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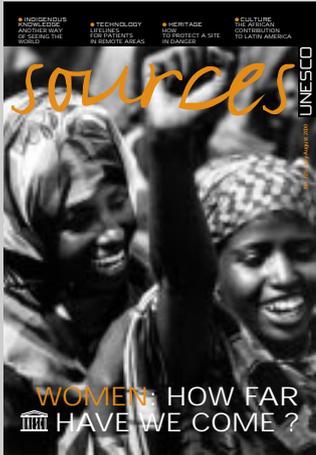
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WOMEN: HOW FAR
HAVE WE COME ?





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CLOSING THE GENDER GAP



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Paris, June 17: the World March of Women en route for UN headquarters in New York

● “The term ‘discrimination against women’ shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”

Article 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

Women around the world have undoubtedly made great strides in recent decades, yet their full participation in society is still a distant goal. Too many persistent and worrying disparities remain between women and men. As noted at the recent World Education Forum in Dakar, the gender gap in primary and secondary school enrolment is narrowing but is still far from being closed. Some 60% of the world’s out-of-school children are girls and two thirds of the 876 million adult illiterates are women. More women than ever before are now working outside the home yet, everywhere, they still earn less than men, and are still responsible for most unpaid work such as maintaining the family home, cooking meals and childcare. Only 9% of the world’s government ministers are women. Women also remain uniquely vulnerable in matters of health and sexuality. Trafficking and sexual exploitation of them has become an eight billion dollar-a-year industry, reports the International Migration Organisation. Yet consider this. A recent World Bank study points out that if the countries of the Middle East, South Asia and Africa could reduce the gender gap in education alone, their annual economic growth would increase by 0.5 to 0.9 percentage points. And it is now general knowledge that an educated woman

will have a healthier, better educated family...

Accelerating the changes that have begun to take place requires the participation of both men and women at the highest political level. With this in mind, the Beijing + 5 meeting in New York (see p. 4), should perhaps be the last “women’s conference.” Future

If the Middle East, South Asia and Africa could reduce the gender gap in education, their annual economic growth would increase by 0.5 to 0.9 percentage points

forums should bring both sexes together to discuss, instead, gender equality and partnership. At the same time governments should legislate against the unacceptable, such as human rights violations against women, domestic or sexual violence, and to improve women’s representation and working conditions.

But above all, women’s and girls’ education must be made a priority and gender equality issues built into school curricula. This is the aim of the United Nations Ten Year Initiative for Girl’s Education, announced by Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the Dakar forum, and strongly backed by UNESCO. The benefits will be shared by all. As Kofi Annan pointed out in New York, education is both the entry point into the global economy and the best defence against its pitfalls. There is no development strategy more beneficial to society as a whole, he said, than one involving women as central players.

Sue Williams



► WOMEN

There is progress: but there could be more. Five years after the Beijing women's conference, the international community gathers to take stock of women's rights

HOW FAR HAVE WE COME?

In 1995, delegates from 189 countries gathered in the corridors of a conference centre in downtown Beijing, while 40,000 women's activists from every region of the world met an hour outside the city, in a place called Huairou. Delegates spent long hours negotiating, and the activists talked, sang, and shared life histories under acres of white tents set up as shelters against frequent rain.

Two weeks later, the UN Fourth World Conference on Women produced the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA). It was the most comprehensive set of commitments toward women's equality ever made by governments, with a vast array of recommendations on economics, health, education, violence, political participation, human rights, the environment and even the portrayal of women in the media.

In June 2000 (5th to 9th), at a special session of the UN General Assembly in New York, delegates and activists convened again to review progress made on these issues, and to map out future initiatives (see box). One of the key words at this meeting, known as Beijing +5, was implementation.

"It is extremely hard to hold governments accountable for their actions," says Noeleen Heyzer, the executive director of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). "We have created a process that has allowed the issues to emerge. Now we need to ensure implementation, because that is what is going to make the difference."

Beijing was not the first time that the world's governments, under the auspices of the UN, agreed to do something about the discrimination and lack of opportunities faced by the vast majority of women everywhere. Three other world conferences were held between 1975 and 1985. In 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women began requiring signatories to guarantee women's human rights.

Beijing, however, may be remembered as the point in history when women took over the international process, injected it with their own ideas and experiences, and then converted it back into local and national actions.



© JOAN ROSS FRANKSON/WEDO

Since 1995, women have used the ideas and energy of Beijing to push for progress on many fronts, often through new activist networks that span nations and regions.

They have convinced an increasing number of countries to adopt affirmative action programmes that raise the number of women in politics. There are currently seven women heads of state in the world, three heads of government, and 145 countries have governments which include women. Activists in South Africa have lobbied their government to break down its budget along gender lines so that women can see who really benefits. In Thailand, the government has prohibited sexual discrimination in its new constitution. In Egypt, women worked with religious leaders to repeal a law allowing rapists who marry their victims to avoid jail.

Beijing also encouraged the UN system to place greater emphasis on gender. It called on UNIFEM, in collaboration with other UN agencies, to establish the world's first funding mechanism devoted to supporting projects to eliminate violence against women. Gender units have been set up in many agencies to foster women's contributions to shaping critical policies and decisions. At UNESCO, women have been considered one

Participants in New York feared a "Beijing -5", but were proved wrong

PASSPORT FOR EQUALITY

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the foremost international instrument to guarantee equality between men and women. UNESCO has released the Convention's text in the form of a Passport for Equality, translated variously into French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Swahili and soon into Russian, Arabic, Chinese, Hindu and Urdu.

●●● For a copy of the booklet: fax +33 1 45 68 55 58. E-mail: l.ruprecht@unesco.org



Beijing may be remembered as the point in history when women took over the international process

of four priority groups since November 1995. After the Beijing conference, the Unit for the Promotion of the Status of Women and Gender Equality, was created, headed by Breda Pavlic, and the Agenda for Gender Equality was established, which was integrated into UNESCO's medium term strategy for 1996-2000, aiming to bring gender into all of its programmes and activities, especially in the media, peace, and science and technology education (see following articles).

"We are advocating a new partnership between women and men, girls and boys, based on mutual respect, dialogue and the sharing of public and private responsibilities," states the Agenda. "A society locks up half its potential when it marginalises women."

Despite the achievements of the past five years, however, women worldwide continue to lag behind in almost all areas. According to the UN Division for the Advancement of Women, women's employment has increased in all regions, but their wages are 50 to 80 % of men's. Up to 80 % of refugees fleeing from conflict are women and children. Two-thirds of the world's illiterates are female, and nearly half the women in the developing world do not meet minimum daily caloric intakes.

A long list of obstacles stands in the way of addressing these issues. Discriminatory attitudes and traditional stereotypes deprive women of resources and continue to prop up

the laws, policies and institutions that prevent greater progress. For example, so-called "honour killings" which are committed by men who feel that women have damaged their reputation, are still legal in three countries.

The Beijing platform itself, while overflowing with good ideas, is not a legally binding document. Governments follow its recommendations because it serves their interests to do so, or because women marshal the political power to persuade them to change laws and policies.

While women's movements and networks have grown in strength and in their ability to work with national and international political systems, they must also contend with a growing set of new challenges.

Angela King, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, notes that Beijing+5 provided an opportunity to contend with these challenges and identify new ways to translate the commitments to gender equality made by governments and the UN system. "Women at the grassroots have successfully used the PFA to advance their rights," she says. "Now governments need to eliminate the gap between what they have agreed to do and the reality of their actions."

*Gretchen Sidhu
New York*

Beijing + 5 : yes to women in politics, no to violence

In June, 2,000 delegates from 180 countries convened at UN headquarters in New York to evaluate progress made since Beijing, agree on obstacles, and map out a set of actions to continue implementing the Platform for Action. Known as Beijing+5, the process was not an easy one, and was marred by disputes over resources and national sovereignty between developing and industrial countries that had been stirred up by last year's WTO meeting in Seattle.

Protracted debates took place over commitments to reproductive health and rights, with the Holy See and a handful of conservative Muslim and Catholic countries attempting to roll back gains women had made on these issues in previous international agreements. While there was no agreement to endorse the use of abortion, the most controversial of the reproductive health issues, the "Final Outcome Document" (a 44 page document on further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action) did at least agree to refer back to progressive commitments made in the Beijing platform.



Women demonstrating for the right to vote in Kuwait

For the first time, governments agreed to address the problems of "honour killings" and forced marriages. There was consensus on the need to enact stronger laws against all forms of domestic violence, and to set up quota systems to bring more women

into politics. The agreement also contains a reference to the right to inheritance, which has long been disputed by Muslim countries. Developing country delegates also registered satisfaction with statements linking structural adjustment, debt, and trade, and recognising the often negative impact of globalization on women. "This is one of the strongest stands taken so far by the UN on this issue, and it will set a precedent for future negotiations," says Jocelyn Dow, a delegate from Guyana. Some activists expressed disappointment with the Final Outcome Document due to the lack of progress on the issue of sexual orientation. The 2000-plus advocates who attended the meeting, however, said it meant more to them than the final consensus document. Nosa Aladeselu of the African Women Empowerment Centre in Benin City said she founded her NGO after the Beijing meeting, and had come back to renew her inspiration. "I find these gatherings so useful," she says.

