PARIS, 9 September 2024
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Item **17** of the provisional agenda

PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL CONCERNING THE DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2026-2029 (43 C/5)

SUMMARY

In pursuance of 42 C/Resolution 81 of the General Conference, the Director-General hereby presents her preliminary proposals concerning the Draft Programme and Budget of the Organization for 2026-2029 (43 C/5) which will be the second and final Programme of the Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4).

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 42nd session. The summary of these consultations is presented in the information documents 220 EX/17.INF and 220 EX/17.INF.2.

This document advances a strategic vision for the Organization, further streamlining UNESCO's strategic focus by building on its strength in rich multidisciplinary approaches and strengthening intersectoral programming. By addressing major global challenges, this proposal enhances UNESCO's ability to exercise leadership in its areas of expertise, and to contribute concretely, visibly, and effectively to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and other internationally agreed development goals.

Decision required: paragraph 134.

Job: 202403040

43 C/5

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Preliminary Proposals

By the Director-General concerning the Draft Programme and Budget

2026–2029

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

1. As we prepare UNESCO's Draft Programme and Budget for 2026–2029 (43 C/5), we face a critical juncture marked by multifaceted global challenges and significant shortfalls in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Amid economic uncertainties, geopolitical tensions, escalating climate crises, and widening inequalities, the need for robust, forward-thinking and multidisciplinary strategies has never been more urgent.

2. The General Conference, at its 42nd session, initiated a process that invited Member States to reflect on UNESCO's future programme orientations. This process, beginning two years prior to approval, offers an opportunity to build on UNESCO's strengths, sharpen its focus, strengthen its actions, and further drive the sustainable, impactful results the world needs. It is a chance to optimize resources and achieve the impact we collectively strive for, reinforcing UNESCO's role in fostering peace, sustainable development and global cooperation.

3. The 43 C/5 will cover the second, and last, quadrennium of our Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-29 (41 C/4). The Medium-Term Strategy sets a bold vision with four strategic objectives: quality education, sustainable societies, just and inclusive societies, and technology for humanity. Achieving these ambitions requires agility to adapt to global dynamics, including crises and inequalities, ensuring our actions remain relevant to changing realities. It demands a determined effort to urgently accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, coupled with a bold vision for an ambitious post-2030 agenda on the horizon. It also requires continued commitment, engagement and investment, through a new strategic compact in support of UNESCO's priorities.

4. This is a crucial moment for UNESCO and its Member States to develop a programme and budget that not only tackles current challenges, but also lays the foundation for a more sustainable and inclusive future.

5. The 43 C/5 will build on the achievements, successes, and lessons from previous and current biennia, consolidating the strong foundations built over the years. This effort is about more than just continuity; it is about ambition and vision. It is about positioning UNESCO to fully leverage its strengths and assets, propelling the Organization forward with renewed energy and purpose.

Consultation Process

6. The preliminary proposals of the Director-General were crafted after an extensive consultation process, gathering diverse perspectives on UNESCO's priorities and future focus. The process was guided by several key inputs:

- The **Guiding Principles and Roadmap** adopted by Member States at the 42nd session of the General Conference (document 42 C/7 and 42 C/Resolution 81) provided the overall framework for the development of the preliminary proposals, emphasising the importance of an inclusive and participatory consultation process.

- **Surveys:** Three surveys collected responses on UNESCO's past performance and future direction from 103 Member States, 75 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and seven intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), as detailed in document 220 EX/17.INF.

- **Regional Consultations:** Seven regional meetings, including an interregional meeting with National Commissions and special sessions for small island developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific and the Caribbean, ensured diverse regional and country perspectives were heard. Outcomes are detailed in document 220 EX/17.INF.

- **Structured Financing Dialogue**: Insights and comments from Member States during the June 2024 Structured Financing Dialogue also helped shape the current document.

- **Youth Forum:** The 13th UNESCO Youth Forum, held during the 42nd session of the General Conference in November 2023, contributed valuable youth perspectives. Conclusions and the Forum's Position Paper are included in document 220 EX/17.INF.2.

- **Intergovernmental and International Bodies (IIBs):** Inputs from governing bodies of category 1 institutes, international and intergovernmental programmes, and conventions were gathered, following Recommendation 74 of the Working Group on Governance. Various consultation modalities, including surveys and statutory meetings, are reported in document 220 EX/17.INF.

7.   Additionally, the development of the preliminary proposals was informed by the analysis conducted in parallel for the Strategic Results Report (SRR24), with the findings helping to shape the ideas and proposals contained in this document. The document also benefited greatly from the insights of UNESCO colleagues in field offices and Headquarters and was guided by the Organization's senior management.

Roadmap for Designing 43 C5

a new strategic compact for UNESCO

AUTUMN 2024
220th Executive Board
Director-General Preliminary Proposals on 43 C/5

SPRING 2025
221st Executive Board
Draft Programme & Budget 43 C/5

AUTUMN 2025
222nd Executive Board
Additional information on 43 C/5 provided to the EXB as necessary

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AUTUMN 2023

42nd General Conference

43 C/5 Guiding principles and Roadmap adopted by Member States at General Conference (42 C/Res. 81)

FEB – AUG 2024

Gathering Collective Insights

- Consultative process with Member States and other stakeholders

- Data analysis for trends and drivers of change

- 7 Regional consultations with National Commissions

- 3 surveys (Member States, NGOs & IGOs)

FEB – AUG 2024

Developing Preliminary Proposals

- Shaping proposals arising from in-depth consultations

- Senior Management Visioning Retreat

- Strategic Workshop with Programmes Sectors and Central Services

- Virtual Consultations with Field Offices

AUTUMN 2024

EXB Decision on Preliminary Proposals

Member States provide main strategic orientations for next Programme and Budget taking into account findings of the Strategic Results Report 2024

SPRING 2025

EXB Recommendations

- Full-fledged Draft 43 C/5 presented to Member States that takes into account Executive Board decisions at the previous session

- Executive Board reviews and makes recommendations to the General Conference on Draft Programme and Budget (43 C/6)

AUTUMN 2025

EXB Final Recommendations

Additional recommendations to the General Conference as necessary (43 C/6 Add.)

AUTUMN 2025

43rd General Conference

Adoption of Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5) by Member States

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Global Context

8.   The preliminary proposals for the 43 C/5 are being introduced in a global environment that presents an opportunity to redefine our collective direction and agency towards a transformative future. While we observe a concerning level of uncertainty, increasing complexities, and a global political gridlock both within and between countries, further exacerbated by polarization, it is evident from the regional consultations with National Commissions and conversations with diverse partners that countries are united in the challenges and fears they face:

- Across all regions, we heard about the escalating impacts of climate change, the water crisis, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss, posing significant threats to ecosystems, communities, and sustainable development worldwide. The rise in natural hazards due to climate disruptions, such as increased frequency of floods, hurricanes, and wildfires, further exacerbates these challenges, endangering lives and disrupting livelihoods. Numerous countries are underscoring the need to make the environment a central pillar of socio-economic development models.

- Many countries expressed their concerns regarding persistent inequalities, social injustices, discrimination, and exclusion, often based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, and/or socio-economic status, as well as setbacks in the fight against poverty. This is seriously affecting human rights, social cohesion, and inclusive development.

- Rapid advancements in digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, big data, and the Internet of Things, are rapidly transforming societies, economies, and cultures across all regions, creating opportunities for innovation and inclusion but also raising rightful concerns about digital divides, skills-labour market shifts mismatches, privacy, human rights, and ethical considerations.

- The spread of misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda is undermining public discourse, and trust in institutions, emphasizing the importance of media and information literacy, media freedom, quality independent journalism, and better governance of digital platforms. This often goes along with increased scepticism and attacks on science, scientific evidence, and scientists jeopardising the important nexus of science, policy and societies.

- All regions are suffering from wars and crises with heart-wrenching consequences for their populations. Deaths and displacement from violent conflicts have reached the highest levels since World War II. In these challenging times, many countries are emphasizing prevention, enhancing resilience in times of conflict, and rebuilding and recovering after conflict.

- Countries are also undergoing deep demographic shifts, with youth bulges in many regions and aging populations in others. These shifts raise significant questions of intergenerational solidarity, equality of opportunities, and justice within and between societies. Youth face unique challenges, ranging from youth violence to access to education and employment opportunities with serious consequences to their mental and physical health, while older populations are struggling with social isolation and adequate care. Migratory patterns are influenced by all these demographic, climate change, and geopolitical factors, presenting both challenges and opportunities for both origin and destination countries.

- Many countries also reported on the still lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and their worries about potential future health crises with profound socio-economic, educational and cultural impacts globally.

9.   The confluence and magnitude of these shared challenges demonstrate that no single actor or sector can address them alone—single narratives will not suffice. Instead, effective responses are intrinsically linked to the necessity for international cooperation and partnerships to realize the global public goods we all depend on. While many of today's challenges are shared, it is crucial to recognize that countries have specific vulnerabilities and do not experience these challenges in the same way. Not all countries have the same capacities to react, the same fiscal space to respond, or the same starting positions. However, at the heart of it, we share humanity—its ingenuity, resilience, and capacity for hope and optimism. And we share one planet.

UNESCO's Strategic Moment

10.   This is the context in which UNESCO is designing its next four-year Programme (2026-2029). In many intergovernmental fora, Member States have repeatedly emphasized that UNESCO's mandate is more critical and relevant than ever. A recent survey highlighted that 91% of UNESCO Member States agree that the Organization's mandate remains as vital today as it was at its founding in 1945.[1] Over the last years, UNESCO has demonstrated that its work is central to many of the solutions the international community needs to tackle today's defining challenges: from the power of education to transform lives, to the promise of the sciences to bolster policy with the best available evidence and shape solutions that work for all; from the dynamism of culture to mobilize positive change, to the great potential that can be unlocked when emerging technologies are equipped with ethical guardrails, and disinformation and misinformation are countered with Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and an Internet for Trust.

11.   With near-universal membership, a dynamic ecosystem of partners and a mandate that resonates deeply in today's challenging global context, this is UNESCO's strategic moment:

Because our mandate unites humanity and can still ignite collective action in a divided world ...

12.   We are shaping UNESCO's next strategic offer during a period of significant introspection for the multilateral system. With global tensions on the rise, the continued impact of poly-crises, widespread mistrust in institutions, and outdated structures that many feel do not reflect today's realities, the world is engaging in a crucial conversation on how multilateralism can continue to deliver the global public goods needed. We recognize the challenges ahead. Key global events, including the 2024 Summit of the Future and the 2025 World Social Summit, are providing important multilateral moments. At UNESCO, we have demonstrated that our convening power and ability to forge consensus remains strong in a context of diverging views. We remain a forum where meaningful discussions take place, and agreements are reached. Most importantly, our multilateral backbone—from expert commissions to Member State committees—continues to unite some of the brightest minds around the world, laying the grounds for a more hopeful vision of the future that benefits everyone. For example, UNESCO's work, operational platforms, and intergovernmental programmes are increasingly recognized for their contribution to addressing the triple global crisis—biodiversity loss, climate change, and environmental degradation—in an effective and participatory way. The role of Biosphere Reserves in reducing biodiversity loss and promoting ecological restoration, which is central to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Convention on Climate Change, stands as a significant example of this impact. Similarly, UNESCO has provided a space for groundbreaking agreements on education for peace, human rights, and sustainable development; higher education; ocean science; open science; AI governance, and the historic MONDIACULT Declaration.

Because we are pioneers of tomorrow, committed to carrying existing promises into the future ...

13.   Achieving SDG progress requires a dual focus on present needs and future challenges and aspirations. This is UNESCO's strength as an intellectual powerhouse with an unparalleled network of global experts. In an era of hyper-change, UNESCO has demonstrated strong thought leadership and forward-thinking. The new

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[1] See 220 EX/17.INF Part II - Analysis of replies to the questionnaire on the draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5).

Pact for the Future and related processes have renewed focus on UNESCO's pioneering instruments and initiatives. UNESCO has been at the forefront of transforming education to meet the needs of a changing world, leading efforts in the ethics of emerging technologies such as AI and neurotechnology, the Internet for Trust, and digital platform governance, and emphasizing youth and responsibilities toward future generations. Building on this foundation, UNESCO is well placed to leverage these instruments for SDG acceleration and shape the post-2030 agenda. This ambition must encompass accelerated progress on existing commitments, coupled with systematic efforts to help countries seize new opportunities and address emerging challenges in a rapidly changing world.

Because we empower the change-makers shaping a brighter future ...

14.   Harnessing the transformative power of education, culture, the sciences, and the free flow of information, UNESCO's initiatives have the potential to equip individuals and communities with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to shape their lives and societies. In an era where many do not feel empowered to shape their lives and contribute to their communities, exacerbated by digital divides or societal marginalization, UNESCO's mandate provides a powerful toolkit to build inclusive, just and peaceful societies that value diversity, dialogue and mutual respect. Students and learners of all ages, teachers, scientists, artists, journalists, and especially youth, are UNESCO's change-makers. They turn these ideals into reality through their respective roles, creating positive ripple effects within their communities and societies.

Because we invest in building the defences of peace at the most crucial of times …

15.   In today's climate of rising conflicts and polarization, UNESCO's work is more vital than ever. With its mandate "to build the defences of peace in the minds of women and men", UNESCO is uniquely positioned to champion a concept of peace that goes beyond the mere absence of violence, emphasizing proactive prevention. This vision fosters a shared future built on moral and intellectual solidarity, where diversity is valued as a strength. In support of this enriched approach to peace, UNESCO can leverage key intergovernmental instruments such as the Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development, the Recommendation on Open Science, and its relevant Culture Conventions. These normative instruments translate into on-the-ground initiatives such as the promotion of education for peace, the advancement of transboundary science collaboration, transboundary cooperation for heritage protection in times of conflict and in times for peace, and projects that encourage inter-generational healing and respect for diverse cultural expressions within and across communities. Responding to today's real challenges, UNESCO's strategy also includes combating online hate speech and disinformation, racism, and all forms of discrimination, as well as ensuring freedom of expression and the safety of journalists, teachers, scientists, and artists. In a climate of rising tensions within and across countries, investing in a comprehensive approach to cultivating a culture of peace is more urgent than ever.

16.   In today's context, it is clear that UNESCO has much to offer.

17.   As UNESCO's Member States and Secretariat, we must think deeply about how we can strategically leverage the Organization in these difficult times as part of the international community's multilateral toolkit. Where can we insert UNESCO's knowledge and leadership? How do we make it a driver of change for the people who need us most? How can we rebuild the collective agency needed to tackle today's challenges? And how can we recover our sense of optimism about a brighter future that we alone have the power to shape?

18.   The Director-General's Preliminary Proposals present a starting point for a dialogue on these defining questions.

LESSONS LEARNED

19.   When designing a new four-year Programme, it is crucial to learn from past experiences to maximize focus and impact. To this end, lessons from UNESCO's work have been analysed through assessments such as the Strategic Results Report 2024 (SRR24), synthesis reports from the Internal Oversight Services (IOS), and the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), as well as consultations within the UNESCO network and Member States. This wealth of information points to a consensus that while UNESCO shows strong leadership in setting the global agenda within its mandate, it has not always been able to fully translate this agenda into tangible, large-scale impact at country level.

20.   To close this gap, the next biennium will focus on achieving the right mix of flexibility, quality financing and partnerships, workforce capacity, results-based management and interdisciplinarity.

21.   **LESSON 1: More flexibility and agility in programme delivery will be key to effectively adapt to rapidly evolving global challenges.** Various evaluations have shown that UNESCO's programmes can adapt to unforeseen circumstances when they foster a culture of learning and are able to implement corrective measures. This adaptability enhances delivery, sustainability and long-term goal focus, and allows programme managers to deal with disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Given that delivering change in complex environments is often non-linear and unpredictable, UNESCO will need to become better at designing projects with pragmatic and adaptive delivery models that acknowledge uncertainties and embed learning. This approach will require a shift in mindsets, improved monitoring for learning, a strengthened evidence base for programming[2] decisions, and regular communication with project partners and donors.

22.   **LESSON 2: Internal consistency and collaboration are crucial for effectively responding to countries' needs.** To ensure that UNESCO's global results translate into tangible improvements in the field, UNESCO's interventions must better align with national and regional priorities. To achieve this, UNESCO's field reform is putting in place tighter integration between the field and Headquarters through various shifts in workforce, regional presence, programming, ways of working and shared accountability frameworks. Several evaluations highlight that strong relationships between Headquarters and field offices, along with increased levels of decentralized authority, can significantly enhance overall project success. Evaluations, however, also show that gaps still exist and need to be addressed. In addition, UNESCO's extensive networks, including National Commissions, category 2 centres, University Chairs, UNITWIN Research Networks, Associated Schools, NGOs in official partnership, and the Creative and Learning Cities Networks, could be better mobilized to amplify impact both at global level and by forging new in-country partnerships and stronger implementation mechanisms. Currently, coordination across networks and between programme sectors could be further enhanced, resulting in untapped potential.

23.   **LESSON 3: A workforce equipped to deliver results fosters innovation and collaboration.** UNESCO's workforce is its greatest strength and an essential resource for fulfilling its mandate. Evaluations highlight the Organization's unique blend of top-tier sectoral expertise, its ability to reshape global agendas and build coalitions, and its agility in responding to global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. UNESCO has also shown a commitment to investing in the ongoing development and well-being of its personnel. However, there is a need to accelerate workforce planning and recruitment to enhance project implementation at field level. To this end, further strengthening UNESCO's field presence will be vital for the Organization to more effectively translate global agendas into country-level results. This will require a thriving, adaptable, and well-equipped workforce capable of embracing new business models and leveraging rapidly expanding technological possibilities.

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[2] In the UN system context, "programming" refers to the process of planning, designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating a set of coordinated activities or interventions aimed at achieving specific development outcomes.

24.   **LESSON 4: Interdisciplinary work can sharpen focus and drive greater impact.** Complex challenges are most effectively addressed through systems approaches. These require innovative, integrated, and interdisciplinary solutions that span sectors and leverage an organization's entire breadth of expertise. Evaluations suggest that more can be done to dismantle silos within UNESCO while still maintaining the high profile of its sectoral expertise. UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy already outlines a clear multisectoral direction through four strategic objectives. This has created a strong foundation for more intersectoral work in areas such as the Organization's Global Priorities and Priority Groups, as well as education, climate, social cohesion and new technologies. Building on this, UNESCO will need to extend the work initiated through its Intersectoral Programmes (IPs) to foster more intersectoral collaboration across focus areas. To streamline inter-sectorality into implementation, UNESCO will also need to further shift from small, fragmented initiatives to more consolidated, large-scale interventions, including clustering relevant projects into portfolios. Cross-sectoral Organizational priorities, such as Global Priority Africa and Gender Equality, as well as Priority Groups SIDS and Youth, would in this regard benefit from enhanced result tracking to better understand cross-sectoral contributions. Interdisciplinary corporate communication can also help to curb the tendency of dispersed and fragmented communication on small-scale initiatives by programme sectors. Integrated strategic communication is instrumental for resource mobilization at scale.

25.   **LESSON 5: Planning, monitoring, and managing for results helps ensure impactful programming.** Evaluations highlight good examples of strengthened results-based management (RBM) at the project and programme levels, where stronger monitoring frameworks have improved communication of achievements to donors, enhanced transparency, and secured more flexible support. However, strong RBM practices are not yet consistently applied across the Organization. UNESCO needs to enhance its ability to identify and address poor performance, demonstrate achievements beyond activities and outputs, and become an outcome and impact-oriented learning organization. A new Integrated Results and Resources Framework, with performance indicators at strategic objective, outcome, and output level, supported by enhanced cost analysis, would further strengthen the link between results planning and strategic budgeting. In addition, an enhanced monitoring infrastructure would benefit from a dedicated regional monitoring function, and further strengthen staff capacities to improve the relevance and application of RBM tools.

26.   **LESSON 6: Flexible funding is critical for effective responses to volatility and emerging issues.** The past programming period has highlighted several positive examples where more flexible funding has enabled the Organization to respond more swiftly and effectively to new and emerging issues, including crisis situations. However, overall UNESCO's funding remains heavily tied to specific projects, activities and countries, reducing its ability to respond to changing country needs. While there has been some improvement in softly earmarked contributions (from 28% in 2020-2021 to 41% in 2022-2023), most of it still goes to specific programmes and only two donors provide flexible funding at Programme Sector level. To enable donors to provide higher levels of flexible funding, UNESCO will need to strengthen its results reporting and visibility, further enhance trust through effective communication channels, and reinforce internal control systems and accountability mechanisms. The current trends in voluntary contributions also underscore some reliance on a limited number of government donors. To ensure the sustainable financing of UNESCO's mandate in the future, it will be necessary to expand and diversify funding and partnerships, including by engaging the private sector, international financial institutions (IFIs), and the UN system, and develop a financing approach with dedicated tools and expertise. Equally, a solid foundation of assessed contributions will be essential to ensure that the Organization has the required institutional capacity to deliver on increased demands from Member States and match the pace of inflation. The 43 C/5 will provide the foundation for a clearer articulation and communication of UNESCO's offer, including a narrative on impact and its unique value proposition.

A NEW STRATEGIC COMPACT

Guiding Principles

27.   UNESCO's programme (2026-2029) will be guided by the principles endorsed by its Member States in UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 (41 C/4). In particular, UNESCO's work will be guided by the following:

- Since the programme period coincides with the final stretch before the SDG deadline and progress is lagging, UNESCO's work will prioritize **accelerating progress** towards the Sustainable Development Goals across its mandated areas.
- UNESCO's efforts will continue to be driven by a commitment to **Leaving No One Behind (LNOB),** addressing structural inequalities, discrimination, exclusion, and marginalization while combating poverty and prioritizing support for vulnerable populations.
- UNESCO's work will be guided by the principle of upholding and strengthening the **rights and freedoms outlined in its mandate**. The adherence to implementation of its conventions and other international agreements will guide its actions and uphold its values globally.

Proposed Strategic Adjustments

28.   To further sharpen the Organization's programmatic focus and maximize impact, a number of adjustments are proposed:

- **Enhance strategic focus through a merger of outcomes.** It is proposed to merge the 41-42 C/5 outcomes 1 and 2, and outcomes 8 and 9 to increase the Organization's strategic focus, clustering UNESCO's interventions in a more coherent and higher-level manner.
- **Strengthen outcome formulations to allow for the design of outcome-level indicators.** Outcome formulations have been revised to facilitate the design of related outcome indicators. The proposed rewording of outcomes (see the table below) involves minor content adjustments but shifts the statements to reflect expected "end states" rather than actions, aiding in the design of outcome-level indicators.

PROPOSED STRATEGIC ADJUSTMENTS	
41-42 C/5 OUTCOMES	**PROPOSED 43 C/5 OUTCOMES**
Outcome 1: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote 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	**Outcome 1:** A world where inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities are ensured.
Outcome 3: Enhance knowledge for climate action, biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction. **Outcome 4**: Advance international cooperation in science, technology and innovation.	**Outcome 2:** A world where biodiversity, water and the ocean are valued and sustainably managed. **Outcome 3:** A world where the sciences, technology, and innovation are responsive to current and emerging challenges and accessible to all.

