Establishment of a UNESCO/Cousteau Ecotechnie Chair in Sudan

The Director-General of UNESCO and the Director of the ComputerMan College for Computer Studies in Khartoum (Sudan) today signed an agreement setting up a new UNESCO/Cousteau Ecotechnie Chair.

This is the thirteenth such ecotechnie Chair set up around the world. These Chairs now make up an international network aiming to promote interdisciplinary education, research and policy-setting in the field of environment and development. One of the features of this new Chair will be to foster South/South cooperation while at the same time strengthening interdisciplinarity in an international network pooling institutions from a dozen countries.

Mr Matsuura said how much he welcomed the creation of this UNESCO/Cousteau Chair, which is one of the concrete outcomes of his official visit to Sudan in December 2003. He also emphasized the special role of the Chair in promoting lasting peace in Sudan, for “anything that encourages access to knowledge and its dissemination also encourages peace”, he stated. “This Chair is the fourth to be established in Sudan and, like the other three, it bears witness to UNESCO’s commitment to participate most actively in reconstruction, peace and reconciliation efforts in the region. As the first UNESCO/Cousteau Chair, it strengthens the international and multidisciplinary nature of initiatives in favour of education and development.”

The Director of the ComputerMan College for Computer Studies, Dr Mustafa Abu Baker, and the Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Sudan to UNESCO, Mr Abdel Basset El Sanosi, both thanked UNESCO and Ms Francine Cousteau for enabling this project to come into being, for it is “a real chance for Sudan”. Mr El Sanosi particularly highlighted the importance of the Chair, which “will be a contribution to the peace process in Sudan through scientific inquiry”. “This Agreement, he added, is not a bilateral accord between Sudan and UNESCO, but a multilateral cooperation instrument through the UNESCO/Cousteau Chairs network.”

Ms Cousteau also welcomed the fact that the name and expertise of the Cousteau Team could again be associated with a project of such potential. The Permanent Delegates of Ethiopia and Malaysia to UNESCO also took the opportunity to hail the initiative, which made it possible to extend onto the international level the exemplary ties of cooperation between their countries and Sudan.

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