Gretchen Sidhu





Millions of women protest against a culture of violence, in Washington (USA) in May

© JESSICA PERSSON/REUTERS/MAXPPP

Cultivating the seeds of peace

Ingeborg Breines, as director of UNESCO's Women and a Culture of Peace Programme, what did you have on your agenda five years ago when preparing the organisation's participation at the Beijing conference?

We noticed that while women from the North often put the emphasis on equality, women in the South mainly focused on development, and even less importance seemed to be given to peace, which was a key preoccupation at UNESCO. We developed the Women's contribution to a Culture of Peace Statement, for Beijing. It influenced the Platform for Action, under paragraph 146, "to promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace." For the first time this concept was officially used outside of UNESCO by the UN. Unfortunately it came under "Women and Armed Conflict," a negative concept. Women have a positive role in conflict prevention and resolution and should not always be seen as victims. It should have had a chapter of its own. Soon after the Conference, the Women and a Culture of Peace Programme (WCP) was set up within UNESCO.

Your programme has since worked closely with African women?

We wanted to combine the three priority groups of UNESCO: women, Africa and the least developed countries (youth is also a priority now). African women are particularly courageous and creative. They show very strong surviving and bridge-building capabilities in times of conflict. We set up a Special Project to research seven case studies in Burundi, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Somalia and Namibia. We hoped to find out whether some traditional ways to tackle conflict could be adapted to modern societies. The role of

GENDER NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

The fight against sexual discrimination is partially carried out by the elimination of sexist stereotypes in all areas. UNESCO has paid particular attention to this matter, and has published a number of works to raise politicians' and teachers' awareness, such as the 1986 book "No to Stereotypes" about children's literature and schoolbooks.

To promote the use of gender neutral language - crucial to an equal representation of men and women - the booklet, "Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language" provides both recommendations and examples. Currently published in both English and French, the booklet will soon be published in Spanish and Arabic.

●●● For a copy of the booklet: fax +33 1 45 68 55 58. E-mail :l.ruprecht@unesco.org

elderly women, for instance, or arranged marriages between clans, are part of a tradition of peace building. We have just finalised with FAWE (Forum for African Women Educationalists) a training module based on these case studies. Then in May 1999 we organised the Pan African Women's Conference in Zanzibar which called for higher participation of women in decision-making and better access to networking possibilities. Flexibility is another one of women's skills, especially since they are often in and out of the work force. Finally, they have a great interest in the environment, which is an important part of any peace process.

You have worked on male roles and masculinities. Is there a connection between domestic violence and armed conflicts?

Boys are expected to assert themselves, to be strong and to control their emotions. They are prepared for working life, to try to hold dominant positions. Thus if they get frustrated they might use their physical superiority. A lot of very young boys join local armies and become a risk-factor for themselves and society. The "real man" role model is a straight jacket for lots of men. After the Male Roles and Masculinities in the Perspective of a Culture of Peace Meeting in Oslo three years ago, it became a major field of research for us. In a UNESCO Associated Schools Project site in Norway, for instance, the teachers take time to deal with the causes of conflict and emphasise positive behaviour. When one previously "bad" boy suddenly said: "It's fun to be nice!", it became the name of the programme. Personally I think the image of virility should move from competition to care.

What are your objectives now?

Two projects from outside partners: a UN Conference on Men; and an International Men's Day like women have on the 8th of March. It would give us one day to discuss men's situation from a gender perspective. An award is being discussed as well. Regarding Africa, our training module is being translated and we are working on a database of best practices. Then in December we will hold the Asian Women for a Culture of Peace Conference in Hanoi. We are also searching for partners to set up a Summer School for education on gender sensitivity and non-violence.

Interview by Natacha Henry

Looking after their own backyard: women and environment

For centuries, accepted wisdom held that women belonged at home. Prevented from moving beyond their immediate neighbourhoods by family and social customs, women became extremely influential in their limited sphere of activities. Even today, in addition to their new roles in society, many women's lives revolve around domestic issues: access to clean and potable water, family health, food-gathering and hygiene. Already active in these roles, women have the potential to play a further role in managing their immediate environments. Among major programmes carried out by UNESCO are two significant projects which have found that women can have a real impact in dealing with social urban problems.

Coordinated by UNESCO's MOST Programme (Management of Social Transformations), the projects examine how women are capable of transforming urban environments, and how young people manage in their urban environments.

'Cities, the Environment and Social Relations between Men and Women' analyses and compares groups of women in their social and environmental relations, in medium sized cities in West Africa, Latin America, Eastern and Western Europe .

One such group is from Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso). A women's group called *Lagem Yam* ('Uniting our Intelligence' in the local Moore language) has improved the quality of life for a 900-strong community by clearing up household waste from the streets and gutters of the Section 10 neighbourhood. Since post-colonial independence in the 1960s the population of Ouagadougou has

almost doubled to 800,000, with an annual growth rate of 8.73 %. Many municipal services – such as waste collection – have fallen by the wayside. Rubbish lines the streets and clogs the gutters; animal and human excrement lies in the path of running water. Waste management is nominally a government affair, but according to a MOST report only 42 % of the city's 500 tonnes of daily waste is cleaned up.

Lagem Yam's activities began with the organisation of waste collection in 1993. The following year, *Lagem Yam* began to produce compost, as well as building wash-houses, latrines and cess-pools. In 1997 the group started a project to clean up the drinking water. According to the MOST study of the group, the women came to understand their potential to change the quality of neighbourhood life. "Men can build, but they don't look after what they build," one group member pointed out.

Girls more restricted

The second programme – Growing Up In Cities – is an international comparative research project aimed at documenting how young people's use and perception of their environment affects their lives and their personal development; and looks at ways of using young people's own perceptions and priorities to create – or rehabilitate – urban environments. The project allows researchers to compare and contrast results from cities in Norway, the USA, South Africa, India, Mexico, Argentina, Poland and Australia and has highlighted how "invisible" young girls are in public space.

Australian GUIC director Dr Karen Malone points out: "Girls... led more restricted lives than the boys in the neighbourhoods we researched". Too old to play on swings but too young to venture into the city centre, young women in these areas have few resources. Meg, 14, looks after her younger sister and grandmother after school. She cooks the evening meal while she babysits, and then spends the rest of the time watching television, or on the phone with her friends. She told researchers that : "There's nothing in Braybrook to do. It would be good if there were some seats and playthings, rollerblade stuff in the park, in the shade, then we could talk there and mind the children," she says. As a result of the GUIC research in Melbourne, local residents have begun to improve their environments, and a long-term plan for greening the western suburbs of Melbourne is under way.

A girl from Sathyanagar, India, portrays her own urban environment (GUIC project)



© LOUISE CHAN/LA MOST PROGRAMME

In South Africa, GUIC research was undertaken with African boys and girls in an inner-city squatter camp. As in the Australian project, boys generally had more freedom to range widely than girls, and for more or less the same reasons. Although boys carried out some household chores, once they were done the boys did not have to stay near the homes, and were free to wander. The girls felt unsafe wandering through the camp, and often said they wished it were a safer place. "Project involvement with the boys and girls has led to women and children being drawn into

community decision-making processes, whereas these sites were formerly the prerogative of men," says GUIC South Africa director Jill Swart-Kruger.

As the declaration of the Fourth UN's Women's Conference in Beijing said, "sustainable development will be elusive if women's contribution to the management of the environment is not recognised and supported."

Chloë Fox

Science: women's last frontier ?

It is estimated that developing African countries need 200 scientists per million inhabitants if they are to make real strides in developing their own industries, and replacing the expatriates that they recruit in enormous numbers.

"To reach this level of scientific and technological provision no African country can leave 50 % of its population – that is to say, women – out of the process," says the 1999 UNESCO report, Scientific, technical and vocational education of girls in Africa.

But society's attitudes to women in science are not encouraging. Around the world, girls and women are constantly fed stereotyped images of scientific careers being incompatible with a woman's life. And the ramifications of women's subsequent under-representation in the scientific field are far-reaching, and perhaps incalculable. Unless women contribute to solving scientific and developmental problems on all levels, there is a real worry that solutions to these problems will under-value women's' concerns and needs.

According to Anna Maria Hoffman-Barthes, a programme specialist in UNESCO's Science and Technology Education Section, socio-cultural barriers are among the greatest impediments to women's access to scientific education. "Negative family attitudes about science create a lack of self confidence among girls and women in their motivation to opt for science," she says. So when the UNESCO Agenda for Gender Equality (see box p.4) was released in 1995, it was recommended that specific campaigns be organised to overcome these barriers.

The campaigns run by the Science and Technology Education Section are aimed at the millions of girls and women in Africa who are excluded from the study of science and technology. They include science clinics, special summer camps and road shows.



© GIACOMO PIRROZZI/PANOS PICTURES

A young artist in Mali has produced a comic book seeking to motivate potential science students. Work is well advanced in the production of kits for African countries which will enable students to carry out experiments firmly rooted in their own daily experience – in recycling waste materials, for example, or studying the properties of soap.

Future Nobel prize winners? Why not!

On a continent where providing education of any kind, at any level, for either sex often poses enormous problems, the task of persuading girls into science and technology – and keeping them there – has no easy answers or quick fixes. Nonetheless there does appear to be some limited reason for optimism, if only because the issue is at least firmly on the agenda now.

