons in order to sustainably manage resources and ecosystems on a global scale; promoting open solutions and protecting access to information in the digital age; or ensuring that cultural diversity is recognized as essential for the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Unprecedented and innovative forms of cooperation, which are more relevant to the diversity of actors and stakeholders involved, will therefore need to be established.

I.2.5 Promoting universal values across UNESCO's fields of competence

22. UNESCO will continue to further universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms [8] and will apply a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to all of its programmes, strengthening its support to the human rights and fundamental freedoms for which UNESCO has a special mandate, including: the right to education (Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts (Article 27), the right to freedom of opinion and expression (Article 19), the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religious (Article 18); the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits (Article 27 – sometimes referred to as the "right to science"), and the right to water and sanitation (recognized as a human right by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010). Major effort must be made for women and girls to realize the full enjoyment of their rights. UNESCO will also work in the implementation of the normative instruments for which it is responsible and on the development of standards relevant to contemporary developments in the pursuit of its mission.

I.2.6 Leaving no one behind: eradicating poverty, bridging divides and reducing inequalities in UNESCO's areas of action

23. UNESCO will work to intensify action to fight poverty and to reduce inequalities within and between countries, with a special focus on least developed countries. By addressing the new educational, scientific, cultural, social, and digital divides, and facing the existing divides widened by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Organization will focus on the needs of the most disadvantaged and marginalized, respecting the principle of "leaving no one behind" and the need to maintain and reinforce international global solidarity.

24. Special attention will be given to vulnerable populations and groups whose rights continue to be unfulfilled. It will encompass combating all forms of discrimination and racism, exclusion, marginalization and stereotyping, as well as fighting their underlying root causes, towards building

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[8] The General Conference at its 40th session (40 C/Resolution 102) recalled that the purpose of the Organization was "*to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations*" (UNESCO's Constitution, Article I).

more just and peaceful societies. These actions will need to be inclusive, equitable and universal – also taking into account that some groups and communities are disproportionately affected. UNESCO will upscale its contributions to promote social inclusion, and the fight against discrimination based on race, origin, gender, religion or any other status.

25. As also outlined below, UNESCO will give fresh impetus to cooperation, research and action in favour of countries undergoing disasters and post-crisis situations (see Section III.5).

I.2.7 Expanding and diversifying partnerships

26. In a rapidly changing global environment, UNESCO cannot achieve its goals on its own: *"success will depend on fostering dynamic partnerships that leverage the strengths of the numerous partners in accordance with the comprehensive partnership strategy presented in document 207 EX/11"*[9].

27. UNESCO will also develop and diversify existing and new partnerships with all partners. It will building on its unique network of National Commissions for UNESCO, which are constitutional parts of UNESCO and represent an opportunity for the Organization, as a key relay for UNESCO at the national level, as a support for advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns concerning UNESCO's programmes and priorities, and as a source of information and assistance both on the programme and on the possible funding opportunities available at the country level. UNESCO will also seek to fully mobilize the potential of its networks of category 2 centres, the Chairs and Associated Schools, its partner NGOs and IGOs, to reach expert communities, civil society and the broader public. In this regard, the Organization will seek to strengthen cooperation with the wide network of UNESCO's professional and expert partners, whether teachers and educational professionals, learning institutions, scientists and scientific institutions, artists and cultural institutions, journalists or media professionals and institutions.

28. A strengthened enabling environment will be provided for partnership building and resource mobilization with all existing or potential bilateral and multilateral partners, including regional banks, United Nations organizations, the European Union institutions, and other international organizations, as well as with the private sector and foundations. Special efforts will be made to strengthen staff capacities in partnerships and resource mobilization in field offices. Alongside existing modalities, new modalities of engagement with partners will be sought, including strategic, multiyear and multistakeholder arrangements and platforms relevant to the diversity of actors and stakeholders involved. This will help to bring together as appropriate governments, international organizations, NGOs and civil society leaders, the private sectors and foundations to realize this goal.

I.2.8 Ensuring continued improvement of UNESCO's efficiency and effectiveness

29. As recommended by Member States, UNESCO must "*continue evolving, adapting and renewing itself in order to consolidate its role in international cooperation more effectively*"[10]. In line with the third pillar of UNESCO's strategic transformation initiated in 2018, the preliminary proposals provide a strategic framework for action which would make it possible to continue and deepen the reform efforts conducted in the areas of overall management for high-quality implementation of UNESCO's programme and to make the Organization more efficient and effective.

I.2.9 Enhancing the strategic results framework of the Organization

30. In an effort to enhance its results-based approach in the elaboration of its Programme and Budget, UNESCO will develop a robust results framework to frame its work, define measurable results, and enable regular monitoring and reporting on implementation and results achievement,

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9   General Conference, 40th session, paragraph 3 (i) in 40 C/Resolution 102.
10   UNESCO, General Conference, 40 C/Resolution 102.

including for the Organization's global priorities. UNESCO will adapt its planning approach by looking also into good practices and approaches applied in other United Nations agencies.[11]

31.   The preliminary proposals follow a logic based on the three key categories: strategic objectives, outcomes and outputs:

- UNESCO proposes centering its Medium-Term Strategy on four **strategic objectives** and one enabling objective of a high-level and cross-cutting nature, within the general framework of the 2030 Agenda, focusing on those SDGs and Aspirations of the 2063 Agenda of the African Union that are most relevant to UNESCO's work and where it has a comparative advantage. This level corresponds to the overall impact which the Organization will have over the 2022-2029 period.

- Each of these objectives is associated with a limited number of "**outcomes**", which detail UNESCO's priority intervention areas, based on its comparative advantages, and which constitute an intermediate level between the aspirations of the strategic objectives and implementation through the Programme and Budget. The "outcomes" – both "programme" and "enabling or corporate" outcomes – will provide the reference framework for the formulation of the four-year programme (and its biennial implementation in accordance with the Organization's budget cycle).

- The C/5 documents will specify, for each of UNESCO's five major programmes and in accordance with results-based management (RBM) logic, concrete and measurable **"outputs"** contributing to the achievement of the "outcomes" and thus, ultimately, of the "strategic objectives". These "outputs" will reflect the direct contribution of UNESCO within a two-year budget time-frame, resulting from UNESCO's action at the global, regional or national levels, and resulting from its activities. They will continue to be designed for the four-year duration of the programme, but may be revised and adapted as necessary every biennium, taking into account the biennial budget cycle, in accordance with budgetary needs and prospects[12].

32.   It is proposed that the C/4 document should remain, like its predecessors, a document which can be adapted (a rolling strategy) by the General Conference during the period under consideration (2022-2029).

I.3   Addressing the challenges of Africa and gender equality

Priority Africa

33.   The current Operational Strategy for Priority Africa (2014-2021) has identified four major challenges faced by African countries – demographic growth, social transformation, democratic governance and sustainable development and economic growth. Almost eight years since the implementation of the Operational Strategy started, as the Organization starts elaborating its future Medium-Term Strategy, these challenges are still prevailing and are compounded by the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

34.   In just under a decade, development in Africa has followed contrasting paths. Whereas at the beginning of the century there was every reason to believe that the impressive growth rates achieved by the region as a whole boded well for a sustainable development which would have benefited people fairly, today the circumstances are quite different. Considerable progress has been made in the reduction of inequalities, the provision of basic services for all, the improvement of governance

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[11]   The proposed framework is based in part on a review of United Nations system best practices and of recent programme and budget documents of other United Nations agencies, in particular, ILO, FAO and WHO.

[12]   These results will be defined in accordance with the guidance given by the Member States (see 40 C/Resolution 103 as well as the recent Executive Board debate and decision on the Strategic Results Report (209 EX/Decision 4.I.B)).

systems, and the establishment of the rule of law (more than half of African countries have established democratic public institutions). However, socioeconomic inequalities and high poverty rates persist in many countries. African countries arrived at a realization to escape the vicious circle of poverty; this translated into the adoption of Agenda 2063 of the African Union, now recognized as the continent's strategic framework for the achievement of its goal of inclusive and sustainable development. It is a concrete manifestation of the pan-African desire for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued within the framework of pan-Africanism and the African renaissance.

35.   In keeping with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063 of the African Union has defined aspirations and objectives for the continent's socioeconomic transformation in the medium and long term. Among the aspirations and goals of Agenda 2063 relevant to UNESCO's mandate are those relating to Aspirations 1,3,4,5 and 6[13].

36.   The challenges remain enormous for a continent replete with natural resources and a cultural and natural heritage yet to be showcased: exponential growth of the young population (40% of the population is under the age of 15 years) without access to all educational resources and employment opportunities and increasingly demanding spaces for civic participation and expression; over-urbanized and poor populations suffering from a lack of education and training and from social exclusion; natural resources, the unpredictable management of which leads to community conflicts and instability; governance systems which have not yet ensured either citizens' full participation in the democratic life of the country or the freedom of expression and safety of information professionals.

37.   The health crisis provoked by the sudden COVID-19 pandemic has revealed new fragilities which will have to be taken into account when developing strategies for responding to the challenges to be met for the emergence of the African continent: a lack of connectivity by means of which to ensure distance education for the entire population and to ensure continuity of education; a growing demand for social inclusion and for the respect of freedom of expression; a visible increase in economic and social inequalities; a sharp contrast between prescribed social distancing measures and actual community practices. More fundamentally, as noted by the intellectuals whom UNESCO brought together to discuss the matter as part of the "Imagining the World to Come" initiative, this crisis calls for a reorientation of national and regional priorities in Africa. It is a question of focusing on human-rights-centred development priorities and of investing primarily in education, health care, social welfare and scientific research as a basis for the creation of a new Africa: an Africa which is capable of looking inwards and finding home-grown solutions to its problems while taking its place on the international stage.

38.   UNESCO's multisectoral and multidisciplinary mandate gives it an undeniable comparative advantage in the field. It also enables the Organization to adopt a holistic approach in overcoming the emerging challenges facing African countries. Population growth, which has resulted in an unprecedented increase in the young population, provides an opportunity to rethink education and policies on vocational and technical training for young people. The xenophobic and discriminatory acts emerging everywhere as a consequence of the COVID-19 health crisis provide an opportunity for UNESCO to think about innovative frameworks for action to promote a culture of peace which is rooted in endogenous African values, as emphasized at the Pan-African Forum for a Culture of Peace in Africa (Biennale of Luanda, September 2019). In short, the phenomena of urbanization and impoverishment are leading to a new consideration of the social transformations under way.

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[13]   Aspiration 1: A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development; Aspiration 3: An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human tights, justice and the rule of law; Aspiration 4: A peaceful and secure Africa; Aspiration 5: An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics; Aspiration 6: An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of the African people, especially its women and youth.

39. Addressing all these challenges will require of UNESCO a strong commitment which spans all its programmes and takes into account the lessons and recommendations of the forthcoming evaluation, which is being conducted by the Internal Oversight Service.

Priority gender equality

40. While much progress has been made over the past 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for the empowerment of women and girls, the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 magnified the depth of structural inequalities in societies and forced the world to question the degree to which lasting advances towards achieving gender equality, including the human rights of LGBTI people, have been made.

41. The pandemic ignited concerns that the gains made in women and girls' access to formal education and non-formal learning opportunities are at risk and that inclusive learning environments to break down gender stereotypes will persist. It exposed the fault lines of women's structural disadvantage, with their over-representation in formal health care, informal care roles at home and in communities, and as workers in the informal economy, as well as their underrepresentation in leadership, decision-making and senior scientific research positions. It further shed light on the importance of engaging men and boys for gender equality and of challenging those expressions of masculinities that fuel different forms of gender-based violence. Warnings were issued that without favorable lines of credit, targeted funds or access to social protection measures, women's economic independence would be in jeopardy. This will have an impact on women working in all of UNESCO's fields of competence such as teachers and educators, independent journalists, scientists, self-employed artists and entrepreneurs in different sectors of the creative economy.

42. Increases in gender-based violence, online and offline abuse in and through the media, harassment and sexual exploitation disproportionally affect women and girls, including indigenous women, as well as the LGBTI community. Access to vital sexual and reproductive health services have diminished, including for women subjected to violence. Such acts not only constitute a serious threat to the health and well-being of the victims, they also undermine the social fabric of communities worldwide and represent a major obstacle to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Harmful gender biases embedded in new technologies, including artificial intelligence-powered products, reinforce negative gender stereotypes. Attacks and censorship against women journalists, researchers, and creators in the arts, media and sciences continue to increase, ultimately threatening freedom of expression and creation in many parts of the world and putting efforts to build open, peaceful and inclusive societies at risk.

43. As the digitization of social interaction accelerates our dependence on connectivity, technological infrastructure and access to mobile devices, the need for digital skills training has increased exponentially. The digital gender divide continues to persist, however, potentially leaving women and girls behind in all areas of political, economic, cultural and social life, and resulting in isolation and decreased access to reliable information – thus making them more vulnerable to misinformation, disinformation and fewer future employment opportunities.

44. The ingenuity, talents and energy of people of all genders are needed to build environmentally sustainable and resilient futures that safeguard nature and the management of natural resources as well as to ensure equality and justice in access to water and sanitation. Addressing the gendered impacts of climate change and developing gender-transformative environmental policies can help overcome the structural and institutional barriers faced by women and girls to accessing natural and cultural resources, science education and jobs in the green economy, as well as to enhancing national and international cooperation.

45. Achieving gender equality will mean overcoming these and other societal vulnerabilities and will involve reimaging and remaking our structures and systems. By recognizing the above challenges and taking a transversal, thematic approach across its mandate, UNESCO, its Member States, public, private and civil society partners can contribute to a dynamic global agenda that

makes new connections between human rights and gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls in all its fields of competence.

46. Addressing all these challenges will require of UNESCO a strong commitment which spans all its programmes (see Section IV.2) and takes into account the lessons and recommendations of the evaluation of priority gender equality conducted by the Internal Oversight Service (see document 210 EX/22.INF.).

II. Mission statement, functions and contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda

II.1 UNESCO's mission statement

47. Member States' replies to the Questionnaire generally confirmed the relevance of UNESCO's current mission statement, 81% of Member States suggesting that it be kept as is (see document 210 EX/22.INF).

48. However, most Member States pointed out that they felt it was important to reduce inequalities and that it was relevant to contribute to SDG 10 in this area. The comments accompanying the responses highlight how central this paradigm is to the development of more just and inclusive societies; they also reflect the fact that one of the major insights to be drawn from the COVID-19 pandemic is the manner in which the pandemic has exposed and exacerbated inequalities, both among and within countries, and especially affecting women and girls. It is therefore proposed that a reference to the reduction of inequalities be added to the mission statement, which would read as follows:

Current mission statement (37 C/4)	Proposed mission statement (41 C/4)
"As a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO – pursuant to its Constitution - contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty and sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information."	"As a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO – pursuant to its Constitution – contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, **the reduction of inequalities,** sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information."

II.2 UNESCO's key functions

49. UNESCO's functions define the ways in which the Organization delivers on its mandate. Member States, by 40 C/Resolution 102, underscored the importance of better reflecting the "differentiation and focus of UNESCO's role and functions at the global, regional and national levels with a view of leaving no one behind". Responses by Member States and partners to the questionnaire indicate that the functions are intimately linked to one another and in keeping with UNESCO's status as a specialized agency of the United Nations system. They thus constitute a comparative advantage for UNESCO, in the way the Organization works or delivers support to Member States. Efforts will be made to strengthen synergies between these functions and between the three levels of action of these functions (global, regional, national), in order to ensure better linkages between the global, regional and national levels and to allow in particular the national level implementation of global norms and standards. Efforts will also be made to put the functions into practice in a more balanced and innovative way, in response to emerging needs. Thus, standard-setting activity must be designed in the light of needs and lessons drawn from field experience, just as operational activity must be guided by coherent normative frameworks.

50.   Member States very broadly support UNESCO's function as a "catalyst for international cooperation" at the global as well as at the regional level. This should make it possible to strengthen UNESCO's action at the regional level, including in collaboration with the regional mechanisms of the recently-reformed United Nations Development System. Member States also highlighted in their replies the importance of national ownership and partnership at the country level, with increased opportunities for National Commissions and UNESCO networks to contribute to the Organization's work at country level, and for United Nations system-wide collaboration in the context of United Nations Country Teams.

51.   The relevance of UNESCO's functions has been made clear during the COVID-19 crisis, including the Organization's ability to mobilize partners and senior policy-makers rapidly and to forge action-oriented coalitions. The crisis has also shown how crucial UNESCO's role is as a forum for reflection, exchange and foresight in creating a common understanding and an ethical perspective on a rapidly changing global situation. At the same time, it has shown the need for a balanced approach to functions to allow the Organization to respond to the needs of Member States, to build their capacities, and to work in close partnership with governments to support the development and implementation of relevant operational capacities and solutions. It is proposed that this balanced and interlinked approach to functions should therefore guide the work of UNESCO, while also paving the way for programme adaptation to new missions, particularly in response to crises and emergencies (see Section III.5.).

52.   The only change proposed in the description of functions for document 41 C/4 (see table below) concerns the insertion of a reference to the production and analysis of benchmark data and statistics. This would make UNESCO's work in this area, which is now recognized worldwide, more visible, especially with regard to the monitoring of SDGs, and the support to Member States in the monitoring of national development goals which is necessary for guiding the formulation and implementation of their policies.

Current functions (37 C/4)	Proposed functions (41 C/4)
1. **Laboratory of ideas:** Serving as a laboratory of ideas, generating innovative proposals and policy advice in its fields of competence	1. **Laboratory of ideas:** Serving as a laboratory of ideas, generating innovative proposals and policy advice in its fields of competence
2. **Clearing house:** developing and reinforcing the global agenda in its fields of competence through policy analysis, monitoring and benchmarking	2. **Clearing house:** developing and reinforcing the global agenda in its fields of competence through policy analysis, monitoring and benchmarking **and the development and analysis of benchmark data and statistics**
3. **Standard-setter:** setting norms and standards in its fields of competence, supporting their implementation	3. **Standard-setter:** setting norms and standards in its fields of competence, supporting their implementation
4. **Catalyst for international cooperation:** strengthening international and regional cooperation in its fields of competence, fostering alliances, intellectual cooperation, knowledge-sharing and operational partnerships	4. **Catalyst for international cooperation:** strengthening international and regional cooperation in its fields of competence, fostering alliances, intellectual cooperation, knowledge-sharing and operational partnerships
5. **Capacity-builder:** providing advice for policy development and implementation, and developing institutional and human capacities	5. **Capacity-builder:** providing advice for policy development and implementation, and developing institutional and human capacities

II.3   The SDGs: UNESCO's strategic roles and contributions

53.   The analysis of Member States' and Associate Members' replies to the questionnaire with regard to Question A3 provides information about priority rating of the SDGs with regard to the Organization's strategic role and contribution in the period of the next Medium-Term Strategy. While recalling that the 17 SDGs are indivisible and interdependent, Member States recommended that UNESCO should focus on its core mandate and on a limited number of SDGs, concentrating its efforts and resources and reinforcing its positioning within the United Nations in the fields where its comparative advantages and global leadership are recognized. SDGs 4, 5, 16, 14, 13, 15, 11 and 6 were specifically mentioned in this context:

- SDG 4 (quality education) received by far the largest proportion of "high" ratings (97%), showing overwhelming support for this area of work. Member States consider that it is the "priority of priorities", recalling the key role of education as a key vehicle for the achievement of all the other SDGs and the importance of the Organization's unique multidisciplinary mandate to the achievement of SDG target 4.7 in particular, through the joined-up action of the other sectors, whether in the sciences, culture, or communication and information;

- SDG 5 (gender equality) also obtained a very high proportion of "high" ratings (87%), confirming its status as a global priority for UNESCO, which should be mainstreamed across all programmes;

- SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) obtained 82% of "high" ratings, consistent with its great proximity to UNESCO's mandate, and with its relation to the work done on access to information and freedom of expression and thought, including artistic freedom, and on social inclusion in close connection with the reduction of inequalities;

- SDGs 14 (life below water), 13 (action to combat climate change), and 15 (life on land) all gathered large numbers of "high" ratings (more than two thirds of the respondents), demonstrating the high importance accorded by the Member States to environmental sustainability and to UNESCO's work on oceans, water, climate change, and biodiversity;

- SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) was rated "high" by 65% of respondents, reflecting the importance of UNESCO's work in the area of the cultural and natural heritage (target 11.4).

- SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) was granted a "high" rating by 63% of respondents, who recalled that water was the ultimate connector towards a sustainable environment and required to deliver almost all other SDGs;

- SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals), whose relevance was assessed as "high" by 51% of the respondents, is legitimately considered by many Member States as a key enabling factor necessary for the achievement of all the SDGs.

54.   Furthermore, UNESCO's mandate confers upon it a leadership role, not only in the area of education covering SDG 4 (quality education), but also and by virtue of its mandate, a well-defined strategic oversight role, as a "custodian agency" for ensuring the monitoring of the implementation of some targets and indicators, in particular the protection and safeguarding of the world's cultural and natural heritage (target 11.4), safety of journalists and access to information (indicators 16.10.1 and 16.10.2), ocean acidification (target 14.3), capacity for marine scientific research (target 14.a), transboundary water cooperation (indicator 6.5.2), and innovation and research and development (indicators 9.5.1 and 9.5.2).

55.   In addition, it is important to recall the cross-cutting nature of the 2030 Agenda and the links between the various dimensions of development and thus the interrelationships between the various SDGs. It is from this perspective that any action taken within the framework of any of the SGDs

deemed a priority according to the aforementioned rating will be closely related to the other SDGs and will contribute to their achievement. This concerns specifically SDG 1 (no poverty), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure, in particular target 9.5 regarding scientific research) and 10 (reduced inequalities).

56. The replies of Member States and their observations on this subject have thus shed light on the strategic orientations, now reflected in these preliminary proposals, which the Organization should adopt in the coming years. Subsequently, in the context of the preparation of the Draft Strategy and its Programme for 2022-2025 which will be submitted to the Executive Board at its 211th session, a more detailed analysis and mapping of UNESCO's contributions at all levels (SDGs, targets, indicators) will be carried out in order to clarify the nature of the Organization's contributions and the priority areas for action.

III.   Framing document 41 C/4 around cross-cutting strategic objectives

57. UNESCO's vision in document 41 C/4 is fully aligned with the transformational ambition of the international community and its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[14] as well as to the African Union's 2063 Agenda for "a*n integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international* arena"**.**

58. In the future Medium-Term Strategy, UNESCO will strive to accomplish this vision and deliver its mission within its mandate. Through an integrated and people-centred approach, UNESCO will support its Member States and mobilize education, the sciences, culture, communication and information for men and women, youth and adults – among the learners, the teachers and educators, the artists and cultural professionals, the scientists, the researchers, the journalists and media workers – in order to empower them to improve their lives and futures and contribute to building learning, sustainable, just and peaceful societies.

59. It is thus proposed that the Medium-Term Strategy be strengthened around a limited number of strategic objectives, which would aim to improve the readability, visibility and overall coherence of the Organization's general message and would give concrete expression to the aspiration to work as "One UNESCO", building on the strength of the expertise within the major programmes and the Organization's many subsidiary bodies, and enabling support from the corporate services. This structure would also enable better communication of UNESCO's strategy and would provide greater than before opportunities for thematic integration and internal and external cooperation. Reduced from nine to four[15], these strategic objectives would nevertheless be clearly linked to UNESCO's mission and mandate in its fields of competence – education, the sciences, culture, communication and information - and would thus preserve the Organization's key areas of expertise. Eventually, the C/4 document will become, together with the C/5 document, a clearer reading guide for our partners and our Member States themselves, with each of the programme sectors contributing to these strategic objectives as appropriate and at different levels, based on their expertise, areas of competence and comparative advantage.

60. Based on Member States' replies and observations to the questionnaire, it is thus proposed to focus the next Medium-Term Strategy on the following four cross-cutting strategic objectives, each of which represents the Organization's contribution to global issues within its specific mandate and across its fields of competence, and based on action where it has a comparative advantage over other international organizations:

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14   See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld
15   The Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021 (37 C/4) contains two overarching objectives (peace, and equitable and sustainable development) and nine strategic objectives, which were designed to receive contributions from various major programmes, in an interdisciplinary mode. (See 37 C/4, para. 21). In addition, document 37 C/4 also contains the cross-cutting theme of responding to post-conflict and post-disaster situations, which, it is proposed, should be retained in document 41 C/4.

Proposed cross-cutting strategic objectives (SO) in the preliminary proposals
SO1: Reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies in the digital age through quality education for all
SO2: Work towards sustainable societies by preserving the environment through the promotion of science, technology and the natural heritage
SO3: Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage
SO 4: Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development of ethical standards.

61.   Through these four strategic objectives, UNESCO would address several of the most pressing global challenges of our times, as a specialized agency of the United Nations system, placing a priority on Africa and gender equality, as well as paying particular attention to crisis response (Section III.5.). The multidisciplinary nature of the proposed strategic objectives offers opportunities for meaningful synergies within and between the strategic objectives, and for better highlighting the contribution of UNESCO's sectors, which in the past still remained in sectoral silos.

62.   The issues associated with climate change or digital transformation thus cut across each of the four objectives, with multiple effects on inequalities, cultural diversity, or gender equality. Likewise, they show that knowledge societies cannot thrive (SO1) without protecting freedom of expression (SO3). The production and sharing of scientific knowledge through open science (SO2) will also make it possible to promote the development of inclusive learning methods (SO1). Innovation and new technologies (SO4), such as artificial intelligence, have created new opportunities for new forms of creative expression, but they have also led to a widespread increase in sexist prejudices and stereotypes (OS 3). Bridges can thus be established between areas and integrated multidisciplinary responses designed to contribute to the resolution of global and complex challenges. The four cross-cutting strategic objectives also translate into a number of "outcomes", which will constitute the basis for the first quadrennial C/5, allowing a better perception of the relation between UNESCO's four-year results and longer-term, higher-level objectives and impact (see Graph 1 below).

63.   The following chapter presents a brief description of each strategic objective and enabling objective, including major programmatic orientations and the identification of the expected four-year outcomes. These outcomes reflect the contributions of UNESCO in all relevant areas of work, as well as the main axis of work of UNESCO's corporate services in support of its actions and results.

64.   The description of the strategic objectives and outcomes proposed below is informed by a reflection on the major challenges facing UNESCO today, in the light of the consultations which have taken place. It thus does not follow a sectoral logic, but a thematic one. Each outcome will benefit in particular from contributions from several sectors, depending on the challenges and themes involved.

65.   With regard to the preparation of document 41 C/5, the table presented in Annex gives, on a provisional and informative basis, the thematic areas which the major programmes would be required to implement, and which would guide the formulation of future C/5 "outputs". In some cases, these thematic areas will require the contribution of more than one major programme; these thematic areas are identified by an asterisk (*) in the table. This table remains indicative and will be revised during the forthcoming process of preparation of the Programme and Budget (41 C/5).

Graph 1: UNESCO's strategic and enabling objectives, and related outcomes
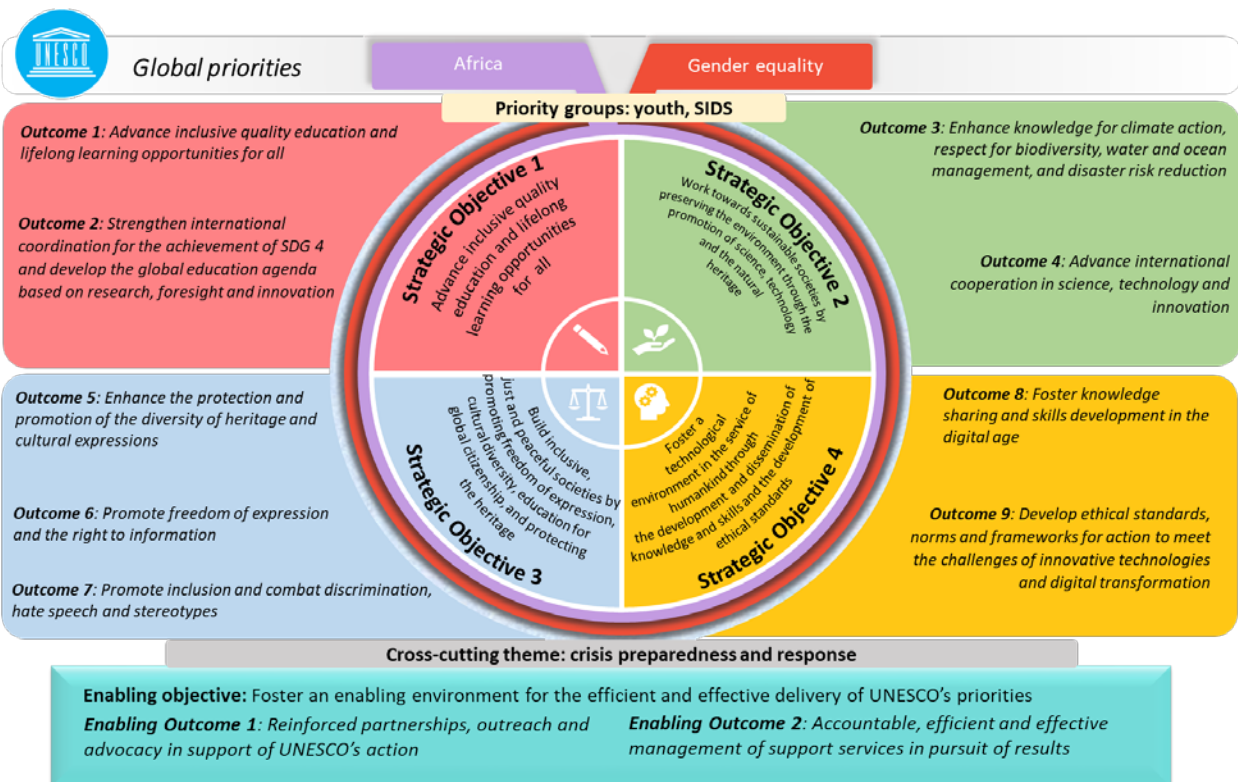
III.1 Strategic Objective 1: Reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies in the digital age through quality education for all

Strategic Objective 1: Reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies in the digital age through quality education for all	
Outcome 1: Advance inclusive quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all	**Outcome 2:** Strengthen international coordination for the achievement of SDG 4 and develop the global education agenda based on research, foresight and innovation

66. Inclusive and equitable quality education is central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is at the heart of UNESCO's mission to build peace, eradicate poverty and drive sustainable development. The SDG 4 commitment to quality, inclusion and lifelong learning is critical to realize the promise of all other SDGs. The 41 C/4 period of 2022-2029 corresponds to the last decisive years of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and UNESCO's work in education will therefore naturally be guided by SDG 4 as a core dimension of the right to education and an enabler of all other human rights.

67. In spite of significant progress realized, the world was not on track to achieve SDG 4 before the COVID-19 crisis, with 200 million children estimated to remain out of school by 2030, the percentage of qualified teachers in sub-Saharan Africa dropping from 84% in 2000 to 61% in 2016 and only two in three countries having achieved gender parity at the primary level. Furthermore, while recent UNESCO initiatives are improving coordination among multilateral education partners, international efforts still reflect a degree of fragmentation.[16]

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[16] Source: UNESCO Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report 2019; GEM Report SCOPE.

68. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequalities. At its peak, over 94% (1.6 billion) of the world's student population from pre-primary to higher education was affected by the closure of educational institutions; half of them without access to a computer and 43% without an Internet connection to benefit from online distance learning. It is estimated today that 24 million learners, especially girls, are at risk of not finding their way back to school in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

69. It is within this global context that UNESCO's mandate to ensure universal access for girls and boys, women and men to inclusive quality education at all levels and to lifelong learning opportunities becomes even more critical in order to ensure that hard-won gains for equality and inclusion in education are not reversed. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, scarce resources among competing development priorities will further increase the need for innovation and coordination action to jointly protect education and accelerate progress towards SDG 4.

70. UNESCO will pursue two outcomes under this strategic objective, to ensure that the next decade will be one of accelerated action and accomplishment. The first relates to advancing quality and equitable education and lifelong learning opportunities for all through the provision of capacity development, policy advice and technical support to Member States, with a new emphasis on integrating the issues related to culture, art and creativity in educational processes. The second aims to strengthen international coordination, shaping the global education agenda and ensuring that education remains high on political agendas.

> *Outcome 1: Advance inclusive quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all*

Universal access, inclusion and gender equality

71. Under Outcome 1, UNESCO will support countries in strengthening their education system and leaving no one behind. This will include the guarantee of equal educational opportunities for all. access to quality early childhood care and education, and at least 12 years of free and compulsory education of quality for all in line with SDG commitments and the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education, as well as the diversification of learning pathways and skills development for youth and adults, particularly literacy, digital skills and technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and higher education. Particular attention will be given to education for crisis-affected populations focusing on strengthening legal frameworks, policy and planning and on fostering safe, inclusive and supportive learning and learning environments, contributing to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and Global Compact on Refugees, as well as education for persons with disabilities to ensure the universal right to education. UNESCO will also mainstream gender equality in all its programmes, with emphasis on quality education for women and girls through support for quality data, policies and legislation as well as teaching and learning practices in improved learning environments.

Development of skills for the world of work and life skills (literacy, TVET, higher education)

72. Diversifying learning pathways is key to building learning and inclusive knowledge societies. UNESCO will strengthen skills development for youth and adults, particularly literacy, digitals skills and TVET, as well as higher education to ensure empowerment and employability. Particular attention will be paid to strengthen the resilience of national education systems in order to ensure the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups such as learners with disabilities and crisis-affected populations. Support will be provided to policy development, leveraging digital technologies and assessing literacy skills programmes, with a focus on disadvantaged groups, particularly women and girls in countries with an adult literacy rate below 50% and those with the largest numbers of non-literate adults. UNESCO will continue to promote youth employment and entrepreneurship, and gender equality and facilitate the transition to green economies and sustainable societies. TVET teachers, employer engagement in TVET and informal apprenticeships as well as the implications of the digitization of labour markets will be further explored, especially given that a large portion of

jobs that will exist in 2030 are yet to be invented. Stronger emphasis will be placed on how higher education systems can further support the SDGs as well as on the implementation of the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education and its regional counterparts, including rising demands for quality assurance in view of the increased internationalization of higher education.

Improvement of learning outcomes through qualified and motivated teachers and relevant curricula

73. Teachers are the most important educational input and in-school factor determining the quality of educational, learning and development outcomes. Therefore, supporting Member States to develop appropriate teacher policies to reinforce teachers' professional development and where necessary reduce the acute shortage of qualified and motivated teachers is urgent, with particular attention to Africa. A threefold approach will be pursued, focusing on supporting countries to develop and implement comprehensive gender-sensitive teacher policies articulated with education sector policies and plans, in line with the 1966 and 1997 Recommendations on teachers; ensuring reliable data to plan for teacher recruitment, professional development and efficient management and support; as well as advocacy and capacity development of teachers and teacher-training institutions. This will include education for sustainable development, global citizenship education as well as distance learning and digital skills. Curriculum development and reform will be revitalized, and focus will be placed on research, knowledge management and networking, and training, as well as operational support at country level.

Planning of education systems, education policies and relevant data

74. UNESCO will continue supporting national education authorities to develop and implement evidence-based education policies and plans that mainstream SDG 4 and the right to education, underpinned by learning continuity approaches and connecting education to other sectors, such as health, employment and the climate, to build more resilient systems. Capacity development for education sector analyses and planning will remain a core area of work and efforts will be made to ensure more robust, timely and disaggregated data as well as performance monitoring tools to inform decision-making at all levels.

Distance learning[17]

75. Supporting distance learning and digital skills development remains central to UNESCO's action to help bridge the digital divide and build inclusive learning and knowledge societies. UNESCO will strengthen capacities of education stakeholders, especially teachers in transition to blended learning, promoting digital skills, curricula development and delivery of distance learning to foster innovative digital solutions to global and local challenges, with particular focus on the most in need and vulnerable populations.

Education for sustainable development (ESD)[18]

76 UNESCO plays a critical role in developing learners' full potential as creative, well-informed, engaged and responsible citizens in an effort to equip them with the knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development, particularly in relation to SDG target 4.7. *Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)*, including climate change, will continue to be promoted through the "ESD for 2030" framework in the period of 2020-2030, with a focus on advancing policies, the learning environment, teachers and educators, youth and local community action. Special attention will be

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[17] See, for digital skills and open educational resources (OER), under "Digital skills and competencies" (Strategic Objective 4, Outcome 8).

[18] See also Strategic Objective 2, Outcome 3, "Development of science education", to which ESD contributes.

given to supporting Member States to integrate these issues into their policies, their curricula, student assessments and teacher education, and mobilizing all relevant UNESCO networks[19].

Global citizenship education (GCED)[20]

77.   *Global Citizenship Education (GCED)* will promote universally shared values such as non-discrimination, equality, respect and dialogue, empathy and compassion, encouraging education systems to provide the foundations to enhance, uphold and apply human rights. This will help develop the ability of learners to engage responsibly and creatively to build peaceful and just societies and address the drivers of violent extremism and hate speech as well as contribute to the prevention of genocide and other atrocity crimes. Social and emotional (SEL) skills, as well established, evidence-based practices, will also need to be mainstreamed in education to meet SDG target 4.7.

Creativity in educational and learning processes

78.   UNESCO will promote creativity in educational and learning processes as a driving force for human development. Cultural literacy will be enhanced as an important dimension of global citizenship education through the integration of culture, cultural heritage and the arts in formal and non-formal education policies, curricula and programmes to accelerate learning outcomes. Heritage education will be developed to promote the intergenerational transmission of heritage, share knowledge about cultures and offer intercultural learning experiences. The role of non-formal education spaces such as cities and museums will be promoted as places of knowledge transmission and social integration through the implementation of the 2015 Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society.

79.   This will entail programmes aimed at professionalizing the cultural and creative industries through technical and vocational education and training, providing lifelong acquisition of skills and competences required for employment, decent work, entrepreneurial innovation and market access in the field of culture, especially in the digital environment. Particular attention will be given to young talents and to women often working in the informal economy and suffering from unequal opportunities in career development.

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM)

80.   STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) play critical educational roles and will require the development of capacities, especially for girls and women, in higher education institutions as well as in *non-formal learning environments such as science centres and museums*. Specific STEM and STEAM programmes will be developed at all levels, particularly at the tertiary level, and UNESCO will work on capacity building and the adaptation of national curricula to new approaches in science and engineering education.

Education for health and well-being and the promotion of safe and inclusive educational environments

81.   *Education for health and well-being* will continue to be promoted, with a focus on safeguarding and scaling up the provision of good quality comprehensive sexuality education, healthy eating and drinking, and physical activity and sport. Particular attention will be given to ensuring safe, inclusive

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[19]   UNESCO networks such as the Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), the UNESCO Cities network, the UNEVOC Centres on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, Geoparks, and world heritage sites, will be platforms for the implementation of SDG target 4.7, together with a wide range of other partners.

[20]   Seealso Strategic Objective 3, Outcome 7, "global citizenship education", to which GCED contributes.

and healthy learning environments, and addressing school violence and bullying, especially school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV).

> *Outcome 2: Strengthen international coordination for the achievement of SDG 4 and develop the global education agenda based on research, foresight and innovation*

Coordination of SDG 4 – mobilization of partners and monitoring of progress

82.   Under Outcome 2, UNESCO will steer global progress towards achieving the ambitious targets of SDG 4 by mobilizing partners in a coordinated effort, shaping the global education agenda and ensuring that education remains a priority in development policies and programmes, and seeking equitable, inclusive and innovative solutions through research and foresight, monitoring, advocacy and networking.

83.   UNESCO will work to ensure effective harmonization of strategic guidance, governance and financing efforts in favour of SDG 4, and continue to involve a vast network of partners – Member States, multilateral and non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector – to chart a more strategic approach, building upon the respective strengths of different actors and allowing a new dynamic to emerge. This will include repositioning and reinforcing the voice of the UNESCO-led SDG–Education 2030 Steering Committee, as a unique political space for strategic dialogue and decision-making, to steer alignment and joint actions around an agreed set of priorities, supported by stronger regional and national SDG 4 coordination mechanisms as well as South-South cooperation. This will also involve rethinking the current international financing mechanisms for education, building upon what already exists, to create a more coherent set of innovative financing mechanisms for education as a means of promoting innovation in education and thereby reducing remaining disparities, while advocating for increased and more equitably distributed national investments in education.

