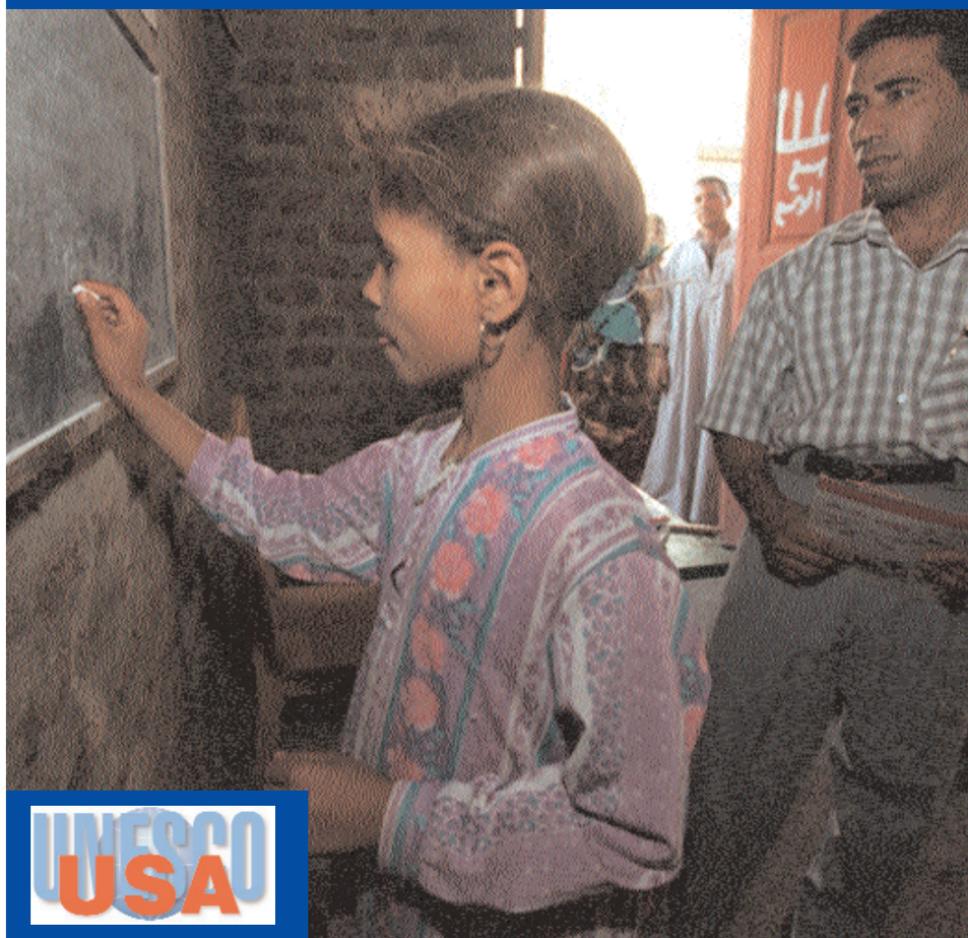


THE USA AND UNESCO

Building
Knowledge

Bridging
Cultures



UNESCO
USA

As a symbol of our commitment to human dignity, the United States will return to UNESCO. This organization has been reformed and America will participate fully in its mission to advance human rights and tolerance and learning.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH
September 12, 2002



President George W. Bush greets a member of the Uganda Watoto Children's Choir after they performed for him at the AIDS Support Organization Center in Entebbe, Uganda.

AMERICA'S PRINCIPLES AND MULTILATERAL COMMITMENT

“It is America’s honor and gift to be a nation of nations, whose people and aspirations touch every nation on the face of the earth. From universal dreams of freedom, equality, and prosperity, we became a country that melded many different cultures, ideas, perspectives, and talents—giving us a rich diversity that continues to make us strong today. With this strength comes great responsibility and a desire to engage with the international community. And words are not enough. Americans are committed to turning these visions into action.”

COLIN POWELL

U.S. Secretary of State

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, was founded after World War II to contribute to peace and security. Collaboration among nations through education, science and culture remains a cornerstone of a peaceful world order. The founders of UNESCO believed that the rule of law, respect for human rights, and freedom of expression would be strengthened through international cooperation. The need for the world community to renew its efforts to advance these principles has never been more urgent. American leadership in the service of peace and security can help mobilize multilateral institutions, including UNESCO, to stand up for common values that promote tolerance and thwart terrorism. The sanctity of human life must be a common commitment.

Americans were an important part of UNESCO’s creation. Author Archibald MacLeish, the first American member of UNESCO’s governing board, wrote the preamble to its 1945 Constitution. The opening lines captured the spirit of its founders: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.”

