



**UNITWIN on Interreligious Dialogue for
Intercultural Understanding
Executive Committee Meeting
17-18 December 2015
UNESCO Headquarters, Room V**

Concept Note

Background and Rationale:

The first Academic Forum of UNESCO Chairs on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan (19-20 May 2015), provided a suitable framework for reflection and exchanges on how to build a more effective platform for interaction and synergized efforts to enhance collaboration among UNESCO Chairs, and also to strengthen their participation and support to core areas in UNESCO's work in this domain.

This meeting will be an opportunity to consult UNESCO Chairs, through a brainstorming and rethinking exercise, with a view to challenging UNESCO's approach in the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, and to suggest new modalities that may be considered for improved mutual understanding among peoples of different cultures, religions and beliefs.

The reflection will be guided by the convening framework of the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022) as a basis for developing a long-term commitment with UNESCO Chairs.

The meeting will therefore have a three-fold objective:

- (i) mapping of opportunities offered by UNESCO and the UNITWIN Network environments and identifying concrete initiatives for joint synergies to enhancing intercultural and interreligious dialogue, in support of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures;
- (ii) brainstorming on future thematic priority areas of focus for UNESCO's work to promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue, from which new flagship collaborative programmes and projects could emerge.
- (iii) review of the functioning and further strengthening of the UNITWIN Network.

The encounter will mobilize experts, including UNESCO Chairs in the field of intercultural dialogue. It will also be the opportunity to kick-off, a collaborative project entitled: "Developing e-training resources for promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding", funded by the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Preliminary Programme

Thursday 17 December 2015

10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

- **Opening and welcome:**

Ms Nada Al-Nashif, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO

Mr Steven Shankman, Coordinator of the UNITWIN Network on Interreligious Dialogue for Intercultural Understanding, University of Oregon (USA)

- Sessions moderators: **Dendev Badarch, Steven Shankman, Ann-Belinda Preis**

Session 1: Ongoing and future work of UNESCO and the UNITWIN Network in the area of intercultural and interreligious dialogue

10:15 a.m. – 11:45 p.m.

- Commitments made at the Academic Forum of UNESCO Chairs on intercultural dialogue in Baku:
 - Update on the collaboration between UNESCO and UNITWIN, including use of the collaborative workspace for UNESCO Chairs
 - Review of proposals for joint projects and collaboration within the UNITWIN
 - Timeframe and reporting

11:45 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

- Proposals of UNESCO Chairs on intercultural dialogue for the 4th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, Baku 2017:
 - Core theme and focus of the 4th World Forum
 - Plenary session for UNESCO Chairs on intercultural dialogue
 - The second Academic Forum of UNESCO Chairs on intercultural dialogue (lessons learnt, thematic focus)
 - Timeframe and reporting

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. – Lunch hosted in the UNESCO Restaurant (7th Floor)

Session 2: Opportunities for Collaboration between UNESCO and the UNITWIN network on intercultural dialogue

2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

- Brief presentation of UNESCO's priorities for the promotion of intercultural dialogue. *Dendev Badarch Director, Division for Social Transformations and Intercultural Dialogue*
- Special focus I: "Building indicators on intercultural dialogue": *Lydia Deloumeaux, Assistant Programme Specialist, Culture Statistics Unit, UNESCO Institute for Statistics*

Discussion

4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

- Special focus II: “Developing e-learning resources for promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding”. *Hugue Ngandeu Ngatta*, Section for Intercultural Dialogue (UNESCO)
 - “Promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding in Africa: a regional mapping of e-learning resources?” *Lupwishi Mbuyamba François*, Director, Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa (OCPA)
 - “Online resourcing for promoting intercultural dialogue”. *Svetlana Knyazeva*, Chief, Digital Pedagogy and Learning Material Section, Institute for Information Technologies in Education (UNESCO)

Discussion

Friday 18 December 2015

Session 3: Future priority areas for UNESCO’s work on intercultural and interreligious dialogue

10:00 a.m. – 10:15 p.m.

- Kick-off presentation: “Emerging trends and challenges for promoting mutual understanding today”. *Gary Bouma* UNESCO Chair in Interreligious and Intercultural Relations – Asia Pacific and *Fethi Mansouri* UNESCO Chair, Cultural Diversity and Social Justice, Director, Centre for Citizenship and Globalization at Deakin University, School of Humanities and Social Studies

10:15 a.m. -12:00 a.m.

- Open discussion with participants. Lead questions:
 - What themes for a sharper focus in the global discussions on intercultural and interreligious dialogue?
 - What interventions for the nexus of cultural diversity and human rights?
 - What unexplored avenues, approaches, vectors?

12:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

- Conclusions, drafting teams and deadlines

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Lunch hosted at UNESCO Restaurant (7th Floor)

Session 4: Building a stronger UNITWIN Network – the Executive Committee

2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

- Brief update on UNESCO Chairs working in the field of Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue – new members of the UNITWIN Network
- Strengthening UNITWIN Network on I-dialogue Coordination and procedures for election and the renewal of the Executive Committee
- Conclusions

4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. **Conclusions, recommendations and way forward**

Preliminary List of Participants

UNESCO Chairs

- **Steven Shankman**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair for Transcultural Studies, Interreligious Dialogue, and Peace, Coordinator of the UNITWIN Network on Interreligious Dialogue for Intercultural Understanding (USA)
- **Gary Bouma**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Interreligious and Intercultural Relations – Asia Pacific (Australia)
- **Pascale Boucaud**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair for Memory, Cultures and Interculturality, Catholic University of Lyon (France)
- **Dimitri Spivak**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair for Comparative Studies of Spiritual Traditions, their Specific Cultures, and Interreligious Dialogue, North-Western Affiliation of D.S. Likhachev Institute for Cultural and Natural Heritage (Russian Federation)
- **Hassan Nadhem**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on the Development of Inter-Religious Dialogue Studies in the Islamic World, The University of Kufa (Iraq)
- **Laura Yerekesheva**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair for Sciences and Spirituality, Institute of Oriental Studies named after R.B. Suleimenov (Kazakhstan)
- **Priyankar Upadhyaya**, UNESCO Chair for Peace and Intercultural Understanding at the Banaras Hindu University (India)
- **Fethi Mansouri**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair, Cultural Diversity and Social Justice, Director, Centre for Citizenship and Globalization at Deakin University, School of Humanities and Social Studies (Australia)

Other Experts

- **Lupwishi Mbuyamba François**, Director, Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa-OCPA (Congo, RDC)
- **Representative from the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan to UNESCO**

UNESCO

- **Nada Al-Nashif**, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences
- **Dendev Badarch**, Director, Division for Social Transformations and Intercultural Dialogue, UNESCO
- **Ann-Belinda Preis**, Chief, Intercultural Dialogue Section, UNESCO
- **Ali Moussa-Iye**, Chief, History and Memory for Dialogue Section, UNESCO
- **Svetlana Knyazeva**, Chief, Digital Pedagogy and Learning Material Section, Institute for Information Technologies in Education (UNESCO)
- **Liliana Simionescu**, Higher Education Section, UNESCO Chairs Coordinating Team
- **Lydia Deloumeaux**, Assistant Programme Specialist, Culture statistics Unit, UNESCO Institute for Statistics
- **Amina Hamshari**, Intercultural Dialogue Section, UNESCO
- **Hugue Ngandeu Ngatta**, Intercultural Dialogue Section, UNESCO