84.   Given the overarching importance of monitoring and quality data for developing evidence-based policies to tackle inequalities and improve educational outcomes, UNESCO will continue to support the production and use of SDG 4 data, expand the type of data sources to allow quicker feedback loops to policy-makers, and introduce new data analytics to the education sector, as in other social sectors. UNESCO will build upon the comparative advantages and mandate of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE), and also on the full range of other global monitoring reports – such as the Re|shaping Cultural Policies report, World Science Report, and the World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development report – which can be used by the global community to test the viability of indicators related to SDG 4 and its targets, share good practices and support innovative policies. Taken together, these different world reports will be able to provide a consolidated base of data and analyses from different sectors to assess, inform and inspire more inclusive and sustainable education policies and systems that take into account emerging digital divides, and regional initiatives in producing relevant information and analysis for the education community.

Research, foresight and innovation

85.   UNESCO will build upon its role as a laboratory of ideas to facilitate research, foresight, innovation, and creative thinking on how knowledge, education and learning can shape the future of humanity, responding to global issues such as climate change, erosion of biodiversity, the health of the oceans, accelerated technological development, and changing patterns of human mobility. Through collaborative research partnerships and networks, and leveraging the expertise of its category 1 institutes, UNESCO will play a leading role in debates about the future of education research, pursue new types of research, including big data studies, use of artificial intelligence in education, and experimental analytics and provide guidance on evidence-informed policies. It will also promote research capacity in Member States and support knowledge sharing and exchange.

Looking towards the horizon of 2050 and drawing on the vision provided in the "Futures of Education: Learning to Become" report (to be published in November 2021), UNESCO will lead forward-looking debates identifying implications for policy, research and action, supporting teaching and learning with a humanistic lens, and a more inclusive and equitable integration of digital innovation into education systems.

III.2   Strategic Objective 2: Work towards sustainable societies by preserving the environment through the promotion of science, technology and the natural heritage

Strategic Objective 2: Work towards sustainable societies by preserving the environment through the promotion of science, technology and the natural heritage	
Outcome 3: Enhance knowledge for climate action, respect for biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction	**Outcome 3**: Enhance knowledge for climate action, respect for biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction

86.   UNESCO's multidisciplinary mandate and the specialized expertise of its international and intergovernmental programmes offer a unique opportunity for it to mobilize the international community and help shape integrated and systemic solutions with the aim of contributing to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDGs 4, 5, 6. 9. 11, 13, 14, and 15, and to Goal 6 (Aspiration 1) of Agenda 2063 of the African Union with regard to marine resources and energy, and Goal 7 on biodiversity, conservation and sustainable natural resource management.

87.   UNESCO will continue to be guided by the relevant internationally commitments and agreed global frameworks, namely the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030), Convention on Biological Diversity, new Urban Agenda and SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway), Istanbul Plan of Action for the LDCs, United Nations Water Action Decade (2018-2028), United Nations SDG 6 Accelerator Framework, United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) and United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), as well as by working across the 1972, 2001 and 2003 culture conventions – to deliver, not only diagnostics of existing or emerging problems, but to also offer effective solutions to make environments and communities resilient.

88.   Tracking progress on the realization of the SDGs, the Sustainable Development Goals report 2020 shows that the world is way off track to meet the Paris Agreement target, with slow progress in meeting the 2030 disaster risk reduction target as well as on the SDG 6 target on access to water and sanitation. Earlier in December 2019, at the COP25 climate summit, the United Nations Secretary-General warned that we were rapidly approaching the "point of no return". Indeed, the alarm was sounded on the failure of the global community to take collective and concerted action on the biggest risks threatening the world today that are science-related and concern the environment. These are failures in climate change mitigation and adaptation; extreme weather events; natural and human-caused disasters; biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse; a global water crisis affecting more than 40% of the world's population; continuous deterioration of coastal waters owing to pollution and ocean acidification that continues to threaten marine environment and ecosystem services, and the related impact on increasing poverty, social inequalities, mass migration and risks of global health pandemics, as recently shown by the COVID-19 pandemic.

89.   Reversing the decline in the natural environment and building a resilient future to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will require therefore full multilateral commitment and action that consolidate stronger and closer relationships between humankind, biodiversity and nature, based on knowledge and ethical principles, and recognize the value and impact on our health, well-being and safety of an increased focus on environmental sustainability and on how people relate to nature and their physical environment. This action must also build on a strengthened interface between research and policymaking to generate the knowledge that helps humanity to be resilient

and achieve long-term sustainability, and to ensure that decision-making and policies are informed by available quality research and evidence.

90.   The transition path to inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic development must be based on a strengthened commitment to science, technology and innovation (STI). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development assigns a central role to STI as one of the main drivers of the global socio-economic transformation in an ever-changing dynamic of environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, water crisis, climate change mitigation and adaptation, existing and emerging diseases and natural disasters. As confirmed by the recent global COVID-19 pandemic, the need has become urgent for enhanced international scientific cooperation, including to leverage the latest advances in scientific research, new data and technological solutions and innovative outreach methods.

91.   Building on past achievements, UNESCO will design and deliver its action to fulfil this strategic objective along two complementary axes:

> **Outcome 3: Enhance knowledge for climate action, respect for biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction**

92.   The biophysical balance of our planet is fundamental to our existence, our economies and to the good quality of life of all people. UNESCO will contribute to maintaining a balance between humanity and the natural world in order to reverse the negative trends in climate, biodiversity, the oceans, and other ecosystems.

93.   In this task, UNESCO will tap on and utilize strategically the rich expertise of its intergovernmental programmes to help strengthen international scientific cooperation, facilitate the production and sharing of transdisciplinary knowledge, and support policies and capacities to apply science-based integrated approaches to build climate-change resilience. Together with its partners, UNESCO will raise awareness of climate change impacts on societies, cultural diversity, biodiversity, hydrological systems, ecosystem services, and the world's natural, geological and cultural heritage. In addition, the opportunities and benefits that are brought about by science and technology advances, including fast-changing digital technologies and the increasing pervasiveness of artificial intelligence, will be mobilized for sustainable development, taking into account existing inequalities and ethical and human rights implications[21].

94.   Furthermore, environmental challenges are recognized to be interconnected with all aspects of social development. Achieving inclusion and sustainability depends on interfaces between ecosystems and societies that are mediated by institutions, infrastructures and behavioural patterns. International environmental agendas are premised on transformative change at all three levels, which calls for enhanced understanding of them anchored in the social and human sciences as well as appropriately informed and contextualized policies. The development and deployment of transdisciplinary sustainability science frameworks[22] will be an essential knowledge driver of the transition path to inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic development. Solutions to the climate emergency need to be developed prioritizing a fair transition.

Ecosystems and biodiversity: the role of UNESCO-designated sites

95.   The loss of biodiversity and degradation of natural ecosystems have devastating effects for our planet and negative consequences for our social, environmental and economic well-being. It disproportionally affects the most vulnerable communities and countries, thus exacerbating

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[21]   See also "Ethics of science and technology, including bioethics" (Strategic Objective 4, Outcome 9).
[22]   "Guidelines on Sustainability Science in Research and Education" (2017): https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260600.

inequality. To halt or reverse this decline it is vital to transform people's roles, actions and relationships with nature.

96.   UNESCO's international and intergovernmental programmes (in particular MAB, IOC, IGGP, IHP) and designated sites will aim to halt biodiversity and natural resources loss and tackle its key drivers through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research and cooperation, including by mobilizing local and indigenous knowledge as well as sustainability science; scaling up efforts for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and implementing binding targets for the restoration of degraded ecosystems and rivers.

97.   UNESCO will help advance the nature-society-development nexus and lead comprehensive action to harness the full potential of its unique network of designated sites – the world heritage sites, biosphere reserves and global geoparks – that serve as climate change observatories for learning, awareness-raising, and enhancing and disseminating knowledge and information, including indigenous knowledge and intangible cultural heritage practices, in order to promote climate change adaptation and mitigation, land and underwater ecosystem restoration, and the creation of green economies. Through these UNESCO-designated sites, UNESCO will foster awareness raising, exchange of good practices, scientific monitoring and research activities in the field of global climate change, water management and biodiversity conservation and restoration, as well as the creation of green economies. Preservation of biodiversity and restoration of ecosystems outside protected areas is critical to reach the global objective of post 2020 to increase protected areas. UNESCO' designated sites will contribute to this objective. The biosphere reserves and the UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp) are laboratories for sustainable development that promote sustainability of local communities and training and employment opportunities via its youth networks. UNESCO will also mobilize its scientific programmes to reinforce SIDS scientific capacities for resilience building.

98.   Better understanding of Earth systems and processes is critical to reduce the risks of extreme climate and human-made hazards. UNESCO will continue enabling international geoscientific cooperation, training and knowledge exchanges in Earth sciences to analyze and predict Earth system variability to determine the predictability of climate and to determine and reduce the effect of human activities on climate, and to support Member States on efficient, safe and sustainable and renewable natural resources exploration and extraction.

Building a global coalition for nature

99.   UNESCO proposes an ethic of caring for life based on global principles, already tested at the scale of our designated sites: this is the spirit of the "Coalition for Nature" that mobilizes our networks and partners to co-construct more resilient societies. The Coalition for Nature is a framework that can chart the way, through reshaped educational, learning and knowledge systems, towards a safer, greener and fairer planet for all. It will focus on how to reconnect to nature and live in harmony with each other, enabling transmission of the value of nature and living things to future generation and bring about a profound rethinking of our knowledge, learning patterns, values and ways of being human and inhabiting the earth.

100.   UNESCO will work towards establishing a "people-nature pact", consolidating the alliances and relationships between humankind, biodiversity and nature with increased focus on environmental sustainability, in order to safeguard the diversity of life across the world and the harmony of ecosystems, while promoting the principles of solidarity and equity between generations which underlie them.

101.   The capacity to redesign solutions and possible future pathways for a sustainable planet takes place in schools, outside schools, through communities and throughout our lives, in formal and non-formal settings. It rests on openness to plurality of knowledge systems and cultures, and on reliable information. Traditional – and specifically indigenous – knowledge transmitted through the generations is, for example, a major resource for adapting to climate change.

102. Far from privileging the ecological issue over the social and economic issue, UNESCO would therefore promote a true integration of living together in all its dimensions, integrating the ecosystem (terrestrial) understanding of human existence into cultural, socio-political and economic organizations at all levels.

103. Building in particular on UNESCO's networks and partners, Chairs and institutes, cities platforms and the wide range of designated sites, this would combine global leadership with effective field implementation to share data and research analysis, knowledge and experiences, revise curricula, generate debates and actions to address the climate crisis, and provide skills and competences for the introduction of transformational and green economy policies and systems. It would produce lasting results aligned with the 2030 Agenda (in particular SDGs 4, 6, 13, 14, 15), the Samoa Pathway and the 2063 African Union Agenda. This initiative will also build from the work of UNESCO in biosphere reserves, geoparks and natural heritage sites. It will emphasize living in harmony with nature, with each other, enabling transmission of the value of indigenous and local knowledge systems.

Mobilizing local and indigenous knowledge systems for sustainable development

104. In its work on the environment, biodiversity and the fight against climate change, UNESCO will mobilize local and indigenous knowledge systems through its Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme. LINKS will pursue its cooperation with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) to better reflect local and indigenous knowledge and to provide technical support to Member States preparing national ecosystem assessments.

105. Cooperation between scientific research and the local and indigenous knowledge of marginalized communities will be strengthened, promoting inclusion of the diversity of populations and the governance of natural resources in inclusive and peaceful societies. UNESCO will continue to work with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in order to strengthen the inclusion of local and indigenous knowledge in the various mechanisms under that instrument, including the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform, and the provisions under the Paris Agreement on local and indigenous knowledge in climate change adaptation.

Climate change education

106. Education gives citizens skills needed to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, and educated citizens with greater environmental awareness and concern are more likely to get involved in political action to protect the environment. Within the "ESD for 2030" [23] framework, that emphasizes a holistic approach – linking the three pillars of environment, economy and society in order to achieve structural transformation, UNESCO will support the integration of environmental issues into education policies, curricula, and teacher education, also drawing on intangible heritage and local and indigenous knowledge, and engaging and empowering youth.

107. Moreover, UNESCO will help ensure access of all people, including vulnerable groups and rural communities to accurate, verified and locally relevant information about climate change and related environmental issues and sustainable solutions in and beyond designated sites. This will be achieved by mobilizing the media and, through journalism education, strengthening journalists' capacities to work with scientists and ensure fair, safe and comprehensive coverage of climate change and natural disasters.

108. UNESCO will also encourage the development of science education regarding water, climate change, the ocean, the environment and biodiversity.

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[23]   See "Education for sustainable development" (Strategic Objective 1, Outcome 1).

Water: science, research, education, governance and management

109. UNESCO and its water family (IHP, WWAP, water-related centres and Chairs) is called upon to play a key contributing role in the United Nations Water and Climate Coalition, as part of the SDG 6 Accelerator Framework to support country progress on clean water and sanitation, via capacity development, innovation, water research and scientific collaboration and governance. UNESCO will mobilize its water family and the wider community to build capacities and promote a holistic scientific approach to address in a sustainable way water management and water governance based on science for mitigation adaptation and resilience. Efforts will focus on improving scientific evidence, bridging the data and knowledge gaps, reinforcing groundwater monitoring and strengthening the science-policy-society interface and developing tools and methodologies for inclusive and integrated water management, good water governance and climate resilience through water. UNESCO will continue to lead the World Water Development Reports which cover the state of the world's water resources and address strategic recommendations for Member States. As co-custodian for SDG indicator 6.5.2 on transboundary water cooperation, UNESCO will continue to promote sharing of scientific research to enable Member States to improve their institutions, strengthen professional capacities and develop regulations for the sustainable management and environmentally sound protection of transboundary aquifers.

Ocean science for sustainable development

110. Acting as the custodian agency for two SDG 14 targets on ocean acidification (target 14.3) and capacity for marine scientific research (target 14.a), UNESCO, through its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), will continue to strengthen science capacity and mobilize the international community to strengthen cooperation and engagement of all stakeholders among scientists, practitioners, decision-makers, the private sector and civil society as a whole for the development and use of science-based, integrated sustainable ocean and coastal management and corresponding solutions. The work will be framed by the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), a common framework designed to support efforts to reverse the cycle of decline in ocean health and ensure ocean science can fully support countries in creating improved conditions for sustainable development of the ocean.

111. IOC will support Member States in generating knowledge, establishing and implementing science-informed policies and developing capacity for sustainable development of ocean-related opportunities and risks and for keeping the ocean ecosystems healthy. In doing so, it will provide healthy ocean and sustained ocean ecosystem services, effective warning system and preparedness for tsunamis and other related ocean system hazards, resilience to climate change and contribution to its mitigation, scientifically founded services for the sustainable ocean economy, and foresight on emerging ocean science issues.

Strengthening UNESCO's action in disaster risk reduction and building resilience to climate change

112. The impact of climate change and urban pressure coupled with lack of disaster preparedness make natural hazards even more devastating in terms of the loss of human life, but can also cause severe destruction with economic costs. These risks often affect vulnerable populations, and could generate multiplier effects in regions already affected by conflicts. Operating at the interface between the natural and social and human sciences, education, culture and communication, UNESCO will promote a global culture of resilience that requires sound policies and frameworks for disaster risk reduction (DRR) and preparedness.

113. UNESCO will continue to help countries to build capacity in terms of disaster risk and climate-change risk management and to support their disaster prevention, mitigation and management efforts by means of education and awareness-raising. It will help to build Member States' scientific and technological capacity for the identification, monitoring and management of risks, as well as their anticipation through early warning systems (particularly for tsunamis and other ocean-related

hazards, and for geological and meteorological hazards); risk assessment and assessment of the vulnerability of critical infrastructure, particularly educational facilities; the resilience of designated sites; the use of new information and communication technologies, such as artificial intelligence, to respond to natural disasters; the involvement of various partners, such as young people, as an interface between policies and communities concerned by disaster risk reduction (DRR); the development of nature-based solutions for resilience; and support for post-disaster needs assessments. It will also protect vulnerable water systems and mitigate the impacts of water-related hazards, as well as of the impact of climate change on culture by providing emergency technical assistance to countries whose culture is affected by disasters. The Organization will draw on its entire field network, designated and affiliated sites, category 1 and category 2 centres, and UNESCO Chairs and networks, in accordance with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and its four priorities for action. Acting upon the 1972 World Heritage Convention, which offers a comprehensive approach to biodiversity conservation, the information generated through impact assessments will provide needed evidence for solutions to help reduce environmental degradation and biodiversity loss at terrestrial and marine heritage sites.

Climate change ethics

114. UNESCO will continue, within the United Nations system, to promote climate change ethics, especially through the implementation of the UNESCO Declaration of Ethical Principles in relation to Climate Change. This will include further reflection on science and human rights as well as mainstreaming climate change ethics across UNESCO's activities on environmental sustainability, climate change and social transformation. This will also apply to the field of ocean science, with the development of a normative instrument on conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Culture and heritage in the face of climate change

115. Besides its impacts on biodiversity, water security and natural heritage, climate change also affects the world's cultural heritage, eroding archaeological remains and historical buildings both on land and underwater. Climate change can also produce other social and cultural impacts, changing the ways that communities live, work, worship and socialize in relation to buildings, sites and landscapes. In many cases, affected communities may be forced to migrate, abandoning their built heritage and losing their intangible cultural heritage. Research in underwater natural and cultural heritage, as well as knowledge and transmission of intangible cultural heritage practices, including traditional and indigenous land and water management practices and the use of traditional architecture and building materials, will be promoted to adapt to a changing climate. In accordance with SDG target 8.9, UNESCO will continue to promote sustainable tourism and the green economy, respecting territories' geological, natural and cultural heritage.

> *Outcome 4: Advance international cooperation in science, technology and innovation*

Open science, access to knowledge and to data sharing

116. Advocating for enhanced international scientific cooperation, access to scientific knowledge and know-how and data sharing, UNESCO will mobilize its partners, scientific and research networks, STEM higher education research institutions and science academies. This will foster Open Science and access to applications to provide equal opportunities to science and its benefits for sustainable development, ensuring that countries in the developing world are equipped to actively participate in the design, development and application of technologies, and fully benefit from the economic opportunities they offer. The work already engaged by UNESCO to support principles of openness in processes that can ensure universal access to information and knowledge, including through the preparation of a recommendation on open science, will be highly significant in setting a new strategic direction in the coming decade, with a view to addressing inequalities and bridging

technology, knowledge and innovation gaps. The 2021 and 2025 Science Reports and the report on engineering sciences will highlight emerging trends in the fields of open science, the development of endogenous research and innovation at the local level. UNESCO will, moreover, work to promote the recognition and application of the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits, drawing on recent normative guidance at the United Nations level, and existing UNESCO normative instruments, notably the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers.

117. All these challenges cannot be met without a renewed commitment to scientific and technological cooperation that transcends borders. In this spirit, UNESCO will continue to rely fully on the development of international scientific cooperation, promotion and support for the development of relevant capacities in the environmental and basic sciences, such as theoretical and applied physics, and pure and applied mathematics, through its specific international and intergovernmental scientific programmes (IOC, IHP, MAB, IBSP, IGGP, ICTP, TWAS, WWAP, and the networks of category 2 centres), in order to contribute to the formulation of solutions to current global challenges (climate change, renewable energies, sustainable mining, carbon capture and sequestration) and those to come, in a forward-looking approach.

118. In addition, digital transformation calls for a multi-stakeholder, open and inclusive approach, whereby all actors not only benefit from the opportunities brought about by emerging technologies and innovation, but also actively contribute to shaping the new digital environment. In that regard, global cooperation and knowledge sharing in the field of digital technologies is essential to bridge existing digital divides between and within countries, and from a gender perspective. Data plays an increasingly important role in the digital age and holds significant potential for sustainable development. It is therefore essential to address issues related to data governance, including in terms of privacy, and to promote the ROAM principles (human Rights, Openness, Accessibility and Multi-stakeholder participation), endorsed by UNESCO's General Conference in 2015, to this end. Concomitantly, science diplomacy and access to scientific and technological advances, which is part of science governance, is coming to the fore as a formidable dimension of power relations between States, and UNESCO will be more and more solicited to play a prominent role in promoting collaboration between stakeholders.