PROPOSED STRATEGIC ADJUSTMENTS

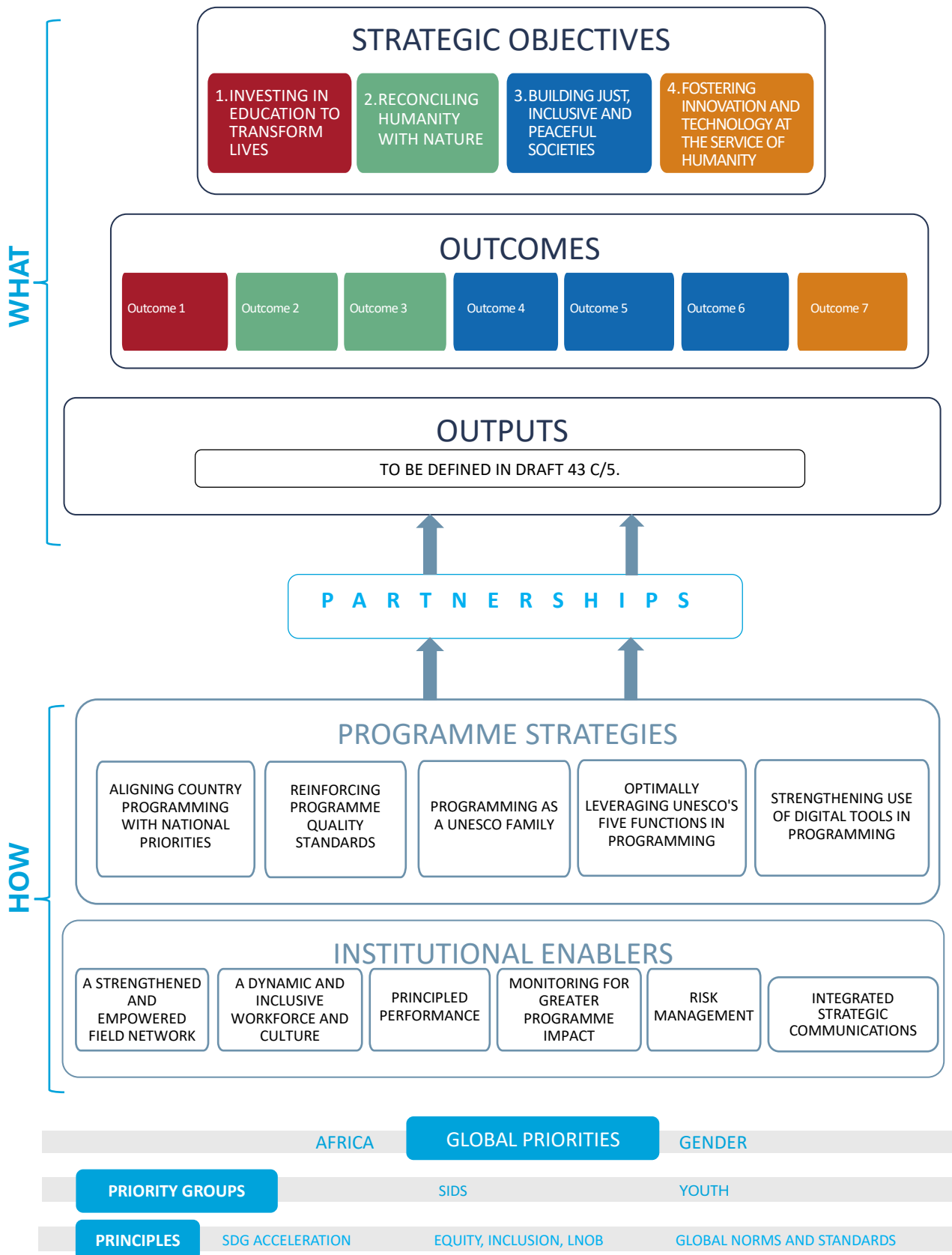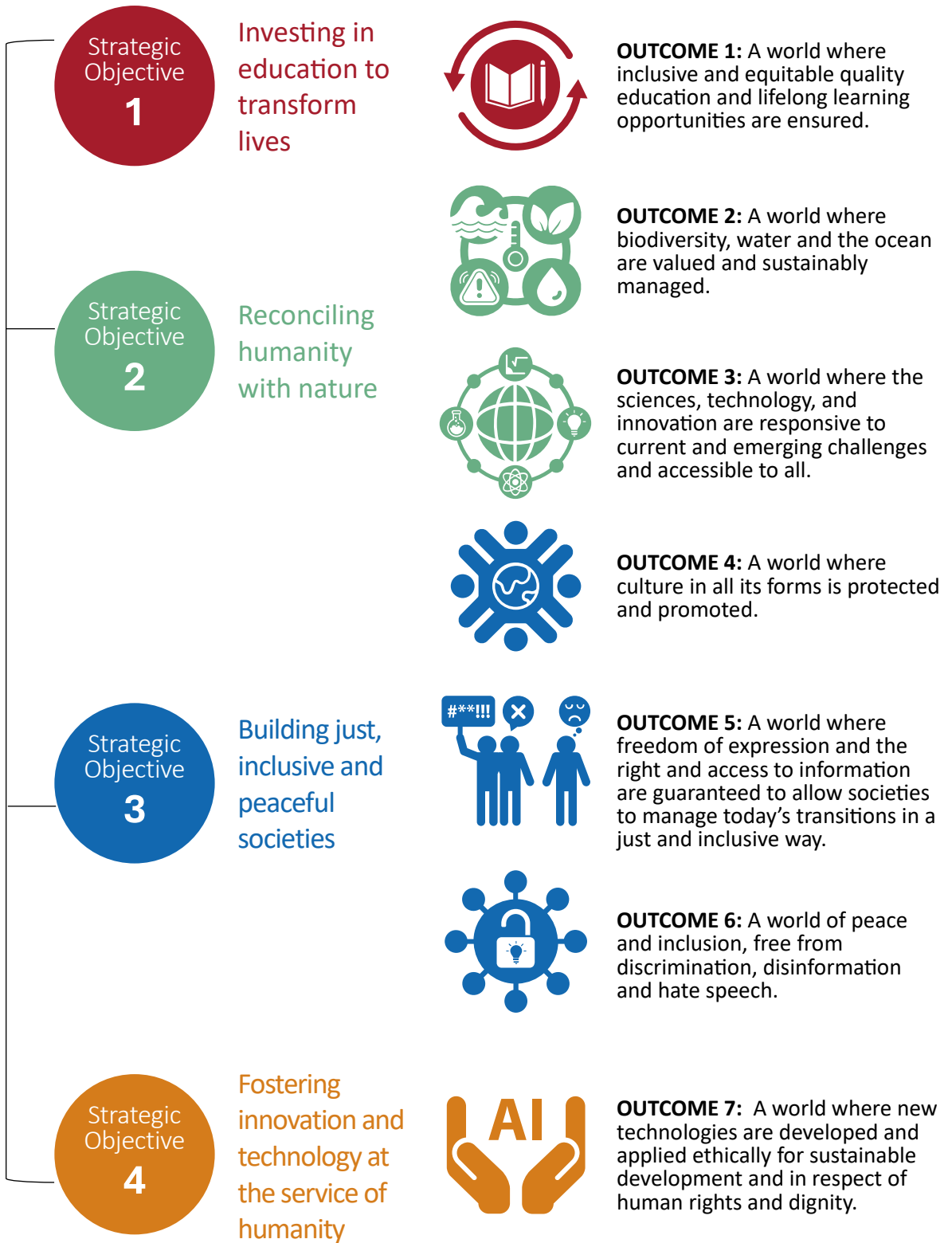| 41-42 C/5 OUTCOMES	PROPOSED 43 C/5 OUTCOMES
Outcome 5: Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions.	**Outcome 4:** A world where culture in all its forms is protected and promoted.
Outcome 6: Promote freedom of expression and the right to information.	**Outcome 5:** A world where freedom of expression and the right and access to information are guaranteed to allow societies to manage today's transitions in a just and inclusive way.
Outcome 7: Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes.	**Outcome 6:** A world of peace and inclusion, free from discrimination, disinformation and hate speech.
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.	**Outcome 7:** A world where new technologies are developed and applied ethically for sustainable development and in respect of human rights and dignity.

- **Create the space for adaptable multi-disciplinary and inter-sectoral work:** The Preliminary Proposals put forward a set of focus areas that outline UNESCO's programme offer to achieve the seven proposed outcomes. These focus areas will serve as the foundation for developing concrete and measurable outputs, which will be proposed in the draft 43 C/5. The proposed areas outline a corporate framework that is adaptable to the diverse needs of different contexts and responsive to an evolving landscape. In addition to drawing on the organization's deep technical expertise, several focus areas group together relevant sectoral interventions to maximize cross-sectoral synergies, learning and implementation, complementing sector-specific areas. This will allow UNESCO – through its revised monitoring framework -- to report more coherently on how it is leveraging expertise across sectors while retaining sector accountability through sector-specific targets.
- **Strengthen Global Priorities and Priority Groups:** In addition to a stronger programmatic focus, it is proposed to further strengthen programme alignment, coordination, resourcing and monitoring of Global Priorities and Priority Groups. The document includes two dedicated sections to this end.
- **Strengthen implementation strategies:** To complement UNESCO's proposed future programme focus (the "What"), specific programme strategies have been introduced to further sharpen the way programmes are implemented (the "How"). This includes approaches to maximize programme impact as well as institutional enablers and partnership strategies to support the effective delivery and sustainability of initiatives.
- **Revise the monitoring framework:** Following the approval of the Preliminary Proposals, the monitoring framework that will accompany the draft 43 C/5 will be updated to include revised outputs as well as clear impact, outcome, and output indicators, providing Member States with a better understanding of how UNESCO's work contributes to higher-level results. This will be complemented by a stronger link between results and resources.

UNESCO Proposed Strategic Framework[3]

WHAT

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. INVESTING IN EDUCATION TO TRANSFORM LIVES
2. RECONCILING HUMANITY WITH NATURE
3. BUILDING JUST, INCLUSIVE AND PEACEFUL SOCIETIES
4. FOSTERING INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY AT THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY

OUTCOMES

Outcome 1 | Outcome 2 | Outcome 3 | Outcome 4 | Outcome 5 | Outcome 6 | Outcome 7

OUTPUTS

TO BE DEFINED IN DRAFT 43 C/5.

P A R T N E R S H I P S

HOW

PROGRAMME STRATEGIES

- ALIGNING COUNTRY PROGRAMMING WITH NATIONAL PRIORITIES
- REINFORCING PROGRAMME QUALITY STANDARDS
- PROGRAMMING AS A UNESCO FAMILY
- OPTIMALLY LEVERAGING UNESCO'S FIVE FUNCTIONS IN PROGRAMMING
- STRENGTHENING USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS IN PROGRAMMING

INSTITUTIONAL ENABLERS

- A STRENGTHENED AND EMPOWERED FIELD NETWORK
- A DYNAMIC AND INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE AND CULTURE
- PRINCIPLED PERFORMANCE
- MONITORING FOR GREATER PROGRAMME IMPACT
- RISK MANAGEMENT
- INTEGRATED STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

	GLOBAL PRIORITIES	
AFRICA		GENDER

PRIORITY GROUPS	SIDS	YOUTH

PRINCIPLES	SDG ACCELERATION	EQUITY, INCLUSION, LNOB	GLOBAL NORMS AND STANDARDS

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[3] Please note that the definitions for each of the four Strategic Objectives remain the same as the previous Medium-Term Strategy. The unchanged definitions have however been shortened for communication purposes on this, and the following page.

4 3   C / 5   P R E L I M I N A R Y   P R O P O S A L

Strategic Objective 1

Investing in education to transform lives

OUTCOME 1: A world where inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities are ensured.

OUTCOME 2: A world where biodiversity, water and the ocean are valued and sustainably managed.

Strategic Objective 2

Reconciling humanity with nature

OUTCOME 3: A world where the sciences, technology, and innovation are responsive to current and emerging challenges and accessible to all.

OUTCOME 4: A world where culture in all its forms is protected and promoted.

Strategic Objective 3

Building just, inclusive and peaceful societies

OUTCOME 5: A world where freedom of expression and the right and access to information are guaranteed to allow societies to manage today's transitions in a just and inclusive way.

OUTCOME 6: A world of peace and inclusion, free from discrimination, disinformation and hate speech.

Strategic Objective 4

Fostering innovation and technology at the service of humanity

OUTCOME 7: A world where new technologies are developed and applied ethically for sustainable development and in respect of human rights and dignity.

Strategic Objective

1

Ensure quality equitable and inclusive education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, in order, inter alia, to reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies, particularly in the digital era

Responding to a Changing Global Context

29.   New UNESCO data has revealed that despite decades of progress, the aspirational targets of SDG 4 remain far from being achieved: 250 million children and youth are still out of school, of which 122 million are girls and 128 million boys. Women still account for nearly two-thirds of the 765 million adults without basic literacy skills. 44 million qualified teachers are needed to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030, and there is an annual financing gap of almost US $100 billion needed to achieve national SDG 4 targets in low- and lower-middle-income countries. The world is not even on track to achieve universal primary completion by the deadline, let alone upper secondary completion. On current trends, only six in ten young people will be finishing secondary school in 2030.[4]

30.   In addition, UNESCO operates in an era of interconnected global challenges that education systems must be prepared to address. These challenges are shaped by divergent demographic trends and an accelerating climate crisis alongside a digital revolution. Emergencies caused by armed conflict, instability, climate disruptions and other disasters, and pandemics are disrupting education and leaving millions of children and youth out of school. Amid the ongoing learning crisis, UNESCO will strengthen and expand its efforts to ensure quality education for all learners, while continually updating and adapting its programmes to meet today's challenges.

31.   **Education for diverging demographic trends:** Demographic changes, with surges in youth populations in some regions and aging populations in others, will require UNESCO to develop diverse educational strategies that respond to these varied needs and ensure the right to education for all. Poor quality education impedes learners' acquisition of the skills needed for life, work and leadership, impacting particularly 15–24-year-olds not in employment, education or training, two thirds of whom are young women.[5] In countries with growing youth populations, there is an urgent need to expand educational infrastructure, train more teachers, and develop curricula that equip young people with skills for work and life. Conversely, in regions with aging populations, the emphasis may need to shift towards adult learning and education. Across all contexts, there is an urgent need for global citizens who have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to face today's interconnected challenges. This requires learning throughout life, including through skilling, reskilling and upskilling.

32.   **The challenges of the green and digital transitions:** The green and digital transitions are shaping our present and future, presenting both challenges and opportunities that make the role of education pivotal. Currently, many education systems are unprepared for these transitions: 47% of national curricula from 100 countries reviewed make no reference to climate change; only 20% of teachers can explain how to take action on climate change;[6] 25% of primary schools lack electricity; 50% of secondary schools are not connected to the internet; and 46% of countries have no national digital skills standards.[7] To prepare learners for the green and digital transitions, they need foundational learning for the future, encompassing literacy, numeracy, social-emotional learning, digital and environmental competencies. Education systems also need to be empowered to leverage technology and protect learners from its potential negative impacts. Finally, the green and digital transitions must go hand-in-hand: education systems need to be supported to ensure that the advances that are made on the digital front do not cancel out the progress made in greening education.

33.   **Gender equality in education is threatened** by conflict, displacement, climate-induced disasters, insecurity, and other backlash. Globally, gender parity in enrolment was achieved in 2013 gender gaps in adult literacy are decreasing, but girls in sub-Saharan Africa are more likely to never attend school or to leave

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[4] UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report, 2023; UNESCO Institute for Statistics; Global Report on Teachers, 2024; and UNESCO SDG 4 Scorecard Progress Report on National Benchmarks.
[5] ILO/SIDA. 2021. Young people not in employment, education or training. Technical brief 3. Geneva, ILO.
[6] Getting every school climate-ready: how countries are integrating climate change issues in education (UNESCO, 2021).
[7] Global Education Monitoring Report 2023 (Global Education Monitoring Report).

early than boys and women continue to make up 63% of illiterate adults and 56% of illiterate young people.[8] Poverty, location, ethnicity and other factors intersect with gender to compound disadvantage,[9] with pregnant and parenting girls being at particular risk of early drop-out.[10] At the same time, boys in many countries are at higher risk of failing to advance and complete their education: for example, globally, by 2020, 114 women were enrolled in higher education for every 100 men.[11] Gender norms, attitudes and practices also affect learning pathways, with boys and men disproportionately participating in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) studies and careers,[12] and girls and women being more likely to enter care-giving fields.

34.   **Healthy and meaningful participation in society:** Physical, emotional, and social resilience are the founding blocks for facing increasing social, economic, and environmental crises. Health and well-being are essential to foundational learning and ending learning poverty. Evidence shows that healthy learners learn better, with lower risks of drop-out, absenteeism and repetition, and that better education contributes to healthier populations. Whilst over 80 countries committed to enhanced physical and mental health and safety measures, very few countries have concrete measures to achieve this goal.[13] For example, while evidence shows the significant positive impact of sport, it is not always an integral part of the education system and only one in three secondary school students worldwide meet the minimum requirement of 180 minutes of physical education and sports per week.[14] Moreover, significant disparities persist in access to safe and secure learning environments, skills-based education about health and well-being, physical education and sport, and school health services including school meals. These disparities disproportionately affect girls and young women, those with disabilities, and the most marginalized learners.

35.   **Leadership for the Global Education Agenda:** Tackling these complex challenges demands leadership and coordinated efforts with partners. The next four years will be crucial as UNESCO accelerates its efforts in the final stretch towards SDG 4 and sustains momentum for transforming education. Following the Transforming Education Summit (TES), it will be essential to identify where and how transformation is occurring, and the outcomes being achieved. This will necessitate more comprehensive data to guide policy decisions and global discourse.
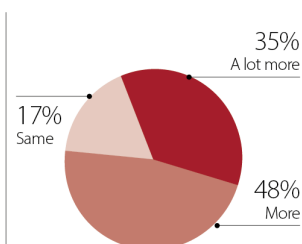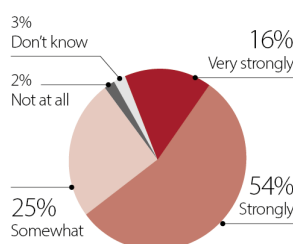
MEMBER STATES SAY

**Outcome 1** contributed to positive change in their countries

- 2% Don't know
- 2% Not at all
- 17% Very strongly
- 50% Strongly
- 29% Somewhat
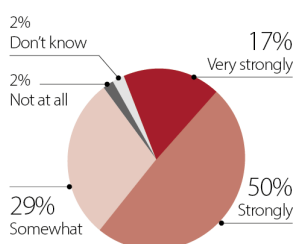
Outcome 1 should increase its programmatic focus

- 35% A lot more
- 17% Same
- 48% More

Outcome 2 contributed to positive change in their countries

- 3% Don't know
- 2% Not at all
- 16% Very strongly
- 54% Strongly
- 25% Somewhat

Outcome 2 should increase its programmatic focus
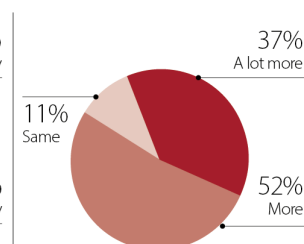
- 37% A lot more
- 11% Same
- 52% More

Note: The outcomes referenced in the Member State survey correspond to the outcome statements in the 41-42 C/5 document.

[8] UNESCO, 2024. Global Education Monitoring Report 2024: Gender report. Paris, UNESCO.
[9] UNESCO, 2024. Global Education Monitoring Report 2024: Gender report. Paris, UNESCO.
[10] Supporting the Education and Health of Young Mothers in Africa: Joint Statement by UNESCO and UNICEF Regional Directors for East and Southern Africa; 3 July 2024.
[11] UNESCO, 2024. Global Education Monitoring Report 2024: Gender report. Paris, UNESCO.
[12] UNESCO Institute for Statistics database.
[13] UNESCO, 'Analysis of National Statements of Commitment, Transforming Education Summit'; 'Dashboard of Country Commitments and Actions to Transform Education'.
[14] *The Global State of Play* Report and recommendations on quality physical education. UNESCO, July 2024.

36.   In response to the evolving landscape and feedback on the 41-42 C/5 outcomes 1 and 2 from Member States (see the chart above), which recognized UNESCO's unique mandate and position in advancing education,[15] UNESCO proposes adjustments to Strategic Objective 1. The merging of two interlinked outcomes allows to better emphasize the connection between UNESCO's work on the global education agenda and programme implementation. The proposed focus areas put forward an offer encompassing the work done under the 41-42 C/5 outputs contributing to Outcomes 1 and 2, with the aim to develop slightly revised outputs fit for responding to the challenges of today, while anticipating the needs of tomorrow. Education will also play a prominent role in other outcomes, contributing to all strategic objectives.

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[15] See 220 EX/17.INF Part II - Analysis of replies to the questionnaire on the draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5).

OUTCOME ONE: A world where inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities are ensured.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 1.1: Strengthening education governance, planning and management.

37.   To enhance its support for effective education policies, plans, management, and governance systems, UNESCO's strategic offer will include technical assistance to national education authorities to develop and implement evidence-based policies and plans, leveraging the specialized support of the International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP) in sector planning and management, as well as the expertise of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). Additionally, UNESCO will work on strengthening and expanding integrated national education data systems, including Education Management Information Systems (EMIS). The organization will also advance curriculum development and reform through the leadership of the International Bureau of Education (IBE), promoting better alignment between policies, pedagogies, learning environments, and assessments to improve learning outcomes. Furthermore, UNESCO will support countries in Africa in developing, monitoring, evaluating, and implementing the new Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2026-2030).

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 1.2: Addressing the teachers' shortage and improving the quality and dignity of the teaching profession.

38.   Based on the findings of the High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession and the recommendations of the Global Report on Teachers, UNESCO will work to increase the supply of qualified and motivated teachers by supporting countries in developing and implementing comprehensive teacher policies that align with broader education sector policies and plans. Additionally, UNESCO will provide technical support for the implementation of normative guidance, notably the 1966 and 1997 Recommendations on Teachers, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO). The organization will also monitor global progress towards achieving SDG 4, expanding the evidence base on teachers and teaching, while promoting and sharing effective pedagogical innovations to enhance teacher policy and practice. Through the Global Teacher Task Force, UNESCO will lead global efforts to address the teacher shortage and elevate the quality and dignity of the teaching profession. Furthermore, UNESCO will advance education policies, teacher professional development, and capacity building in Africa through the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA).

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 1.3: Advancing lifelong learning for all through ECCE, adult learning, literacy, TVET and STEM.

39.   Developing skills for work and life is essential both for individuals and society, as education systems increasingly face the challenge of addressing broader societal issues. To help these systems keep pace with contemporary demands and ensure learners have access to quality lifelong learning opportunities, UNESCO will take several key actions. These include expanding access to and improving the quality of early childhood care and education, scaling up technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to promote skills development for empowerment and employability with a focus on inclusion and gender equality, and specifically targeting efforts to realize Africa's demographic dividend. UNESCO will also support the development of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs at all levels of education, both in formal and non-formal learning environments. This will involve advancing new approaches to STEM education, innovative technology-based pedagogy, enhancing teacher capacity, and developing systems and tools to support the recognition of qualifications in STEM fields. The new UNESCO International Institute for STEM Education (IISTEM) will play a pivotal role in promoting inclusive, equitable, relevant, and quality education in STEM from early childhood to adulthood. Additionally, UNESCO will strengthen youth and adult literacy, particularly in countries with the lowest literacy rates, and support adult learning and education in both formal and non-formal settings, guided by the Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). Literacy,

adult education, TVET, and STEM programs will also be tailored to meet the specific needs of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

PROPOSED FOCUS AREAS 1.4: Strengthening higher education systems and research infrastructures.

