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**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, the Director-General organized a series of consultations as part of the preparatory process for the elaboration of her Preliminary Proposals on UNESCO's Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5). This information document contains the results of these consultations.

It is structured as follows:

- Part I: Reports of regional and subregional consultations of National Commissions for UNESCO
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PART I – REPORTS OF REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL CONSULTATIONS OF NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO

1. Pursuant to 42 C/Resolution 81, the Director-General organized a series of regional and subregional consultation meetings with the National Commissions for UNESCO between February and June 2024, as was outlined in the roadmap for the preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5), presented in 42 C/7. The regional and subregional consultations with the National Commissions were organized as follows:

Africa

- Consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO of Africa (in-person meeting in Luanda, Angola) (21 June 2024). The meeting was hosted by the National Commission for UNESCO of Angola.

Arab States

- Consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO of the Arab States (in-person meeting in Muscat, Oman) (1-2 May 2024). The meeting was hosted by the National Commission for UNESCO of the Sultanate of Oman.

Asia and the Pacific

- Consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO in the Pacific (online) (23-24 May 2024). The meeting was hosted by the National Commission for UNESCO of New Zealand.
- Consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO of Asia (online) (11 June 2024). The meeting was hosted by the National Commission for UNESCO of Indonesia.

Europe

- Consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO of the Europe region (online) (5 June 2024). The meeting was hosted by the National Commission for UNESCO of Türkiye.

Latin America and the Caribbean

- Consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO in the Caribbean (in-person meeting in Willemstad, Curaçao) (16-18 April 2024). The meeting was hosted by the National Commission for UNESCO of Curaçao.
- Consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO in Latin America (online) (18-19 June 2024). The meeting was hosted by the National Commission for UNESCO of Costa Rica.

SUMMARY

2. Facilitated and supported by UNESCO offices in the field, the consultations were an invaluable opportunity for the National Commissions to exchange and engage with each other, and with the UNESCO Secretariat, in particular Priority Africa and External Relations (PAX) and the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP). The National Commissions expressed their views on regional and subregional challenges and UNESCO's required action in addressing them during the next Programme and Budget period (2026-2029). The Consultation also provided for a platform to exchange on the strategic role of the National Commissions in advancing UNESCO's work.

3. While there were some regional specificities, the Consultations demonstrated that all regions are facing common challenges and there are a set of expectations from UNESCO shared across the regions. The main common takeaways are summarized as below.

4. **Risks and challenges faced by regions:** The National Commissions voiced that their regions are faced with the following risks and challenges.

- Climate change and environmental threats
- Digital divide and challenges linked to new technologies
- Demographic changes – in some regions aging populations, in some regions bulging youth populations
- Threats to multilateralism
- Social issues such as youth violence and gender inequality
- Ongoing multiple crisis and armed conflicts

5. **Opportunities identified:** In the face of these risks and challenges, the National Commissions commonly identified the following as opportunities in going forward.

- Strengthening disaster preparedness and climate resilience
- Advancing digital literacy and responsible use of AI
- Reforming education systems to address future skills needs
- Enhancing youth engagement in decision-making
- Leveraging culture and creativity for sustainable development
- Promoting intercultural dialogue and social cohesion
- Improving cooperation between National Commissions

6. **Comparative strength and value-added of UNESCO:** In the face of the global challenges and the new opportunities, the National Commissions identified the following as being UNESCO's key comparative strengths and value-added.

- UNESCO's extensive networks and designations are highly valuable and widely recognized and should be further strengthened and capitalized.
- The multi-disciplinary mandate of the Organization is a unique strength, and the National Commissions wish to see more interdisciplinary and intersectoral approaches to deliver comprehensive solutions.
- The programmes for meaningful youth involvement are highly appreciated and further youth engagement is suggested.
- The presence and role of UNESCO National Commissions in Member States is considered a unique advantage for implementing UNESCO's work and promoting UNESCO's values.
- UNESCO's role as convener, to facilitate regional and inter-regional cooperation, and sharing of knowledge between regions is highly appreciated.

7. Priorities for UNESCO's future programmes: Against this backdrop, the National Commissions identified the following areas requiring attention and priorities for the future programme of UNESCO.

- **Climate change and environmental sustainability:** The National Commissions called for further programming in view of enhancing climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, environmental education, and adaptation strategies.
- **Digital transformation:** The National Commissions urged UNESCO to accompany their countries in digital transformation by promoting digital literacy and skills, addressing ethical issues related to artificial intelligence and new technologies, and leveraging digital tools for education and development.
- **Education:** The National Commissions emphasized the critical role of education and urged UNESCO to continue to lead in promoting inclusive and equitable quality education, lifelong learning and skills development.
- **Culture:** UNESCO's mandate in cultural preservation and promotion is strongly appreciated. The National Commissions wish UNESCO to continue in safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage, leveraging culture for sustainable development and social cohesion, and supporting cultural and creative industries.
- **Youth:** Enhancing youth engagement and participation, in view of addressing youth unemployment and skills development, as well as preventing youth violence, was considered to be an important priority in many regions. Priority Group Youth remains an important programming principle.
- **Gender equality:** The National Commissions reiterated the importance of mainstreaming gender perspectives across programmes, and the need for UNESCO's work towards empowering women and girls. Global Priority Gender Equality remains high priority.
- **Promoting peace and understanding:** The National Commissions expressed the importance of fostering social cohesion and mutual understanding by promoting global citizenship education, countering hate speech and misinformation, and fostering intercultural dialogue, in view of promoting peace.
- **Strengthening UNESCO networks and partnerships:** The National Commissions strongly urged for enhancing collaboration with the National Commissions, leveraging the unique asset of UNESCO's designations and networks, and further promoting regional and international cooperation among programmes.

8. Strategic role of National Commissions: The National Commissions identified the following as the key strategic role of the National Commissions to take forward UNESCO's priorities and programme in the future programme period.

- **Advocacy and implementation:** National Commissions play a crucial role in advocating for and implementing UNESCO's mandate in their respective countries. They are integral parts of UNESCO's operation and are valuable assets for promoting UNESCO's messages and engaging with civil society. The National Commissions should not be seen as just coordinators between the Secretariat and the country and its civil society but also as important implementers and actors in promoting UNESCO's values and work.
- **National and regional cooperation:** National Commissions are playing a vital role in fostering national, regional and inter-regional cooperation. It plays a key role in ensuring the effective execution of UNESCO's initiatives by leveraging their understanding of local contexts.

- Communication, information sharing and raising the visibility of the National Commission: The National Commissions encouraged a more systemic approach to coordinate the communication between National Commissions and the Secretariat, and among the National Commissions, to share their best practices and to enhance the visibility of their efforts and results.
- Training and capacity building: Taking into account the varying human and financial resources of the National Commissions and the different ecosystems in which they operate, the National Commissions called for more trainings and capacity building of the National Commissions and promoting peer-to-peer learning to share successful strategies and practices.
- The National Commissions have presented a position paper titled “National Commissions for Renewed Multilateralism”¹ calling upon further strengthening of the trilateral relationship between the Secretariat, Member States and their National Commissions; and highlighting the role that the National Commissions can play in bringing multilateralism into action.

9. The reports of the respective regional Consultations of the National Commissions are found in this document.

¹ This position paper can be found on the website of the German Commission for UNESCO (<https://www.unesco.de/en>).

A. Report of the consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO in Africa (Luanda, Angola, 21 June 2024)

10. The Consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO in Africa took place in Luanda, Angola (21 June 2024). The meeting was one of many global consultations aimed at capturing the strategic advice, guidance and intellectual contributions of National Commissions towards the design of a relevant, forward-looking and future proof new Programme and Budget for the period of 2026-2029. More than 40 National Commissions for UNESCO from Africa took part in this meeting. The meeting was opened by H.E. Ms Luísa Maria Alves Grilo, Minister of Education, and President of the Angola National Commission for UNESCO. The Consultation meeting was made possible through generous financial contribution from the National Commissions of Germany, Canada and Azerbaijan.

11. The meeting was hosted by the National Commission of Angola, under the Chairperson Mr Alexandre de Sousa Costa, the Secretary-General of the Angola National Commission for UNESCO. The Secretary-General of Liberia, Mr Gaston Harris was appointed as Vice-Chairperson. The Secretaries-General of the National Commission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Eswatini were designated as the two Rapporteurs.

12. The African National Commissions affirmed their endorsement of a Joint Contribution of National Commissions for UNESCO to the preparation of 43 C/5 of UNESCO documents titled “**National Commissions for Renewed Multilateralism**”.

13. Participants reiterated that UNESCO National Commissions play a crucial role in advancing UNESCO’s mission within Member States, acting as strong collaborators, amplifying impact, overseeing networks and designations and enhancing UNESCO’s visibility, encourage participation, manage conventions, and engage with stakeholders at different levels.

14. It was noted that in Africa, a convergence of influential trends significantly shapes national and regional development, closely aligning with UNESCO’s mission. These trends include:

- (1) **Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA):** CESA strives to enhance education quality and accessibility across the continent. By fostering collaboration among African nations, it addresses disparities and promotes lifelong learning.
- (2) **AU Agenda 2023:** The African Union’s Agenda 2063 emphasizes sustainable development, peace, and security. It envisions an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and positioned as a global force.
- (3) **Regional Protocols and Recommendations:** Agreements guide collaborative efforts. These protocols span diverse areas, including education, culture, and environmental conservation.
- (4) **UNESCO Conventions:** The increasing participation of African countries in UNESCO Conventions fosters accountability and robust partnerships. These conventions cover a wide spectrum, from safeguarding cultural heritage to advancing scientific cooperation.
- (5) **Frameworks for Holistic Learning:** Initiatives like Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD 2030) promote comprehensive learning. They emphasize critical thinking, empathy, and global awareness, preparing youth for active citizenship.
- (6) **Regional African National Commissions for UNESCO:** These Commissions engage in strategic planning, advocacy, and capacity building. They serve as vital bridges between UNESCO and Member States, ensuring effective programme implementation.

- (7) **Subregional Blocs** (e.g., ECOWAS, SADC): These blocs drive cooperation, economic integration, and policy harmonization. Their contributions are pivotal in advancing sustainable development goals within their respective regions.
- (8) Emphasis was placed on the **Cross-Cutting Technological Advancements**: Africa's leapfrogging in technology adoption is transformative.
- (9) **Creative Economy**: Africa's rich cultural heritage contributes to a vibrant creative economy. Music, art, literature, and film not only generate economic value but also foster identity and social cohesion.
- (10) **Youth Empowerment**: With the youngest population globally, Africa's youth are central to its future. Empowering them through education, skills development, and meaningful participation is paramount.

Risk and opportunities to watch “on and beyond the horizon” in Africa

15. A number of risks that hinder progress were identified by Member States namely:

- (1) **Armed conflicts**: Ongoing wars pose a significant threat to development. They disrupt infrastructure, displace populations, and hinder economic growth. Efforts to achieve sustainable development are severely impacted by conflict.
- (2) **Gender inequality**: The participation of women and girls in development forums is affected by various factors, including wars and conflicts. Addressing gender disparities is crucial for inclusive development.
- (3) **Migration and displacement**: Wars and conflicts force people to flee their homes, leading to migration and displacement. This disrupts communities and strains resources.
- (4) **International polarization**: Global polarization diverts attention from Africa's development needs. It's essential to foster collaboration and partnerships to ensure Africa's concerns remain at the forefront of international agendas.
- (5) **Out-of-school youth**: The increasing number of out-of-school youth is a challenge.
- (6) **Hate speech on social media**: Hate speech threatens peace and stability in countries. Promoting digital literacy, responsible online behaviour, and countering hate speech are essential.
- (7) **Mental health**: The deteriorating mental health situation is a significant concern. Addressing mental health stigma, providing support, and integrating mental health into development programmes are vital steps.
- (8) **Lack of resources**: Member States also mentioned the lack of resources, which hinders the work of UNESCO National Commissions.
- (9) **Climate change**: Member States also mentioned climate change disasters encountered, especially by small island developing States (SIDS).

Priorities for UNESCO's future programme

16. For optimum results and robust actions, there is a need to strengthen the position of National Commissions in the development ecosystems. The following prospects were identified by the participants as key areas they foresee into the 5-10 years:

- (1) **Digital Transformation and Bridging the Divide:** The National Commissions in Africa recognize the urgency of bridging the digital divide. Ensuring equitable access to information and skills development in information and communication technologies (ICTs) is crucial for sustainable development.
- (2) **Climate Action through Education:** The National Commissions in Africa emphasize climate action, particularly through Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Integrating climate literacy and environmental awareness into education can empower future generations to address climate challenges effectively.
- (3) **Supporting the Creative Economy:** The National Commissions in Africa advocate leveraging the creative economy. By promoting art, handicrafts, and cultural expressions, Africa can tap into economic opportunities while preserving its rich heritage.
- (4) **Africa Free Trade Agreement:** The National Commissions in Africa recognize the potential of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Harnessing this agreement for handicraft trade and art can boost economic growth and cultural exchange.
- (5) **Culture as a Global Good:** UNESCO acknowledges culture's role in sustainable development. The National Commissions play a vital role in ensuring access to cultural heritage, promoting diversity, and safeguarding intangible traditions.
- (6) **Rethinking Education:** The National Commissions advocate an evolved education system. Beyond traditional models, education should equip learners with critical thinking, digital literacy, and adaptability to navigate a rapidly changing world.
- (7) **Governance of Digital Platforms:** Addressing hate speech, disinformation, and misinformation online is essential. Responsible governance of digital spaces protects citizens' rights and fosters a healthy online environment.

UNESCO's comparative strength and value added in Africa

17. Participants underlined that UNESCO's comparative advantage is the presence of the National Commissions which creates a unique relationship with stakeholders at all levels in the Member States. The presence of UNESCO National Commissions plays a huge role in securing UNESCO's success stories. It is through the National Commissions that UNESCO gets to have the vivid picture of what is happening in Member States, and how best to support the Member States increasing specificity.

18. UNESCO is also noted by Member States as a specialized United Nations agency, and the only one that works on the safety of journalists, ethics and consciousness (including Recommendations on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, Bioethics). Its work on the futures of its areas of competence is also noteworthy.

19. UNESCO has great recognition for its work to promote peace and the quality of education in Member States. It is through quality education that Member States can champion the Sustainable Development Goals.

Strategic role of National Commissions in the implementation of the next programme

20. African Member States emphasize the importance of recognizing the National Commissions' positive impact in expanding UNESCO's footprint. They called on UNESCO to ensure the following:

- (1) Allocating resources to the National Commissions for implementation of some of UNESCO's programmes as is done with some NGOs and government ministries.

- (2) Strengthening National Commissions for UNESCO is essential, as they serve as the engines driving UNESCO's mandate in Member States. Ensuring their effective functioning is thus crucial for achieving UNESCO's goals.
- (3) One key way to achieve this is through capacity building. Capacity building for National Commissions should focus on project implementation, evaluation, fundraising, and resource mobilization.
- (4) Further, African National Commissions requests assistance from UNESCO to accompany Member States and their National Commissions in transformation efforts of the latter's architecture into cross-sectoral bodies, considering their multifaceted nature and commitment to multilateralism.
- (5) In particular, African National Commissions emphasized that UNESCO should actively acknowledge and support the Accra Declaration and African National Commissions' Regional Operation Plan (in support of the operationalization of Priority Africa) adopted at its Luanda meeting. These initiatives are crucial for championing Global Priority Africa and extending UNESCO's mandate on the continent.
- (6) Additionally, promoting multilingualism, especially in this decade of Indigenous Languages and against the backdrop of Africa's multilingual make-up, facilitating knowledge sharing in education, developing programmes for out-of-school youth, and creating specific initiatives for digital transformation and climate action are vital steps identified to enable UNESCO to leverage its unique positioning.

B. Report of the consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO of the Arab States, Muscat, Oman (1-2 May 2024)

21. Representatives of 20 National Commissions for UNESCO participated in the Consultation Meeting of the Arab States region's National Commissions on the Preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5) which took place in Muscat, Oman (1-2 May 2024). Representatives of UNESCO Headquarters also participated in the meeting, alongside representatives from UNESCO regional field offices in the Arab States region (Doha and Cairo Offices), and the Bureau of Strategic Planning. Additionally, several representatives of Arab National Commissions for UNESCO and officials from the UNESCO Headquarters and its field offices in the Arab countries joined the meeting online.

22. The meeting was hosted by the National Commission of the Sultanate of Oman. The meeting began with opening remarks by His Excellency Professor Abdullah bin Khamis Ambusaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, Deputy-Chairperson of Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, and Mr Salah Khalid, UNESCO Representative to the Gulf States and Yemen – Director of the UNESCO Doha Office, who both highlighted the significance of this meeting and its results to the preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029. This was followed by the election of the Chair, Vice-Chairs, General Rapporteur, and session rapporteurs of the meeting, and the adoption of the agenda. Oman chaired the meeting, while Jordan and Egypt were elected as Vice-Chairs, Lebanon as general rapporteur, and Algeria, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Qatar as session rapporteurs.

Setting the scene of the dialogue for the preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget Process (43 C/5)

23. Ms Zazie Schäfer, Director of the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP), presented the framework and timeline for the Preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget 2026-2029 (43 C/5). She presented the strategic framework in which the consultations are taking place, notably UNESCO's eight-year Medium-Term Strategy and its four strategic objectives. She also recalled that the preparation of the Programme and Budget is a Member States-driven process and stressed that this dialogue is an opportunity for National Commissions to explore preliminary thoughts and share their views for the future.

Key recommendations emerging from the consultations:

24. Following the Consultation Meeting of the Arab States region's National Commissions on the Preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5), the Arab National Commissions recommended the following:

- (1) Supporting Arab countries to achieve sustainable development goals in UNESCO's areas of competence, with a focus on five priorities (supporting countries in crisis situations, inclusive and equitable education, artificial intelligence and technology, empowering youth, promoting peace and cultural diversity), by developing comprehensive, cross-disciplinary and multidisciplinary programmes, and adapting them to the needs and contexts of Arab countries.
- (2) Supporting and investing in UNESCO networks in the Arab States region, including the UNESCO Associated Schools Network, youth clubs, Learning Cities, university Chairs, regional and international UNESCO centres, etc.
- (3) Strengthening ongoing cooperation and coordination between UNESCO (including its field offices) and the Arab National Commissions.
- (4) Building the capabilities of National Commissions and enhancing the exchange of expertise among them as well as with National Commissions from other regions.

- (5) Developing an integrated strategy for UNESCO's initiatives in the Arab States region to optimally utilize resources, avoid duplication of work, and govern communication between the Organization and its regional offices and National Commissions.

Opportunities and risks to watch “on and beyond the horizon” in the Arab States region

Opportunities

- Leveraging regional cooperation in the Arab States region in all fields, and implementing pioneering governance systems from the region.
- Empowering and utilizing human resources in the Arab States region to achieve development, especially the youth, and investing the youths' potentials to realize further progress, beside supporting emerging youth businesses.
- UNESCO Associated Schools Network and Youth Clubs are investments in future generations, through which UNESCO values such as peace and tolerance are consolidated, and leading school experiences are disseminated and learned.
- Online educational platforms that emerged during the COVID-19 crisis and the remote work system are opportunities that can be utilized in digital transformation.
- Using the experience of countries in the region regarding developing the Artificial Intelligence Ethics Guide.
- Enhancing networking between countries in the region and exchanging experiences and expertise among them in the field of confronting crises such as the climate change crisis.

Risks

- Limited resources for some National Commissions that lack government support.
- Crises, emergencies, instability, the effects of climate change, and armed conflicts experienced by many Arab countries, especially the State of Palestine, and the need to protect children and journalists, ensure the continuity of education, preserve cultural heritage, and support youth, in addition to post-crisis and recovery periods.
- Intensifying efforts in the field of environmental conservation and using green energy to mitigate the effects of climate change.
- The need to spread a culture of peace, confront hate speech, and spread global citizenship even at the pre-school stage to eliminate hate speech and racism among generations and peoples.
- The large digital and technological gap between countries requires UNESCO to adopt an approach to bridge this gap, especially the countries of the South.
- Modernizing the UNESCO Associated Schools Network to keep pace with the changing needs of young people.
- The requirements for establishing UNESCO Chairs and their evaluation mechanism, which does not provide continuous feedback, and limit the process to the acceptance/rejection decision.
- Lack of balance in UNESCO's programmes and activities between its different areas of competence.

- Technical support and capacity building in relation to monitoring and evaluating progress made toward the fourth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNESCO's comparative advantage and value added in the Arab States region

- UNESCO's areas of competence cover education, culture, science, and communication and information, which are very sensitive areas for the region and the world. The Organization provides opportunities for participation, exchange of best global practices, and support of unique initiatives in Member States, considering inclusiveness, respect for cultural diversity, and rapprochement of cultures and peoples.
- UNESCO works - through its lists and registers - to preserve and promote elements of the cultural heritage of humanity in the region.
- UNESCO scientific Chairs are among the most important programmes that contribute to addressing many issues in the region, such as desertification and the ethics of artificial intelligence. However, the registration process should be reconsidered, so that it is not limited to acceptance or rejection. There should be continuous feedback throughout all stages. This will ensure countries receive continuous feedback that guarantees acceptance of the Chair and encourages scientific research in the region.
- The UNESCO Associated Schools Network is extremely important as it contributes to raising students' awareness of the principles of peace and dialogue at a very early age.
- The Learning Cities and Smart Cities Networks are a distinctive addition towards achieving sustainability.
- Continuous monitoring of indicators and ensuring the reliability of results based on credibility and transparency since the Organization is an accredited international body in relation to measuring indicators related to sustainable development goals, especially indicators of the fourth goal and others. It measures progress in those aspects, which in turn helps to identify opportunities and risks.
- International agreements and obligating Member States to implement their principles is an added value provided by the Organization.
- Strategic planning and anticipating the future is another added value by the organization. The Organization works as a think tank and expertise house in all its fields of competence. For example, national consultations show the importance of benefiting from the four-year strategic planning experience and harmonizing national and international plans.
- Leading international action, as UNESCO for example, leads the efforts toward achieving the fourth goal on education and promotes digital transformation in education. The added value of the Organization lies in supporting education issues, whether technical or vocational, as it has become a priority in some countries where education has almost halted. The Organization also contributes to the development of many policies related to science and technology.
- UNESCO councils and committees, and its field offices.
- UNESCO Prizes in the five various fields are another added value, but UNESCO must inform the National Commissions in due time about their nominations' status.
- UNESCO regional and international centres (category 1 and category 2).
- International Days and designating specific topics to celebrate every year.

Priorities for UNESCO's future programme

25. During the session, representatives of the National Commissions identified five main priorities and corresponding implementation mechanisms for the region.

Priorities	Implementation mechanism
1. Supporting countries in emergencies, crises, and post-crisis situations (wars, conflicts, climate conditions, epidemics, etc.), and enhancing the mobilization process and the follow-up on its results, especially in the field of education and preservation of cultural heritage (tangible and intangible), especially in Gaza and State of Palestine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capacity building in the field of crisis-sensitive planning in countries going through unprecedented situations. ▪ Use of technology to deal with drought and water scarcity. ▪ Categorize Arab countries according to their needs. ▪ Unifying the efforts of United Nations agencies and their regional offices.
2. Inclusive and equitable education for economic and social development , including technical and vocational education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting Member States to achieve their commitments emerging from the Transforming Education Summit in New York 2022. ▪ Supporting countries in achieving the fourth goal. ▪ Supporting digital transformation in education. ▪ Promoting scientific research and innovation. ▪ Building the capacity of Member States to follow up and monitor indicators of SDG 4.
3. Artificial intelligence and advanced technologies in various fields.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investing in modern technologies to build lifelong learning systems (informatics-based system). ▪ Using digital platforms in the Organization's areas of competence. ▪ Governance and establishment of ethical frameworks for the use of these technologies.
4. Empowering youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involving youth in planning and implementing programmes. ▪ Addressing poverty and unemployment and aligning youth skills with the labour market. ▪ Strengthening the role of UNESCO Clubs, Chairs, Schools and Learning Cities.
5. Promoting identity, citizenship, peace, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishing principles and standards to reach common values (through normative frameworks such as UNESCO conventions and recommendations). ▪ Promoting the principle of equal opportunities and gender equality. ▪ Finding innovative ways to promote peace, global citizenship and dialogue through modern technical means.

Contribution of National Commissions to the implementation of the next UNESCO programme

26. Contributions National Commissions can make to implement the Medium-Term Strategy:

- *Engagement of National Commissions:* The importance of involving National Commissions in UNESCO's effort to overcome challenges and facilitate relations with government agencies.
- *Broader mandate:* Giving National Commissions a broader mandate for interactions between UNESCO field offices and government institutions so they do not act as mere coordinators or mediators.
- *Formal commitments:* Meetings should include formal commitments to ensure effective results.
- *Visibility and participation:* UNESCO's continued presence in Member States through periodic visits and meetings is very important in enhancing the National Commissions' status and influence.

Main strengths of National Commissions:

- National Commissions represent an added value, being the sole representative of UNESCO in Member States, and it is the only mediator for transferring the expertise of this Organization in its fields of competence to all public, private and civil society institutions.
- Direct reporting to high-level officials, including Ministers.
- National Commissions have a deeper understanding of national contexts, challenges, priorities and considerations.
- National Commissions' ability to build communication channels and mobilize resources at the national level.
- Availability of competent personnel who have the knowledge, experience and expertise in issues related to UNESCO, especially regarding the roles of National Commissions.

What the UNESCO Secretariat can do to enhance the participation of National Commissions:

- Strengthening channels of communication and cooperation between UNESCO, its field offices, and National Commissions.
- Providing capacity building and training opportunities for National Commissions on an ongoing basis.
- Facilitating ways to exchange knowledge and best practices between National Commissions.
- Encouraging the effective participation of National Commissions in the design and implementation of UNESCO field offices' initiatives.
- Enhancing the recognition and visibility of National Commissions in areas where government agencies may not appreciate their role. This can be achieved through strategic visits to the Commissions and organizing high-level global or regional events within the country.

- Strengthening the role of the National Commissions as think tanks and urging field offices to coordinate directly with National Commissions for initiatives and cooperation at the national level.
- The need to create a guide that explains to countries the role and importance of National Commissions in all fields of work to avoid confusion about their roles and utilize any achievements.

C. Report of the consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO in the Pacific (23-24 May 2024)

Executive Summary

27. The consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO in the Pacific on the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5) took place online on 22 and 23 May 2024. The meeting was hosted by the National Commission of New Zealand. It took place over two sessions of approximately three hours each. The Chair was Vicki Soanes, Secretary-General of the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO and the Vice-Chair was Joseph Auli, Secretary-General of the Papua New Guinea National Commission for UNESCO.

28. Pacific National Commissions underscored the key priorities and challenges the region would like UNESCO to address in its upcoming programme cycle.

29. Climate resilience and environmental sustainability stand out as paramount concerns, given the existential threats Pacific island countries (PICs) face from climate change impacts, such as rising sea levels and extreme weather events. The importance of supporting and maintaining the rich cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge of Pacific countries was also a strong theme throughout the consultation. Education remains a key priority for the region, with sustainability of educational programmes and effective implementation beyond initial phases being critical issues. Capacity building for educators and technical support for educational data management are pressing needs requiring ongoing attention and investment.

30. The role of National Commissions is pivotal in driving UNESCO's agenda forward in the Pacific. Strengthening their institutional capacity through targeted capacity building, regular consultations, and enhanced funding mechanisms is essential. Facilitating regional collaboration and networking among National Commissions is also seen as important. However, the existing regional frameworks and mechanisms must be recognized and complemented by UNESCO.

Recommendations for the UNESCO Director-General

31. Drawing on the discussions at the Pacific National Commission consultation, below are the top recommendations to guide UNESCO's next programme cycle effectively:

- (1) **Finalize the UNESCO Field Office reform for the Pacific States:** Decisions on the location of the office must be taken in a timely manner after respectful consultation with affected parties – in particular the host countries – and be to the satisfaction of all Pacific Member States. Subsequently adequate levels of funding and professional staff must be provided to the Office on an ongoing basis.
- (2) **Tailor programmes to local contexts:** Ensure UNESCO initiatives are tailored to the specific needs and contexts of Pacific countries by deepening engagement with National Commissions and aligning programmes with national development priorities.
- (3) **Prioritize climate resilience and sustainable development:** In reflection of the existential threat posed by the climate crisis to the Pacific States, it is essential that UNESCO continues to allocate increasing resources towards climate resilience, sustainable development practices, and environmental conservation efforts that address the unique challenges faced by Pacific communities.
- (4) **Invest in education and capacity building:** The region would like to see higher investment in additional support for education systems in the region, as well as technical assistance for digital transformation and data management, and build the capacity of educators to enhance educational outcomes and resilience.

- (5) **Empower National Commissions:** Strengthen the institutional capacity of National Commissions through capacity building, improved funding mechanisms, and regular consultations to enhance coordination and ensure effective programme implementation.

Risk and opportunities to watch “on and beyond the horizon” in the Pacific

32. **Climate Change and Environmental Challenges:** Countries in the Pacific region, especially PICs face significant threats from climate change, such as rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and increased frequency of natural disasters. These challenges necessitate comprehensive climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, including coastal protection and disaster risk reduction. Issues such as marine pollution, deforestation, waste management, and the overexploitation of natural resources are hindering sustainable development.

33. **Education and Skills Development:** Ensuring access to quality education, particularly in remote and outer island communities, remains a priority. Challenges include addressing teacher shortages, infrastructure gaps, and developing relevant curricula that incorporate local contexts and cultural heritage. There is a growing focus on promoting science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, vocational training, and lifelong learning to build a skilled and adaptable workforce. This includes integrating climate change education and resilience-building into educational programmes.

34. **Cultural Preservation and Promotion:** There is a significant emphasis of the value of culture and identity and the importance of preserving and revitalizing Indigenous languages and cultural heritage. This is important for maintaining cultural identity and promoting social cohesion. Efforts include developing language and culture programmes in educational institutions and supporting national efforts on cultural preservation. The role of culture in sustainable development is recognized, with initiatives aimed at integrating culture and arts education into the broader educational framework.

35. **Technological Advancements and Digital Inclusion:** Ensuring equitable access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) is essential for education, knowledge sharing, and economic development. Remote communities often lack access to digital resources, highlighting the need for building digital infrastructure, literacy and skills. The rise of artificial intelligence poses ethical and value-based questions, particularly in education. There is a need for discussions on legislation and policies to address intellectual property rights, particularly for Indigenous knowledge, and the implications of artificial intelligence (AI).

36. **Economic Diversification and Sustainable Development:** There is a strong trend towards adopting renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, to reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels and enhance energy security. This aligns with the broader goal of mitigating climate change impacts. Promoting sustainable tourism and exploring blue economy opportunities, such as sustainable fisheries and marine biotechnology, are seen as ways to diversify economies and create jobs while preserving natural and cultural heritage. The empowerment of youth is seen as a goal.

UNESCO’s comparative strength and value added in the Pacific

37. The consultation highlighted several areas of UNESCO’s comparative strength and added value in the Pacific region.

38. **Education and capacity building:** UNESCO has a long-standing history and recognized leadership in promoting quality education globally. Its work on educational planning, policy, curricula development, teacher training, and monitoring learning outcomes gives it a strong advantage. UNESCO’s expertise in educational planning, curriculum development, and teacher training is key for addressing the shortage of science teachers and enhancing overall educational quality in Pacific island nations.

39. There is a clear need to strengthen STEM education across the region. UNESCO's support in this area, including promoting digital literacy and vocational education, can significantly benefit Pacific island countries.

40. **Culture and language preservation:** UNESCO's normative instruments (e.g. World Heritage Convention) and programmes focused on safeguarding cultural/natural heritage, position it uniquely to support Pacific nations' efforts in this area.

41. UNESCO's mandate to preserve and promote cultural diversity, including Indigenous knowledge, is especially pertinent in the Pacific region where cultural heritage is integral to identity and community resilience.

42. UNESCO's work on promoting cultural industries, creativity, and traditional knowledge is highly relevant as these emerge as needed to diversify economies. UNESCO's ability to facilitate and protect cultural diversity is an asset amid social transformations.

43. **Regional cooperation and knowledge sharing:** UNESCO's convening power and ability to facilitate regional cooperation are important for Pacific island nations facing common challenges such as climate change impacts and educational needs. However, UNESCO should recognize the existence and primacy of the main regional mechanisms, such as the Pacific Islands Forum, and seek to work with those.

44. UNESCO's normative role in setting global standards and providing technical expertise in areas like marine science (through UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission - IOC), cultural heritage (World Heritage), and the ethics of AI supports Pacific nations to align with international frameworks and best practices.

45. Several participants noted that reporting obligations for Recommendations and Conventions are hard to meet and would appreciate more support from UNESCO to fulfil these obligations.

46. **Climate change adaptation and environmental management:** UNESCO plays a vital role in supporting Pacific island nations in developing and implementing disaster risk reduction strategies. This includes enhancing early warning systems and promoting community-based resilience.

47. **Digital connectivity and innovation:** Enhancing Internet and digital connectivity can bridge gaps in education, promote digital economies, and facilitate access to basic human rights. UNESCO's role in promoting digital literacy and supporting technological innovation is important in this context. The Pacific faces specific challenges in connectivity due to geographic realities.

Priorities for UNESCO's future programme

48. Climate resilience and disaster risk reduction emerge as critical priorities. Pacific National Commissions highlighted the urgent need to enhance resilience against climate-related disasters such as king tidal waves, sea-level rise, and erosion. To achieve this, UNESCO should focus on implementing early warning systems, integrating traditional ecological knowledge, and fostering community-led disaster risk reduction strategies. These efforts would ensure that vulnerable communities are better prepared and equipped to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters.

49. Pacific National Commissions emphasized the importance of sustainable agriculture, aquaculture, and food sovereignty. UNESCO can support these goals by promoting climate-smart agricultural practices, revitalizing traditional farming techniques, and advocating water-efficient agricultural methods. Moreover, fostering community-based initiatives for food production and storage facilities would enhance local resilience against food insecurity and water scarcity challenges.

50. Connectivity and digital inclusion were highlighted as essential for Pacific communities. To bridge the digital divide, UNESCO should prioritize supporting the expansion of digital infrastructure

and promoting digital literacy across the region. This includes ensuring affordable and reliable broadband Internet access, providing technical training in digital skills, and utilizing digital technologies for improved service delivery in sectors such as education, healthcare, disaster response, and cultural industries.

51. Advancing a sustainable blue and green economy is crucial. Pacific National Commissions expressed the need to develop sustainable industries such as eco-tourism, fisheries, and renewable energy.

52. UNESCO can support these efforts by supporting capacity-building initiatives and knowledge sharing on sustainable technologies, which would facilitate economic growth while preserving Pacific ecosystems.

53. Integrating environmental education and promoting stewardship of natural resources emerged as key strategies. UNESCO should collaborate with Pacific countries to empower youth in environmental stewardship and document traditional ecological knowledge. This approach ensures that future generations are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to sustainably manage Pacific environments.

54. Strengthening regional cooperation and knowledge sharing is essential. By fostering partnerships among Pacific countries on issues such as ocean governance, marine conservation, and climate change adaptation, UNESCO can amplify collective efforts to address common challenges. Leveraging UNESCO's global networks and platforms for knowledge exchange will enhance the visibility and impact of Pacific voices in global environmental governance.

55. In terms of implementation, a well-supported and resourced UNESCO Office in the region is crucial. These Offices should house multidisciplinary teams capable of coordinating local and regional activities, engaging with governments and communities, and leading flagship projects such as the Ocean Decade. It must be adequately resourced to carry out its activities, taking into account the realities of the region, such as distance between Member States and the high cost of travel.