"There's a lot of action, a lot of associations reacting," says Hoffman-Barthes, citing in particular the NGO, Female Education in Science and Mathematics in Africa (FEMSA). "There's a movement going on and you can feel that there's a change."

Stephen Jessell

*There's
a movement
going on,
and you can feel
there's a change*

Science in the future: are women being ignored?

Participants at the 1995 Beijing conference returned home after agreeing on a declaration and platform for action in which the education and training of women were directly addressed, with five out of 11 recommended actions referring specifically to the need for women to become more closely involved in science, mathematics and technology. The momentum was sustained at the World Conference on Science in Budapest in the summer of 1999 which adopted the

following declaration. "The difficulties encountered by women in entering, pursuing and advancing in a career in the sciences and in participating in decision-making in science and technology should be addressed urgently." "Unless women are fully represented in thinking about and developing solutions to technological and scientific problems there is real disquiet that the solutions that emerge will under-value their concerns and interests," argued UNICEF consultant

Karin A.L. Hyde in a contribution to the Dakar Education for All conference last April. So there was some disappointment at the prominence – or lack of prominence – assigned to the issue at Beijing + 5. Some observers suggest this merely reflects the architecture of the original Beijing meeting and that there is a tendency to examine the role of women in science and technology as part of a social rather than an educational problem. But others regretted the session did

not place more emphasis on science and women. "I would have liked it to have gone much further on the fundamental role of science in relation to sustainable development – uneducated, illiterate, poor women cannot participate in development and that contributes to the general failure of the system," says Renée Clair, Programme Specialist from UNESCO's special programme on women, science and technology.

Stephen Jessel

Winning hearts and minds in the media

If the media serves as a mirror of society, the reflection it projects of women is unquestionably distorted. Under-represented (of 100 people cited, 82 are men, only 18 are women), women appear unnamed and with no professional label twice as often as men, while, at the same time, they are over-represented as victims. These figures from a study carried out this year by the Canadian NGO MediaWatch have scarcely evolved since the previous study carried out by the same group in 1995. Moreover, in spite of the considerable feminisation of the media, too few women occupy positions of responsibility to influence either the content of news or of the programmes.

More than 25,000 people listen to this children's radio programme in the Philippines



© CHLOE ARNALDO

In March 1995, the Toronto Conference organised by UNESCO focused on professional women in the media, the conclusions of the conference serving as background material at the Beijing conference on women's rights (later that year) in particular for Chapter J of the Platform for Action. Addressed to governments, NGOs and the media, Chapter J made a number of recommendations. They were aimed on the one hand at increasing women's participation in the media, facilitating their access to decision-making in and by the media, and new communication technologies as well as promoting a positive, more balanced, less stereotyped image of women.

UNESCO works towards these objectives, says Alain Modoux, Assistant Director-General for Communication, Information and Informatics, mainly "through training activities, which are discreet and behind the scenes but very important, for professionals of the written press, radio, television and new media; and by promoting networks among them."

Seminars, which aim at reinforcing professional competence and analysing stereotypes in the content of messages, are organised in partnership with national or regional associations of women journalists. In Africa, some of the seminars are geared to raising the awareness of media leaders on questions of gender. Another, carried out with the Association of African Communication Professionals, focuses on training for production of radio programmes, while yet ano-

ther is devoted to a data bank on women and the media in francophone Africa. Workshops are also organised in Central Asia and in Mediterranean countries where women journalists are particularly under-represented.

From a user's point of view, radio is the most accessible medium. "Women Speak to Women" is a Special Project in community radio, launched in 1996 to promote development in seven countries – Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Malawi, Cote d'Ivoire and India – through the creation of local radio stations operated by and for women. UNESCO financed training and provided equipment. Programmes concern daily preoccupations: literacy, health, professional training and creativity.

Training in cyberspace

In Mongolia, the Radio for Women in the Gobi Desert, set up in cooperation with the government, is a non-formal educational activity for nomadic women, encouraging them to learn and exchange knowledge and skills. Its success convinced UNESCO to adapt the project to other populations excluded from the formal education system.

The spirit of Toronto led to the creation of the network WOMMED/FEMMED (Women in the Media) set up after the conference to encourage greater freedom of expression among women and their access to decision-making in the media. The Asia Pacific Women's Information Network (APWIN) is an active partner and also participates in the UNESCO chair devoted to communication technologies for women at the University of Sookmyung in Seoul (Korea).

Women are taking advantage of opportunities provided by new information technologies around the world. The multidisciplinary project "Women on the Net" carried out with the Society for International Development (SID), and NGO, aims at reinforcing their presence in cyberspace, notably through training.

The first workshop for an electronic network of women, organised in 1999 in Seoul with participants from 11 Asian countries, resulted in the creation of five internet sites. A number of publications support this effort: *An International Annotated Guide of Women Working on the Net* (1997, in English), *Women in the Digital Era*, and *Women@Internet: Creating New Cultures in Cyberspace* (1999, in English).

Nonetheless, the world coalition of women in the media, meeting in New York at the Beijing+5 recalled that, while all of these initiatives were welcome in the sector, much remained to be done to attain professional equality and banish stereotypes.

Monique Perrot-Lanaud

MARCH 8 - WOMEN MAKE THE NEWS

The simplicity of the operation was itself a litmus test. On January 31, UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura called on the world's media to ensure women journalists had editorial responsibility on International Women's Day, just five weeks away. The word then spread, mainly through internet. A special website, the hub of the event, was backed up with contact by e-mail, phone and fax.

Media liked the idea or dismissed it. Those that took it up - 1,000-plus media in some 60 countries in every continent - did exactly as they chose. Some wrote special women's news. Some, like Algeria's *El Watan*, got the men to write special women's news while the women ran the main news. Others rejected the idea of "women's news" altogether. Some put one woman in charge while others replaced entire teams of male editors for the day or went on to ensure that women were also in charge of the radio transmitters, the TV cameras, the press association, the university faculty of journalism...The only limit was a time limit: the 24 hours of March 8. For several thousand women journalists participating around the world, those 24 hours had at least one lasting effect: senior media positions were demystified once and for all. As Hawa Ba, editor-for-a-day on Senegal's *Sud Quotidien* told other women journalists in a

post-March 8 column, "Refuse the carefully preserved mystification surrounding the management of a newsroom. What men can do, women can do." That realisation, in itself, wedges open the editor's door. The event "may look like tokenism, but it is a unique gesture that can make us think about the role,



DR
A role model: Rebekah Wade, 31, editor of Britain's *News of the World*

presence and status of women in the news media," commented Indian journalist Sidharth Bhatia. Many women journalists contacted UNESCO to say this shared action on a shared problem was a great opportunity to challenge the status quo. Both men and women sent messages describing the enthusiasm and creative energy as routines were shaken up and newsrooms reshuffled. So a one-day event - by empowering women, demystifying authority, raising low expectations, exposing the systematic way women journalists fill subordinate posts - can teach valuable lessons. It can even challenge assumptions about

what constitutes news. Albanian women in charge throughout the national media banished for a day the habitual hate language of a bitter political divide. Women editing a US newspaper dismissed as trivia a prurient voyeur story, defended as a front page piece by the demoted male editors. But can such steps ultimately change the gender balance in the key media posts where influence and authority are wielded. It is surely no coincidence that the all-powerful Western media were notably absent from the March 8 initiative. Entry to the leadership positions where real power lies is bound to be the last and hardest stage of the struggle for gender equality. This first Women Make the News Day will not be the last such action. Ways must be found to convince those media that heard but chose not to heed UNESCO's call. Reasons for refusing to take part were varied. It was "tokenistic" and "demeaning" to call for one day only. A whole week, then, next year? To focus on gender undermines women's efforts to succeed by professionalism alone. But the figures show the imbalance and lack of progress at the top - and a day in the editor's seat helps.

*Stella Hughes
executive officer,
Office of the Director
General, UNESCO*

Western science is one type of knowledge system among many. It's time to recognise the others

TAPPING INTO THE WORLD'S WISDOM

● International Day of Indigenous Peoples will be celebrated on August 9

Sophisticated knowledge of the natural world is not confined to science. Human societies all across the globe have developed rich sets of experiences and explanations relating to the environments they live in. These “other knowledge systems” are today often referred to as traditional ecological knowledge or indigenous or local knowledge. They encompass the sophisticated arrays of information, understandings and interpretations that guide human societies around the globe in their innumerable interactions with the natural milieu: in agriculture and animal husbandry; hunting, fishing and gathering; struggles against disease and injury; naming and explanation of natural phenomena; and strategies to cope with fluctuating environments.