The United States rejoins UNESCO in October 2003 in that same spirit. Peace depends upon building a strong foundation of knowledge that can bridge nations, enlarge fundamental freedoms, and promote democracy with well-informed participants.

America will work hard in UNESCO to expand and improve education, promote scientific progress and press freedom, enhance understanding, and protect cultural heritage worldwide.

U.S. PRIORITIES IN UNESCO

EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

“Our nation is poised to rejoin UNESCO because—as President Bush pointed out—this organization is committed to advancing human rights, tolerance, and learning. It’s a noble goal that we all share. We must devote ourselves to making education a universal reality now. Far too many have waited too long for this day to come.”

ROD PAIGE

U.S. Secretary of Education

Advancing education is fundamental to the development of nations. In every country, literacy means freedom, power and opportunity. Education must be more than an ideal; it must be a reality.

In helping to launch the UN Literacy Decade (2003–2012) at the New York Public Library in February 2003, Laura Bush observed: “With 860 million illiterate adults and more than 100 million children worldwide without access to school, the enormity of the challenge is clear. But ours is a small world, and our futures are inextricably linked. And one person who cannot read is one person



U.S. funding for international education, which totaled \$333 million in 2003, supports primary, secondary and college students throughout the world. This classroom is in El Pedernalillo Lake, northern Mexico.



Laura Bush, Honorary Ambassador for the United Nations' Literacy Decade and a passionate promoter of literacy in the United States, looks forward to working with UNESCO to build strong education programs in each member country.

too many." Literacy is a precondition to education. It brings the power to reshape communities and destinies and to improve nations socially and financially.

Education is the most important long-term investment that any country can make in its people and its future. It is an instrument for change. With UNESCO's support, nations can develop strong education programs. The United States has invested \$333 million in international primary, secondary and college education in 2003.

UNESCO needs to help close the gender gap in education. Two-thirds of the one in five adults who cannot read are female. Education is vital for girls. UN studies show that illiterate girls may marry as early as age 11 and have up to seven children before the age of 18. Educated girls are more

likely to marry later and to have smaller, healthier families. Educated women understand the importance of health care and nutrition. There is no tool more effective in promoting democracy and development than the education of girls and women.

The United States seeks to partner with UNESCO to create learning environments for more than 22 million refugees, giving their lives structure and independence. For societies affected by poverty and HIV/AIDS, education is the key to survival. School systems decimated by AIDS must be rebuilt. More than 10 million children under age 15 have been orphaned by AIDS. Education is critical for these children. Other lives have been decimated by war and civil strife. Education brings trust and confidence to post-conflict

environments. UNESCO's work on revising textbooks and curriculums shows promise in countering distortions and helping break the cycle of prejudice and hatred that helps perpetuate conflicts. The United States will work toward ensuring that UNESCO's education programs pay attention to civic education as a foundation of democratic governance and peace.

Education is essential for achieving the goals of the Millennium Declaration, which the United Nations adopted as a blueprint for building a better world. Literacy and education bring freedom, power and opportunity for people to transform themselves. The United States believes the world community cannot waste time if we are to meet UNESCO's goal of increasing global literacy by 50 percent by the year 2015.

DEMOCRACY AND THE FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION

The free flow of information is fundamental to democracy. Information can contribute to the development of a world where 80 percent of the people still lack access to basic telecommunications. Access to information is also one of the best guarantees of respect for human rights. The Internet, free of government control, is one way to keep information flowing. UNESCO has a unique mandate to promote the right to seek, receive and impart information and to foster media independence.

When the United States left UNESCO in 1984, the organization had moved away from these ideals.



Designing the front page of the Kabul Weekly on a computer in Afghanistan. With more than 100 newspapers and a new law decreeing freedom of the press, Afghanistan has come a long way since the Taliban's overthrow in 2001.

In recent years, however, UNESCO has successfully demonstrated that it has recovered the vision of a free press and freedom of expression that its founders held dear. Some of its measures include:

- ≈ Establishment of an advisory group on press freedom, which includes professional journalists from around the world.
- ≈ Creation in 1997 of the Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize for the defense of freedom of expression.
- ≈ Provision of advisory services on media legislation and an independent press to legislators and other decision-makers.

In post-conflict situations, freedom of the press, independence of the media, and development of community newspapers and radio stations are crucial to reestablish social bonds and build

reconciliation. Increasingly, UNESCO is being asked to assist. The United States, with its extensive experience and expertise in these areas, intends to work with UNESCO to advance the free flow of information as a major prerequisite for tolerance and political participation.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS

The 21st century promises great scientific advances. Multilateral coordination through UNESCO will help maximize the effectiveness of scientific goals and projects. The United States looks forward to the opportunity to play a dynamic role with UNESCO partners to help ensure that science is used ethically to help solve the world's problems, and not to create new ones.