119. Providing open access to scientific and technological data will be increasingly important and UNESCO will work with its partners to foster science diplomacy and the right to information. It will ensure that countries in the developing world are not mere users of technologies but are also equipped to actively participate in their design and development, as to benefit from the economic perspective they offer.

Strengthening STI (science, technology and innovation) policies, systems and governance

120. The 2030 Agenda attaches central importance to science, technology and innovation as drivers of global socio-economic transformations to address global challenges such as environmental degradation, mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, the digital divide, or natural disasters. This approach will require interfaces between academia, research and industry, and more participatory governance of STI systems, so as to promote a culture of science and innovation. UNESCO will continue to support Member States' efforts to improve basic sciences research through the International Basic Sciences Programme (IBSP) and basic and engineering sciences, as well as STI systems, taking into account gender issues and encouraging a culture of innovation, as well as building their capacities. UNESCO will continue to help Member States to improve governance of STI systems to design policy responses in national priority areas and strengthen capacities in this area, building on the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers, and providing data to facilitate short-, medium- and long-term decision-making. Innovative initiatives will support the establishment of STI systems through regional and thematic platforms fostering the sharing of experiences and good practices, with particular emphasis on Africa, gender equality, youth, and SIDS.

121. Investment in basic sciences and engineering has never been as vital so as to foster creativity and inclusion to build societies that are more resistant to external and internal shocks, including global environmental, social and economic crises. Furthermore, the achievement of the 2030 Agenda will depend in great measure on the constitution of a critical mass of scientists, engineers and technicians with the capacities to innovate and make policy into reality in the ground. This will require increased investment in higher education reform and in research infrastructure so as to deploy science for the SDGs and strengthening resilience.

122. UNESCO will step its efforts to assist Member States in building institutional capacities for science and engineering and the transformation of higher education systems towards more interdisciplinary approaches so as to integrate the challenges of sustainable development in the research and education agenda. The Organization will continue to accord priority to the particular needs of Africa and small island developing States (SIDS).

III.3 Strategic Objective 3: Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage

Strategic Objective 3: Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage		
Outcome 5: Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions	**Outcome 6**: Promote freedom of expression and the right to information	**Outcome 7**: Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes

123. As the world moves towards 2030, the promise of a sustainable development built on non-discrimination, mutual respect, tolerance, intercultural dialogue, inclusion, and the appreciation of diversity as richness appears distant still. Realizing the vision of inclusive, peaceful and just societies that ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms is still a long way off, and sustainable progress is more elusive than hoped for.

124. Instead, rising inequalities in their various dimensions, around income, opportunities, and those based on race, sex, disability, ethnicity, origin, religion, age, and economic or other status, seem to be a defining challenge of our time. Exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, they have shown their compounding nature with existing patterns of vulnerability, putting the poorest countries, as well as vulnerable and marginalized groups and individuals within countries at multiple interrelated disadvantages, with devastating effects. This is creating fractured societies, with a strong perception of unfair economic and social outcomes, and concentration of wealth, income and opportunities at the top. Those furthest behind not only see their opportunities and outcomes worsen but risk getting trapped in a vicious circle of extreme poverty while becoming more exposed to serious human rights violations.

125. On the heels of inequalities and exclusion come persistent structural and often systemic discrimination, that continue to jeopardize individual rights and social justice. Social movements that have emerged all over the world against racism unequivocally confirm the magnitude of the problem. The COVID-19 pandemic may further entrench existing patterns of discrimination and stigma, with reports emerging from many countries of increased levels of discrimination against different groups and individuals.

126. This development must take into account the opportunities which digital transformation can hold for sustainable development, freedom of expression, artistic freedom, access to information, respect for cultural diversity, democracy, non-discrimination and social cohesion, but also the risks

and challenges that the digital future can pose[24]. New technologies and platforms indeed offer new opportunities for expression, advocacy, and access to information. At the same time, the prevalence of these technologies has been associated with the spread of disinformation and hate speech, as well as created new forms of exclusion. While 53.6% of the world's population now use the Internet, an estimated 3.6 billion people are without access, and the least developed countries are the least connected, with only 19% of their populations using the Internet[25]. There is an urgent need to fill gaps in access to information and knowledge, and countering resulting discrimination. As recalled by UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, "While ensuring the free flow of ideas by word and image, care should be exercised so that all cultures can express themselves and make themselves known. Freedom of expression, media pluralism, multilingualism, equal access to art and to scientific and technological knowledge, including in digital form, and the possibility for all cultures to have access to the means of expression and dissemination are the guarantees of cultural diversity."[26].

127.   Building on past achievements, UNESCO will design and deliver its action to fulfil this strategic objective along three complementary axes:

> ***Outcome 5: Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions***

From cultural heritage to the creative economy

128.   It is the entirety of the cultural sphere, in all its diversity, both its types of heritage – built, moveable, underwater and intangible – and its cultural expressions, which will be supported, protected and promoted in order to build more open and peaceful societies. Building on the mechanisms for international cooperation and assistance established under the various international conventions in the area of culture (1954, 1970, 1972, 2001, 2003, 2005), and the various recommendations associated with them, technical and legal support will be provided at the normative and operational level, both to translate their provisions into national legislation and policies and to build institutional and human capacities in countries, particularly the most fragile. These cultural conventions, which serve as a global reference and forum for consultation in the field of culture, must, in practice, lead to placing the cultural sphere, and particularly the creative economy, at the centre of sustainable development policies, thus contributing to the achievement of SDG target 11.4.

129.   This integrated approach will be accompanied by ambitious policies to mobilize communities involved in the safeguarding, management and transmission of heritage and all actors and professionals in the cultural sector whose status has been undermined by the devastating and long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to help reconsider what constitutes not only the most appropriate kinds of support for culture and access to a diversity of content, but also equitable participation in cultural life, including in the digital environment[27], which can contribute to social and economic inclusion. Support for heritage policies, in support of multinational inscriptions under the 1972 World Heritage Convention and 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and for the inter-State consultation and cooperation mechanism for the safeguarding of underwater heritage under the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001) will play a decisive role in supporting the processes of social cohesion, reconciliation and shared memory.

130.   As the issue of inequalities has become central, UNESCO will work to redress imbalances in the exchange of cultural goods and services through national assistance schemes for market access, in particular in the area of cultural and creative industries, the promotion of preferential treatment

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24   See Strategic Objective 4.
25   Report of the Secretary-General: Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, June 2020.
26   UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), article 6.
27   See Strategic Objective 4.

clauses and mobility for artists and cultural professionals from developing countries, in support of SDG 10 (target 10.a).

131.   Finally, and taking into account the issues associated with digital transformation, we should give all cultures the opportunity to have access to the means of expression and dissemination and ensure that the production and supply of cultural content is representative of pluralistic societies[28]. Policies and measures favouring media diversity will, within this framework, be supported to guarantee the availability of local and diverse cultural content.

132.   In addition, actions will be taken to harness the potential of human creativity for economic and social development by creating the necessary enabling conditions in support of dynamic and resilient creative economies. The Organization will provide support to the design of development-oriented policies aimed at stimulating the growth and diversification of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the creative sector. Finally, technical support programmes will be undertaken to improve the legal, social and economic conditions of artists. The transformative power of cities as creative hubs that concentrate resources and human capital will be harnessed through the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, which will stimulate training and enhance the capacities of urban creatives, targeting youth.

Combating trafficking of cultural property: a challenge for peace and prosperity

133.   The illicit trade in cultural objects and the intentional destruction of cultural heritage - historic sites, buildings and monuments, places of worship, cultural institutions, including museums and archival collections, etc. - exacerbate tensions and undermine peace, with dramatic effects on the affected communities' collective memory. UNESCO will work to support, with renewed emphasis, countries in the implementation of policies and practices aligned with the principles of the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970). Efforts to assist in the return and restitution of cultural objects, including these of indigenous peoples, will be intensified through UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation and through the promotion of its mediation mechanisms. UNESCO will strengthen its action to encourage the adoption of ethical rules concerning the acquisition of cultural objects through the promotion of the International Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property and the furthering of dialogue and cooperation with art market actors, including in the field of online sales of objects. Finally, ethical standards will be developed and promoted among art market actors to prevent illegal transactions involving cultural property on the Internet.

Coping with emergencies: culture and the heritage at the heart of reconstruction processes

134.   Countries whose culture is affected by emergencies or conflicts deprive cultural actors of the tools and equipment they need to create and live off their income, while depriving the public of access to culture and the arts. Responses require solidarity, commitment and coordination. UNESCO will provide technical support to Member States in emergency, conflict and post-conflict situations in order to protect all forms of cultural and natural heritage, enable continuity and transmission of living heritage, support the revitalization of cultural and creative institutions, support cultural professionals, artists and creators. Actions will focus on building the human, institutional and legal capacities needed to manage the entire emergency cycle – preparedness, mitigation and response. These actions will draw from the *Strategy for the reinforcement of UNESCO's action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict* and the implementation of cultural conventions and their operational mechanisms. The support of the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund will be sought in order to be able to act quickly and effectively. UNESCO will strengthen its partnerships to deepen the integration of culture in peace-building and peace-keeping mechanisms, security strategies and humanitarian action frameworks by consolidating its achievements in this field. Finally, UNESCO will continue to combat impunity for attacks on culture

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[28]   See "Expanded and diversified access to culture in the digital age" (Strategic Objective 4, Outcome 8).

and intentional destruction of heritage and cultural institutions, and support will be provided in the adoption of normative acts to deter and sanction crimes against cultural heritage.

135. As part of its action to preserve documentary heritage, UNESCO will continue to support Member States in the implementation of the 2015 Recommendation concerning the Preservation of, and Access to, Documentary Heritage including in Digital Form, notably through the Memory of the World Programme. This will ultimately make it possible to strengthen the capacities of memory institutions and to broaden the Organization's response within the framework of its policies for the protection of heritage.

136. Efforts to promote the recognition of freedom of cultural expression, including in artistic form, as part of fundamental freedoms, will be pursued through advocacy and participatory policy-making. In support of these actions, policy discussions with United Nations partners will be deepened with a view to further integrating the protection of culture in peace and security frameworks. These actions will contribute to SDG 16.

Analyses and data for integrated cultural policies

137. Building on the recognition of the role of culture as a driving force and vector of development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNESCO will support Member States' efforts to integrate culture into public policies and development plans at the national level. It will provide technical support in monitoring, collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data in the field of culture in order to inform policy-makers and professionals in the field of culture and development, and to inspire and inform innovative and integrated cultural policies.

138. To this end, UNESCO will ensure that its new methodological framework of thematic indicators for culture in the 2030 Agenda, Culture|2030 Indicators, serves States and partners; it was designed with the assistance of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics to assist in the collection of cultural data and statistics. The data collected will make it possible to encourage investment in culture as a wealth-creating sector but also as an indispensable condition for the sustainability of economic, social and environmental development. Emphasis will be placed on the implementation of pilot activities for application at the country and city levels. These efforts should also facilitate the integration of culture into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

Strengthening cities' potential to support creativity and innovation

139. The potential of cities which, by essence, are places of extraordinary diversity, and incubators of cultural, social, economic and environmental innovation, will be harnessed anew, contributing to SDG target 10.2 and SDG targets 11.3 and 11.4. In this regard, UNESCO's Creative Cities Network will be mobilized to experiment with new models of governance and stimulation of creative economies. The UNESCO Cities Platform, bringing together the eight UNESCO cities programmes, will contribute to the synergy of UNESCO's multisectoral expertise to advance inclusive and participatory urban development and identify multi-stakeholder partnerships, bringing together public and private partners to develop sustainable solutions, in line with the new urban agenda adopted in 2016.

Rethinking diversity issues through the human and social sciences

140. UNESCO will continue to promote the role of the disciplines of human and social sciences in respect for and appreciation of cultures and their diversity, as well as a key element in the understanding of contemporary challenges. Drawing on philosophy, history, languages and literature and the arts, UNESCO will promote international science cooperation in the humanities and social sciences, including supporting capacities to foster more balanced intellectual exchange, and work to ensure that scholarship is translated into terms that can enable societies, and particularly young people, to access and make sense of their past in order to create the conditions for more peaceful, just and diverse futures.

Multilingualism and linguistic diversity: inclusive sustainable development

141. UNESCO will continue to promote multilingualism, including through the Information for All Programme and by supporting the implementation of the 2003 Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace. Special attention will be given to indigenous peoples through initiatives that will seek to promote their right to practice, revitalize and transmit their cultural traditions and expressions, and to conserve, protect and safeguard their heritage and associated knowledge. This will entail activities for the protection of indigenous languages as important vehicles of cultural expressions transmission, throughout the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032), for which UNESCO was designated as lead agency and tasked to coordinate. UNESCO will strengthen its intersectoral work in this field, by promoting synergies between the programmes on multilingual education, knowledge in different languages (including indigenous knowledge), the diversity of cultural expressions and access to information, online and offline.

> *Outcome 6: Promote freedom of expression and the right to information*

Freedom of expression, right to information and safety of journalists

142. Freedom of expression and the right to information, supported by an enabling environment allowing for the development of a free, independent and pluralistic media landscape, are central to fostering open, equal, diverse and peaceful societies. These fundamental freedoms are prerequisites for citizens and especially young people to engage in the democratic and socio-economic life of their societies, and to actively contribute to sustainable development and peace (SDGs 5, 8, 11, 16, and 17). Fostering freedom of expression and promoting access to information contribute to addressing poverty (SDG 1) and other forms of inequalities (SDGs 5 and 10), while also building resilience in the face of crises. UNESCO recognizes the strong link between supporting press freedom and safety of journalists, enabling a plurality of voices, addressing oppression, ending conflict and alleviating poverty. In this context, an independent and pluralistic media sector is a central enabler for sustainable development, which has implications for the role of duty-bearers and right-holders in society and in policy-monitoring processes.

143. Recent years have been characterized in some places by increasing hostility towards journalists, including specific threats and hostility targeting women journalists, and persistent impunity for crimes against them. This is happening at a time when digital technologies are radically transforming societies, and as the COVID-19 crisis is exacerbating the spread of false information, rumours, xenophobia and hate speech related to the pandemic, as well as unjustified restrictions to freedom of expression in some countries, adding to physical and psychological threats to the safety of journalists. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fragilities of peace and security within and among countries and their institutions. A humanitarian and human-rights crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected people, communities and societies around the world with increasing rates of gender-based violence, disinformation and misinformation, censorship and harassment online and offline resulting in greater fragility and marginalization and affecting the free flow of information and cultural expression, further exacerbating the challenges of racism and hate speech. Overcoming these and other societal vulnerabilities is required for peace and stability and will involve reimaging and remaking our structures and systems.

144. Creating an enabling environment for sustainable media is essential, given journalism's potential role in fostering peace and justice (SDG 16), especially in countries undergoing conflict or political transition. This includes the media's role of informing the public, guaranteeing accountability and transparency, facilitating debate and addressing disinformation, misinformation and hate speech, including in times of election. Investigative journalism also plays a key role in exposing inequalities, corruption, enhancing transparency and making officials accountable to the people, enhancing overall good governance and open government.

145. As the custodian for global reporting on SDG indicator 16.10.2 on public access to information, and a contributing agency for the monitoring and reporting on SDG indicator 16.10.1 on fundamental freedoms, including the safety of journalists, UNESCO will continue to foster freedom of expression and access to information for open, diverse and peaceful societies, including through the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). This will also be achieved through the continued implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, spearheaded by UNESCO, and with a specific focus on the safety of women journalists.

146. Building on its experience working with duty-bearers, including the judiciary branch and law enforcement bodies, UNESCO proposes to continue fostering open, inclusive and democratic societies, which are based on the rule of law and protect and promote freedom of expression, both online and offline, access to information and the safety of journalists, by enhancing legal and institutional frameworks that align with international human rights standards and promote gender equality. UNESCO will also address the challenges faced by journalists in the digital age, concerning online threats, digital security, surveillance, and breaches of the right to privacy and the right to information.

147. UNESCO will therefore work to support its Member States in enhancing norms, policies and practices related to freedom of expression, including press freedom and the right to access information, online and offline. It will address the challenges faced by journalists in the digital age, concerning online threats, digital security, surveillance, and breaches of the right to privacy and the right to information.

148. To achieve Outcome 6, UNESCO will adopt a holistic approach, combining policy advice to integrate and promote international standards in freedom of expression, access to information and the safety of journalists, with a specific focus on the safety of women journalists, as well as capacity building on these issues for duty-bearers and law enforcement bodies. Capacities of key stakeholders will also be strengthened to address challenges to freedom of expression and access to information, such as disinformation, misinformation and hate speech (see also the contribution to Outcome 7 below). Awareness-raising and advocacy will be carried out at the national, regional and global levels. As fundamental freedoms related to freedom of expression are increasingly interlinked, this work will be carried out in an intersectoral manner to foster academic, scientific and artistic freedom, and their linkages with freedom of expression.

Media development

149. Digital transformation opens up the potential for creating wide-reaching online content. While it has partly democratized public discourse, it has also severely impacted the media industry. In the field of media development and journalism education, UNESCO will reinforce capacities of media professionals and institutions, particularly focusing on key areas for sustainable development and for reporting in times of crisis and emergency issues. UNESCO will aim to encourage innovation to support journalism education for students from developing countries and contribute to the development and sustainability of media in the digital age. UNESCO will also continue to promote media diversity and pluralism, including through support to community media, and support Member States in the implementation of media reforms, with a view to fostering enabling environments for media, in line with international standards.

150. The digital age reshapes the conditions in which internationally recognized rights and freedoms are expressed and realized. It opens new possibilities for creativity, enabling new identities and communities to emerge. At the same time, it creates new opportunities for misuse and abuse and serves as an accelerator for misinformation, hate speech, further discriminatory practices, and other toxic dynamics. It also fosters new patterns of exclusion, as individual and communities enjoy sharply differentiated capacity to participate in it. The digital age therefore demands new strategies to protect and promote rights and freedoms. Along with other frontier technologies, artificial intelligence (AI) also has an impact on the free flow of information. The normative framework of the future

recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence, designed around a number of universal principles, should support these efforts.[29]

151. To achieve Outcome 6, UNESCO will organize its work along several workstreams, including through intersectoral engagement, as appropriate. It is important to note also that these will also dovetail with other outcomes relating to rights and the conditions of their realization, including the right to education (Outcomes 1 and 2), the right to science (Outcomes 3 and 4) and the right to participate in cultural life (Outcome 5).

Media and information literacy (MIL)

152. In increasingly digitized societies where informed engagement with online and offline content is key for building inclusive knowledge societies, media and information literacy (MIL) is critical to enable citizens, and particularly young people, to critically examine information and make informed decisions, both as users and producers of content, participating in digital information technologies. It contributes to enhancing intercultural understanding, through participatory and inclusive processes that shape the digital society, and by empowering citizens to participate actively in political life and sustainable development; it improves people's knowledge of individual digital rights to assess, use and share information wisely. UNESCO, including through its Information for All Programme (IFAP), will continue to promote MIL skills for a critical approach, essential to navigate flows of information that are increasingly marked by the digital transformation. These skills are equally important to discern and address challenges of misinformation and disinformation, hate speech, as well as online and offline discrimination, and to prevent violent extremism.

> *Outcome 7: Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes*

Reducing inequalities, fostering social cohesion and well-being

153. UNESCO will support the development of policies aimed at reducing inequalities and fostering inclusion, social cohesion and social justice. This will be done in particular through the ministers responsible for social development represented in the Management of Social Transformations Programme (MOST) and by stepping up research and the production of data and knowledge in this field. Action will also aim to support policy development in a participatory manner, involving different groups of beneficiaries, and key partners and other stakeholders. This approach will also be based on strengthening anticipation and foresight capacities.

154. UNESCO will focus on efforts in all fields (culture, education, the sciences, communication and information) that will enable Member States to reduce the multiple forms of inequality (inequalities of income and opportunity, but also those related to race, gender, disability, ethnicity, origin, religion, age and economic or other status) and to build inclusive societies. The Organization will need to strengthen its contributions and mobilize its networks to understand the drivers and dynamics of this rising inequality, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specific groups that are and will be most affected, such as young people and women, must be put at the centre of the effort, without which the attainment of the SDGs will remain illusory.