56. Empowering National Commissions to play a central role in programme design, implementation, and evaluation is important, however UNESCO must recognize the realities of workload for small Member States, which do not have large teams working on UNESCO matters.

57. UNESCO should support National Commissions to strengthen their capacity in project management, resource mobilization, and advocacy to ensure programmes are locally owned and aligned with national development priorities. Clear communication channels and robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks will facilitate feedback mechanisms, enabling adaptive management and continuous improvement of UNESCO initiatives in the Pacific region.

Contribution of National Commissions to the implementation of the next UNESCO programme

58. National Commissions underscored their role in enhancing local ownership and alignment with national priorities. They aim to ensure that UNESCO's programmes are tailored to address specific challenges and opportunities within their respective countries. This involves facilitating engagement and buy-in from national government agencies, local authorities, and stakeholders, thereby enhancing the relevance and sustainability of UNESCO's initiatives.

59. National Commissions emphasized their capability to strengthen coordination and collaboration. They serve as primary liaisons between UNESCO and national governments, fostering coordination across different ministries and agencies. By identifying synergies and opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration, National Commissions help integrate UNESCO's programmes into broader national development frameworks, ensuring comprehensive and holistic approaches to addressing challenges.

60. Lastly, National Commissions serve as advocates and ambassadors for UNESCO's mandate and programmes at the national level. They raise awareness about UNESCO's initiatives, promote their relevance, and mobilize public support for sustainable development goals. This advocacy role extends to fostering dialogue, promoting cultural diversity, and preserving indigenous knowledge and heritage, thereby enriching UNESCO's impact and visibility within Pacific island communities.

Pacific National Commissions – strengths and engagement

61. The National Commissions in the Pacific region demonstrate several key strengths that UNESCO can leverage to enhance their engagement and effectiveness in the next programme cycle.

62. National Commissions possess deep local knowledge and contextual understanding. They are well-versed in the unique challenges, cultural nuances, and specific needs of their respective countries. This local expertise enables them to provide valuable insights and guidance to UNESCO in designing and implementing programmes that are tailored to the Pacific region's distinct circumstances.

63. National Commissions have established strong relationships and networks within their national governments, ministries, and local communities. These connections facilitate effective coordination, collaboration, and buy-in for UNESCO's initiatives at both national and subnational levels. By leveraging these relationships, National Commissions can ensure that UNESCO's programmes align closely with national priorities and development agendas.

64. National Commissions engage with a diverse range of stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and Indigenous knowledge holders. This broad engagement fosters inclusivity and ensures that UNESCO's programmes are responsive to local needs and have widespread support within Pacific communities.

65. To further strengthen the engagement of National Commissions in the next UNESCO programme, the UNESCO Secretariat could take several strategic actions:

- (1) **Enhance capacity:** Provide targeted capacity-building support to National Commissions in areas such as project management, monitoring and evaluation, and resource mobilization. This would strengthen their institutional capacity and ability to effectively implement UNESCO's programmes.
- (2) **Facilitate regular consultations:** Engage in regular consultations with National Commissions to understand and align with each country's specific development priorities. This ensures that UNESCO's programmes are closely tailored to meet national needs and aspirations.
- (3) **Support localization and community engagement:** Empower National Commissions to lead the localization of UNESCO's programmes, adapting them to fit local cultural, social, and environmental contexts. Facilitate direct engagement with local communities and grassroots stakeholders to enhance programme effectiveness and inclusivity.
- (4) **Increase funding and resource mobilization:** Provide dedicated financial resources to National Commissions to strengthen their capacity to coordinate and implement UNESCO's programmes.
- (5) **Promote regional cooperation and knowledge sharing:** Facilitate regional dialogues, networking opportunities, and peer-learning exchanges among National Commissions in the Pacific. Support them to participate actively in regional initiatives and platforms to share best practices and lessons learned.

D. Report of the consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO of Asia (11 June 2024)
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66. The consultations of the Asian National Commissions for UNESCO took place online on 11 June 2024, hosted by the National Commission of Indonesia. The consultation meeting was organized to engage National Commissions in a dialogue and to discuss regional challenges and priorities towards providing guidance to the Director-General on main directions and priorities for UNESCO's future Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5). The outcomes of the discussions contributed to the Interregional Meeting of National Commissions held online (2-3 July 2024).

67. The Indonesian National Commission represented by Secretary-General, Ms Itje Chodidjah was elected as Chair of the meeting. The Vice-Chair was the Korean National Commission represented by Ms Eun Young Kim, Director of UNESCO Agenda and Policy Center, and the Rapporteur was the Philippine National Commission represented by Ms Lindsay Barrientos, Deputy Executive Director.

68. The Chairperson of the meeting set the scene by emphasizing the importance of the Asian National Commissions' inputs to ensure that UNESCO's programmes and budget reflect the diverse needs of the countries of the region. She highlighted the expanded roles and responsibilities of National Commissions, especially its strategic role of influencing standard setting activities and advocating for the interest of Asian Member States more effectively. She expressed her wish for the consultation meeting to strengthen cooperation and ensure effective implementation of programmes across the region. She stressed the need for UNESCO to be well positioned to support Member States in addressing multi-faceted challenges by improving operational efficiency and by maintaining trust and credibility among Member States.

69. To jointly tackle opportunities and issues together, the Asian National Commissions' Consultation meeting was divided into four sessions: risks and opportunities to watch on and beyond the horizon; perceived comparative advantage in the region; translation to future programmes; and the strategic role of the National Commissions.

Executive Summary

Topics	Recommendations from the Consultation
Risks and Opportunities to Watch ("beyond the horizon")	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the roles of the youth as direct programme beneficiaries, programme implementors and key decision makers • Digitalization transforming education, how it impacts cultural heritage preservation, thus, the need to address digital divides. • Demographic change – Asia population • Climate change – Asia is being hit hardest by climate change and this will affect daily lives of the people. • Migration – need for programmes on social cohesion and public dialogue
Perceived Comparative Advantage in the Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to influence policies and bridge science and policy • Role in translating global priorities to local actions • Knowledge platform, collaborative research • Emphasis on the role of women and the youth • UNESCO designated and inscribed sites as models of sustainability

Future Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greening Education Programme • Synergies in education, culture, and sciences • Youth-led • Capacity building for managers of UNESCO designated and inscribed sites • Digital Literacy, e-learning and skills relevant to the 21st century • Peace building to counter extremism • Preserving cultural heritage • Strengthening collaborative efforts for ICH, including local and indigenous projects • Bringing students to geopark/biosphere reserve sites, learning about the geopark/biosphere reserves lens of sectors • Support to and promotion of youth-produced knowledge and data, in order to design and implement policies and actions to address challenges that affect humans and nature. • Contextualizing UNESCO reports, translating to local languages • Capacity programme for Regional or Subregional Offices to share best practices • Support to International Day of Celebration that highlight collaboration, cooperation and community participation
Strategic Role of National Commissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective two-way bridge that paves the way for seamless lines of communication and stronger bonds of cooperation • A model of unity in diversity (Network of National Commissions) • A laboratory of ideas, a think-tank, driver of intellectual cooperation • A platform to ensure that global priorities are localized • Connector for partnerships, for building capacities, and for strengthening the networks for lifelong learning that cuts across sectors. • Facilitator for discourse on science-policy nexus • Partners in communicating with policy-makers and politicians for sustainable engagements in UNESCO programmes
Areas of Synergy and Cooperation between National Commissions and UNESCO and its field offices	<p><u>Coordination and communication</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further improve communication lines, streamline processes, avoid duplication • Implement efficient information flow from UNESCO Headquarters (HQ)/Regional Offices to National Commissions to Programme or Sector Focal Points in Member States • Maintain the momentum and continuing discussions after meetings/consultative sessions • Conduct regular meetings such as the recent Regional Meeting with the Cluster covered by UNESCO-Jakarta <p><u>Increasing UNESCO visibility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Commissions to share to UNESCO and its field offices information about its initiatives at the local, national and global levels • Support and strengthen ASPnet • Branding and campaign of UNESCO to reach out to broader areas at the country level

Risks and opportunities to watch “on and beyond the horizon” in the Asia region

70. The meeting discussed the risks, the challenges and opportunities that the region is facing, highlighting the following areas:

- (1) **Culture:** The role of culture and creativity in attaining sustainable development and its influence on national and regional development is increasingly recognized.
- (2) **Youth:** Increased engagement and contributions of the youth to project implementation and policy decisions will shape the opportunities and challenges in the countries.
- (3) **Digitalization:** The need to address digital divide was raised, especially given the impact of digitalization to education and cultural heritage preservation. The need for support for integration of artificial intelligence in the public sector was also evoked.
- (4) **Demographic change and migration:** With the significant demographic changes in the Asia region, there is a need to adopt policies that support lifelong learning. In relation to migration, there is a need for creating social cohesion and intercultural dialogue.
- (5) **Climate change:** Asia’s vulnerability to natural hazards and climate change was noted as it highly affects the daily lives of the people, especially due to lack of access to quality education. To tackle global climate change, there is a need to further invest in literacy and artificial intelligence, adapting sustainable practices, and implementing Global Citizenship Education (GCED). Furthermore, disparities must be addressed by promoting transforming education, including the technical and vocational education training (TVET) and address climate crisis through education for sustainable development (ESD). It was called on the need to support the Greening Education Programme that envisions 50% of schools being green by 2030.
- (6) **Peace, human security and economy:** Asia, as a motor of global economy, contributes to at least 60% of real gross domestic product (GDP) growth. The impact of the global economic crisis was mentioned as reinforcing existing issues, especially in relation with climate change. Despite the ongoing global crisis such as in Ukraine and Gaza, it was hoped that the Asia region would be kept in the attention.
- (7) **Relations with National Commissions:** The importance of relations with National Commissions and of their best practices were emphasized, mentioning the need to reinforce capacity building and training, considering the limitations in technical and financial capacities of the National Commissions.

UNESCO’s comparative advantage and value added in the Asia region

71. The participants in the meeting expressed that UNESCO’s comparative strength lies in its broad mandate, which encompasses education, sciences, culture, communication and information. This wide scope allows UNESCO to deliver impactful activities within each field and promote an intersectoral approach that leverages the potential of soft power, helping people lead more decent lives and fostering sustainable development. The importance of strengthening UNESCO’s foresight capabilities to envision a better and more desirable future was emphasized.

72. The gains from UNESCO’s inscriptions and partnerships were strongly emphasized, in particular in relation to its support to tourism and raising awareness about sustainable development. It was expressed that regional cooperation through multinational nominations in UNESCO programmes, such as Intangible Cultural Heritage and Memory of the World, not only strengthens the identification of common identity but will foster cultural understanding that could eventually lead to partnerships or joint activities within and beyond the Asia region. It was noted that there is further room to pool together experts – to consider more experts from the Asia region who could be part of

the UNESCO pool of experts, especially to contribute to those in need of working on their nomination dossiers, engaging with grassroots communities, deepening appreciation of local contexts and including learnings from traditional and indigenous knowledge.

73. UNESCO's involvement with youth was also welcomed. UNESCO's support of youth exchange programmes, strong youth engagement in global fora and platforms such as the Transforming Education Summit, Man and Biosphere Youth Network and the Youth Forum in Paris was highlighted as added value of the Organization. The meeting recommended that UNESCO provide further support to youth-led activities, project proposals that cut across sectors to address climate change impact and promote peace education.

74. It was noted that UNESCO has 20 subregional and regional offices across the Asia and the Pacific region. In the case of Indonesia, it is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and collaborates with these countries especially in the areas of culture and sustainability of regional network. It was further noted that five countries of the ASEAN are working under the auspices of UNESCO Office in Jakarta and five countries are working under auspices of UNESCO Office in Bangkok, and thus suggested strengthening the cooperation between UNESCO field offices.

75. The importance of a common regional identity and the potential for regional cooperation within the UNESCO framework, particularly through the network of National Commissions was emphasized. The importance of leveraging this network to strengthen regional cooperation and share best practices among Asian countries was stressed. The need to maintain the momentum of convening regional meetings where issues, especially pertaining to regional cooperation and education, could be discussed also was highlighted.

76. It was also suggested to centralize communications through National Commissions to reduce duplication of efforts, to streamline communications effectively and efficiently, thereby maximizing the impact of UNESCO at the global and local levels. National Commissions, as intermediaries between UNESCO and its partners at national, local and grassroots levels, could help translate initiatives at the local level, especially in the initiatives related to providing quality education. At the same time, it was recognized that, while driven by the same goals and visions, National Commissions and UNESCO have their respective features especially in terms of human resources, hence, National Commissions cannot deliver UNESCO's mandate in the same way.

Priorities for UNESCO's future programme

77. The representatives of the National Commissions in the Asia region stressed the importance of aligning UNESCO's Programme and Budget (2026-2029) with the countries' priorities. In this sense, National Commissions in the Asia region recommend the following to guide UNESCO's next Programme and Budget cycle:

- (1) **Lifelong learning:** It was suggested to prioritizing lifelong learning to adapt to rapid technological advancements and maintain competitiveness. The need to harmonize development with conservation efforts to protect cultural and ecological integrity was emphasized. Additionally, the importance of the Futures of Education initiative to address diverse educational challenges in the region was highlighted.
- (2) **Strengthening synergies in and between areas of activity:** It was suggested to further emphasize or focus on strengthening the synergies in the sciences, culture, and education sectors. Especially in view of encouraging more nominations in Asia into inscribed and designated sites, it is important to strengthen the capacities of National Commissions and the people who are managing UNESCO-inscribed and designated sites; and to support efforts, including research, that further raise awareness of the protection and conservation of UNESCO designated and inscribed sites.

- (3) **Strengthen cultural collaborations:** It was observed that the rhythms of development are not synchronized with the rhythms of cultural development. It was suggested that UNESCO could launch a world forum for cultural policies and to strengthen collaborative efforts for intangible cultural heritage, including local and indigenous projects.
- (4) **Technological developments:** Several National Commissions raised the issue of the challenges faced linked to advancing technologies. Interest was expressed in developing collaboration in relevant programmes, notably in bio-genome, but also in digital literacy, e-learning and skills relevant to the 21st century, peacebuilding to counter extremism, and preserving cultural heritage.
- (5) **Supporting youth-produced knowledge:** It was asked for enhanced to support and promote youth-produced knowledge and data, in order to design and implement policies and actions to address challenges that affect humans and nature.
- (6) **Contextualizing UNESCO reports:** It was asked that publications be translated into local languages.
- (7) **Support to International Day of Celebration:** Support to celebration of International Days was requested to UNESCO as they are important moments of collaboration, cooperation and community participation.

Strategic role of National Commissions in the next programme implementation period

78. It was emphasized that the collaboration between UNESCO and National Commissions is vital, as much as it is important to engage national governments to secure funding/support for capacity building and trainings. National Commissions can broaden influence within the different government structures by working on common objectives to raise UNESCO's profile.

79. It was noted that UNESCO could contribute to programmes that promote cultural understanding and language skills. Participants mentioned that every National Commission has unique features in terms of their capacity and human and financial resources. National Commissions that are relatively smaller could benefit from technical support from those that are doing better. It was stressed that activities can be implemented with success with the strong commitment to its objectives, regardless of the structures of National Commissions.

80. Furthermore, National Commissions should have a good understanding of the achievements and results of UNESCO field offices. It was suggested to develop a programme at the regional or subregional level to share best practices per programme, with UNESCO Headquarters as facilitator.

81. Participants presented that National Commissions should keep striving to be a platform for meaningful exchanges and repository of relevant and reliable information to help determine where the country is in terms of bridging UNESCO to the communities and the grassroots.

82. As laboratory of ideas, think-tank, driver of intellectual cooperation but also a model of unity in diversity, it was said that National Commissions are a connector and facilitator ensuring that global priorities are connected with relevant stakeholders at local level. It was suggested for National Commissions to actively convene national expertise to contribute to UNESCO's decision-making processes and to harness their intellectual and cultural wealth to shape UNESCO's policies and programmes where possible. National Commissions plays an important role in the promotion of UNESCO's mission. The strategic leadership of National Commissions are crucial considering the diversity and different capacities and its contributions to aligning national priorities in promoting UNESCO's thrusts and optimizing actions. Additionally, it was argued that National Commissions should lead in areas where the UNESCO Secretariat faces challenges, rather than merely serving as intermediaries.

83. National Commissions are an effective two-way bridge that paves the way for seamless lines of communication and stronger bonds of cooperation. It was underscored that the strategic role of National Commissions is beyond coordination as it also contributes to substance and helps raise awareness of UNESCO's programmes. There were calls on the need to increase branding and campaign to increase the recognition and visibility of UNESCO. It was proposed to ensure that more students will be able to visit and learn about UNESCO's designated and inscribed sites. Support is needed for this as well as in building capacities especially of those in the frontline.

84. The Secretariat encouraged the National Commissions to share activities at the national, regional and global levels. The regional meeting of five National Commissions (Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Timor-Leste, and Philippines) organized by the UNESCO Office in Jakarta and hosted by the Indonesia National Commission (May 2024) is regarded as a good practice demonstrating positive synergies. It was reminded that UNESCO also organizes training for new Secretaries-General and team members. In terms of training for National Commissions, UNESCO advised National Commissions to specify or provide more details on the kind of support or training that the respective Commissions would need.

85. UNESCO shared the updated Architecture of National Commissions publication that contains best practices, mandates, and structures, among others. The Secretariat also reminded the National Commissions of UNESCO's fellowship programmes that encourage cultural understanding and diversity and recognize that every person is an agent of change. National Commissions are encouraged to share invitations or communications regarding fellowship programmes with stakeholders.

Conclusion

86. There was a collective agreement to make efforts to improve on communication, coordination and cooperation for the National Commissions and UNESCO to effectively contribute to the realizing of UNESCO's goals and aligning to the visions and plans of the Member States in the Asia region. It was noted that it is crucial to identify areas where impact has been strong. National Commissions were encouraged to continue adding value to UNESCO programmes and future initiatives. It was hoped that National Commissions will continue to contribute to collective wisdom towards building a better future for all.

E. Report of the consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO of the Europe region (5 June 2024)

87. The consultation of the European National Commissions for UNESCO on the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5) took place online on 5 June 2024. The meeting was hosted by the National Commission of Türkiye. Professor M. Öcal Oğuz, President of the Turkish National Commission was elected as the Chair of the meeting, Mr Yves-Gérard Méhou-Loko, Secretary-General of the Canadian National Commission as the Vice-Chair and Ms Jana Foltányová, National Commission of Slovakia as the rapporteur of the meeting.

88. The participants expressed deep appreciation to the Turkish National Commission for hosting the online Consultation Meeting with the European National Commissions for UNESCO, an essential process for the elaboration of UNESCO priorities and for the future programme; as well as for organizing and hosting the eighth meeting of the Informal Network of the European National Commissions (24-28 April 2024, Istanbul).

Risk and opportunities to watch “on and beyond the horizon”

89. The regional consultation highlighted several significant risks that the world at large, and in particular Europe, is faced with. The issues raised were as below:

- **Demographic change:** the rapidly aging population in Europe raises several challenges in the long term for society.
- **Multilateralism:** It was noted that there is increased threat to the value of multilateralism. The participants noted that UNESCO must remain at the forefront of defending the importance of multilateralism and that the National Commissions have an important role in this endeavour.
- **Defending democracy:** It was noted that there are trends towards democratic backsliding. In this regard, the importance of UNESCO’s work in freedom of expression, academic, and cultural freedom was emphasized.
- **Multiple crisis including climate crisis:** The multitude of crisis around the world were raised as serious challenges at the global and European levels, including the war in Ukraine. Climate change was noted as an issue to be addressed through interdisciplinary approach and by leveraging UNESCO’s wide networks.

UNESCO’s comparative strength and value added

90. The consultation meeting highlighted a number of comparative strength and value-added of UNESCO.

91. **UNESCO’s positive name value:** It was noted that UNESCO’s name value could be considered to be the biggest asset of the Organization. UNESCO’s name carries significant positive value and is well-received and known by the public at large. It is perceived as an asset that reflects the Organization’s core value. This reputation is crucial for UNESCO’s success, and there must be a strong emphasis on maintaining and enhancing this positive perception. The need for reputation management and integrating reputational risk assessments into all decisions related to partnerships and programmes were highlighted. The National Commissions expressed their wish and commitment to contributing to further enhancing UNESCO’s name value.

92. **UNESCO’s network and designations:** UNESCO’s networks, such as ASPnet, Geoparks, and UNESCO Chairs, are highly valuable and widely recognized. The meeting noted the challenges faced from insufficient staffing at the Secretariat, which does not allow it to develop and guide programmes. Currently, it was considered that the one or two staff dedicated to each of the Networks

are only able to cope with management and administrative matters. There is a call for increased staffing and resources to better support and guide these networks and to encourage and develop more inter-regional cooperation. The meeting proposed the idea of bundling functions across different networks to improve connections and support.

93. **Normative role of UNESCO:** The human-rights based approach of UNESCO is crucial and very important. UNESCO is appreciated and valued for the normative role that it plays. It was considered that UNESCO should continue to be an active multilateral organization with strong expertise in the areas of its mandate such as education and freedom of expression. It was noted that it is important to translate norms at national level, as this allows governments to understand the impact of UNESCO.

94. **Network of UNESCO National Commissions:** The crucial role and importance of National Commissions for UNESCO in each of the Member States were highlighted as a strong comparative advantage of UNESCO. The meeting reiterated the important role that the National Commissions play in implementing UNESCO's work.

Priorities for UNESCO's future programme

95. The Consultation meeting identified the following key areas and principles to take into consideration in defining the priorities for UNESCO's future programme:

96. **Human rights-based approach:** Programme implementation at UNESCO should continue to emphasize core values such as human rights, especially on issues such as freedom of expression in its broad sense, encompassing artistic and academic freedom, scientific freedom and safety of journalists, and its more recent work on ethics of artificial intelligence. Gender equality must continue to be a core value of UNESCO's work and programmes.

97. **Intersectoral approach:** The National Commissions urged UNESCO to continue to strengthen its intersectoral and inter-disciplinary approach to programming. Creating more synergies through intersectoral approach would further strengthen UNESCO's programmes, especially in emergency situations like in Ukraine. Key initiatives such as UNESCO's leadership in the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme, and the Futures Literacy Programme are all founded on the strength of UNESCO's multi-disciplinary mandate.

98. **Enhance programmatic synergies of UNESCO's networks and designations:** UNESCO's far-reaching networks (i.e. ASPnet, UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs, category 2 centres, and more) and designations (i.e. World Heritage, Geoparks, Biosphere Reserves, Creative Cities, and many more) are extremely valuable. In order for these programmes to have even further outreach and impact, the National Commissions would like to see the networks and designations creating more programmatic synergies and enhancing the inter-disciplinary approach. In this connection, the National Commissions urged UNESCO to enhance collaboration with civil society, including youth, across its programming and suggested that the National Commissions can contribute to these efforts.

99. **Highlight and communicate UNESCO's comparative advantage:** UNESCO must communicate better its achievements and results around its comparative advantage. In view of communicating to the policy-makers in the European region, it is important for UNESCO's programmes to be identified as addressing the needs of Europe and aligned with EU's policies and priorities. Europe and the European Union's financial contribution and partnership with UNESCO is significant. In this regard, UNESCO should further communicate on its work on freedom of expression, tackling disinformation and preserving trust in the democratic system. It should also continue to facilitate dialogue between regions.

100. **Further improve results-based management:** The National Commissions commended UNESCO for its ongoing efforts to improve its results-based management. The National

Commissions suggest the approach of having a limited number of objectives and strengthening further the Organization's results-based management. It also suggests that UNESCO enhance its risk management systems. In doing so, the analysis of UNESCO's Internal Oversight Services must be put forward.

Contribution of National Commissions to the implementation of the next UNESCO programme

101. Considering the key role that the National Commissions have in advocating and implementing UNESCO's mandate, the National Commissions urge UNESCO to foster better integration and cooperation between the National Commissions and UNESCO. In that regard, the meeting suggested that UNESCO conduct systematic training of UNESCO staff on collaborating with National Commissions.

102. It was noted that National Commissions play a critical role in the tripartite system involving the Secretariat, Member States, and the National Commissions. It was recalled that the National Commissions should not be viewed merely as platforms for communication and advocacy but as integral parts of UNESCO's operation, deserving further support and resources. It was recalled that each National Commission has its own ecosystem with varying capacities and resource, but all share the same function. National Commissions are seen as valuable assets for promoting UNESCO's messages and engaging with civil society.

103. The National Commissions commended the efforts of UNESCO's National Commissions unit to facilitate communication and exchange with UNESCO and among National Commissions. The meeting suggested further streamlining of communications to National Commissions. Regarding requests for feedback on surveys, the meeting asked that National Commissions are given the necessary time to consult.

104. The meeting discussed the position paper of the National Commissions for the preparation of document 43 C/5 of UNESCO titled "National Commissions for Renewed Multilateralism". It was recalled that this position paper is a revision of the paper which was presented by the National Commissions at the time of preparing documents 41 C/4 and C/5 and in light of the strategic transformation of the Organization. It was recalled that the paper calls on to further strengthen the trilateral relationship between the Secretariat, Member States, and National Commissions. The position paper highlights the role that the National Commissions can play in bringing multilateralism outside of the UNESCO building, by encouraging and facilitating interactions between the different designated sites, the networks and reaching out to civil society. It was noted that the position paper advocates more interaction and learning between National Commissions, in view of strengthening multilateralism.

105. The National Commissions expressed the wish that the Secretariat and the Director-General raise the profile and the role of National Commissions, during their interactions and exchanges with high-level government officials, in view of strengthening the trilateral relationship. The participants of the meeting also expressed their wish that the Governing Bodies of UNESCO such as the Executive Board also be well aware of the processes and the contributions of the National Commissions.

F. Report of the consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO in the Caribbean, Willemstad, Curaçao (16-18 April 2024)

106. The Consultation of National Commissions for UNESCO in the Caribbean took place in Willemstad, Curaçao (16-18 April 2024). Twenty National Commissions from Member States and Associate Members of the Caribbean participated in the meeting. The meeting also included observers from the National Commissions of France and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as well as focal points of the Netherlands National Commission in three Dutch Caribbean islands (Sint Eustatius Statia, Bonaire and Saba). The meeting took place in hybrid format, with most participants from the National Commissions in the region *in praesentia*. The Honourable Sithree van Heydoorn, Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Curaçao, Chairperson of the National Commission officially declared the consultation meeting open. The consultation meeting was made possible through a generous financial contribution from the National Commission of France, which had provided the same for the consultation of National Commissions for UNESCO in the Pacific the previous year.

107. The meeting was hosted by the National Commission of Curaçao, an Associate Member of UNESCO, under the Chairperson Ms Marva Browne, Secretary-General of the Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO. Five Vice-Chairpersons were appointed – the Secretaries-General from Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Lucia. Six Rapporteurs were designated from the National Commissions of Belize, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (observer).

108. The meetings were organized as follow-up to two frameworks. The first objective was to organize a meeting of the Nations Commissions of Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS) as follow-up to the recommendations of the 9th Interregional Meeting of National Commissions (June 2022). The second objective was to hold a subregional consultation on the preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5), pursuant to 42 C/Resolution 81.

109. Throughout the three days of meetings, the National Commissions of the Caribbean region discussed the following: the Caribbean region's inputs into the draft 43 C/5 based on the guiding questions for the elaboration of the preliminary proposals for the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (as contained in document [42 C/7](#)); the implementation of UNESCO's new Operational Strategy for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (2023-2029) (as contained in document [42 C/51](#)) during the 2026-2029 quadrennium, as well as the priority actions of the Caribbean region within the framework of UNESCO's Global Priorities Africa and Gender Equality; and strengthening the regional cooperation and reinforcing the relationships between the Caribbean National Commissions and UNESCO field offices in the region.

110. The meetings provided opportunity to interact with the wider UNESCO family in the region. Members of the National Commissions were able to interact through a lecture held by the UNESCO SIDS Chair at the University of Curaçao on the topic of "UNESCO with and for SIDS". The panelists were the ADG/PAX of UNESCO Mr Anthony Ohemeng-Boamah, and Mr Richenel Ansano, international facilitator on intangible cultural heritage. The session was moderated by Ms Anna Paolini, Director of the UNESCO Regional Office for the Caribbean.

Risks and opportunities to watch "on and beyond the horizon" in the Caribbean

111. In identifying the needs of the next Programme and Budget of UNESCO, the meeting discussed the risks, the challenges and opportunities that the region is facing. In terms of risks, the Caribbean SIDS are highly vulnerable to natural hazards, climate change, and economic shocks, which pose significant challenges to their development and sustainability. Violence among youth, including violence in schools was highlighted throughout the meeting as a key challenge and risk in the region.

112. One of the risks raised related to programming was the lack of synergy and alignment between the various initiatives and projects undertaken by different United Nations agencies within the region, leading to inefficiencies and overlapping efforts.

113. The meeting identified many opportunities to be seized. The region can benefit from enhanced multisectoral and inter-agency collaboration to maximize the impact of UNESCO's programmes, especially in tackling the challenges of youth violence. Strengthening disaster preparedness and promoting ocean science can enhance resilience to natural hazards and climate change. Educational reform and the integration of future skills into curricula can address the region's evolving needs and empower youth. Leveraging digital transformation and promoting digital literacy can drive innovation and improve access to information. Leveraging intangible cultural heritage for resilience, economic development and social cohesion was underscored an opportunity in Caribbean SIDS. The shared history along the Transatlantic Slave Route was deemed significant for safeguarding heritage, fostering economic development, and promoting regional cooperation.

UNESCO's comparative advantage and value added in the Caribbean

114. The participants in the meeting expressed that UNESCO's comparative strength lies in its interdisciplinary approach, which enables it to connect different sectors and promote comprehensive solutions. The following areas were identified as key comparative advantage and value-added of UNESCO.

115. UNESCO's focus on educational reform and lifelong learning is pivotal for addressing the foundational issues in the Caribbean region.

116. Programmes for meaningful youth engagement were highlighted. UNESCO's programmes for girls in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and flagship programmes for gender equality such as the L'Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science International Awards; peacebuilding and violence prevention in schools; and youth in creative economies are positive examples of UNESCO's work towards gender equality and youth empowerment.

117. UNESCO's efforts in cultural heritage preservation and promotion are crucial for maintaining the unique identities of Caribbean SIDS.

118. UNESCO's support for disaster preparedness and ocean science is critical given the region's vulnerability to natural hazards and climate change, in view of the geographical specificities of being islands and surrounded by oceans.

Making UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Small Island Developing States (2023-2029) relevant to country and regional national priorities of the Caribbean

119. The members of the National Commissions of the Caribbean region exchanged on ensuring the relevance of UNESCO's Operational Strategy for SIDS (2023-2029) in the region in line with their national and regional priorities. The discussion was complemented by presentations from the UNESCO Secretariat on UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Small Island Developing States (2023-2029) and its Accelerator Programmes (ACEs); resource mobilization for the Strategy; and enhancing the communication and visibility of the results of wider UNESCO's programmes.

120. The exchange highlighted the need for better coordination, communication, and customization of initiatives to make UNESCO's Operational Strategy for SIDS relevant and effective for Caribbean countries.

121. The meeting affirmed UNESCO's crucial role in contributing to sustainable development in the Caribbean SIDS; and in creating stronger, more resilient communities in SIDS. The UNESCO Secretariat assured its engagement with the SIDS countries in the region.

122. In terms of the programmes, the representatives of the National Commissions stressed the need for a customization of UNESCO's programmes and initiatives for the countries, as the one-size-fits-all approach is not suitable. The countries called for UNESCO to adapt the initiatives to the specific needs of each of the countries. High-level engagement with the countries was suggested to ensure country-specific programming.

123. In terms of **resource mobilization** for the Strategy, UNESCO Secretariat emphasized the long-term engagement required with the donors. The Chief of Strategic Partnerships shared that the donors are increasingly placing emphasis of co-creating the programmes which they support and promote. The value of working jointly with other United Nations agencies, in particular for resource mobilization was emphasized.

124. The National Commissions shared their challenges related to their lack of capacity to respond to the various calls for proposals – the lack of human resources; lack of time to coordinate with all the relevant stakeholders; and lack of technical capacity to prepare solid proposals to donors. The short time and deadlines of UNESCO for the call for proposals were also highlighted as not creating the enabling environment in the National Commissions.

125. The importance of communicating concrete results in the SIDS, especially considering Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was highlighted to raise the awareness of politicians, donors and the wider international community to generate positive cycle of resource mobilization. UNESCO aims to further enhance the communication through conventional and social media. With regards to media outreach, it was pointed out that the programmes should be mindful of the lack of capacity in certain Member States, in topics such as SDGs.

126. The representatives of the National Commissions also voiced the challenges that they face, in relation to coordination and communication. Many highlighted that different ministries often operate independently, and national programme committees do not necessarily have the overview of each other's activities. With a view to increasing awareness among ministries of the ongoing work of UNESCO, it was suggested to make full use of the communication aimed at the National Commissions, in particular the National Commissions Platform, the weekly and monthly newsletters, brochures, and annual reports, prepared and distributed by the Secretariat.

127. UNESCO Secretariat's Chief of SIDS Section provided an update to the participants on the 4th International Conference provided an update to the participants on the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States (Antigua and Barbuda, 27-30 May 2024). The National Commissions voiced that there was limited information available about the Conference, from within their own respective governments.

128. Regarding the SIDS4 Conference programme, the participants highlighted the centrality of education and realizing the priorities of the countries in achieving the SDGs. The participants also stressed the important need to address youth as agents of change and peacebuilders, promoting meaningful youth engagement and preventing violence among youth. One representative voiced disappointment in not seeing culture being prominent in the SIDS4 Conference, while Culture is UNESCO's comparative advantage and is central to finding suitable climate action and development of creative economies and wider social development. It was shared that the Transcultural Programme would be featured at the SIDS4 Conference.

Priorities for UNESCO's future programme

129. The representatives of the National Commissions stressed the importance of aligning UNESCO's Programme and Budget (2026-2029) with the countries' priorities. It was also expressed that there should be continuity of UNESCO's programmes. UNESCO's mandate of building peace remains as relevant as ever in the region. The information below summarizes the programme areas highlighted by the National Commissions of the Caribbean region for UNESCO's Programme in the 2026-2029 period.

130. Addressing youth violence and improving youth programmes: Meaningful youth engagement strategies must be enhanced, focusing on creating comprehensive youth programmes that address the multifaceted challenges of violence and societal pressures. Youth programmes should include education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), holistic social services, training and capacity development opportunities, building culture and heritage understanding, and community involvement to ensure an integrated approach. Increased advocacy at the decision-making level is needed to address the problem of growing youth crime and violence in the region, of young male school dropouts, placing peacebuilding and mutual understanding at the centre of these conversations. The youth programmes should also integrate advancement of gender equality while recognizing youth as partners and agents of change. Enhancing capacities of youth practitioners and decision-makers for mainstreaming youth in programming was also emphasized. Examples of existing successful programmes on youth violence prevention with universities in the region were shared.

131. Strengthening multisectoral and inter-agency collaboration: Caribbean SIDS expressed the lack of synergy and linkages between different areas of UNESCO's mandate. UNESCO should focus on improving synergies between different sectors and United Nations agencies. This involves promoting interdisciplinary approaches in its activities, in particular "connecting the dots" with the powerful instruments already in place to improve coherent and coordinated responses to regional challenges. The same goes for programmes and projects at the national level. These should reinforce one another to ensure synergy and a holistic approach.

132. Disaster preparedness and ocean science: Given the region's vulnerability to natural hazards, UNESCO should prioritize supporting disaster preparedness and response initiatives. Ocean science is significant to the Caribbean and deserves due attention, given the anticipated climate change actions, and in the context of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) for which UNESCO's IOC plays a leading role.

