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UNESCO And Bangladesh

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"WHEN they ask me what is my background I shall say I come from the whole universe, from this unceasing flow, from this weft of clustered threads, from this weave of mixtures great, fertile and passing. I flow towards darkness. Or towards wholeness? My freedom is here: this is the one consolation."

(Federico Mayor: From weaving to websites)

The following extract from the "Medium Term Strategy 1996-2001" adopted by UNESCO, will throw adequate light on this specialised branch of the United Nations (UNO): "UNESCO is an organization dedicated to the development of international intellectual co-operation. Its role is to forge a community of ideas, knowledge and purpose; it is also to contribute to the progressive forging of a universal vision reflecting, and drawing benefit from, the sum of the differences. As an intellectual forum, it can help the international community to gain a better grasp of the changes occurring in the world today and to devise innovative strategies to meet emerging challenges in its fields of competence. Development for peace and peace for development are the two main strands closely intertwined of the Medium-Term Strategy as it has been devised for the years 1996-2001. The main objectives underlying it are, in essence, to reach the unreached, to include the excluded, to facilitate the exercise of civil rights and the participation of everyone in development, and to learn to live together and to build together, despite disagreements and differences." (Extract from: Medium-Term Strategy 1996-2001: UNESCO).

UNESCO which stands for United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, and comprises of 186 member states, gives top priority to its educational programme: a) basic education for all b) edu-

racial prejudice and religious differences. 4) Cultural Activities: developing cultural exchanges between member states and giving people access to works of our literature and philosophy, 5) Exchange of persons: Providing information as to the opportunities for works and study abroad, and providing travelling fellowships, 6) Mass Communication: keeping the public informed about the work of UNESCO and significant events in the fields of education, science and culture and campaigning to help people to obtain easier access to knowledge, 7) Rehabilitation: assessing and making provision for the educational needs of schools, libraries, and scientific institutions in war-devastated areas and under-developed countries, 8) Technical Assistance: providing expert advice in the fields of fundamental education, teacher training, technical and general education, scientific research and scientific advisory services: member states are advised in such matters as their literacy campaigns, school building programme surveying of mineral resources, teacher training.

UNESCO also contributes to the translation of certain masterpieces of world literature, recording of traditional music from all regions of the world and renders valuable assistance and advice in the maintenance of cultural heritages of nations and nationalities throughout the world and participates in the prevention of drug abuse and AIDS through education programmes and through a centre set up to gather, assess and distribute educational materials on AIDS prevention.

Teacher training, access to education for girls and women, education for peace and international understanding, environmental education, education for AIDS prevention, nutritional education, scientific and technological education, vocational and technical education, these

ber 5 was chosen in view of its historic importance due to adoption of the "Recommendation."

Education Ministers who met at the 44th session of the International Conference on Education under the auspices of UNESCO solemnly declared. "We, the Ministers of Education meeting at the 44th session of the International Conference on Education, deeply concerned by the manifestations of violence, racism, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism and violations of human rights, by religious intolerance, by the upsurge of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and by the growing gap separating wealthy countries from poor countries, phenomena which threaten the consolidation of peace and democracy both nationally and internationally and which are all obstacles to development. Mindful of our responsibility for the education of citizens committed to the promotion of peace, human rights and democracy in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, the Constitution of UNESCO, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant instruments such as the Convention on the rights of the child and the conventions on the rights of women, and in accordance with the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ... convinced that education policies have to contribute to the development of understanding, solidarity and tolerance among individuals and among ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and sovereign nations. Convinced that education should promote knowledge values, attitudes and skills conducive to respect for human rights and to active commitment to the

dignity and differences, and able to prevent conflicts or resolve them by non-violent means; to adopt measures to enhance the role and status of educators in formal and non-formal education and to give priority to pre-service and in-service training as well as the retraining of educational personnel, including planners and managers, oriented notably towards professional ethics, civic and moral education, cultural diversity, national codes and internationally recognized standards of human rights and fundamental freedoms; ... This solemn declaration of the Education Ministers was duly approved by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 28th session in Paris in 1995. Now it is interesting to observe whether the contents of this declaration already has been translated into action in countries including Bangladesh which is also a signatory to the above stated declaration of the Education Ministers.

Bangladesh became a member of UNESCO in October 1972 in pursuance of Article VII of UNESCO Constitution. Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO has also been setup by the government with the Education Minister as its Chairman and 69 Government and non-government members in the field of education, science and culture. Its activities, center around UNESCO Headquarters in Paris and different Regional Offices viz, the Regional Offices for Science and Technology for South and Central Asia in New Delhi (HOSTSCA), Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok (PROAP), Regional Offices for communication in Kuala Lumpur, for book development in the Asia Pacific Region in Karachi, besides these the Asian Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), Tokyo, Japan, jointly organized by the Japanese governmental and non-governmental organizations, organized regular annual co-operation.

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