155. Building inclusive societies also needs to take into account new and innovative concepts such as the well-being of people. To measure and promote this progress, it is necessary to examine not only the functioning of economic systems, but also the diverse experiences and living conditions of individuals. This is why UNESCO will focus its attention on the multiple dimensions of well-being, and its connections to scientific and ethical, economic and educational issues, as well as to the dynamics of digital transformation. The Organization will forge partnerships with the main institutions working in this field, implementing interdisciplinary approaches and equipping young women and men with the values, intercultural and future-oriented skills to enable them to meet the new societal

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[29] See "Ethics of artificial intelligence and innovative technologies" (Strategic Objective 4, Outcome 9).

challenges. Particular emphasis will be placed in this respect on the integration of social protection and related mechanisms in the field of social inclusion policies.

New analytical frameworks to combat intolerance, discrimination, xenophobia, racism and sexism

156. Recent societal developments have brought to the surface the alarming normalization of intolerance, xenophobia, racism and racial discrimination in all parts of the world, and in all fields, including through social networks. Addressing the deeply-rooted racist and sexist stereotypes and systemic discrimination in our societies requires action at different levels. It passes through empoweing key actors so they can develop better policies and more effective programmes against discrimination. To this end, UNESCO will invest in data collection and analysis of institutional, legal and cultural frameworks that contribute to the fight against racism and discrimination. UNESCO's longstanding effort to counter racism and discrimination will be scaled up, delivering a "roadmap" for effective action, and partnering with prominent figures and institutions involved in this fight.

Mobilizing cities against racism and discrimination

157. The COVID-19 pandemic may have further entrenched existing patterns of xenophobia, stigmatization and racism, with reports emerging from many countries of discrimination against different groups. In addressing inequalities, UNESCO will work with all stakeholders, including municipalities and city authorities and develop a comprehensive strategy to counter exclusion, discrimination, racism and sexism, as well as policies and plans to tackle discrimination, including gender-based, inequalities and exclusion. It will reach out to the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR), the Creative Cities Network, and other relevant members of the Cities Platform will work to link cities through creation, innovation and media and information literacy to promote intercultural competences based on human rights and design actions of solidarity and assistance to vulnerable populations to foster inclusion. Socially responsible citizenship and collective engagement in targeted ethics, integrity and values-based interventions, within and outside formal education will be enhanced.

158. UNESCO, in keeping with the work initiated for the preparation of a recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence, will continue its research and mobilization activities to ensure that the ethical and social issues related to the challenges of discrimination are addressed in depth.[30]

A framework for action for intercultural dialogue

159. In line with its coordinating role for the implementation of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), UNESCO will pursue its lead role within the United Nations for the culture of peace and intercultural dialogue, in particular in terms of sharing good practices and building capacities, and with national/local institutions, in particular for peace-building in post-conflict areas and in cooperation with the other United Nations system agencies. UNESCO will assume with renewed vigour its functions as a data collector and a laboratory of ideas, a policy adviser and a watchdog, drawing attention to the essential role of intercultural dialogue and requisite educational skills in social inclusion and reconciliation processes based on the protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights, including cultural rights. The prism of intercultural dialogue will thus provide new perspectives for the work undertaken in the framework of the International Year of Indigenous Languages (2019) on education in indigenous languages and indigenous knowledge. UNESCO will collect factual data to support Member States in leveraging dialogue effectively for peace and to understand the impact of intercultural dialogue in key development and security outcomes.

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[30] See also "Ethics of science and technology, including bioethics" (Strategic Objective 4, Outcome 9).

Sport and physical education for social inclusion

160. The Organization will continue to mobilize sport and physical education as important vehicles for health, equality and inclusion. Ensuring inclusive access to sport in all its diversity and at all levels, especially for young people, will thus be a field of action to combat prejudice, overcome racial and political barriers, and promote gender equality and human rights. Through the implementation of the principles of the International Convention against Doping in Sport, UNESCO will ensure that educational and ethical issues remain at the centre of the policies and frameworks for action developed to protect and promote the integrity of sport.

Global citizenship education

161. Through global citizenship education, UNESCO will work to design programmes to improve knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes, promote universally shared values and address the challenges of building open, diverse, creative and peaceful societies. Global citizenship education can help learners - in formal, non-formal and informal settings and throughout their lives – to address inequalities, social, economic and environmental injustices and the sources of violent extremism. From common histories and shared memories, including those around Africa and the Silk Roads, UNESCO will pursue a holistic approach that promotes cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, non-discrimination, equality, respect and tolerance. Such an undertaking gives context for the full implementation of the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech and other normative instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the various international cultural conventions of UNESCO.

III.4   Strategic Objective 4: Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development of ethical standards

Strategic Objective 4: Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development of ethical standards	
Outcome 8: Foster knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age	**Outcome 9:** Develop ethical standards, norms and frameworks for action to meet the challenges of innovative technologies and digital transformation

162. Rapid technological change and the digital transformation are having a profound impact on societies across the world, impacting all of UNESCO's fields of competence. Emerging technologies bring about unprecedented opportunities. However, they also raise new questions and challenges to which humanity must respond in a human rights-based, ethical, accountable, inclusive and sustainable manner. Technological change and the resulting new possibilities, including in the context of the digital transformation, must be accompanied by the development of digital access and skills enabling every person to understand, participate in, and benefit from such change, as well as by the development of appropriate ethical frameworks to accompany technological change. This two-pronged approach will be captured in the context of this strategic objective through two dedicated outcomes. UNESCO – with an interdisciplinary mandate and expertise that encompasses natural sciences, social and human sciences, communication and education – is uniquely positioned to lead this process.

163. The digital divide persists, threatening to leave behind women and girls, as well as marginalized and vulnerable groups, including minority language speakers and persons with disabilities. Overcoming these divides, through the development and deployment of technologies that are inclusive and non-biased, and through the improvement of digital competencies and skills, is essential to achieve gender equality (SDG 5) and for reduced inequalities (SDG 10). The evolution

of the digital economy also raises major concerns about the right to privacy, the protection of personal data, and open access to educational resources and open solutions. It further poses issues about capacities across societies concerning media and information literacy and concerning digital engagements.

164. UNESCO has a central role to play to ensure a multi-stakeholder and inclusive approach to the digital transformation, whereby all actors can not only benefit from the opportunities brought about by emerging technologies, but also actively contribute to shaping this new digital environment. Building on its experience in international cooperation, the Organization is uniquely positioned to facilitate global cooperation and knowledge sharing in the area of digital transformation and innovation within and between countries, and ensuring sustainable media organizations in the digital ecosystem as well as raising the capacities of citizens to understand and engage with the digital communications environment in the interests of sustainable development.

165. UNESCO will explore innovative ways to reaffirm the richness of the diversity of knowledge and ensure equal and balanced cultural participation through openness and knowledge exchanges to reduce the digital divide, consistent with the existing Respect for Human Rights, Openness, Accessibility and Multi-stakeholder Participation Principles ("ROAM" principles) of Internet Universality (see Outcome 6) and the ongoing preparation of the recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence.

166. UNESCO will mobilize the humanities and natural and social science knowledge, as well as communications and information, to enhance capacities in Member States to use digital technologies effectively to explore critical societal questions, in an era of massive digitization of content, with a view to promoting accountable research and innovation. Furthermore, UNESCO will strengthen systematic interlinkages with fundamental human rights by promoting in particular the recognition and application of the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits, drawing on recent normative guidance at the United Nations level. Under the United Nations Secretary-General's framework for digital co-operation, UNESCO will promote multi-stakeholder engagement in a range of challenges and opportunities, including issues of ethics, privacy, disinformation, access to data and knowledge, educational innovation, media and cultural development.

167. In view of the above, UNESCO proposes to pursue the two following outcomes:

Outcome 8: Foster knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age

Sharing of knowledge, open solutions and data governance

168. Digital transformation requires a multi-stakeholder, open and inclusive approach, enabling all actors not only to benefit from the opportunities offered by new technologies and innovation, but also to actively contribute to shaping the new digital environment. In this regard, global cooperation and knowledge exchange in the field of digital technologies will be essential to bridge the existing digital disparities within and between countries, paying attention to gender equality.

169. UNESCO will promote access to open, inclusive and secure online learning, including access to reliable and affordable internet connectivity, as well as other learning and knowledge sharing solutions at distance such as television, radio and mobile technologies in order to reach learners and marginalized populations in the most isolated regions. This will also require support for the development, use and adaptation of inclusive and quality digital content, open access to scientific information and open educational resources (OER), in particular through adequate guidance frameworks in line with the UNESCO OER Recommendation (see Outcome 1). UNESCO will work to enhance public access to verified information online and offline for all, including through the design and use of open data and open solutions, and through the development of mechanisms for media sustainability in digital conditions.

170. UNESCO will produce innovative ways to reaffirm the richness of the diversity of knowledge and ensure equal and balanced cultural participation through openness and knowledge exchanges to reduce the digital divide. As data is of growing importance in the digital age and represents significant potential for sustainable development. UNESCO will examine with renewed emphasis issues related to data governance, including in terms of data confidentiality. Actions will be guided by the existing Respect for Human Rights, Openness, Accessibility and Multi-stakeholder Participation Principles ("ROAM" principles) of Internet Universality as agreed by the General Conference of UNESCO in 2015. Attention will be given to the need for balancing access to data with the protection of personal information.

Expanded and diversified access to culture in the digital age

171. In response to the effects of the digital transformation, and to reduce the inequalities resulting therefrom, UNESCO will assist in the development of policies aimed at adapting legislation and policy frameworks to ensure a more diverse digital ecosystem and to foster the availability, discovery and delivery of diverse cultural content, with a view to mitigating the possible negative impact of digital technologies in terms of cultural production, access and transmission. In support of this, and building on the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, its Guidelines and Roadmap on its implementation in the digital environment, activities will be undertaken to build the digital literacy of artists, creative entrepreneurs and cultural professionals and for fairer access to markets in the digital environment. This new project, which will involve innovative analyses on the status of culture in trade negotiations, will also aim to better promote, through the development of appropriate regulatory frameworks, the fair and equitable remuneration of creators in the digital environment, in order to support countries' creativity.

172. Adapting to the new digital environment also means addressing the challenges it poses to fundamental freedoms, artistic freedom and the online harassment of artists, with a disproportionate impact on women artists, and censorship of artists. Support will be provided to enable artists and cultural and media professionals to respond to violations of their fundamental freedoms in the digital environment. This will contribute to SDG targets 5.1 and 5.2 and SDG target 16.10.

173. In addition, UNESCO will harness the potential of digital technologies for cultural heritage identification, conservation, documentation, access, transmission and, now, physical and virtual reconstruction after natural disasters, conflicts or crises. Joint platforms will be established to share cultural content, including through partnering with museums, taking full consideration of accessibility, inclusiveness and consent of groups and communities whose culture is represented.

174. Current and new forms of exclusion in the digital world also need to be addressed, including cultural and linguistic dimensions. Recognizing that online multilingualism is a key component of cultural diversity in the context of the digital transformation, UNESCO will continue to support the implementation of the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace.[31]

Digital skills and competencies

175. To promote inclusive development, UNESCO will focus on developing the skills of young people and adults, especially in relation to literacies across UNESCO's fields of competence, including digital competencies and skills. Support will be provided for policy development, the harnessing of digital technologies, with a focus on disadvantaged groups, especially women and girls, and in the developing world. The protection of rights to expression, access to information privacy, non-discrimination and cultural and linguistic diversity, will be promoted in policy and programmes of all stakeholders.

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[31] See also "Multilingualism and linguistic diversity" (Strategic Objective 3, Outcome 5).

176.   Digital skills development[32] remain a central issue for UNESCO to help bridge the digital divide and build inclusive and learning knowledge societies.

177.   UNESCO will also support distance learning and promote access to inclusive and safe online learning, including access to reliable and affordable Internet connectivity, as well as such alternate distance learning solutions as television, radio and mobile technology in order to reach learners and marginalized populations in the most remote areas. This will also include supporting the development, use and adaptation of inclusive and quality digital content and open educational resources (OER), including adequate policy frameworks, cross-platform OER repositories for public good, and a quality assurance mechanism based on international cooperation, in line with the 2019 UNESCO Recommendation on Open Educational Resources. UNESCO will promote the use of multilingual open learning resources, including OER, to support and improve self-learning in and beyond schools and educational institutions. Lastly, UNESCO will consider the implications of new technologies for education, particularly issues related to learner privacy and security and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in education to support Member States in introducing and managing AI and data analytics in education.

178.   UNESCO will strengthen the capacities of stakeholders, including teachers in transition to blended learning, focusing on promoting digital skills, curriculum development and distance learning opportunities, at the same time supporting innovative digital solutions to global and local challenges, with a focus on the populations most in need and the most vulnerable groups. The development and advancement of digital skills will also be central for the scientific community, the cultural professions, and media and journalism.[33]

> ***Outcome 9: Develop ethical standards, norms and frameworks for action to meet the challenges of innovative technologies and digital transformation.***

179.   The opportunities and benefits that derive from scientific and technological advances, including the rapid evolution of frontier and digital technologies and the growing ubiquity of artificial intelligence, will be harnessed by UNESCO for fostering sustainable development and climate resilience, taking into account existing disparities in particular between genders, and ethical and human rights implications. Identifying and addressing the ethical questions raised by the rapid development and convergence of technologies, especially digital technologies, determine the way we live together and the societal choices that will shape our future.

Ethics of artificial intelligence and innovative technologies

180.   UNESCO will focus on the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI), and related ethical and human rights risks and challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation and uptake of AI-enabled technologies across many sectors. This is happening at a moment when inequalities and opportunities are at their highest level in decades (within and between countries). Unequal access to these technologies, as well as their development, governance and ownership represent a global challenge.

181.   UNESCO will take the lead within the United Nations system on the ethics of AI, both in terms of setting global standards and norms, and by supporting policy and capacity development in this area in Member States. UNESCO will continue to monitor and identify emerging ethical risks, including in relation to gender biases being reproduced in AI algorithms, and obstacles faced by women to access and participate in the development of AI and other digital technologies. In particular, this will be the subject of the future recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence (AI) on which UNESCO is currently working. Moreover, UNESCO will develop tools and guidance, including through ethical impact assessment modalities, capacity building and policy advice activities, as well as working with all stakeholders, including major digital platforms, to ensure that

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32   See also "Distance learning" (Strategic Objective 1, Outcome 1).
33   See, for example, "Open science, access to knowledge and data sharing", (Strategic Objective 2, Outcome 4).

these technologies not only deliver inclusive outcomes, but also are developed and deployed in an inclusive manner. UNESCO will also work towards closing the gender gap in this field, and countering stereotyping, biases and malicious use. Furthermore, UNESCO will also address the impact of these technologies on the environment and climate change, especially since this is an often-neglected issue in other international efforts.

Ethics of science and technology, including bioethics

182. The identification and resolution of ethical issues posed by the rapid development and convergence of technologies, especially digital technologies, determine the way we live together, and the choices made by society that shape our future. The importance of science, technology and innovation for achieving the SDGs, underlines the crucial need to promote stronger systematic interlinkages of the human rights-based approach with developments in the new digital environment, to mitigate the deepening of existing divides. By mobilizing the international community and reinforcing linkages among scientists, ethicists, policy-makers, judges, journalists, and civil society, UNESCO will support Member States in adopting sound and reasoned policies on ethical issues in science and technology. Building on its longstanding achievements in bioethics and ethics of science and technology, and its flagship mechanisms such as the International Bioethics Committee (IBC), Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC) and the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST), UNESCO will play an important role in setting a global agenda to ensure that emerging technologies function within a human rights-based framework, and that their development and use comply with ethical standards and are imbued with core values of equality, diversity, inclusion, sustainability, transparency and accountability.

III.5 Crisis preparedness and response: a cross-cutting theme

183. In order to face the realities and challenges of a changing world, it will be essential to adapt in innovative ways the programmes, functions and capacities for action and mobilization for the effective implementation of UNESCO's mandate.

184. The strategic objectives described above reveal, in particular, the need to develop, in the coming years, a systemic perspective on *crisis preparedness and response*, which already distinctively cut across and impact all of UNESCO's fields of competence. Meeting this challenge will be essential if UNESCO is to act effectively to contribute to the decade of action for the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

185. Responding to this challenge will mark a major shift, at both organizational and programmatic levels, and will provide an ambitious foundation for the Organization's credibility and added value within the United Nations system. Mainstreaming this issue in all programmes will also open up new perspectives for action, and will allow innovative partnerships to be built with new actors, notably from the private sector and civil society, in order to drive forward long-term commitments.

186. In close coordination with the actors involved in the overall responses of the United Nations system, UNESCO will need to be able to adapt its missions (prevention of harm and natural disasters, needs assessment, capacity building of affected institutions and professionals, reconstruction, etc.) to respond effectively to the priorities and needs of countries and communities affected by crises, both to contribute to humanitarian action and to engage in long-term recovery and development processes covering priority areas of its mandate: building fair, inclusive and equitable education systems; preserving our biodiversity as part of a renewed covenant with the planet; making open science a powerful lever of international cooperation; placing culture in the service of creativity, innovation and social cohesion; and ensuring access to free and reliable information.

III.6 Enabling objective: Fostering an enabling environment for the efficient and effective delivery of UNESCO's priorities

Enabling objective: Foster an enabling environment for the efficient and effective delivery of UNESCO's priorities	
Enabling Outcome 1: Reinforced partnerships, outreach and advocacy in support of UNESCO's action	**Enabling Outcome 2**: Accountable, efficient and effective management of support services in pursuit of results

187. Over the next Medium-Term Strategy period, building on the institutional strategic transformation process already underway, UNESCO will commit to a series of reform measures and corporate actions that will be instrumental for delivering on the Organization's mandate, as well as constitute important ends in themselves in creating an agile, accountable and proactive Organization.

188. As demonstrated in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its unfolding impact, there is an ever-greater need to ensure that organizations are alert and responsive, prepared and resilient. The principles and measures set out below form the "enabling environment" for the optimal delivery of UNESCO's mandate in the 41 C/4 period, in a fast-changing environment. They are captured in a House-wide "enabling objective" with two related outcomes:[34]

Enabling Outcome 1: Reinforced partnerships, outreach and advocacy in support of UNESCO's action

Partnerships

"The Global Goals can only be met if we work together. International investments and support is needed to ensure innovative technological development, fair trade and market access, especially for developing countries. To build a better world, we need to be supportive, empathetic, inventive, passionate, and above all, cooperative". (SDG 17)

189. For the upcoming period 2022-2029, UNESCO will develop a new comprehensive partnership strategy that will be firmly anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and at its heart lies SDG 17 (partnership for the Goals) and will form an integral part of the Organization's Medium-Term Strategy.[35] It will seek to capitalize on UNESCO's unique and manifold networks which testify to the Organization's unparalleled convening power and deep-rooted ties at global, regional and country levels.

190. The purpose of the future partnership strategy will be to advance the partnerships UNESCO needs to successfully coordinate and implement its Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2029). It will contribute to the achievement of the following six SDG 17 targets:

- Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources. (SDG target 17.3)

- Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing

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[34] This presentation is drawn from ILO's practice.
[35] As per 207 EX/Decision 11.

mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism. (SDG target 17.6)

- Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology. (SDG target 17.8)

- Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. (SDG target 17.9)

- Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries. (SDG target 17.16)

- Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships. (SDG target 17.17).

191. UNESCO will forge alliances and multi-stakeholder partnerships for the pursuit of its strategic priorities, and harness the different comparative advantages of partners to create synergies, develop innovative approaches and solutions, and add value. It will leverage both financial and non-financial resources geared towards this objective, such as financial support, advocacy, access, and outreach, expertise and data, implementation support and in-kind contributions.

192. At the country level, National Commissions for UNESCO will remain privileged partners for outreach, engagement and amplifying messages about UNESCO's vision and mission.

193. UNESCO will continue to optimize its unique networks of "UNESCO family partners". The members of UNESCO's "extended family" including UNESCO Clubs, the Associated Schools Network, UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Network, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors, the UNEVOC Network, category 2 institutes and centres and UNESCO intergovernmental programmes and their membership. This "network of networks" brings together a wealth of knowledge, expertise and an unparalleled ability to reach out to new voices. Non-governmental organizations with their specialized knowledge and capacity to act swiftly at global, regional and local levels and offer platforms for strong civil engagement are critically important partners for UNESCO.