133. Addressing poverty and migration: Initiatives to alleviate poverty and manage migration effectively, upholding human rights, must be developed within Caribbean SIDS with clear definitions and understanding of these issues in the Caribbean context, ensuring that programmes are targeted and effective.

134. Educational reform for future skills: It is essential to reform education systems to meet future societal needs. This includes integrating future skills into curricula, promoting lifelong learning, and using innovative pedagogies combining formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways. It was agreed that education is the starting point for addressing many of the issues discussed. ASPnet was highlighted as a programme in the region. Members called on UNESCO to provide further budget allocations to this important network.

135. Countering disinformation and promoting literacy: Programmes to increase community literacy to distinguish between disinformation and reliable information are essential, including harmful messaging on social media. This will empower communities and promote informed decision-making. The negative impacts and associated ethical risks of artificial intelligence also need to be addressed, in line with the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, and greater emphasis placed on freedom of expression to strengthen democracy.

136. Caribbean regional programme on the Transatlantic Slave Route and people of enslaved origin: Leveraging the shared history in the Caribbean on the Transatlantic Slave Trade, a link between the "Routes of the Enslaved Peoples" programme and the General History of Africa must be established. A working group was formed at the meeting to co-design a joint project proposal to promote and safeguard the history and impact of the Transatlantic Slave Route in the Caribbean, fostering local ownership and regional collaboration. Elements should include UNESCO's commitment to gender equality and youth engagement, the use of technology to interlink and perpetuate heritage, and economic development and social cohesion through rehabilitation of sites and places. Archives, curricula development, interdisciplinary research, memory tourism and the

mapping of sites linked to the history of enslavement and the slave trade were mentioned. Furthermore, the Associated Schools Programme Network (ASPnet), Memory of the World (MoW) and the UNESCO network “Place of history and memory linked to enslavement and the slave trade” were highlighted as ways to advance cooperation between the Caribbean and Africa.

137. Strengthening the understanding of cultural heritage and promotion of creative industries: UNESCO’s work on advancing the awareness of cultural heritage was widely seen as a success story in the region. The region places high priority in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (ICH). Members stressed the importance of working with NGOs, and community-based organizations in this regard. Some members called on UNESCO to prioritize even more the promotion of cultural identities of the Caribbean islands which could generate positive social benefits, such as promoting creative economy development, sustainable tourism, youth engagement, social development and others.

138. The National Commissions provided the **following recommendations** on how to respond to the priority areas identified.

- (1) **Clear articulation of the region’s needs:** Global programmes should be relevant to the Caribbean region. Caribbean SIDS must provide a clear and comprehensive articulation of the region’s challenges and needs to ensure that relevant and effective solutions are designed. The alignment and creation of synergies with regional bodies such as CARICOM and OECS were stressed.
- (2) **Strategic implementation of programmes:** The UNESCO network and the SIDS themselves need to prioritize transformative and strategic choices that can have a significant impact. These priorities should be selected based on their potential to catalyse change and respond to the most pressing regional needs. Currently, the **Caribbean** is experiencing a significant funding gap in priority areas, which raises the question of resource allocation criteria. Members called for the commensurate allocations to the Priority Group for SIDS in UNESCO’s budget.
- (3) **Future-oriented and sustainable strategies for education and culture:** It is essential to ensure that strategies not only address current needs but also be adaptable to future challenges, promoting cultural sustainability and long-term effectiveness. Members called for more cultural heritage awareness campaigns and capacity building.
- (4) **Forming stronger bonds between institutions:** By strengthening links and partnerships and aligning goals between different institutions, partners, NGOs and civil society, UNESCO can ensure that programmes and projects at regional and national levels not only support each other but also promote an integrated approach to addressing regional challenges. The role of National Commissions is key in forging alliances, especially in countries without UNESCO’s on-site presence.
- (5) **Innovative partnerships and new sources of wealth:** Partnerships and wealth creation must be approached in innovative ways. For example, people and local communities are powerful partners, but are often overlooked by National Commissions and policy-makers. The perspective on partnerships should be broadened by focusing on the untapped potential of local communities. By recognizing these internal resources as vital partners, programmes can leverage indigenous knowledge and local skills to create new sources of wealth.
- (6) **Leverage digital transformation effectively:** Critically assessing how digital tools and strategies across sectors and programmes is essential to ensuring that they improve operational efficiencies and effectively meet needs of the Caribbean community.

- (7) **Engagement at the highest level:** The general feeling is that UNESCO actively acknowledges the contributions of Caribbean National Commissions when developing frameworks and proposals on global issues such as education, culture and digital transformation that are relevant to the region. It is essential that UNESCO seeks to influence, lobby, and build partnerships with donors and other stakeholders to support and strengthen its efforts in the region and ensure that the perspective of Caribbean SIDS is well represented in global dialogues.
- (8) **Enhancing the UNESCO field offices in the region:** Many participants recognized the centrality of UNESCO's field offices in implementing initiatives and building partnerships in the region. The meeting stressed the need to strengthen the staffing at the UNESCO field offices in the region, including through local staff who can enhance the understanding of local contexts and contribute with local expertise. In this same light, National Commissions called for increasing financial resources for field offices covering multiple countries. The effective participation and contribution of the UNESCO offices in Kingston and Havana in facilitating discussions and collaboration among countries in the region was noted with appreciation.

Strategic role of National Commissions in the next programme implementation period

139. **Crucial role of National Commissions in raising the awareness of UNESCO in the countries:** The National Commissions have a fundamental key role in raising the visibility of UNESCO, its values, and its work in the respective countries. The involvement and engagement of the National Commissions in the UNESCO's designated sites, ASPnet schools, UNESCO Chairs, category 2 centres, and others are crucial. The Caribbean region looks forward to more category 2 centres that are based and focused on the region.

140. **Strengthen the capacity of National Commissions:** There is a clear need for building capacity within National Commissions and promoting peer-to-peer learning to share successful strategies and practices. It is crucial for the National Commissions to be consulted on important issues so that they can deliver. There is a need to develop the capacity of the National Commissions in communication, awareness-raising, and resource mobilization.

141. **Cultivating partnerships and cooperation among National Commissions within the region and worldwide:** The National Commissions shared some positive experiences of cooperation within the region. The members suggested further cooperation to mutually support one another's work. The cooperation with the Associate Members within the region and by extension with countries such as the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was considered to be important and requiring further attention. The cooperation among the National Commissions within the Caribbean region could also be positive in linking up the in-country networks with one another. Some members also shared positive cooperation opportunities with National Commissions from outside the Caribbean region (i.e. Canada, Republic of Korea, Türkiye).

142. **Information sharing between National Commissions and with the wide UNESCO family:** There should be a long-term plan, a communication strategy for better articulation and coordination of media approaches and information sharing at the national level and within the UNESCO family. The National Commissions and UNESCO field offices should mutually be aware of one another's work and programmes.

143. **Priority identification:** There are limited resources (human and financial) at both the National Commissions and the UNESCO field offices to meet the demands. It was proposed that the National Commissions identify up to three key priority areas for UNESCO's support so that UNESCO may provide targeted assistance. It was suggested that a joint workplan for all National Commissions be drafted.

144. **Raising the visibility of the role and work of the National Commissions:** The positive work of the National Commissions in the region in their cooperation was highlighted. It was also deemed important for the work and the results of the National Commissions to be widely known and diffused through UNESCO's platforms and other media, to raise their visibility.

145. These roles underscore the importance of National Commissions in bridging the gap between UNESCO's global initiatives and local implementation, ensuring that programmes are both impactful and sustainable.

G. Report of the consultation of the National Commissions for UNESCO in Latin America (18-19 June 2024)
Executive Summary

146. The online consultation meeting with the National Commissions for UNESCO of Latin America took place online on 18 and 19 June 2024. The meeting was hosted by the National Commission of Costa Rica. The meeting was opened by Ms Anna Katharina Müller Castro, Minister of Education of Costa Rica and President of the Costa Rican National Commission for UNESCO, and Mr Alexander Leicht, Director of the UNESCO Office for Colombia, Central America and Mexico. The meeting appointed Ms Anna Katharina Müller Castro, Minister of Education of Costa Rica and President of the Costa Rican National Commission for UNESCO as Chair of the meeting; Ms Aixa Aguilar, Director of External Cooperation, Coordinator of the UNESCO National Commission of Honduras as Vice-Chair; and Mr Andrea Mendez, Secretary-General of the Costa Rica National Commission as rapporteur.

147. During the regional consultation, several key recommendations emerged for the UNESCO Director-General, focusing on the five main functions of the organization. The key themes, that UNESCO has recently and historically supported, of artificial intelligence (AI), Culture conventions, and education - particularly regarding the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.7 - were prominent throughout the consultation, alongside the overarching goal of fostering peace and addressing violence.

148. First, there was a call for strengthened capacity building and training of National Commissions in the region, in particular with involvement of UNESCO Headquarters' PAX/National Commissions section, to ensure more effective and comprehensive development.

149. Second, the meeting underscored the necessity of improving communication and processes within UNESCO, acknowledging the progress already underway but stressing the need for further enhancement, including the possibility of more face-to-face meetings to facilitate better coordination and understanding.

150. Third, the participants highlighted the importance of enhancing the implementation of initiatives through increased private sector support and emphasized the pivotal role of National Commissions in these efforts. They urged UNESCO to reinforce these National Commissions' involvement in new programmes. Collectively, these recommendations aim to bolster UNESCO's capacity to meet its objectives and better serve its global mission.

Risk and opportunities to watch “on and beyond the horizon” in Latin America

151. The regional consultation highlighted several **significant risks** that could impede progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. During the discussions, five main trends were identified that are already influencing or are expected to influence UNESCO's areas of competence in Latin America.

- (1) **Technological advancements** are significantly impacting the region, with artificial intelligence and digital technologies reshaping sectors such as education, science, culture, and communication. Addressing issues like misinformation, hate speech, and the ethical use of AI is becoming increasingly crucial.
- (2) **Economic trends** highlight the growing importance of sustainable and responsible tourism. There is a growing need to balance economic growth with the preservation of cultural heritage and environmental sustainability, recognizing the effects of unregulated tourism.

- (3) **Social dynamics** emphasize the increasing recognition of interculturality and the need for inclusive policies that integrate diverse cultural perspectives, promote gender equality, and enhance social cohesion.
- (4) **Environmental factors** underscore the urgency of addressing climate change, with a focus on fostering environmentally conscious education and developing robust climate policies to ensure resilience and sustainability. Climate change poses a major threat, with its far-reaching impacts on ecosystems, weather patterns, and human livelihoods, making it imperative to integrate climate resilience into all aspects of development planning.
- (5) **Demographic changes** point to the necessity of adapting educational and cultural initiatives to an aging population, ensuring the inclusion of older adults in cultural and heritage activities, and leveraging their knowledge and experience for societal benefit.

152. These trends underscore the dynamic and interconnected challenges and opportunities UNESCO must navigate to advance its mission in Latin America. They also emphasize the importance of supporting Member States in addressing significant societal issues and capitalizing on opportunities to consolidate progress.

153. The regional consultation identified numerous **opportunities** that UNESCO can leverage to advance its mission and contribute to sustainable development:

- (1) **Interculturality:** It was recommended to emphasize on interculturality as a potential opportunity to enhance food programs by incorporating indigenous menus.
- (2) **Robust recommendations for climate change:** It was suggested that UNESCO develop robust recommendations for climate change policy-making and promote environmentally conscious education.
- (3) **Bilingualism:** The importance of bilingualism was stressed, with the goal that sixth-grade students graduate with at least A2-level proficiency in a second language.
- (4) **Education as a fundamental human right and public good:** The founding principle that there is no future without education as a fundamental human right and public good was strongly underscored.
- (5) **Capacity development of National Commissions:** More training opportunities and expanding applications to support continuous learning and development for the members of the National Commissions were called for.
- (6) **Heritage education:** Aiming to coin this term regionally, the concept of “heritage education” was proposed as a way to foster sensitivity, respect, and visibility of native peoples’ memories, guided by UNESCO’s recommendations.
- (7) **Enhance cooperation between National Commissions:** There is a need to improve the articulation and communication of National Commissions within the region to ensure better coordination and implementation of initiatives.

154. These opportunities collectively emphasize the importance of inclusive, respectful, and environmentally conscious educational practices in achieving sustainable development goals.

UNESCO’s comparative strength and value added in Latin America

155. Several of UNESCO’s comparative advantages were identified:

- (1) The ability to leverage its historical commitment and extensive experience in promoting cultural diversity and educational initiatives.
- (2) UNESCO's reputation and longstanding commitment to the region further strengthens its ability to influence and drive meaningful change.
- (3) Its unique ability to foster intersectorality, effectively bringing together diverse sectors to address complex global challenges. This approach enables UNESCO to position itself strongly on key issues such as artificial intelligence.

156. By integrating various sectors and fostering collaboration across disciplines, UNESCO can create holistic solutions that address the multifaceted nature of sustainable development, ensuring its initiatives are both comprehensive and effective. This intersectoral approach, combined with its reputation and deep-rooted commitment, solidifies UNESCO's role as a pivotal player in advancing global and regional development goals.

Priorities for UNESCO's future programme

157. Through the regional consultations, National Commissions in the Latin America recommend the following to guide UNESCO's next Programme and Budget cycle:

- (1) **Artificial intelligence:** The need for continued support in addressing issues related to artificial intelligence, particularly in combating misinformation and hate speech, and managing AI in networks was emphasized.
- (2) **Culture and responsible tourism:** The importance of promoting responsible tourism and extending UNESCO's recommendations to balance tourism with heritage preservation, addressing the negative impacts of unbridled tourism was highlighted.
- (3) **Strengthened networks between countries:** Strengthened networks between countries was asked for, integrating key themes into educational curricula, creating spaces to discuss tax incentives for businesses that support cultural heritage preservation, and supporting national AI policies.
- (4) **Education financing:** The necessity of improving education financing was underscored, noting a successful collaboration with UNICEF and UNESCO where a team of consultants trained the Ministry of Public Education in better resource utilization through a Planning for Results programme, which aims to prevent under-execution, enhance institutional reorganization and service quality monitoring, including transportation and food services.
- (5) **Flexible scheduling:** Latin American countries have expressed concerns about the rigidity of certain activities, such as training sessions and application periods, which are scheduled without taking into account the unique schedules and time zones of each country.
- (6) **Advocate core values in education:** UNESCO was urged to serve as a spokesperson for core values in education, while Ecuador stressed the importance of promoting media and information literacy (MIL) and disseminating the translated version of the MIL curriculum to benefit the region.

158. For UNESCO's forthcoming four-year programme (2026-2029) in Latin America, the following key areas and approaches could be considered:

- (1) **Promoting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD):** enhancing curriculum development to embed ESD principles across educational institutions by collaborating

with departments of education for teacher training, developing educational materials, and establishing networks for sharing best practices.

- (2) **Preserving Cultural Heritage:** safeguarding cultural heritage sites and practices by conducting workshops for local communities, promoting sustainable tourism practices, and utilizing digital technologies for documentation and preservation.
- (3) **Advancing Gender Equality in Education:** ensuring equitable access to education for all genders and promoting gender-sensitive educational policies by partner with other organizations and local governments to address gender disparities in school retention rates and integrating gender perspectives into educational curricula.
- (4) **Promoting Media and Information Literacy:** enhancing critical thinking skills and digital literacy by developing media literacy training opportunities by fostering partnerships and using online platforms for broad dissemination.
- (5) **Educating on Climate Change and Adaptation:** integrating climate change education into learning settings by supporting research on climate change impacts, collaborating with scientific institutions, and promoting community-based strategies for adaptation.

Strategic role of National Commissions in the implementation of the next programme

159. The National Commissions believe they can contribute significantly, with the required support, to the implementation of the next UNESCO four-year programme through various means.

160. The National Commissions are playing a vital role in fostering local and regional cooperation, promoting inclusive policies, and ensuring the effective execution of UNESCO's initiatives by leveraging their deep understanding of local contexts. The National Commissions hope to develop strengths in the region that include establishing networks, a deeper understanding of regional cultural and educational landscapes, and the ability to mobilize resources and stakeholders at the national level.

161. To further strengthen the engagement of National Commissions, UNESCO could take several steps.

- It was recommended to update the contact list of the Commissions to facilitate better communication and cooperation with UNESCO, and between countries.
- It was suggested to start sharing meeting notes and resources to ensure transparency and continuity.
- It was proposed to create communication channels amongst the National Commissions in the region and organize an annual meeting to foster stronger connections and facilitate collaborative efforts.
- The need for training in management and fundraising to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the Commissions was emphasized, considering the importance that they can also continue to lead and promote initiatives that strengthen cooperation with UNESCO and the impact of the Organization in the countries.
- The importance of providing training and access to resources for travel expenses was stressed, noting that much of the crucial work of the Commissions is carried out in the field.

162. Participants agreed that UNESCO can enhance the operational capacity and collaborative potential of National Commissions, ensuring that they are well equipped to contribute effectively to the Organization's next programme.

PART II – ANALYSIS OF REPLIES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2026-2029 (43 C/5)

INTRODUCTION

163. By circular letter CL/4468 sent on 5 April 2024, the Director-General launched the consultation, by means of three online surveys addressed to (i) Member States and Associate Members, including their National Commissions; (ii) non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in official partnership and foundations and similar institutions in official relations with UNESCO; and (iii) intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) on the preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5).

164. The surveys were designed to solicit contributions regarding both UNESCO's past achievements and its future strategic orientations and programmatic focus that should inform the Director-General's Preliminary Proposals on the Draft 43 C/5.

165. This part is structured in three sections and presents the summary analyses of all replies received from:

- ✓ 103 Member States and Associate Members,
- ✓ 75 NGOs in official partnership and foundations and similar institutions in official relations with UNESCO; and
- ✓ 7 intergovernmental organizations.

A. Analysis of the replies of Member States and Associate Members

166. One hundred and three Member States and Associate Members replied to the survey. The repartition by region can be found in the table below.

	Total Member States and Associate Members	Number of replies received	% of replies
Africa	47	25	53%
Arab States	19	12	63%
Asia and the Pacific	46	21	46%
Europe and North America	49	31	63%
Latin America and the Caribbean	33	12	36%
Sub-total Member States	194	101	52%
Associate Members	12	2	17%
TOTAL	206	103	50%

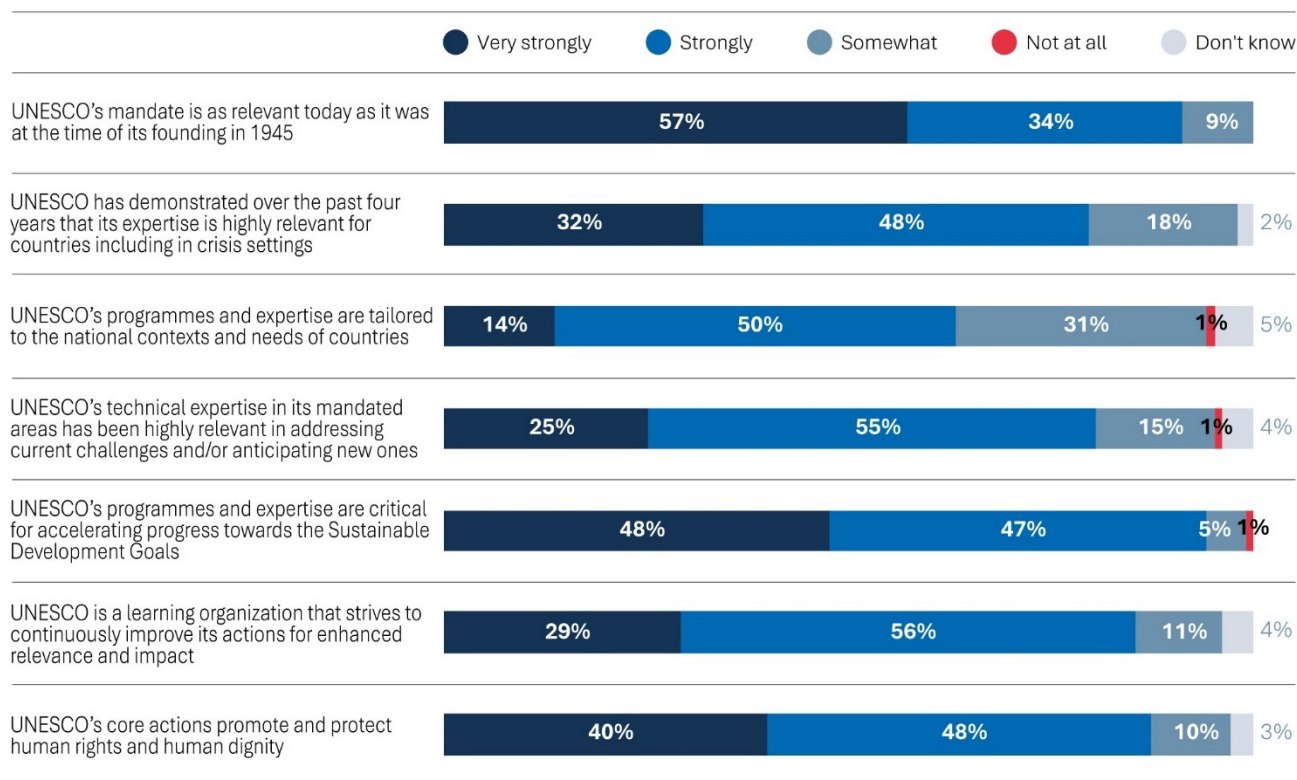
Key messages identified based on the analysis of survey results and comments:

- ✓ UNESCO's mandate remains highly relevant, with strong support for its role in addressing global challenges.
- ✓ Clear call to UNESCO to enhance its focus on climate change, environmental issues, and digital transformation across all its programmes.
- ✓ Education remains a core priority, with emphasis on quality, inclusivity, and adapting to future needs, including digital skills and STEM education.
- ✓ Member States strongly support UNESCO's global coordination role for SDG4 and its efforts to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.
- ✓ Need for UNESCO to improve its operational efficiency, strengthen its field presence, and enhance coordination between Headquarters and field offices.
- ✓ Gender equality and youth engagement are seen as critical cross-cutting priorities, with calls for more substantial integration of these perspectives across all UNESCO programmes.
- ✓ Member States recognize UNESCO's technical expertise but highlight the need for improved financial resources and operational capacity, particularly in crisis response situations.
- ✓ Strong support for UNESCO's intersectoral approach, with calls for even greater integration across different areas of expertise to address complex global challenges.
- ✓ The protection and promotion of cultural heritage and diversity remain key strengths of UNESCO, with calls to further leverage this for sustainable development.
- ✓ Consistent demand for improved communication, visibility, and demonstration of impact across all of UNESCO's activities, including better engagement with National Commissions and other stakeholders.

SECTION 1 – UNESCO’S RELEVANCE AND IMPACT

RELEVANCE

1.1 How strongly do the following statements describe UNESCO?



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

167. The survey results show a strong endorsement of UNESCO's continued relevance. More than 80% of respondents agree strongly or very strongly with six out of the seven statements proposed. UNESCO's mandate is still seen as relevant as it was in 1945 (91% strongly or very strongly), its programmes and expertise are fully recognized as critical for accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (95% strongly or very strongly) and its action is strongly considered as promoting human rights and human dignity (88% strongly or very strongly). Survey participants also strongly recognized UNESCO's ability to adapt and respond effectively to both existing and emerging challenges. Specifically:

- 80% of respondents strongly or very strongly agreed that UNESCO effectively deploys its technical expertise to address current and new challenges.
- 85% strongly or very strongly believed that UNESCO consistently strives for continuous improvement in its operations and programmes.
- 80% strongly or very strongly affirmed UNESCO's capacity to effectively utilize its expertise to assist countries, including those facing crisis situations.

168. In their comments, most respondents widely affirmed UNESCO's continued relevance in its core areas of education, sciences, culture, and communication. Many countries praised the Organization's ability to address global challenges and respond to crises, though there were calls for faster and more comprehensive crisis interventions. The Organization's human rights-based approach and efforts in promoting equality were generally supported, with several respondents emphasizing the importance of these aspects in UNESCO's work.

169. However, a significant number of respondents stressed the need for more tailored programmes that better align with specific national contexts and priorities. The data reflects this concern, with only 64% of respondent believing that UNESCO's programmes are tailored to national contexts. There were also concerns about resource allocation, with some Members States noting declining funding and calling for improved efficiency and prioritization of programmes. Additionally, several countries highlighted the importance of UNESCO addressing technological changes and promoting digital transformation in its initiatives.

170. Many Member States emphasize the need for improved communication about UNESCO's activities and achievements, as well as better engagement with National Commissions. There are calls for enhanced evaluation and impact assessment. While most respondents support UNESCO's work, some express concerns about perceived politicization or bias in recent years.

1.2 Given the serious lag in SDG progress at mid-point, how can UNESCO best contribute to accelerating actions during the next programming period?

171. For this question, respondents were asked to rank their six preferred contributions to accelerating actions in favour of SDGs among 13 proposals².

Play a global coordination role for SDG4	4.53
Support national and local governments with development planning and implementation	2.04
Develop broad partnerships and coalitions that push for large-scale development change	1.90
Facilitate multilateral agreements on new or updated global norms and standards	1.63
Support governments in developing national statistical data and reporting capacities and systems	1.43
Utilise South-South cooperation to help source knowledge, expertise and finance	1.36
Enhance in-country innovation in policies, technologies, and business operations	1.26
Enhance knowledge sharing and exchange of information between the public and private sectors	1.23
Facilitate greater access to public and private financing for the SDGs	1.19
Support building resilience to climate change and natural disasters	1.18
Support regional collaboration and support to regional institutions	1.17
Provide multisector policy and programme approaches to tackle SDGs	1.14
Support governments and institutions to improve gender equality and foster inclusion, diversity and equity	0.83

² Participants had to rank 6 out of 13 statements from 1 to 6. For the analysis, points were assigned based on their rankings: 6 points for rank 1, 5 points for rank 2, down to 1 point for rank 6, and 0 points for unranked statements. To determine the average points for each statement, we sum the points received by each statement across all participants and then divide by the number of participants who ranked that statement. The statements are then ranked based on their average points, with higher average points indicating a better ranking. This method accurately reflects the collective preferences of the participants by considering both the rankings and the number of participants who ranked each statement.

172. The results indicate two main directions where UNESCO can best contribute to accelerating actions for SDG progress:

Action at global/multilateral level:

- ✓ Rank 1: Play a global coordination role for SDG 4
- ✓ Rank 3: Develop broad partnerships and coalitions for large-scale development change
- ✓ Rank 4: Facilitate multilateral agreements on new or updated global norms and standards

Country-level actions and cooperation:

- ✓ Rank 2: Support national and local governments with development planning and implementation
- ✓ Rank 5: Support governments in developing national statistical data and reporting capacities and systems
- ✓ Rank 6: Utilize South-South cooperation to help source knowledge, expertise and finance

1.3 Are there any new emerging issues or trends that your country believes should be addressed by UNESCO in the next programming cycle?

173. The 84 respondents to this question have highlighted a range of pressing issues and emerging trends that should be addressed in the Organization's next programming cycle. While concerns vary across regions, several overarching themes emerge, reflecting shared global challenges and priorities.

174. **Climate change and environmental issues** stand out as a universal concern. Across all regions, there is a growing recognition of the urgent need to address the impacts of climate change across all of UNESCO's sectors. This includes integrating climate education into curricula, preserving cultural and natural heritage sites threatened by environmental changes, and promoting sustainable development practices. One respondent, for instance, emphasized the need for "Green Education", while another one highlighted the devastating effects of rising lake levels and landslides.

175. The **rapid advancement of artificial intelligence and digital technologies** is another area of widespread interest and concern. Countries across all regions recognized the transformative potential of these technologies, particularly in education, but also expressed apprehension about their ethical implications and potential risks. Concerns about the digital divide are also prevalent, with many countries calling for improved digital literacy and infrastructure. The impact of AI and digital technologies on employment and the need to prepare youth for a digitalized job market are also recurring themes. There's a clear desire for UNESCO to take a leading role in shaping the ethical framework for AI and ensuring that digital advancements benefit all of society.

176. The **rise of misinformation and disinformation** emerges also as a concern among some Members States. There is a need to work with digital platforms and governments to address this issue, while also developing critical thinking skills among younger generations. This ties into broader concerns about the state of journalism and freedom of expression, with many countries calling for increased protection for journalists and promotion of media literacy.

177. **Education** remains at the core of UNESCO's mandate, and respondents consistently emphasized the need for quality, inclusive education that adapts to the changing global landscape. This includes addressing the digital divide, promoting STEM and vocational education, and ensuring education systems are resilient in the face of crises. Some countries highlighted the importance of education in countering extremism and as a vector of peace, while others, stressed the need to improve science and math education from early childhood.

178. **Cultural heritage** preservation is another key area of focus, with many countries calling for increased efforts to protect tangible and intangible cultural heritage, especially in conflict zones or areas affected by climate change.

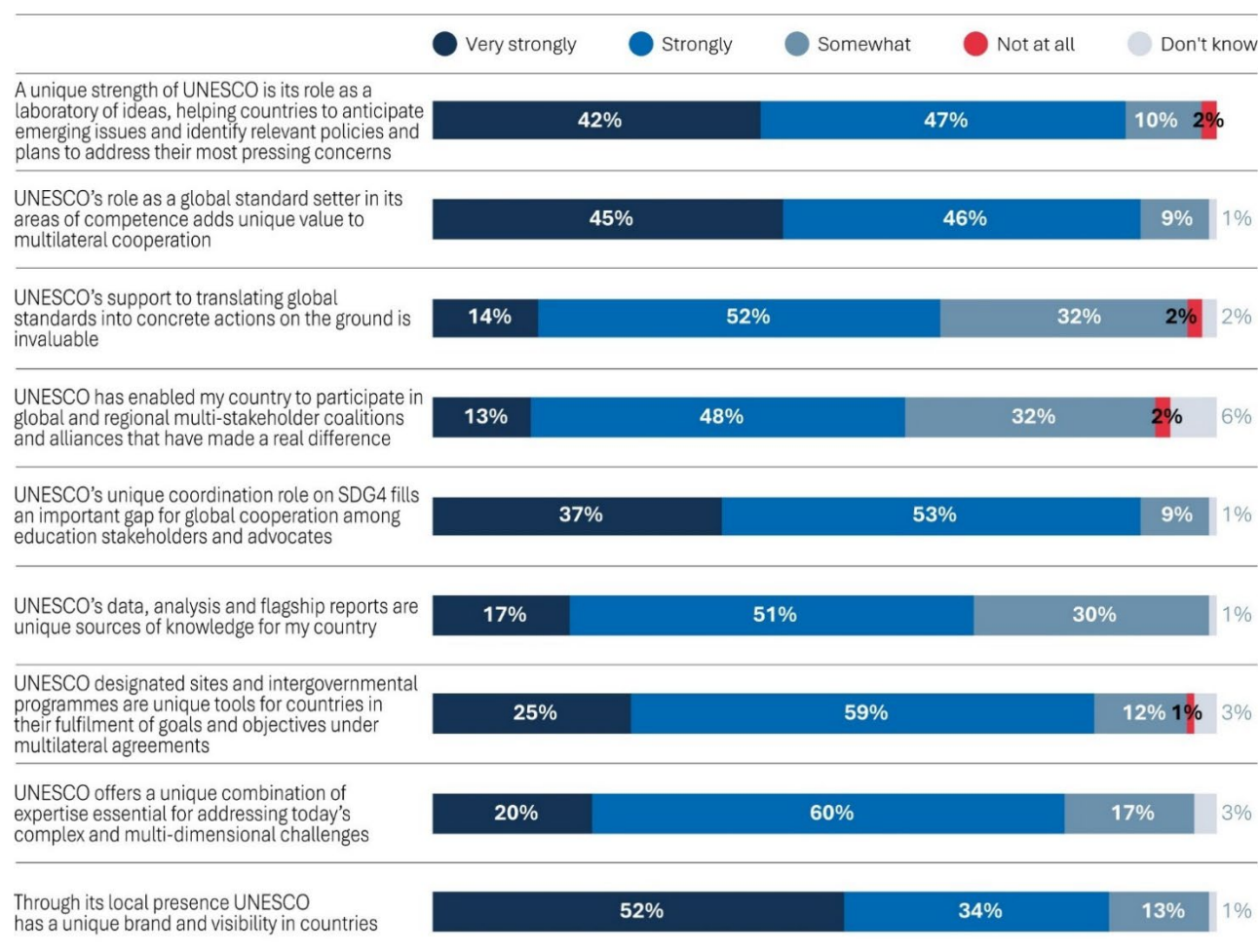
179. **Youth engagement and development** is a recurring theme, reflecting global concerns about youth unemployment and the need to equip young people with the skills needed for the future job market.

180. **Gender equality** remains a priority for many Member States, with calls for its further integration across all of UNESCO's programmes.

181. Lastly, there's a notable focus on UNESCO's work in education, culture, and science seen as crucial for fostering intercultural dialogue, preventing conflicts and fostering peace.

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

1.4 How strongly do the following statements describe UNESCO?



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

182. The results generally show a positive perception of the Organization across all statements, with most responses falling in the "Very strongly" or "Strongly" categories. The survey data reveals that UNESCO's strongest perceived attributes are its role as a global standard-setter in its areas of competence (91%), its unique coordination role for SDG 4 (90%) and its function as a laboratory of ideas (89%). These core strengths, along with UNESCO's brand and visible local presence through various initiatives that receive the highest "very strongly" score, form the foundation of its positive reputation among respondents.

183. While all areas received the majority of positive responses, some aspects show potential for enhancement. This might include enhancing support for implementing global standards at the local level, improving stakeholder engagement in coalitions, and optimizing its data and reporting processes.

184. In their additional comments, countries emphasized the need for UNESCO to enhance its visibility and engagement, improve financial and resource allocation, strengthen data quality and reliability, and leverage its networks and partnerships more effectively.