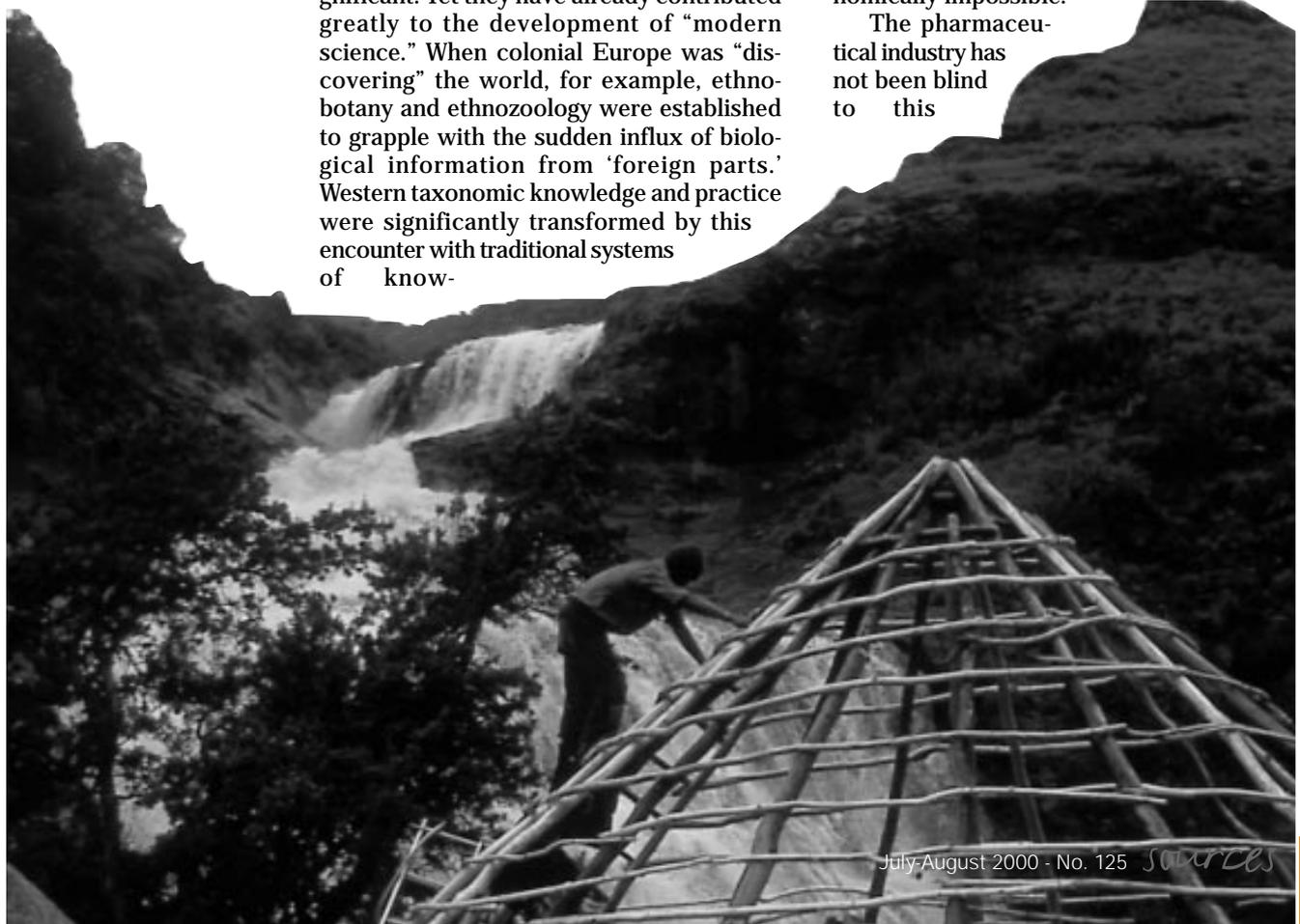
Numerous scientists and development agencies dismiss these other systems as insignificant. Yet they have already contributed greatly to the development of “modern science.” When colonial Europe was “discovering” the world, for example, ethnobotany and ethnozoology were established to grapple with the sudden influx of biological information from ‘foreign parts.’ Western taxonomic knowledge and practice were significantly transformed by this encounter with traditional systems of know-

ledge. Western science profited from the appropriation of traditional taxonomic and ecological understandings, with little acknowledgment of their intellectual origins.

Traditional knowledge remains the basis of local food production in many developing countries. As Lazare Sehoueto of the Kilimandjaro Institute (Benin) points out, “local knowledge’ is the principal knowledge resource for small-scale farmers who represent 70 to 90% of agricultural producers and more than 60% of the population of sub-Saharan Africa.” Similarly, the Maya have developed a large number of herbal remedies on the basis of their “astute understanding of the signs and symptoms of common disease conditions.” These remedies represent, in the view of Brent Berlin of the University of Georgia (USA), an invaluable asset for remote regions of Mexico where “the delivery of modern medications is economically impossible.”

The pharmaceutical industry has not been blind to this

Building a hut in Lesotho



potential. It recognises that traditional health practitioners may greatly facilitate the search for new bioactive ingredients by providing information on their selective use of biodiversity. Biotechnicians, including those of the agro-chemical industry, are very much interested in the genetic potential of the numerous crop varieties developed and sustained by generations of small-scale farmers. In tropical agro-ecosystems in Thailand and Indonesia, for example, peasants commonly maintain more than 100 domestic plant species, as well as harbouring in their paddies, rice varieties adapted to a range of environmental conditions.

While this growing recognition of traditional knowledge might seem beneficial, it poses some major problems. It dissects and reduces such knowledge into the categories of "useful" and "useless", fragmenting traditional systems and leading to their accelerated replacement by science. It has also triggered an intensification of "biopiracy", the unauthorised appropriation of traditional knowledge, and subsequently calls for appropriate systems of protection for this knowledge.

Property rights

Adapting intellectual property rights (IPR) arrangements is one solution. Patent and copyright laws, however, have evolved within narrow socio-economic and political contexts. Designed to protect individuals whose inventions require safeguarding in view of their potential commercial value, they remain incompatible with traditional knowledge, which is collectively owned, whose "invention" extends across generations, and whose *raison d'être* is not profit, but ecological understanding and social meaning.

Due to these contradictions, legal rights may have impacts quite other than those intended. By protecting select elements in isolation from the larger cultural context, they encourage fragmentation of the cultural system. By designating knowledge "owners", they may trigger social dissension between recognised proprietors and others who are excluded. Finally, as IPRs protect knowledge by setting rules for their commercial exploitation, they may facilitate the appropriation of traditional knowledge by the global marketplace. In short, extant legal arrangements are ill adapted for protecting traditional knowledge. Today, efforts are turning towards the challenging task of defining new or *sui generis* systems.

There is clearly a need for novel approaches to traditional knowledge systems, which can meet the challenges arising from their increasing prominence. Perhaps one important step forward is to consider traditional knowledge, not as static sets of information, but as integral components of living and dynamic societies and cultures: a process, not a product. With its ethical, scientific, cultural, and educational mandate,

A New Impetus for Action on Traditional Knowledge

Traditional knowledge and management are not new themes for UNESCO. Early initiatives in the 1970s and 80s addressed traditional agro-piscicultural systems in Mexico through the Man and the Biosphere Programme, and traditional marine resource management in the Pacific Basin through the Coastal Marine Programme. At the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, clear reference was made to traditional knowledge in the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. As well, the "knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities" are the focus of Article 8 (j) of the Convention on Biodiversity. Recently, traditional knowledge has re-emerged as a priority concern for several of UNESCO's sectors. The issue received strong support at the World Conference on Science, held in

Budapest in June/July 1999, where a special session was organised on "Science and Other Systems of Knowledge". A number of important recommendations concerning traditional knowledge systems were approved by the over 150 countries participating in this event co-organised by UNESCO and the International Council for Science (ICSU). Several UNESCO Member States also brought traditional knowledge to the fore at the organisation's last General Conference (October 1999, Paris) which decided that an intersectoral project on traditional knowledge should be proposed for inclusion in the next medium term strategy (2001-07). In the Sector for Culture, strong interest in traditional knowledge has been voiced through the priority given to "intangible cultural

heritage", and in particular, the calls to establish an international normative instrument on the protection of folklore and traditional culture. A preliminary study is presently underway to investigate the legal and technical implications of establishing such an instrument. In addition, the issues of "cultural rights" and of indigenous peoples, in particular in the context of the on-going Decade for Indigenous Peoples (1994-2004), are also of great significance for UNESCO and have a clear relationship to the traditional knowledge area. Given these converging priorities relating to traditional knowledge, UNESCO is currently elaborating a proposal for integrated action in this area involving its sectors for Natural Sciences, Social & Human Sciences, Culture, Education and Communications.

D.N., L.P. and P.B.

UNESCO is well placed to address this pressing contemporary issue in the more comprehensive framework that interlinks the goals of social equity, biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and protection of the intangible cultural heritage.

*Douglas Nakashima,
(UNESCO Science sector)
Lyndel Protz,
(Culture sector)
Peter Bridgewater,
(MAB Programme)*

Thailand's sea nomads



© UNESCO/NARUMON HINSHIRANAN

The Moken make use of renewable resources such as fast-growing bamboo

The Moken are one of the last sea tribes in Thailand which follow a traditional lifestyle

Walking patiently into the beach forest day after day for months, Salama Khalthale finally found the right tree for making his *kabang* (boat).

The choice is important. The boat will serve him as vehicle, home, fishing instrument, a place for giving birth and, on occasion, a place for dying for the next 20 years. Only a few species of tree are suitable for the task, such as *rakam* (*Salacca wallichiana*) and a local tree called *mai pan*. Others would give the boat the wrong weight, says Salama, a sea-nomad and member of the Moken tribe which lives in the Surin Islands along Thailand's Andaman Sea coast.

The selected log will be crafted into a rough boat-like shape, then immersed in water and heated in order to enlarge it. It will then be "grilled" over a fire of *tanai* wood (an unidentified species of *sapotaceae*), which blackens the lower part of the boat, and protects it from damage by barnacles once it is in use. Its sail will be made from the *toei naam's* (*pandanus*) leaves.

Boat-making is both a science and an art for the tribe. The techniques used have been handed down from generation to generation, perpetuating the experience and skills of their ancestors.

The Moken also rely on many other forest products. According to Moken expert Dr Narumon Hinshiranan, an anthropologist Chulalongkorn University in the Thai capital, Bangkok, the tribe uses some 80 plant species for food, 28 medicinal plants, 53 species for housing and other 42 for other purposes including handicraft.

"A local plant, *morloon* is used to make a fire the heat of which is used to treat women who have just given birth. The *yaa thale's* bark is mixed in boiled water and used for bathing sick kids," says Aroon Thaewchatturat, a researcher studying the Moken. Plants are also used for entertainment: the violin-like *kating* is made from bamboo for example. They also learn to select proper materials for house-building and use pandanus for weaving mats and boxes.

The Moken are one of the last sea tribes in Thailand which follow a traditional lifestyle. Salama's tribe settled in the Surin Islands three decades ago, when the political situation in Myanmar (then Burma) forced them to quit their traditional sea-route along the coastline of both Myanmar and Thailand.

A decade later, in 1981, their new home was declared a national marine park and restrictions were placed on their fishing and foraging activities. Authorities perceived these traditional activities as a threat to the environment (although subsequent studies have refuted this). Tourism also began to develop there, bringing the Moken into contact with a world which, until then, had remained largely unknown to them. "Snacks, instant noodles, and condensed milk have become favourite foods and paracetamol a common medicine," says Dr Narumon.

Once again, the lifestyle and culture was under threat. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that the Moken are not recognised as Thai citizens and therefore not



allowed to own land or attend public schools.

In 1997 UNESCO launched the Andaman Pilot Project, which seeks ways of integrating the traditional knowledge of the Moken into the region's sustainable development, the protection of its environment and the preservation of their distinct cultural heritage. A first phase of the project included extensive

Gathering sand worms at low tide: the Moken's knowledge of their environment could prove invaluable in managing it

research on the Moken's traditional knowledge and practices, their migration and settlement history. This knowledge is now being articulated with a number of marine science studies in the area to better understand the local ecology. The environmental impact of tourism activities is also being assessed, and the role the Moken could play in tourism development is being looked at.

Such involvement, and the recognition given to their skills and culture, will in turn, it's hoped, allow the Moken to gain control over the changes that contact with the modern world has brought about for them, improving their standard of living while sustaining their traditional lifestyle.

Enough is now known about this indigenous community, that today number some 5,000, to convince Park officials that they should remain a significant force in the Surin Islands (which the Thai government is proposing for World Heritage listing), and eventually become partners in the area's conservation. This acknowledgement is only a first step towards a much bigger goal, but, says Dr Narumon, it's a vital one.

*Kamol Sukin
Bangkok*

Cévennes: French peasants restore their ancient lands

The terraced landscapes of the Cévennes biosphere reserve in southern France (one of the Man and Biosphere programmes worldwide network reserves) are a good example of human beings adapting to an environment and becoming its protectors. Centuries ago, local people learned how to make use of their steep mountain slopes, poor soil, and a climate that swings from drought to heavy rains: generations of peasants worked hard to prevent streams developing by breaking up the slopes into terraces to stop precious soil being washed away. The enemy, stone, was transformed into an ally.

However, thousands of hectares of terraces fell into decay with the exodus from the French countryside that began in the 19th century. By 1975, certain valleys counted five times fewer inhabitants and 20 times less farmers than in 1850. Erosion set in and the unchecked growth scrubleft the land vulnerable to fire.

But in recent years, these neglected lands have been coming back to life and people are returning to live in the Cévennes. Quality natural produce is in demand these days,

the farmer's role in managing the land is recognised and machinery is now available to farm the terraces properly.

"This cared-for landscape is the sign of a healthy countryside. It is part of a mountain region that is alive and a source of local identity. The Cévennes people are fiercely attached to their terraces because they are well aware that if they disappear, the land will be neglected and lost forever," says Daniel Travier, curator of the Museum of the Valleys of the Cévennes.

In Le Vigan, in the southern Cévennes, farmers grow the region's traditional mild onion, the St André. "Production of these onions has doubled in the past 10 years," says Nicolas Escand, head of the onion farmers' cooperative. "It's brought many young people into farming and we've been able to restore many abandoned terraces. The farmers get financial help to rebuild the dry stone walls from the Cévennes National Park and Biosphere Reserve and from the European Union."

In the village of Soudorgues, other farmers produce medicinal and aromatic plants on the terraces, and sell them under an

Rebuilding the drystone walls of the Cévennes terraces



The Cévennes terraces have come back to life, thanks to the revival of an ancient technique



© M. SABATIE

DEVELOPING BEST PRACTICES

Ethiopian peasants have developed through centuries methods to assess erosion based on real-valued observations. In China, populations living near the Minjiang river in the Sichuan province have a botanical knowledge for the reforestation of degraded watersheds. Women in Costa Rica have been using a traditional method to house and feed hens which enables a high production of eggs. During drought seasons, Sri Lankan families have been using the 'Bethma' practice of temporary redistribution of lands. These are a few of the 27 examples of traditional knowledge which are also examples of sustainable development practices, included in a book recently published by UNESCO (MOST program) and NUFFIC (Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education), "Best Practices on Indigenous Knowledge". www.unesco.org/most/bpindi.htm

organic produce label. An organisation called Forgotten Fruit is restoring terraces to plant traditional fruit trees on them. Christian Sunt, a spokesman for the group, says the terraces "are particularly suitable for growing fruit. The dry stone walls help the soil to drain as well as reflecting the sun's rays to allow crops like olives to ripen over a longer period."

Some villages have restored terraces by themselves. The people of Bonnevaux are worried about the risk of fire on neglected land and have teamed up with three other villages. Georges Zinsstag, Bonnevaux's former mayor, says the problem is that "the ownership of the land is very fragmented. The 17 hectares we've restored are made up of 298 lots. We had to get 70 landowners involved and this took a lot of time. Today, people are rearing goats and sheep there and the countryside looks wonderful again."

Restoration of the terraces is nonetheless a costly affair. However, the locals are discovering that the investment pays off in a number of ways. The terraces are clearly a tourist drawcard for example. The village of Saint Germain de Calberte plans to build a trail for visitors who want to see the terraces and the crops growing there. The village's deputy mayor, Gérard Lamy, says "the trail will encourage agro-tourism and bring people to the region because its inhabitants farm the land and look after the countryside."

The Cévennes Biosphere Reserve is also encouraging people to learn how to work with the dry stone walls needed to restore the terraces. The basic method is simple (the stones must overlap each other and the wall must be sloped upwards a little), but the craft is difficult and takes years of

experience. Practitioners are few and far between and the work has a low status. Efforts are being made to give the masons a higher profile, get them work and set up a diploma course, as has been done in places like Majorca, in Spain.

The village association for the development and conservation of the Galeizon Valley is training five young local people. The association's chairman, Yannick Louche, says they are "taking courses and restoring parts of the Cévennes heritage such as the low walls along the roadsides and elsewhere, as well as the ancient paved pathways. We hope they'll get jobs with local firms or set up on their own," he says.

The biosphere reserve is also cataloguing traditional local skills relating to working with dry stone. It plans to publish a manual of them to remind the people of the Cévennes of the rich culture associated with the walls and to encourage them to restore the terraces.

Jean-Baptiste Lanaspèze, a French official of the European Union project Proterra, which is pushing the stone terrace restoration, says the terraces "have an agricultural future, are historical places, boost tourism, are ecologically rich and also have a heritage of building and associated skills that needs to be preserved."

The terraces and dry stone walls have not been built by architects but by the efforts of a whole people. By reviving terrace farming and the art of building with dry stone, the inhabitants of the Cévennes have perhaps discovered their own way to contribute to sustainable development.

Didier Lécuyer
Cévennes



WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

Just for kids ...is a section of the World Heritage Centre's website that is devoted... just to kids! The aim is to sensitise youngsters to the importance of world heritage and its protection. It includes games, resource information, discussion forums and virtual tours of sites



such as the historical centre of Naples (Italy) or the Great Pyramid of Giza (Egypt), although you need to be equipped with the adequate plug-ins for this. It also informs kids on what they can do to protect world heritage.
www.unesco.org/whc/



COMMUNICATION

Responsible youth media

Fifty Brazilian journalists and 20 youth activists from around the country met in the capital, Brasilia, over the first weekend in June to look at ways of better communicating AIDS related issues into youth media. Reports on the portrayal in the media of drugs, education, family issues, poverty, sexual orientation, teen pregnancy and youth leadership were presented during the meeting, which was organised by UNESCO along with the News Agency on Childrens Rights (ANDI), the Ayrton Senna Institute, the National Coordination of STDs/AIDS from the Brazilian Ministry of Health, the Odebrecht Foundation, the UNDP and UNICEF. The results will be disseminated throughout Brazil at a later date.

CDS/ISIS

CDS/ISIS distributors and users'associations from European countries met at headquarters on June 30-July 1. Debates focussed on the revision and evaluation of existing CDI/ISIS products and solutions,

as well as proposals for further development of CDS/ISIS software and applications, and for the setting up of an international CDS/ISIS group. CDS/ISIS is one of the world's leading information storage and retrieval softwares, whose position as a Public Domain tool UNESCO would like to strengthen in the coming years.

Gutenberg on-line

A first set of pages of one of the world's most famous books, the Gutenberg Bible, is now available on-line. The digital version of the two volumes of the 1454 edition of the Bible was prepared at the Centre for Retrospective Digitisation of the State and University Library in Göttingen, Germany. The site preview already offers exquisite digitised photographs of the manuscript, which were taken using special equipment for contact-free digitisation so as to ensure minimum stress on the binding.

<http://www.gutenbergdigital.de>



CULTURE

Ciak Junior

More than 300 children from four continents took part in the 11th Ciak Junior Festival of films written, directed and selected by children, held at Treviso (Italy) from May 29 to June 3. Among several prizes given at the final ceremony on June 3, UNESCO/ OFTC Fellini Prizes were awarded to two films: "Long Journey Home" from the Czech Republic, and "Discovered Colours" from Hungary.

To celebrate the UN International Year for a Culture of Peace, a film entitled "Messages in the Bottle" in which children send messages in a bottle, was co-produced by countries participating in the festival.

Children in Chile, for example, wrote: "We are children of a non-declared war. Against non-equal opportunities, AIDS, violence, etc. When I was a little child I thought that the peace existed only when there was no war, but



I know that it is much more than this. Peace is the most important and simple of things to obtain. It's just enough to put a bit of ourselves to get it." The festival was sponsored by television companies from Europe, South America, China and Africa.

INTANGIBLE HERITAGE LABEL LAUNCHED

The international jury named by UNESCO to proclaim cultural spaces and forms of cultural expression as "masterpieces of the oral and intangible heritage



This Mongol musician's skills form part of his intangible cultural heritage.

of humanity," met for the first time on June 15. The jury, which will be renewed every four years, is made up of nine members including: Hasan M. Al-Nabooah (United Arab Emirates), Juan Goytisolo (Spain) who was elected president, Ugné Karvelis (Lithuania), Richard Kurin (USA), J.H. Nketia (Ghana), Ralph Regenvanu (Vanuatu), Dawnhee Yim (Republic of Korea), Zulmar Yugar (Bolivia) and Munajat Yulchieva (Uzbekistan).

First candidatures for this new label must be submitted before December 31st this year and the first proclamations will be made in June 2001. Proclamations will then be made every two years. (More details in *Sources* No. 126, September).



EDUCATION

Guide to Teaching

A valuable new education tool, "A guide to teaching and learning in higher education" has been released on CD-rom, and is also available on the web (<http://breda-guide.tripod.com>). The information is specifically packaged for all those who are in higher education with a desire to improve their teaching and learning practices. While examples have been largely

drawn from Africa, worldwide use of the information is possible. The guide was produced by the higher education section of the UNESCO regional office in Dakar (Senegal), and is for use by both students and teachers.

HIGHER EDUCATION FOR PEACE

More than 500 participants from 40 countries met in Tromso (Norway) from May 4 to 6 to

discuss the role higher education can play in building peace and promoting human rights. "Universities and other institutions of higher education are in a unique position to help shape the minds and attitudes of decision-makers" and to provide "both students and the larger community with relevant knowledge, the ability for critical reflection, skills of dialogue, insight into important global issues and, not least, successful outcomes and non-violent solutions to confrontations," said Ingeborg Breines, who represented UNESCO's Director-General at the meeting. Participants agreed on the need for more and better peace education and decided to strengthen cooperation and networks between institutions of higher education, among students, with UNESCO and country authorities.

The conference was organised by the University of Tromso with the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO as a contribution to the UN International Year for a Culture of Peace, and a follow up to the World Conference on Higher Education held at UNESCO in 1998.



PEOPLE

KEEPING THE BALL ROLLING

In a follow up to the World Parliament of Children organised by UNESCO and the French government in Paris in October 1999, children from 12 countries travelled to Ottawa last April 7 to 15 for a session with the Canadian parliament. The event was organised by the Canadian National Commission for UNESCO with children from Australia, Bahamas, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, France, Kenya, Northern Ireland, Norway, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and Sri Lanka, also presented the Canadian MPs with the Youth Manifesto for the 21st Century, prepared in Paris. "I'm honoured to be here in Canada representing my country," said Australian Caitlin Ross, "but the greatest honour of all would be to have you take the message of the Manifesto and act on it and pass it on to others." Several other Member States are also looking at ways to follow up the Paris meeting. And a small delegation of the children will present the Manifesto to the UN Millennium Assembly in September.

Afghan Women

The cultural association RUDAKI in association with UNESCO presented a diverse showcase about Afghan women on June 20 at headquarters. Film, personal accounts, dance, poetry, music and painting were united to praise these Afghan women, whose very physical and moral identity is currently under threat. The audience discovered the style and tone of these women's poems, as well as learning more about their roles in the war and their ongoing fight for access to education.



Don't forget that she has rights too !

© ASSOCIATION RUDAKI

▶ "We have to act. The global connectedness that brings the bad news can also serve to tackle the problems. In the same way, the globalising processes underlying the rapid social and economic change triggering many environmental problems can be made to work for the environment, not against it. It is fundamentally a question of political will and political action."

Koichiro Matsuura,
UNESCO Director-General,
in his message for World Environment Day (June 5)

▶ "All rights for all people should be the goal of this century."

UN Development Programme (UNDP),
Human Development Report 2000

▶ "Democracy... is the only political system that is capable of correcting its own dysfunctions."

Koichiro Matsuura,
UNESCO Director-General,
speaking at the Community of Democracies conference in Warsaw (Poland)

▶ "Our battle-cry is: Never again will this country sink into the abyss of the recent past when human rights abuse was the order of the day."

Olusegun Obasanjo,
Nigerian President
quoted in the UNDP's Human Development Report 2000

▶ "This is the most important, most wondrous map ever produced by humankind."

Bill Clinton,
US President,
commenting on the completion in June of rough map of the genetic makeup of human beings, which took ten years to finish



FACTS IN FIGURES

- **\$1 trillion:** the combined wealth of the world's 200 richest people in 1999
- **\$146 billion:** the combined incomes of the 582 million people living in the 43 least developed countries in the same year
- **100 million:** the number of children around the world who live or work on the streets
- **1 person in 5** is estimated to participate in a civil society organisation
- In 1990 **no country** had universal adult suffrage. Today nearly all countries do

(Source : UNDP Human Development Report 2000).



SCIENCE

SOLVING THE PUZZLE

Managing land, water and the living resources in a way that promotes conservation and sustainable development in an equitable way is the goal. But how to achieve it? By adopting "the ecosystem approach," says the Conference of the Parties of the



Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which recently adopted it as the primary framework for action under the convention.

To better understand this approach, UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB) has published an illustrated guide explaining the concept and its 12 guiding principles. The booklet comes with a poster-

size map of the biosphere reserve network which was initiated in 1970 and which today includes 368 reserves in 91 countries. The booklet and map are available free of charge from the MAB secretariat at UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

For further information, email i.fabbri@unesco.org

Middle Eastern science centre

Jordan is to host a major scientific research and training centre, the International Centre for Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications for the Middle East (SESAME). The UNESCO-initiated project for an international research centre for the Middle East and Mediterranean region will be built around the BESSY I synchrotron-light source facility decommissioned in Berlin at the end of 1999 and which Germany is willing to donate. Eleven members have joined the project, officially launched at a meeting in Paris a year ago: Armenia, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Authority and Turkey. Jordan has guaranteed open access to the facility to all interested scientists.



EXHIBITIONS

Images of Valparaiso



© ROXANA WERNER

Valparaiso - the beloved city of Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, and showcase of all the world's architecture, built on 45 hills overlooking the Pacific ocean, was the subject of an exhibition at headquarters from June 26 - 30, featuring the paintings of Roxana Werner (Chile) along with a selection of remarkable photographs. Valparaiso is included on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

WHEN EUROPE DISCOVERED BRAZIL

The oldest known globe of the world, from 1492, does not show the American continent. But today Brazil is one of the world's major economies and at headquarters an exhibition (13 June-15 July) followed and portrayed its discovery. Beautiful historic illustrations and accompanying text tell the tale, with all its ups and downs, of how Europeans and Indians met.

The exhibition pays homage to the pre-colonial way of life, showing how the colonists failed to understand that their could be other, acceptable ways of life apart from their own European norm. Ironically, those practices that were then perceived as "savage" are now enjoying a new popularity, such as local, decentralised administration, collective farming, and close family ties.

Children's Rights

The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the UNESCO Chair on Education for Human Rights and Peace organised an exhibition in May entitled "Children Write and Draw their Rights".

The exhibition included the best work of primary school pupils who participated in a competition launched by the Greek government and UNICEF. Some 56 drawings and 48 books were on display. A large number of students visited the exhibition and participated in workshops and discussion groups regarding the Convention on the Rights of the Child.



BOOKS

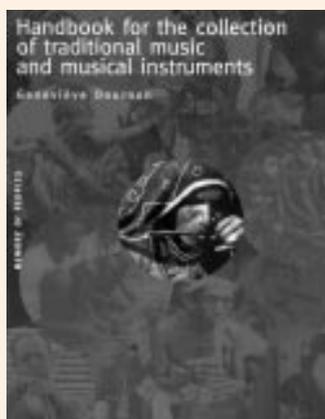
Handbook for the collection of traditional music and musical instruments

By Genevieve Dournon

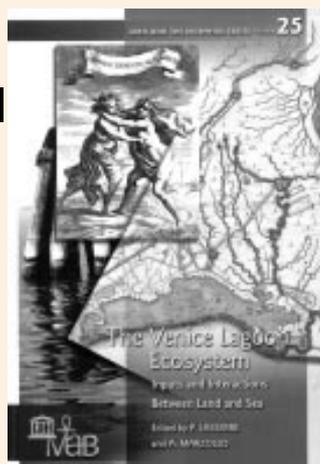
UNESCO Publishing

160 FF, 24,39 €

Collecting in the field is the best way to assemble ethnographic and ethnomusicological collections: it gives access to the socio-cultural context without which an object, a tale, a piece of music or an instrument, deprived of its true significance, has no cultural or scientific value. This handbook provides the beginner with an essential foundation for the recognition, identification and classification of musical instruments. Collectors will find two systems for field-work: the first, which is easily applicable to all kinds of objects,



is for musical instruments; the second, intended for audiovisual and musical documents, can also be adapted to the collection of oral literature. The final chapters of the book explain the procedures to be followed for the scientific and museographic treatment of instruments, films and sound recordings, and will be of use to any new institution in which collections are deposited.



The Venice Lagoon Ecosystem

Man and the Biosphere Series,

Volume 25

UNESCO Publishing

and The Parthenon Publishing Group, 2000

595 FF, 90,71 €

Coastal lagoons comprise about 13% of the world's coastline, and are found from tropical zones to the poles. In many parts of the world, lagoons have long been closely interlinked with human societies, nowhere more so than in the Lagoon of Venice, where the mingling of human actions and ecological processes has been so enduring, complete, complex and profound.

The Venice Lagoon Ecosystem project was carried out in the early 1990s, with the aim of developing an integrated scientific approach to the Venice Lagoon as recommended by a group of experts jointly set up by the Italian Government and UNESCO in 1981.

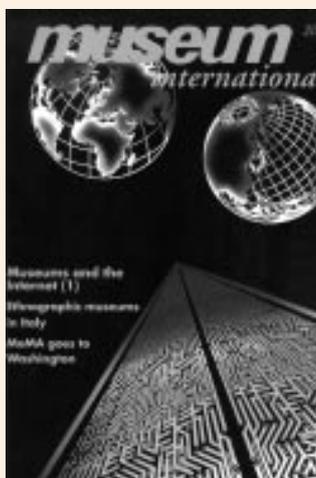
The scientific results reported in this volume represent a distinctive contribution to the understanding of one of the world's most renowned coastal lagoon ecosystems, as well as to decisions on the future development of Venice and its lagoon. The approaches and insights described in this book will also be of interest to scientists working on coastal lagoon ecosystems in other parts of the world.



PERIODICALS

MUSEUM INTERNATIONAL

More than five million visitors a year discover the wonders on display at the Louvre in Paris. But more than one million visitors a month now view the museum's treasures on its internet site (www.louvre.fr). The latest issue of Museum International (204)



focuses on how museums are working with the internet to create a new group of museum visitors. In fact, the internet is changing the face of museums. But how has the museum community exploited the resources available on the internet? This is the question. Other articles include a fascinating insight into the Peruvian archaeological site Kuntur Wasi, which is at once a museum and an experiment in community development; and an article about how a combination of unique historical and political factors has given rise to an explosion in the number of Italian ethnographic museums.

The UNESCO Courier

Hip-hop was born in the fire of New York's ghettos, while electronic dance music was born on

the thudding dancefloors of the city's underground clubs. These two genres which have helped to define a generation are the subject of a special dossier in this month's issue of the Courier. Young people have seized upon these rhythms and beats to express anger and aspiration - but is the spirit of the music being lost to commercialisation?

The issue also discusses the legitimacy of the embargo on Iraq, the vigorous debate over the trading of endangered species, and mobile phones as a development tool in the South. However the highlight of the issue is perhaps a selection of astonishingly beautiful photos from Mali, taken by Dogon villagers themselves.



●●● **To find out more**
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Learning to use the equipment in Kampala

TECHNOLOGY *New medical technology being tested under a UNESCO project holds out hope for patients in the world's most remote regions*

CONNECTIONS THAT SAVE LIVES

Specialist medical help may soon be available to patients in the world's most remote regions, thanks to new portable ultrasound devices that can transmit and receive three-dimensional images to hospitals anywhere around the globe. The equipment is now being tested by physicians in Uganda, Kazakhstan, and the Canary Islands (Spain) and the Azores Islands of Portugal, under a project known as TeleInViVo (InViVo is a software tool for viewing 3D data), which is funded by the European Community. UNESCO has been given the task of coordinating the project in the non-European countries.

The project makes tele-diagnosis and teleconsultation a reality in even the most extreme conditions, while promoting international medical collaboration

and mutual sharing of specialist information and expertise.

Nakaseke Hospital lies 60 km outside Kampala, the capital of Uganda. "The whole system was without a telephone line, fax or e-mail," said Meddie Mayanja, the Project Officer at the UNESCO National Commission for Uganda. A multipurpose community telecentre, established there in 1999 (see *Sources* No. 114), provided the infrastructure for the training of local doctors in the use of basic computers and internet connection.

"The hospital is now connected to the world and doctors can get information from anywhere," said Mayanja.

Aralsk (Kazakhstan), once an important fishing port, now lies 100km from the northern shore of the shrinking Aral Sea in one of

the most sparsely populated regions in the world. Epidemic outbreaks are not uncommon to the region which is plagued by worsening human-induced environmental problems. The Central Regional Hospital of Aralsk serves this remote population and despite the high level of medical capacity inherited from the Soviet era, the hospital today does not have the resources or expertise to deal with the deteriorating medical situation.

This project enables doctors there to make 3D medical images of the patient, which can then be transmitted via the satellite link-up established in the project to the Diagnostic Centre in Almaty, the capital. In Uganda, transmission is made via the internet from Nakaseke to Mulago hospital in Kampala.

Given the principle that it is faster and cheaper to ship information around than people and especially those who're gravely ill, the TeleInViVo experience becomes very compelling. Teleconsultation allows "all physicians, particularly those working in isolated or disaster areas, to exchange ideas, experiences, discuss doubts, diagnoses and establish therapy in a more confident way, in order to achieve the best for the patients," said Dr. Luisa Texeira. Dr. Texeira is a radiologist at the Hospitais da Universidade de Coimbra (HUC), Portugal, which serves as a focal point for the project. She adds that the system could ultimately be used "inside the ambulance during transport to the hospital," allowing "doctors to see the images and take the most adequate decisions before the patient arrives," which gives a whole new perspective to emergency healthcare.

Over the next six months, data transmission, teleconsultation and tele-diagnosis will take place once a week between specialists in the urban hospital of each country involved, and specialists in the HUC. Tests, ranging from gynaecological and abdominal scans to cardiological examinations, have begun in both countries, and Dr. Texeira indicated that "until now, all the diagnoses proposed have been confirmed."

International collaboration is proving beneficial to all parties in this project. Dr. Matovu, a radiologist at Mulago hospital explained that TeleInViVo "will be useful with difficult cases which we find at Mulago" while "European doctors can gain access to and

understanding of diseases not common to the European set up.”

The creation of medical databases using the cases studied in the project will also allow doctors to “review the data stored whenever they want, to remember the images and the pathology or to compare with new cases,” explained Dr Texeira. Traditional medical archives “are difficult to retrieve,” according to Dr. Matovu, “so it is difficult to use past experience for current diagnosis. TeleInViVo allows the processing, storing and retrieval processes to take place.” Thus, application of telematic techniques facilitates patient management and diagnosis, by reducing patient referral, and saving time.

A BREAKTHROUGH FOR AFRICA

Meddie Manyanja wants to place the project within a “fully developed strategy for the use of telemedicine in a broader sense, with appropriate and affordable technical solutions.” He views the project as a “breakthrough in medical support and practice in Africa.

“In Uganda, the Ministry of Health has established a telemedicine taskforce, which is understudying the activities of our project for possible replication. There are two students from the surgery and technology faculties who are also doing research on the project. This will help in building local capacity and understanding of the project.”

Similar optimism exists in Kazakhstan, where telemedicine is an increasingly high priority area. The ability of specialist doctors to link up to and support remote doctors in consultation and diagnosis could help to create a major international shift, in both the practices and principles of health care.

Jack Skillen
project assistant,
UNESCO

THE THIRD ROOT

CULTURE *South and Central America are starting to recognise their ‘Africanicity’, and acknowledge the contribution of this ‘third root’ to the continent’s identity*

Long taboo, the African component of American culture is starting to be recognized. Not only in Brazil and the Caribbean where 80% of the 30 to 40 million survivors of the slave trade live, but also in Central America, in the Andean region and the southern cone of the continent - wherever African culture was able to survive, adapt and sometimes mix with indigenous and European cultures.