194. UNESCO will forge new alliances for the SDGs with and within the United Nations Development System (UNDS) and actively engage in innovations linked to United Nations reform. The Organization will seek to establish new and strengthened forms of engagement will be sought with key constituencies like young people, cities and business.

195. UNESCO's donors entrust resources to the Organization because they are stakeholders in its Programme and its Medium-Term Strategy. In this regard, UNESCO will continue to foster long-term strategic partnerships with bilateral government donors, the European Union, multilateral development banks, business, foundations and United Nations funding sources.

Resource mobilization

196. Resource mobilization is an integral part of the comprehensive partnership strategy. It will build on the success of recent years as well as lessons learned. As part of the Medium-Term Strategy, it will aim to consolidate the achievements of recent years in order to maintain the positive trend and also to explore and put in place new innovative modalities for mobilizing resources with the aim of increasing resources in order to meet the ambitions of the Organization's Medium-Term Strategy

and the implementation of its Programme. UNESCO's resource mobilization efforts will be guided by the following key principles:

(i)   *Alignment*: ensuring that resource flows correspond to the Organization's strategic priorities and are accompanied by effective cost-recovery mechanisms to avoid subsidizing non-core resources with regular programme resources;

(ii)   *Predictability*: encouraging donors to make multi-annual commitments to reduce organizational vulnerability and enable forward-looking planning of anticipated extrabudgetary funding, and addressing volatility in year-to-tear financing;

(iii)   *Flexibility*: advocating for lower levels of earmarking and striving to deploy available resources to fill all funding gaps, taking into account evolving resource mobilization performance over time;

(iv)   *Broadening and diversifying the donor base:* reaching out to new donors – emerging donors, middle income countries, new private sector partners, sub-national actors – to reduce dependency on a limited number of donors;

(v)   *Transparency*: providing the full picture of programme funding and delivery and of areas where funding gaps exist.

197.   UNESCO will focus during the coming years on:

- strengthening strategic dialogues with donors, including through structured financing dialogues and partners' forums, which create a space to advocate for lightly earmarked funding and push for more substantive bilateral consultations with individual donors or small groups of donors.

- maintaining and nurturing relations with the top 25 donors to secure higher levels of predictable funding;

- further developing and implementing a concrete roadmap for private sector fundraising;

- continue fostering a strong enabling environment to strengthen the resourcing of UNESCO's programme by consolidating and expanding the series of measures introduced during the last few years, including in the context of the strategic transformation, to reduce bureaucracy and foster decentralization, strengthen capacity of field offices through equipping each office with dedicated resource mobilization expertise, and provide training on resource mobilization and communication;

- strengthening advocacy and communication to position UNESCO vis-à-vis key partners when exploring new entry points for engagement, and scale up existing programmes through compelling communication about results;

- targeting resource mobilization efforts for the global priorities Africa and gender equality, and for priority groups SIDS and youth. A tailor-made resource mobilization strategy will be developed at the field office level to respond effectively to emerging needs and priorities at national and sub-regional level.

Strategic planning

198.   As the intellectual organization of the United Nations system, UNESCO will continue to invest its efforts to identify major global trends and challenges in its fields of competence in order to better align and adjust the priorities of its programmes and actions. It will ensure the coherence of overall planning and the strategic positioning of the Organization in a complex international environment

through programming that responds to the needs of Member States. To that end, the Organization will strengthen its actions for a comprehensive approach to strategic planning, based on forward-looking analysis, and new tools for planning and monitoring programme implementation, and will ensure the alignment of resources with the strategic objectives and results pursued.

Communication and advocacy

199. Communication is a rapidly transforming and highly dynamic, yet ever more important field of action for the Organization. The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting reliance on e-content and communication have demonstrated the key importance of high quality, readily available and easily accessible content and communication channels. Lessons learned from the response to the COVID-19 crisis about communication techniques and needs expressed by UNESCO's different audiences will be leveraged to further strengthen UNESCO's approach to communication for the upcoming medium-term period.

200. UNESCO will continue transforming its approach to communication, going beyond a traditional approach to public information, to put communication squarely at the service of UNESCO's programme. Effective communication is an important means to help achieving the Organization's strategic objectives and to contribute to overall organizational success and relevance, such as by highlighting results achieved, raising public awareness, and enabling long-term strategic partnerships. High-quality, more assertive communication and trust-building, with a strong narrative about UNESCO's contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the delivery of its priorities is a fundamental condition for building a more open, engaging and outward-looking UNESCO.

201. Going forward, UNESCO's strategic approach to communication will be guided by:

(i) an increased effort to highlight UNESCO's core message and comparative advantage, focusing on events, publications and speeches and the Organization's strategic objectives, flagship programmes and global priorities, so as to limit the dispersion of communication efforts and improve the readability of UNESCO's action;

(ii) an effort to accelerate the design and enhancement of the UNESCO brand, which must unify the diversity of programmes, sectors, divisions and offices;

(iii) a scale-up of UNESCO's digital transformation, in particular by reallocating resources from traditional means of communication to digital means and digital content, including through an e-first publication policy and innovative event formats;

(iv) leveraging partnerships with media, United Nations organizations, business, civil society and other partners to build an ecosystem of partners capable of amplifying the Organization's message.

202. With the above, UNESCO aims at a significantly increasing recognition and representation of UNESCO's voice in media, with strong advocacy benefits including for global decision-makers. It also aims at the creation of an integrated digital platform, which allows much more fluid and transversal circulation of content between the various UNESCO sub-sites, in line with the intersectoral character of the Organization's high-level strategic objectives.

203. In terms of content, UNESCO's communication must focus in the long term, *inter alia*, on (i) making reference data available, which must circulate more from one communication medium to another, in a more visual and interactive way, (ii) showcase human stories that bear witness to the impact of the programme (storytelling), and (iii) highlight work and results delivered through the UNESCO field network. The Organization will also further strengthen its efforts and explore innovative ways to interact and communicate more directly with its audiences and partners, in

particular youth, and through content tailored to the new digital environment, especially on social networks.

UNESCO's presence in the world

204. UNESCO's field network constitutes an invaluable asset. UNESCO will continue working towards the objective of reinforcing a responsive and sustainable field network for the implementation of the Organization's mandate, ensuring that UNESCO is well-positioned within the United Nations Development System's joint work at the country and regional levels.

205. During the next medium-term period, UNESCO will pursue the optimization of the field network architecture, aiming at offering a pertinent and robust response to the complex multilateral challenges and to better address Member States' needs at global, regional and country levels, while ensuring the relevance and added value of its mandate. For this purpose, UNESCO will work towards:

(i) improved strategic and programmatic coherence between Headquarters and the field network to allow UNESCO to mobilize the full potential of its programmes and resources in responding to national needs and priorities, including through an enhanced decentralization policy across the sectors and delegation of accountability and authority;

(ii) a resource mobilization strategy developed for the field, in line with the needs and priorities of Members States, particularly in Africa;

(iii) assignment of staff equipped with appropriate skills and competencies in the field offices, for efficient programme delivery and effective management of the field operations, which meet the needs of Member States;

(iv) full contribution to the deliverables of the common United Nations system of operational activities, including in the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF) and other United Nations system-wide mechanisms whenever possible;

(v) a communication approach developed for internal and external stakeholders, to enhance visibility, highlight results achieved through the field network, and support communication and advocacy with partners.

Reinforcing cooperation with a reforming United Nations system

206. UNESCO will systematically engage with other United Nations organizations in a system-wide effort to maximize the strength and the delivery capacity of the United Nations system at large and to make the entire range of expertise residing therein available to Member States in a coordinated manner, creating synergies arising from collaboration based on a clear distribution of tasks building on the Organization's mandate, technical expertise and comparative advantages.

207. The Organization is committed to ensuring an effective leadership and coordination role in UNESCO's priority areas within the United Nations system and its intergovernmental organs, and to contributing to the relevant initiatives of the United Nations Secretary-General, and to assuming lead roles conferred on UNESCO by the United Nations General Assembly. UNESCO will also take on strategic lead and coordination roles and mandates in the context of United Nations inter-agency mechanisms such as of the United Nations Chiefs Executives Board (CEB) and its subsidiary groups.

208. At country level, UNESCO will continue to strategically engage in the United Nations Development System's work around United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs), collaborate with the United Nations resident coordinator system, and strive to increase its representation therein, including through dedicated training for UNESCO staff to

become part of the next generation of RCs. At regional level, UNESCO will collaborate with the United Nations regional mechanisms.

209. In post-conflict and post-disaster situations, the Organization will participate proactively in the United Nations' integrated assistance to early recovery and reconstruction, including through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) consolidated appeals and flash appeals, United Nations/World Bank joint needs assessments, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee/ Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (IASC/ECHA) and other common programming and funding mechanisms.

210. In its contribution, UNESCO will reaffirm UNESCO's comparative advantages, enhance its global, regional and country presence, and further update its working modalities. United Nations reform also informs the review of UNESCO's field network configuration at country and regional levels.

> **Enabling Outcome 2: Accountable, efficient and effective management of support services in pursuit of results**

211. An accountable, efficiently and effectively managed Organization is a key success factor for the delivery of UNESCO's strategic priorities, and an important lever to ensure the Organization's responsiveness, preparedness, and adaptability.

Career development, learning, and agile working methods

212. UNESCO will continue to invest in its staff to ensure the excellence, responsiveness and flexibility required to deliver on UNESCO's crucial work and to address and find solutions to the complex challenges of the present and future. The Organization will strengthen performance management, and further develop workforce planning, and the alignment of human resource policies with organizational priorities and needs. It will further implement the Senior Leadership Development Plan, and attract and advance young and diverse staff. UNESCO will further embed mobility in its policies and practices to enable more staff members to benefit from an international and diversified career.

213. UNESCO will strengthen transversal and agile working methods (including telecommuting), to provide a flexible working environment that can accommodate new working methods, including elements such as cross functionality of teams, self-organization and collaboration with diverse teams, and contribute to an environment that valorizes wellbeing and motivation.

Business-focused support for programme delivery

214. Going forward, UNESCO is committed to providing efficient and business-focused support for programme execution through simplified tools, policies and procedures that integrate functionalities in a user-friendly way, and enable new and flexible ways of working. The Organization's tools are to produce relevant information to internal and external stakeholders in support of decision-making, and will be governed in a transparent and accountable manner. In line with the findings of recent audits, UNESCO will further work to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of corporate systems and administrative processes.

Environmental sustainability and accessibility of operations

215. The United Nations system has committed to leading by example to combat climate change and ensure environmental sustainability from within. This is implemented *inter alia* through integrating environmental and social sustainability considerations across its work and operations, towards a vision for sustainability management in line with the objectives underpinning the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as captured in the CEB Strategy for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System 2020-2030. UNESCO will pursue efficient,

environmentally sustainable and accessible operations, by aligning operational models, facilities and management practices to become smarter and more environmentally-friendly, with the overall objective of reducing the negative environmental impact of its activities.

216. In line with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, and a human-rights based transformative process on disability inclusion through all pillars of work of the United Nations, UNESCO is furthermore committed to fully advance the accessibility of its tools and operations.

Long-term financing models for corporate needs

217. UNESCO will develop and implement sustainable financing models for corporate needs, to allow for the delivery of essential long-term financial investments. These can include one-off investments to upgrade buildings, work spaces and IT systems, as well as structural needs and investments related to environmental and sustainable management.

Risk management, organizational resilience and business continuity

218. UNESCO will further champion the implementation of risk management, organizational resilience and business continuity, by pursuing a risk-informed approach and decision-making throughout its work and operations, improved reporting on risks and related opportunities, and enabling a better quantification and qualification of achievements. This will build on risk-management components already in place, and further expand the range of available risk-management tools. Based on risk analysis, the Organization will develop a framework and tools to ensure resilient operations, including comprehensive business continuity models, in close collaboration with stakeholders. It will aim at further establishing safety measures within a duty of care perspective.

Evaluation and audit for accountability and learning

219. The Organization will continue to leverage audit, investigation and evaluation to promote responsible administration of resources, improved programme performance, and a culture of accountability, learning and transparency. This will be achieved through *internal audits*, which provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls, risk management and governance processes of the Organization; *investigations*, which promote accountability across UNESCO through training activities and by responding to allegations of misconduct and irregularities (e.g. fraud, sexual harassment, abuse of authority or other misconduct); and *evaluations*, which will inform senior management and governing bodies, staff and partners on actions that need to be undertaken to improve the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of UNESCO's activities.

IV.   Renewed commitment and action for the global priorities and priority groups

IV.1 Global Priority Africa

220. At its 40th session, the General Conference reaffirmed the relevance of global priority Africa and requested that it remain a part of the Organization's next Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4). It also called for a reinforcement of the global priority by means of the design and implementation of measures which add greater value to the main lines of action of the major programmes concerning Africa and which take into account the new trends, new challenges, and new opportunities for development and ascent on the continent. The maintenance of Africa as one of the Organization's global priorities was also confirmed by the national and regional consultations organized within the framework of the preparation of the Medium-Term Strategy.

The main lines of UNESCO's response

221. Recent reports on progress with respect to the attainment of the SDGs and the Agenda 2063 goals for 2014-2023, [36] and the challenges brought about the COVID-19 pandemic, call for multisectoral action strategies and multifaceted global partnerships and indicate the urgent need for UNESCO to target those priority areas that fall under its mandate, consolidate the achievements realized to date and step up its efforts in supporting the African Member States to ensure the full realization of the goals. The future orientation of Priority Africa will follow the recommendations of the final evaluation of the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa (2014-2021), and will continue to reflect the vision of Agenda 2063 while providing the means for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

222. As advocated by 209 EX/Decision 32, and in response to the major challenges cited above, the future Operational Strategy for Priority Africa will need to be centred on flagship programmes or initiatives which will add value to the major programmes and will be implemented in a cross-cutting and intersectoral manner, and that are grounded in the national, subregional and regional priorities and aligned with the regional development frameworks and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs). The future strategic plan for global priority Africa will therefore be elaborated and framed by UNESCO's future Medium-Term Strategy and its four strategic objectives.

223. UNESCO's action for the period 2022-2029 would be to give priority to responses to the following specific challenges:

– With regard to access to education, only one third of the countries concerned have achieved the goal set for the primary and secondary levels, and there are large disparities between girls and boys. The issue of girls' education, particularly in disadvantaged rural areas, remains one of the most important challenges on the continent, as does that of teaching quality and teacher quality. The review also indicates that significant efforts still need to be made in order to promote formal and non-formal education in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), as well as access to computer-based communication and information tools, in particular for girls and young women. It is moreover essential to equip citizens, and in particular young people, with the digital skills needed to be part of a job market that is increasingly shaped by emerging technologies, and enable them to place innovation and digital technology at the service of sustainable development.

– Africa's sustainable development is challenged due to increasing water stress, environmental degradation, the impact of climate change and the difficulty of timely access to scientific and technological advancements. The role of the scientific research and innovation cannot be overemphasized, and there is therefore an urgent need to empower the African scientific community to lead efforts to contextualize global relevant scientific agendas. The Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA-2024) as well as a number of related African Union declarations and decisions[37] call upon UNESCO to provide technical support to strengthen science, technology, engineering, mathematics and innovation in Africa as well as the training of science teachers.

– In a context where the coexistence of cultures is a major challenge, the heads of State of the African Union adopted a decision proclaiming 2021 "Year of the Arts, Culture and

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[36] A preliminary assessment of the progress made in the implementation of the goals of Agenda 2063, conducted by the African Union Commission for the period 2015-2019, reveals that much remains to be done in order to meet them.

[37] Decision of the Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government (C10) Championing Education, Science and Technology in Africa, and the ministers who participated in the third meeting of the Bureau of the African Union's Specialized Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology (STC-EST, 3-9 April 2020).

Heritage in Africa" (African Union Summit, Addis Ababa, February 2020). This is an opportunity for UNESCO to work closely with the African Union Commission to raise the profile of the Organization's cultural mission in Africa, and in particular to help combat the trafficking of cultural property in Africa, which exacerbates tensions and fuels criminal activity. It also offers a chance to reaffirm the relevance of the various UNESCO conventions, as well as their contribution to the construction of peaceful and inclusive societies and to the development of cultural and creative industries which offer employment opportunities for young people.

– Likewise, in the context of digital transformation and emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), there is an urgent need to safeguard freedom of expression and promote access to information, two pillars of building inclusive knowledge societies. This will contribute to ensuring rule of law, good governance and transparency, in line with African Union Aspiration 3.

224. Thus, it is proposed that the future strategic plan for global priority Africa be structured around the following priority action areas:

41 C/4 strategic objectives	Priority Africa: priority action areas
Reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies in the digital age through quality education for all *[African Union Aspirations 1, 5 and 6]*	Accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 4 and in particular: – Close the gender gap, with a focus on girls' education; – Improve the quality of teaching and address the shortage of qualified teachers; – Support the development of digital skills; – Support the development of literacy skills; – Support the strengthening of science, technology, engineering and mathematics education (STEM), and the training of science teachers; – Support the strengthening of higher education and scientific research.
Work towards sustainable societies by preserving the environment through the promotion of science, technology and the natural heritage *[African Union Aspirations 1, 5 and 6]*	– Strengthen scientific and technical capacity needed for biodiversity conservation and the sustainable management of hydrological, biological and geological resources; – Support ocean monitoring and forecasting, coastal vulnerability and disaster risk reduction, climate change impacts on coastal zones, marine spatial planning, marine biodiversity and biogeography, and sustainable management of the ocean and coastal areas; – Enhance international scientific cooperation and the exchange of scientific knowledge; – Promote access to open science; – Strengthen the national bioethics and ethics of science and technology infrastructure, in particular with regard to artificial intelligence.

Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage *[African Union Aspirations 3, 4 and 5]*	– Ensure the protection and sustainable management of the African cultural and natural heritage through the strengthening of legal frameworks and human skills and the mobilization of youth; – Support the prevention of trafficking in cultural property and promotion of the return of cultural property; – Support the promotion of freedom of expression, access to information and safety of journalists, including through the strengthening of standards, policies and capacities of journalists and media professionals; – Ensure media diversity and address challenges such as misinformation and disinformation by strengthening community media networks; – Foster a culture of peace and mutual understanding through capacity building to engage in intercultural and interreligious dialogue based on respect for human rights and to combat discrimination, and through value-based interventions in sport and physical education, that combine physical, mental and social well-being.
Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development *[African Union Aspirations 1 and 5]*	– Support the development of digital skills, particularly for young people; – Capacity building and policy implementation for innovation and digital transformation; – Support the platform on Innovation for a Transformed and Prosperous Africa (e.g. artificial intelligence, robotics and automation, biopharmaceuticals) in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union; – Strengthen the national bioethics and ethics of science and technology infrastructure in African countries, including on the ethical dimensions of artificial intelligence; – Strengthen capacities in the creative industries – the audiovisual, musical and cinema sectors – and in their digital distribution; – Support museums and cultural institutions in the development of information technologies and harness their potential for education.

IV.2 Priority gender equality

225. Gender equality was overwhelmingly re-confirmed as a global priority by Member States during the 40th session of the General Conference, and in their responses to UNESCO's questionnaire on draft documents 41 C/4 and 41 C/5. They underlined that gender equality is a fundamental human right, a necessary precondition for sustainable, people-centred development, and a goal in and of itself. Furthermore, Member States identified gender equality as one of the most powerful levers for achieving the 2030 Agenda, both as a standalone goal and as a cross-cutting priority consistent with the principle of "leaving no one behind". Indeed, among the 17 SDGs, Member States ranked SDG 5 ("achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls") in second place, after SDG 4 on quality education, as an area where the Organization has a strategic role to play. UNESCO is therefore committed to strengthening its action and concentrating resources to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls for the 2022-2029 period.

Gender equality is everyone's business: a new framework of transversal thematic priorities and actions

226. UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy gives priority to achieving gender equality in and across all its fields of competence. It does so through a new framework that identifies seven transversal thematic priorities and areas of action that are aligned with the four strategic objectives of the 41 C/4. This approach is informed by the findings and recommendations of the IOS Review of UNESCO's Global Priority Gender Equality published in 2020 calling for greater cross-sectoral collaboration between Major Programmes around specific thematic areas and to modernize UNESCO's gender equality agenda to encompass equality and human rights for all genders.

