Globalisation remains a much-contested concept that belies easy and precise definition despite the volumes of scholarly texts and discourse on the subject. Globalisation can be an all-encompassing phenomenon and yet leave untouched large areas of the globe. It can have a benign influence on many societies and yet impact others negatively. There is, however, some consensus that globalisation is not only an economic but a political, social and cultural phenomenon unleashed by technological innovations and advances in communications in recent years. Characterised by “shrinking space, shrinking time and disappearing borders,” globalisation is challenging the way nations operate.

UNESCO defines globalisation as “a set of economic, social, technological and cultural structures and processes arising from the changing character of the production, consumption and trade relations and assets that comprise the base of international politico-economic economy.” These changes are transnational and multi-dimensional dynamics that have a major impact on outcomes in determining “issue areas” (environment, trade and world regulation) and may induce global and local actors to be more auton- omous or form a traditionally exclusive state decision-making.

According to UNESCO, four principal features can explain the origins of globalisation: the integration into the world market of national economies; the transition from a “high volume
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