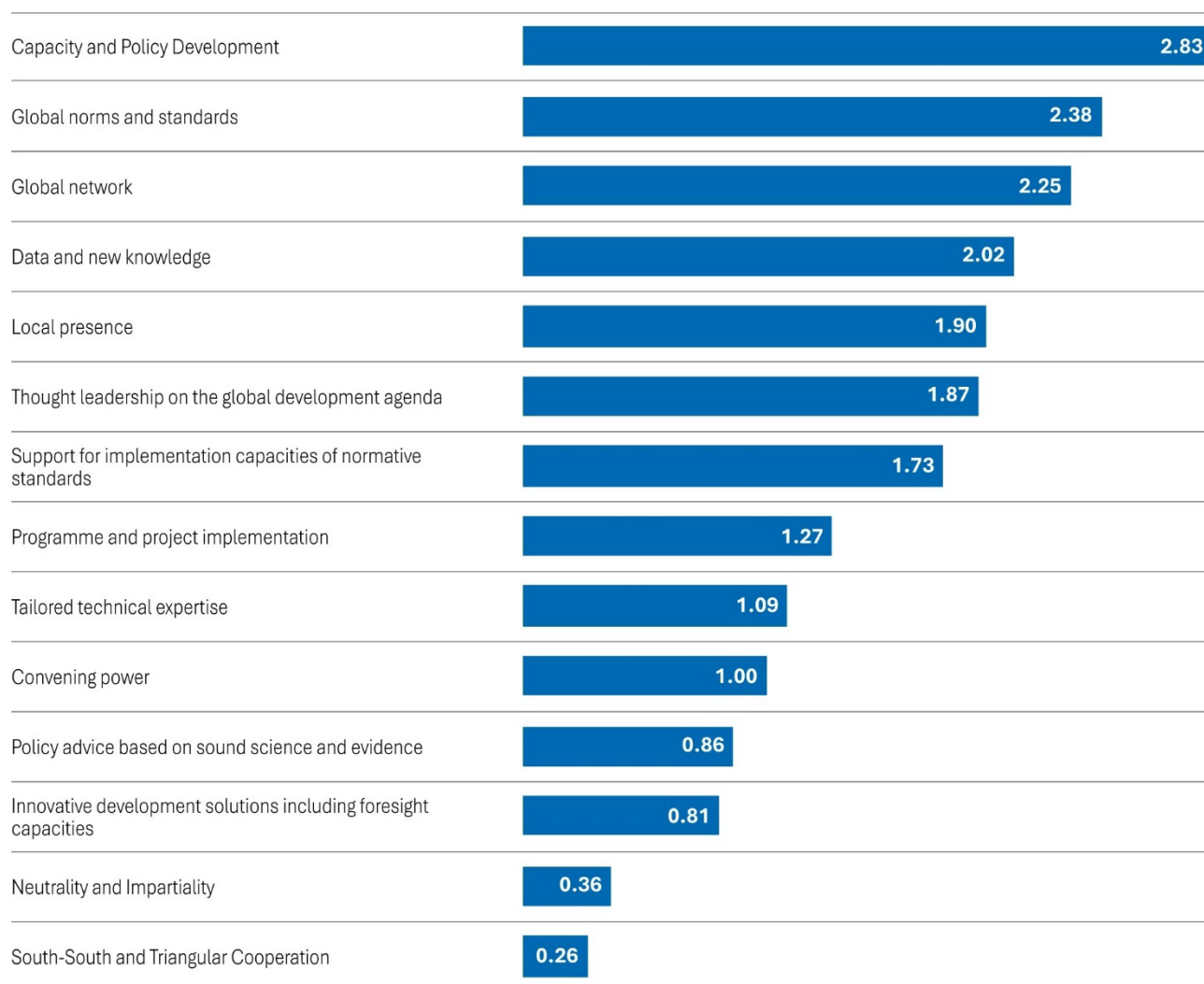
185. Many Member States emphasized the need for stronger engagement and visibility of UNESCO's activities within Member States and at global level. The importance of UNESCO's networks, including National Commissions, designated sites, and programmes such as ASPnet schools, was highlighted by many countries as crucial for enhancing UNESCO's presence and impact.

186. Additionally, several countries emphasized the need for increased funding and resources to enhance UNESCO's impact, especially in developing countries. The challenges of equitable engagement across regions were also highlighted.

1.5 What value does UNESCO bring to your country?

187. For this question, respondents were asked to rank their six top contributions among 14 proposals as regards the value UNESCO brings at country level³.

³ Participants had to rank 6 out of 13 statements from 1 to 6. For the analysis, points were assigned based on their rankings: 6 points for rank 1, 5 points for rank 2, down to 1 point for rank 6, and 0 points for unranked statements. To determine the average points for each statement, we sum the points received by each statement across all participants and then divide by the number of participants who ranked that statement. The statements are then ranked based on their average points, with higher average points indicating a better ranking. This method accurately reflects the collective preferences of the participants by considering both the rankings and the number of participants who ranked each statement.



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

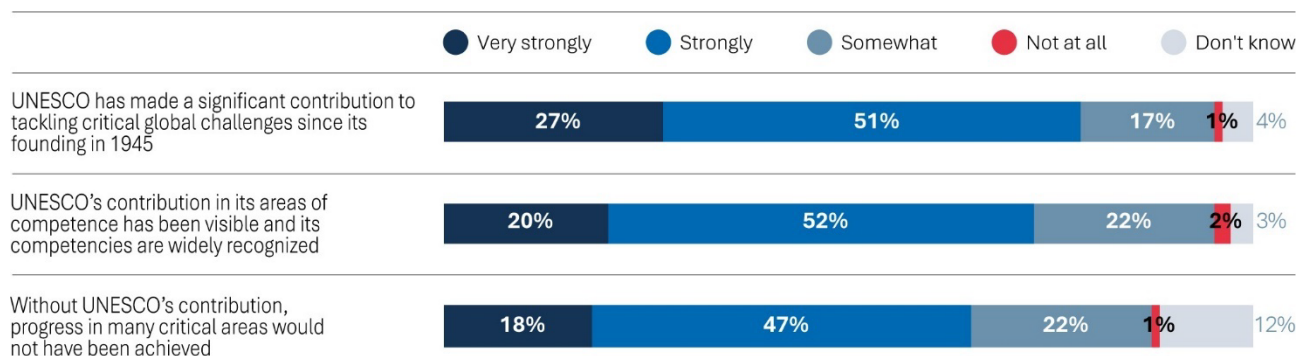
188. The graph presents various aspects of UNESCO's value to Member States, highlighting strong appreciation for its role in capacity and policy development, establishing global norms and standards, and leveraging its global network. The three top-rated areas reflect the reliance of countries on UNESCO for capacity and policy development, establishing internationally recognized norms and standards and fostering collaborative opportunities at global level.

189. Other significant UNESCO contributions include data production and dissemination, local presence through a variety of mechanisms, and thought leadership on the global development agenda.

190. However, lower scores in areas such as neutrality and impartiality, South-South cooperation, and innovative development solutions suggest opportunities for UNESCO to strengthen its enabling framework and address perceived gaps in its interventions.

DEMONSTRABLE RESULTS

1.6 How much do you agree with the following statements?



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

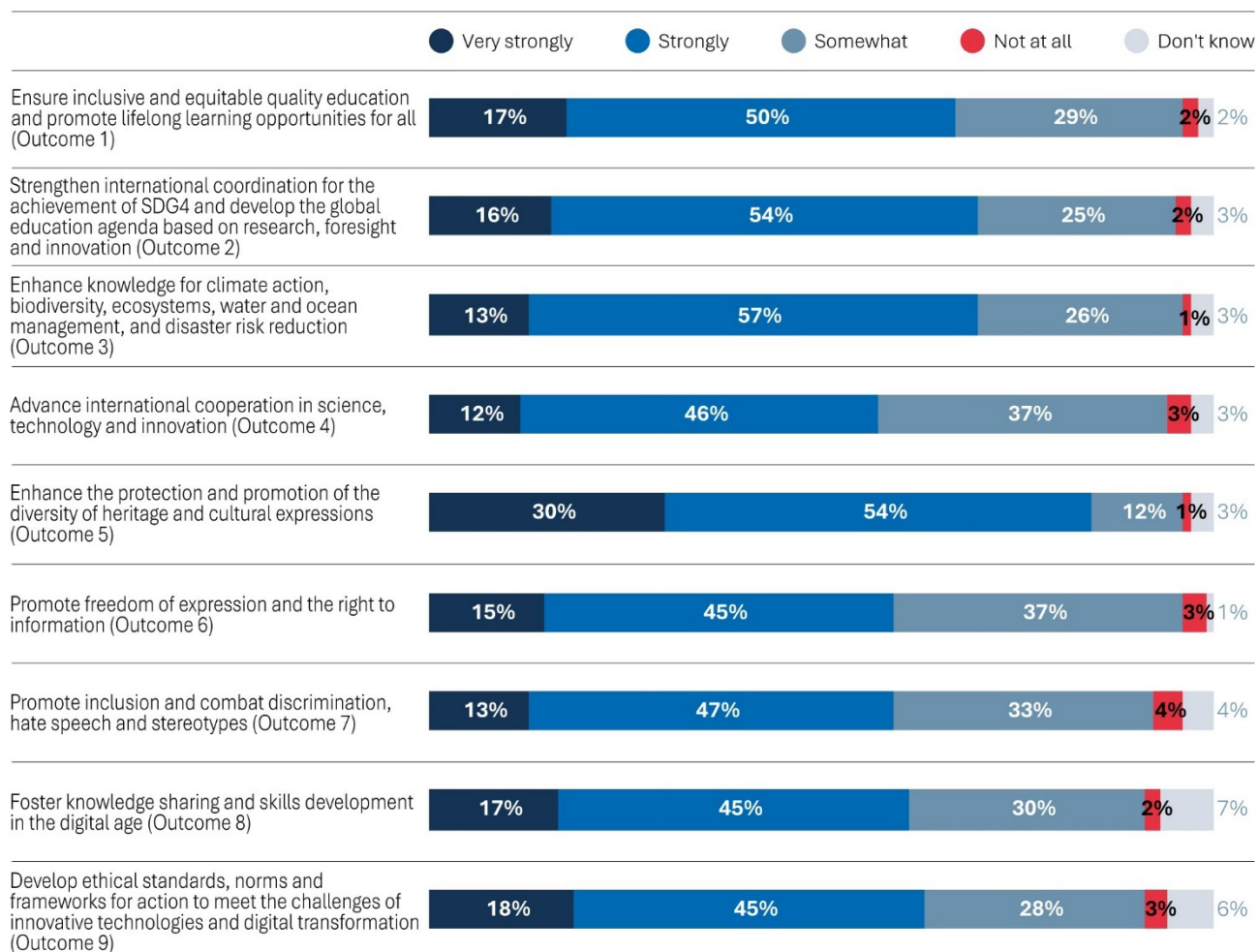
191. The three statements received a majority of positive responses, indicating a generally high regard for UNESCO's contributions and impact. A significant majority (78%) of respondents either strongly or very strongly agreed that UNESCO has made a significant contribution to tackling critical global challenges since its founding in 1945. A substantial 72% of respondents either strongly or very strongly agreed that UNESCO's contribution in its areas of competence has been visible, and its competencies are widely recognized. This is consistent with the general perception that UNESCO's mandate is still relevant and needed.

192. The last statement about UNESCO's unique contribution has the highest uncertainty, with 12% responding "don't know" and 64% strongly or very strongly agreeing. This suggests that better demonstrating the Organization's results and impact remains a challenge to be addressed.

193. In their comments, Member States widely recognized that UNESCO has made significant and visible contributions in its areas of competence, and that progress in many critical areas would not have been achieved without its efforts. Notably, many Member States highlighted UNESCO's significant role in promoting universal access to quality education. Initiatives such as Education for All, Education for Sustainable Development, and Global Citizenship Education were widely acknowledged. UNESCO's work in safeguarding cultural and natural heritage, including the designation and protection of World Heritage Sites, was frequently cited as a major contribution. Its conventions and initiatives related to tangible and intangible cultural heritage as well as cultural diversity were also commended. Member States recognized UNESCO's contributions in fostering scientific progress, collaboration, and knowledge sharing in areas such as climate change, disaster risk reduction, oceanography, hydrology, and basic sciences. Nevertheless, it has been noted that UNESCO's efforts in these areas still lack visibility. Several Member States also recognized UNESCO's work in promoting freedom of expression, access to information, and safety of journalists. Finally, the Organization's adaptability in responding to global issues such as climate change, ethics of artificial intelligence, and the COVID-19 pandemic was also commended.

194. Nevertheless, a need for more financial and human resources has been identified. While the Organization has strengthened its results-based management system, some respondents suggest that reporting should focus more on results and UNESCO's contributions to critical global challenges, rather than reporting merely on operations and activities. It has also been suggested to focus on a few priorities in each sector and group initiatives into bigger projects with higher impact.

1.7 In your opinion, how much have the following UNESCO's strategic outcomes contributed to positive change in your country?



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

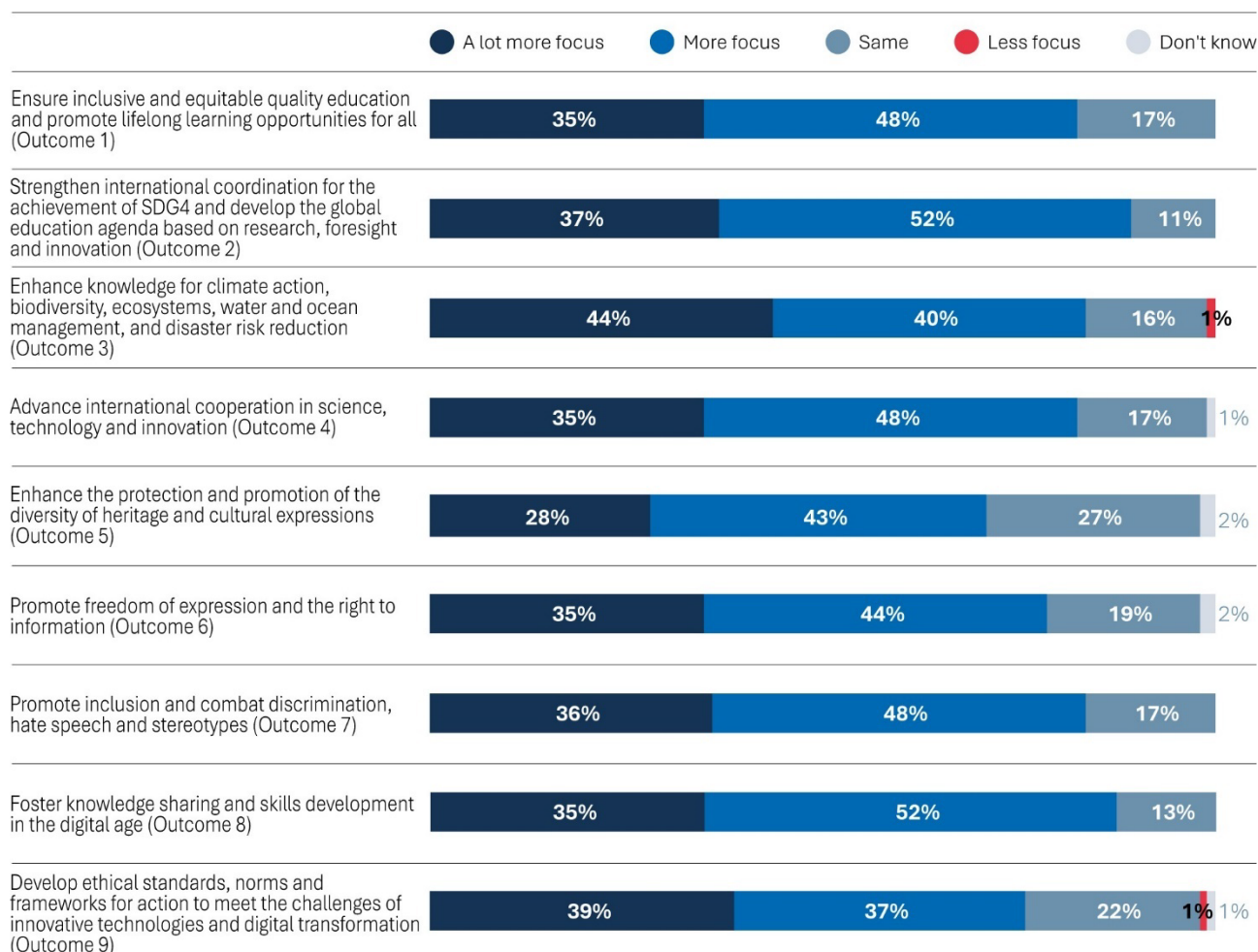
195. UNESCO's efforts have been particularly impactful in three key areas, as evidenced by the high positive ratings from respondents. The protection and promotion of heritage and cultural diversity (Outcome 5) received the highest acclaim, with 84% of respondents indicating strong or very strong positive change in their countries. Following closely, UNESCO's work in strengthening international coordination for SDG 4 (Outcome 2) and enhancing knowledge for climate action, ocean management, and disaster risk reduction (Outcome 3) both garnered 70% positive ratings.

196. The remaining outcomes also received considerable positive feedback, with 58-67% of Member States reporting strong or very strong impacts. Notably, ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education (Outcome 1) was recognized by 67% of respondents as having a significant positive effect. However, international cooperation in science, technology, and innovation (Outcome 4) received the lowest rating at 58%, potentially indicating a need for increased visibility in this area as highlighted already in previous questions.

197. In their comments, respondents emphasized several key points. Many respondents noted positive effects in cultural heritage protection and education, and highlighted the importance of UNESCO's normative frameworks and standard-setting instruments. However, some expressed concern about the limited awareness of UNESCO's work beyond the Organization itself, suggesting a need for improved communication strategies. Additionally, several Member States called for increased resources and improved field office staffing to enhance UNESCO's local impact.

198. It's worth noting that some Member States found it challenging to quantify and attribute positive changes solely to UNESCO, given the involvement of multiple actors in addressing global challenges. However, there is global recognition of UNESCO's positive influence, either direct or indirect, notably through the development of solutions to global problems, advocating for a number of areas on the international scene, providing capacity building at country level and creating coalitions of like-minded partners that can more efficiently advance on a number of critical subjects.

1.8 Given the challenges countries face, how much should UNESCO increase its programmatic focus in the following UNESCO outcome areas?



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

199. There's a strong overall consensus that UNESCO should either maintain or increase its focus across all programmatic areas. This sentiment is particularly pronounced in areas related to global challenges and future-oriented initiatives. For instance, the outcome "Enhance knowledge for climate action, biodiversity, ecosystems, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction" received the highest percentage (44%) for "A lot more focus". This aligns with the growing global concern about climate change and environmental issues, suggesting that respondents see UNESCO as a crucial player in addressing these challenges. Similarly, the high priority given to "Develop ethical standards, norms and frameworks for action to meet the challenges of innovative technologies and digital transformation" (39% for "A lot more focus") reflects an awareness of the rapid technological changes and their societal implications.

200. In addition, there is a clear request to strengthen the focus on two outcomes which, by their scope and cross-cutting impact, are also crucial to help meeting other challenges. Outcome 2 "Strengthen international coordination for the achievement of SDG 4 and develop the global education agenda based on research, foresight and innovation" received the highest combined

percentage for increased focus (89% when adding “More focus” and “A lot more focus”). This, along with the strong support for “Foster knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age” (87% combined), underscores the perceived importance of addressing global challenges and preparing for the future.

201. While all areas receive strong support for increased focus, there are nuances in the urgency perceived for each. For example, “Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions” has the lowest percentage for “A lot more focus” (28%) and the highest for maintaining the current level of focus (27% for “Same”). This aligns with the previous question where respondents indicated UNESCO’s current efforts in this area as more adequate compared to other fields.

202. In the additional comments, education emerges as a central theme, with many countries emphasizing the need for increased attention to quality education, lifelong learning, and the development of digital skills. There’s a strong emphasis on UNESCO’s role in strengthening international coordination for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in education. Several countries highlighted the importance of addressing climate change, biodiversity, and environmental management, aligning with the high priority given to these issues in the quantitative data.

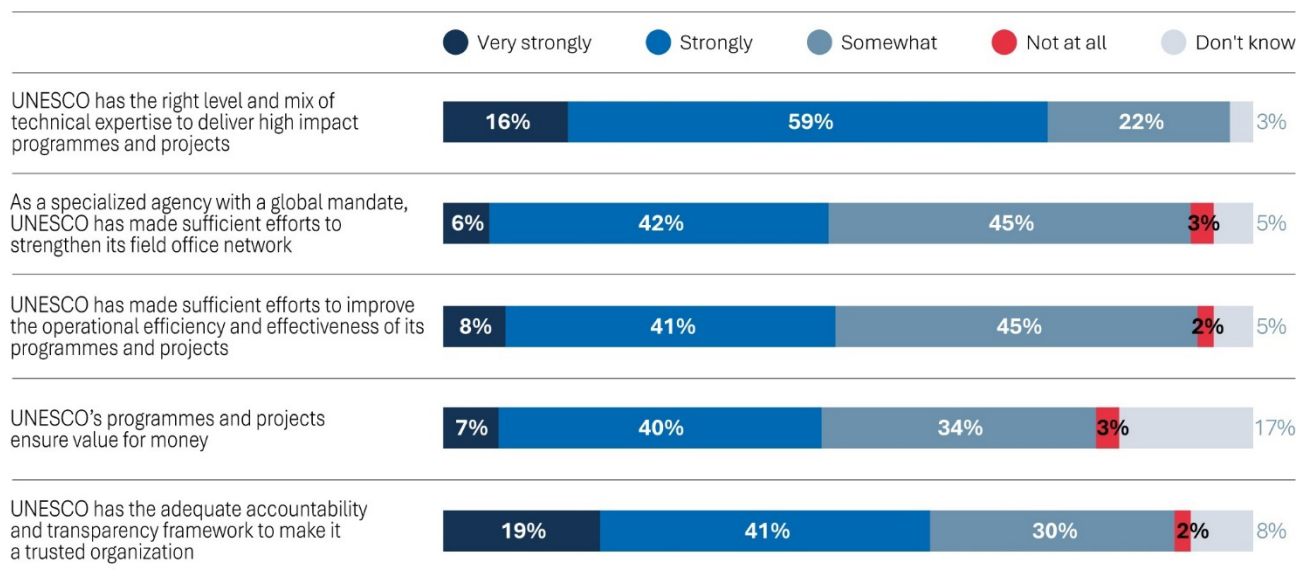
203. Digital transformation and its associated challenges are frequently mentioned, with countries calling for UNESCO to play a more significant role in developing ethical standards and frameworks for new technologies. The comments also reveal a widespread concern about combating discrimination, hate speech, and misinformation, with many countries urging UNESCO to increase its efforts in promoting inclusion and protecting freedom of expression. Cultural heritage protection and promotion of cultural diversity are mentioned, though with somewhat less urgency compared to other areas.

204. Notably, several countries stress the importance of UNESCO’s intersectoral approach and call for better coordination between Headquarters and field offices. There are also requests for UNESCO to focus on implementation and impact rather than just increasing the number of initiatives. Some countries highlight region-specific concerns, such as support for Africa or strengthening support for the cultural expressions and languages of Indigenous Peoples and their meaningful involvement at decision-making tables.

SECTION 2 – PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

CAPACITY TO DELIVER

2.1 How strongly do the following statements describe UNESCO?



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

205. When asked about UNESCO's capacity to deliver, Member States' replies and comments show both strengths and areas for improvement. The Organization's strongest asset appears to be its technical expertise, with 75% of respondents strongly or very strongly believing UNESCO has the right level and mix of expertise for high-impact programmes and projects. In their comments, respondents emphasized the excellent experts on key programmatic areas and the enabling of more geographical mobility maintaining a resilient and dynamic workforce. However, it was also mentioned that regular staff make up less than 50% in the total workforce and generally have a more generalist profile as the Organization relies more on short-term appointments, notably in the field, to benefit from the most up-to-date expertise. This raises the question of finding the right balance between generalist and expert profiles to meet the needs of the Organization and the continuity and efficiency of its programmes.

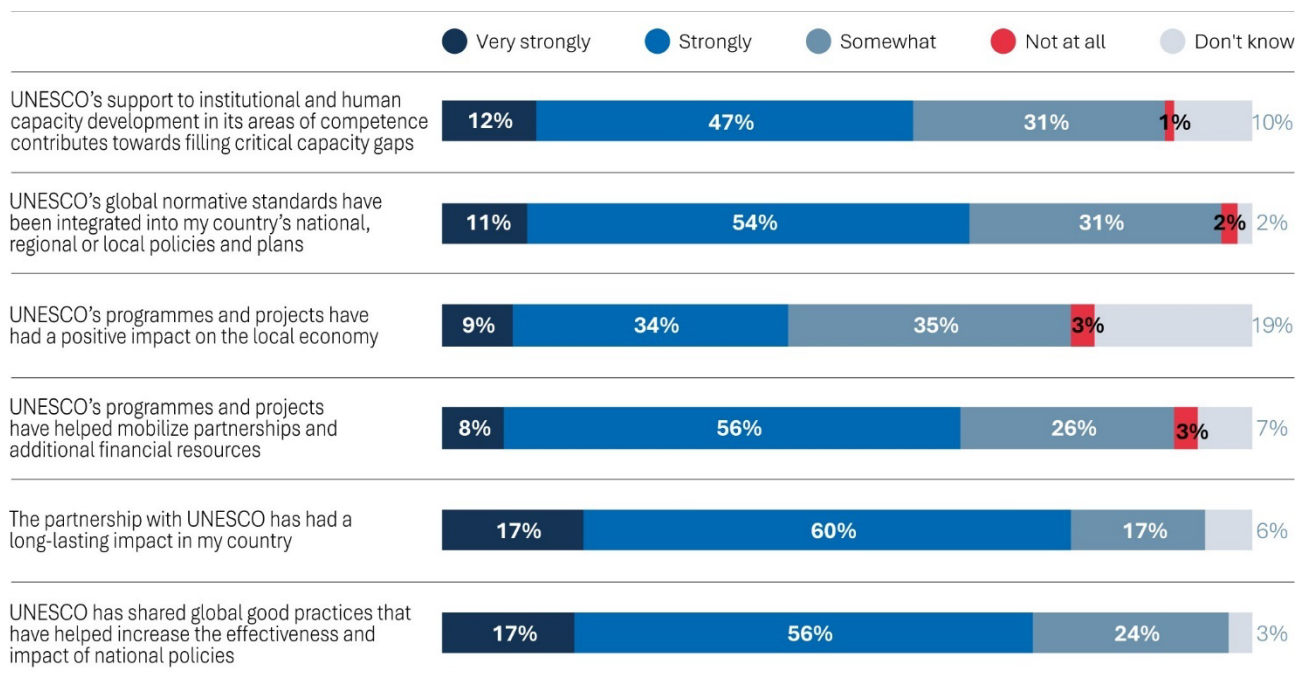
206. Additionally, 60% strongly or very strongly agreed that UNESCO has an adequate accountability and transparency framework, indicating a general trust in the Organization's governance. In the comments, the important progress made in recent years was acknowledged while also underlying the need to improve accountability, monitoring and evaluation, especially on projects implementation, as well as to strengthen internal controls.

207. However, the data also reveals perceived weaknesses in operational areas. Only about half of respondents strongly or very strongly believe UNESCO has made sufficient efforts to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness (49%) or strengthen its field office network (48%). Respondents strongly called for increased staffing, better resource allocation, and improved operational efficiency across regions. There's particular concern about regional disparities, and a push for better coordination between field offices and National Commissions. Respondents also stressed the importance of enhancing accountability and transparency in field operations, while ensuring that field offices are equipped to address local needs and emerging challenges effectively. As regards operational efficiency and effectiveness, key areas for improvement include better programme prioritization, strengthened results-based management, more effective resource utilization, improved internal processes, and more strategic planning and responsiveness to Member States' needs.

208. Member States expressed concerns about UNESCO's ability to demonstrate value for money, this statement receiving the lowest-rated perception with only 47% strongly or very strongly agreeing to it. Respondents emphasized the need for better evaluation of programmes, prioritization of high-impact initiatives, and the ability to modify or terminate underperforming projects to ensure efficient use of resources. To enhance its overall capacity to deliver, UNESCO may need to leverage its strong technical expertise while addressing operational inefficiencies, strengthening its field presence, and more clearly communicating the value and impact of its programmes.

SUSTAINABILITY

2.2 How strongly do the following statements describe UNESCO?



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

209. UNESCO's impact and sustainability are most evident in its role as a knowledge broker and influencer of national policies. The survey data shows that 78% of respondents strongly or very strongly agree that UNESCO partnerships have long-lasting impacts, while 73% affirm that UNESCO has effectively shared global good practices that have enhanced national policies. This high level of agreement on knowledge sharing and long-term impact suggests that UNESCO's ability to facilitate the exchange of best practices is a key strength, contributing significantly to its sustainable influence in Member States.

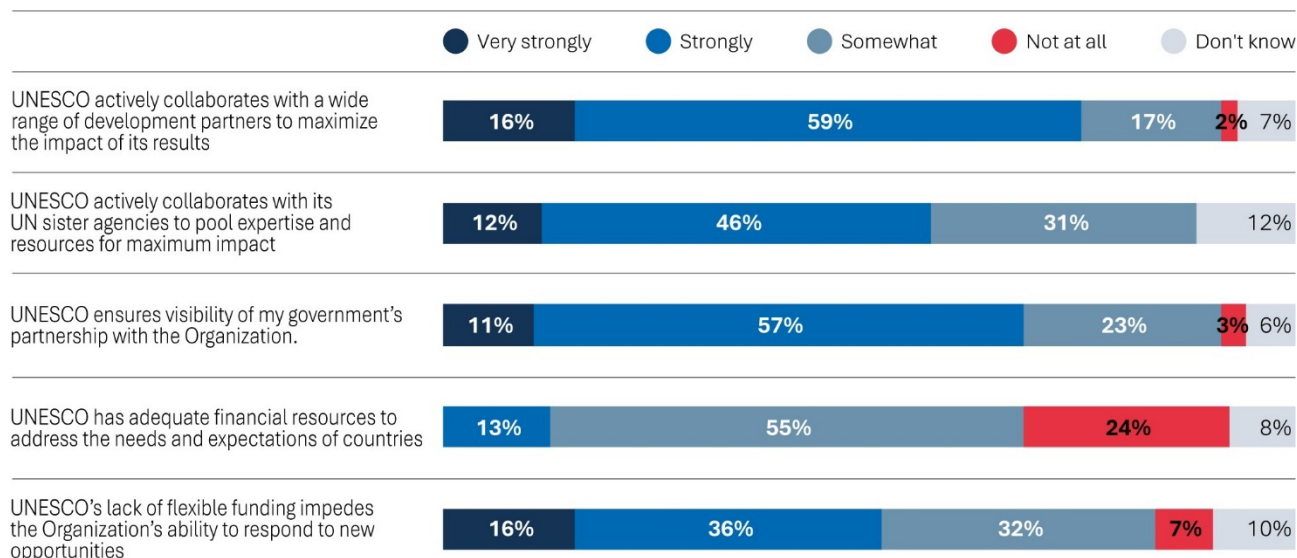
210. The integration of UNESCO's standards into national, regional, or local policies is also highly rated, with 65% of respondents strongly or very strongly agreeing. This, combined with the strong agreement on sharing good practices, indicates that UNESCO's normative work and knowledge dissemination have a substantial influence on policy-making across various domains, from cultural heritage to environmental management. Comments from respondents reinforce this, highlighting the impact of UNESCO conventions and programmes in shaping national policies.

211. While UNESCO's contributions to capacity development are positively viewed, with 58% strongly agreeing that it helps fill critical capacity gaps, this area shows potential for improvement. Some Member States suggested a need for more systematic approaches to capacity building, particularly in leveraging UNESCO programmes for financial mobilization and better utilizing local expertise. The economic impact of UNESCO's programmes appears to be less evident, with only 43% strongly agreeing on its positive effect on local economies. However, some countries report

significant economic benefits from UNESCO designations, particularly in the areas of biosphere reserves and cultural sites.

PARTNERSHIPS

2.3 How strongly do the following statements describe UNESCO?



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

212. UNESCO is widely perceived as an effective partner, both within and outside the UN system. The survey shows strong agreement (75% strongly or very strongly agree) that UNESCO actively collaborates with a wide range of development partners to maximize impact. Comments from various Member States corroborate this, highlighting UNESCO's progress in coordinating with UN sister agencies and other partners. However, there's a consistent call for even better coordination to avoid duplication, increase efficiency, and amplify impact. Some suggest that UNESCO should leverage its unique networks and position more effectively, particularly in engaging with academic institutions, the private sector, and civil society organizations.

213. Financial constraints emerge as a significant concern. The survey indicates that only 13% strongly agree that UNESCO has adequate financial resources to meet countries' needs and expectations. This is echoed in numerous comments highlighting UNESCO's limited financial capacity compared to other UN agencies. The lack of flexible funding is seen as a major impediment, with 51% strongly or very strongly agreeing that it hinders UNESCO's ability to respond to new opportunities. Many Member States call for more autonomous or flexible funds to enhance UNESCO's responsiveness and effectiveness. There's also a suggestion to develop better funding mechanisms to address the issue of high transaction costs associated with numerous small grants.

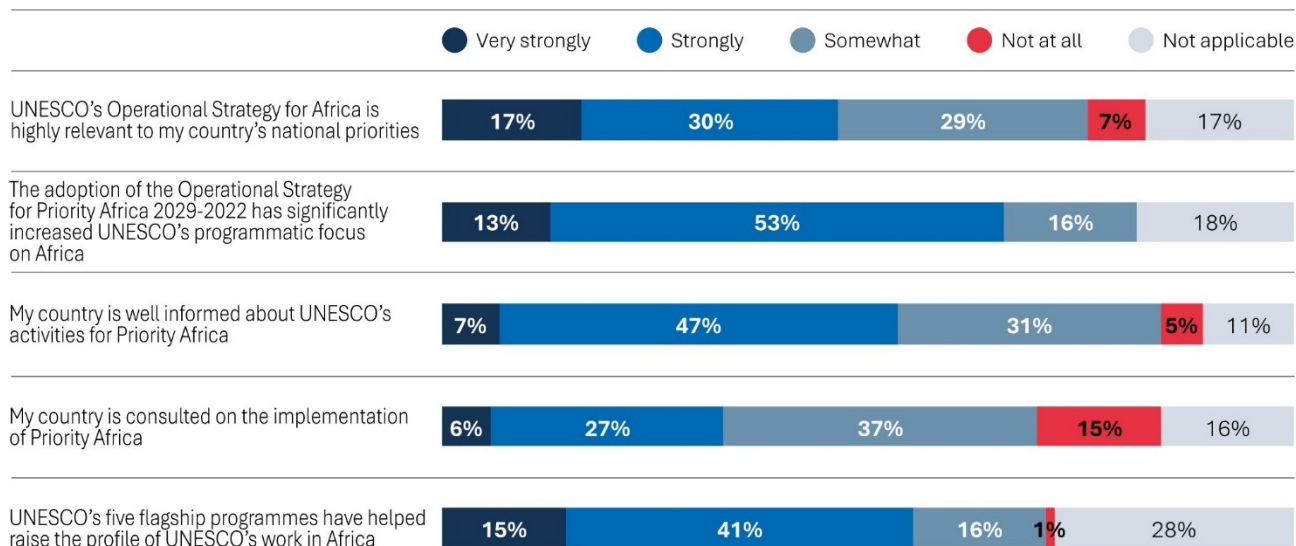
214. UNESCO appears to be effective in ensuring the visibility of its partnerships with governments, with 68% of survey respondents strongly or very strongly agreeing on this point. However, comments reveal a mixed picture, with some praising UNESCO's efforts in highlighting collaborations, while others call for increased visibility of government partnerships. Some suggest leveraging National Commissions and UNESCO networks more effectively to enhance visibility and engagement at all levels.

215. While UNESCO's work for partnerships is generally viewed positively several areas for improvement emerge. These include enhancing its positioning within the UN system, focusing on fewer priorities with higher impact, improving internal working frameworks (including accountability and financial management), and developing more strategic and long-term partnerships. Improved coordination with other UN entities, more flexible and strategic funding approaches, and enhanced

communication about partnerships and their outcomes are seen as key to increasing UNESCO's effectiveness and impact in addressing the needs and expectations of Member States.