227. The seven transversal thematic priorities that would make up the new framework of action directly contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, the Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the UN Women "Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights for an Equal Future." They are aligned with international standard setting instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. They are:

– Gender equality is achieved in and through education

– Women and girls have universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights

– Women and girls lead action for climate justice

– Gender-based violence, discrimination and censorship are eliminated, with the active involvement of men and boys

– Women are economically empowered and have income security, decent work and social protection

– Women are leaders, participate in and are represented equally within gender-responsive systems of governance

– Women and girls have access to and fully participate in scientific and technological developments, including frontier technologies that are free of gender bias.

228. UNESCO's transversal thematic priorities will be implemented through mainstreamed and targeted actions at the global, regional and local levels that take into account diverse contexts and capacities as well as integrate an intersectional and gender diversity approach. Gender transformative programmes will be designed involving multiple Programme Sectors and partners to address the root causes, power dynamics and structures of discriminatory policies, practices and programmes that reinforce gender inequalities.

229. Aligned directly with the 41 C/4 strategic objectives, UNESCO's new framework for global priority gender equality will consolidate the range of activities across Sectors and strengthen the impact of its actions to achieve gender equality. Working towards a gender transformative approach, a diverse set of actions will be required for UNESCO to:

– lead global and regional debates, advocacy and communication campaigns that engage women and men, girls and boys;

– develop stakeholder outreach and expertise to support capacity building at country level;

– conduct needs assessment and analysis, generate sex disaggregated data and share best practices to monitor the implementation of global agendas to promote gender equality;

–   identify, recognize and create solidarity among women leaders and foster the mentoring of girls in UNESCO's areas of competence;

–   provide customized technical support to policy and legislative development towards institutional change.

230. The Gender Equality Division will have a coordination function, working with programme sectors, central services and field offices to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate this new framework for global priority gender equality.

41 C/4 8-year strategic objectives	Gender Equality Transversal Thematic Priorities	Examples of actions to be implemented through the 41 C/5
Reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies in the digital age through quality education for all	Gender equality is achieved in and through education (SDG target 4.5) Women and girls have universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SDG target 5.6)	– collecting and analysing sex-disaggregated, producing research and evidence to inform education policies, programmes and plans; – advocacy and communication actions to promote continuity of learning and return to school, partnerships and systems reform; – curricula development and textbook revision that integrates a gender perspective; – safe, inclusive and healthy learning environments to ensure all students continue learning; – safeguard and scale up high quality comprehensive sexuality education and prevent gender-based violence; – support non-formal learning spaces and institutions such as museums to integrate a gender perspective in their educational programmes.
Work towards sustainable societies by preserving the environment through the promotion of science, technology and the natural heritage	Women and girls lead action for climate justice (SDG 13)	– raising awareness of the challenges faced by women and girls who are disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change and are more vulnerable to natural and cultural disasters and health pandemics, but whose knowledge and resilience is the backbone of recovery in communities worldwide; – promoting leadership roles for women scientists and technologists to ensure their visibility and give recognition to their scientific innovations and technological research and providing mentoring opportunities to advance the scientific careers of young female scientists; – integrating indigenous knowledge and intangible cultural heritage practices, particularly transmitted by women, in management systems to halt biodiversity

		loss and restore ecosystems across land and seas in order to make communities more resilient;
		– ensuring that early warning systems, post disaster needs, and risk management assessments of physical environments and cultures affected by nature disasters are gender-transformative;
		– collecting and analysing sex-disaggregated water and environmental data to inform national and regional policies and plan gender-transformative actions and monitor progress towards gender equality for climate justice.
Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage	Gender-based violence, discrimination and censorship are eliminated, with the active involvement of men and boys (SDG targets 5.1 and 5.2) Women are economically empowered and have income security, decent work and social protection (SDG targets 8.5 and 8.8) Women are leaders, participate in and are represented equally within gender-responsive systems of governance (SDG target 5.5)	– design, implement and monitor policies and measures to tackle hate speech, censorship and discrimination against women scientists, researchers, journalists, educators, artists and creators; – increase the number of women in leadership positions in the creative economy, in heritage preservation, management and transmission practices as well as in peace and security frameworks; – eliminate the proliferation of online and offline harassment of women in and through the media and creative industries, including unfair representations reinforcing gender stereotypes and predetermined social roles, through the design and distribution of gender-transformative narratives; – ensure the full implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, notably through strengthening actions aimed at addressing the specific risks facing women journalists and ensuring their safety as well as integrating specific gender equality-related content in capacity development tools for media, judiciary and law enforcement bodies; – design, implement and monitor economic and social assistance programmes with targeted funds and protection measures for women working as independent journalists, scientists and researchers, self-employed artists, entrepreneurs working in different sectors of the creative economy, particularly in Africa; – sensitize men and boys on the importance of gender equality and ensure they have the tools to become advocates to end gender-

		based violence and discrimination globally and in their communities.
Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development of ethical standards	Women and girls have access to and fully participate in scientific and technological developments, including frontier technologies, that are free of gender bias (SDG target 5B)	– provide teacher training and career development opportunities including ICTs; – ensure equal access to distance learning, STEM, STEAM and ICTs fields; – reduce the digital gender divide, by supporting digital skills development of girls and women, including through media and information literacy; – providing equal access to digital solutions and technology and address gender biases in artificial intelligence and machine learning; – ensure women are directly engaged in policy making processes and systems of governance for education, science, culture and communication in the digital environment and that the resulting policies address and provide solutions to the challenges for women and girls in the digital environment – foster the full participation of women in information and technology-related solutions to crisis situations whether health pandemics, wars or natural disasters; – support for the participation of women artists and cultural professionals as creators, producers and users of digital content that is also arranged or distributed through frontier technologies; – establish digital platforms to facilitate scientific and cultural cooperation to facilitate the exchange of information between women scientists and artists worldwide.

IV.3   Priority groups: Youth

231.   At 1.2 billion strong, young people represent one out of every six people worldwide.[38] In every society, they are rights-holders and actors with their own value who deserve recognition and inclusion. Current and emerging crises, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic, the increased inequalities of income and opportunities across the world, and the climate emergency, raise or further aggravate existential and systemic challenges for youth, particularly for young women and the most vulnerable. Social and economic inclusion, education, employability and income, mental and physical well-being, creativity and self-expression, are youth development determinants gravely impacted by global and local crises. Unless decisive and collective action is taken now by

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[38]   2017, United Nations, *World Population Prospects.*

governments, in partnership with young people, the prospects of the current and future youth generations will be jeopardized.

232. Yet, all is not bleak. Day in, day out, young people prove their resilience and inventiveness in the face of adversity. They help themselves and their communities to rise, and to recover stronger and better from crises. The youth climate movement, the role of youth in peacebuilding,[39] and their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, illustrate why youth are a critical partner and should be included in all aspects of public life. More than ever, young people are shaping new forms of solidarity, humanism and creativity.

233. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development positions youth as critical agents of change and full-fledged partners in the United Nations' work to build a better world for all.[40] In this context, UNESCO's mission is to address the challenges and conditions that inhibit youth's wellbeing and to ensure their inclusion and meaningful engagement in societies.

234. In the current context, this mission is all the more important. Indeed, youth will be particularly touched by the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis it is generating. The crisis has also exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities derived from increased inequalities of income and opportunity. To avoid a lost generation (just like the one derived from the 2008 financial crisis), priority should be given to actions and policies that address the needs of youth across the world. UNESCO's role will be key in raising awareness about this priority among Member States and partners, and to develop strategic solutions to address the challenges youth faces in developing their full potential. Furthermore, for 2022-2029, UNESCO will pursue an Organization-wide strategic agenda revolving around four building blocks that will be adapted across regions, with a priority focus on Africa. These are:

> *Knowledge brokering:* the lack of disaggregated data and in-depth knowledge on youth – particularly young women and the most vulnerable – severely undermines youth-related solutions. UNESCO will partner with academia, development actors and youth to generate and share knowledge that will inform decision-making and programming to address the impact of current and emerging crises.

> *Solutions:* as an intergovernmental organization, UNESCO will partner with Member States to propose youth-related policy solutions, and advocate for the prioritization of young women and vulnerable youth. UNESCO will also work with Member-States and youth to adapt the policy and normative environment to mitigate crises' impact on youth (in education, employment, social and economic inclusion, health – including mental health –, and employability), and to enhance opportunities and inclusive spaces available to them (use of ICTs, civic engagement, increased sense of solidarity).

> *Youth-led action:* targeted action will be taken on enhancing youth resilience and effectively recognizing and engaging young people as change-makers and solution-drivers in addressing societal challenges and crises, particularly the impact of climate change, security and health crises; increased inequalities and gender disparities; violence; discrimination; destruction of heritage, spread of disinformation and hate speech; and the challenges of artificial intelligence (AI). Levers for youth engagement and social inclusion, such as sport, culture and the arts will be further explored and promoted, through targeted partnerships and initiatives which UNESCO will actively pursue with stakeholders across all sectors (in the education, arts, digital and sports arenas) to generate new opportunities for youth, with special attention to African youth.

> *Capacity development:* UNESCO will work with governments at different levels to strengthen institutional capacities to deal with youth challenges, particularly regarding capacities of policy-makers and development actors, as well as capacities for

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[39]   As recognized in United Nations Security Council resolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020).
[40]   The United Nations Youth Strategy - Youth 2030

intergenerational dialogue and cooperation. This will enable systemic and participatory responses to youth development and youth engagement challenges. UNESCO will also strengthen longstanding efforts to advance youth competencies and skills to enhance their employability, well-being and social inclusion.

235. UNESCO's youth action will also rely on the strengths of the Organization's mandate. We will leverage our mandate on education, culture and sciences, and our goal to build a more peaceful world. Each pillar of the Organization's work will advance a priority agenda for youth, with a common narrative. We will rely on communities of practice to develop individual chapters for youth and education; young artists and culture; young journalists; and young researchers. We will partner with different institutions in charge of promoting and managing sports, including sports people at all levels. Finally, we will take advantage of the Youth Olympics that will take place in Senegal in 2026.

236. Due account will be put on the global priorities of UNESCO when addressing youth needs. Young women around the world are being affected as part of the young generation from the different systemic crisis. But their longstanding challenges of discrimination and violence, lack of opportunities, and diverse gender gaps (on access to education, employment, financial leverage, political representation and voice) should also be taken into account when developing a UNESCO youth strategy. Africa will also be front and centre, being the geographic region with the highest share of young population, but also with the most acute challenges and vulnerabilities. UNESCO will engage with governments and other sport stakeholders, in particular the private sector, to invest in sport as a lever for youth capacity development and social inclusion, in particular in Africa, where the level of youth vulnerability and the socio-economic impact of COVID is likely to be much more devastating than other regions.

237. Across these efforts, significant focus will be also placed on the various gendered identities of youth, including LGBTI, and their intersection with race and ethnicity.

238. UNESCO's youth action will be co-created with the young generation, based on the longstanding track record on youth engagement and structural dialogue that the Organization has fostered for years. UNESCO will effectively recognize and engage young people as change-makers and solution-drivers in addressing societal challenges and crises, particularly the impact of climate change, security and health crises, increased inequalities and gender disparities, violence, discrimination, destruction of heritage, spread of disinformation and hate speech, and artificial intelligence (AI).

239. Meaningful youth engagement will be a central priority throughout, both as "an end in itself, as well as a means to build a better world".[41] Building on the paradigm shift that UNESCO has been forging in 2014-2021, under its earlier Operational Strategy on Youth, the Organization will not only address youth as *beneficiaries*, but will also engage with them as *change-makers*, *knowledge-holders*, and *partners*. Collaboration with United Nations system agencies at global (Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development) and country (United Nations country team) levels, as well as with regional IGOs, namely the African Union Commission, will increase further in the context of the United Nations Youth Strategy – Youth 2030. UNESCO will also work with an enlarged institutionalized youth focal point network, with young people through the UNESCO Global Youth Community (GYC), as well as with UNESCO's own networks, especially UNESCO Chairs, ASPnet Schools, cities and municipalities, MAB Youth Networks, Youth Water networks and Young Science Academy and Africa Youth Network for DRR, among others.

IV.4 Responding to the needs of priority groups: small island developing States

"Islands of the Future. Building resilience in a changing world"

240. The small island developing States (SIDS) comprise 39 UNESCO Member States and nine UNESCO Associate Members. On the frontlines of raising sea levels and biodiversity loss, and with

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[41]   The UN Youth Strategy - Youth 2030

a high dependence on the ocean, SIDS share specific vulnerabilities linked to natural disasters and multiple adverse consequences of climate change which are threatening island livelihoods, resources, cultures and societies, and even the very existence of low-lying island countries. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to impact SIDS disproportionately with potentially devastating social and economic impacts, including in areas such as education, gender equality, global migration and sustainable tourism. These pressing challenges require enhanced efforts by the concerned Member States and the international community for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and "building back better" in SIDS.

241. During the current Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2029), SIDS will remain a priority target group, as indicated in 40 C/Resolution 102, confirmed by the Member States during the consultations on the draft documents 41 C/4 and C/5,[42] and emphasized by the Executive Board at its 209th session.

242. UNESCO's support to SIDS will join the efforts of the international community for the realization of the SAMOA Pathway and respond to the Call for Action of the SAMOA Pathway Mid-Term Review (United Nations General Assembly resolution 74/3), which highlighted that small islands continue to be a special case for sustainable development, and that particular attention must be given to building resilience, including through technology transfer and development, education and human resource development.

243. UNESCO's SIDS Action Plan (2016-2021) identified five priority areas: (i) enhancing island capacities to achieve sustainable development through education and the reinforcement of human and institutional capacities; (ii) enhancing SIDS resilience towards environmental, ocean, freshwater and natural resources sustainability; (iii) preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage and promoting culture for island sustainable development; (iv) supporting SIDS in the management of social transformations and the promotion of social inclusion and social justice; and (v) increasing connectivity, information management and knowledge sharing.

244. During the consultation process for the elaboration of draft documents 41 C/4 and 41 C/5 and the Executive Board at its 209th session, Member States confirmed that the above priority areas and their objectives remained valid, and called for UNESCO to scale up its efforts and promote intersectoral and integrated approaches to build resilience and advance sustainable development of SIDS taking into account new challenges, gaps and opportunities.

245. During the new medium-term period, UNESCO will draw on achievements and lessons learnt from the implementation of UNESCO's SIDS Action Plan (2016-2021) and the recommendations of the Internal Oversight Service evaluation of the Action Plan[43] to further enhance, streamline and tailor its action to key priorities identified at national or subregional levels.

246. Under **Strategic Objective 1,** and in line with the "social development" priority area and its sub-chapter "education" of the SAMOA Pathway, UNESCO will focus its action on ensuring universal access, inclusion and gender equality in education, including by addressing boys' higher school dropout rates in the Caribbean and Pacific. Specific focus will be put on the necessary skills development for work and life (literacy, technical and vocational education and training and higher education), and on equipping learners with twenty first-century skills and values through education for sustainable development, global citizenship education and ocean literacy so they can engage responsibly with their social and ecological environment. Efforts will be made to expand learning opportunities through distance learning, including educational resources. UNESCO will support

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[42]   Consultations included: (i) the first UNESCO Caribbean Regional Partners Forum (Kingston, Jamaica, September 2019), which provided a platform for dialogue to reflect on future lines of action on prevalent challenges in Caribbean SIDS, with a focus on youth, STI capacity, climate change and disaster preparedness; (ii) the online consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO in the Caribbean (30 June 2020); and (iii) the online consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO in the Pacific (23 and 24 June 2020) and the questionnaire to Member States on the preparation of draft documents 41 C/4 and 41 C/5.

[43]   https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366791

SIDS Member States to strengthen policies, multiply good practices and exchange experiences for improved social inclusion within the framework of the MOST Programme.

247.   Under **Strategic Objective 2,**[44] UNESCO will focus on building resilience and strengthening environmental sustainability in SIDS, by harnessing science and knowledge to foster climate change adaptation and mitigation, enhance disaster risk reduction and emergency responses and scale up sustainable management of island costal and marine ecosystems. UNESCO will support the SIDS in addressing their specific situation related to climate change ethics, especially through the implementation of the UNESCO Declaration of Ethical Principles in relation to Climate Change. UNESCO will also support SIDS to understand complexity, anticipate different scenarios, negotiate trade-offs, be ready to act quickly on the basis of available science-based information, and to collaborate in finding the best solutions. The Organization will promote resilience education and training for sustainable development by supporting the conservation of natural and cultural environments and by safeguarding cultural assets and indigenous and local knowledge systems for adaptation and sustainable living. UNESCO will develop a dedicated comprehensive interdisciplinary initiative to harness the potential of its designated sites (biosphere reserves, UNESCO Global Geoparks and world heritage sites) as laboratories for sustainable development of SIDS. UNESCO will address the specific challenges related to freshwater in SIDS by building sustainable water capacity and strengthening integrated water management to ensure water security and island freshwater resilience. Within the framework of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), UNESCO/IOC will dedicate efforts to address SIDS specific challenges such as sea-level rise, ocean pollution and acidification, loss of marine biodiversity and costal erosion; support ocean-resilient communities; build capacities for and enhance the conservation, protection, management and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, including marine and underwater cultural heritage; improve tsunami early warning systems and build tsunami-ready communities. UNESCO will also aim to strengthen the capacity of young people of SIDS by preparing them to participate in the pre-COP26 activities to raise awareness of the climate-related challenges facing SIDS, and by creating opportunities for active youth engagement in innovation for sustainable development.

248.   UNESCO will support capacity development in SIDS priority areas, such as reporting on climate change, including through media development projects under the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). UNESCO will promote open science and access to data, technology transfer and the development of targeted science, technology and innovation policies for sustainable development of SIDS with a view to ensuring greater agility, early warning systems and resilience to shocks.

249.   In addition to responding its Member States' requests and addressing challenges and priorities for action identified in the SAMOA Pathway and its mid-term review, UNESCO's action in the thematic areas identified above will support the achievement of several SDGs that are highly relevant for SIDS, including SDGs 4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 14 and 15, and align with the relevant priorities to be addressed during the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), the United Nations Decade for Ecosystems Restoration (2021-2030) and the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

250.   Under **Strategic Objective 3**, and in line with the "social development" priority area and its sub-chapters "culture and sport" and "promoting peaceful societies and safe communities" of the SAMOA Pathway, UNESCO will endeavour to advance sustainable development and social cohesion in SIDS by promoting indigenous and traditional knowledge and cultural expressions and underscoring the deep connections among people, culture, knowledge and the natural environment. UNESCO will strengthen capacities of SIDS in implementing UNESCO's cultural conventions through the provision of technical and financial support, and will promote creative industries and culture-based development, combining creative and digital resources to boost recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and advance sustainable tourism. SIDS' intangible cultural

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[44]   In line with the "climate change", "disaster risk reduction", "oceans and seas", "water and sanitation" and "biodiversity" priority areas of the SAMOA Pathway.

heritage and associated traditional knowledge will be safeguarded and its transmission supported. UNESCO will support SIDS in combating trafficking of both land and underwater cultural property. Support will be provided to the Slave Route Project in the Caribbean.

251. Recognizing the strong potential of small island developing States in sport, UNESCO will promote sport as a vehicle to foster development, social inclusion and peace, strengthen education, and build life skills, particularly among youth.

252. UNESCO will foster free, independent and pluralistic media, and work to address challenges of disinformation, hate speech and intolerance, both online and offline. The Organization will promote the preservation and accessibility of the documentary heritage through the Memory of the World Programme. Youth networks will also be supported for their involvement in public policies related to climate change adaptation and mitigation and for addressing challenges related to both internal and external incidences of school violence.

253. Under **Strategic Objective 4**, UNESCO will support SIDS to advance universal access to information, data and knowledge and the use of digital technologies as tools for empowerment, reducing digital and knowledge divides and building inclusive knowledge societies. The Organization will focus on enhancing digital skills, promoting the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) skills for the labour market, and preparing SIDS to adapt to and take an active part in digital transformations and frontier technologies.

254. Attaining these objectives will require reinforced partnerships with other organizations and concerned stakeholders to help multiply the Organization's impact, including the Commonwealth Secretariat (Blue Charter); the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Landlocked, Least Developed Countries and SIDS (UN-OHRLLS); Caribbean Community (CARICOM); Pacific Islands Forum (PIF); Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS), and the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Secretariat. While working with intergovernmental coordination bodies in the SIDS regions, UNESCO also has a capacity-building role in relation to communities as holders of knowledge and custodians of the environment. UNESCO will also further enhance its efforts and ability to engage with multiple stakeholders, building upon its comparative advantage and unique network of the National Commissions for UNESCO, UNESCO Chairs and category 2 centres in SIDS.