40.   As the only United Nations agency with a mandate in higher education, UNESCO will scale up its support to countries in expanding higher education opportunities for all. This will involve strengthening higher education systems with a particular focus on enhancing equity and ensuring equal access for all students. UNESCO will also promote greater adoption and implementation of global and regional Conventions on the Recognition of Qualifications in higher education. In Africa, through the 'Campus Africa' Flagship, UNESCO will build integrated, inclusive, and quality higher education systems by fostering cooperation among institutions, facilitating collaborative research, including PhD programs, promoting academic mobility, and strengthening quality assurance systems. In Latin America and the Caribbean, UNESCO will advance higher education through the leadership of the International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC). Additionally, UNESCO will facilitate research, foresight, innovation, and creative thinking on knowledge, education, and learning through its extensive interdisciplinary network of UNESCO Chairs and the UNITWIN programme.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 1.5: Advancing gender equality in and through education.

41.   UNESCO will continue its efforts to advance gender equality across all aspects of education, focusing on participation and access, the content and context of teaching and learning, and the outcomes that influence life and work opportunities. To leverage its convening power for facilitating policy dialogue and cooperation on gender equality in education, including contributions to the Beijing +30 review in 2025, UNESCO will steer the global agenda based on forthcoming recommendations from the evaluation of the UNESCO Strategy on Gender Equality in and through Education (2019-2025). It will support countries in scaling up gender-transformative teaching and learning, particularly in areas with the greatest gender disparities, and will build national capacity while enhancing the availability and quality of data to inform actions for gender equality in education. Additionally, UNESCO will assist countries in developing education policies, conducting regional and global policy analyses, and engaging in strategic planning that promotes gender equality and addresses key barriers. This support includes mainstreaming gender into curricula, learning materials, and pedagogical approaches through expanded resources, policy guidance, and capacity development.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 1.6: Ensuring access to education in emergencies.

42.   In regions affected by emergencies and crises, *young people* face not only the loss of homes and loved ones but also the disruption of their education, which significantly impacts their futures and society as a whole. UNESCO plays a vital role within the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to ensure the continuity of education during such crises, recognizing education as a fundamental pillar of sustainable development. To achieve this, UNESCO is committed to protecting teaching and learning for both learners and education personnel in conflict and disaster situations by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills for prevention and protection. The organization also focuses on making learning environments safe and secure, promoting the health and well-being of all involved. To ensure that education systems are prepared and resilient, UNESCO will scale up support to Ministries of Education for crisis-sensitive planning, while also providing formal and informal learning opportunities for children, youth, and adults in emergency contexts. Additionally, UNESCO will work to strengthen the availability and quality of education data in crisis settings and provide mental health and psychosocial support for learners and education personnel. Finally, UNESCO will lead and engage in global coordination and advocacy efforts on education in emergencies, collaborating with partners such as UNHCR, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, and the Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 1.7: Advancing education for health and well-being and promoting inclusion for all learners.

43.   In line with the UNESCO Strategy on Education for Health and Well-being, UNESCO will continue to enhance health and education outcomes for all learners by supporting national education sectors and key stakeholders in adopting a comprehensive approach to school health and well-being. The organization will also advocate for and support inclusive education, particularly focusing on vulnerable and marginalized groups. Emphasizing inclusion and equity, UNESCO will address gender equality, health and well-being, and the creation of safe, enabling school environments. To achieve these goals, UNESCO will assist national education sectors in implementing a whole-school approach to health and well-being, strengthen access to quality comprehensive sexuality education through initiatives like the 'Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future' programme, and work to prevent and address all forms of violence and bullying in schools. Additionally, UNESCO will support the development of more inclusive school environments, paying special attention to the needs of learners with disabilities, and enhance school health and nutrition programmes, including school feeding in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP). The organization will also promote quality sport education through the 'Fit for Life' Programme, ensuring coaches are equipped to foster inclusive sport and physical education, and mainstreaming values education through sport. Building on the legacy of the 'Change the Game' Conference, organized by UNESCO ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, UNESCO will prioritize gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence in global sports, collaborating with partners of the Fit for Life Alliance to implement the key initiatives outlined in the Fit for Life Sport and Gender Equality Game Plan.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 1.8: Shaping the global education agenda and monitoring progress.

44.   UNESCO will continue to lead the global education agenda by supporting countries in transforming their SDG 4 commitments into actionable strategies and monitoring their progress. As the Chair of the SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee, UNESCO will mobilize high-level political engagement and foster international cooperation and knowledge-sharing to steer the transformation of education at both political and technical levels. The organization will provide cutting-edge research and data, positioning education at the core of the post-2030 development agenda. To maintain its leading role in the global and regional coordination of SDG 4, UNESCO will advocate for increased domestic and international financing of education, advance efforts on new benchmark indicators such as greening education, school connectivity, and youth participation, and scale up the quality and availability of data to inform decision-making through tools like the SDG 4 Dashboards and the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report. Additionally, UNESCO will develop a foresight approach contributing to the UN post-2030 vision, ensuring that education remains a central driver for change, a social equalizer, and a critical tool for peace. The organization will also advance research to better track progress, respond to emerging trends, and support evidence-based policy development while engaging young people and elevating their voices in shaping the global education agenda through initiatives like the SDG 4 Student and Youth Network.

Strategic Objective

2

Work towards sustainable societies and protecting the environment through the promotion of science, technology, innovation and the natural heritage

Responding to a Changing Global Context

45.   As the lead agency for the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (2024-2033), UNESCO is uniquely positioned to address the growing challenges posed by climate disruption, biodiversity loss, and human activities. In this role, UNESCO is committed to bolstering support for sustainable and resilient ecosystems, recognizing that advancing science, technology, and innovation will be pivotal in creating solutions that drive sustainable development, mitigate the impacts of climate change, and foster resilient societies amidst growing planetary pressures. The importance of including the environment as a key part of socio-economic development, both locally and globally, is clearly shown in UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks. These areas highlight the need to ensure everyone benefits from essential ecosystem services and to foster a better balance between people and nature. This is achieved through a combination of scientific and traditional knowledge, along with universal commitment and participation.

46.   **Knowledge asymmetries and gaps between scientific knowledge and public understanding.** Barriers to producing and accessing scientific knowledge in a transparent, equitable and inclusive manner hinder developing countries and underrepresented groups from fully participating in, contributing to, and benefiting from science, technology, and innovation. This limits efforts to tackle global crises like pandemics, natural hazards, biodiversity loss, and climate change. Rising geopolitical tensions and security issues in key technological and scientific areas, such as AI and biotechnology, threaten international scientific collaboration and disrupt education and scientific progress. Higher education in sciences continues to ignore Indigenous and Local Knowledge systems, despite progress in multilateral recognition of this vital resource. Additionally, the persistent gender gap in science, with only one in three scientists being a woman, significantly hampers scientific progress and equitable development. To address these challenges, it is crucial to empower people – especially younger generations – through education, enabling them to transform mindsets and foster a deeper understanding of science and the connection to the natural world for a more sustainable future.

47.   **Threats to biodiversity, ecosystem health, and geodiversity.** Currently, 8.1 million species are endangered, with 1 million facing extinction. Human activity has significantly altered 75% of the global land surface, including the loss of 32 million hectares of tropical forest between 2010 and 2015, 85% of wetlands since 1700, and 50% of live coral on reefs in the past 150 years.[16] To effectively protect and restore ecosystems, it is crucial to enhance the implementation of key international environmental agreements at the national level. This needs to be achieved through interdisciplinary approaches grounded in human rights, and respect for biodiversity and cultural diversity, while leveraging Indigenous and local knowledge, as UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks are promoting.

48.   **Climate and biodiversity interaction and responses.** Biodiversity and climate change are intricately linked, with each significantly impacting the other. Climate change alters habitats and ecosystems, leading to shifts in species distributions, changes in phenology, and increased extinction risks, thereby reducing biodiversity and associated nature contribution to people's well-being. In turn, loss of biodiversity diminishes ecosystem resilience, making ecosystems less able to sequester carbon and regulate climate, which exacerbates climate change. This feedback loop poses a threat to sustainable development by undermining ecosystem services essential for human well-being, such as food security, water purification, and disease regulation, thereby hindering efforts to achieve long-term economic and social stability.

49.   **Understanding the human dimensions of climate change and green transitions.** Climate change and the green transition also necessitate a fundamental re-evaluation of current narratives and systems. While scientific knowledge and policy frameworks for low-carbon transitions have progressed, understanding the social impact of these transitions and related policies remains challenging. Understanding human behaviour, including through innovative social sciences and humanities research on climate change, will be essential for ensuring a fair transition.

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[16] Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, IPBES, 2019.

50.   **Water security challenges**. The world is alarmingly off-track to reach SDG 6 on safely managed water and sanitation for all. Roughly half of the world's population currently experiences severe water scarcity for at least part of the year. One quarter of the world's population face extremely high levels of water stress, using over 80% of their annual renewable freshwater supply.[17] Pollution, ecosystem degradation, population growth, economic development and climate change are affecting water resources, exacerbating water-related disasters, disease outbreaks, water shortages and deadly floods and droughts.

51.   **Climate and disaster resilience.** Weather-related disasters are becoming increasingly frequent. Flooding alone accounted for 47% of all weather-related disasters (1995-2015), affecting 2.3 billion people. While less frequent than flooding, storms have killed more than 242,000 people in the past 21 years, with 89% of these deaths occurring in lower-income countries, even though they experienced just 26% of all storms. The most vulnerable populations are also the most affected by disasters through displacement, infrastructure damage, and severe economic costs.[18] Climate change exacerbates the frequency and intensity of extreme events like cyclones, floods, including glacial lake outburst floods, and droughts and related landslides. Their impact, together with geological hazards such as tsunamis and earthquake, is amplified by poorly implemented development strategies, unsustainable land use practices and a lack of preparedness.

52.   **Ocean and marine ecosystems challenges.** The largest ecosystem of the planet Earth, a healthy and resilient ocean is vital for sustainable ocean economies, including food supply. However, its sustainability is under threat. Over the last decades, the amount of pollutants in the ocean – nutrients, plastics, chemicals and CO2 – has been increasing at the rate that risks exceeding the safe operating space for humanity. The ocean plays a critical role in climate regulation, by absorbing large amounts of carbon, which are predicted to increase ocean acidification by more than 100% by the end of the century.[19] At the same time, ocean warming is happening at an unprecedented pace, causing rising sea levels, alterations in ocean currents and dramatic changes in marine ecosystems. Sustainability depends on a "predicted ocean", where society understands and can respond to changing ocean conditions.

53.   **The unique challenges faced by small island developing states (SIDS)**. SIDS are particularly vulnerable to climate change and environmental degradation. This is exacerbated by their small landmasses, low-lying coastal areas and dependency on fragile marine and terrestrial ecosystems, which threatens livelihoods and cultural heritage, necessitating tailored solutions. SIDS also have a unique history of sustainable governance of natural resources under traditional systems, which makes the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and local communities a key to sustainability.
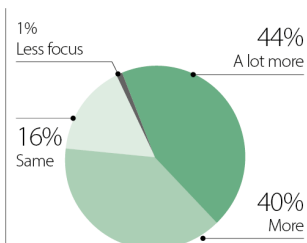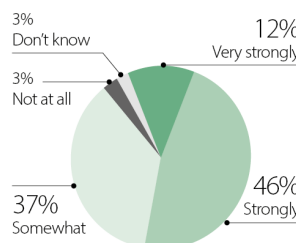

MEMBER STATES SAY

Outcome 3 contributed to positive change in their countries

3% Don't know
1% Not at all
13% Very strongly
26% Somewhat
57% Strongly
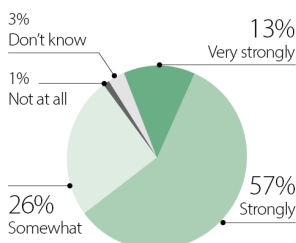
Outcome 3 should increase its programmatic focus

1% Less focus
44% A lot more
16% Same
40% More

Outcome 4 contributed to positive change in their countries

3% Don't know
3% Not at all
12% Very strongly
37% Somewhat
46% Strongly

Outcome 4 should increase its programmatic focus
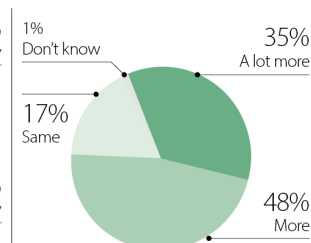
1% Don't know
35% A lot more
17% Same
48% More

Note: The outcomes referenced in the Member State survey correspond to the outcome statements in the 41-42 C/5 document.

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[17] The United Nations World Water Development Report 2024, UNESCO.
[18] The Human Cost of Weather-Related Disasters 1995-2015, UNDRR.
[19] State of the ocean report, 2024, UNESCO.

54.   Strategic Objective 2 will continue to be pursued through two revised outcomes, now labeled as outcome 2 and outcome 3, which correspond to outcomes 3 and 4 in the 41 and 42 C/5. The proposed focus areas present a renewed offer expanding the potential for enhanced impact, including through intersectoral collaboration, compared to the eight outputs in the 41 and 42 C/5. These revisions take account of Member States' feedback to increase UNESCO's field impact and strengthen focus on issues such as Disaster Risk Reduction and the specific needs of small island developing States (SIDS).[20]

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[20] See 220 EX/17.INF Part II - Analysis of replies to the questionnaire on the draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5).

OUTCOME TWO – A world where biodiversity, water and the ocean are valued and sustainably managed.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 2.1: Advancing biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in the face of climate change.

55.   To strengthen climate action through the sustainable management of natural resources, UNESCO will support Member States by leveraging its designated sites—such as Biosphere Reserves, Global Geoparks, and World Heritage sites—to reverse biodiversity loss, restore key ecosystems, and enhance the resilience of natural and socio-economic systems. This includes support to sustainable development strategies and concrete biodiversity and ecosystem conservation and restoration initiatives for these sites. Additionally, UNESCO will provide knowledge support to protect and manage marine biodiversity, incorporating Indigenous and Local Knowledge systems, in alignment with global marine biodiversity targets and the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement. The organization will also promote international cooperation and innovative solutions to safeguard vital natural resources by enhancing biodiversity data collection for conservation, ecosystem restoration, and integrated management of soil, biodiversity, landscapes, and water. UNESCO will ensure that Indigenous and local knowledge informs biodiversity and ecosystem restoration and contributes to understanding climate adaptation opportunities. This effort involves facilitating exchanges between Indigenous knowledge holders and environmental policy processes, promoting Indigenous-led research, and integrating new technologies with traditional knowledge. Furthermore, UNESCO will advance innovations that combine Indigenous knowledge with geospatial information technologies to improve data collection and monitoring of biodiversity and climate change, enhancing environmental decision-making. The organization will also foster access for young scientists, particularly young women, to advanced research through the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Network and the Youth MAB Awards. Additionally, UNESCO will promote ethical reflection, policy dialogue, and governance on climate issues, including climate engineering, and will advance social and human sciences research to influence global agendas, notably through a special report on Climate Transition and the Distributive Impact of Climate Change. This will include the use of humanities insights to accelerate climate action through the Bridges Coalition, a platform for transdisciplinary sustainability science. Finally, UNESCO will deploy solutions via the Inclusive Policy Lab of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme, which crowdsources expertise on fair transitions and supports innovative policies on sustainable welfare, eco-social policies, and equitable resets.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 2.2: Advancing water security for a changing environment and climate resilience.

56.   To ensure sustainable and climate-resilient water management, it is essential to tackle global water security challenges such as scarcity, acceleration of melting glaciers, floods, droughts, pollution, environmental degradation, and competing uses, while also improving governance and cross-border collaboration. Leveraging the ninth phase of the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP), which focuses on science for water security, and UNESCO's global Water Family network—including IHP initiatives, the World Water Assessment Programme, IHP National Committees, category 2 centres, the Groundwater Youth Network, and water-related Chairs and UNITWIN Networks—UNESCO will drive cutting-edge hydrological research, water assessments, and water science education, incorporating Indigenous and local knowledge systems. Global Priority Africa Flagship 5 will focus on climate change resilience and water resource management to strengthen water resilience in Africa, while Priority Group SIDS Accelerator Programmes on sustainable water management for the blue economy and resilience will contribute to these efforts. UNESCO will promote integrated water resources management, including groundwater and urban water management, and develop early warning systems for hydrological extremes like floods and droughts. The organization will advance ecohydrology and water quality to achieve sustainable environmental management, support hydrological research at the basin and country levels, and foster international cooperation in transboundary water management. Additionally, UNESCO will promote gender equality and youth engagement in water governance and management. Based on the UNGA resolution A/78/L.99, which invites UNESCO to lead the Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences (2025–2034) in

collaboration with other UN organizations, UNESCO IHP will spearhead these efforts to enhance global water security.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 2.3: Strengthening Ocean management.

57.   To support Member States in enhancing their capacity for marine scientific research, UNESCO will assist in generating knowledge and developing science-based tools, services, and policies aimed at reversing the decline in ocean health and accelerating the transition towards sustainable management of ocean-related risks and opportunities. As the lead organization for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), UNESCO will guide ocean multilateralism by coordinating actions such as building tsunami early warning systems, mapping the seabed, identifying thousands of previously unknown marine species, increasing ocean literacy, and establishing a gender working group to develop the Ocean Decade Gender Roadmap. UNESCO will also strengthen Member States' capacities for sustainable ocean planning and management, with a focus on regional delivery mechanisms like the IOC Regional Sub-Commissions. Initiatives like the Priority Group SIDS Accelerator Programme 2, 'Growth of Blue Economies', and Global Priority Africa Flagship 5 will contribute to sustainable ocean knowledge and community involvement in monitoring climate change impacts and marine spatial planning. Additionally, UNESCO will expand the knowledge base for policies and programming in areas such as climate change, coastal resilience, marine biodiversity, and marine pollution, with the State of the Ocean report providing up-to-date knowledge for ocean action making use of coastal and marine designated sites such as Biosphere Reserves. The organization will enhance its interface with industry and policy stakeholders to meet data needs through evidence-based analytical products, placing ocean-related observation and data at the service of societal benefit. Furthermore, UNESCO will develop a network to support women in ocean science, ensuring an environment that addresses the challenges they face and supports their research and career development in senior positions, while also engaging youth in ocean science initiatives.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 2.4: Strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

58.   To drive sustainable solutions and enhance global preparedness for climate change impacts and natural hazards, UNESCO will scale up intersectoral, multi-hazard, and multi-stakeholder engagements through policy advice, capacity building, and community awareness initiatives. These efforts, which include contributions from Global Priority Africa Flagship 5 and the Priority Group SIDS Accelerator Programme 4, aim to build resilient societies by helping policy makers and communities understand risks and develop appropriate measures. UNESCO will strengthen early warning systems in coordination with IHP and IOC, ensuring the protection of lives, heritage sites, and cultural practices, while integrating Indigenous and local knowledge into disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies. Additionally, UNESCO will support resilient built environments, including houses and schools, by providing technical assistance and policy guidance for safer construction. UNESCO continues to advocate for the integration of nature-based solutions, such as wetland restoration, mangrove planting, and urban greening, into DRR strategies. UNESCO will also upscale the Tsunami Ready community recognition program and strengthen partnerships with organizations such as the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) under the Secretary-General's Early Warning for All initiative. To ensure inclusive access to quality information on climate change and action, UNESCO will advance the dissemination of scientific knowledge and DRR policies through media, support the safety of journalists reporting on environmental issues, and promote scientific freedom. UNESCO will assist media institutions in strengthening their disaster preparedness and response strategies, promote Media and Information Literacy to combat misinformation during disasters, and support memory institutions as reliable repositories of DRR information. Furthermore, UNESCO will provide innovative methodologies and normative instruments, including the use of Artificial Intelligence, to ensure accurate risk assessment, early warning, and risk communication on climate change adaptation and DRR. The organization will offer multi-sectoral support during disaster response phases to complement humanitarian efforts, address the disproportionate risks faced by vulnerable groups, and empower them to cope with potential hazards through networks like CARDIMA, U-Inspire, and AYAB.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 2.5: Advancing climate and environmental action through Education for Sustainable Development.

59.   UNESCO is committed to supporting Member States in developing and expanding educational activities that address sustainability issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, disaster risk reduction, water and soil management, ocean conservation, sustainable urbanization, and sustainable lifestyles. To harness the power of education in tackling the climate crisis and promoting a green transformation, UNESCO will continue its leadership of the Greening Education Partnership, focusing on greening schools, curricula, teacher training, education system capacities, and community engagement making use of UNESCO designated sites for testing and implementing innovative and integrated approaches. The organization will advance the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for 2030 Agenda and support country-specific ESD initiatives, with contributions from the SIDS Accelerator Programme 1 on climate and environmental action. UNESCO will utilize its unique sites, including Biosphere Reserves, Global Geoparks, World Heritage Sites, and Eco-Hydrology Demonstration Sites as learning hubs for sustainable development and environmental action. In this regard, building on the lessons learned from the Sandwatch programme, UNESCO will further develop the IslandWatch Programme in SIDS, leveraging citizen driven terrestrial, coastal and marine monitoring through digital technologies and enhancing related academic data and information systems, linking to policy formulation for evidence based corrective actions. Furthermore, UNESCO will empower education systems to align digital advancements with progress in greening education, eliminating potential trade-offs. The organization will promote climate-related educational tools across various levels and actively participate in UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meetings, including the Conferences of Parties (COP), to showcase climate-resilient tools and methodologies. UNESCO will work to elevate education on the climate agenda and strengthen global partnerships, particularly through the UNESCO Youth Climate Action Network. Additionally, UNESCO will collaborate with journalists and media to combat climate disinformation, thereby enhancing public understanding, fostering informed decision-making, and empowering individuals and communities to take meaningful climate action.

OUTCOME THREE – A world where the sciences, technology, and innovation are responsive to current and emerging challenges and accessible to all.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 3.1: Strengthening Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) ecosystems, including through open science.

60.   To enhance global Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) capacities, drive technological advancements, and facilitate sustainable development through cross-border scientific partnerships and innovative solutions to complex challenges, UNESCO will support Member States in strengthening their STI ecosystems and lead the process in nurturing a global science culture. This effort contributes to Global Priority Africa Flagship 5, focusing on innovation and Open Science to improve inclusive, rights-based STI policies, and facilitate access to and sharing of scientific and technological advancements. Leveraging UNESCO's normative instruments, such as the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers (2017) and the Recommendation on Open Science (2021), the organization will also support global and regional open science initiatives, including open data and open access collaboration mechanisms and partnerships that enhance scientific knowledge production and dissemination. STI policy governance implementing 'Remote Access to Laboratory Equipment Initiative' to promote open science processes and build a UNESCO open science platform. Additionally, UNESCO will promote science popularization and STEM education to boost science literacy, support women in science through global advocacy, and strengthen science-policy linkages by advancing science diplomacy, particularly on transnational and transboundary issues. This will be facilitated by providing timely and globally comparable data for science through the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and contributing to the strengthening of STI by supporting sustainability science through the Management of Social Transformation Programme (MOST).