Newspapers have proliferated on the streets of Baghdad since the fall of Saddam Hussein, giving Iraqis access to information for the first time in many years.

Preservation of the world's increasingly endangered fresh-water resources is a significant global challenge. This issue is intrinsically linked to the need for a clear understanding of how the oceans and atmosphere function. The United States helped found the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, which we continued to support even during the period when the United States was not a member of UNESCO. The Commission makes an important contribution to knowledge of the oceans and atmosphere, while facilitating intergovernmental cooperation and collaboration.

Much of UNESCO's work in the area of the environment and natural resources has recently focused on sustainable development, that is, long-term economic growth that respects and promotes a healthy environment.

The United States has worked closely for years with other countries and UNESCO on joint research to foster progress on biodiversity, environmental policy development, site preservation and environmental monitoring in developing countries.

UNESCO serves as an interdisciplinary and multicultural forum to examine the ethics of scientific issues. The United States looks forward to active participation in these discussions as well as meetings of UNESCO's World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge (COMEST).

CULTURAL PRESERVATION AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

UNESCO's role in preserving cultural heritage worldwide is aimed at helping nations better understand their own



River gauging in Nepal, one of the projects sponsored by UNESCO's International Hydrological Program for the 2003 International Year of Fresh Water.



Renovating Sanshan Guild Hall, a cultural attraction in Shanghai, China. The United States supported its renovation through the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, a U.S. program that helps countries with their cultural patrimonies.

roots and each other. A long-term goal of the United States is to preserve cultural artifacts in those developing countries where such treasures are otherwise unprotected.

The United States was instrumental in the 1972 drafting and ratification of the World Heritage Convention, which ensures that sites around the world are recognized for their cultural history or their contributions to the soul of all humanity. Throughout the period of American withdrawal from UNESCO, the United States continued to fund and participate in the work of the World Heritage Committee, the implementing body for the World Heritage Convention.

The U.S. government is also committed to preserving the world's diverse and fragile cultural heritage through the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the

Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. Throughout its 18-year absence from UNESCO, the United States continued to implement this convention. Bilateral agreements addressed professional training, public education, conservation, and museum development, as well as scientific, cultural, and educational exchanges.

The United States is one of the most culturally diverse nations on earth. Such diversity stems from openness to and acceptance of cultural influences from around the globe. In addition to preserving cultural heritage, UNESCO has an obligation to encourage the exchange of cultural influences and cultural works that are essential to the achievement of cultural diversity and inter-cultural understanding.

UNESCO REFORM

The United States was a founding member of UNESCO in 1946. U.S. withdrawal in 1984 followed concerns about severe mismanagement, an increasingly ideological agenda, and an anti-Western bias that opposed those values that Americans cherish. For example, the Director-General of UNESCO at that time advocated limits on a free press. The United States was not alone in its dismay that UNESCO had drifted away from its founding principles: The United Kingdom and Singapore also withdrew.

U.S. withdrawal from UNESCO sent a strong message that despotic leadership would not be tolerated. America's message was taken seriously and led to a reform process that continues to this day.

The Decision to Return

President Bush's decision to rejoin the organization recognizes that significant changes have occurred. UNESCO's recent work has promoted core values such as press freedom and education for all.

In recent years, Director-General Koichiro Matsuura has addressed the organization's management problems. Senior management posts have been reduced from 160 in 1999 to 89 in 2002. Appointments to senior posts are now made in a competitive and transparent manner. The Director-General has created an Internal Oversight Unit, introduced budgeting and management software, and pursued greater decentralization of UNESCO's bureaucratic structure. These changes need to continue.

America's Engagement

The United States will remain committed to reforming UNESCO. This institution must uphold its founding purpose and operate efficiently. If UNESCO falls short, the United States will say so. Americans will insist upon good stewardship of resources, accountability, and results-oriented performance.

The United States again will be the biggest financial contributor to UNESCO, paying 22 percent of the annual assessed budget, in addition to voluntary contributions. America will work to ensure that funds are spent efficiently and transparently.

UNESCO is heavily involved in many issues that are vitally important to the United States of America and the world. This streamlined organization now has the potential to be a critical force for positive action. In rejoining UNESCO, the United States is renewing its commitment to multi-lateral cooperation in education, science, and culture, and its determination to use every available means to work with other countries in the advancement of peace, development, human rights, and security.



ON THE COVER

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has funded the construction of almost 2,000 primary schools in Egypt since 1975, with a particular concentration on rural areas and girls' attendance.

BACK COVER

Experts from the U.S. National Park Service provided technical assistance to Indian authorities managing the Taj Mahal's preservation and maintenance.

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