255. Bearing in mind the findings of the IOS evaluation of the SIDS Action Plan (2016-2021), UNESCO will improve integrated planning and monitoring of its actions in SIDS, as well as resource mobilization and allocation, both financial and human, through better targeting SIDS needs and priorities. UNESCO will support innovations for transformational change and build on the achievements and success stories so far develop a dedicated **communication strategy** that will improve visibility, which in turn will support fundraising, leading to greater availability of resources to strengthen the sustainable development of SIDS.

PART B

INTRODUCTION

256. The future 41 C/5 (Programme for 2022-2025 and Budget for 2022-2023) will continue to be presented under an Integrated Budget Framework (IBF), comprising estimated costs to be incurred for the achievement of results in the first biennium 2022-2023, taking into consideration all sources of funds available or to be mobilized to finance the activities in the biennium.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES AND FRAMEWORK FOR 2022-2025

257. In respect of the financial management framework supporting the delivery of the quadrennial programme, the key principles to be applied are those set out in paragraph 9 of document 40 C/7 on the Preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 (41 C/5). Specifically, in accordance with General Conference Resolution 40 C/Resolution 103, the Secretariat will be focused on:

> *"(h) Ensuring that the Organization's financial management model, through the reinforcement of the Integrated Budget Framework, the streamlined and transparent management of resources, and the review of cost recovery and other financial tools, provides a robust and sustainable mechanism to support the delivery of the strategic objectives set out by its Member States."*

258. This will be achieved through a selected number of key initiatives and improvements, including:

(i) **The reinforced use of the Integrated Budget Framework** as the key tool for the allocation and management of resources for the achievement of the C/5 results, as well as the primary dimension for reporting on the utilization of resources. Refinements in the presentation and format of related tables will continue to be sought, with a view to further improving clarity and transparency of the information presented. The need for the continued presentation of resources by their respective sources of funding is also acknowledged, and will continue to be maintained, with consideration being given to simplifying the underlying presentation and accounting structures. The need to provide comprehensive and integrated views of financial and programmatic proposals is also paramount, as it will serve to enable the governing bodies to take decisions at the appropriate strategic level;

(ii) **The review of the cost recovery policy of the Organization** will focus on addressing lessons learned in the first biennium of the implementation of the revised policy, as well as reinforcing efforts to target full cost recovery in respect of costs incurred under the regular programme budget in facilitating and supporting the execution of voluntary contribution funded activities. A separate document (210 EX/33) presents further thoughts for consideration in this respect, also responding to the decision of the Executive Board in this respect (209 EX/Dec.4.II);

(iii) **The completion of the core system re-design project**, subject to funds availability, is planned to be developed further in parallel with the preparations for and discussions on the next Programme and Budget. This will provide the opportunity to ensure full alignment of the operational, accounting, and planning and budgeting systems within the Organization's financial management model;

(iv) **The planned review of the periodicity and content of programme performance and financial reporting** in close consultation with Member States as well as the Secretariat's efforts towards a more integrated reporting on both programme and financial performance will provide a more comprehensive view of the use of the Organization's resources in pursuit of the achievement of its results. The content, frequency and

periodicity of the performance and financial reports are foreseen to be reviewed from this perspective, and will also address gaps in the current reporting. It is also important to ensure that Member States and stakeholders clearly understand the link between financial data presented in the financial statements, versus the figures presented in the Programme and Budget and the Financial Management Report. Differences need to be clearly explained, and the long-term needs translated into funding requirements. This will ensure that the financial statements can also be used as a tool for financial accountability. Appropriate adjustments in the timing and content of the Financial Management Report will provide the basis for these enhancements. A separate proposal will be submitted to the Executive Board on this topic at its 211th session pursuant to its recent decisions (209 EX/4.I.A and 4.II); and

(iv) **The introduction of a long-term financial management strategy** will aim to ensure the prudent and sustainable management and maintenance of UNESCO's capital assets (reserve policy and capital master plan proposals); as well as to establish a robust and predictable base for the funding of the Organization's long-term obligations to its retirees for After Service Health Insurance (ASHI funding proposal). A separate Concept Paper has been prepared on this subject and is submitted for Member States' consideration in document 210 EX/32.

PREPARATION OF THE DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET (41 C/5)

I. Principles

259. In order to ensure that accountability is clearly established for (i) the achievement of results, as well as for (ii) the use of resources allocated for such purposes, it is essential to present these in a comprehensive and transparent manner. While outcomes are established at the level of the Organization in the C/4 and serve as a framework for the quadrennial C/5 documents, each Sector and Service will continue to have clearly defined quadrennial outputs and performance indicators that can be reviewed and adjusted as necessary according to the biennial budgetary cycle. Targets will continue to be defined on a biennial basis, thereby linking the quadrennial programme with the biennial integrated budget framework Resources will be assigned accordingly to ensure that these outputs can be achieved. It is through the structure of the Programme and Budget that this accountability is established and enforced. The following specific enhancements are proposed in the presentation of the Programme and Budget.

(i) Additional information will be presented for Member States' information on the geographical/regional breakdown of the Organization's proposed budget; and

(ii) A summary overview will be presented on the overall resources proposed for Priority Africa and Priority Gender Equality, to reinforce and illustrate the Organization's commitment to delivery on these two global priorities, as well as to ensure that tracking of expenditures against these priorities is facilitated.

260. Risks are managed as an integral part of the Programme and Budget implementation. Accordingly, key risks are proposed to be presented in the C/5 to enhance the performance dialogue with Member States.

261. Furthermore, it is critical to ensure that enhanced flexibility continues to be provided within the Programme and Budget to address unforeseen developments, especially in an unpredictable and difficult global environment.

262. The biennial operating budget of the Organization cannot be the vehicle for funding one-off large capital investments that may also cross biennia, as this would distort the operating budget significantly and provide no predictable or reliable funding for related projects over the

implementation timeframes. However, these need to be presented alongside the biennial Budget proposal. Any related recurring or maintenance costs that may have an impact on the current or future biennial budget(s) will need to be disclosed and, if appropriate, incorporated into the draft Programme and Budget of the appropriate biennium. A proposal is made in the Concept Paper on a Sustainable Financial Management Strategy for UNESCO (210 EX/32) for addressing the future funding of capital expenditure items.

II.   IBF reinforced

263.   As mentioned above, the Organization's Programme and Budget will continue to be presented in the Integrated Budget Framework (IBF) view. The planned budget and expenditure (as well as income and expenditure) under the Management Cost Account will be presented separately, in order to avoid duplication. Proposals for appropriate changes to the Financial Regulations of the Organization that should help better reflect the changing funding landscape and the business model of the Organization will be submitted to Member States' consideration in due time.

III.   Budgeting Techniques

264.   Budgeting techniques will continue to be improved and refined, and consideration will also be given to exploiting system opportunities which may become available as a result of the implementation of the Core System Redesign project.

265.   Elements of changes to the cost recovery policy will also be incorporated, subject to guidance provided by the Executive Board on this subject at its 210th session.

266.   A review of the traditional "Part V" appropriation under the assessed Regular Programme is envisaged, the purpose of which would be to focus more on enabling funding for unforeseen needs and contingencies.

Proposed draft decision

267.   In light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1.   Recalling 40 C/Resolutions 102 and 103,

2.   Having examined the preliminary proposals by the Director-General concerning the Draft Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 (41 C/4) and the Draft Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 (41 C/5) (210 EX/22),

3.   Expresses its appreciation to Member States, including their National Commissions for UNESCO, UNESCO's international and intergovernmental bodies, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for their rich and constructive contributions to the consultation process for the preparation of documents 41 C/4 and 41 C/5;

4.   Takes note with appreciation of the emphasis of the preliminary proposals on reinforcing UNESCO's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the other relevant international development agendas, through enhanced and integrated action in the Organization's fields of competence, including to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to building back better;

5.   Welcomes the proposed strategic, transformative vision for the Organization with a view to asserting its global leadership in the areas of its mandate, by focusing on its comparative advantages and added value within the United Nations system;

6. <u>Also takes note with appreciation</u> of the multidisciplinary integrated approach in the formulation of the strategic objectives and the programme of work, while maintaining the focus on the Organization's mandate, fields of competence and expertise;

7. <u>Endorses</u> the proposed mission statement of the Organization for the next eight-year period, and <u>takes note</u> of the conclusions concerning the prioritization of UNESCO's functions at the global, regional and national levels;

8. <u>Reconfirms</u> Africa and gender equality as the two global priorities of the Organization, and youth and small island developing States (SIDS) as priority groups for the period covered by the next Medium-Term Strategy;

9. <u>Also endorses</u> the strategic objectives and the associated proposed outcomes for the Draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4), which will serve as a basis for the formulation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 (41 C/5);

10. <u>Takes note</u> of the proposed improvements to the presentation and techniques to be applied in the preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 (41 C/5), and <u>invites</u> the Director-General to implement these in the presentation of document 41 C/5;

11. <u>Requests</u> the Director-General to prepare the Draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4) and the Draft Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 (41 C/5), taking into account the discussions held at its 210th session, and to submit them to it for consideration at its 211th session.

ANNEX

PROPOSALS FOR THE THEMATIC AREAS OF DOCUMENT 41 C/5

With regard to the preparation of document 41 C/5, this table gives, on a provisional and indicative basis, the thematic areas which the programme sectors would be required to implement, and which would guide the formulation of future 41 C/5 programmes and outputs. In some cases, implementation may be intersectoral and contribute to the achievement of more than one "outcome". This table will naturally be adjusted and completed during the forthcoming process of preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget (41 C/5).

MAJOR PROGRAMME I – EDUCATION

41 C/4 strategic objectives	"Outcomes"	Thematic areas relevant to the formulation of "outputs" in document 41 C/5 (indicative)
SO 1: Reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies in the digital age through quality education for all	**O1**: Advance inclusive quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all	• Universal access, inclusion and gender equality • Skills development for work and life (literacy, TVET, higher education) • Teachers' policies and professional development • Curriculum development and reform • System-wide planning, policies, and data • Distance learning and digital skills* • Education for Sustainable Development* • Global Citizenship Education (GCED)* • Education for health and well-being and safe, inclusive learning environments
	O2: Strengthen international coordination for the achievement of SDG 4 and develop the global education agenda based on research, foresight and innovation	• Steering SDG 4, mobilizing partners and monitoring progress • Research, foresight and innovation - reimagining education for a better future

41 C/4 strategic objectives	"Outcomes"	Thematic areas relevant to the formulation of "outputs" in document 41 C/5 (indicative)
SO 2: Work towards sustainable societies by preserving the environment through the promotion of science, technology and the natural heritage	**O3**: Enhance knowledge for climate action, respect for biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction	• Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)*
	O4: Advance international cooperation in science, technology and innovation	
SO 3: Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage.	**O5**: Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions	
	O6: Promote freedom of expression and the right to information	
	O7: Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes	• Global Citizenship Education (GCED)*
SO 4: Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the	**O8**: Foster knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age	• Distance learning and digital skills*
	O9: Develop ethical standards, norms and frameworks for action to meet the challenges of innovative technologies and digital transformation.	

41 C/4 strategic objectives	"Outcomes"	Thematic areas relevant to the formulation of "outputs" in document 41 C/5 (indicative)
development of ethical standards.		

(*) Some programmes in this thematic area will be designed and implemented through an intersectoral approach, and/or contribute to the achievement of more than one outcome.

MAJOR PROGRAMME II - NATURAL SCIENCES

41 C/4 strategic objectives	"Outcomes"	Thematic areas relevant to the formulation of "outputs" in document 41 C/5 (indicative)
SO 1: Reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies in the digital age through quality education for all	**O1**: Advance inclusive quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all	• STEM and STEAM*
	O2: Strengthen international coordination for the achievement of SDG 4 and develop the global education agenda based on research, foresight and innovation	
SO 2: Work towards sustainable societies by preserving the environment through the promotion of science, technology and the natural heritage	**O3**: Enhance knowledge for climate action, respect for biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction	• Ecosystems and biodiversity restoration and conservation; and UNESCO designated sites • Water science, research, governance and management • Management of transboundary resources • Local and Indigenous Knowledge systems • Water education, climate, oceans, biodiversity and environmental literacy * • Disaster risk reduction management and prevention, early warning systems for geological and meteorological hazards
	O4: Advance international cooperation in science, technology and innovation	• Open Science, and access to scientific and technological data and information*. • Science Diplomacy • STI policies, systems and governance • International scientific cooperation, including in basic and engineering sciences • Theoretical and applied physics, pure and applied mathematics • STEM, higher education and scientific research*

41 C/4 strategic objectives	"Outcomes"	Thematic areas relevant to the formulation of "outputs" in document 41 C/5 (indicative)
SO 3: Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage.	**O5**: Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions	
	O6: Promote freedom of expression and the right to information	• Open access to scientific and technological data*
	O7: Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes	
SO 4: Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development of ethical standards.	**O8**: Foster knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age	• Open access to scientific and technological data*
	O9: Develop ethical standards, norms and frameworks for action to meet the challenges of innovative technologies and digital transformation.	

(*) Some programmes in this thematic area will be designed and implemented through an intersectoral approach, and/or contribute to the achievement of more than one outcome.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION (IOC)

41 C/4 strategic objectives	"Outcomes"	Thematic areas relevant to the formulation of "outputs" in document 41 C/5 (indicative)
SO 2: Work towards sustainable societies by preserving the environment through the promotion of science, technology and the natural heritage	**O3**: Enhance knowledge for climate action, respect for biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction	• Healthy ocean and sustained ocean ecosystem services • Effective warning systems and preparedness for tsunamis and other ocean-related hazards • Resilience to climate change and contribution to its mitigation*. • Scientifically-founded services for a sustainable ocean economy • Foresight on emerging ocean science issues • Ocean literacy*

(*) Some programmes in this thematic area will be designed and implemented through an intersectoral approach, and/or contribute to the achievement of more than one outcome.

MAJOR PROGRAMME III – SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

41 C/4 strategic objectives	"Outcomes"	Thematic areas relevant to the formulation of "outputs" in document 41 C/5 (indicative)
SO 1: Reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies in the digital age through quality education for all	**O1**: Advance inclusive quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all	• Sports and quality physical education for inclusion, health and well-being*
	O2: Strengthen international coordination for the achievement of SDG 4 and develop the global education agenda based on research, foresight and innovation	
SO 2: Work towards sustainable societies by preserving the environment through the promotion of science, technology and the natural heritage	**O3**: Enhance knowledge for climate action, respect for biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction	• Social and human sciences-related knowledge for climate resilience and environmental sustainability*. • Ethics of Climate Change*
	O4: Advance international cooperation in science, technology and innovation	• Implementation and monitoring of Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers
SO 3: Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting	**O5**: Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions	• Humanities to develop better understanding of diversity and the complexities of the world

41 C/4 strategic objectives	"Outcomes"	Thematic areas relevant to the formulation of "outputs" in document 41 C/5 (indicative)
freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage.	**O6**: Promote freedom of expression and the right to information	
	O7: Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes	• Social and human sciences informed policies to reduce inequalities and foster social cohesion and well-being • Intercultural dialogue • Fight against intolerance, exclusion, discrimination, xenophobia, racism and sexism; Cities against Racism • Sports and quality physical education for inclusion, health and wellbeing, and enforcement of anti-doping rules*.
SO 4: Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development of ethical standards.	**O8**: Foster knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age	
	O9: Develop ethical standards, norms and frameworks for action to meet the challenges of innovative technologies and digital transformation.	• Ethics of science and technology, including bioethics.* • Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (AI)*.

(*) Some programmes in this thematic area will be designed and implemented through an intersectoral approach, and/or contribute to the achievement of more than one outcome.

MAJOR PROGRAMME IV – CULTURE

41 C/4 strategic objectives	"Outcomes"	Thematic areas relevant to the formulation of "outputs" in document 41 C/5 (indicative)
SO 1: Reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies in the digital age through quality education for all	**O1**: Advance inclusive quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all	• Creativity in teaching and learning, including Arts Education*. • Cultural institutions and sites as learning spaces*
	O2: Strengthen international coordination for the achievement of SDG 4 and develop the global education agenda based on research, foresight and innovation	
SO 2: Work towards sustainable societies by preserving the environment through the promotion of science, technology and the natural heritage	**O3**: Enhance knowledge for climate action, respect for biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction	• Impact of climate change on culture and on the conservation and management of cultural and natural heritage • Emergency preparedness and response to natural disasters
	O4: Advance international cooperation in science, technology and innovation	
SO 3: Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression,	**O5**: Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions	• Protection, promotion and management of culture (built, moveable, underwater and intangible cultural heritage, diversity of cultural expressions) • Fight against illicit trafficking/restitution of cultural property

41 C/4 strategic objectives	"Outcomes"	Thematic areas relevant to the formulation of "outputs" in document 41 C/5 (indicative)
cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage.		• Emergency preparedness for culture in crisis response and recovery • Cultural networks for creativity and innovation (Creative Cities Network) • Artistic freedom, including Status of the Artist • Data collection and analysis, and support to cultural policies
	O6: Promote freedom of expression and the right to information	
	O7: Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes	• Creative Cities Network
SO 4: Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development of ethical standards.	**O8**: Foster knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age	• Inclusive access to culture and diversity of cultural contents in the digital environment
	O9: Develop ethical standards, norms and frameworks for action to meet the challenges of innovative technologies and digital transformation.	

(*) Some programmes in this thematic area will be designed and implemented through an intersectoral approach, and/or contribute to the achievement of more than one outcome.

MAJOR PROGRAMME V – COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

41 C/4 strategic objectives	"Outcomes"	Thematic areas relevant to the formulation of "outputs" in document 41 C/5 (indicative)
SO 1: Reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies in the digital age through quality education for all	**O1**: Advance inclusive quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all	• Media and Information Literacy* • Open educational resources* • Digital skills and competencies*
	O2: Strengthen international coordination for the achievement of SDG 4 and develop the global education agenda based on research, foresight and innovation	
SO 2: Work towards sustainable societies by preserving the environment through the promotion of science, technology and the natural heritage	**O3**: Enhance knowledge for climate action, respect for biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction	• Training of journalists on coverage of environmental and climate change issues
	O4: Advance international cooperation in science, technology and innovation	

41 C/4 strategic objectives	"Outcomes"	Thematic areas relevant to the formulation of "outputs" in document 41 C/5 (indicative)
SO 3: Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage.	**O5**: Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions	• Linguistic diversity (indigenous languages and multilingualism)*.
	O6: Promote freedom of expression and the right to information	• Freedom of expression, Right to information, and Safety of journalists • Media development • Access to information* • Media and Information Literacy*
	O7: Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes	• Media and Information Literacy*
SO 4: Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development of ethical standards.	**O8**: Foster knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age	• Open data and development of open solutions • Data governance
	O9: Develop ethical standards, norms and frameworks for action to meet the challenges of innovative technologies and digital transformation.	• Frontier technologies and Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*

(*) Some programmes in this thematic area will be designed and implemented through an intersectoral approach, and/or contribute to the achievement of more than one outcome.

PARIS, 13 October 2020
English only

<u>Item **22**</u> of the provisional agenda

PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL CONCERNING THE DRAFT MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY FOR 2022-2029 (41 C/4) AND THE DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2022-2025 (41 C/5)

CORRIGENDUM

1.   In Graph 1: UNESCO's strategic and enabling objectives, and related outcomes, Strategic Objective 1 should read as follows: **Reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies in the digital age through quality education for all.**

2.   The box under **III.2 Strategic Objective 2: Work towards sustainable societies by preserving the environment through the promotion of science, technology and the natural heritage** should read as follows:

Strategic Objective **2:** Work towards sustainable societies by preserving the environment through the promotion of science, technology and the natural heritage	
Outcome 3: Enhance knowledge for climate action, respect for biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction	**Outcome 4**: Advance international cooperation in science, technology and innovation

3.   The title of III.6 should read as follows: **Enabling objective: Foster an enabling environment for the efficient and effective delivery of UNESCO's priorities**.