SECTION 3 – GLOBAL PRIORITIES, PRIORITY GROUPS AND CRISIS PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

3.1 UNESCO has adopted Africa as a Global Priority. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

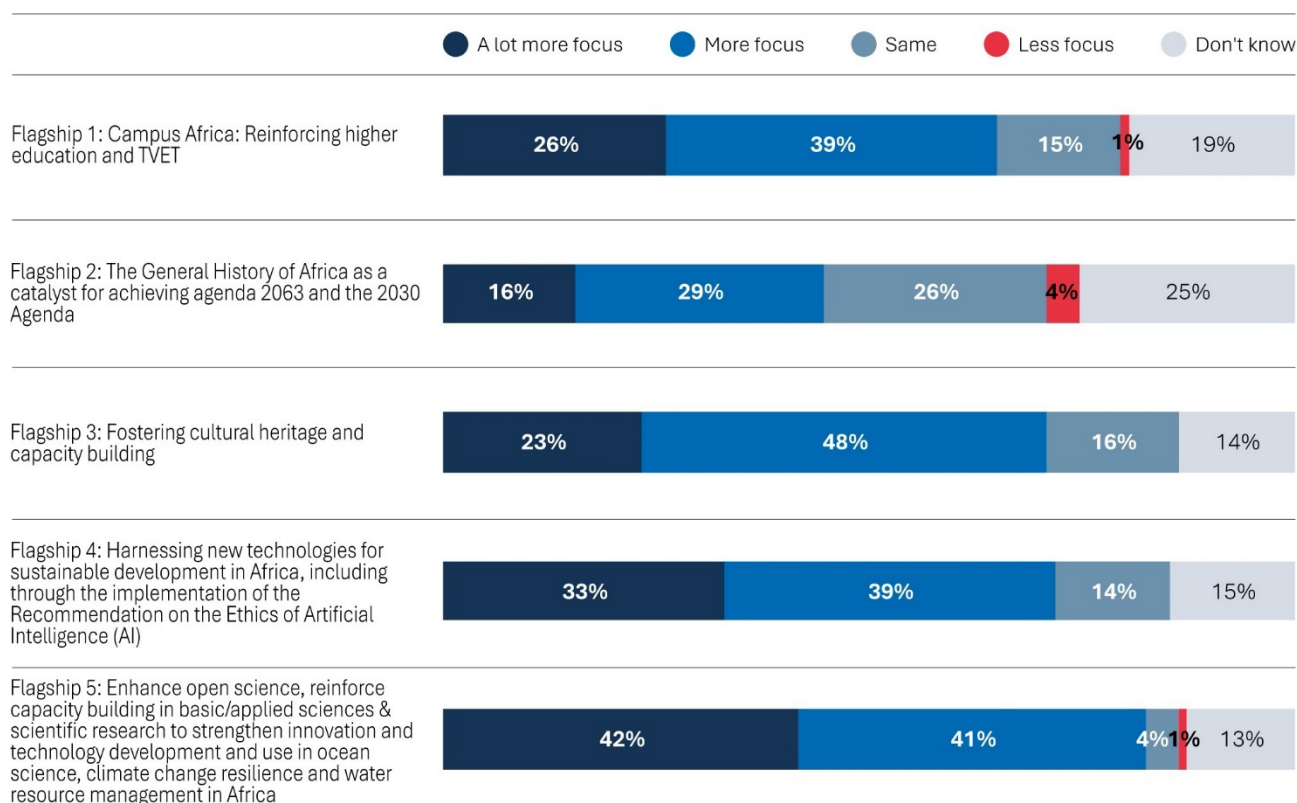
216. The Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029 appears to have significantly increased UNESCO's programmatic focus on Africa, with 66% of respondents strongly or very strongly agreeing with this statement. This suggests that the strategy has been effective in directing more attention and resources towards the continent.

217. There's a general sense that UNESCO's activities for Priority Africa are well communicated, with 54% of respondents strongly or very strongly agreeing that they are well informed. However, consultations on the implementation of Priority Africa seem less consistent, with only 33% strongly or very strongly agreeing that their country is consulted.

218. The comments reveal a range of perspectives on Global Priority Africa. Many countries express strong support for the initiative, recognizing the unique challenges faced by the African continent and the importance of UNESCO's focus in this area. Some non-African countries mention their own strategies or programmes aligned with supporting Global Priority Africa. However, there are also calls for balance, with some respondents suggesting that other regions should receive equitable support or that their own regions face similar challenges.

219. Several comments highlight the need for capacity building, improved communication about activities and results, and more involvement of National Commissions in the implementation of Global Priority Africa. There's also a desire for better understanding of the budget and implementation programmatic areas of Global Priority Africa at the ground level. Some respondents suggest leveraging South-South cooperation and addressing digital transformation as key areas for development in Africa.

3.2 Where should UNESCO further increase its focus in the next programming period?



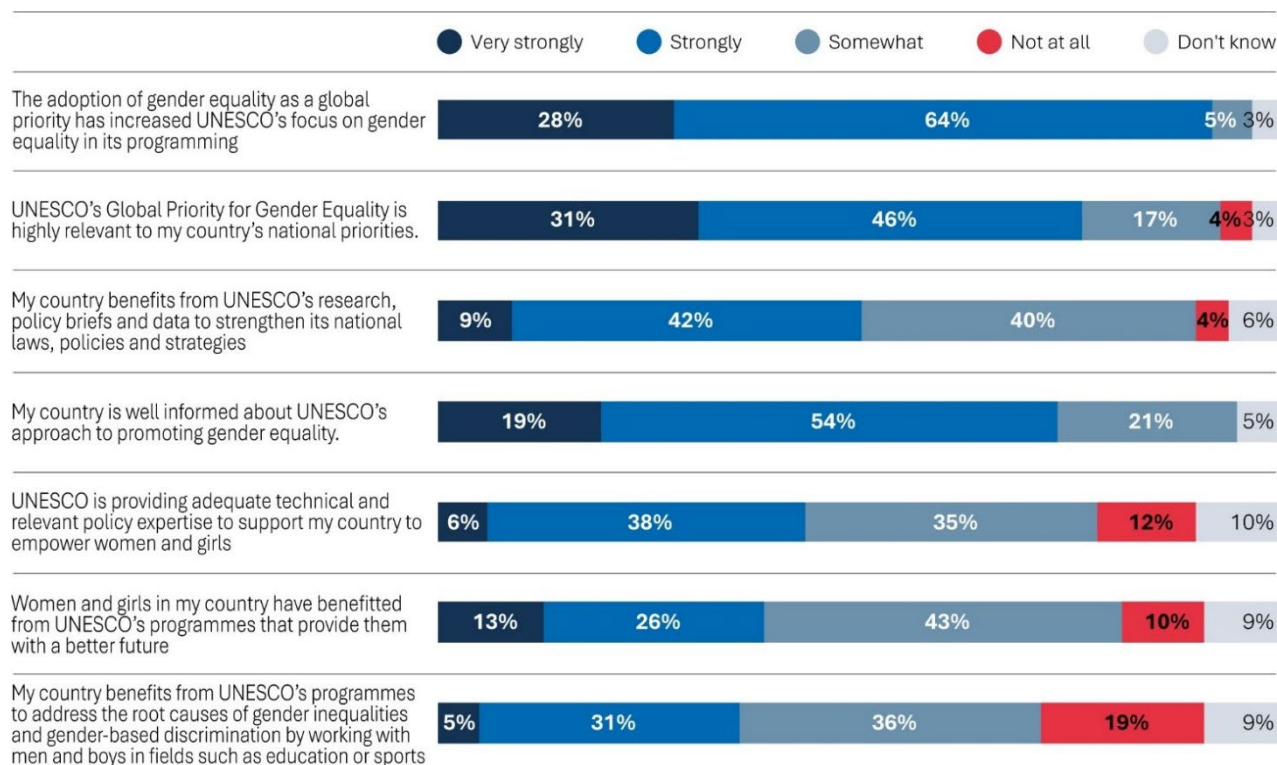
*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

220. Overall, there is strong support for increased focus across all flagship programmes, with Flagship 5 (Enhancing open science and capacity building in sciences) receiving the highest endorsement - 83% of respondents indicate more or a lot more focus is needed. Flagship 3 (Fostering cultural heritage and capacity building) and Flagship 4 (Harnessing new technologies for sustainable development) also show strong support, with 71% and 72% respectively calling for increased focus. Flagship 1 (Reinforcing higher education and TVET) and Flagship 2 (General History of Africa) receive somewhat less emphasis, though still with a majority favouring more attention.

221. The comments reveal a range of perspectives on the implementation and focus of these programmes. Several respondents emphasize the need for better communication and visibility of the Flagship Programmes, particularly at the national level and among National Commissions. One comment specifically mentions the need for more emphasis on emerging issues such as artificial intelligence, neurotechnology, and open science, which align with the strong support for Flagships 4 and 5 in the survey data.

222. Some comments highlight the importance of tailoring approaches to regional contexts, noting the diversity of challenges faced by different parts of Africa. There are suggestions for enhancing partnerships, such as strengthening ties with the African Union and other regional bodies. Several respondents emphasize the critical role of education, particularly early childhood, primary, and secondary education, as well as the importance of addressing gender equality. The comments also reveal a desire for UNESCO to focus on long-term capacity building, prevention of “brain drain”, and the empowerment of local initiatives to address diverse needs across the continent.

3.3 Gender Equality is a global priority for UNESCO. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements



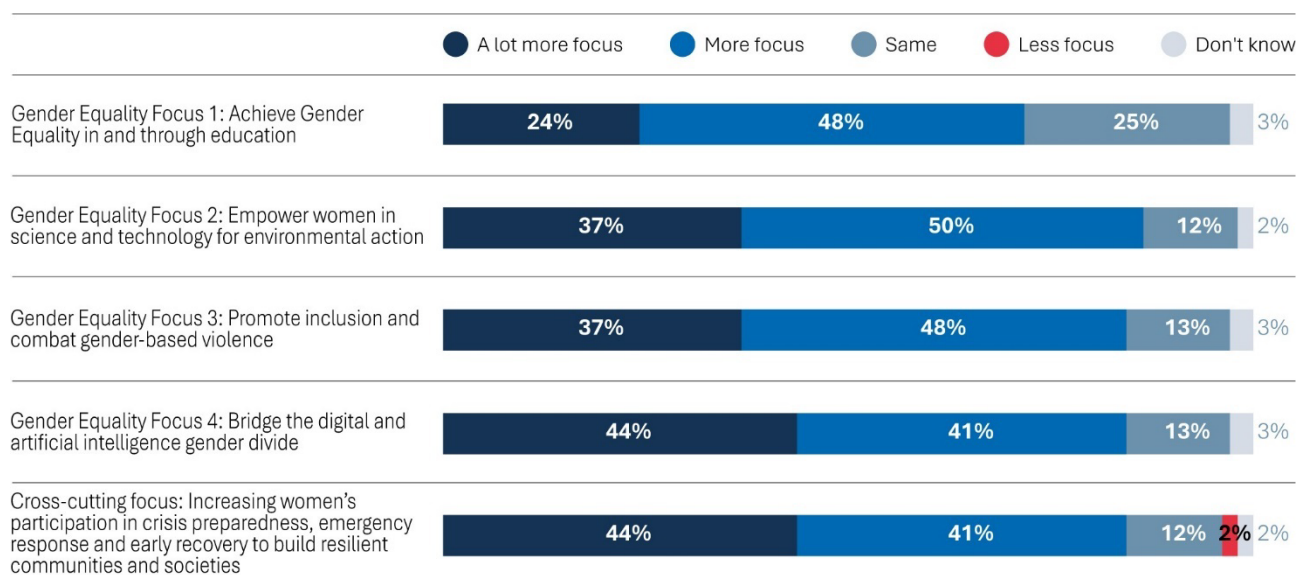
*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

223. There is strong agreement (92% strongly or very strongly agree) that the adoption of gender equality as a global priority has increased UNESCO's focus on this issue in its programming. Additionally, 77% of respondents indicate that UNESCO's Global Priority for Gender Equality is highly relevant to their country's national priorities. This suggests broad alignment between UNESCO's gender equality focus and Member States' priorities.

224. However, the data reveals some gaps in implementation and impact. While 74% of respondents feel well-informed about UNESCO's approach to promoting gender equality, fewer report direct benefits from UNESCO's programmes. Only 39% strongly or very strongly agree that women and girls in their country have benefitted from UNESCO's programmes providing a better future. Similarly, only 36% strongly or very strongly agree that their country benefits from UNESCO's programmes addressing root causes of gender inequalities by working with men and boys.

225. The comments reflect diverse perspectives on gender equality initiatives. Some Member States report significant progress in areas like access to education and literacy rates for women and girls. Others highlight the need for more resources, both financial and technical, at country and global level, to effectively implement gender equality programmes.

3.4 Where should UNESCO further increase its focus in the next planning period?



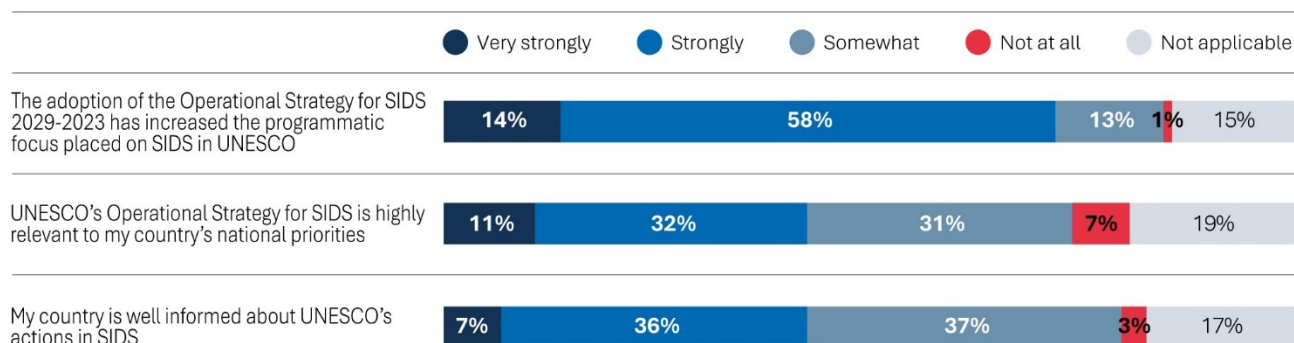
*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

226. All five gender equality focus areas received strong support for increased attention in the next planning period, with the majority of respondents calling for “More focus” or “A lot more focus” across the board. The area receiving the highest combined support for increased focus (86%) was “Gender Equality Focus 2: Empower women in science and technology for environmental action”. This is closely followed by “Gender Equality Focus 3: Promote inclusion and combat gender-based violence”, “Gender Equality Focus 4: Bridge the digital and artificial intelligence gender divide”, and the “cross-cutting focus: Increasing women’s participation in crisis preparedness, emergency response and early recovery to build resilient communities and societies”, all at 84%.

227. The comments reveal a range of priorities and perspectives from Member States. Several respondents emphasized the need for a truly cross-cutting approach to gender equality across all UNESCO sectors. There were calls for increased funding and resources dedicated to gender programmes, as well as for improved integration of gender analysis in planning, implementation, and reporting processes. Some Member States highlighted the need for more robust, systematic approaches to monitoring gender equality initiatives within UNESCO’s work. They emphasized the importance of integrating gender analysis throughout UNESCO’s processes, from planning to reporting, and the need for data-driven approaches to track outcomes effectively. Some comments highlighted specific areas needing attention, such as combating online and offline violence against women, addressing gender equality in the arts and cultural sector, and increasing women’s participation in STEM fields.

228. Several comments emphasize the importance of tailoring approaches to local contexts and cultural sensitivities. There are also calls for UNESCO to broaden its focus to include issues like LGBT+ rights and the challenges faced by boys and men.

3.5 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are a Priority Group in UNESCO. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:

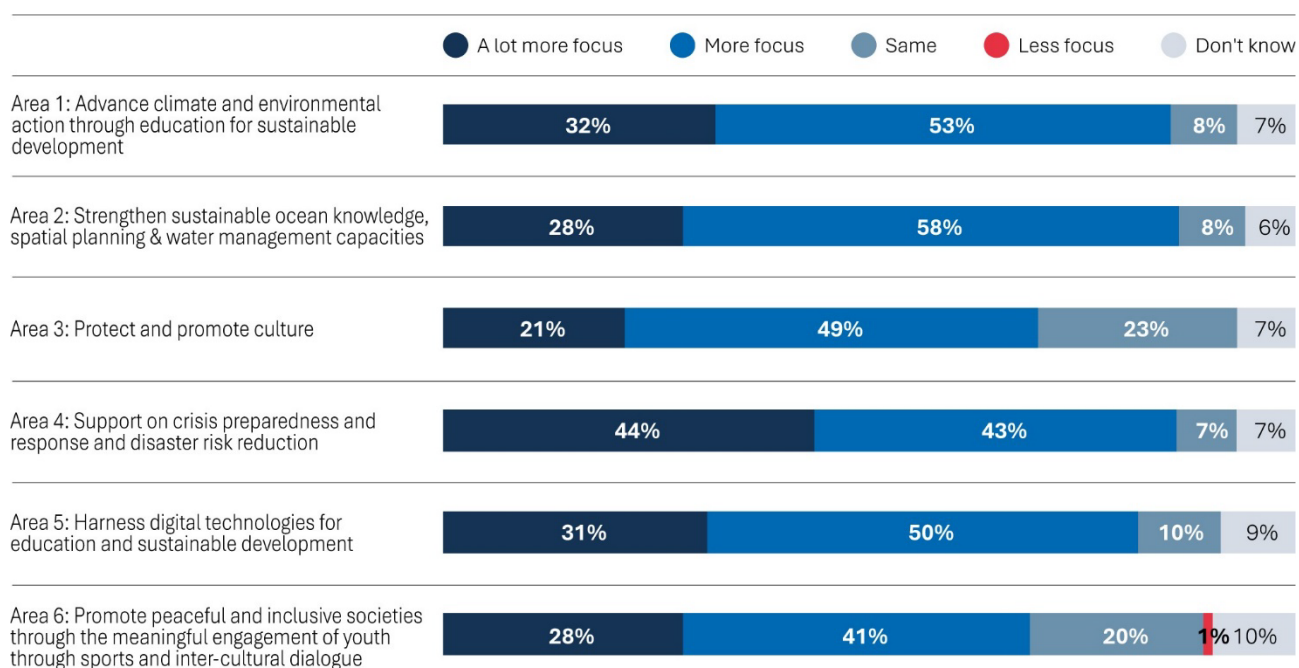


*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

229. Most respondents (72%) acknowledged that the adoption of the Operational Strategy for SIDS has increased UNESCO programmatic focus on SIDS but only 43% strongly or very strongly agreed that it was highly relevant to their country's national priorities. To shed some light on these figures, it should be noted that only a small percentage of SIDS countries have responded to the survey. In addition, a significant number of respondents (only 43% strongly or very strongly and 37% somewhat) felt that they were not sufficiently informed about the strategy, which can be explained as it was only adopted in 2023.

230. In their comments, most respondents showed a strong support to UNESCO's focus on SIDS as a priority group and highlighted the relevance of the operational strategy and its accelerators. Even if the Operational Strategy has not been fully implemented yet, making it premature to assess its impact, it was felt that it has already played a crucial role in increasing the visibility of SIDS and highlighting their unique priorities, needs, and specificities. Continued focus on implementation will be key to translating this increased visibility into tangible benefits for SIDS and will require additional efforts in terms of partnerships and fund mobilization.

3.6 In November 2023, UNESCO's General Conference adopted six SIDS Accelerator Programmes: where should UNESCO further increase its focus in the next planning period?

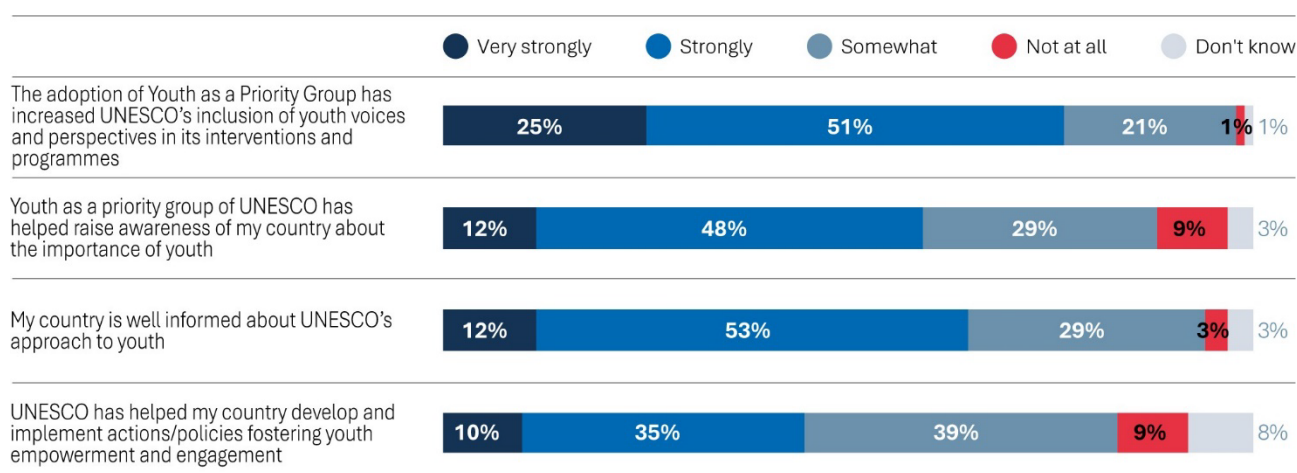


*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

231. In line with the answers to the previous question, the majority of respondents indicated that UNESCO's focus on all the six accelerators contained in the Operational Strategy for SIDS should receive more or much more focus. Particular emphasis was placed on Advancing climate and environmental action through education for sustainable development (Area 1), strengthening sustainable ocean knowledge, spatial planning and water management capacities (Area 2) and Support on crisis preparedness and response and disaster risk reduction (Area 4) with more than 86% of respondents recommending that more or much more focus be placed on these areas.

232. Many respondents emphasized the importance of prioritizing climate action, disaster risk reduction, and environmental protection in SIDS, given their particular vulnerability to these challenges. There was also broad support for capacity building, sustainable development initiatives, and preserving cultural heritage in these regions. Some countries highlighted the need for youth engagement, digital education, and North-South collaboration. A few responses stressed the importance of allocating sufficient funds and resources to these programmes and suggested that priorities should be guided by the needs identified by SIDS themselves.

3.7 Youth is a priority group for UNESCO. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

233. According to survey results and comments, there's a generally positive perception of UNESCO's efforts regarding youth inclusion and engagement, though with some areas for improvement.

234. The data shows that 76% of respondents strongly or very strongly agree that UNESCO's adoption of Youth as a Priority Group has increased the inclusion of youth voices and perspectives in its interventions and programmes. This aligns with many comments emphasizing the importance of youth participation in decision-making processes and UNESCO's various initiatives to engage young people.

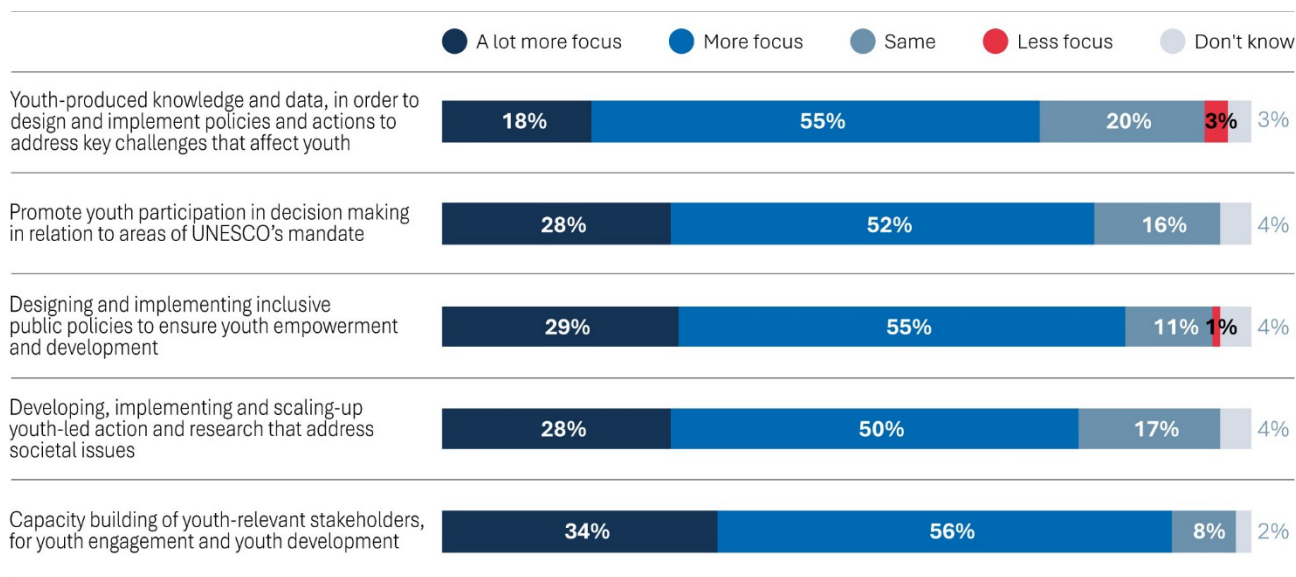
235. However, the impact on country-level awareness and policy implementation appears more mixed. While 60% of respondents strongly or very strongly agree that UNESCO's youth priority has raised awareness about the importance of youth in their countries, a lower percentage (45%) strongly or very strongly agree that the Organization has helped their country develop and implement youth empowerment policies. This suggests an existing gap between awareness-raising and concrete policy implementation that should be addressed.

236. Several comments highlighted successful youth engagement initiatives, such as including youth representatives in UNESCO National Commissions and conference delegations. Others call for more substantial integration of youth voices beyond parallel events, suggesting UNESCO could further enhance youth participation in core decision-making processes. Some respondents

emphasized the need for UNESCO to support youth-led initiatives, provide skills development opportunities, and address issues like youth unemployment and brain drain.

237. There were also calls for a more comprehensive and strategic approach to youth engagement. Some comments suggested improving mechanisms for youth inclusion, developing a clearer framework for UNESCO's youth-focused work, and ensuring that youth perspectives are integrated across all of UNESCO's programmes rather than treated as a separate element. A few responses highlighted the importance of reaching marginalized youth groups and fostering cross-generational and cross-cultural approaches to youth engagement.

3.8 Where should UNESCO further increase its focus in the next planning period?



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

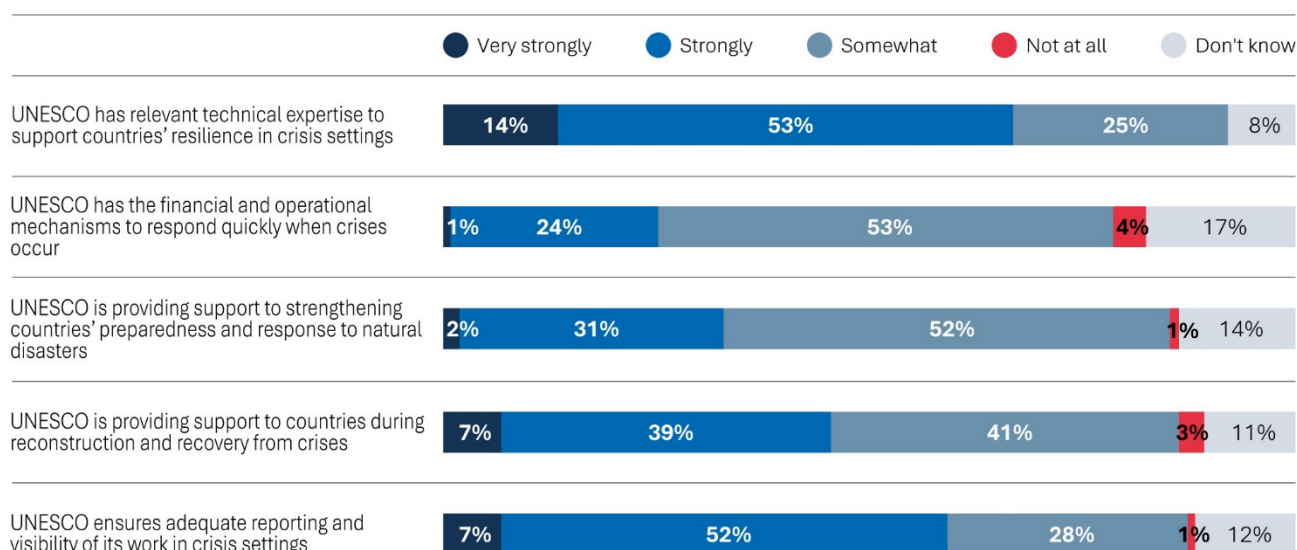
238. The survey results and comments reflect a strong consensus that UNESCO should increase its focus on youth engagement across all areas, with particularly high support for capacity building of youth-relevant stakeholders with 90% advocating more or a lot more focus and designing inclusive policies for youth empowerment (84%).

239. There's a clear emphasis on the need for more meaningful and authentic youth participation in UNESCO's decision-making processes. Many respondents call for moving beyond declarative events or parallel forums to integrate youth perspectives directly into core policy-making and programme development.

240. Several responses highlight the importance of supporting youth-led initiatives and research, with suggestions for creating platforms to showcase youth projects and increasing opportunities for young professionals within UNESCO. There's also a call for UNESCO to better understand youth needs by using their preferred communication tools and language.

241. While the overall sentiment is positive regarding UNESCO's youth focus, some comments indicate a need for a more strategic and mainstreamed approach to youth engagement across all of UNESCO's mandate areas. There are suggestions to improve the mechanisms for youth inclusion, ensure diversity in youth representation, and link youth initiatives more closely to addressing societal challenges and public policy implementation.

3.9 Member States adopted crisis preparedness and response as a cross-cutting area for UNESCO's actions in its Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 (41 C/4). How much do you agree with the following statements?



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

242. Based on the analysis of the survey results and comments, UNESCO's role in crisis response is generally viewed positively, though with areas for improvement.

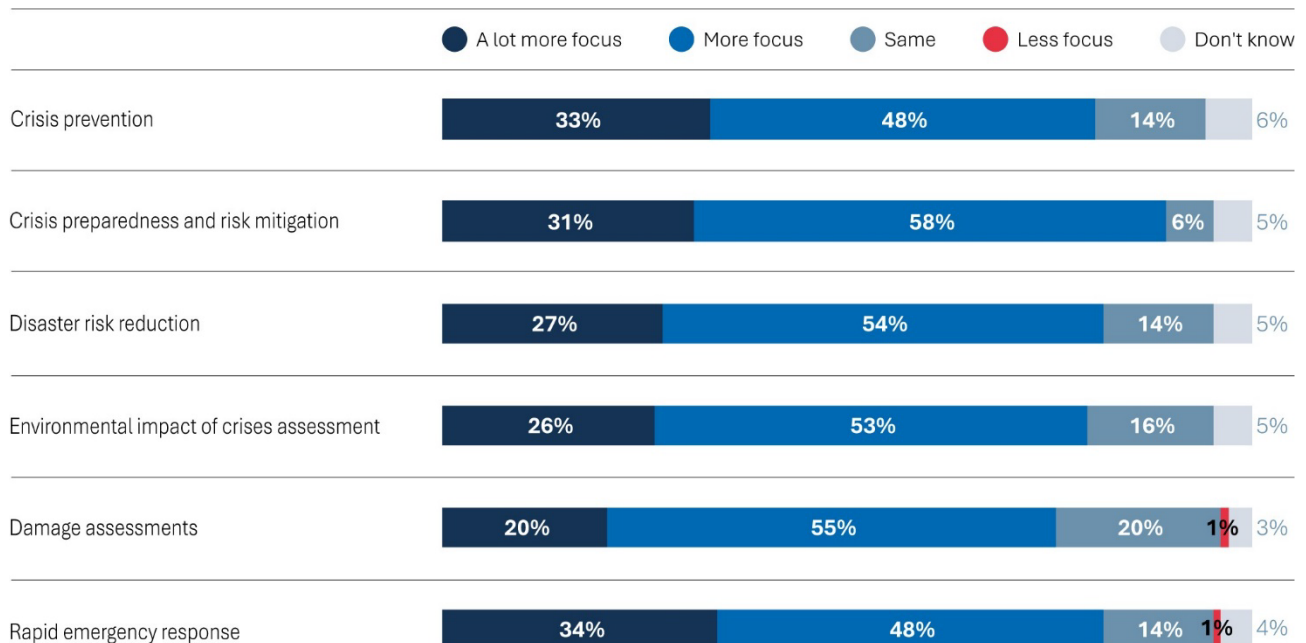
243. The majority of respondents recognize UNESCO's strong technical expertise in supporting countries' resilience in crises settings (67% strongly or very strongly agree). However, there's a significant gap between this recognition and the perception of UNESCO's financial and operational capacity to respond quickly when crises occur (only 25% of agree or strongly agree). This disparity suggests that while UNESCO possesses valuable knowledge and skills, it still faces challenges in mobilizing resources and implementing responses efficiently.

244. UNESCO's efforts in specific crisis situations have been appreciated by many Member States. Examples include the Organization's adaptability during the COVID-19 pandemic, its work in conflict-affected areas, and its rapid response to damaged cultural sites. The Heritage Emergency Fund and the emergency assistance through the Participation Programme were highlighted as particularly effective mechanisms.

245. However, there's a clear call from multiple Member States for improved financial and operational mechanisms to enhance UNESCO's crisis response capabilities. Suggestions include allocating more resources for crisis support, creating dedicated funding mechanisms, and developing more efficient systems for deploying assistance. Some respondents emphasize the need for UNESCO to focus on crisis response within its core mandate areas while coordinating closely with other UN agencies and stakeholders for a more comprehensive approach.

246. Lastly, while UNESCO's reporting and visibility of its crisis work are generally seen as adequate (59% strongly or very strongly agree), there's room for improvement in communicating its efforts and impacts. Enhancing this aspect could not only increase awareness of UNESCO's contributions but also potentially support resource mobilization efforts. Additionally, some responses highlight the importance of developing more robust preparedness strategies and mechanisms for crisis response, suggesting that proactive planning could significantly improve effectiveness in future crisis situations.

3.10 Where should UNESCO increase its focus before, during and after crises in the next programming period?



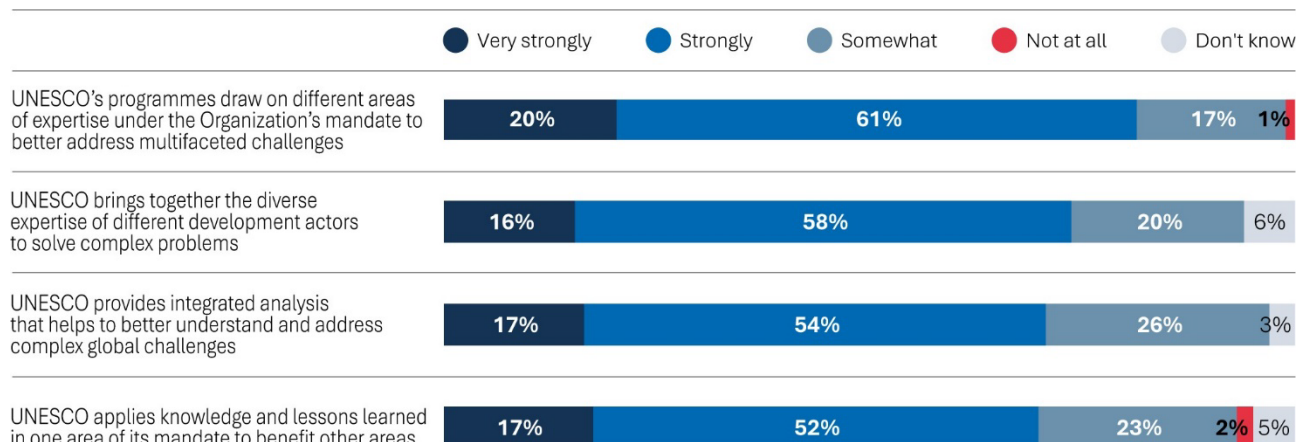
*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

247. There's a strong consensus that UNESCO should increase its focus across all areas of crisis management, with particular emphasis on crisis prevention, preparedness, rapid emergency response and disaster risk reduction. The data shows that over 80% of respondents believe UNESCO should give more or a lot more focus to each area, with crisis preparedness and risk mitigation (89%) and rapid emergency response and disaster risk reduction (82%) receiving the highest combined percentages for increased focus.

