

However, the experience of recent years does not permit us to voice a positive opinion on this otherwise worthy notion.

For one thing, the target groups, Africa, the least developed countries and women, do not feel they have felt the anticipated benefits of this prioritization.

For another, there is a flaw in the idea. These three groups are too often the beneficiaries and thus the targets, and all too rarely the agents of transformation that their special status should make them.

For as long as they are perceived and treated as recipients rather than active agents, the project is doomed to failure.

There is some hope, however: the project "Les Assises de l'Afrique" seems to have been adopted by the principal parties concerned.

The dossier of "women", despite the Organization's efforts including its insertion as a priority target group which is a means of promotion, continues to meet with resistance that has a demobilizing effect in certain Member States, including our own.

Canada feels it has valuable experience to contribute under this heading; the next C/5 should plan for activities that are specific to women with respect to the rise in poverty, democratic transition and the impact of globalization.

The next Plan must deal with this failure and analyze the reasons for it. The Organization must find a way of convincing its partners that being included in a priority target group "really does make a difference."

In consultations with National Commissions, a fourth target group was proposed: youth. We do not feel it would be wise to enlarge the field of priority target groups for the time being. We first need assurance that the three identified groups do feel the positive effects before we consider lengthening the list, which would lead to rivalry and frustration.

Canada would nonetheless like to see young people truly associated with the reflection and the UNESCO Programme as agents of change. At the time when the Organization is looking to the 21st century, the members of our society who will be living in that century are not yet active members of the debates that concern them more than anyone, and to which they have important contributions to make.

The Director-General wonders whether "combating exclusion could be made the watchword of the next Medium-Term Plan" (Paragraph 33). If the Organization has still not succeeded in reaching the three priority target groups that are among the most poorly provided for in this world, how can it envisage, without seriously damaging its credibility, the addition of other targets that it could not reach?