

Which of these two alternatives do you think it desirable to choose, and why? Do you think it preferable to adopt another solution?

Background:

The question of resource indications in the Medium-Term Plan has been the subject of some controversy and differences of opinion. The first Medium-Term Plan did contain resource indications expressed in terms of differential biennial growth rates for objectives. The problem arose because these indications, while not constituting commitments on the part of Member States, tended to become self-fulfilling prophecies: actual growth tended to match or exceed these indications. While there is agreement that resource indications are useful in that they provide some idea of the relative priorities in terms of which the Organization's total resources will be distributed, there is reluctance to include such indications that tend to become de facto commitments.

At the 21st session of the General Conference Member States were divided on this issue. Some, mostly developed countries, preferred not to have any resource indications in the second Plan itself, leaving resource allocations to be decided in each biennial programme and budget; others, mainly developing and socialist countries, wanted resource indications in the Plan, but did not agree on what method should be used. Hence the paragraph in 21C/Resolution 100 quoted in this question, inviting the Director-General to make an indepth study of the matter.

Considerations:

The two alternative hypotheses offered in the paragraph reflect some of the differences of opinion that surfaced in the General Conference. Alternative a) would be very limited in that it would only indicate relative priorities at the beginning of the Plan period. It implies either an assumption that these priorities will remain the same for the entire planning period, whatever the growth rate in the total resources of the Organization, or an assumption that changes in these priorities will be decided at the time when resources are allocated in each successive biennial programme and budget, depending on the overall growth rate of resources. While the second assumption may seem reasonable, it still does not provide a basis for decisions about changes in priorities that are not based on expectations that resources will increase.

Canada, along with most western countries, has consistently opposed increases in Unesco's budget during the first Medium-Term Plan. It is mainly in consistency with this policy position that the hypothesis (b) would be considered unacceptable, even though it has the advantage of indicating changes in priorities during the Plan period. Assuming that this