248. Many comments emphasize the importance of UNESCO focusing on crisis prevention and preparedness within its core mandate areas. Several respondents stress the need for UNESCO to strengthen its capacity in crisis management while remaining within its areas of expertise. Examples include enhancing UNESCO's role in protecting cultural heritage during emergencies and leveraging new technologies for monitoring at-risk cultural sites. The Organization's adaptability during the COVID-19 pandemic is cited as a positive example of its crisis response capabilities.

249. However, there are also calls for UNESCO to be realistic about its scope and to focus on areas where it has a comparative advantage. Some responses suggest improving coordination with other agencies and organizations for a more comprehensive approach to crisis management.

3.11 Today's challenges are complex and multifaced and require innovative solutions that integrate different areas of expertise. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:

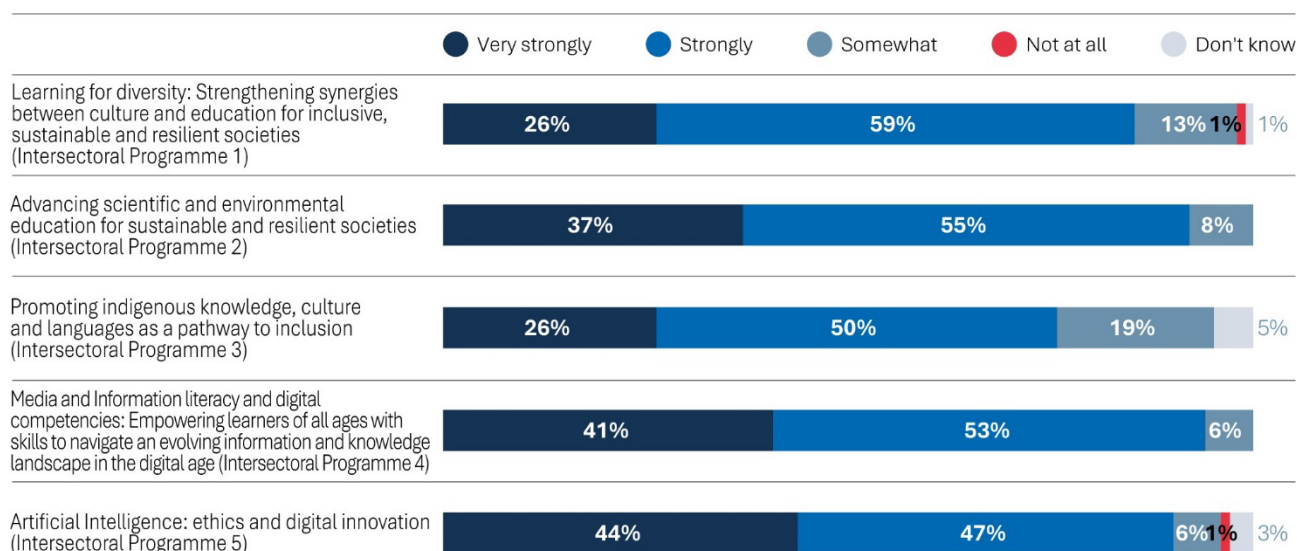


*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

250. The data shows generally strong positive perception towards UNESCO's methods and effectiveness.

251. The statement receiving the highest combined strongly and very strongly agreement (81%) is about UNESCO's programmes drawing on different areas of expertise to address multifaceted challenges. This suggests widespread recognition of UNESCO's interdisciplinary approach. Similarly, 74% strongly or very strongly agree that UNESCO brings together diverse expertise to solve complex problems. The Organization's ability to provide integrated analysis for understanding global challenges and apply knowledge across different mandate areas also received strong positive responses (71% and 69% respectively).

3.12 Where should UNESCO further increase its intersectoral approach in the next planning period?



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

252. The survey results demonstrate strong support for UNESCO's Intersectoral Programmes, with all five initiatives receiving high levels of combined "Strongly" and "Very strongly" agreement (76% to 94%). This aligns with comments from several Member States emphasizing the importance of intersectoral collaboration. Multiple countries explicitly welcome UNESCO's focus on intersectoral

cooperation and multidisciplinary themes. Others highlight the need for a more integrated approach, addressing the issue of siloed work within the organization.

253. However, the comments also reveal nuanced perspectives on implementing intersectoral work effectively. While there's broad agreement on its importance, some countries express caution or suggest improvements. For instance, one questions the added value of intersectoral programmes in their current form, while another emphasizes the need for coordination with other UN bodies to ensure consistency. Several States stress the urgency of strengthening relationships between different sectors to address complex global challenges.

254. In providing additional comments on UNESCO's intersectoral work, Member States were also asked to elaborate on the link with the Pact for the Future. Their comments are summarized below:

255. The observations reveal a strong consensus that UNESCO's mandate and areas of expertise should be more prominently reflected in the Pact for the Future. Many Member States emphasize the need to include culture as a key pillar in the Pact, with some advocating its recognition as a global public good and a stand-alone goal in future development agendas. There's also a push for greater inclusion of education, science, and technology in the document, aligning with UNESCO's core competencies.

256. Several countries stress the importance of UNESCO's active involvement in shaping and implementing the Pact. They call for the Organization to advocate youth leadership, Indigenous Peoples' participation, human rights, freedom of expression and gender equality within the Pact's framework. Some respondents highlight the need for the Pact to address emerging challenges such as digital innovation, AI ethics, and climate change, areas where UNESCO has significant expertise. There's also a call for ensuring the Pact aligns with existing UN commitments and avoids duplication of efforts, with suggestions for UNESCO to coordinate closely with other UN bodies in this process.

3.13 Optional: Additional comments concerning the future Programme and Budget for 2026-2029

257. Additional comments on the future Programme and Budget highlight both the thematic areas UNESCO should prioritize (focus areas) and the necessary improvements in its working methods and management (enablers).

Focus Areas:

- ✓ **Education and skills development emerge as critical focus areas.** Member States emphasize particularly the need for quality teacher training across all educational levels and stress the importance of youth skills development.
- ✓ **Culture's role in sustainable development** receives significant attention, with some Member States advocating its recognition as a global public good.
- ✓ **Sustainability and climate change are identified as urgent priorities.** Members advocate for the integration of environmental sustainability and climate action across all of UNESCO's work areas. There's a notable interest in emerging trends such as green hydrogen and climate education. Furthermore, there's a call for UNESCO to strengthen its role in global climate discussions, such as the Conference of Parties (COP).
- ✓ **Normative role and global leadership:** Multiple comments stress the importance of UNESCO's standard-setting function and its role in providing policy advice. This includes mentions of recent recommendations on AI ethics, open science, and neurotechnology.
- ✓ **Global Priorities and Priority Groups** - Africa, gender equality, youth, and small island developing States (SIDS) - continue to receive strong support. Comments highlight the

need for tailored approaches to regional needs, such as skill development initiatives for African youth or specific programmes and attention addressing the unique challenges faced by SIDS.

- ✓ **Crisis and emergency response:** Several countries highlight the need for UNESCO to enhance its capacity to respond to crises and emergency situations.
- ✓ Some respondents also indicated that maintaining a human rights-based approach across all programmes **remains a priority**.

Enablers:

- ✓ **Results-based management and organizational efficiency** are also prominent themes. Member States stress the importance of improved planning, budgeting, and monitoring processes to ensure tangible outcomes. Some suggest developing clear criteria for evaluating programmes and activities, emphasizing the need for regular assessments to inform decision-making about programme continuation or termination.
- ✓ **Intersectoral collaboration is recognized as a crucial enabler.** There's a strong push for strengthened intersectoral work and synergies across UNESCO's domains.
- ✓ **Enhancing partnerships and improving UNESCO's visibility** are frequently mentioned. There are calls for strengthening collaboration with the private sector, civil society organizations, and academic networks. Enhanced collaboration with UNESCO networks, such as UNESCO Chairs and Associated Schools, is also highlighted. Some comments suggest improving UNESCO's brand management and communication strategies to better promote its activities and achievements globally.
- ✓ **UNESCO's normative role and global leadership** are identified as key strengths to be further developed. Members stress the importance of reinforcing UNESCO's role in standard-setting and policy advice. Improved communication and visibility about UNESCO's activities and a strengthened position within the UN system are seen as essential for maximizing impact.
- ✓ **Strengthening UNESCO's field presence and supporting National Commissions** emerge as key priorities. Strengthening field offices and their capacity to implement country-level programmes is seen as crucial. There's a strong call for enhanced support for National Commissions, recognizing their important role in connecting UNESCO's global mission with local contexts and stakeholders.

B. Analysis of the replies of non-governmental organizations in official partnership and foundations and similar institutions in official relations with UNESCO

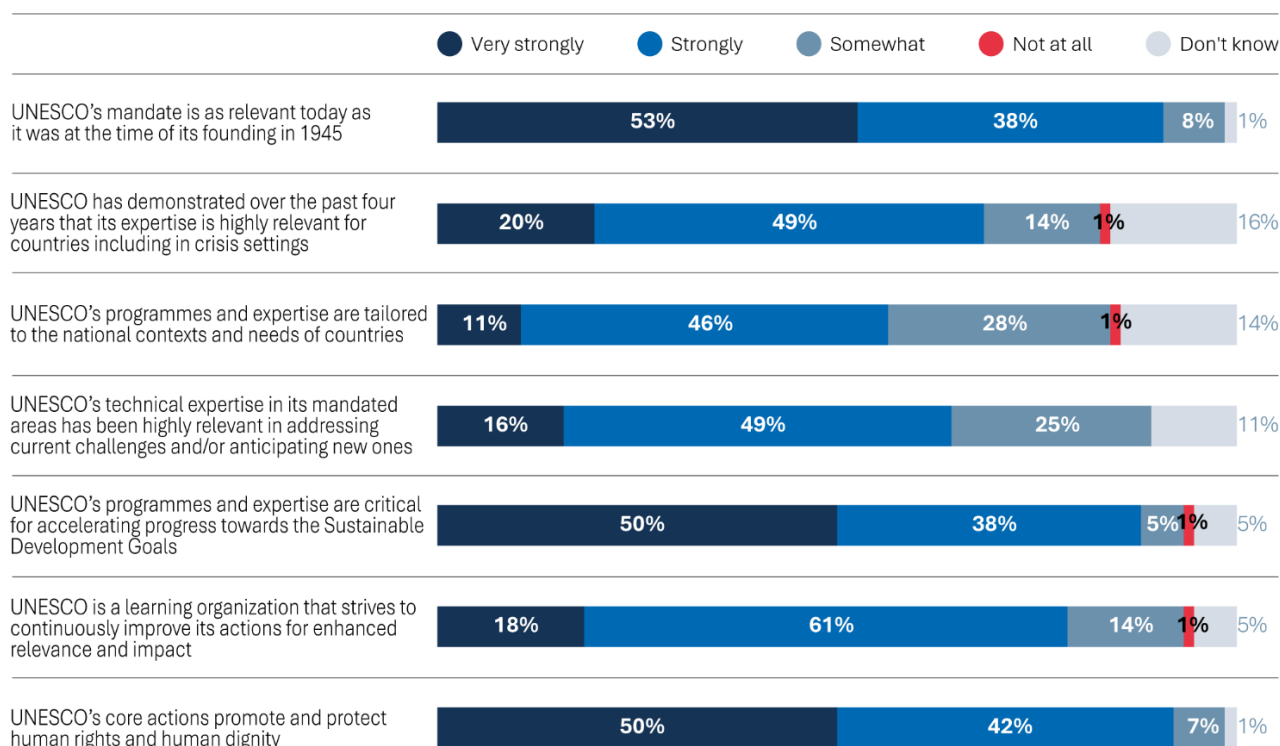
258. A total of 75 non-governmental organizations and foundations replied to the survey.

Key messages identified based on the analysis of survey results and comments:

- ✓ Recurring call for stronger cooperation between UNESCO and NGOs, emphasizing the need to better utilize NGO expertise and capabilities in achieving UNESCO's goals.
- ✓ Education as a priority across multiple areas, including climate education, lifelong learning, education for peace and global citizenship, digital literacy, and improving access for women and girls.
- ✓ Strong emphasis on the need to better address gender equality, combating discrimination, and ensuring inclusivity across all of UNESCO's programmes and initiatives.
- ✓ NGOs emphasized the need for increased funding opportunities, including direct funding for projects and joint funding mechanisms with UNESCO.
- ✓ Need for UNESCO to improve its communication and increase the visibility of its actions, particularly towards NGOs and civil society organizations.

SECTION 1: UNESCO'S RELEVANCE AND IMPACT

1.1 In your organization's opinion, how strongly do the following statements describe UNESCO?



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

259. Respondents' perception of the relevance of the Organization and its action are positive overall. The continued relevance of UNESCO's mandate ranks first among respondents (of which 91% very strongly or strongly agreed with the statement), out of which several respondents further stressed the need for UNESCO to preserve its specialized mandate and expertise as these bring significant added value to the United Nations system and are critical for contributing to peace and sustainable development. The Organization's actions aimed at promoting values such as human rights and human dignity ranks second (92% of NGO respondents very strongly or strongly agreed). Respondents also perceived UNESCO's actions as critical to accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in the framework of Agenda 2030 (88% of NGOs very strongly or strongly agreed with the statement). The Organization's approach to continuous learning towards improving its actions for enhanced relevance and impact was also noted by NGO respondents with 79% of respondents very strongly or strongly agreeing with this statement.

260. In parallel, respondents answered "Don't know" to several statements, which may indicate that there is a need to increase communication targeting NGOs in order to enhance the visibility and general knowledge of UNESCO's actions in these areas, as underlined by a number of NGOs.

261. In addition, in their comments several respondents called for UNESCO to improve its communication and visibility, making its work and expertise more accessible to the general public and to enhance its collaboration with NGOs and civil society, emphasizing the need for more inclusive partnerships. Lastly, some respondents also emphasized the need for UNESCO to become more responsive and adaptable, able to react more quickly to emerging global challenges and crises, while reducing bureaucratic barriers.

1.2 Given the serious lag in SDG progress at mid-point, in your organization's opinion, how can UNESCO best contribute to accelerating actions during the next programming period? [Please select your top 6 choices]⁴

Play a global coordination role for SDG4	3.87
Facilitate multilateral agreements on new or updated global norms and standards	2.40
Develop broad partnerships and coalitions that push for large-scale development change	2.35
Enhance knowledge sharing and exchange of information between the public and private sectors	1.73
Utilise South-South cooperation to help source knowledge, expertise and finance	1.49
Facilitate greater access to public and private financing for the SDGs	1.43
Support regional collaboration and support to regional institutions	1.41
Provide multisector policy and programme approaches to tackle SDGs	1.33
Support governments and institutions to improve gender equality and foster inclusion, diversity and equity	1.27
Support national and local governments with development planning and implementation	1.13
Support building resilience to climate change and natural disasters	1.12
Enhance in-country innovation in policies, technologies, and business operations	0.84
Support governments in developing national statistical data and reporting capacities and systems	0.65

*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

262. According to the survey data, three areas are clearly highlighted as areas where UNESCO can contribute to accelerating actions towards the achievement of the SDGs during the next programming period. Respondents widely recognized UNESCO's role as coordinator for SDG 4 within the United Nations system as the top contributing factor. This was followed by its core functions as catalyst and motor for international cooperation and standard-setter in facilitating multilateral agreements on new or updated global norms and standards and its capacity to develop broad partnership coalitions that push for large-scale development change. Respondents' perception of other statements was rather equally distributed. The Organization's role as facilitator for enhanced knowledge sharing and exchange of information between the public and the private sector and its capacity to utilize South-South cooperation to help source knowledge, expertise and finance were also highly ranked by respondents.

263. However, UNESCO's function as a clearing house, specifically in the field of support to governments in developing national statistical data and reporting capacities and systems, was the least well-ranked theme in terms of the Organization's ability to contribute to accelerating actions

⁴ Respondents had to rank 6 out of 13 statements from 1 to 6. For the analysis, points were assigned based on their rankings: 6 points for rank 1, 5 points for rank 2, down to 1 point for rank 6, and 0 points for unranked statements. To determine the average points for each statement, we sum the points received by each statement across all participants and then divide by the number of respondents who ranked that statement. The statements are then ranked based on their average points, with higher average points indicating a better ranking. This method accurately reflects the collective preferences of respondents by considering both the rankings and the number of respondents who ranked each statement.

during the next programming period. This was followed by its ability to enhance in-country innovation in policies, technologies, and business operations and to support building resilience to climate change and natural disasters. This may also reflect a limited knowledge from the NGOs concerning UNESCO's actions in these areas, possibly relating to the perceived need for increased NGO-targeted communication mentioned in question 1.1.

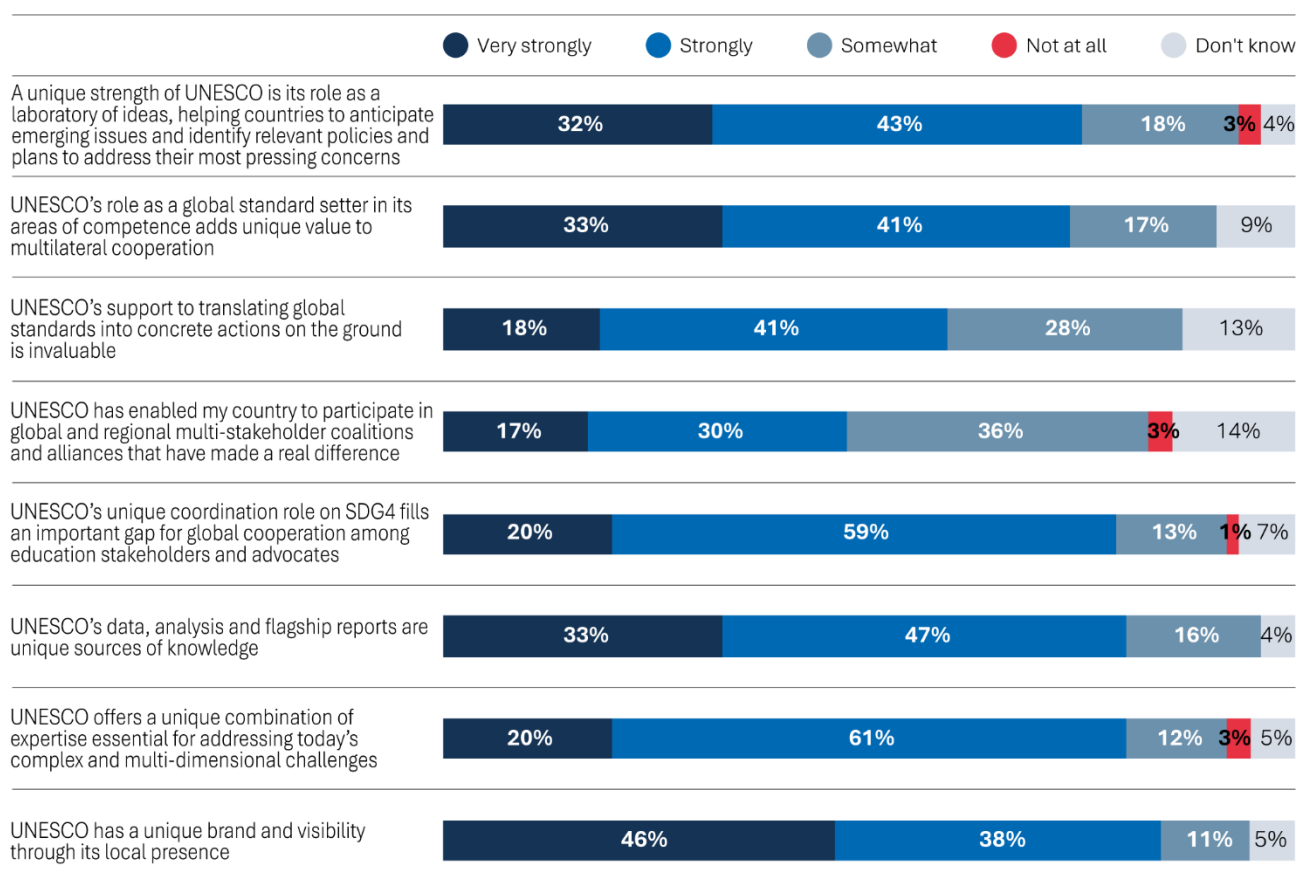
1.3 Are there any new emerging issues or trends that your organization believes should be addressed by UNESCO in the next four-year programming cycle (2026-2029)? Please insert text (1,000 characters maximum without space)

264. NGO respondents highlighted five main issues or trends, some emerging, to be addressed by UNESCO in the next four-year programming cycle (2026-2029). These are classified by the number of occurrences of said issues or trends among NGO responses, as follows:

- (1) **Education** stands out as a universal concern. This includes, *inter alia*, climate education; lifelong learning; education for peace and global citizenship; teacher development; education in crisis settings; literacy, including digital literacy and improving literacy rates for women and girls; information and communications technology in education. At the same rank, **inclusion, gender equality and human rights**, which includes the aim to combat violence against women and girls, is also an area of widespread interest and concern;
- (2) **Artificial intelligence (AI)**, including the ethical dimensions of AI;
- (3) **Climate change**, including through increasing scientific knowledge on this topic, providing strengthened support to communities vulnerable to the impact of climate change, and intensifying efforts aimed at preserving biodiversity and pursuing environmental sustainability;
- (4) **Culture**, with a focus on the arts and the empowerment of artists across the globe;
- (5) **Bridging the digital divide**, supporting digital transformation, and leveraging digital spaces as vehicles for the diffusion of culture. In addition, a number of respondents highlighted the need for UNESCO to better engage and partner with NGOs in tackling these issues.

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

1.4 In your organization's opinion, how strongly do the following statements describe UNESCO?



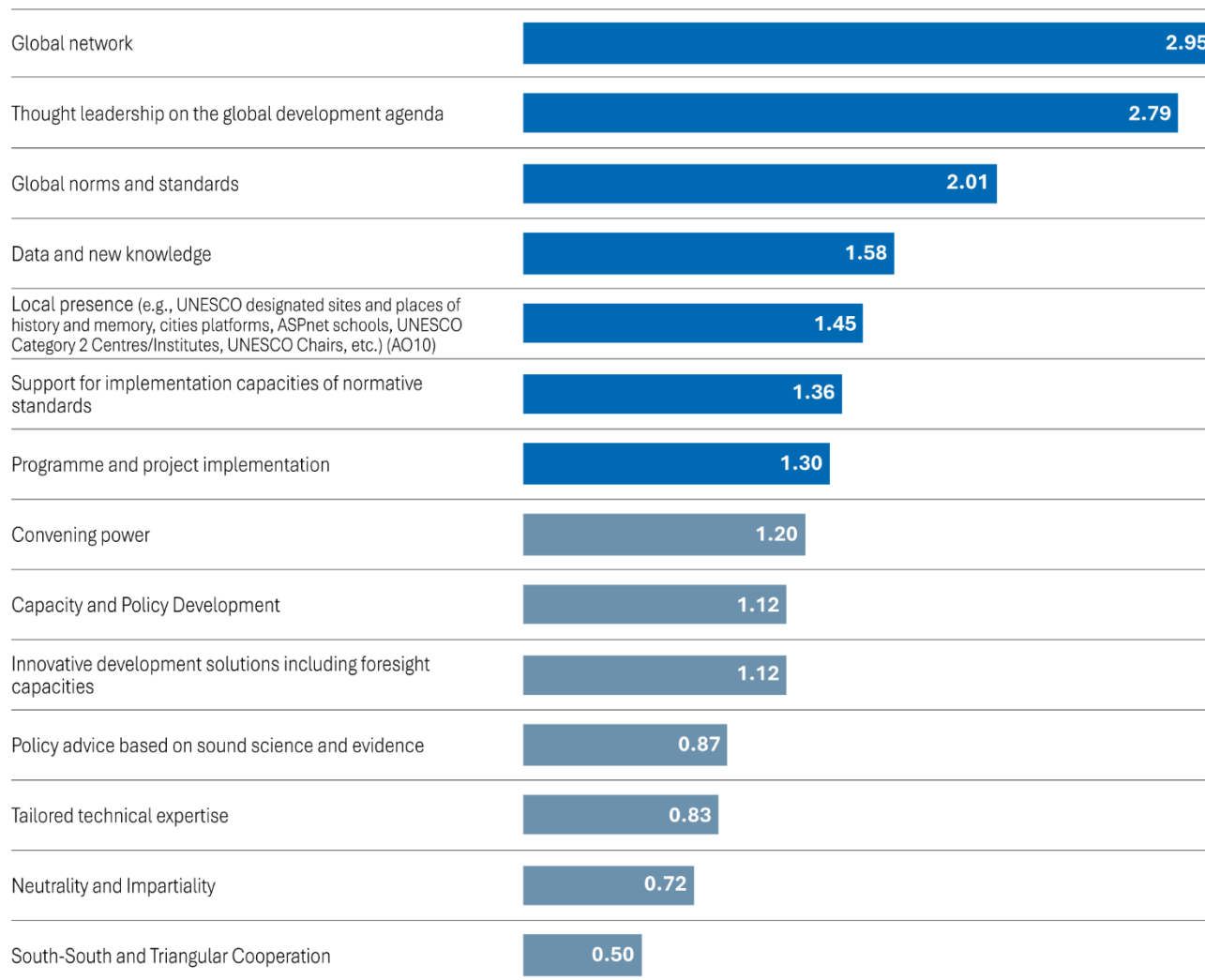
*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

265. Respondents' perception of the comparative advantage of the Organization and its action was positive overall, with over the majority of NGOs agreeing with almost all of the abovementioned statement. UNESCO's unique brand and visibility through its local presence ranked first, with 84% of respondents very strongly or strongly agreeing. In their comments, while respondents largely acknowledged UNESCO's strong and unique brand identity, particularly through its World Heritage sites, they indicated that its overall visibility and public awareness of its broader activities remain limited and could be significantly improved. This was followed by the recognition of UNESCO's essential combination of diverse expertise needed to tackle the complex challenges of our time (81% very strongly or strongly), UNESCO's function of clearing house under which the Organization's data, analysis and flagship reports provide unique sources for knowledge (80% very strongly or strongly) and its role as coordinator for SDG 4, thereby enabling global cooperation among education stakeholders and advocates (79% very strongly or strongly). UNESCO's specific functions of global standard-setting adding value to multilateral cooperation and of laboratory of ideas were also highly ranked by respondents.

266. In contrast, respondents' perception of the Organization's ability to translate global standards into concrete actions on the ground was less acknowledged, which can be paired with the need to further develop UNESCO's operational action on the ground as highlighted by several NGOs. The perception of the Organization's ability to enable the participation of countries in global and regional multistakeholder coalitions and alliances was more mixed (47% of NGOs very strongly or strongly agreed with the statement, 36% somewhat agreed, 3% of NGOs disagreed with the statement, and 14% answered "Don't know"). Further, in the additional comments, several NGOs raised the issue

of the limited visibility of UNESCO's activities beyond the field of World Heritage and recommended increasing communication efforts, including with the media.

1.5 According to your organization's working experience with UNESCO, what are the main values that UNESCO brings to countries? *[Please select your top 6 choices]*⁵



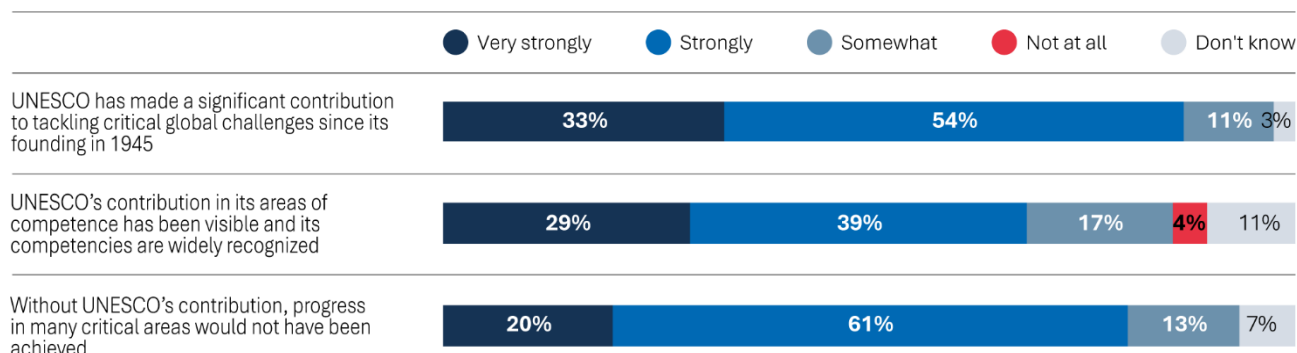
*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

267. A salient top-two ranking emanates from respondents' answers on the main value UNESCO brings to countries, i.e. its provision of a global network and its thought leadership on the global development agenda. Three values also rank high, i.e., the provision of global norms and standards, of data and new knowledge, and the Organization's local presence (e.g., UNESCO designated sites and places of history and memory, cities platforms, ASPnet schools, UNESCO category 2 centres and institutes, UNESCO Chairs, etc.), while the remaining answers are somewhat equally distributed in terms of ranking. South-South triangular cooperation, neutrality and impartiality, and tailored technical expertise were considered more limited in terms of what UNESCO brings to countries.

⁵ Respondents had to rank 6 out of 14 statements from 1 to 6. For the analysis, points were assigned based on their rankings: 6 points for rank 1, 5 points for rank 2, down to 1 point for rank 6, and 0 points for unranked statements. To determine the average points for each statement, we sum the points received by each statement across all participants and then divide by the number of respondents who ranked that statement. The statements are then ranked based on their average points, with higher average points indicating a better ranking. This method accurately reflects the collective preferences of respondents by considering both the rankings and the number of respondents who ranked each statement.

DEMONSTRABLE RESULTS

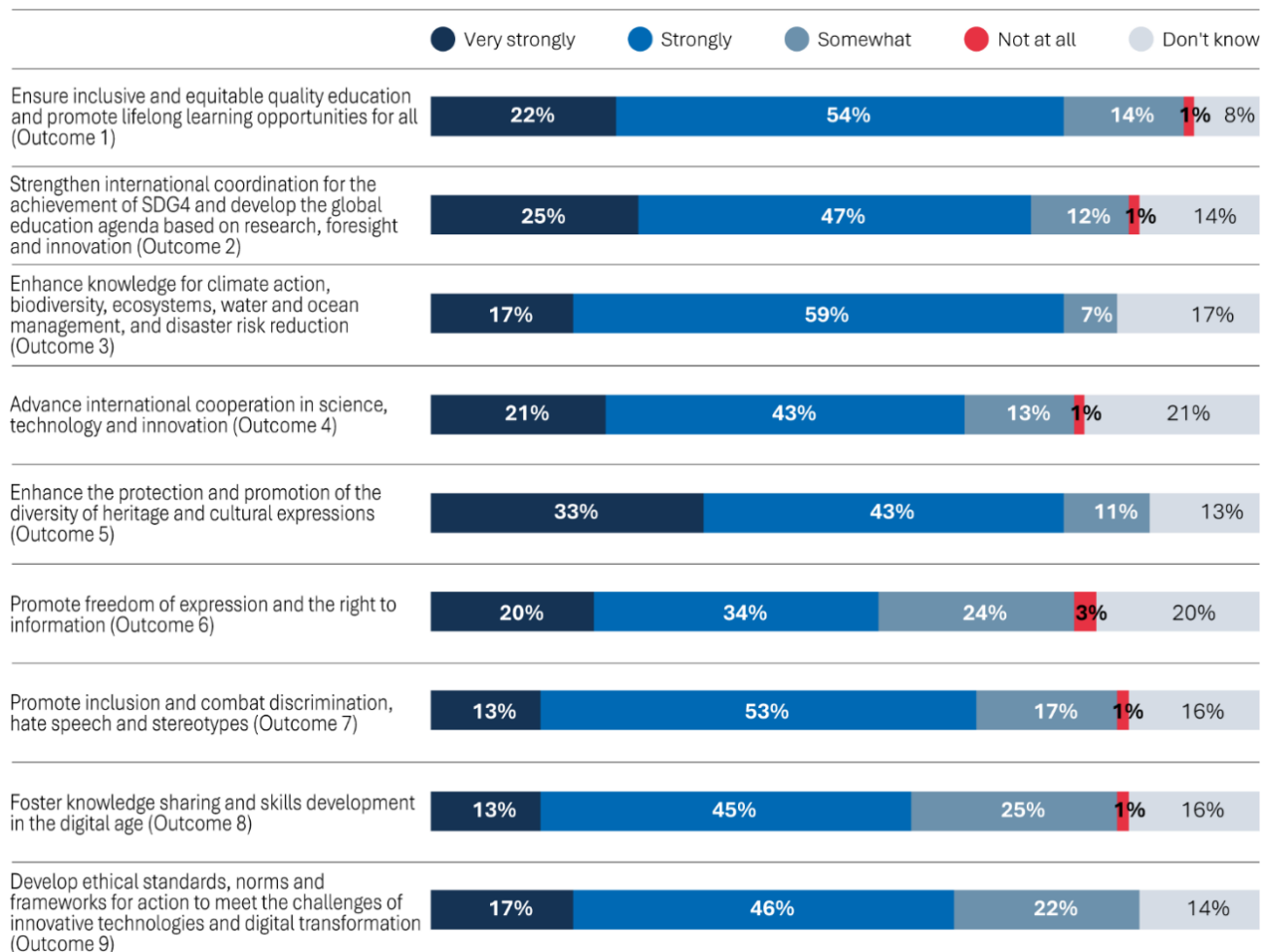
1.6 How much does your organization agree with the following statements?



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

268. All three statements received a strong majority of positive responses, indicating a generally high regard for UNESCO's contributions and impact. Respondents' perception of UNESCO's demonstrable results is rather equal across the three areas related to tackling global challenges, visibility and recognition, and UNESCO's crucial contribution to overall progress, with UNESCO's contribution to tackling critical global challenges being designated by NGOs as the most significant demonstrable result achieved by the Organization (87% of respondents very strongly or strongly agreed). In addition, NGOs expressed the opinion that UNESCO achieved the most results through core functions and approaches, such as being a convener of global dialogue and its ability to adapt quickly to emerging technologies and new scientific fields, as well as in particular areas such as education. NGOs also provided pointers for increased results, which included, *inter alia*, enhancing UNESCO's focus on priority areas and groups such as crisis and conflict settings and youth engagement, and increasing the Organization's communication efforts to make its actions more visible.

1.7 According to your organization's experience, in which of these areas (relating to UNESCO's outcomes as adopted in its Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 – 41 C/4) have you observed the most significant positive contributions from UNESCO?