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 3.2: Advancing innovation, education and capacity building in basic science and engineering.

61.   Multi-disciplinary sciences are the cornerstone of modern science, driving innovative solutions to meet basic human needs and address pressing sustainable development challenges. As the lead agency for the 'International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (2024-2033)', UNESCO, by using its C2Cs and Chairs, will enhance science education by developing institutional and human capacities in basic sciences and engineering, with a particular emphasis on Africa and setting up normative instrument to guide Member States in their effort. This includes implementing the 'Call to Action Closing the Gender Gap in Science' under Global Priority Africa Flagship 5. UNESCO will also foster international and inter-regional collaboration in basic sciences and encourage research and innovation that translates into actionable scientific knowledge for sustainable development. Additionally, the organization will deploy concrete applications of basic and multidisciplinary sciences to promote urban innovation through city networks, facilitating technology transfer to establish global innovation hubs, and supporting national innovation systems. This support will be tailored to better respond to scientific and societal needs, with a focus on creating equal opportunities for young scientists and engineers, especially young women at the early stages of their careers.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 3.3: Strengthening the science-policy-society nexus.

62.   Addressing complex issues like inequality, climate change, and digital transformation requires multidimensional frameworks, a robust multidisciplinary knowledge base, and evidence-based policy-making. UNESCO will foster the dialogue between science, policy, and society to strengthen their interface to further promote the recourse to evidence for decisions and policy-making at the national and international levels. UNESCO will enhance the contributions of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme, including its Inclusive Policy Lab, the Annual MOST Forum, and its mandate to review current socio-economic paradigms. This effort is aligned with the MOST Strategy 2022-2029, which aims to foster interdisciplinary research and advance innovative policy solutions to global challenges such as

climate change, digital transformation, demographic shifts, migrations, and inequalities. UNESCO will also work to build robust capacities within governments, fostering institutions, systems, and incentives for increased analytical functions and the design of evidence-driven, cross-sectoral, and future-oriented reforms. Additionally, UNESCO will maximize the contribution of the humanities, philosophy, and arts by mobilizing knowledge generation to develop tailored solutions to specific problems and contribute to other analytical frameworks derived from social, economic, and natural sciences. The organization will track scientific progress in these areas through initiatives like the World Social and Human Sciences Conference.

Strategic Objective 3

Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage

Responding to a Changing Global Context

63.   UNESCO's mandate has a key role to play in advancing just, inclusive and peaceful societies. To this end, UNESCO will enhance synergies across its sectors, programmes, and instruments, to place people and communities at the centre of solutions to tackle today's challenges.

64.   **Peace in a geopolitical landscape marked by rising tensions, conflict, and emergencies.** UNESCO has a critical role to play in leveraging the power of its mandate to promote inter-cultural dialogue and peace before, during, and after conflict, including by addressing the rise of intolerance, discrimination, racism and hate speech and by promoting global citizenship. Hate speech not only causes harm at the personal level and can incite group-targeted violence, but it is also an attack on inclusion, diversity and human rights. A recent survey in 16 countries revealed that 67% of internet users reported that they had encountered online hate speech, and that 85% were concerned about the influence of disinformation on their fellow citizens, viewing it as a source of destabilization.[21] In this context, UNESCO needs to harness the power of education for peace and information to address the root causes of conflict and violence. The unanimous adoption by all 194 UNESCO Member States in 2023 of the Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development signaled a commitment to peace through education, which requires concerted efforts to support its implementation through an evidence-based, whole-of-school approach.

65.   **Protecting and promoting culture in a fast-evolving global context**. Culture, in all its forms, has emerged as a critical source of inclusion, resilience and hope during times of crisis, helping to support social cohesion, fairer and more sustainable development, reminding us of our shared humanity. But culture still needs to be recognized more widely as a critical contributor to the development discourse, crucial for building just and inclusive societies. The COVID-19 pandemic showcased the structural fragility of the culture sector to unforeseen global crisis. At the height of the crisis, 90% of countries were forced to close or partially close their World Heritage sites and museums. Throughout the period, the drop in site visitations determined a substantive decline in revenues, eventually triggering staff layoffs. The cultural and creative industries fared consistently worse than national economies overall, with an estimated contraction of about US $750 billion in gross value added in 2020, while 10 million job losses worldwide, especially among freelancers.[22] The pandemic served as a crucial test for the creative industry's contribution to economies and sustainable livelihoods in an increasingly digital world. This requires solutions to equip the creative workforce with essential digital skills, navigate intellectual property issues amid advancements in artificial intelligence, safeguard the diversity of cultural expressions in digital environments, also resolving enduring gender inequalities, harassment, and threats within the evolving cultural and creative industries, thus increasing equal distribution of opportunities. Additionally, cultural and natural heritage faces growing threats from climate change and disruption, such as rising sea levels and extreme weather events that endanger World Heritage sites, while the potential of culture heritage in all its forms and Indigenous and Local Knowledge to contribute to climate action remains underutilized. In conflict situations, cultural heritage is often threatened and endangered by illicit trafficking and destruction, while artistic freedom and the livelihoods of cultural professionals are at risk.

66.   **Limitations to freedom of expression, and threats to the safety of journalists and other professionals worldwide.** Freedom of expression is increasingly limited by restrictive regulations, reduced media viability, deteriorating working conditions, mistrust in journalism and science, harmful online content, and recurrent and new forms of violence against journalists and other professionals expressing critical voices. Gender-based violence and threats particularly impact women active in the public sphere. While an increasing number of countries (140 countries and territories) adopt and implement policies and legislation for public access to information, progress remains modest, and the need to accelerate implementation worldwide acute. Across various regions, many artists, journalists, teachers, and scientists face common challenges while playing a vital role in raising public awareness about pressing issues, mobilizing others to advance key causes, exposing corruption and human rights abuses, and countering disinformation. In 2020-

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[21] Survey on the impact of online disinformation and hate speech, UNESCO/IPSOS 2023.
[22] Cultural and creative industries in the face of COVID-19: an economic impact outlook, UNESCO 2021.

2022, UNESCO recorded a total of 205 killings of journalists worldwide. Despite the slight (3%) decline in the global impunity rate measured in 2022, 86% of crimes committed against journalists remain unsolved. Similarly, trust in science is weakening and scientists have not been spared from the rising hostility in the real and the digital worlds engendered by a surge of polarization. A survey by Nature (2021) revealed that over two-thirds of 300 scientists who have given media interviews about COVID-19 faced adverse consequences and 22% of respondents reported threats of physical or sexual violence.[23] Between 2021 and 2023, 1,132 reports of attacks on scholars, students and their institutions have been recorded, spread over 66 countries and territories.[24] While leading media organizations increasingly adopt digital tools, including artificial intelligence, many media outlets face significant digital divides. This disparity can lead to unfair competition in the media market, adversely affecting cultural diversity, the plurality of views, and inclusive access to information.

67.   **Inequalities, racism, and discrimination amid social transformations.** The world is grappling with major challenges and transformations that have substantial social impacts. Climate change and disruption, digitalization and artificial intelligence, migration, and demographic transitions contribute to persistent and growing inequalities both between and within countries. These inequalities manifest themselves economically in the distribution of income, opportunities and wealth, as well as in unequal access to essential services, information, culture, and technology. None of these challenges are gender neutral. In addition, racial discrimination fuels injustice and uncertainty, often with violent consequences. This erodes trust in institutions and can fuel social unrest and polarization. Some 1.5 billion people live in contexts where societal dialogue is stalling, leaving them more exposed to conflict, forced displacement, poverty and inequality. Despite progress, racism and discrimination remain barriers to equity and justice, particularly for marginalized communities, Indigenous populations, and persons with disabilities, among others.[25] Gender-based violence and discrimination persist, while 90% of the world continues to hold biases against women and girls.[26]

68.   **Global challenges impacting young people.** Young people endure all global challenges with anxiety for the future. Mental health issues among them are prevalent, with approximately 1 in 7 young people experiencing a mental health disorder globally.[27] Youth face a notable lack of opportunities and low-quality job prospects, affecting nearly 1 in 5 young people aged 15-24 who, accordingly to the ILO, are neither employed nor in education or training. Globally, suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15-29-year-olds.[28] Technology and social media are taking a toll on young people: 41% of teens with the highest social media use rate their overall mental health as poor or very poor.[29] Moreover, young people often find themselves at the margins of key processes, and their declining engagement in national politics is a concern in many democracies.

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[23] Nature, 'I hope you die': how the COVID pandemic unleashed attacks on scientists, 2021.
[24] Scholars at Risk, 2023.
[25] We need to talk: measuring intercultural dialogue for peace and inclusion, UNESCO, 2022.
[26] 2023 GENDER SOCIAL NORMS INDEX, UNDP.
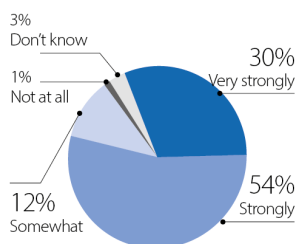[27] Institute of health Metrics and Evaluation. Global Health Data Exchange (GHDx).
[28] WHO Global Health Estimates 2000-2019.
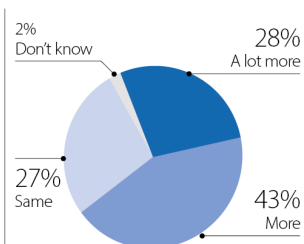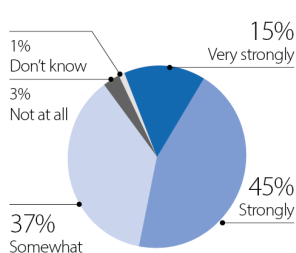[29] Gallup Familial and Adolescent Health Survey 2023.

MEMBER STATES SAY
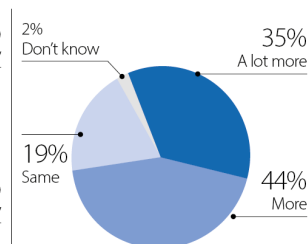
Outcome 5 contributed to positive change in their countries

- 3% Don't know
- 1% Not at all
- 30% Very strongly
- 54% Strongly
- 12% Somewhat

Outcome 5 should increase its programmatic focus

- 2% Don't know
- 28% A lot more
- 43% More
- 27% Same

Outcome 6 contributed to positive change in their countries

- 1% Don't know
- 3% Not at all
- 15% Very strongly
- 45% Strongly
- 37% Somewhat

Outcome 6 should increase its programmatic focus

- 2% Don't know
- 35% A lot more
- 44% More
- 19% Same

Outcome 7 contributed to positive change in their countries

- 4% Don't know
- 4% Not at all
- 13% Very strongly
- 47% Strongly
- 33% Somewhat
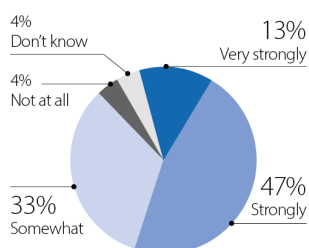
Outcome 7 should increase its programmatic focus
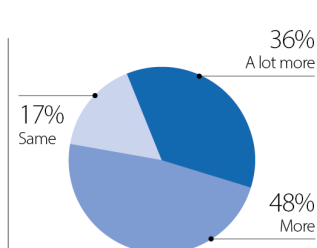
- 36% A lot more
- 48% More
- 17% Same

Note: The outcomes referenced in the Member State survey correspond to the outcome statements in the 41-42 C/5 document.

69.   UNESCO has further sharpened its focus to leverage its mandate to promote culture in all its forms for a fairer sustainable development, which Member States have identified as one of its key strengths. It is proposed that the 43 C/5 maintains three outcomes contributing to this Strategic Objective (new outcomes 4, 5, and 6, corresponding to the 41 and 42 C/5 outcomes 5 on the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions, 6 on freedom of expression and the right to information, and 7 on inclusion and combatting discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes). The proposed focus areas advance a streamlined offer to increase cross-sectoral collaboration, to integrate the new flagship initiative on Education for Peace, as well as to enhance the efforts on Media and Information Literacy.

OUTCOME FOUR – A world where culture in all its forms is protected and promoted.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 4.1: Anchoring culture in public policies and advocating for its role in sustainable development.

70.   The integration of culture into national development processes, strategies, and policies has demonstrated significant potential for reducing poverty, empowering marginalized groups through job creation in the cultural sector, enhancing quality education, promoting social justice, and providing context-relevant solutions for environmental sustainability. To support Member States in documenting and measuring the impact of culture on sustainable development, UNESCO will further foster intergovernmental dialogue to ensure culture remains a priority in international discussions and policy-making, including through its Inter-Agency Platform on Culture for Sustainable Development. Building on the MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration, which recognized culture as a global public good and called for its inclusion as a standalone goal in the post-2030 international development agenda, UNESCO will further support Member States in designing and implementing integrated, equity-driven, inclusive, and participatory policies for safeguarding and preserving culture in its various dimensions. This includes integrating culture into sustainable development policies, guaranteeing cultural rights, and promoting adequate public investment in the protection and promotion of culture. Additionally, UNESCO will expand data analysis and information sharing on the role of culture in achieving sustainable development, monitor gender equality in the cultural sector, including through the Global Report on Cultural Policies, and provide technical assistance for revising and adapting national cultural policy frameworks in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), through the Priority Group SIDS Accelerator Programme 3, 'Culture for Resilience and Sustainable Development'.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 4.2: Protecting, promoting and safeguarding natural and cultural heritage including, tangible, intangible and underwater Heritage.

71.   To support and reinforce the implementation of UNESCO culture conventions and recommendations, including the World Heritage Convention (1972), the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), the Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001), and the Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscapes (2011), UNESCO will provide policy advice and technical support to Member States, enhancing the integration of these conventions into national policies and programs for the safeguarding and promotion of culture and continue to promote the ratification of the Culture Conventions. UNESCO will build capacities for safeguarding living heritage, focusing on human well-being and community empowerment, particularly for youth. The organization will also enhance the protection of underwater cultural heritage through capacity development and the promotion of responsible public access. Furthermore, UNESCO will strengthen the institutional, legal, and technical capacities of Member States to develop effective normative frameworks for conservation and legal protection. The Global Priority Africa Flagship Programme 3, 'Fostering Cultural Heritage and Capacity Development' is well placed to enhance World Heritage capacity building in Africa, particularly on nominations and the removal of sites from the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 4.3: Preserving documentary heritage.

72.   Recent crises have highlighted the urgent need to enhance the preservation and digital accessibility of documentary heritage as a reliable knowledge asset for informed decision-making and combating misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech. To address these challenges and support memory institutions, UNESCO will enhance their capacities for identifying, preserving, promoting, and disseminating documentary heritage. The organization will also advocate for upstream policy initiatives that ensure the sustainable preservation of this heritage and facilitate dialogues between memory institutions and policymakers. Efforts will be scaled up to protect documentary heritage at risk from human-made and natural hazards, including climate change, with a strong focus on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Africa. Additionally, UNESCO will advocate for the use of the Memory of the World International Register as a resource for transformative education, intercultural dialogue, and the fight against disinformation and hate

speech, while recognizing the contributions of women and girls in shaping history and helping youth connect with diverse histories and cultures.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 4.4: Protecting and fostering the diversity of cultural expressions.

73. To promote the diversity of cultural expressions and support dynamic, inclusive cultural and creative industries as drivers for sustainable development, UNESCO will focus on supporting the improvement of the working conditions of artists and cultural professionals by strengthening their economic and social rights and promoting artistic freedom, in line with the Recommendation on the Status of the Artist (1980). The organization will support robust regulatory and institutional frameworks by enhancing Member States' capacities to design, implement, and monitor policies aligned with the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). This includes developing national and regional frameworks on the Status of the Artist, building capacity and providing support for artists through the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD), and the UNESCO-Aschberg programme. UNESCO will also support Member States in the ratification and implementation of the 2005 Convention. UNESCO will also work to protect cultural diversity by addressing the impacts of digital transformation on cultural and creative industries, including through the UNESCO Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms and the Operational Guidelines on the Implementation of the 2005 Convention in the Digital Environment. Furthermore, the organization will support enabling environments to foster youth employment in the cultural and creative industries, address gender inequalities, and empower women within these sectors. To harness urban creativity for sustainable development, UNESCO will seek greater synergies among its cultural networks, such as the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and the World Book Capital Network, as well as through the UNESCO Cities Platform and museum networks. Lastly, UNESCO will support enhancing the role of museums in education and social inclusion, in line with the Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity, and their Role in Society (2015).

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 4.5: Protecting culture in emergencies.

74. UNESCO will intensify its efforts to protect and promote culture in all its forms during crises and disasters, both natural and human-induced, by emphasizing the power of culture for recovery and resilience and encouraging a renewed focus on preparedness. Central to this mission is supporting the ratification and implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention and its two Protocols, as well as the 1970 Convention on the illicit trafficking of cultural property. To this end, UNESCO will support Member States' preparedness and response capacities for emergencies impacting culture, including conflicts and disasters, by providing emergency assistance through rapid response mechanisms and financial tools such as the Heritage Emergency Fund. The organization will also support Member States strengthening institutional, legal, and technical capacities to protect against illicit trafficking of cultural property and promote an international coordinated response. Additionally, UNESCO will support building the capacity of institutions, including military and law enforcement, for the protection of cultural property, and develop innovative tools like high-quality images and 3-D renderings of stolen cultural objects including to support restitution efforts. Efforts will also be scaled up to protect artists, living heritage bearers, and culture professionals in emergencies, with a particular focus on women. Moreover, UNESCO will further advocate for integrating culture into humanitarian, security, peacebuilding, and recovery processes to reinforce community resilience. Moreover, UNESCO will further Support the conservation and management of World Heritage sites affected by the impacts of climate change and disruption, as well as conflicts in particular in Africa and with the contribution of youth, as well as to counter illicit trafficking, support museums, and encourage return and restitution directly contributing to Global Priority Africa Flagship Programme 3 'Cultural Heritage and capacity development'.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 4.6: Advancing multilingualism and linguistic diversity, including in the framework of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

75.   The importance of linguistic diversity for sustainable development must be increasingly recognized through awareness-raising and multi-stakeholder dialogue at all levels to eliminate discrimination against lesser-used and Indigenous language users. To preserve and promote linguistic diversity and multilingualism both online and offline, UNESCO will focus on raising awareness of the crucial role linguistic diversity plays in inclusive sustainable development, paying particular attention to the connection between biological and linguistic diversity. Leveraging its role as the lead agency for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032) in collaboration with UNDESA, UNESCO will support the development of inclusive language policies and legislative frameworks that represent lesser-used and Indigenous language groups. Additionally, UNESCO will expand data analysis and information sharing to produce evidence that informs decision-making on language preservation and protection. The organization will also promote multilingualism in media and foster the development of language technologies to support cultural diversity and digital empowerment, including the creation of multilingual digital and AI tools in line with the 2003 Recommendation on the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace. Furthermore, UNESCO will support linguistic and educational policies for effective bilingual and multilingual teaching, particularly within the framework of Global Priority Africa Flagship 2, 'The General History of Africa', and the Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination. Finally, UNESCO will develop and expand initiatives that highlight the value of youth involvement in language preservation through education and technology.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 4.7: Strengthening synergies between culture and education.

76.   The UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education, unanimously adopted at the World Conference on Culture and Arts Education in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in 2024, represents a significant milestone for culture and education. By viewing culture and arts education as an ecosystem that encompasses lifelong learning, UNESCO aims to place culture and the arts at the core of quality education. To achieve this, UNESCO will work towards monitoring the framework's implementation progress, leveraging existing practices at the global, regional, and national levels, and facilitating the sharing of best practices among Member States. Additionally, UNESCO will engage its networks across the Education and Culture sectors to advance and disseminate data and research in culture and arts education, strengthening evidence-based analyses and intensifying cooperation with other regional and international networks, as well as public and private stakeholders. Moreover, UNESCO will explore ways to deepen existing synergies between relevant Conventions, Recommendations, programmes, and initiatives to further strengthen culture and arts education.

OUTCOME FIVE – A world where freedom of expression and the right and access to information are guaranteed to allow societies to manage today's transitions in a just and inclusive way.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 5.1: Protecting and advancing freedom of expression and the right and access to information.

77.   Empowering individuals to voice their opinions is essential for democratic processes and fosters innovation and diversity. As the custodian of SDG indicator 16.10.2 on public access to information and a contributing agency for SDG indicator 16.10.1 on fundamental freedoms, UNESCO will support Member States in developing and strengthening laws, governance frameworks, and policies that safeguard freedom of expression and the right to access information both online and offline. This effort is linked to the proposed focus area 7.3. UNESCO will also leverage international cooperation to implement the UNESCO Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms to ensure respect for fundamental rights, related to proposed focus area 7.1. Additionally, UNESCO will advocate for press freedom, the protection of journalists' rights, and artistic freedom, while providing support to media organizations and professionals to ensure effective operations during crises or electoral periods, addressing the new risks and opportunities of the digital age. Furthermore, UNESCO will strengthen the role of communication and media in crisis mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery by promoting inclusive and accurate information dissemination, building media capacities, fostering community engagement, and enhancing partnerships with humanitarian agencies, disaster management authorities, and scientific communities. Finally, UNESCO will continue to lead the monitoring and reporting on SDG 16.10.2 in cooperation with the Inter-agency Group on SDG Indicators and UNDP.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 5.2: Advancing the safety of journalists and other professionals within UNESCO's mandate, including scientists, and researchers.

78.   UNESCO is committed to enhancing the safety of journalists through the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. Building on the lessons learned from this initiative, UNESCO plans to expand its focus to other professions within its mandate, including scientists and researchers, who also face significant risks to their freedom of expression and personal safety. Leveraging its experience with duty-bearers, such as the judiciary and law enforcement bodies, UNESCO will enhance the capacities of key stakeholders to address the challenges to the safety of journalists, particularly women journalists, through awareness-raising, advocacy, and the continued implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, while continuing to monitor and report on the killings of journalists. Additionally, UNESCO will develop tailored strategies, specific guidelines, and training programs, while advocating for stronger legal protections to address the unique safety challenges faced by journalists, scientists, and researchers. Collaborating with Member States, UNESCO will work to strengthen legal frameworks and national mechanisms that align with the principles of prevention, protection, and prosecution to reinforce the safety and freedom of expression of professionals in its field. Furthermore, UNESCO will collect evidence and data on the status of scientists, produce periodic reports, promote policy dialogues at ministerial and technical levels, and launch a global observatory and monitoring tool. These efforts will be supported by advocacy campaigns, capacity building, and the forging of alliances at regional and global levels, in line with the UNESCO Programme on the freedom and safety of scientists and the "Call to Action" under the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 5.3: Fostering media development and media viability.

79.   UNESCO will continue to play a crucial role in advancing media development and ensuring the viability of media organizations in the face of digital age challenges, primarily through the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). To promote media pluralism and advocate for a diverse and inclusive media landscape that reflects various societal perspectives, UNESCO will support the creation and

maintenance of enabling environments that foster media diversity, gender equality, and inclusion, particularly for minorities, persons living with disabilities, and Indigenous Peoples. Additionally, UNESCO will work to ensure the viability of independent media outlets and organizations, improve the sustainability of community, public service, and Indigenous-led media, and assist media organizations in leveraging digital technologies. This support includes helping media develop sustainable business models to navigate economic challenges posed by digital transformation, adopt new technologies like AI, innovate in content production and delivery, and adapt to changing audience behaviours, all while maintaining editorial independence. Furthermore, UNESCO will support the professionalization of media and journalism education to strengthen the overall quality and resilience of the media sector.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 5.4: Advancing information integrity and reliability.

