
Question 14

What new issues could be contemplated or reinforced in which UNESCO has a comparative advantage in the multilateral context and in which it could play a constructive role?

Question 15

Are there any activities, issues/themes which you consider should be dropped/abandoned in view of their limited impact or their marginal relevance for the Organization's mandate?

Response of Canada

Of all of the questions, these three are perhaps the most difficult to answer objectively. We believe that all respondents are in a position to identify "activities and contributions" that they would like to see either more strongly supported or "dropped/abandoned." If the decisions about what programmes to maintain are to be based on subjective responses and not evaluations of the programmes, it will be difficult to make decisions based on these responses. It is also not entirely clear what is meant by "activities and contributions" in this context.

While these questions do address priority-setting to focus on a limited number of objectives, they only partially address the proposals of the Director-General in document 160 EX/5, Part II, and the 31 C/4, paragraphs 32-37, that UNESCO's actions should be guided by the principles of concentration, flexibility, creativity and innovation, convergence and inter-disciplinary action, and co-operation and partnerships. The notion of UNESCO's comparative advantage is only present in the context of new initiatives, and we recommend that the prioritization of UNESCO's programme activities be based on the five principles identified above, combined with activities where UNESCO has a clear comparative advantage. Furthermore, we recommend that UNESCO not endanger its current strengths and successes such as the World Heritage Programme, Associated Schools and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in the belief that it is essential to identify new issues to be addressed on a priority basis.