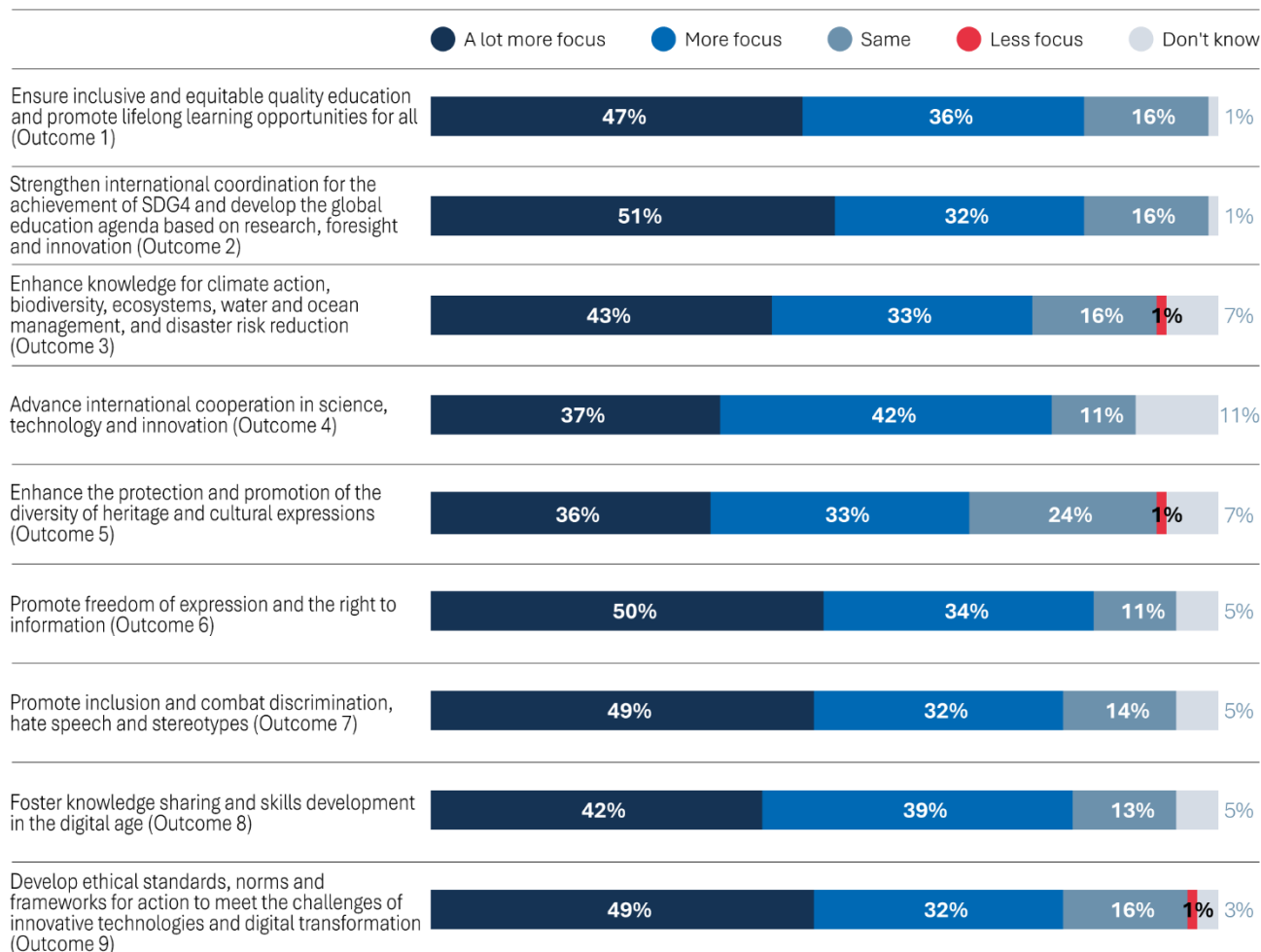


*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

269. Respondents' perception of UNESCO's contributions towards its outcomes is positive overall, with the majority of NGOs considering that the Organization has positively contributed to progress towards these focus areas. The most significant and positive contributions made by the Organization were linked to Outcome 1 (Inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning), Outcome 3 (Enhanced knowledge for climate action, biodiversity, ecosystems, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction) and Outcome 5 (Protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions), with 76% of NGOs expressing the opinion that UNESCO has very strongly or strongly contributed towards these three outcomes. Outcome 2 (SDG 4 and development of the global education agenda) also scored high, with 72% of respondents reflecting the belief that UNESCO has very strongly or strongly contributed towards this area.

270. While respondents evaluated the Organization's contribution towards the remaining outcomes as positive overall, a substantial proportion indicated lacking knowledge about UNESCO's progress in relation to Outcome 6 (Freedom of expression and the right to information) and Outcome 4 (Advancing international cooperation in science, technology and innovation), with 20% and 21% of NGOs providing "Don't know" answers, respectively. This may relate to both the fact that these topics do not represent the main areas of interest and fields of competence of the NGOs responding to the survey and to a need to increase communication targeted to NGOs to enhance the visibility and general knowledge of UNESCO's actions in these areas.

1.8 Building on the previous question and given the challenges the world is facing, in your organization's opinion how much should UNESCO increase its programmatic focus in the following outcome areas?



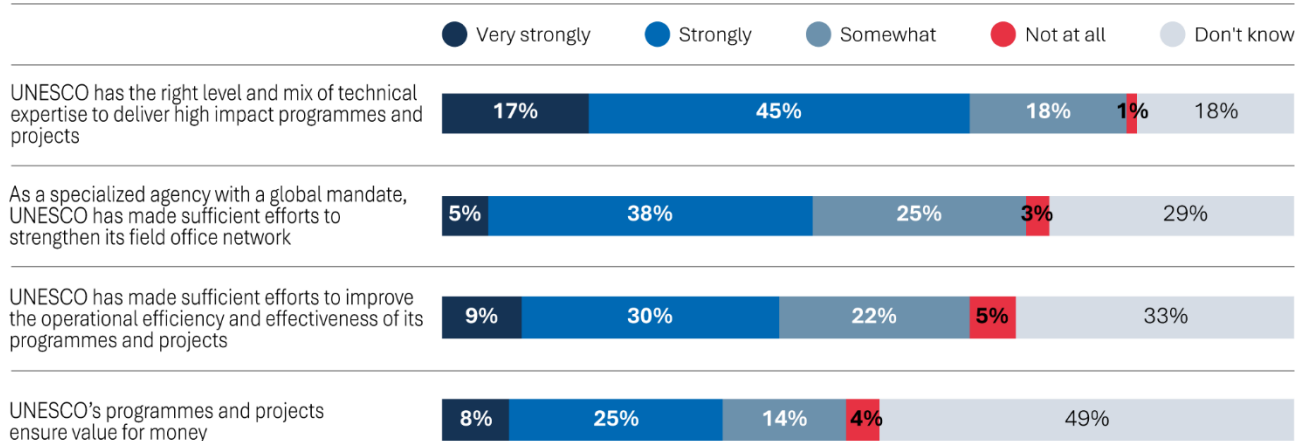
*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

271. As a general trend, NGOs expressed the opinion that UNESCO should increase its programmatic focus in two of three of the outcomes which they assessed to have benefited the most from the Organization's contribution (Outcomes 1 and 2). The importance of increasing the focus on education (Outcome 1), such as on digital literacy, inclusive education and health education, was also reiterated several times in the additional comments. NGO respondents also expressed the view that programmatic focus should be increased on the outcomes which were deemed to have benefitted less from UNESCO's contribution under Question 1.7, i.e. Outcomes 4, 6, 7 (Promoting inclusion and combating discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes), 8 (Knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age) and 9 (Ethical standards, norms and frameworks to meet the challenges of innovative technologies and digital transformation). Further, as for the previous question, Outcome 4 registered the most "Don't know" answers. Numerous respondents also highlighted the need to further focus on mainstreaming gender equality across all outcomes in the additional comments.

SECTION 2: PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

CAPACITY TO DELIVER

2.1 In your organization's opinion how strongly do the following statements describe UNESCO?

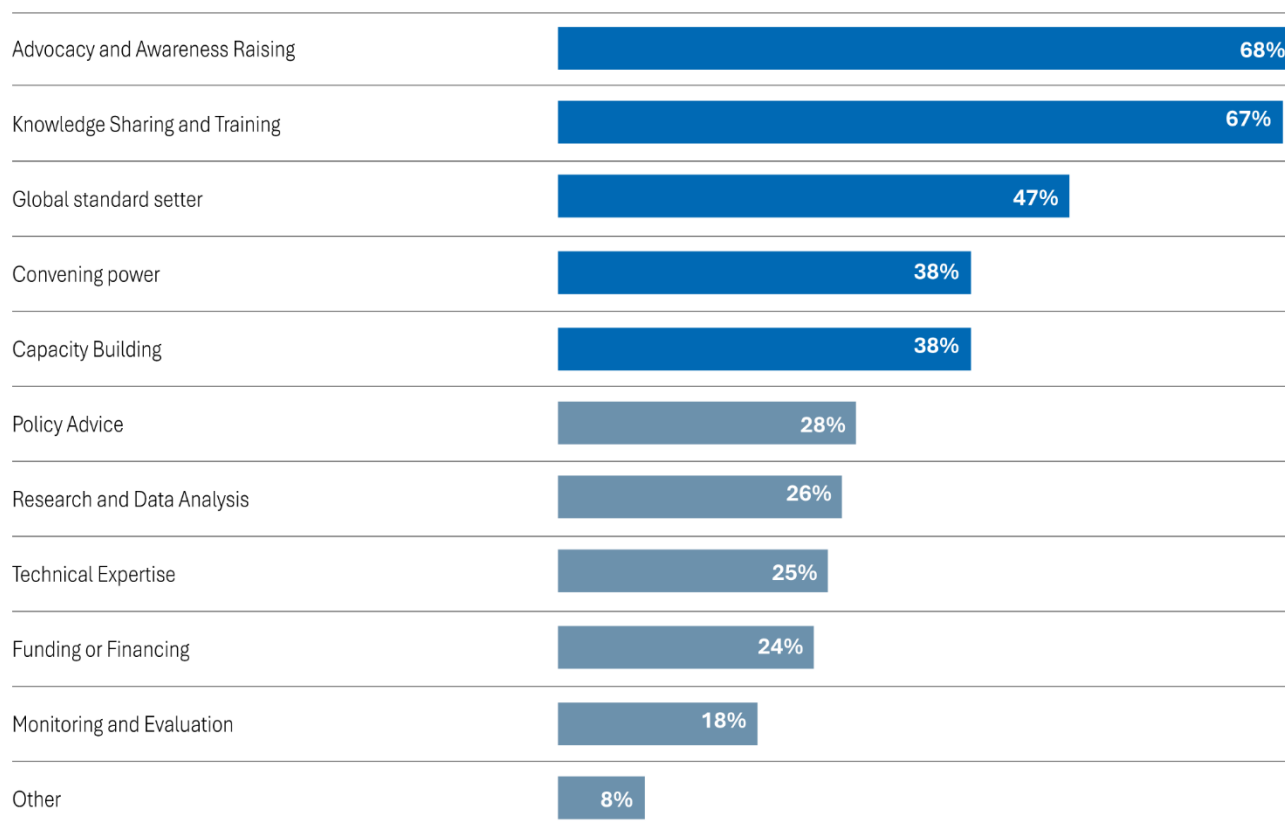


*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

272. Respondents' perception of the Organization's capacity to deliver on its mandate is positive overall. A majority of respondents considered that UNESCO has the right level and mix of technical expertise to deliver high-impact programmes and projects (62% of respondents very strongly or strongly agreed) and perceptions were positive yet more nuanced regarding the remaining three statements related to strengthening the Organization's field network, improving its operational efficiency and effectiveness, and ensuring value for money. In addition, all four statements registered significant proportions of "Don't know" answers, particularly as regards the statement concerning value for money (49% of "Don't know" responses). The high rate of "Don't know" answers across all areas, and especially on the "value for money" statement, may result from the fact that reporting on the efficiency and effectiveness of UNESCO's capacity to deliver is mainly addressed to Member States and might not always be communicated to outside partners in an adapted manner.

PARTNERSHIPS

2.2 When your organization collaborates with UNESCO, what are the main contributions that UNESCO offers in the partnership? *[Please select your top 4 choices]*

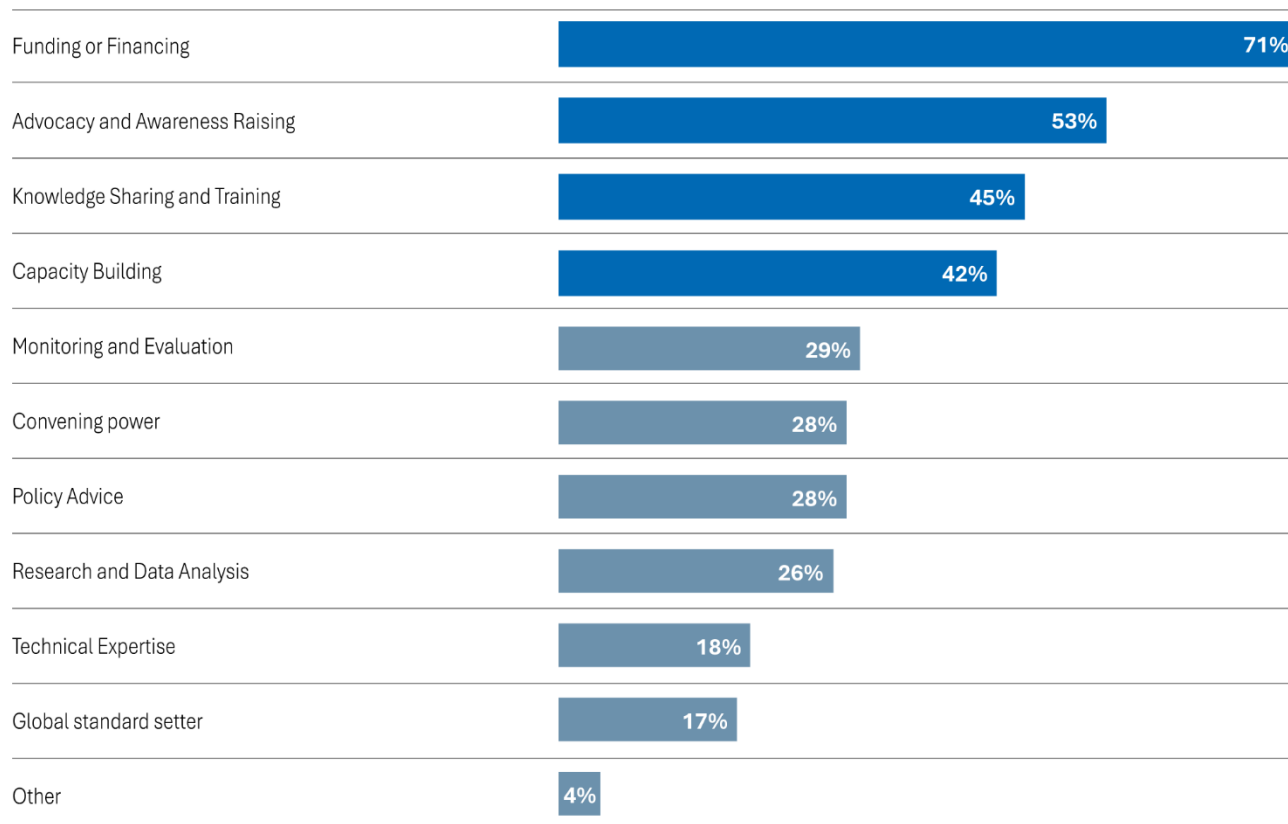


*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

273. In the area of cooperation with civil society, NGO respondents strongly highlighted two main contributions offered by UNESCO: advocacy and awareness-raising (68%) and knowledge sharing and training (67%). Other main types of contributions relate to UNESCO's core functions such as global standard-setting (47%) as well as capacity building and its convening power ability (38% respectively).

274. Respondents ranked lower other types of contribution such as policy advice (28%), which may be perceived as an area that is usually targeted at governments and policymakers rather than NGOs, research and data analysis (26%), technical expertise (25%), funding and financing (24%), and monitoring and evaluation (18%). Some of these low rankings may be explained, on the one hand, by the sample of respondent NGOs not effectively reflecting the range of fields of competence and types of collaboration with UNESCO present within the network of official NGO partners and, on the other hand, by NGO respondents maybe being providers of these types of contributions to the Organization rather than recipients of UNESCO's contribution in the areas highlighted above. The former would be in line with some of the preliminary findings of the ongoing thematic mapping of NGOs (see document 220 EX/31), which suggest that activities that require substantial knowledge resources, such as research and policy development, are less frequent among NGO partners.

2.3 Building on the previous question, please specify the main areas of contribution where your organization would appreciate a more proactive engagement from UNESCO.
[Please select your top 4 choices]



275. Most responses (71%) highlighted the need for UNESCO to have a more proactive engagement towards funding or financing, a contribution which was considered lacking by respondents in the previous question. However, concerning other areas that respondents ranked high, these generally relate to areas in which they consider that UNESCO already strongly contributes when partnering with NGOs. These areas of contribution are advocacy and awareness raising (53%), knowledge sharing and training (45%), and capacity building (42%). The two types of contribution which had been considered significant by NGOs which have collaboration ties with the Organization, i.e. UNESCO's global standard-setting role and its convening power, scored lower (17% and 28%, respectively) in terms of expecting a more proactive engagement, which may indicate that UNESCO's engagement in these areas is already adequate. The remaining areas of contribution, i.e. monitoring and evaluation, policy advice, research and data analysis and technical expertise, were not designated by respondents as being UNESCO's main contributions when partnering with NGOs and ranked lower in terms of requiring increased engagement, which may confirm that these do not constitute specific areas in which responding NGOs seek collaboration with UNESCO and/or the fact that respondents may actually be the providers of expertise and services to the Organization in the areas rather than the recipients of UNESCO's contribution, as per question 2.2.

2.4 What are some specific enablers and constraints of your organization's collaboration with UNESCO?⁶

276. NGO respondents highlighted four main enablers and four principal constraints in collaborating with UNESCO. These are classified by the number of occurrences of said issues or trends among NGO responses.

277. The main enablers identified by NGOs are as follows: (1) **Sharing a common vision and a common set of priorities** within UNESCO's fields of competence, which enables fruitful collaboration; (2) **global collaboration frameworks** established by UNESCO in different fields as part of its global mandate and action; (3) **trust and relationships** established between the Secretariat and NGOs through communications and the undertaking of joint activities; and (4) the availability of **funding** provided to NGOs. In addition, a number of respondents highlighted the added value of UNESCO's global presence and international recognition, which enables them to access global opportunities such as partaking in global networks (and processes).

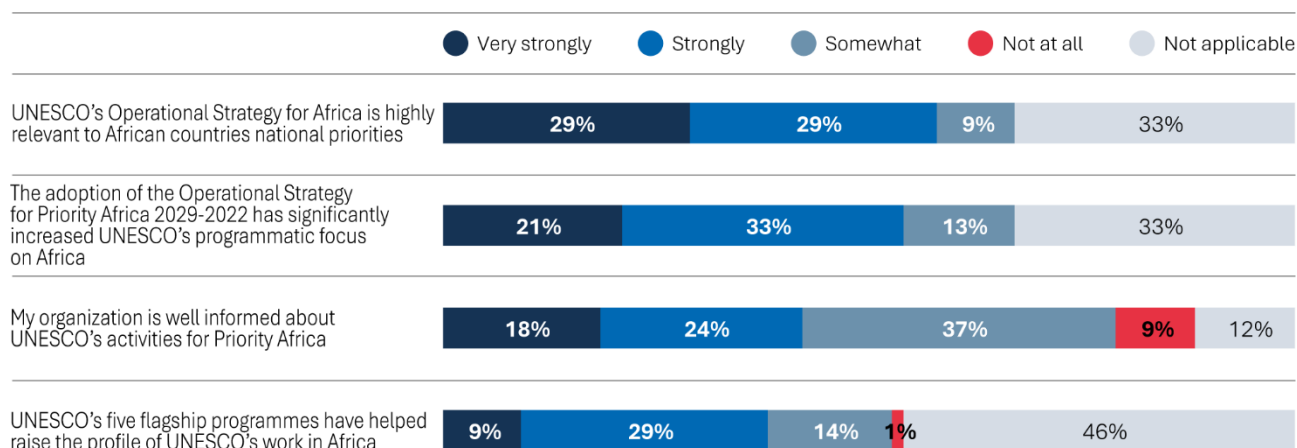
278. Regarding the four main constraints highlighted by respondents, these are as follows: (1) The **lack of funding and/or of joint funding mechanisms**, which was highlighted as an enabler by some NGOs and a constraint; (2) the **bureaucratic nature** of UNESCO, which causes delays in communications with NGOs and in planning and implementing activities; (3) **lack of joint planning and joint work**; and (4) **Lack of communication to and involvement of NGOs** in UNESCO's activities (events, projects, etc.). In addition, a number of respondents highlighted constraints linked to insufficient monitoring and evaluation of cooperation relationships between the Organization and NGOs and a lack of common vision hindering further collaboration.

⁶ Instructions: List up to 3 enablers and 3 constraints (1,000 characters max without space). Examples of enablers can include common vision, complementary comparative advantages of individual entities, common set of priorities, country context and national needs, trust and relationships among colleagues, existence of global collaboration frameworks, joint funding mechanisms or strategies, performance evaluation indicators. Examples of constraints can include bureaucratic issues, differing programmatic approaches, lack of communication, lack of common vision or understanding of what the collaboration should achieve, lack of joint planning, lack of indicators to measure collaboration, lack of joint funding mechanisms, differences in capacity, limited monitoring and evaluation, variations in programming cycles.

SECTION 3: GLOBAL PRIORITIES, PRIORITY GROUPS AND CRISIS PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Africa, Gender, SIDS, Youth

3.1 UNESCO has adopted Africa as a Global Priority and designed in 2021 its [Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029](#). Please indicate how much does your organization agree with the following statements:



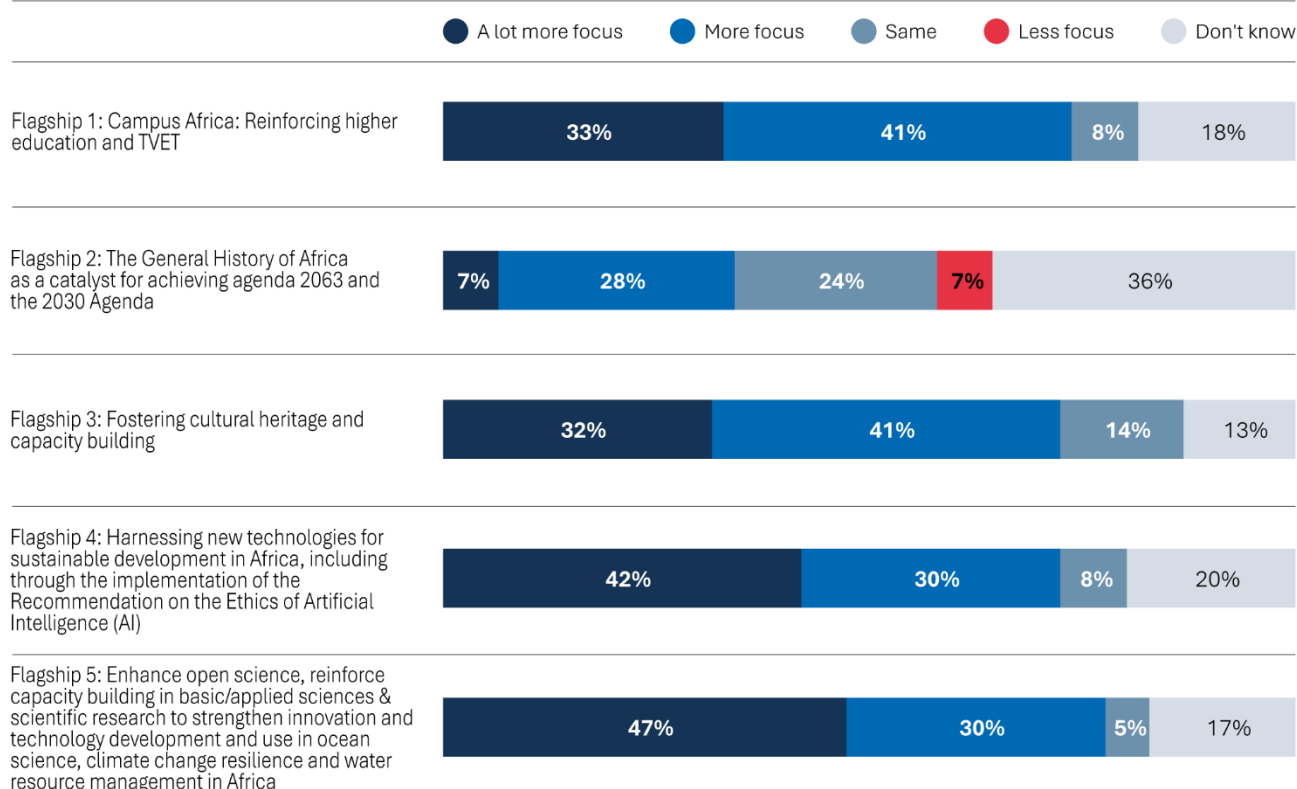
*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

279. Respondents' perception of the Organization's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029 as a strategic framework guiding UNESCO's actions for the African continent is positive overall. NGOs' perception of the Strategy's relevance to the national priorities of African countries tends to be rather positive (58% very strongly or strongly agreed with the related statement). The Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029 also appears to be perceived as having significantly increased UNESCO's programmatic focus on Africa, with 54% of respondents strongly or very strongly agreeing with this statement. This suggests that the strategy has been effective in directing more attention and resources towards the continent.

280. While positive, responses are more nuanced regarding NGOs' knowledge of UNESCO's activities for Priority Africa (42% replied that they very strongly or strongly agreed with this statement, 37% that they somewhat agreed, 12% stated that they did not know and 9% stated that they did not agree at all). Similarly, concerning the Strategy's five flagships contributing to raising the profile of UNESCO's work in Africa, responses were rather equally distributed between respondents who agreed with this statement (38% very strongly or strongly agreed and 14% somewhat agreed) and those who stated that they had no knowledge on this area (46%), while 1% did not agree at all.

281. Overall, the large number of "Don't know" answers tend to indicate that respondents are not fully cognizant of UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029 and its corresponding activities falling under the scope of Priority Africa, an assessment which several NGOs confirmed in the additional comments.

3.2 According to your organization's opinion, please indicate where UNESCO should further increase its focus in the next programming period (based on the five [Flagship programmes](#) contained in the Operational Strategy for Global Priority Africa 2022-2029):



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

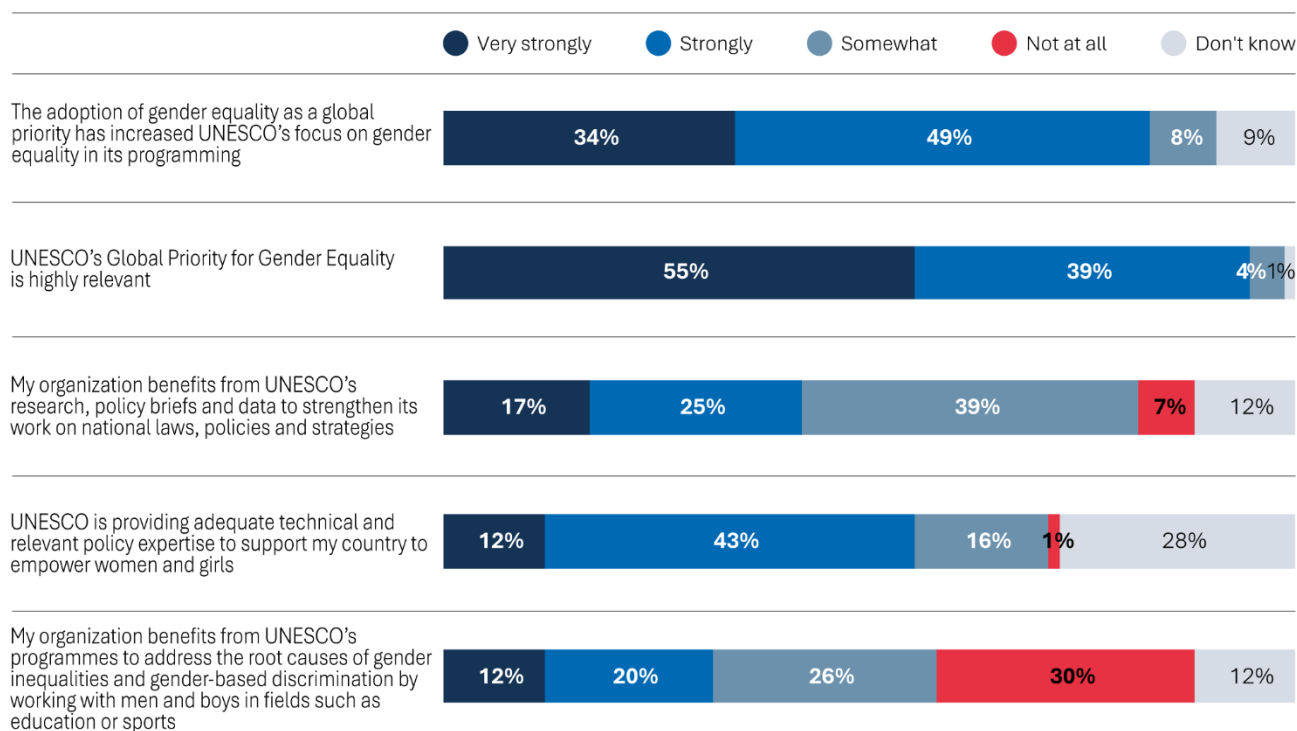
282. In line with the new emerging issues or trends that UNESCO should prioritize highlighted by NGOs under question 1.3, e.g., education, artificial intelligence, climate change, and culture, respondents gave the following ranking of the flagships on which UNESCO should further increase its focus:

- (1) **Flagship 5 focusing on open science, capacity building in sciences and scientific research**, with emphasis on climate change resilience, ocean science and water resource management (77% of respondents very strongly or strongly agreed with this statement);
- (2) **Flagship 1: Campus Africa**, which is dedicated to reinforcing and improving the quality of higher education and technical and vocational education and training systems across the African continent (74% of respondents very strongly or strongly agreed);
- (3) **Flagship 3 focusing on fostering cultural heritage and capacity building** (73% very strongly or strongly agreed);
- (4) **Flagship 4 dedicated to harnessing new technologies for sustainable development** in Africa with a focus on the Recommendation on the Ethics of AI (72% very strongly or strongly agreed);
- (5) **Flagship 2: General History of Africa** (35% very strongly or strongly agreed with this proposal and 24% somewhat agreed), which corresponds to the ranking level given by Member States. On the latter, a large proportion of NGOs (36%) responded that they lacked knowledge regarding this issue, which may point to a need to increase targeted

communication to NGOs regarding the General History of Africa programme, while 7% expressed the opinion that UNESCO should not increase its focus on this flagship.

283. Further, and in line with the emphasis on inclusion, gender equality and human rights, NGOs recommended UNESCO to pursue under Q1.3, a number of respondents suggested improving the focus on gender equality across all flagship programmes, and on women's economic empowerment in particular.

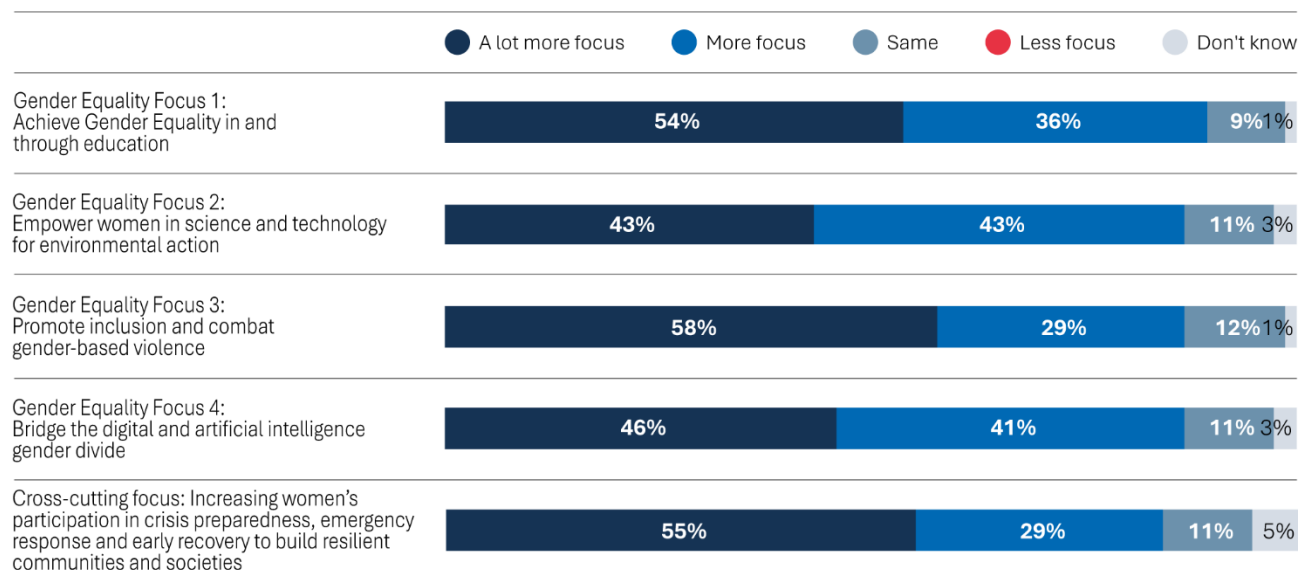
3.3 Gender Equality is a global priority for UNESCO. Please indicate how much does your organization agree with the following statements:



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

284. A vast majority of respondents considered the Organization's Global Priority Gender Equality to be highly relevant (94% of NGOs very strongly or strongly agreed with this statement) and deemed positive its contribution towards increasing UNESCO's focus on gender equality across its programmes (83% of NGOs very strongly or strongly agreed). Results were more mixed regarding UNESCO's external action on gender equality in terms of benefitting countries and NGOs. While UNESCO's provision of technical and policy expertise to countries is recognized (55% of respondents very strongly or strongly agreed), it also constitutes the area in which NGOs stated they lacked knowledge the most to provide an assessment (28% of "Don't know" answers), which may be explained by the fact that, as for Question 2.2 on Partnerships, governments and policy-makers, rather than NGOs, are considered as the main target recipients of UNESCO's policy advice. Further, regarding contributions made by UNESCO to the work of NGOs themselves in this area, respondents' perception of the Organization's research, policy briefs and data to strengthen national legislations remained positive yet scored lower than the three abovementioned areas (while 42% very strongly or strongly agreed with this statement, 39% somewhat agreed, 7% did not agree at all, and 12% provided "Don't know" answers). In terms of UNESCO's programmes directly benefitting NGOs in addressing the root causes of gender inequalities and gender-based discrimination, this area received more mixed responses by NGOs as, while 32% very strongly or strongly agreed with this statement and 20% somewhat agreed, 30% stated they did not agree at all and 12% that they lacked knowledge on this topic, which may result from a lack of targeted communication from UNESCO to NGOs, as stated by few respondents in the additional comments.

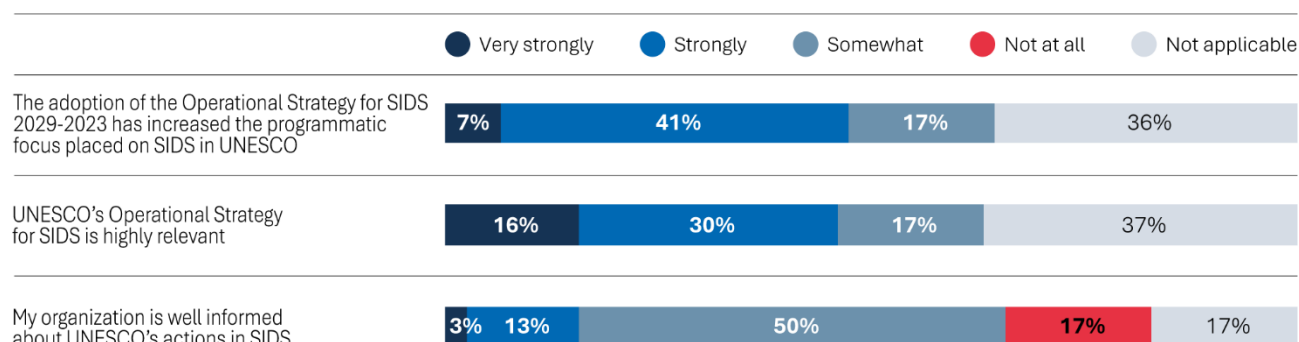
3.4 According to your organization's opinion, please indicate where UNESCO should further increase its focus in the next planning period:



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

285. Respondents considered that UNESCO should increase its focus on gender equality across all five focus areas in a rather equal manner. In parallel, respondents suggested an added emphasis on focus 3 (Promoting inclusion and combatting gender-based violence) according to 58% of NGOs which suggested a lot more focus on this area; on gender equality as a cross-cutting focus on women's participation in crisis preparedness, emergency response and early recovery for 55% of respondents who suggested a lot more focus; and on focus 1 aimed at achieving gender equality in and through education in line with 54% of NGOs which suggested a lot more focus. The emphasis on the latter was reiterated numerous times by organizations in the additional comments, and particularly the two-pronged approach to focusing on women's and girls' education and education as a springboard to fostering greater gender equality in society.