This meeting of the three worlds is the subject of an exhibition entitled Afro-America, the Slave Route, which opened in Mexico City on June 24. The show will travel later to different states in Mexico, to Cuba, the Dominican Republic and on to Africa, Spain and other European destinations.

“Using graphic documents - maps, drawings,

paintings, texts - along with ship models, photographs and objects linked to the religious cult of the slaves, we wanted to present a comprehensive picture of the transatlantic slave trade,” explains the show’s organizer, Mexican anthropologist Luz María Martínez Montiel, who is Director of the association, Afroamerica: *la tercera raíz* (the third root) and a member of the Scientific Committee of UNESCO’s Slave Routes project, launched in 1994.

“We didn’t want to limit ourselves to the period ending with the abolition of slavery, but rather to go further by studying the lives of these people, what they had become,” she said. “In this sense, the exhibition is clearly didactic. The official history of our countries has never attributed a civilising role to Africans in the

Americas. We have too long looked upon them as numbers, a work force, and never as cultural agents.” Indeed, most history books refer to “Latin” America, thereby excluding the African element (the continent’s “Africanicity”). And yet, from the far corners of Mexico to the summit of the Andean Cordillera, the culture of the American continent is impregnated by historical figures, rites and traditions of African origin.

According to Doudou Diene, Director of UNESCO’s Slave Routes project, “slaves never stopped putting up cultural resistance to the slave trade - in the holds of the slave ships where they were lined up like sardines, on the plantations or in the mines where they replaced the manpower of the indigenous populations



The capoeira (Bahia-Brazil), is a system of self defense that has its origins in a dance practised by slaves to discreetly train for battle

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which had been massacred.” Across four centuries of total oppression, slaves incorporated everything the slave traders imposed on them and transformed, it while seeming to obey. They thus created a *maroon* culture, composed of resistance and integration. “For instance, they integrated the Virgin Mary and the Catholic saints with their own gods, and gave them a place in the voodoo pantheon (Haiti, the Caribbean, Brazil), the santeria (Cuba, Mexico, Central America) or the candomblé (Brazil, Uruguay),” said Diene. A number of sacred African objects, contributed to the exhibition by Jean-Paul Agogue, a specialist in African ethnic groups, illustrate this heritage.

The African presence is everywhere, but “we don’t see it, because we don’t want to,” explained Olinda Celestino, an ethnologist in the Collège de France (Paris) laboratory of Social Anthropology, founded by Claude Lévi-Strauss, and member of a group of researchers put in place by Luz María Martínez Montiel, across South America. “We didn’t want to acknowledge that, up until the 1920s and 30s, the black population of Buenos Aires was bigger than the indigenous population,” she continues, or that dances like the Tango

contain “a big African component”. The existence of “whole black quarters in the big South American megapolises (Lima, Mexico City, Bogota...) as well as in villages and entire regions has also been denied or hidden just like the fact that the Patron Saint of Lima (Peru), San Martín de Porras, was the son of a black slave.”

It is in this context that Martínez Monteil has worked for over 20 years to ini-



In Brazil, a ceremony that pays homage to Omolou, god of diseases, has its origins in Benin and Nigeria

tiate a dialogue between the Americas and Africa, between “the two continents which barely know each other although they both suffered the hardships of slavery.”

Her efforts, however, have remained relatively isolated until recently. Nonetheless, the 1970s saw the emergence in Latin

America of black writers like Manuel Zapata in Colombia, Gregorio Martínez and Nicomedes Santa Cruz in Peru. “These writers incited the scientific world / scholarly historical establishment to consider the question of the descendants of the slaves,” said Olinda Celestino. Little by little, everywhere in Latin America, these writers came together, proclaiming their “Africanicity”, their role in

factors: first of all colour, “specific to the transatlantic trade: European thinkers have, over the centuries, elaborated racist doctrines based on the prejudice of colour which justified the sale of human beings as slaves.” From this stems the idea of the “normal” economic and social inferiority of populations of African origin.

Today “globally, the descendants of slaves are severely marked by inequalities born in this period and in countries like the French Antilles; those who control the land, the ‘Béké’, are descendants of slave traders!”

“In an attempt to correct this marginalisation grown out of the slave trade, some countries have chosen a system of quotas (affirmative action) in employment, housing, etc. Others advocate national integration. But neither system is truly successful.” For the moment, it is mainly in their spiritual and cultural expression that the descendants of slaves are gaining ground.

Cristina L’Homme

●●● 23rd August: International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

RESTORING MYANMAR’S CITY OF TEMPLES

HERITAGE *A candidate for the World Heritage List, Pagan first needs to be properly protected*

The towers are built in delicate stone and some have been coated with gold the thickness of a finger. Others have been covered likewise with silver. The king ordered these towers to

be built every so often to mark the splendour of his reign and as an act of piety. The result is there for all to see. They make up one of the most beautiful places in the world – magnificent,

lavish and extraordinarily well finished.”

Five centuries after the explorer Marco Polo thus described the city-state of Bagan in his *Chronicles of 1298*, it is still one of the

world’s greatest archaeological sites – a harmonious blend of nature and human effort and a masterpiece of religious devotion and human creativity.

From the mid-11th

century to the end of the 13th, a great outburst of religious fervour led to thousands of Buddhist religious monuments (*stupa*) and temples (*pahto*) being built on a loop of the river Ayeyarwady, in what is now central Myanmar (formerly Burma). To grasp the majesty of the place, imagine all of Europe's medieval cathedrals concentrated in an area of 50 sq kms.

Pagan is not yet on UNESCO's World Heritage List, which currently includes 630 natural and cultural sites around the world. The World Heritage Committee deferred its inclusion in 1997, mainly because the Myanmar authorities could not sufficiently guarantee the preservation of the site and its future management. The committee instead offered technical help to put together a new application to join the list and four international experts were sent to Myanmar last April.

"Our visit focused on two sensitive matters," says Minja Yang of UNESCO's World Heritage Centre and one of the four. "A golf course was built in 1996 right in the middle of the site. At the same time, a project to widen a road leading to Old Bagan threatened to



Details of a frieze at the Hti-lo-min-lo temple

© UNESCO/PIERRE PICHARD

spoil the site and its character and so prevent it from being put on the list.

"When we got there, we noticed that the golf course had been built on land that had switched to agriculture centuries ago. So the damage to the archaeological heritage was done long before the golf course was built. But to avoid other harm, we recommended that the land be declared an area reserved for tourists so as to strictly limit its use for other purposes. As for the road, we suggested building a detour leading directly from the airport to New Pagan to keep cars and buses away from the historic centre of the site."

These "frank" proposals were "taken positively" says Ms Yang. "The mission has been interesting and useful for us," confirms U Nyunt Han, the director-general of the archaeology department in Myanmar's Ministry of Culture.

Restoring the buildings themselves is a more complex matter. Since the government's tourist promotion – Visit Myanmar Year – in 1996, more than a thousand temples and other structures have been restored or rebuilt using methods a long way from Western norms of strict respect for the details of the original edifice.

FUNCTION NOT FORMS

"The people of Myanmar don't see it the way we do," says Ms Yang. "For them, restoring a temple doesn't mean so much restoring it to how it originally looked as enabling it to become a place of worship again. And in the Buddhist tradition, a building doesn't become a temple unless a holy object is placed on top of it. Without this, the remains of a temple, even if they're 1,000 years old, are only a heap of stones of no religious significance.

"So the technicalities of restoration and rebuilding are less important in the eyes of local people than whether the final result

allows the building to once more be used for religious purposes. As a result, whether it's done for touristic and cultural reasons – since religion is important in Myanmar – the work is quite shoddy. In some places, industrial bricks and cement have been used to restore 11th century buildings made of delicate bricks joined together with barely visible vegetal glue.

"The Myanmar authorities admit the work has been done too hastily and that the country does not have enough skilled people to do restoration work," she says. "So we returned from the trip with a request for help with training people. I hope the international community will respond because a properly done restoration will improve the monuments and make the site a model of conservation for the future. It'll also be a way to meet the demands of more and more tourists for 'authenticity' – and tourism can obviously be a way for Myanmar to develop."

Pierre Wolf



A shrine at the Ka-ma-kyang-u-hpaya temple

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Next month's issue :

YOUTH AND VIOLENCE

FORUM ON THE PACIFIC



on UNESCO's calendar

5 September

DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILISATIONS

At United Nations headquarters in New York (USA), a round table discussion on inter-cultural dialogue, organised by UNESCO and Iran in preparation for the United Nations Year for Dialogue Among Civilisations, 2001

8 September

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

8 to 10 September

URBAN PRIDE

Edinburgh (Scotland) hosts a congress on "Living and Working in a World Heritage City."

14 to 18 September

INTERDENOMINATIONAL EXCHANGE

Religious leaders and leading philosophers meet in Tashkent and afterwards in Samarkand (Uzbekistan) as part of UNESCO's Routes of Faith programme

27 to 29 September

CO-OPERATIVES FOR HOUSING

In Oujda (Morocco), which has a long tradition of self-help communities, a seminar on promoting a network of small local co-operatives in the housing sector is organised with the help of MOST