80.   Ensuring the accuracy, reliability, transparency, and trustworthiness of information as a public good is essential for sustainable development, as it underpins informed decision-making, knowledge sharing, and operational efficiency. To uphold these principles of information integrity, UNESCO will foster global partnerships and collaborations to share best practices and develop standards that ensure access to reliable and accurate information worldwide. The organization will promote human rights-based, multi-stakeholder governance within the digital ecosystem to protect freedom of expression and access to information. Additionally, UNESCO will implement strategies to identify and counteract disinformation, misinformation, and hate speech by promoting accurate and trustworthy information, especially in the context of digital transformation. Efforts will also be enhanced to promote plurality and diversity in media and online content, spreading critical and multilingual information on public interest issues, including through documentary heritage preservation and Media and Information Literacy programs that strengthen digital competencies and critical thinking. Moreover, UNESCO will advocate for and support the practice of ethical journalism by providing training and resources for media professionals and will develop legal and policy measures to remove barriers to women's access to information, including combating online and offline gender-based violence.

OUTCOME SIX – A world of peace and inclusion, free from discrimination, disinformation and hate speech.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 6.1: Fostering peace through education.

81.   UNESCO plays a crucial role in leveraging the power of education to combat intolerance, discrimination, and hate speech, while promoting education for peace before, during, and after conflict. This effort aims to address the root causes of conflict and violence. The unanimous adoption by all 194 UNESCO Member States in 2023 of the Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development demonstrates a collective commitment to peace through education. To implement this Recommendation, UNESCO will launch a new Flagship Programme on Education for Peace, building on its longstanding efforts to foster peace through education. This initiative will advance the conceptualization of education for peace by aligning the transformative vision of SDG target 4.7 with the 2023 Recommendation's universal mandate. It will encompass global citizenship education, human rights education, education for sustainable development, and efforts to prevent hate speech, violent extremism, and all forms of discrimination and racism. Additionally, UNESCO will define core standards for countries to aspire to, based on the 2023 Recommendation and existing resources, and strengthen linkages with higher education and research communities through the creation of a UNESCO Academy. This academy will serve as a global platform for research, knowledge sharing, and co-creation. The initiative will also focus on strengthening monitoring and reporting on the Recommendation, filling critical gaps in research and evidence concerning effective educational approaches to peace, and scaling up support for training and capacity development at the country level. Furthermore, UNESCO will work with the Mahatma Gandhi Institute on Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) to advance SDG 4.7 through social and emotional learning, innovative digital pedagogies, and youth empowerment. Leveraging Global Priority Africa Flagship 2, 'The General History of Africa', the pedagogical use of the General History of Africa will also be promoted to contribute to peace.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 6.2: Advancing Inter-cultural understanding, anti-racism and anti-discrimination.

82.   UNESCO is committed to challenging stereotypes, promoting gender equality, and enhancing historical understanding to contribute to inclusive societies where diversity is celebrated, and discrimination is eradicated. To achieve this, UNESCO will support Member States and a broad range of stakeholders in combating racism and discrimination through initiatives like the Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination and the UNESCO Masterclasses against Racism and Discrimination. The organization will also implement campaigns to raise awareness about the historical roots and contemporary forms of racism, focusing on the consequences of enslavement and the slave trade, and advocating for restorative justice for Afro-descendants as part of the Routes of Enslaved Peoples programme. UNESCO will promote places of history and memory linked to enslavement as tools for dialogue and anti-discrimination, while also equipping local communities to leverage these sites for socio-economic benefit. The development of city-twinning initiatives will further enhance understanding between Africa and its Diasporas, fostering joint research and activities. In addition, UNESCO will support intercultural dialogue initiatives that bring together diverse communities, including young people, to foster mutual understanding. The organization will address the root causes of gender inequalities through educational programs and policies that challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes, such as the 'Transforming MEN'talities' initiative, which engages men and boys as allies in the fight for gender equality. Through the Global Priority Africa Flagship 2, UNESCO will also enhance the General History of Africa, to provide a more comprehensive representation of African history. Finally, UNESCO will strengthen the structures, capacities, and skills needed for intercultural dialogues as tools for peace, integration, and inclusion, by developing an appreciation of interconnected historical narratives, such as those of the Silk Roads, and promoting the compassionate leadership movement.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 6.3: Advancing media and information literacy.

83.   In the digital age, media and information literacy (MIL) is essential for empowering citizens to navigate a complex information landscape. UNESCO recognizes that achieving this goal requires intersectoral collaboration, building synergies across its work in fostering freedom of expression and access to information, developing formal and non-formal education curricula on MIL, and addressing issues like climate action, anti-discrimination, and anti-racism. UNESCO's efforts will focus on integrating MIL into national education policies and curricula, building on progress from previous programming cycles. The organization will enhance critical thinking and digital literacy skills through MIL programmes targeting various age groups, aiming to counter the spread of disinformation and hate speech, including gendered disinformation, while ensuring youth engagement. This includes developing and distributing educational resources on MIL for stakeholders such as schools, youth organizations, media, content creators, communities, and cities. Furthermore, UNESCO will develop MIL programmes specifically designed for educators, journalists, and communities to strengthen their digital literacy and critical thinking, including around the use of Generative AI. The organization will also ensure that online user-empowerment through MIL remains central to the governance systems of digital platforms and will support research and dissemination of good practices to build resilience against disinformation and other harmful content.

PROPOSED FOCUS 6.4: Developing inclusive policies and programmes on youth.

84.   UNESCO recognizes the critical role of youth in shaping a sustainable future and is committed to developing inclusive policies and programs that address the unique and complex challenges faced by young people. To this end, UNESCO will advance the development and implementation of cross-sectoral youth policies, including those focused on education, employment, and health, ensuring that they address the specific needs of young people. This will include promoting youth participation in decision-making processes at all levels, notably through the mobilization of the UNESCO Toolbox for youth policy and programming, including through Global Priority Africa and the Priority Group SIDS Accelerator Programme 6, 'Youth engaged for Peaceful and Inclusive Societies'. UNESCO will also work to develop a deeper understanding of the situation and needs of young people through initiatives like the Youth as Researchers Initiative, the UNESCO Youth Global Outlook, and gender-responsive youth-led research, which will inform future policies and programs. Collaboration with young people and youth organizations will be key, with efforts focused on developing innovative solutions to pressing social issues through initiatives such as the Global Youth Grant Scheme, the annual UNESCO Youth Hackathon during Global MIL Week, and the support of youth-led networks like the UNESCO Youth Climate Action Network and the UNESCO Global Youth Community. Additionally, UNESCO will address gender-based violence and discrimination among young people through targeted educational and support programmes, aligning with the proposed focus area 1.5 in outcome 1.

PROPOSED FOCUS 6.5: Advancing sports values, ethics and integrity through anti-doping.

85.   UNESCO's Anti-Doping Convention is dedicated to promoting ethical sports practices and enhancing the social impact of sports by ensuring fairness and preventing unethical behaviours, thereby fostering a culture of integrity and respect within the global sports ecosystem, particularly among youth. To achieve these goals, UNESCO will promote the implementation of the Anti-Doping Convention, focusing on building the capacities of governments to strengthen their anti-doping structures, policies, and frameworks. The Convention's capacity to address youth-centered challenges related to sport values, ethics, and integrity will be reinforced, particularly in combating the use of prohibited substances and methods through applicable tools, such as an anti-drug pass. Additionally, UNESCO will support the Convention in adapting to emerging challenges within the global sports ecosystem, including the use of artificial intelligence, neurosciences, traditional pharmacopoeia, the rise of e-sports and virtual reality, and the impact of climate change on athletes. Moreover, UNESCO will promote sports as a tool for social inclusion and development through values-focused programs and events, aligning with the Fit for Life sports initiative and related objectives.

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

Responding to a Changing Global Context

86.   As frontier technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and neuro-technologies converge and become more powerful and accessible, UNESCO's mandate is crucial in ensuring these advances are leveraged to promote sustainable development.

87.   **Challenges and opportunities of frontier technologies.** Emerging and converging technologies such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, nanotechnology, neurotechnology, synthetic biology, internet of things, virtual and augmented reality, and quantum technologies, among others, hold significant potential to drive innovation and achieve sustainable development. However, they also pose ethical, social, and environmental human development challenges, and the respect of human rights must be ensured in the development and application of these technologies. Neurotechnology, when combined with artificial intelligence, intensifies several concerning trends, with impact on mental privacy, mental integrity, freedom of thought, agency, and social justice. Concurrently, AI risks amplifying biases, spreading disinformation, and threatening democracy, with a rising number of incidents related to its unethical use and resulting increases in technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and other forms of discrimination.[30] At the same time, AI and next-generation technologies like remote sensing and advanced data analytics can be effectively employed for managing natural resources, combating climate change, and reducing disaster risks. Notwithstanding, it is important to acknowledge that AI itself contributes to increased carbon emissions due to its high energy consumption.

88.   **Digital technologies impact how knowledge and information is accessed, shared and produced.** The COVID–19 pandemic increased the digital transmission of knowledge, making digital competencies even more crucial for participation in society and employment opportunities. Based on UNESCO's research, 40% of the most-mentioned skills on various lists of skills for the future are socio-emotional. Cognitive and hybrid skills follow with 25% each.[31] There is no common language to refer to these abilities and skills, complicating communication between teachers, learners, employers and employment advocates. Moreover, AI poses new and uncharted challenges for teaching and learning, with the potential to reshape education in both positive and negative ways. Public administrations responsible to guide the development and use of digital technologies require upskilling to be able to leverage these technologies for the benefit of societies and enhance trust in government and institutions.

89.   **Digital Challenges and Opportunities for Access to Information (ATI).** Access to information and knowledge is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of sustainable development. The digitization of many aspects of life has generated growing volumes of information and data, which can be used to meaningfully monitor and achieve the SDGs, exponentially expanding access. However, as most data today is owned by private actors, and is subject to intellectual property rights, access to information beyond state institutions is increasingly relevant. While open licensing frameworks can facilitate access, promoting transparency and collaboration while respecting the rights of the data owners, private ownership might raise issues of accountability for respecting and protecting rights and ensuring transparency. Additionally, cross-border international data flows complicate national legislation and decision-making. Another critical issue is balancing the right to privacy with the right to information when potential conflicts arise. Digital data processing and lack of data minimization can compromise privacy, as personally identifiable information may be exposed through big data analysis. Data collection and mining can lead to blanket surveillance, data invisibility, commercial or political profiling, biased automated decision-making, behavioural tracking and prediction and manipulation of data subjects.

90.   **Effective and equitable data governance is essential for AI and frontier technology governance.** As digital transformation drives progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), robust policies can unlock data's potential while managing risks and ensuring its benefits for all. The fragmented data governance landscape hampers global collaboration, requiring forward-thinking solutions. Member states need support in developing responsible, equitable, and interoperable frameworks that promote sustainable

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[30] 2023 AI Index Report, Stanford University.
[31] The futures we build: abilities and competencies for the future of education and work, UNESCO 2023.

development while safeguarding data privacy, unlock data value and ensure secure, trustworthy data exchanges, and address diverse stakeholder needs, promoting equity and inclusion.
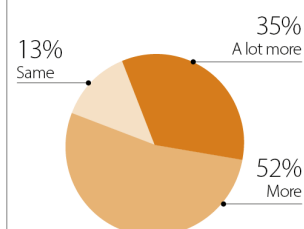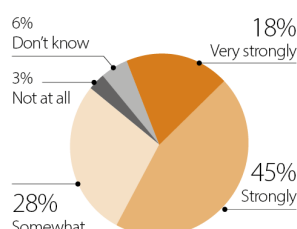
MEMBER STATES SAY
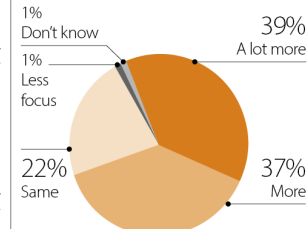
Outcome 8 contributed to positive change in their countries
- 7% Don't know
- 2% Not at all
- 17% Very strongly
- 45% Strongly
- 30% Somewhat
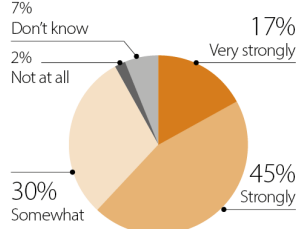
Outcome 8 should increase its programmatic focus
- 13% Same
- 35% A lot more
- 52% More

Outcome 9 contributed to positive change in their countries
- 6% Don't know
- 3% Not at all
- 18% Very strongly
- 45% Strongly
- 28% Somewhat

Outcome 9 should increase its programmatic focus
- 1% Don't know
- 1% Less focus
- 39% A lot more
- 37% More
- 22% Same

Note: The outcomes referenced in the Member State survey correspond to the outcome statements in the 41-42 C/5 document.

91.   In the upcoming programming period, UNESCO will focus on tackling the ethical, social, and environmental challenges, as well as the skill development needs, stemming from rapid technological and scientific advancements. Member States have identified the development of ethical standards for innovative technologies and digital transformation as one of the top areas for increased focus. To address this, UNESCO has consolidated outcomes 8 and 9 from the 41-42 C/5 into a single outcome (now outcome 7), proposing an offer around four focus areas that encompass work under five outputs of the 41 C/5 and enhance intersectoral collaboration. Media and Information Literacy (MIL) has been incorporated into outcome 6, alongside initiatives to combat misinformation and disinformation. Documentary heritage has been included in outcome 4, to increase synergies with other heritage work.

OUTCOME SEVEN –A world where new technologies are developed and applied ethically in respect of human rights and dignity.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 7.1: Ensuring the ethical development and use of AI for the benefits of all.

92.   UNESCO plays a critical role in guiding Member States to develop ethical AI governance frameworks, policies, and institutions, ensuring that these technologies benefit all of humanity and do not exacerbate existing inequalities. Building on the 2021 Recommendations on the Ethics of AI and the comprehensive program for its operationalization, UNESCO will upscale the national application of the Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM) and Ethical Impact Assessment (EIA), establishing benchmarks for ethical framing of national AI strategies and advancing an AI Model Governance Framework. This includes enhancing the capacities of governments, including the executive, judiciary, and parliamentarians, to create enabling environments and governance frameworks for harnessing AI for sustainable development. UNESCO will leverage the global community of experts to develop competencies within governments and civil society through initiatives such as the AI Ethics Experts without Borders Network and the Women for Ethics of AI platform. The organization will lead international multistakeholder collaboration on ethical AI governance through platforms like the annual Global Forum on the Ethics of AI and the Global AI Ethics and Governance Observatory. Moreover, UNESCO will contribute knowledge to major AI initiatives in forums like AI Summits, G20 and other global forums as well as deepen collaboration with the private sector through the Business Council for Ethics of AI and the AI Ethics Disclosure mechanism. Additionally, UNESCO will support the follow-up of the Global Digital Compact, co-chair the UN Interagency Working Group on AI, and establish regional platforms for implementing the Recommendation in various regions, including Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The organization will develop mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the impact of AI technologies on society, pilot an open-source AI tool to support policy-making, and harness AI for real-time crises response and resource allocation. UNESCO will promote the monitoring, international dialogue and capacity building on AI & culture policies, in view of leveraging AI technologies to increase equitable access to culture; enrich cultural diversity and creative industries; protect and promote heritage; encourage pluralism of languages; as well as contributing to ethical AI development and protecting the rights of artists and cultural professionals.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 7.2: Developing and implementing ethical, scientific and technical guidelines and policies for frontier technologies.

93.   Given its mandate, expertise, and experience, UNESCO plays a crucial role in establishing and implementing guidelines and policies for emerging and converging technologies, such as biotechnology, synthetic biology, climate engineering, nanotechnology, the internet of things, virtual and augmented reality, quantum technologies, and space exploration. This support is essential for maximizing the benefits of these technologies while mitigating their associated risks. To achieve this, UNESCO will develop ethical and human rights-based scientific and technical guidelines for these emerging technologies, ensuring their accessibility to all stakeholders and assisting governments and institutions in integrating these guidelines into national and international policy frameworks. The organization will also support the implementation of the forthcoming Recommendation on the Ethics of Neurotechnology, pending its adoption by the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference. Additionally, UNESCO will promote an inclusive digital transformation aligned with human rights principles, advocating for an open and multistakeholder-driven internet through the concept of Internet Universality. UNESCO will further enhance its anticipatory role as a global agenda-setter by identifying and informing Member States about emerging technological and scientific trends, such as quantum computing, climate engineering, and space exploration, addressing the ethical, social, and environmental challenges they pose. The organization will produce knowledge and policy recommendations to harness the benefits of these advancements while mitigating ethical, social, and environmental risks. Furthermore, UNESCO will enhance international cooperation to bridge digital and knowledge gaps, ensuring inclusive and harmonized digital governance, including through follow-up initiatives like the Summit of the Future and the Internet Governance Forum. Gender equality will remain a central concern in digital transformation policies, with UNESCO promoting women's access to and

participation in decision-making related to ICT and their involvement in research teams developing frontier technologies. Lastly, UNESCO will leverage next-generation technologies to manage natural resources more effectively, combat climate change, and reduce disaster risks, integrating these technologies into its related programs to enhance their impact.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 7.3: Fostering universal and open access to information and digital public goods.

94.   In the digital age, ensuring universal access to information and promoting knowledge sharing through open solutions and digital public goods, while safeguarding data privacy and security, is crucial for global development. UNESCO is committed to championing open solutions and accessible content creation to bridge digital divides, promote transparency, and foster economic development. To achieve this, UNESCO will advocate for innovative approaches to open data, open access to scientific information, and the use of free and open-source software, providing policy guidelines and repositories through initiatives like the Information for All Programme (IFAP). The organization will also advance Open Educational Resources (OER) policies and initiatives, monitoring the implementation of the 2019 Recommendation on OER. Additionally, UNESCO will operationalize its Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms, defend online information integrity, and promote data transparency and reliability. The development of data governance frameworks and tools for Member States will be a priority, encouraging data-driven sustainable development policies while ensuring data privacy and equitable distribution of data governance benefits across society. UNESCO will further promote international collaboration and dialogue on digital policies and data governance, particularly in Africa, ensuring that digitalization advancements align with African contexts and values. This effort supports the AU Continental Data Policy Framework and enhances Africa's digital resilience in line with the Global Priority Africa Flagship 4, 'New and Emerging Technologies for Sustainable Development'.

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA 7.4: Developing knowledge, skills, and competencies on digital, emerging and converging technologies.

95.   UNESCO will continue to support the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for governments to shape inclusive digital futures and for citizens to thrive in an evolving technological landscape. This involves enhancing the capacities of public administrations to develop policies that promote inclusive digital transformation and responsible AI development, ensuring enabling environments and guardrails that address digital and knowledge divides, including gender-based disparities. UNESCO will implement capacity development initiatives aimed at equipping individuals, particularly young people, with the skills needed to navigate and excel in the digital age, with a special focus on Global Priorities Gender Equality and Africa, as well as marginalized and underserved communities, including persons with disabilities. To encourage lifelong learning, UNESCO will provide continuous education opportunities and resources for skill development in emerging technologies, integrating digital skills into national media and information literacy policies and strategies. Furthermore, UNESCO will promote the use of inclusive digital tools and EdTech solutions tailored to the needs of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), fostering synergies between digital and green transitions through partnerships with tech companies as part of the Priority Group SIDS Accelerator Programme 5, 'Digital Technologies for Sustainable Development'. This will include training teachers in digital pedagogy and creating online platforms offering culturally relevant, multilingual educational content. Additionally, UNESCO will build capacities to leverage digital technologies for cultural creation and employment.

PROPOSED FOCUS 7.5: Harnessing technology, including AI for education.

96.   While technology has the potential to enhance access to learning, it can also exacerbate inequalities and raise social and ethical challenges for students and teachers. Despite widespread commitment to the digital transformation of education, most education systems are not yet equipped to address these challenges. There is a pressing need for guidance on how digital technologies and resources can be leveraged to contribute to broader efforts to improve learning for all. In response, UNESCO will support countries in developing comprehensive and innovative ICT policies in education, helping teachers master

remote and hybrid teaching while creating quality digital learning content. Additionally, UNESCO will expand the reach of digital public learning platforms, promoting equity and inclusion and bridging the digital divide, particularly through the Gateways to Public Digital Learning initiative and by leveraging Open Educational Resources (OER). The organization will also accompany countries as they navigate emerging technologies, including AI, by providing technical support, guidance, and capacity development, with the leadership of the International Institute for Technology in Education (IITE) and through UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy programs. Furthermore, UNESCO will support countries in applying AI competency frameworks for both teachers and students to ensure that digital transformation in education is both effective and equitable.

UNESCO's
Global Priorities

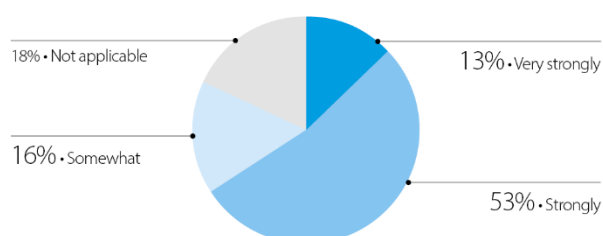- ▶ Africa
- ▶ Gender Equality

GLOBAL PRIORITIES

97.   UNESCO is dedicated to further reinforcing its Global Priorities: Priority Africa and Gender Equality. Focusing on these areas in the 43 C/5 will be essential for maximizing programme impact, especially in light of the slow pace of progress towards the SDGs and the need to significantly accelerate efforts. In the 43 C/5, UNESCO commits to further integrating these priorities into its mainstream work. This section outlines specific proposals for enablers to ensure Global Priorities are systematically prioritized across all work.
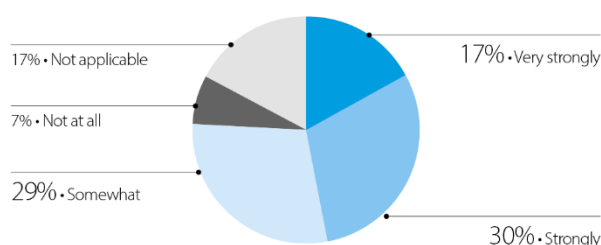
STRENGTHENING GLOBAL PRIORITY AFRICA

MEMBER STATES SAY

Africa as a global priority has increased UNESCO's focus on Africa

18% · Not applicable
16% · Somewhat
13% · Very strongly
53% · Strongly

Africa as a global priority is highly relevant to their national priorities

17% · Not applicable
7% · Not at all
29% · Somewhat
17% · Very strongly
30% · Strongly

Strengthening Alignment with African Priorities

- **Sharpen alignment of Flagship Programmes with national priorities**. There is a need to fully align Priority Africa's five Flagship Programmes with national priorities, recognizing that not all programmes can be implemented in every African country given available budget envelopes and delivery capacities. One option to achieve this could be for each subregion to identify 2-3 priorities across the five flagship programmes for special programmatic focus in the next planning period.
- **Further strengthen UNESCO's programme implementation for Global Priority Africa** (beyond its five Flagship Programmes) to fully align with the priorities included in Agenda 2063. This would be measured through strengthened Priority Africa markers.
- **Further strengthen and systematize collaboration with the African Union (AU).** This would include an updating of the AU-UNESCO Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and other relevant agreements to further improve engagement and collaboration. In addition, regular thematic dialogues would be established with the AU. This would also ensure that UNESCO's work on Priority Africa remains continuously aligned with key continental frameworks like the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA), the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA), and Agenda 2063.

Strengthening Capacities and Internal Coordination for Africa

- **Continue to strengthen the coordination function for Priority Africa.** UNESCO has a dedicated division for Africa in PAX. During the 42 C/5, the division was further strengthened with additional resources for coordination. Under the 43 C/5, it is proposed that the allocation of a specific coordination budget be continued to ensure the division is adequately resourced to coordinate closely with Member States, field offices, programme sectors and other partners at field level.
- **Strengthen coordination between programme sectors and field offices.** Successful models of sector/field-level coordination, such as the UNESCO Dakar Office's effective coordination of the Africa Education Group, would be replicated across other programme sectors. This model integrates field

offices, institutes, and Headquarters divisions, facilitating information exchanges and alignment on major continental initiatives through periodic meetings. Strengthening such coordination mechanisms with Headquarters and field buy-in would significantly enhance knowledge management and collaboration amongst UNESCO entities.

- **Strengthen accountability for Global Priority Africa.** Strengthened accountability would be supported by strengthened monitoring of programme implementation for Priority Africa (see monitoring framework). In addition, it is proposed to convene regular meetings of the Programme Coordination Group (PCG) to review progress and discuss gaps.

## Strengthening Resourcing for Priority Africa

- To support further fund mobilization, it is proposed to **allocate adequate seed funding from the Regular Budget for the implementation of the Flagships**. Allocations could be provided to regional offices in Africa, to be programmed in consultation with Programme Sectors, PAX and BSP. In addition, the Africa region would continue to receive the highest level of catalytic funding specifically for field offices to increase their resource mobilisation targets.
- As part of the corporate **structured financing dialogue**, to provide specific information on the resourcing of Global Priority Africa, in particular to understand gaps and their impact on results achievement, as well as mobilize partner support. The Group of Friends for Priority Africa (GFPA) would be leveraged to support greater donor support for Global Priority Africa and drive increased resources, in particular for Flagship Programmes. This would be complemented by dedicated partner consultations, organized at field level with development partners.
- **Strengthen cooperation, through regional and country offices, with Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the African Development Bank**, and AU thematic clusters to enhance cooperation and align initiatives with regional goals. Explore the potential of innovative funding mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, blended finance, and crowdfunding initiatives.
- **Further strengthen South-South and trilateral cooperation** arrangements to broaden the funding base for programmes in Africa.
- **Explore further resource mobilization opportunities through pooled funding mechanisms**, such as the joint SDG Fund, Peacebuilding Fund, local UN pooled funds, etc.
- **Increase engagement with potential private sector partners** on the African continent.
- **Increase collaboration with National Commissions,** ensuring coherence with field offices and contributing to alignment of policies with Headquarters-based Permanent Delegations
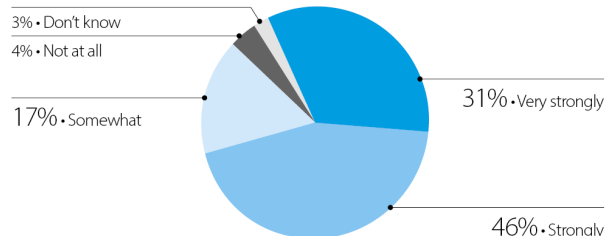
STRENGTHENING GLOBAL PRIORITY GENDER EQUALITY

MEMBER STATES SAY

Gender equality as a global priority has increased UNESCO's focus on gender equality
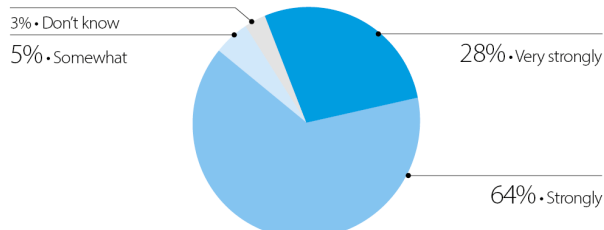
- 3% • Don't know
- 5% • Somewhat
- 28% • Very strongly
- 64% • Strongly

Gender equality as a global priority is highly relevant to their national priorities

- 3% • Don't know
- 4% • Not at all
- 17% • Somewhat
- 31% • Very strongly
- 46% • Strongly

Mainstreaming Gender Equality into Programmes

98. UNESCO is scaling up the integration of Gender Equality across its programmes as a fundamental principle and strategic priority, aiming to dismantle barriers that perpetuate gender disparities. This commitment ensures that all sectors and field offices incorporate gender perspectives into their activities and policies with a focus on:

- **Roll out the UNESCO Global Priority Gender Equality Framework** to make Gender Equality "everybody's business" by improving understanding of the scope of the Global Priority Gender Equality across all of UNESCO's fields of competence. Develop a **limited number of top Gender Equality change strategies** in priority areas, where UNESCO's programming can make a major difference. Using Gender Equality change strategies and initiatives as vehicles for more integrated cross-sector and intra-sector programming.
- **Invest in co-producing with the Sectors knowledge and data in emerging and priority** areas (crisis preparedness, emergency response and early recovery, neurotechnology and artificial intelligence, MIL, climate justice history, inclusive heritage and memories) to provide new evidence for UNESCO's gender transformative actions, inspire new programmes and inform global, regional and national-level debates, advocacy and standard setting initiatives.
- **Accelerate the scale-up of Gender Equality Marker 3** (GEM3) initiatives, where Gender Equality is the primary purpose of the work plan.[32]
- **Expand the global priority Gender Equality regional and national capacity development programme** (based on the needs assessment conducted with field offices) to reinforce the field network with gender expertise and promote gender transformative initiatives in unexplored areas. The programme will also leverage UNESCO's role in coordinating with UN Country Teams and other relevant bodies and stakeholders to amplify impact through joint programming and initiatives in line with national and regional priorities. In addition, targeted training and advocacy mechanisms tailored for senior managers will be rolled out.

Internal Coordination for Gender Equality

99. UNESCO will invest in creating a more agile and reinvigorated internal gender architecture and making Gender Equality "everybody's business". In this regard, new modalities of work to make Gender Equality

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[32] The Gender Acceleration Plan established 15% as the standard allocation for expenditures in the UN system dedicated to outputs/activities where Gender Equality is the principal objective (GEM 3) by 2030.

"everyone's business" and promote intersectoral exchange on gender-related results will be further developed.

- **Continue strengthening the coordination function for Gender Equality.** The Gender Equality Division is strategically housed within the Cabinet of the Director-General, providing a central position for collaboration across the entire Organization. This positioning facilitates coordination with programme sectors, ensuring a unified approach to gender equality.
- **Explore the feasibility of fielding Regional Gender Advisers** in the new programming period to strengthen capacities for Gender Equality programming in the field. These advisors would provide expert guidance, support gender mainstreaming in all initiatives, and ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, providing additional capacities to the gender focal point approach. By embedding gender expertise at the regional level, UNESCO aims to enhance the impact and reach of its Gender Equality efforts, ensuring that all programmes are inclusive and equitable.
- **Expand cooperation with Member States through the Group of Friends (GoF) for Gender Equality** with the organization of regular exchange sessions and joint initiatives.

Resourcing Gender Equality

- **Continue with a dedicated regular budget funds allocation** under the 43 C/5 to strengthen Gender Equality coordination, ensuring robust and targeted resource availability for effective implementation and impact. Allocation would support cutting-edge research and launch of new initiatives with programme sectors.
- **Further strengthen the monitoring of gender financial allocations** through the corporate results and resources management system, Core Manager, and establish tighter accountability mechanisms via the Gender Steering Committee to ensure transparency, efficiency, and alignment with gender equality goals.
- **Further strengthen partnerships with donors and stakeholders** committed to advancing Gender Equality, leveraging these relationships to secure increased funding and resources for gender-focused initiatives, where UNESCO has a comparative advantage within the UN system.
- **Enhance communication and advocacy**, investing in new communication channels, strengthening cooperation within the UN system and raising the profile of the Organization and its gender related results in regional and international forums.
- **Invest in new partnerships** with UNESCO Chairs and National Commissions for UNESCO, civil society organizations, academia and the private sector.

UNESCO's
Priority Groups

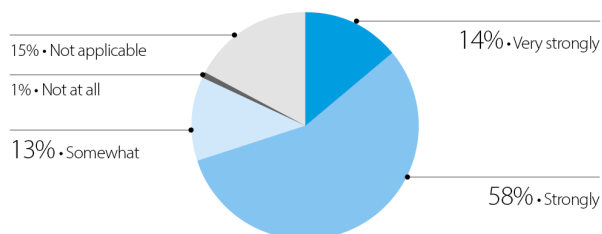► Small Island Developing States

► Youth

PRIORITY GROUPS

100. UNESCO is also reinforcing its action in favour of its Priority Groups: Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Youth. This section outlines specific proposals for enablers to ensure Priority Groups are systematically prioritized across all work.

## STRENGTHENING PRIORITY GROUP SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

MEMBER STATES SAY

Adoption of the SIDS Operational Strategy has increased the programmatic focus placed on SIDS in UNESCO

- 14% · Very strongly
- 15% · Not applicable
- 1% · Not at all
- 13% · Somewhat
- 58% · Strongly

UNESCO's SIDS Operational Strategy is highly relevant to their country's national priorities

- 11% · Very strongly
- 19% · Not applicable
- 7% · Not at all
- 31% · Somewhat
- 32% · Strongly
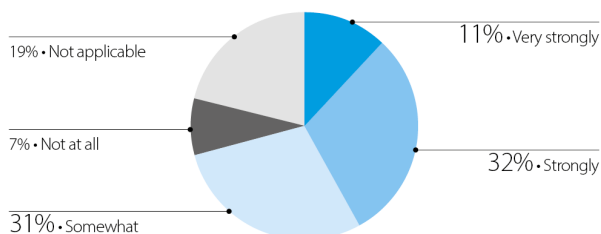
Aligning with the Priorities of SIDS

101. The Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) resulted in the adoption of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States (ABAS). ABAS outlines ten priority areas of action for SIDS. UNESCO will ensure alignment with these areas as follows:

- **Sharpen alignment and impact of SIDS Accelerator Programmes,** by providing seed funding from the regular budget to support further fund mobilization for the Accelerator Programmes. This would allow Regional Offices and national partners to identify concrete priorities for implementation during the 43 C/5 period.
- **Develop a new UNESCO Multidimensional Vulnerability Framework based on available UNESCO data** (across its mandated areas) to be able to better address the specific needs of small island developing states (SIDS). This framework would help identify unique vulnerabilities and guide more targeted interventions in UNESCO's areas of expertise. In this context, further strengthen collaboration with relevant category 2 centres, and other partners on data collection and analysis.
- **Further strengthen collaboration with regional bodies** like CARICOM, the Pacific Islands Forum, the Pacific Community (SPC), and the Indian Ocean Commission. This integration would harmonize efforts to address regional challenges in SIDS, promoting cohesive and coordinated actions that enhance regional development. It would also help maximize programme impact through greater economies of scale.

Strengthening Internal Capacities and Coordination for SIDS

- **Continue to support SIDS coordination** (including on accelerator programmes) across programme sectors with a regular budget allocation under the 43 C/5.
- **Create an agile mechanism with expertise from all programme sectors** that can be deployed to SIDS field offices (or Regional Offices covering SIDS countries) to develop proposals and mobilize capacity for project implementation.
- **Strengthen the exchange of knowledge sharing and learning across sectors** through regular workshops, seminars, and virtual platforms. This would be done through the establishment of a formal platform for

sharing knowledge and best practices related to SIDS programmes and initiatives to enhance the collective understanding and effectiveness of these efforts.

- **Implement targeted capacity development programmes** to build skills and expertise within UNESCO's SIDS Section, SIDS Focal Points, and field offices. **Strengthen induction for staff being fielded to SIDS countries** (and staff going on technical missions to SIDS countries) to ensure that staff are well briefed on country contexts and specificities.

Resourcing our Work on SIDS

102.   Efforts to ensure adequate resourcing (including both from the regular budget and voluntary contributions) for UNESCO's work on SIDS will be guided by the Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Plan for the SIDS Operational Strategy. In particular, UNESCO will:

- **Develop and roll out "Partner Platforms"** in support of each Accelerator Programme, bringing together key public and private stakeholders and their financial and non-financial contributions with a focus on joint impact at scale.
- **Better embed and measure SIDS dimensions in larger UNESCO programmes,** particularly multidimensional thematic or regional projects. Measurement of resources allocated to SIDS and results achieved will be enhanced through tagging for Accelerator Programmes (as explained below in the monitoring section).
- **Strengthen UNESCO's access to vertical funds, especially on climate.** Several global and regional multilateral and vertical funds can be explored for funding priority sectors in SIDS, particularly those related to climate adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity, environment, and marine conservation. A modular approach will be adopted depending on the fund and UNESCO's positioning and accreditation status.
- **Advocate strong ownership of SIDS Governments,** which play a key role in positioning UNESCO as a "partner of choice" and ensure it is eligible and duly considered to receive funding from bilateral donors, pooled funds and vertical funds. Programme design and resource mobilization strategies should be country-driven and embedded in the relevant national and multi-country UN frameworks.
- **Join forces with other UN agencies for joint work and resource mobilization.** In particular, UN pooled funds can be an important source of funding for the SIDS. For example, the Joint SDG Fund has launched a dedicated call for proposals focusing on strengthening resilience and ending the vulnerabilities of SIDS to accelerate the SDGs. UNESCO will team up with other UN agencies to leverage all possible funding opportunities in support of SIDS.

STRENGTHENING PRIORITY GROUP YOUTH

MEMBER STATES SAY

Adoption of youth as a Priority Group has increased UNESCO's inclusion of youth voices and perspectives in its interventions and programmes

1% · Don't know
1% · Not at all
21% · Somewhat
25% · Very strongly
51% · Strongly
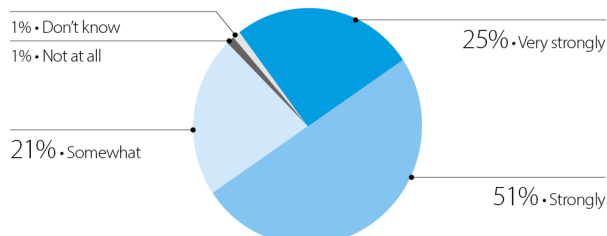
Youth as a Priority Group of UNESCO has helped raise awareness of their country about the importance of youth

3% · Don't know
9% · Not at all
29% · Somewhat
12% · Very strongly
48% · Strongly
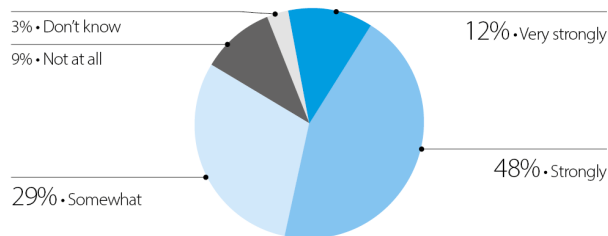
Ensuring Youth are Engaged in UNESCO Programmes

103.   Discussions during the regional consultations with National Commissions clearly indicate that youth remains a top priority for many regions and countries. In line with the Pact for the Future, UNESCO will leverage its expertise to integrate youth voices and solutions in addressing current and future challenges. Youth-relevant actions will be co-created with young people to develop more innovative and impactful initiatives across UNESCO's mandate. To strengthen this, the following will be undertaken:

- **More systematically engage youth throughout the programme cycle** by including them in advisory groups, meetings, and as co-creators and leaders. This will be supported through youth platforms such as the UNESCO Youth Forum, as well as youth-led networks like the Global Youth Community (GYC), the MAB Youth Network, SDG4 Youth and Student Network, the World Heritage Volunteers**,** or the Youth Climate Action Network (YoU-CAN).
- **Enhance youth engagement in meetings, strategic processes, and governing bodies**, including by spotlighting youth-led research and supporting National Commissions in boosting youth participation.
- **Highlight youth contributions in major international events and processes**, such as the follow-up to the Pact for the Future, UNFCCC COPs, and the 2027 SDG Summit.
- **Expand the deployment of UNESCO's tool on meaningful youth engagement,** which provides guidance on how to craft and execute policies and programmes that cater to the comprehensive needs of young people with the engagement of young people. An estimated 300-400 staff members have been empowered. Interest from other UN agencies and UN Country Teams is also high, as well as from Member States, allowing the development of institutional cultures on youth engagement also among UNESCO's partners.

Strengthening Internal Coordination on Youth

- **Further strengthen the coordination role of the Youth section** in the Social and Human Sciences Sector to provide strategic guidance and information, and liaise with all programme sectors, field offices, and category 1 centres/institutes.
- **Further empower Youth Focal Points** to implement meaningful youth engagement in UNESCO's programmes and develop relevant intersectoral projects. The specific function of a Youth Focal Point should be recognized within UNESCO's performance management system.
- **Ensure youth priorities are reflected in UNESCO-supported networks and projects**, including the UNESCO Chairs and Participation Programme.
- **Develop intersectoral solutions and actions for youth-related challenges.**

Strengthened resource mobilization and partnerships for youth

- **Scale up the UNESCO Global Youth Grant Scheme** to provide funding and support for solutions-oriented youth-led projects and research worldwide. The Grant Scheme addresses critical societal issues, promotes youth capacity development through training and mentorship. It not only supports immediate needs for youth and communities alike, but also contributes to long-term sustainable development goals, ensuring a significant impact on youth and societal development locally and internationally. Scaling-up of the Grant Scheme can notably be done by further developing **private sector partnerships** to mobilize resources for youth initiatives, building on successful Grant Scheme projects thus far.
- **Increase focus on resource mobilization opportunities through UN pooled funds** with youth components at global and field level, such as the UN Peace Building Fund.
- **Increase collaboration with UN system entities** at global (High Level Steering Committee and Joint Working Group of the UN Youth Strategy, and Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development) and country (UN country team) levels, as well as with regional IGOs (namely the Africa Union Commission), notably in the context of implementation of the UN Youth Strategy – Youth 2030, and of the Pact for the Future and its Declaration of Future Generations.
- **Integrate Priority Group Youth into UNESCO's strategic dialogues with donors** and partners whenever relevant.
- **Bring a larger proportion of youth-led organizations in the network of NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO.** This also includes ensuring youth representation in the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee and in other existing mechanisms for civil society engagement, including in the International Conference of NGOs and in relevant mechanisms within the General Conference.
- **Boost visibility for UNESCO's work on youth, leveraging its new Goodwill Ambassador for Youth.** Based on a dedicated plan of action for the new Goodwill Ambassador for Youth (K-pop group SEVENTEEN), UNESCO will seek to increase visibility for its youth-focused work at major international forums, events, and campaigns.

MONITORING IMPACT FOR GLOBAL PRIORITIES AND PRIORITY GROUPS

104.   Robust planning, monitoring, and reporting on our Global Priorities and Priority Groups will be a cornerstone of our strategy. To achieve this, we will establish simple and streamlined mechanisms that will allow us to analyse and report on resource investments and results achieved for these priorities. Based on lessons learned, we aim to adopt the following four mechanisms:

- **Full integration of Africa Flagships and SIDS Accelerator Programmes in the Results Framework:** Africa Flagships and SIDS Accelerator Programmes, being critical drivers of UNESCO's impact on the ground, will be fully integrated into the Results Framework under relevant outputs and/or distinct outputs with specific performance indicators (PIs) to measure achievements against the intended results of the Flagships and Accelerator Programmes.
- **Refine markers:** Existing Markers to monitor investments in Global Priorities (Africa and Gender Equality) and Priority Groups (SIDS and youth) will be further refined. All programme sectors receiving resources and investing in Global Priorities and Priority Groups will be requested to consistently use these Markers to enable more complete monitoring and reporting on results and spending.
- **Introduce disaggregated indicators:** Where relevant, target group (sex and age group) and geographical disaggregation (Africa and SIDS) will be introduced under relevant PIs to systematically monitor progress for Global Priorities and Priority Groups.
- **Introduce Africa Flagship and SIDS Accelerator Programme tagging:** To capture the critical intersectionality and cross-fertilization of results, Flagship/Accelerator Programme Tagging will be introduced, where sectors will be requested to tag relevant Flagship/Accelerator Programmes if their projects are expected to contribute to the results of these Programmes. This would allow for the monitoring of both direct investment in and achievement of Flagship Programmes through distinct outputs as well as indirect contributions through other outputs.
- **Better measure gender mainstreaming in UNESCO's central services:** All central services will be required to incorporate a systematic gender perspective, which will be monitored through dedicated institutional performance indicators.

105.   By implementing these four mechanisms—full integration of Flagship and Accelerator Programmes into the Results Framework, streamlined markers, disaggregated indicators, and Flagship Tagging—we will significantly enhance our ability to monitor and report on our critical drivers for success: Global Priorities and Priority Groups. This comprehensive and systematic approach will ensure robust financial and results reporting, ultimately strengthening our impact and effectiveness in these vital areas.

Programme
Strategies

PROGRAMME STRATEGIES

106.   UNESCO is committed to maximizing the impact of its reinforced programmatic focus under the new Programme and Budget (2026-2029) by further enhancing the design and implementation of its initiatives. This will involve improving the alignment of programmes with national priorities and increasing the adaptability of interventions to respond to emerging challenges. Additionally, enhancing the integration of evidence-based decision-making and promoting sustainability in programme outcomes will be key priorities. The following are areas where further emphasis will be placed:

STRATEGY 1: Further Aligning Country Programming with National Priorities and Contexts

107.   In accordance with evaluation recommendations, UNESCO will enhance corporate tools and processes to better support its field network in designing programmes that capitalize on UNESCO's unique strengths in addressing country priorities. To achieve this, UNESCO will:

- **Further sharpen its programme offer at country and regional level.** Building on existing good practices, UNESCO will introduce consistent country (and regional) strategy notes to better capture UNESCO's integrated offer in each country, where it operates. The notes will outline the Organization's response to national priorities, its implementation strategies and funding requirements for achieving results over a set period. They will guide operational activities at country level, ensuring alignment with national priorities and the broader goals of the United Nations. They will be closely consulted with national counterparts to ensure that UNESCO's programmes focus on priority issues, where the Organization has a comparative advantage. They will also be aligned with United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF) planning processes to ensure that countries can benefit from a coordinated UN offer.

- **Strengthen crisis coordination to ensure that field offices in protracted and sudden onset crisis situations are better supported.** UNESCO will enhance operational support to field offices in crisis situations by providing tailored technical assistance, establishing task forces for effective interventions, and supporting coordination within UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to secure UNESCO's effective participation in UN integrated mechanisms for early recovery and reconstruction. Additionally, UNESCO will strengthen resource mobilization and partnerships to ensure field offices have the necessary support and resources for effective crisis management. To improve crisis response, UNESCO is strengthening its processes to ensure a consistent approach across field operations. Dedicated training programmes for field office directors and teams will boost their capacities to manage and coordinate during emergencies. If relevant, immediate to short-term staff deployments in response to emergency and early recovery action will be facilitated. These efforts will enable UNESCO to more effectively monitor and assess damages, establish internationally recognized baselines, and deliver needs-driven urgent interventions and evidence-based medium- and long-term recovery efforts.

- **Support field offices in enhancing the quality of funding for country and regional programming, emphasizing larger, more predictable, and flexible funding sources**. Drawing on numerous successful examples, programming efforts will transition from small, fragmented, and short-term projects to large-scale, multi-year, and higher-impact programmes. In this context, UNESCO will explore the possibility of receiving flexible funding at country and regional level to finance strategy notes, similar to other UN agencies. This would be complemented by global efforts to increase the predictability and flexibility of voluntary contributions, focusing on field-level results. Such efforts would enable greater adaptability of programmes, foster innovation, and ensure more timely interventions, especially during crises and emergencies.

## STRATEGY 2: Reinforcing Quality Standards for more Impactful Programmes

108.   UNESCO will also strengthen its quality standards for programmes, including by incorporating lessons from intersectoral programming to better address today's complex global challenges. Recognizing the growing demand for integrated solutions, UNESCO will further incentivize collaboration across programme sectors, focusing on leveraging each sector's strengths to create integrated solutions, foster innovation, and better leverage its diverse expertise. By promoting more inclusive dialogue and multidisciplinary approaches, UNESCO aims to further break down silos, making its programmes more effective, adaptable, and resilient.

- **Strengthen programming quality standards.** UNESCO will invest in the development of a corporate programme quality standards framework to ensure a compelling and consistent approach to programme design, implementation, and monitoring, in line with UN best practises and international standards. This would involve consolidating various existing programme standards (sectoral, Priority Groups, environmental, etc.) and emerging frameworks such as the Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF) into a single reference. The goal would be to provide a comprehensive guide for improving programming quality consistently across the Organization, while maintaining the flexibility and agility needed to address diverse operating contexts, without adding compliance burdens.

- **Further explore opportunities for inter-sectoral collaboration to maximise programme impact through integrated solutions.** The complex challenges that UNESCO's mandate faces require innovative interdisciplinary solutions leveraging all of UNESCO's fields of expertise as relevant. The intention is to continue and strengthen the approach to Intersectoral Programmes, which were conceived within this Medium-Term Strategy and received seed funding during the 42 C/5 budget cycle. At the same time, UNESCO will explore additional opportunities to strengthen multisectoral collaboration. This could include a range of approaches from enhanced sharing of experience and expertise to more integrated planning across sectors through revised peer review mechanisms, to the development of intersectoral portfolios grouping existing projects and enhancing coordination, etc. At the country/regional level, multi-disciplinary strategy notes would facilitate intersectoral integration and help better leverage sectors' expertise at country level. To better understand current obstacles and incentives for intersectoral programming, a review of the experience to-date, including the implementation of the five intersectoral programmes, will generate important lessons in terms of programming, results-based management and funding.

STRATEGY 3: Programming as a UNESCO Family

109.   UNESCO is one of the most connected organizations within the UN system. Its extensive ecosystem includes 200 National Commissions and a broad partner network comprising category 2 centres, University Chairs, UNITWIN Research Networks, Associated Schools, UNESCO Clubs, the UNEVOC network, various designations and designated sites, and UNESCO's Network of Learning and Creative Cities, among others. This network offers a tremendous asset in terms of expertise, knowledge, and data, as well as reach into communities, mobilization of changemakers, and advocacy platforms. It has the capability to translate multilateralism from the global to the local level, showcasing the practical value of UNESCO's work to people.

Infographic 1: UNESCO's Unique Ecosystem of Assets (non-exhaustive list)
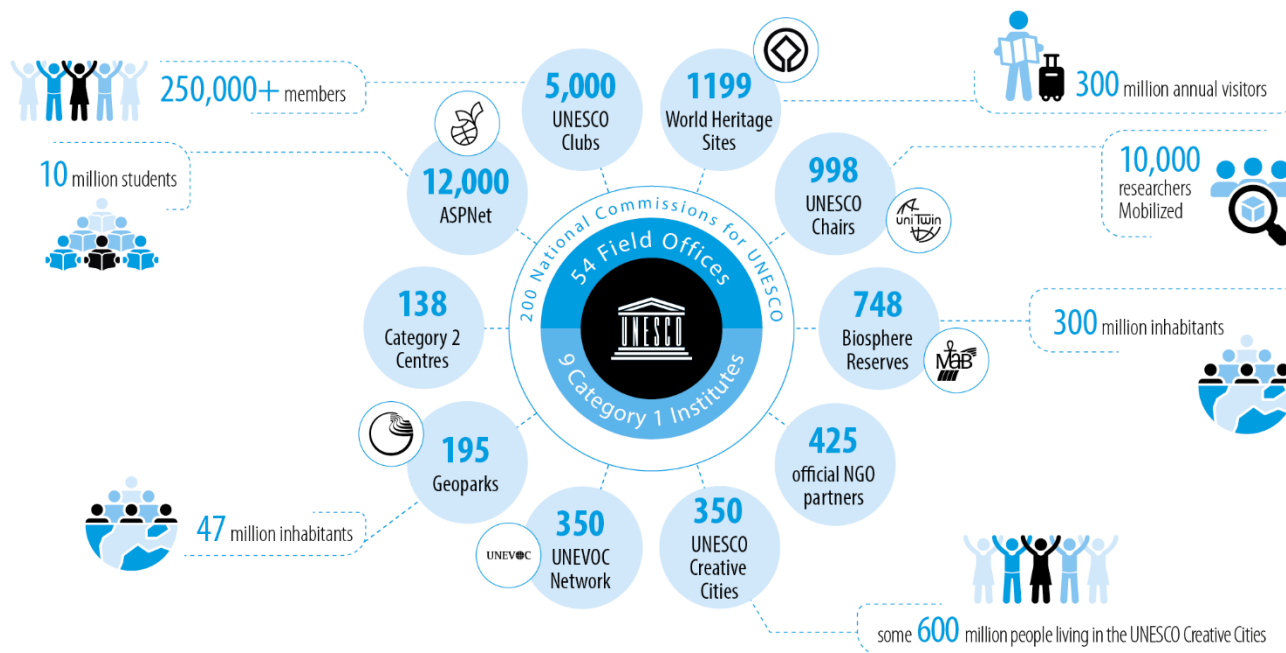
110.   While many good examples exist of how UNESCO is leveraging parts of this network, these are still too often ad hoc and limited to specific programme sectors. To reinforce the understanding of UNESCO as "one single entity" among partners and donors, during the next programming period, UNESCO proposes to strengthen the strategic engagement with its National Commissions and ecosystem of partners to maximize programme reach, impact and visibility:

- **Reinforce coordination between different Secretariat units (managing UNESCO ecosystem partners) to allow for a better exchange** of knowledge and lessons, to optimize procedures and explore collaboration opportunities across networks and programme sectors. This would include exploring ways to ensure that increased management and administrative burdens are managed more effectively[33], including innovative ways to share capacities across units, where it makes sense.

- **Strengthen cooperation between the Secretariat and National Commissions** in support of the implementation of the Organization's new Programme (2026-2029). This could include a review of best practices and gaps to identify areas where more systematic collaboration would add value (drawing also on proposals made in the National Commission paper, referenced in 220 EX/17.INF).

- **Initiate a series of capacity-building trainings with National Commissions** in areas such as Results-Based Management, project evaluation, and fundraising among others. These trainings would also further support the successful preparation of project proposals submitted by National Commissions within the Participation Programme.

- **Further facilitate dynamic coordination and information sharing** between Member States, including their National Commissions, UNESCO's ecosystem of partners, and the UNESCO Secretariat. Ensure that onboarding of UNESCO staff across all sectors includes information on National Commissions and ecosystem partners. Similarly ensure that National Commissions and partners in UNESCO's ecosystem continue to be regularly updated on relevant UNESCO activities.

- **Incorporate a marker in the corporate strategic planning system (Core Planner) and results and resources management system (Core Manager)** to track partnerships with National Commissions and
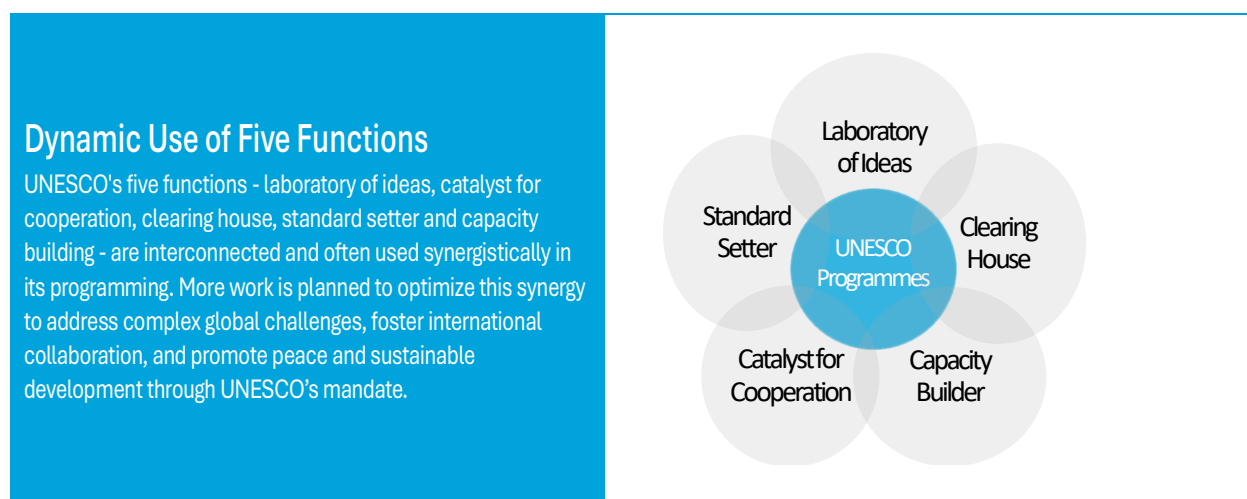
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[33] It is important to note in this context that while the network (and its related statutory obligations) has tremendously increased over the past years, UNESCO's Regular Budget has not been adjusted to take this into consideration.

ecosystem partners in UNESCO's programming. This data would be publicly available on the Core Data Portal, showcasing how UNESCO leverages and harnesses its rich ecosystem of partners for impactful results.

STRATEGY 4: Optimally Leveraging UNESCO's Five Core Functions

111.   UNESCO's five functions—idea laboratory, clearing house, standard-setter, cooperation catalyst, and capacity builder—are key assets that reinforce each other. These functions provide the integrated and connected solutions countries need to address today's complex and evolving challenges. By applying these functions more strategically at both the global and country level, UNESCO can ensure that programmes are tailored more to local contexts while utilizing global knowledge and standards to create impactful and sustainable solutions. This approach not only enhances the relevance and effectiveness of UNESCO's interventions but also strengthens its ability to promote integrated development, innovation, and resilience in communities.

Infographic 2: UNESCO's Five Core Functions

Dynamic Use of Five Functions

UNESCO's five functions - laboratory of ideas, catalyst for cooperation, clearing house, standard setter and capacity building - are interconnected and often used synergistically in its programming. More work is planned to optimize this synergy to address complex global challenges, foster international collaboration, and promote peace and sustainable development through UNESCO's mandate.

112.   As we enter the next programming period, UNESCO will enhance the strategic use of its five functions within its programming to further maximize synergies and impact. The following measures are proposed:

- **LABORATORY OF IDEAS: Develop a more strategic approach to publications and knowledge production** that leverages interdisciplinary research and fosters collaboration between scientists, policy-makers, and practitioners. UNESCO will increase its focus on strategic flagship publications, complemented by expert publications for targeted audiences. It will identify key opportunities for launches, leveraging major global events to increase visibility for UNESCO's products. This knowledge will also further enhance UNESCO's clearing-house function, maximizing the use of generated data to inform policy decisions at both global and national levels. By fostering cooperation with major knowledge producers, UNESCO will further strengthen capacity building and programmatic efforts. National Commissions will play a more proactive role in launches. Additionally, UNESCO will invest further in strategic foresight to navigate uncertain futures, envision better outcomes, and chart new paths forward. Aligning with UN 2.0 objectives, UNESCO will integrate foresight capabilities, futures literacy, and concepts of intergenerational solidarity and concern for future generations into its work.

- **CLEARING HOUSE: Further strengthen UNESCO's collection, analysis, and dissemination of data**. By strengthening and establishing comprehensive databases and leveraging advanced analytics, UNESCO will provide Member States with actionable insights to inform policy decisions. This involves not only compiling best practices and research findings, including by leveraging and supporting UNESCO's Laboratory of ideas, but also developing tools and platforms that facilitate real-time data sharing and

collaboration. Better and more accessible data will also be critical to inform platforms for dialogue and cooperation, as well as monitor the application of standards and norm and develop national stakeholders' capacities to comply with them. Strengthening partnerships with UNESCO's large networks, academic institutions, research organizations, and technology companies will be crucial in further building these capabilities.

- **STANDARD-SETTER: Define a more deliberate strategy for the development of new standards and norms**. UNESCO's role in developing international norms and guidelines is crucial during times of significant social and economic transformation. UNESCO will help ensure that norms and standards are effectively implemented to address today's challenges by producing strategic knowledge products, ensuring accurate and accessible data, fostering dialogue and collaboration, and strengthening capacities within Member States. Engaging a wide range of stakeholders in the standard-setting process provides UNESCO with a key advantage in creating norms that are robust, widely accepted, and effectively implemented.

- **CATALYST FOR COOPERATION: Position UNESCO as a key platform for dialogue and collaboration among Member States**, international organizations, civil society and the private sector to promote coordinated responses to complex issues. UNESCO's critical contributions—norms and standards, high-quality knowledge, and data—facilitate collaboration on technical matters within its mandate. The SRR24 report provides numerous examples of how UNESCO has built coalitions to create shared purpose and achieve broader impact. UNESCO will continue to collaborate with various regional and global forums, such as the Group of Twenty (G20), by providing data, policy recommendations and technical expertise. The aim of this collaboration is to increase UNESCO's impact of all its major programmes, by working innovatively with Member states to find new ways of achieving the sustainable development goals. Cooperation with these entities above is part of the effort to revitalize UNESCO's participation in a reinvigorated and inclusive multilateralism. It will sustain and advance international cooperation, solidarity and sharing of solutions in strategic areas identified in the Programme and Budget.

- **CAPACITY BUILDER: Embed capacity building into programmes with a more deliberate focus on longer-term sustainability** to enable Member States to achieve key development outcomes within UNESCO's mandate. The quality of capacity building will depend on the availability of contextualized knowledge and sound evidence, as well as innovative approaches to reach consensus and respond to communities' needs. Hence, all of UNESCO's core functions will be leveraged to contribute to building the necessary capacities to implement norms and standards in a diversity of contexts, including strengthening the institutional capacities of relevant national stakeholders to ensure ownership and longer-term sustainability.

STRATEGY 5: Strengthening the use of Digital Tools in UNESCO Programming

113. Strengthening the use of digital tools for UNESCO's programme implementation is crucial for enhancing efficiency, expanding reach, and increasing impact. Digital technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and e-learning platforms enable UNESCO to collect and analyse data more effectively, facilitate real-time monitoring, and provide accessible, high-quality education and training. By leveraging these tools, UNESCO will be able to achieve greater reach, and ensure that its initiatives are inclusive, adaptive, and responsive to the evolving needs of Member States and communities worldwide. Examples to be implemented over the next programming period include:

114. **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data Analytics:**
- UNESCO is developing a large language model linked to the UIS SDG 4 database, featuring an interactive chatbot for data analysis, the first bot built with education monitoring data.

- AI and machine learning will analyse data from remote sensors and satellite imagery for real-time biodiversity monitoring, conservation efforts, and water quality monitoring. Predictive analytics will use big data and AI to predict environmental changes and natural disasters.
- Machine learning and AI tools will be used to conduct research on antiracism and antidiscrimination, providing Member States with advanced data to inform policies.
- Advance research tools throughout UNESCO's lists, reports, and data will ensure better services for users and Member States.

115. **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and E-learning Platforms:**
- Following the success of the MOOC on intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development, UNESCO will continue offering online and multi-modal educational materials.
- UNESCO provides MOOCs and other e-learning platforms for accessible education in Natural Sciences, supported by the UNESCO open learning platform, which consolidates training materials within the water family.

116. **Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Spatial Analysis:**
- GIS will be implemented for detailed mapping and spatial analysis of environmental data, aiding in understanding the geographical distribution of natural resources and assessing human impact on ecosystems.

117. **Internet of Things (IoT):**
- In collaboration with ICTP and other partners, IoT devices will be developed for real-time environmental monitoring and data collection, tracking parameters such as air and water quality, weather conditions, and soil health.

118. **Digital Platforms and Collaborative Tools:**
- UNESCO will expand the Inclusive Policy Lab as a major digital platform for programme implementation. The UNESCO Global Youth Community will be developed into a cutting-edge digital platform for young people to connect, develop content, create communities of practice, and collaborate.
- A new platform on Open Science will be launched to promote sharing of best practices and foster scientific cooperation.
- Building on the success of the Water Virtual Museum, UNESCO will develop a virtual science museum aimed at fostering science literacy and promoting a culture of science for people of all ages. A digital hub will be created to provide interactive access to knowledge and data on sport for development under the Fit for Life programme.
- UNESCO will strengthen the Anti-Doping Convention's online monitoring system (ADLogic) and develop an online platform for the Anti-Doping Fund, using collaborative digital platforms for experts and working groups.

Institutional
Enablers

INSTITUTIONAL ENABLERS

119.   Institutional enablers are crucial for programme impact as they provide the foundational support and resources necessary for successful implementation. Strong governance structures, efficient management systems, effective communication, and robust accountability mechanisms ensure that programmes are well-coordinated, transparent, and effectively monitored. Additionally, institutional enablers foster a conducive environment for innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning, enabling programmes to adapt to changing contexts and emerging challenges. By strengthening key enablers, UNESCO will further enhance its programme performance:

ENABLER 1: A Strengthened and Empowered Field Office Network

120.   The reorganization of the field network, implemented in 2022-23, leveraged the strengths of the existing structure while applying a set of targeted reinforcements and strategic adjustments. It has led to a number of gains, such as a more uniform and coherent two-tier system, a more streamlined structure with better defined accountability and reporting lines, and increased alignment with UN regional and country teams. For the next programming period, further critical enhancements are proposed to ensure that UNESCO's field offices are well positioned and equipped to implement programmes aligned with national priorities, leverage UNESCO's networks of partners, and are able to access additional resources at country and regional level.

- **Boost programme delivery capacities in field offices** to be able to implement larger programmes and ensure programme delivery meets agreed timelines. Together with field offices, initiatives will be explored to reduce recruitment time and create agile support teams (generic roster and substance experts).

- **Address gaps in field office core functions.** As part of a field-focused strategic workforce planning effort, a comprehensive exercise will be undertaken to minimize capacity gaps in the five Regional Offices with designated UN coordination functions. In addition, an exercise will be undertaken to explore the feasibility of creating a select number of standard regional functions, including gender advisers, monitoring specialists, communication staff, and additional core administrative functions.

- **Further strengthen capacities of field offices to engage in UN processes.** This will be supported through catalytic funding that on a needs-basis supports field offices with strategic engagement in joint UN planning and programming processes. This will further enhance alignment with national priorities and ensure that UNESCO can leverage UN funding opportunities at country level. In addition, funds will be decentralized to the five Regional Offices with UN coordination responsibilities to further resource these functions.

- **Further strengthen capacities of field offices to mobilize local resources**. This will continue to be supported through a dedicated line in the C/5 budget to support field offices in the preparation of project proposals and strategic partner engagement.

- **Update organizational accountabilities for strengthened Headquarters-field collaboration.** UNESCO has been further reinforcing its field network over the past few years to provide stronger support at country level. This will require a review of the Organization's Accountability Framework to further clarify core functions, as well as related roles and responsibilities between UNESCO's various implementation units in Headquarters and the field. Building on the recent clarification of accountability and reporting lines

issued for the reorganized UNESCO field network,[34] further enhancement will be implemented, where required.

- **Enhance Headquarters-field coordination**: Bringing Headquarters and the field closer together, a range of structured but flexible coordination mechanisms will be institutionalized, including regular dialogues on key strategic issues (including programmatic and operational issues), and field representation on the Programme Coordination Group. This will foster interaction and synergies, and create a dynamic feedback loop, allowing for real-time adjustments and more cohesive operations across all levels of the Organization.

ENABLER 2: A Dynamic and Inclusive Workforce and Culture

121.   UNESCO's effective programme implementation relies on its dedicated workforce, whose expertise, innovation, and commitment drive the Organization's mission forward. The staff's ability to adapt to changing global needs, engage with diverse communities, and implement complex projects ensures that UNESCO's initiatives are impactful and sustainable. To further ensure that UNESCO's workforce meets the challenges of a complex operating environment, the following is proposed:

- **Strengthen proactive workforce planning:** A shift from reactive to proactive workforce planning will be implemented to better align staffing needs with the Organization's strategic goals and Human Resources plans to build future-ready workforce capacities and skills. This will include, for example embedding standard workforce planning principles and guidance into strategic and operational planning processes, led by a new specialized unit. This will be key to ensuring a harmonized and consistent foundation for priority human resources functions. Efforts will be guided by better planning, identification of relevant staff skills, especially for critical and hard to fill positions, development of future-oriented skills, including in the context of UN 2.0, as well as more efficient and accelerated recruitment and staffing of posts.

- **Achieve gender and geographical balance.** While geographical representation of 80% of Member States has already been achieved - one of the leading percentages in the UN system - UNESCO aims to reach a target of 85% of representation over the next quadrennium. UNESCO has also achieved good progress on gender parity, with a gender ratio of 58% women to 42% men at the P-level, and 44% women to 56% men at the D-level. More progress will be needed over the next quadrennium, with a target of achieving gender parity at and above the P-5 level by 2028.

- **Invest in learning and staff development:** UNESCO will invest more in learning, upskilling and staff development programmes, to support a positive and collaborative organizational culture, with high-performing and agile teams, following better defined and transparent career paths. Training programmes and staff well-being measures will be made available to all UNESCO staff in all locations. Disability inclusion will be a priority for the next years, including through concrete measures to enhance accommodation and improvements in the workplace.

- **Improve outreach and recruitment to attract top new skills to the Organization:** The capacity for targeted outreach will be further increased to meet staffing ambitions and targets. This will include the establishment of a robust system of assessment centres and rosters.

ENABLER 3: Principled Performance

122.   Principled performance is key for greater programme impact by ensuring that all interventions are aligned with the Organization's core values, ethical standards, and strategic objectives. This approach

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[34] See 215 EX/5.III.A on sustainability of the field network

enhances the effectiveness, credibility, and sustainability of UNESCO's efforts. In the next programming period, this will be further strengthened in the following ways:

- **Further systematize follow-up to audit and evaluation recommendations to reinforce programme impact.** UNESCO sees great value in learning from audit and evaluation recommendations, including to further improve programme design and impact. To make a more systematic link between recommendations and programme related discussions, UNESCO's Programme Coordination Group (PCG) will regularly address key areas emerging from recommendations and ensure that the Organization's programming standards and guidelines are updated, where needed. In addition, BSP is closely working with IOS to ensure that emerging issues are captured systematically.

- **Implement new environmental and social standards to ensure its programmes align with UN standards.** UNESCO will be rolling out a new UNESCO Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework (ESSF) over the next programming period. The Framework, currently under development, will align with best practice in the UN and multilateral institutions and respond to the provisions of the UN Strategy for Sustainability Management (2020-2030). Implementation of the standards will ensure that UNESCO's programmes and operations meet top environmental and social standards and will allow the Organization to seek re-accreditation with the Adaptation Fund and meet requirements of several other potential donors.

- **Continuously strengthen workplace ethics.** UNESCO will be further investing in workplace ethics. Priorities for the upcoming quadrennium include: an Action Plan to address all forms of abusive conduct in collaboration with the Internal Oversight Services, the Ethics Office, and other relevant services; a feasibility study on establishing a new Ombudsperson office to further strengthen the internal justice system; expanding training, outreach, and awareness-raising activities on ethics in the workplace; and a comprehensive review and update of key policies including the Declaration of Interests and Financial Disclosure Policy, and a policy on Conflicts of Interest.

123.   UNESCO's independent oversight function will continue to provide assurances and generate evidence for decision-making through audits, advisory services, evaluations, and investigations. A data analytics culture will be built into all phases of audit, evaluation, and investigation for increased efficiency, improved monitoring abilities, and higher visibility of transactions, notably in the field network. To strengthen the decentralized evaluation function, the fielding of evaluation associates in five regional field locations was piloted under the 42 C/5, to provide targeted independent support and expertise, and promote knowledge exchange across regions. Going forward, it will be explored how to institutionalize this pilot, if the experience proves successful.

ENABLER 4: Monitoring, Reporting, and Learning for Greater Programme Impact

124.   Enhancing UNESCO's approach to evidence-based results planning, monitoring, and reporting is essential for fostering Organization-wide learning and ensuring that achievements are both measurable and impactful. This is crucial for promoting performance dialogues with Member States, co-creating sustainable solutions, and achieving shared objectives towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Key elements of proposed enhancements will be tested and gradually introduced based on available resources and absorption capacities of the Organization, including:

- **Strengthen evidence-based analysis and performance dialogues with Member States:** To reinforce evidence-based analysis, decision-making, and performance dialogues with Member States, UNESCO will strengthen the Results Framework for the 43 C/5 with robust indicators at the strategic objective, outcome, and output levels. By applying the highest global standards and leveraging best practices from other UN agencies, SDG and other relevant global indices will be integrated to measure UNESCO's contributions to strategic objectives and outcomes. Performance indicators at the output level will be set

at the appropriate level and disaggregated by UNESCO's target beneficiary groups and geographical areas, enabling a more meaningful comparative and holistic performance analysis across the Organization.

- **Streamlining and standardizing performance indicators:** To ensure the comparability and analysability of UNESCO's achievements across all areas, performance indicators will be streamlined and standardized using simple and consistent quantitative methodologies (i.e., Boolean, integer, percentage, and rating scale)[35] and disaggregation rules. Based on best practices in other UN entities, a two-layer approach will be introduced: corporate-level indicators and unit/field-level indicators.

- **Develop indicator metadata:** For effective monitoring of achievements across the Organization, it is critical that all UNESCO staff and partners share a common understanding of each performance indicator, including their definitions, objectives, measurement methodologies, aggregation rules, and indicator owner. The aim is to develop detailed metadata (methodological notes) for each performance indicator to enable units to measure performance consistently and facilitate data-informed performance dialogues and decision-making within the Organization and with external stakeholders.

- **Enhance markers:** Performance indicators are designed to measure the Organization's objectives. To significantly deepen performance analytics, markers will be gradually streamlined and leveraged to measure how, where, for whom, and with whom results are achieved.

  - To measure how results are achieved, "HOW" markers will be introduced, aligned with UNESCO's five functions: laboratory of ideas, clearing house, standard-setter, catalyst and motor for international cooperation, and capacity-builder. Additionally, "WHERE" markers will be developed based on the current Geoscope tagging for Global Priority Africa and Priority Group SIDS.
  - A Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) marker will be introduced to measure the target beneficiaries of UNESCO's programmes.
  - To evaluate collaborative efforts with partners, the Partners Marker will capture joint initiatives with other UN agencies, international financial institutions (IFIs), private sector partners, and others.
  - Lastly, a unique UNESCO Ecosystem Marker will be established to understand how assets—such as National Commissions, category 1 institutes, category 2 centres and various designated sites—are leveraged to achieve impact as a networked Organization.

- **Strengthen linkage between results and resources:** To enable meaningful analysis of UNESCO's effectiveness in achieving intended results, it is crucial to strengthen the link between the results to be achieved and the resources to be invested. For the 43 C/5, results-based budgeting will be reinforced by testing the introduction of clearer connections between budget scenarios and target levels. This approach will allow for a clearer articulation of achievable results against required resources. The Structured Financing Dialogue will provide an opportunity to examine the impact of funding on results achievement.

- **Reinforce monitoring function:** UNESCO is committed to enhancing its monitoring function across the Organization to facilitate greater Organization-wide learning, evidence-based decision-making, and adaptive management. To achieve this, a stronger monitoring function will be gradually institutionalized at all organizational levels. Strengthening staffing and capacities will be crucial for gaining a deeper understanding of successes. These efforts will benefit from stronger data analytics skills and the application of greater quality standards for programmes and projects.

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[35] Boolean: an indicator that has only two possible values, typically "Yes" or "No," indicating the presence or absence of a condition or achievement. Integer: a whole number indicator that counts occurrences or quantities, providing precise numerical data. Percentage: an indicator expressed as a fraction of 100, used to show proportions or relative quantities. Rating Scale: an indicator that uses a predefined scale (e.g., 1 to 5 or 1 to 10) to measure the degree or extent of a condition or achievement, allowing for nuanced assessments.

- **Transition to more evidence-based reporting:** By generating more robust qualitative and quantitative results data, UNESCO will be able to produce more evidence- and data-based reporting. This will be achieved by using performance data generated through indicators at strategic objective, outcome, and output levels, and by leveraging UNESCO's world-class knowledge products, including signature publications and statistics. Reporting will clearly demonstrate UNESCO's contributions to the SDGs and its impact on the ground. For effective results reporting that analyses both short-term achievements and their contribution to long-term impact, it will also be crucial to integrate multi-year results reporting with annual reporting, consistently using performance indicators across multiple years.

- **Promote learning lessons:** UNESCO will continue to build a strong organizational culture of lessons learning. Embracing honesty about the challenges faced and the results not achieved will be essential for this cultural and behavioural shift. Analysing challenges, understanding root causes, and proposing solutions must be integral to the lessons learning process. To achieve this, it will be vital to continue to learn from independent assessments, including evaluations, audits, and performance assessments.

- **Invest in updated digital solutions:** None of the above can be achieved without continued investment in robust digital solutions. The ongoing UNESCORE Programme aims to transform 20-year-old systems into updated cloud-based solutions. Digital tools for strategic planning (Core Planner) and results and resources management (Core Manager) will be gradually enhanced. Improvements will also continue on the Core Data Portal, providing public access to a range of information, including UNESCO's financial and results data.

ENABLER 5: Risk Management

125.   Promoting a risk-aware culture where risks are integrated into strategic planning and decision-making at all levels is crucial for effective programme implementation. Balancing risk and opportunity is essential for UNESCO. By adopting robust risk management strategies, the Organization can identify and seize new opportunities while safeguarding its reputation. This includes proactive risk assessments and the implementation of measures to address potential threats before they escalate, thereby ensuring the Organization remains credible and trustworthy. Shifting from reactive to proactive risk management by anticipating potential risks and addressing them before they become significant enhances UNESCO's ability to navigate uncertainties. A strengthened risk management function can provide timely insights and leverages technology to integrate, manage, and predict risks.

126.   UNESCO is currently reviewing its top corporate risks to reflect the current risk landscape and align with the Organization's evolving priorities and goals. The review is based on a dual track approach to collect inputs from field network teams, central services, and category 1 institutes, coupled with a top-down validation by senior management of major transversal risks and corporate-level mitigation actions. In the upcoming quadrennium, UNESCO will also be working to enhance its risk management maturity level from "Developing" (Level 2) to "Established" (Level 3) by standardizing risk identification and assessment processes, further embedding risk management in regular operations and decision-making, revamping risk registers for better monitoring and reporting, providing staff training on Enterprise Risk Management, and by regularly revising Top 10 Corporate Risks with inclusive stakeholder input.

127.   These ambitions aim to transform traditional risk management to better serve programmes and address the following indicative risks in the next four-year cycle:

Programmatic Risks during the next Four-Year Programme:

- **Unstable and unpredictable environment:** Increasing political instability and conflicts pose significant risks to UNESCO's programmes by causing disruptions, delays, and potentially suspensions. UNESCO will

need to further strengthen contingency planning and create adaptable programme frameworks that respond swiftly to changing operating landscapes.

- **Growing impacts of natural disasters and climate change:** Natural disasters and climate change can severely damage heritage sites, disrupt educational initiatives, and hinder conservation efforts. Integrating disaster risk reduction and climate resilience into programmes, along with enhancing early warning systems, is essential to safeguard UNESCO's initiatives against these threats.

- **Dramatic technological transformations:** Technological transformations present both opportunities and challenges across all of UNESCO's programmes. Major changes in technologies offer the potential to enhance learning, improve scientific research, preserve cultural heritage, and expand access to information, thereby empowering individuals and communities for sustainable development and economic growth. However, technological disruptions, such as the rapid obsolescence of programmes and the creation of digital divides, can undermine UNESCO's efforts. To mitigate these risks, UNESCO will promote digital literacy, support the adoption and ethical use of new technologies, and ensure inclusive access to digital resources across all its areas of work, fostering resilience and adaptability in a rapidly changing world.

Operational Risks

128.   In the context of foreseen programmatic challenges, the Organization also anticipates operational risks related to various situations. These could include:

- **Funding dependence on a limited number of donors:** UNESCO must navigate the complexities of fluctuating funding levels – both in terms of UNESCO's assessed and voluntary contributions. To mitigate these risks, UNESCO will diversify its funding sources by engaging with a broader range of partners and strategic alliances, including private sector entities, foundations, and international donors, and advocate for sustained financial commitments from existing and new donors. This approach will help stabilize financial flows and ensure consistent support for its programmes.

- **Information security while enhancing collaboration and connectivity:** As UNESCO enhances its digital collaboration and connectivity, ensuring the security of information becomes paramount. The Organization will implement advanced cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive data and maintain the integrity of its systems.

- **Talent retention and acquisition in a highly competitive market:** Retaining and attracting top talent is critical for UNESCO's success. In a competitive job market, UNESCO will focus on creating an attractive work environment that includes professional development opportunities, competitive compensation packages, and a culture of innovation and inclusivity. Additionally, leveraging its global network and reputation will help attract skilled professionals dedicated to UNESCO's mission.

- **Scaling operations to reach more beneficiaries while minimizing the environmental footprint:** To extend its impact, UNESCO aims to scale its operations efficiently. This involves adopting sustainable practices that minimize environmental impact, such as reducing travel through virtual meetings, implementing green office initiatives, and promoting eco-friendly technologies. By integrating sustainability into its operational strategies, UNESCO can reach more beneficiaries without compromising environmental stewardship.

ENABLER 6: Integrated Strategic Communication

129.   Impact-driven communication is a key enabler for achieving UNESCO's strategic objectives. To strengthen this function, UNESCO will streamline communications resources to clarify and strengthen UNESCO's message and ensure that the Organization is recognized as a "one single entity". The aim is to

strategically invest in communication to enhance visibility and the recognition of UNESCO as a major solution provider. This is a pre-condition to scale up UNESCO's voice in a very competitive environment, which would attract larger-scale funding and appeal to larger and more strategic partners. Efforts to strengthen communications in UNESCO will entail the following:

- **Streamline corporate communications and messaging**, through a much stronger, coherent and coordinated identity and communications planning.

- **Scaling up capacities in new tools and technologies including AI and data management:** This is critical to improve the targeting of messages and communities' engagement. UNESCO requires staff capacity development on digital communications and AI, including reinforcing related-communications capacity in field offices.

- **Stronger communications on results and impact**: UNESCO will dedicate additional attention to documenting UNESCO's impact on the ground, creating a critical mass of result-oriented content. This is key to address the specific needs of Member States and better communicate results at country level. The enhancement of communications capacity should be fully integrated in budgets and planning, especially for extrabudgetary funding.

- **Leverage communication tools such as websites, social media, and engagement platforms:** Digital platforms will be leveraged to increase visibility and awareness of UNESCO's results and programmes. This will include a review of existing specialized platforms (e.g., newsletters, social media accounts, specialized websites, etc.) to strengthen targeted communication towards selected audiences and communities.

Partnerships
Financial
Parameters

STRONG, DIVERSE AND RESULTS-ALIGNED PARTNERSHIPS

130. While assessed contributions form the foundation of UNESCO's funding and play a central role in ensuring predictability of resources, voluntary contributions now account for 60% of UNESCO's integrated budget and have become increasingly essential for supporting the achievement of results. Maintaining a healthy balance between assessed and voluntary contributions is crucial to ensure that UNESCO has the capacity to mobilize additional resources and deliver results. Given the increased complexity, volatility, and earmarking in the global development financing landscape, UNESCO aims to sustain annual fund mobilization levels at approximately US $400 million. This target is both realistic and ambitious in the current environment.

131. With strong support from its donors, UNESCO will enhance its advocacy for adequate funding, highlighting the importance of its work in areas essential for achieving the SDGs and aligning with donor and national priorities. In addition, UNESCO will concentrate on deepening, expanding, and diversifying its funding sources, while fully leveraging all forms of partnerships to support its strategic objectives. Specifically, it will:

- **Align the C/5 results framework more closely with the funding framework for voluntary contributions.** A review of existing instruments to attract funding, particularly flexible funding, is underway. Proposals will be made to optimize these instruments and better align them with the C/5 results framework to reduce earmarking and fragmentation. This will build on good practices, such as special accounts at the Programme Sector level, which have an enhanced results focus, improved reporting formats, clear allocation methodologies, and dedicated visibility strategies. Thematic funding windows will be proposed as part of an effort to build a consolidated partnership offering in support of C/5 implementation. This would support a gradual shift from numerous small-scale, fragmented interventions to multi-year, high-impact transformative programmes in areas of UNESCO's comparative advantage. It would also contribute to strengthening the linkage between resources and results and establish a clearer "investment case" for UNESCO, making the return on investment in the Organization more compelling.

- **Continue efforts to attract more flexible funding.** The current high level of earmarking in voluntary contributions limits UNESCO's agility and responsiveness in supporting Member States and increases administrative costs. Flexible funding is essential for enhancing responsiveness, particularly in emergencies, improving operational efficiency, ensuring programme continuity and sustainability, driving innovation, and maintaining the coherence of the 43 C/5. The Organization will continue efforts to highlight the results and benefits of flexible funding through sustained exchanges with key partners. In addition to optimizing funding instruments, this would involve expanding and deepening strategic dialogues with major partners to build trust, increase the visibility of UNESCO's results, and demonstrate its added value to key decision-makers.

- **Embrace a holistic approach to partnerships to fully leverage all forms of support for UNESCO's strategic objectives.** This includes utilizing both financial and non-financial public and private resources, such as advocacy, networks and outreach, expertise and data, implementation support, and in-kind contributions. Better connections will be made between the substantive engagement of partners in UNESCO's work and resource mobilization opportunities. Efforts will focus on forging alliances and multi-stakeholder partnerships that align stakeholders around common goals, and harnessing partners' comparative advantages to create synergies, develop innovative approaches and solutions, and add value. This approach will necessitate a shift towards a "partnerships for results" culture within the Organization, serving as the entry point for partner engagement.

- **Enhance the Organization's expertise, programming experience, and tools to incorporate a financing perspective into its work.** This will involve strategically positioning UNESCO's mandate in global discussions on financing for development and build on existing best practices, such as UNESCO's leadership in strengthening multilateral education financing and driving private investments into biodiversity conservation. This approach will be expanded to other sectors to demonstrate how UNESCO's actions contribute to global agendas and can benefit from a variety of new financing instruments, such as impact investing, blended finance, sustainability bonds, debt swaps, and other mechanisms to support goals in education, biodiversity, heritage, social inclusion, technologies, and other areas.

- **Conduct regular structured financing dialogues and support the implementation of the new UN Funding Compact.** These dialogues will provide Member States with updated information regarding C/5 funding and its impact on results achievement. Additionally, UNESCO will support the implementation of the UN Funding Compact, expected to be approved by the UN General Assembly in late 2024, and report on the status of commitments by Member States and the UN system, detailing its application to UNESCO.

- **Further enhance partner engagement.** Effective resource mobilization requires the careful nurturing of trust-based relationships with partners. Although UNESCO enjoys strong relationships across all partner groups, there is potential for further enhancement through coordinated partner engagement. This can be achieved by developing coordinated engagement plans for UNESCO's leadership, improving information on partner priorities and funding processes, and undertaking proactive partner visibility efforts through dedicated visibility campaigns and consistent recognition of results achieved with partners' resources. Additionally, multifaceted engagement will be pursued, involving Permanent Delegations, National Commissions, capital-based counterparts, and participation in major global events and processes to strategically highlight UNESCO's impact.

- **Fully leverage the UN system in support of UNESCO's strategic objectives.** UNESCO will continue to strengthen its engagement with the UN system at global, regional, and country levels to position the Organization's mandate as part of system-wide processes and benefit from the expertise and support from other UN agencies. This will be done by actively participating in relevant interagency mechanisms, networks and initiatives, including the "six transitions" and the 12 high-impact initiatives showcased by the UN system at the SDG Summit. UNESCO will facilitate this by developing bilateral engagement frameworks with UN entities operating in areas close to our mandate. At country level, UNESCO will further invest in participating in UNSDCF processes to position its mandate, including where it is non-resident, and look for opportunities to ramp up joint programming. It will also work to access pooled funding opportunities and develop collaborative relationships that leverage the assets of respective agencies in support of SDG achievement.

- **Seek opportunities to diversify funding sources.** While governments are likely to remain the largest source of UNESCO funding (currently representing 65% of mobilized funds), UNESCO has successfully increased funding from other sources. Efforts will continue to access new funding sources, including non-traditional donors, international financial institutions and vertical funds (particularly climate funds), UN sources, and the private sector. The focus will be on creating long-term strategic relationships centred around UNESCO's comparative advantages. With the private sector, UNESCO will continue to build on its positive experience by adopting a "shared value" approach to achieve impact through more sustainable, just, and inclusive business practices, and by crowding in private sector expertise, innovations, solutions, influence, networks, and investments.

- **Further diversify and expand the network of NGOs in official partnership and foundations in official relations with UNESCO**. Given the critical importance and influence of NGOs as partners, contributing invaluable expertise, advocacy and grassroots engagement across UNESCO's various fields of competence, enhancing their engagement and aligning their actions with UNESCO's priorities and

programmes will remain a strategic focus. UNESCO will intensify and expand efforts to grow and enrich the network of NGOs in official partnership, strengthen the engagement of non-governmental partners, and foster their connection with UNESCO's ecosystem of partners, with a view to leveraging their collective strength towards the successful fulfilment of UNESCO's mandate.

132.   As per 219 EX/Decision 5.II.A adopted by the Executive Board at its 219th session, a four-year partnership strategy in alignment with the 43 C/5 covering the period 2026 to 2029 will be presented at the 222nd session of the Executive Board.

FINANCIAL PARAMETERS

133.   The forthcoming 43 C/5 (Programme for 2026-2029 and Budget for 2026-2027) will continue to be presented within an Integrated Budget Framework (IBF). This framework will encompass the estimated costs required to achieve the results in the initial biennium for 2026-2027, considering all sources of funds available or to be mobilized to finance the activities during this period. The proposed financial parameters for the 2026-2027 Budget are as follows:

- **Integrated Budget Framework:** The Organization will continue to present planned results proposed to be financed through all sources of funds, assessed contributions, voluntary contributions and revenue generating activities. The Organization will continue to seek ways to increase flexibility of funding, noting that currently most voluntary funds are highly earmarked, and limitations exist for cost recovery funds. Some further flexibility may be possible in respect of the revenue-generating and cost recovery funds whose income is primarily generated by voluntary contributions, but careful consideration needs to be given to any changes that may be introduced in this respect to manage new risks that may emerge. Work will commence on exploring the opportunities for appropriate change, and if feasible, proposals in this respect may be introduced in the 43 C/5.

- **The anticipated inflation impacts on cost increases will be clearly presented, and a budget contingency will be re-introduced** for that part of the Integrated Budget financed from assessed contributions. The contingency was removed in the 41 C/5 to accommodate the increasing planned staff costs, whilst remaining within a zero nominal growth total for that biennium.

- **Staff cost budget methodology will be adapted** to include provision for parental leave costs (now increased entitlement, therefore increased cost), a separate temporary staff cost budget, as well as for any other foreseen statutory increase of salaries scales and entitlements.

- **After-Service Health Care provision** will be increased in line with the General Conference Resolution (42 C/Res.64), which approved a progressive charge on the regular programme and other proprietary funds (OPF)-funded staff. This will ensure long-term sustainable financing for all future staff cost obligations (historically the pension obligations have been secured, but not the after-service healthcare obligations).

- **Long-term funding for capital expenditure will be continued.** A long-term financing mechanism has been approved with the creation of the Capital and Strategic Initiative Fund (211 EX/Decision 23) and the approval within the 41 C/5 Budget for the first time of a capital expenditure allocation, 18.9 million. This must be maintained in the 43 C/5 to address the long-term chronic underfunding of capital investment needs at UNESCO.

Proposed draft decision

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

The Executive Board,

1. <u>Recalling</u> 42 C/Resolution 81,

2. <u>Having examined</u> the preliminary proposals by the Director-General concerning the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5) as contained in document 220 EX/17,

3. <u>Takes note</u> of documents 220 EX/17.INF and 220 EX/17.INF.2 and 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 document 43 C/5;

4. <u>Underscores</u> the continued relevance to the preparation of document 43 C/5 of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4), including its five functions, four Strategic Objectives, two Global Priorities, Africa and gender equality and two Priority Groups, small island developing States (SIDS) and youth;

5. <u>Welcomes</u> the streamlining of the number of outcomes for the Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5) leading to a more focused approach to achieving UNESCO's Strategic Objectives and also takes note of their reformulation;

6. <u>Welcomes with appreciation</u> the reinforced interdisciplinary approach envisaged for the future programme of work, while maintaining the focus on the Organization's mandate, fields of competence and expertise;

7. <u>Underlines</u> the need to further enhance UNESCO's work in the field and takes note with appreciation of the proposals contained in document 220 EX/17;

8. <u>Further takes note</u> of the proposed improvements to the presentation and budget techniques to be applied in the preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5), and <u>invites</u> the Director-General to implement these in the presentation of document 43 C/5;

9. <u>Requests</u> the Director-General to prepare the Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5) based on these proposals and taking into account the discussions held at its 220th session, and to submit the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5) to it for consideration at its 221st session.