3.5 UNESCO has designated small island developing States (SIDS) as a Priority Group and adopted in November 2023 its [Operational strategy for SIDS](#). Please indicate how much does your organization agree with the following statements:



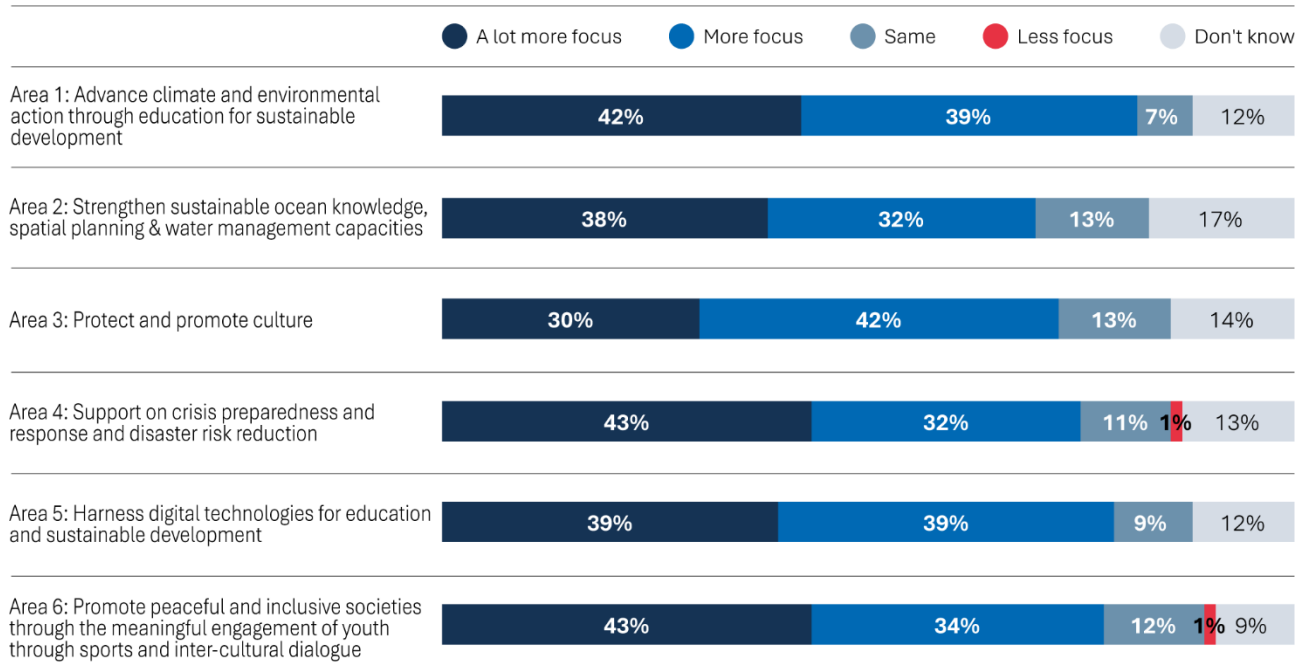
*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

286. Respondents' perception of the Organization's Operational Strategy for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) was rather equal across all three statements. While NGOs tended to perceive the Strategy to be rather relevant (46% very strongly or strongly agreed with the statement) and considered that the document contributed to increasing UNESCO's programmatic focus on SIDS on the whole (46% very strongly or strongly agreed with the statement), UNESCO's external communication to NGOs on SIDS was perceived to be more mixed (16% very strongly or strongly

agreed with the statement, the majority of NGOs somewhat agreed with the statement while 17% did not agree at all).

287. Further, the rate of “Don’t know” answers is high across all three statements. This may be explained by the recent adoption of the Strategy (in 2023) and by the fact that, as stated in the additional comments, SIDS do not necessarily represent a major programmatic focus of the NGOs that responded, as focus on SIDS is, to date, a niche area among the network of official NGO partners.

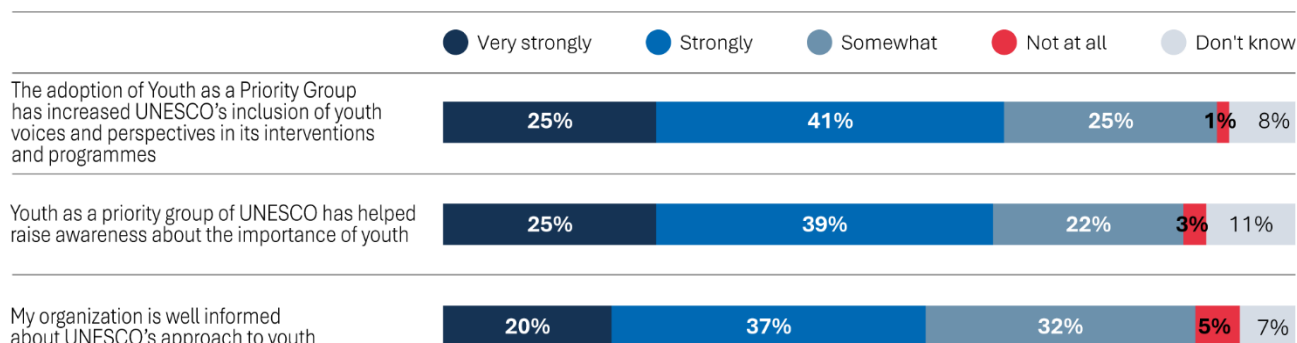
3.6 In November 2023, UNESCO’s General Conference adopted six SIDS Accelerator Programmes (see below). According to your organization’s opinion, please indicate where UNESCO should further increase its focus in the next planning period:



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

288. Respondents considered that UNESCO should increase its focus on SIDS across all six Accelerator Programmes in a rather equal manner, with emphasis on Area 1 (Education for sustainable development to advance climate and environmental action), Area 5 (Harnessing digital technologies for education and sustainable development), and Area 6 (Meaningfully engaging youth through sports and inter-cultural dialogue to promote peaceful and inclusion societies). The alignment between the suggestion to increase more focus on Areas 1 and 5 and the recommended emphasis on education and harnessing digital technologies by NGOs under Q1.3 is also to be noted. In the additional comments, respondents further highlighted to a need to increase focus on gender equality across all Accelerator Programmes, including in light of the specific impact of climate change on women and girls.

3.7 Youth is a priority group for UNESCO. Please indicate how much does your organization agree with the following statements:

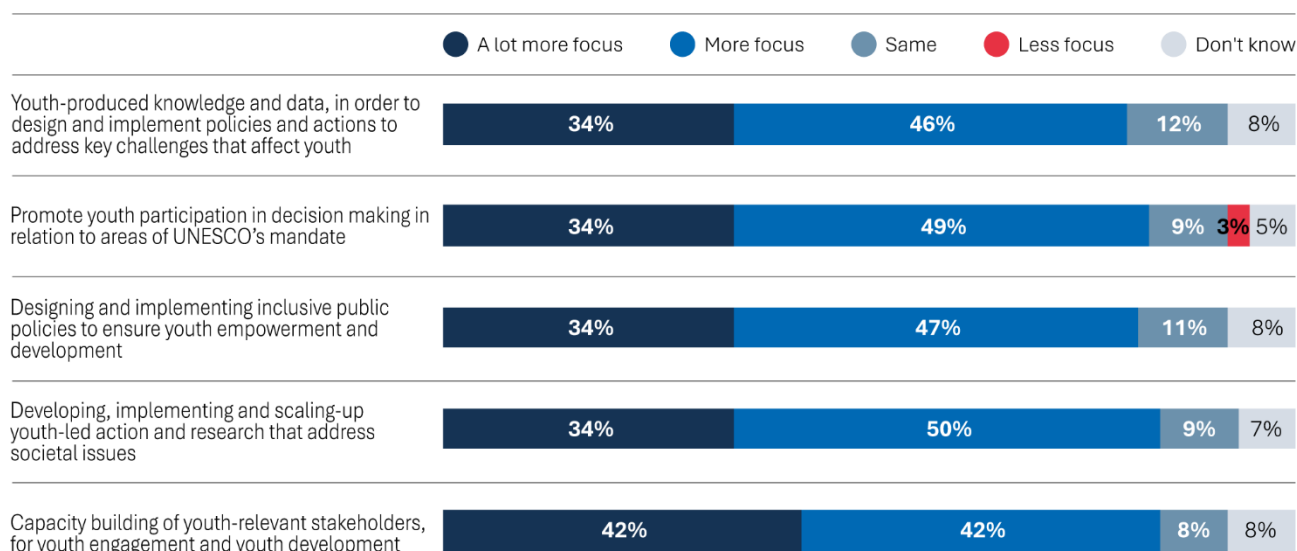


*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

289. Respondents highly rated their perception of the relevance of Youth as a Priority Group (66% very strongly or strongly agreed with the corresponding statement), of its contribution to raising awareness about the importance of youth (64% very strongly or strongly agreed with the corresponding statement) and of their own knowledge about UNESCO's approach to youth (57% very strongly or strongly agreed with the corresponding statement).

290. However, similarly to responses related to Global Priorities Africa and Gender Equality and to SIDS as a Priority Group, NGOs' knowledge about the Organization's approach to youth, partly as a result of UNESCO's external communications, scored lower in respondents' perception. On the latter, some NGOs referred to a need to increase youth involvement in UNESCO's activities while others specified that they have a more limited understanding of UNESCO's initiatives on youth since they partner with Programme Sectors other than the Sector for Social and Human Sciences, which coordinates Youth as a Priority Group.

3.8 According to your organization's opinion, please indicate where UNESCO should further increase its focus in the next planning period:

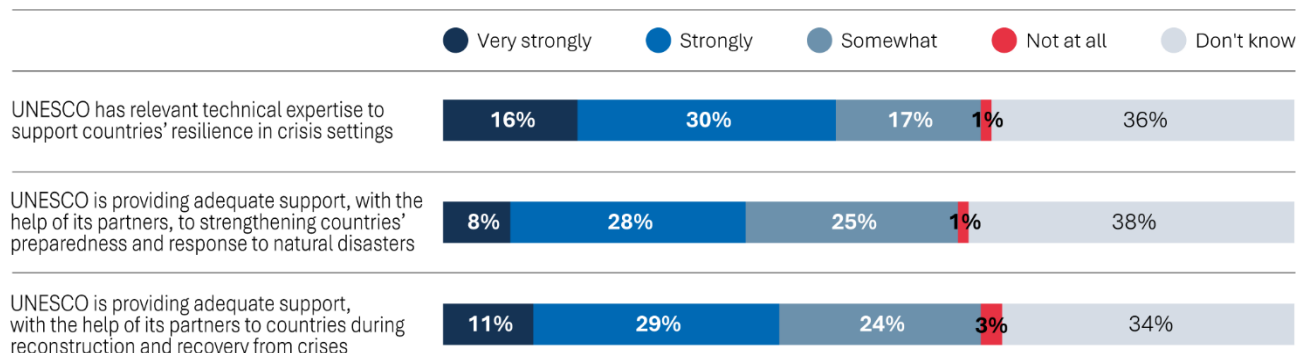


*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

291. Respondents considered that UNESCO should increase its focus on youth-related activities across all five areas in a rather equal manner. In their additional comments, NGOs stressed the importance of empowering youth through, *inter alia*, education, leadership and intergenerational dialogue as a first step to involving young people in decision-making processes, and emphasized

the need to engage vulnerable youth groups, including youth in situations of poverty, across all UNESCO's programmes and initiatives.

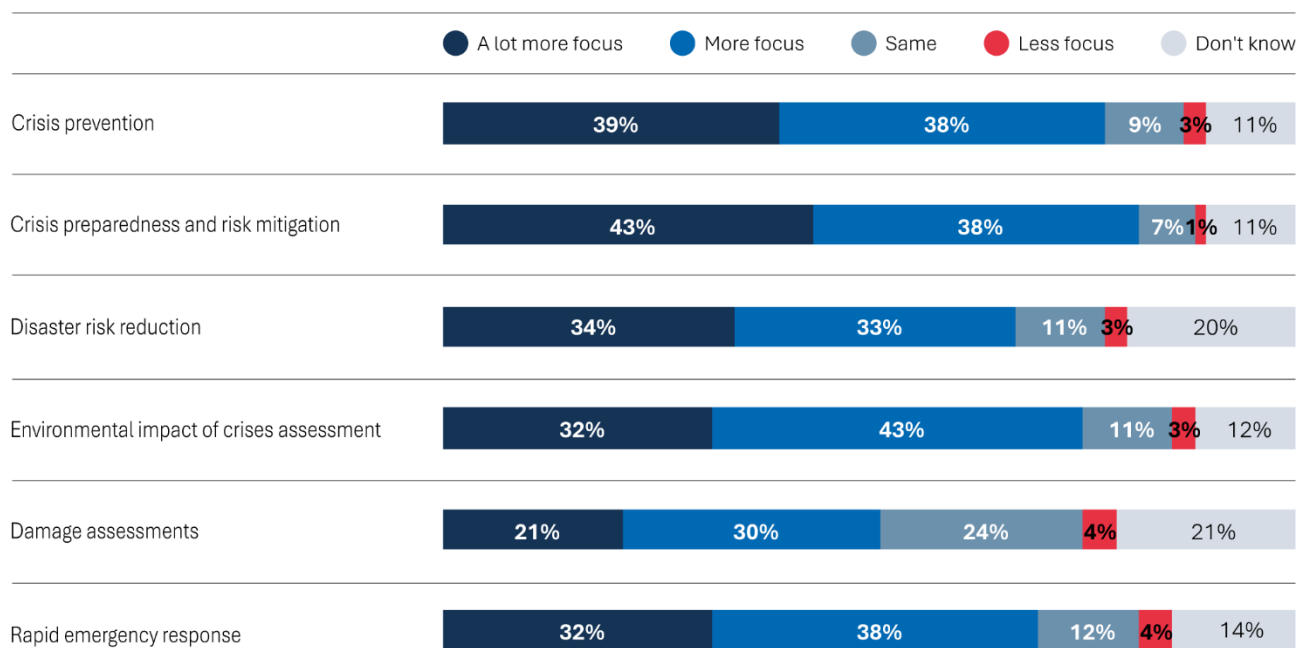
3.9 Member States adopted crisis preparedness and response as a cross-cutting area for UNESCO's actions in its [Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 \(41 C/4\)](#). How much does your organization agree with the following statements?



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

292. Respondents' perception of the adequate provision of support and technical expertise to countries by UNESCO in the context of crisis and disaster preparedness and response, resilience, and reconstruction and recovery is mixed overall, with certain nuances depending on the statement. While a majority of respondents very strongly, strongly or somewhat agreed with all three statements, it is worth noting that only the third area received a near-majority of "very strongly" and "strongly" endorsements by respondents. In parallel, NGOs provided a high rate of "Don't know" answers across all three areas. Limited targeted communication to NGOs on UNESCO's action towards crisis preparedness and response may partly account for this lack of knowledge, as indicated by respondents in the additional comments, together with the fact that all abovementioned activities relate to providing support and expertise to countries rather than to organizations themselves. Further, respondents highlighted the need for mainstreaming gender equality across all three areas.

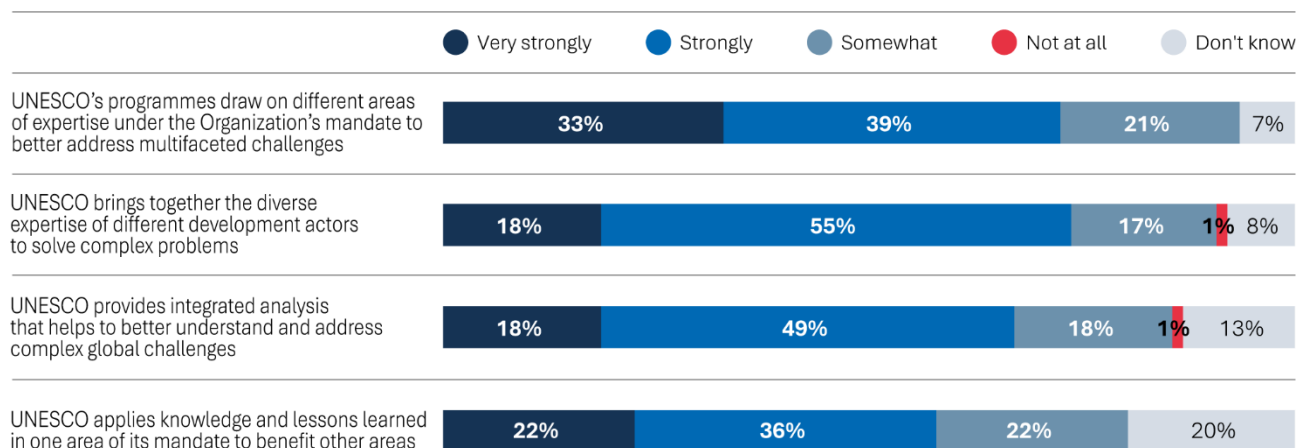
3.10 In your organization's opinion, are there any areas in which UNESCO should increase its focus before, during and after crises in the next programming period?



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

293. There is a strong consensus that UNESCO should increase its focus across all areas of response to crisis, with particular emphasis on the second area (Crisis preparedness and risk mitigation) with 43% of NGOs suggesting a lot more focus and 38% suggesting more focus on this area. On the third area (Disaster risk reduction) and the fifth area (Damage assessments), respondents provided a substantial number of “Don’t know” answers (20% and 21%, respectively), which may indicate a certain lack of knowledge of respondents on these topics, as they may not be specialized in the sub-fields of crisis and disaster preparedness and response.

3.11 Today’s challenges are complex and multifaced and require innovative solutions that integrate different areas of expertise. Please indicate how much does your organization agree with the following statements:



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

294. The data shows generally strong positive perception towards UNESCO’s methods and effectiveness, with the majority of respondents very strongly or strongly agreeing with all statements. NGO respondents nonetheless highlighted UNESCO’s multidisciplinary expertise (72% very strongly or strongly agreed with this statement) and its convening power (73% very strongly or strongly agreed with this statement) as the Organization’s strongest and most innovative ways to contribute to addressing today’s challenges. Regarding the fourth area dedicated to utilizing knowledge and lessons learned, a significant proportion (20%) of respondents provided “Don’t know” answers, which is in line with responses to previous questions (e.g., questions 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 on partnerships and UNESCO’s capacity to deliver) stating that NGOs naturally have limited knowledge of UNESCO’s internal processes in general, such as its monitoring and evaluation practices, or consider the latter to be insufficient.

3.12 Optional: Do you have any additional comments concerning the future Programme and Budget for 2026-2029?

295. NGO respondents provided a number of pointers to guide the development of the Organization’s Programme and Budget for 2026-2029. These are classified by the number of occurrences of a given item mentioned by respondents and are as follows:

- ✓ Respondents highlighted the need to **increase cooperation between UNESCO and NGOs** as a top priority to enable the realization of Agenda 2030 through collaborating on joint initiatives and activities and leveraging NGOs’ expertise and competencies which are currently not fully harnessed by the Organization.
- ✓ The importance for UNESCO to **increase funding opportunities** available to NGOs, including through joint funding mechanisms, was highlighted as crucial by the respondents.
- ✓ **Specific thematic areas emerge as critical focus areas** in which UNESCO should strengthen its action and continue implementing activities. These include education (such

as, *inter alia*, climate education, ICTs in education, and increasing women's access to and participation in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics), gender equality, artificial intelligence, culture and the arts, the topic of individuals' lack of legal existence, youth, and poverty eradication.

- ✓ NGOs emphasized the need for UNESCO to **increase its external communication efforts** towards civil society organizations and the general public, such as on its flagship programmes and initiatives, and on progress achieved on the Organization's outcomes.

C. Analysis of the replies of intergovernmental organizations

296. A total of seven intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) replied to the questionnaire. Considering the small number of respondents, the summary of replies will concentrate on main trends without including statistical data that would not shed light on the analysis and would not be representative of the views of a wider range of organizations with regard to UNESCO.

SECTION 1 – PARTNERSHIP WITH UNESCO

297. All respondents have collaborated with UNESCO in the past four years, both at Headquarters level and regional or country level. Three of them also collaborated with UNESCO in the framework of specific United Nations inter-agency cooperation mechanisms.

298. According to the participating IGOs, UNESCO's strength in partnerships lies primarily in knowledge sharing and training, policy advice and advocacy and awareness-raising contributions, with technical expertise also playing a significant role (with at least four out of seven respondents highlighting these areas). UNESCO's contribution in research and data analysis, monitoring and evaluation and capacity building is also acknowledged by three out of the seven respondents. One respondent also indicated other areas where UNESCO brings a valuable contribution: coordinating and implementing the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), as co-Chair of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, the Inter-Agency Working Group on Artificial Intelligence as well as of the Joint Task Force on Smart Cable systems, and its work on digital learning/skills or the mobile learning week.

299. Most respondents highlighted the need for UNESCO to play a more proactive role in knowledge sharing and training and to upgrade its funding capabilities. Similarly, participating IGOs value UNESCO's technical and research capabilities and wish for more involvement in these areas as demonstrated by the consideration as second-highest priorities (five out of seven respondents) among the proposed statements.

300. To the question about the specific enablers and constraints characterizing the collaboration with UNESCO, the following common enablers and constraints were highlighted:

- Common enablers:
 - Existence of global collaboration frameworks
 - Shared vision or priorities and complementary comparative advantage
 - Country context and national needs
 - Regional expertise and leadership on education
- Common constraints:
 - Lack of joint funding mechanisms
 - Bureaucratic issues
 - Lack of joint planning
 - Differing programmatic approaches

SECTION 2 – UNESCO’S RELEVANCE AND IMPACT

RELEVANCE

301. Almost all the respondents reaffirmed the continued relevance of UNESCO’s mandate since its founding and acknowledged that UNESCO’s programme and expertise are critical for accelerating progress towards the SDGs (six out of seven respondents) as well as UNESCO’s ability to tailor its programme to national contexts and needs (five respondents). One IGO highlighted the particular relevance of UNESCO’s mandate in education as an enabler of all human rights. UNESCO’s technical expertise is also regarded as relevant for countries including in crisis settings and to address current and future challenges.

302. UNESCO’s global coordination role for SDG 4, its support to governments in developing national statistical data and reporting capacities and its role in facilitating multilateral agreements on global norms and standards are highly valued by respondents as best ways for UNESCO to accelerate progress towards SDGs. Similarly, UNESCO’s capacity in knowledge sharing and exchange of information, its leveraging of South-South and triangular cooperation to help source knowledge, expertise and finance and its ability to provide expertise towards the six key transitions⁷ identified as transformative entry points for the overall achievement of the 17 SDGs are also seen as significant by respondents.

303. As regards the main and/or emerging areas for future inter-agency collaboration, respondents highlighted a diverse range of collaborative opportunities in various areas, reflecting the multifaceted nature of UNESCO’s work and its relevance to various global challenges. Education was frequently mentioned as an area for cooperation with emphasis on its role in sustainable development, human rights, and conflict prevention. Additionally, artificial intelligence and technology was also frequently cited with a focus on its ethical implications. There was also a clear trend towards leveraging technology and data for development and policy-making.

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

304. As regards comparative advantage, according to the participating IGOs, UNESCO’s strong assets appear to be its role as laboratory of ideas and its unique knowledge resources (data, analysis and flagship reports) and its networks and partnerships modalities that provide distinctive visibility (five out of seven respondents). UNESCO’s coordination role for SDG 4 and its support to countries for translating global standards into concrete actions are also both highly valued (four out of seven respondents). UNESCO’s standard-setting role and expertise in addressing complex challenges showed more mixed responses.

305. According to their working experience with UNESCO, among the 14 areas proposed, the respondents considered the production of data and new knowledge as the most valuable contribution from UNESCO to its intergovernmental partners. Capacity and policy development, global network and global norms and standards are also seen as essential contributions. UNESCO’s role in South-South and triangular cooperation and leadership on the global development agenda are also considered as areas of strength. The substantial gap between the top four areas and the rest suggests that the participating organizations particularly value UNESCO’s intellectual and convener and coordinator role.

306. The IGOs were then asked about their perception of UNESCO’s contributions in its nine areas of focus as contained in its Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4). According to their experience, the participating IGOs highlighted Outcomes 5 (Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions) and 8 (Foster knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age) as the areas where UNESCO has the strongest contribution. They

⁷ The six key transitions include: (1) food systems; (2) energy access and affordability; (3) digital connectivity; (4) education; (5) jobs and social protection; and (6) climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

were followed by the two education-related outcomes (Outcome 1 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, and 2 on strengthening international coordination for the achievement of SDG 4) and the work done on advancing international cooperation in science, technology and innovation (Outcome 4). The Organization's contribution on the four other areas received mixed appreciations from the participating IGOs, which is challenging to analyse considering the small number of respondents.

307. Building on the previous question, the participating IGOs clearly indicated that UNESCO should increase its focus on three main areas (six respondents out of seven): Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (Outcome 1), Advance international cooperation in science, technology and innovation (Outcome 4), and Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes (Outcome 7). Fostering knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age (Outcome 8) is also seen as an area where efforts should be intensified.

SECTION 3 – GLOBAL PRIORITIES, PRIORITY GROUPS AND CRISIS PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Africa

308. When asked about UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029, the majority of respondents recognized the relevance of the strategy in relation to countries' priorities. However, there appears to be moderate familiarity among the respondents regarding UNESCO's activities for Priority Africa and the impact of the strategy and its flagship programmes on increasing attention directed towards the continent.

309. In relation to primary areas for inter-agency collaboration, Flagship 4 and Flagship 5 received the highest ratings among the respondents, indicating that enhancing open science and environmental resilience, as well as harnessing new technologies for sustainable development are the most prominent areas for inter-agency collaboration. Interest for collaboration in higher education and scientific research initiatives (Flagship 1 – Campus Africa) was also highlighted.

Gender Equality

310. UNESCO's Global Priority Gender Equality is considered highly relevant by a majority of respondents (six out of seven) and there's significant appreciation for UNESCO's research and policy contributions. As regards UNESCO's practical implementation and programmatic impact, the perceptions are more mixed as organizations may not have the adequate level of information about UNESCO's concrete implementation mechanisms of this Global Priority.

311. According to the responses from the participating IGOs, while all areas of gender equality focus were rated highly, three key areas stood out for inter-agency collaboration: achieving gender equality in and through education, empowering women in science and technology for environmental action and bridging the digital and artificial intelligence gender divide.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

312. The responses concerning UNESCO's Operational Strategy for SIDS, adopted in 2023, reveal that while most respondents acknowledge the importance of the priority, they have limited knowledge of the strategy itself.

313. Respondents identified three main areas for inter-agency collaboration in SIDS: Area 1: Advance climate and environmental action through education for sustainable development action, Area 4: Support on crisis preparedness and response and disaster risk reduction and Area 5: Harness digital technologies for education and sustainable development.

Youth

314. While a majority of respondents (four out of seven) acknowledged the relevance of having adopted Youth as a priority group and indicated that they were well informed about UNESCO's approach to youth, participating IGOs seem less aware about its impact as regards awareness raising on the importance of youth.

315. There's a strong emphasis among respondents on capacity building of youth-relevant stakeholders, which has been highlighted as the highest priority area. Two other top priorities, youth-produced knowledge and inclusive public policies design and implementation, are of equal interest for respondents. While direct youth involvement in decision-making is important, it's slightly less prioritized.

UNESCO's action for crisis preparedness and response

316. When asked about UNESCO's action for crisis preparedness and response as a cross-cutting area, the respondents generally expressed a positive view of UNESCO's contribution. They particularly highlighted UNESCO's effectiveness in strengthening the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding nexus and its role in providing adequate support to strengthen countries' preparedness and response to natural disasters.

317. According to the participating IGOs, the main areas for inter-agency collaboration in the context of crisis are: crisis preparedness and risk mitigation, environmental impact of crisis assessment, and disaster risk reduction.

Intersectorality

318. The majority of respondents (five out of seven) acknowledged UNESCO's capacity to draw on different areas of expertise under its mandate to better address multifaceted challenges and to bring together the diverse expertise of different development actors to solve complex problems. It suggests a good recognition of UNESCO for its interdisciplinary approach and ability to convene diverse stakeholders. In the same vein, four out of the seven respondents considered that UNESCO provides at different degrees an integrated analysis and foresight that help to better understand and address complex global challenges.

Future UNESCO Programme and Budget

319. Only two organizations provided optional comments on the future UNESCO Programme and Budget for 2026-2029. One called on UNESCO to develop more strategic, multi-faceted partnerships with financial institutions such as multilateral development banks, highlighting the potential for deeper collaboration that goes beyond mere financial support. The other stressed the need for UNESCO to reinforce its focus on media freedom and safety of journalists as critical for civic space and in support of democratic institutions and on the integration of human rights education into formal and informal education systems.

ANNEX**LIST OF RESPONDENTS****MEMBER STATES AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS****MEMBER STATES**

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Andorra | 36. Ghana | 73. Russian Federation |
| 2. Argentina | 37. Grenada | 74. Saint Vincent and
the Grenadines |
| 3. Armenia | 38. Guinea | 75. Saudi Arabia |
| 4. Australia | 39. Guinea-Bissau | 76. Senegal |
| 5. Austria | 40. Honduras | 77. Seychelles |
| 6. Azerbaijan | 41. Hungary | 78. Sierra Leone |
| 7. Bahamas | 42. Iceland | 79. Slovakia |
| 8. Bahrain | 43. Iran (Islamic
Republic of) | 80. Slovenia |
| 9. Bangladesh | 44. Iraq | 81. South Africa |
| 10. Benin | 45. Japan | 82. Spain |
| 11. Bhutan | 46. Jordan | 83. Sri Lanka |
| 12. Bosnia and
Herzegovina | 47. Kenya | 84. Sweden |
| 13. Brazil | 48. Kuwait | 85. Switzerland |
| 14. Bulgaria | 49. Kyrgyzstan | 86. Syrian Arab
Republic |
| 15. Burkina Faso | 50. Latvia | 87. Thailand |
| 16. Burundi | 51. Lebanon | 88. Timor-Leste |
| 17. Cameroon | 52. Liberia | 89. Togo |
| 18. Canada | 53. Lithuania | 90. Tonga |
| 19. China | 54. Malawi | 91. Türkiye |
| 20. Colombia | 55. Malaysia | 92. Turkmenistan |
| 21. Congo | 56. Maldives | 93. Ukraine |
| 22. Cook Islands | 57. Marshall Islands | 94. United Arab
Emirates |
| 23. Côte d'Ivoire | 58. Mexico | 95. United Kingdom of
Great Britain and
Northern Ireland |
| 24. Croatia | 59. Mongolia | 96. United Republic of
Tanzania |
| 25. Czechia | 60. Morocco | 97. United States of
America |
| 26. Democratic
Republic of the
Congo | 61. Namibia | 98. Uruguay |
| 27. Ecuador | 62. New Zealand | 99. Uzbekistan |
| 28. Egypt | 63. Nigeria | 100. Zambia |
| 29. El Salvador | 64. Norway | 101. Zimbabwe |
| 30. Equatorial Guinea | 65. Oman | |
| 31. Estonia | 66. Peru | |
| 32. Finland | 67. Philippines | |
| 33. France | 68. Poland | |
| 34. Gambia | 69. Portugal | |
| 35. Germany | 70. Qatar | |
| | 71. Republic of Korea | |
| | 72. Romania | |

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

1. Aruba
2. Curaçao

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN OFFICIAL PARTNERSHIP AND FOUNDATIONS AND SIMILAR INSTITUTIONS IN OFFICIAL RELATIONS WITH UNESCO

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN OFFICIAL PARTNERSHIP

1. International Academy of Ceramics (IAC/AIC)
2. International Association of Charities (IAC/AIC)
3. Akhil Bharatiya Sanskrutik Sangh (ABSS)
4. Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW)
5. International Catholic Society for Girls (ACISJF)
6. International Association of Art (IAA/AIAP)
7. International Association of Art Critics (AICA)
8. International Association of Educators for Peace (AIEP/IAEP)
9. International Association of University Professors and Lecturers (IAUPL)
10. Association Internationale Les Amis des Musées d'Égypte (AME)
11. World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS/AMGE)
12. Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)
13. Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA)
14. B'nai B'rith International (BBI)
15. Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE)
16. Catholic International Education Office (CIEO/OIEC)
17. International Catholic Centre for Cooperation with UNESCO (CCIC)
18. CISV International (CISV)
19. International Dance Council (CID)
20. International Council of Women (ICW)
21. International Council of Organizations for Folklore Festivals and Folk Art (CIOFF)
22. International Council for Film, Television and Audiovisual Communication (ICFT/CICT)
23. Latin American Social Sciences Council (CLACSO)
24. Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI)
25. European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)
26. European Network on Cultural Management and Policy (ENCATC)
27. European Students' Union (ESU)
28. Federation for European Education (FEDE)
29. World Federation of Scientific Workers (WFSW / FMTS)
30. International Federation of Associations of the Elderly (FIAPA)
31. Graduate Women International (GWI)
32. HOPE 87
33. Arab Institute of Human Rights (AIHR / IADH)
34. Institute of Afro-European Culture in Paris (ICAEP)
35. International Alliance of Women (IAW/AIF)
36. International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)
37. International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE)
38. International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH/AIH)
39. International Consortium of Research Staff Associations (ICoRSA)
40. International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE)
41. International Council of Associations for Science Education (ICASE)
42. International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE/CIEPSS)
43. International Council on Education for Teaching (ICET)
44. International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW International)
45. International Mediterranean Women's Forum (FIDM)
46. International Music Council (IMC / CIM)
47. International Network of Women Engineers and Scientists (INWES)
48. International School Psychology Association (ISPA)
49. International Union of Architects (IUA/ UIA)
50. Make Mothers Matter (MMM)

51. ATD Fourth World – International Movement (ATD)
52. National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC)
53. New Humanity
54. Pax Christi International
55. Rotary International
56. Russian Peace Foundation (RPF)
57. Service Civil International (SCI)
58. SIL International (SIL)
59. Soroptimist International
60. Sulitest – Sustainability Literacy Test (SULITEST)
61. Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS / CCSVI)
62. V.I. Vernadsky Nongovernmental Ecological Foundation (Vernadsky Foundation)
63. Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)
64. Union internationale de la marionnette (UNIMA)
65. International Union of Scientific and Technical Associations and Organizations (UATI)
66. Universal Esperanto Association (UEA)
67. International Radio and Television Union (URTI)
68. World Confederation of Education (COMED)
69. World Martial Arts Union (WoMAU)
70. World Organization for Early Childhood Education (OMEP)
71. Zonta International (ZI)

FOUNDATIONS

1. Centre for International Heritage Activities (CIE)
2. King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity
"Mawhiba" (MAWHIBA)
3. South Asia Foundation (SAF)
4. YOU Foundation - Education for Children in Need (YOU)

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO)
2. Arab Bureau of Education for Gulf States (ABEGS)
3. International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
4. Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)
5. Joint Institute for Nuclear Research (JINR)
6. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
7. United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC)