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IRAN-UNESCO Country Programming Document 2010-2013

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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
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Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

UNESCO Country Programming Document (UCPD)

for the

Islamic Republic of Iran

2010~2013

UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office 2010

Foreword

I have the pleasure to present the first UNESCO Country Programming Document (UCPD) for the Islamic Republic of Iran, covering the period 2010~2013. The UCPD aims to situate UNESCO's work in each Member State within the country's development context. This document is grounded within the programmatic goals and planned outcomes of the UNDAF for Iran (Jan 2005 - Dec 2010), which coordinates and guides the activities of all the UN agencies in Iran.

The UCPD for Iran, as is the UNDAF itself, is closely aligned with the development priorities of Iran as presented in the general policy outlines of the Fifth Five-Year Development Plan (March 2010 - March 2015), which are in keeping with the 20-year Outlook Plan of the country.

As a specialized agency within the UN system, UNESCO's mission is to support the efforts of Member States in adhering to international standards and norms adopted by UNESCO's General Conference, and fostering international co-operation between Member States, scientific bodies and civil society organizations involved in UNESCO's fields of competence. UNESCO's mission supports the UN's Millennium Development Goals, and thus supports Iran's work in this regard to enable access to the benefits of development by all citizens in this country.

The June 2009 presidential election in Iran has clearly brought about new context and dynamics for achieving sustainable development within the Iranian society. The present UCPD will be reviewed and further refined as new challenges arise within the social and cultural context of the country.¹

Building peace in the hearts and minds of people remains the primary mission of UNESCO. In collaboration with our partners in Iran and worldwide, we hope to provide platforms for social change that will enable the benefits of development to reach all, especially the most disadvantaged, women, youth and children, to shape a sustainable future for the world – a world of unity in diversity.



Qunli Han
UNESCO Representative to the Islamic Republic of Iran &
Director of UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office for
Afghanistan, I.R. of Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan

¹ I take this opportunity to express appreciation to the professional team members who collaborated with me to prepare and finalize this document, namely: Mr. Gholam Reza Samarbakhsh for Education, Ms. Niloofer Sadeghi for Science, Ms. Riina Subra for Communication and Information, and Ms. Junko Taniguchi for Culture, as well as the photographers' contributors. My particular thanks go to Ms. Riina Subra for preparing the first and comprehensive draft and to Ms. Junko Taniguchi for her substantial work on editing. Mr. Amir Makouei, who joined the team later, also made important contributions related to disaster management and the finalisation of the document. My sincere appreciation is also expressed to the Assistant Director-General for Strategic Planning and his team, especially Ms. Ranwa Safadi, Senior Programme Planning Officer for her valuable comments in the final refinement of the document, and to the Director of the Bureau of Field Co-ordination for continued support and guidance.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AiE	Arts in Education
ANVPAH	Association Natl des Villes et Pays d'Art et d'Histoire
ASPnet	Associated Schools Project Network
BAFIA	Iranian Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigration Affairs
BCM	Billion Cubic Meters
BMSC	Bam Model School Complex
CCA	United Nations Common Country Assessment
CM	Cubic Meter
CMTC	Creative Music Training Center
COMEST	World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology
DIR/BFC	Director/Bureau of Filed Cooperation
DMUCH	Disaster Mitigation of Urban Cultural Heritage
EC	Expediency Council
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EDUCAIDS	Global initiative on Education and HIV/AIDS
EFA	Education for All
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FRESH	Focusing Resources on Effective School Health
GC	Guardian Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEObs	Global Ethics Observatory
G-WADI	Water and Development Information for Arid Lands – A Global Network
HCAUP	Higher Council for Architecture and Urban Planning
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IBC	International Bioethics Committee
ICHHTO	Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization
ICOM	International Council of Museums
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IGBC	Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee
IGCP	International Geosciences Programme
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
ISDR	UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
IT	Information Technology
ICQHS	International Centre on Qanats and Historic Hydraulic Structures
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICTP	International Center for Theoretical Physics
IHCNF	Indian Heritage Cities Network Foundation
IHP	International Hydrological Programme
IIEES	International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology
INCO	Iranian National Centre for Oceanography
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPDC	International Programme for the Development of Communication
ISCE	Iranian Society of Consulting Engineers
IRIB	Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting
LDI	Linguistic Diversity Index
NHDR	National Human Development Report
MAB	Man and Biosphere
MCM	Million Cubic Metrics
MDI	Media Development Indicators
MLA	Main Line of Action
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals

MHUD	Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHME	Ministry of Health and Medical Education
MoSRT	Ministry of Science, Research and Technology
MOST	Management of Social Transformations
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHDR	National Human Development Report
NSHC	Network of Small Historic Cities
R&D	Research & Development
RCUWM	Regional Centre for Urban Water Management
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SCE	Supreme Council for the Protection of the Environment
SPAC	President's Deputy Office for Strategic Planning and Control
S&T	Science & Technology
STE	Science and Technology Education
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCPD	UNESCO Country Programming Document
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESS	UNESCO National Education Support Strategy
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIDC	United Nations International Drug Control
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNITWIN	University Twinning and Networking
UNODC	United Nations Organization for Drugs and Crimes
UTCO	UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office
UUT	Union of Universities of Technology (Iran)
UWM	Urban Water Management
WB	World Bank
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society

Executive summary

1. This first UNESCO Country Programming Document (UCPD) 2010-2013 for the Islamic Republic of Iran draws the main lines of the cooperation framework within which the Organization will support the Iranian Government's development efforts in addressing national challenges and ambitions in the areas of education, science, culture, communication and information, and social human sciences.
2. The country has experienced growth both in income and in population in recent decades, the latter which has more than doubled in since the Islamic Revolution in 1979. The dramatic population growth has produced a large, young population that is now reaching out to higher living standards, deeper knowledge and technical capacities for enhanced quality of life. Within this context, Part I of this document reviews the social and cultural challenges facing Iran and its people today, highlighting the priorities for development. Outstanding issues related to education, scientific research, technology and the environment are examined to identify the main concerns for enhancing policies and practices.
3. UNESCO's added value for the development process of Iran is elaborated in Part III of the document. In supporting the Iranian efforts to build an ever more inclusive, sustainable and forward-looking society, UNESCO's achievements of the past and prospects for the future years 2010-2013 are presented. Throughout its proposed programmes for 2010 ~ 2013, UNESCO strives to offer Iranian partners the expertise, best practices, catalytic support, access to international networks established and/or supported by UNESCO worldwide, to increase capacity for enabling the benefits of development to reach all, particularly the disadvantaged. Most of the proposed programmes are embedded within the sub-regional activities of the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office, which services Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkmenistan in addition to Iran.



Photograph 1: School girl in Bam City, Kerman Province, studying on the ground after the 2003 earthquake.

PART I: IRAN – A DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

I.1. Country profile

I.1.a. Governance system

4. The Government and Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRAN) were established following the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The Iranian governance system includes legislative (Parliament), judiciary (courts), executive (government/public implementing agencies) and supervising bodies. The Parliament is divided into a lower (*Majlis*) and upper house (the Guardian Council). The members of the Guardian Council [GC] are appointed by the Supreme Leader, while those in the *Majlis* are elected for four years from a group of candidates prequalified by the GC. The President of the country is elected for four years from a small group of candidates similarly prequalified by the GC. The President is the head of all executive entities. The ministers are nominated in their personal capacity by the President but the *Majlis* approves their appointment.

5. In addition to appointing the members of the GC, the Supreme Leader appoints the head of the judiciary system and is also the commander of armed forces. He has delegated some of his powers to the Expediency Council [EC], a group of high-level officials such as the President and *Majlis* Speaker as well as selected experts. EC is responsible for elaborating macro-level national policies as well as deciding on the disagreements between higher and lower houses of the Parliament.

6. In Iran, many decisions are made by different councils. There are three different categories of councils, all of which adopt policies related to the fields of UNESCO's mandate:

- Inter-ministerial councils who adopt regulations controlling development initiatives. The Higher Council for Architecture and Urban Planning, the Higher Environment Council and Economy Council are such councils. Members of these councils include ministers, deputy-ministers or their representatives.
- Planning Councils are established at provincial and county levels. Members of these councils include public officials at the respective level. Provincial and county councils are mainly responsible for the development policies of the area under their jurisdiction.
- Elected Local Councils are those members are elected at rural and city level. These are mainly responsible for supervising the management and approving the development policies of their settlement. There are councils at higher levels in form of second-tier elected bodies.

7. The central government is based in Tehran. Iran has thirty provinces which are governed by appointed provincial governors. UNESCO's key governmental counterparts in Iran include two Vice Presidents heading specialized organizations for (i) Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism, and (ii) Environmental Protection; Ministers from the ministries of (iii) Culture & Islamic Guidance, (iv) Education, (v) Energy, (vi) Housing & Urban Development, (vii) Interior, (viii) Jihad e Agriculture, (ix) Science, Research and Technology; (x) Iranian National Commission for UNESCO; (xi) Councils mentioned above active in the fields related to UNESCO's mandates; (xii) provincial and local governmental organizations, amongst others.

I.1.b. Geography, natural resources and economy

8. The country lies between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, on a high plateau surrounded by three chains of mountains, at an average of over 1,200m above sea level. With two large deserts in the central basin, over 80% of Iran's 1,648 thousand square km surface area is arid or semi-arid land.² Less than 10% of the soil is arable land, and 6.8% is covered by forests.³

9. Iran's significant crude oil and natural gas reserves are a main source of national revenues.⁴ Other important natural resources include coal, chromium and copper. The economy is driven by a large service sector (69% of GDP)⁵ and industry (28%), with agriculture representing around 3% of the overall economy, although agriculture employs a significant share of the population.⁶



Map 1: Map of Iran

Source: <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/iran.pdf>

² Source: G-Wadi Asia 2007, p.66. Other sources such as FAO Iran as well as national reports say this rate does not exceed 60-65%.

³ Source: UN Statistics Division 2008. Other sources such as FAO Iran as well as national reports mention that about 31% of the soil is arable land, and close to 9% is covered by forests.

⁴ Iran's known natural gas reserves are the world's second largest.

⁵ Source: WB 2005, Iran Country Profile 2008. Other sources such as The Economist Intelligence Unit reports 48.5% of GDP for the service sector and 41.3 for the industry sector.

⁶ Iran Country Profile 2008. Other sources such as The Economist Intelligence Unit notes 10.2% of GDP for agriculture sector. FAO Iran says it is around 14%. In terms of employment, these figures are different, with only 44.8% of the active population working in the service sector, 31.8% in industry and 23.4% in agriculture. Source: Statistical Centre of Iran, National Census 2006.

I.1.c. Demography, rapid urbanization and the Iranian people today

10. Since the Islamic Revolution, the country's population has more than doubled due to a very high birth rate during the 1980's. The trend was reversed in the 1990's following a change in population policy and widespread advances in family planning. As a result, Iran has a very young population with 50.2% of the 70.5 million population aged under 25.⁷

11. The entry of this young generation into the labor market has caused pressure on the economy, and consequently the unemployment rate has reached an estimated 11.6% (20.4% for females) in 2004.⁸ Rise of unemployment has increased urban migration from rural areas, notably from the 1990's, causing dramatic urban development pressures.⁹ The capital area of Tehran has witnessed unprecedented growth in the past two decades, and is now a city with 9 million inhabitants and 13 million during the workday.¹⁰

Table 1: Fast Facts - Iran	
Total population World Bank (2007)	71 million
Urban population World Bank (2008)	67%
Life expectancy at birth (years) World Bank (2008)	71
Total fertility rate (births per woman) UNESCO (2006)	2.1
Population growth rate (%) World Bank (2008)	1.1
GDP HDR (2007);	US\$ 286.1 billion;
GDP growth rate (%) World Bank (2008)	2.5
GDP per capita growth (%) World Bank (2008)	1.3
GNI per capita World Bank (2008)	US\$ 10,800
Human Development Index UNDP (2009) Rank; Value	88; 0.782
Gender Empowerment Measure (value) UNDP (2009)	0.331
Net primary school enrolment rate UNESCO (2007)	98(%)
Adult female literacy rate UNESCO (2006)	77.2%
Adult male literacy rate UNESCO (2006)	87.3%
Female professional and technical workers in labor force UNDP (2009)	34%
HIV/AIDS adult prevalence rate World Development Indicators Database (2008)	0.2%

12. Iran is a country of many traditional cultures and ethnic groups. It is home to peoples of varied origins including the Persians (50%), the Azeri Turks (20-25%), the Kurds (10%), and the Arabs (3%), as well as the Lors, the Turkmens, the Baluchis and Ghashghaees. Iran also hosts one of the world's largest refugee populations, with 935,512 Afghan and 23,500 Iraqi registered refugees residing in the country.¹¹ The official and main religion is Shia Islam (approximately 85-90%), with other religious groups including different branches of Islam with Sunni Muslims (approximately 5-10%), and Zoroastrians, Christians and Jews (approximately 0.1 - 0.5% each).¹²



Photograph 2:
Service at an Armenian Church in Tehran City

⁷ Source: Statistical Centre of Iran, National Census of 2006.

⁸ Unemployment estimates vary, and some suggest a significantly higher figure, specifically among those under age of 25 and women. Source: WB 2007. Draft CCA report of Iran 2009 says it was around 10.5% in June 2009.

⁹ Urban population increased from 45.7% in 1975 to 66.9% in 2005 and is expected to reach 71.9% in 2015. Source: UNDP HDR 2008.

¹⁰ On average, 11 million people, Source: Tehran Municipality 2008.

¹¹ 935,512 Afghan refugees were registered in January 2009 by the Iranian Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigration Affairs (BAFIA). According to the 2008 Amayesh III registration 23,562 Iraqi refugees were registered in BAFIA's 2007 database. UNCHR says it is now about 50,000 registered Iraqi refugees. The number of unregistered refugees is unknown.

¹² Source: Statistical Centre of Iran, National Census of 2006. Estimates vary as the Iranian Government does not keep separate statistics on the number of Shia and followers of other schools of Islam. This estimate is based on research by the Faculty of Social Science, University of Tehran.

1.2. Iranian development context – challenges and priorities in education, science, culture and communication

I.2.a. Overview

13. The Government of Iran's development priorities are reflected in comprehensive and multi-sectoral nation-wide development plans, updated every five years to reflect key challenges linked to the implementation of the Supreme Leader's 20-year Outlook Plan.

14. The 5th National Development Plan will provide policy orientations for the years 2010 to 2014. The plan emphasizes economic and social development, the nurturing of Islamic principles, environmental protection and disaster management, investment in research and technology and the development of relations with other countries in the region.

15. Key priority areas of the 5th Development Plan related to UNESCO's mandate include¹³:

- i. Increased support to science and technology, both in terms of funding and of strengthening quality, based on an assessment of the needs of the labor market;
- ii. Promoting social justice and the well-being of people in rural and deprived areas;
- iii. Promoting innovative research, risk-taking and critical thinking;
- iv. Increasingly investing in the use of new technology, including communication and information technology;
- v. Focusing on the needs and the creation of constructive opportunities for women and youth;
- vi. Stepping up actions to maintain public health, increasing opportunities for sports and addressing problems linked to narcotics abuse, pollution and other environmental health risks, and mental health concerns;
- vii. Increasing policy coherence to ensure synergies related to education, health and employment objectives;
- viii. Increasingly engaging in regional international cooperation and dialogue based on Islamic-Iranian culture and interests.

16. Iran has made significant progress in human development since the 1990's. The country's Human Development Index (HDI) has been rising rapidly,¹⁴ especially due to growth in per capita income and to improved health conditions contributing to increased life expectancy. In the 2008 Human Development Report of UNDP, IRI is ranked 94th among countries on the HDI, placing it at the higher end of middle income countries. However, Iran remains highly dependent on its one major industry – oil and gas – which accounts for 10~20% of GDP and 80% of Iran's export income.¹⁵

17. The country's main development challenges are found to emerge from the rise of a large young population and a substantive amount of migrants, both internal and external. These groups create population pressures for the social system and thus for human opportunities in various sectors. This is reflected in the increased demand for high quality education, work opportunities, life options and empowerment of both men and women. Recently, with the emergence of a global financial and economic crisis and the related dramatic decrease in the price of crude oil, Iran's already fragile economy has become increasingly vulnerable.

¹³ Based on the President's presentation of policy outlines to the Supreme Leader, 2008.

¹⁴ Iran's HD Index value rose from 0.578 in 1980 to 0.759 in 2005.

¹⁵ Source: Draft CCA 2009 July.

18. In recent years, the government has embarked on several initiatives aiming to increase human development and to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the country. Results have been achieved in poverty alleviation, in the reduction of infant mortality rates and in the improvement of maternal health. Although increases in the education index have not yet reached the level of the overall HDI increase (NHDR 2007), basic education services have significantly improved for boys and girls and nearly the entire population under 24 is now literate.¹⁶

19. The main factor that contributed to this development surge is the rapid growth of the Iranian economy since 2000.¹⁷ However, while the number of people living on less than US\$ 2 a day declined from 7.3% in 1999 to 3.1% in 2005, the absolute number of people under various forms of welfare coverage has not followed suite, indicating that income poverty indicators do not measure the purchasing power needed to maintain basic living standards in Iran.¹⁸ Economic growth has not benefited all people equally and as a consequence income inequality has increased between population groups. The richest part of society has benefited, but the overall population's participation in the labor force remains low. Especially women and young people – regardless of their level of education - suffer from high unemployment and a difficult entry into the labor market.

20. With high inflation in the past three years, rising unemployment rates¹⁹ and severe housing costs in the cities, income security is a concern for a majority of families. Although women's education levels have improved significantly,²⁰ women often have difficulties accessing work.²¹ Although forming a large section of the workforce, women still fill only a small percentage of senior managerial positions. All this impedes further human development for women and limits many families' income generation opportunities, especially among the increasing number of female headed households.

I.2.b. Progress of Iran in Achieving the MDGs

21. The first MDGs Report released by the I.R. Iran, using national statistics, indicated that progress had been made in terms of most indicators. Iran has achieved much in the health sector and in the establishment of health networks and has made significant advances in the education sector. Iran has also made systematic progress in reducing absolute poverty and hunger in terms of availability of food and access to basic needs. In general, the country is well placed to meet most of the MDGs at the national level, provided the appropriate policies are pursued over the next six years.²²

22. However there are serious challenges as well. Inequality, for instance, and relative poverty is gradually on the rise because of conditions such as inflation, unemployment, marginalization, lack of full social insurance coverage and other factors. In fact, the national averages mask relatively significant disparities between rich and poor, men and women, young and old and inhabitants of different regions. On the other hand, despite significant progress in gender education, the share of women in employment and management and

¹⁶ According to national data, 98% of people under 24 years old were literate in 2004. Source: EFA 2008 Global Monitoring Report. The ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education also shows considerable improvement from 79% in 1990 to 94.3% in 2005. During the same period, the ratio of literate women to men, between 15-24 years old, also saw an increasing trend, from 87.9% to 98.6%. Source: UN CCA 2008. However, with the increasing economic pressures and the new economic plans of the government, these rates are decreasing and may continue to decrease even more.

¹⁷ Iran's GDP growth rate has been high throughout the past decade, 5.8% in 2007. Source: UN Statistics.

¹⁸ Source: Draft CCA 2009 July.

¹⁹ Estimates vary widely (the WB estimate for inflation was 16.4% in 2007, Common UN assessments are around 20%, others even higher). Unemployment estimates differ significantly, from 11% to 25%.

²⁰ The percentage of female students in tertiary education rose from 37.4% in 1990 to 110.5% in 2002 – more young women than young men are now entering university. Source: Situation Analysis of Gender in the Islamic Republic of Iran 2006, UN in Iran.

²¹ According to UN estimates, the unemployment rate of women between 15 and 24 years of age rose from 26.8% in 1996 to 40.6% in 2001. N.B. Women's actual employment rates are not fully known as at 2009, however, as a significant proportion of women's economic contributions are in the informal economy, and not officially tabulated.

²² MDG Monitor, UNDP: http://www.mdgmonitor.org/factsheets_00.cfm?c=IRN&cd=

policy-making roles remains relatively small in Iran. On the HIV/AIDS front, Iran has seen rising infections in recent years and there are signs that the infection patterns are making the dangerous shift from injecting drug users to sexual transmission. There have been progressive national policies in tackling this disease. However, more resources and better coverage needs to be speeded up to deal with the problem.²³

23. The country also has to deal with some complex environmental issues. Over the past decades, the environmental and natural resources in Iran have been substantially degraded mainly due to unsustainable development and consumption patterns, overpopulation, institutional fragmentation, inadequate enforcement and a number of socioeconomic root causes. The country's desertification growth is considered among the fastest in the world.²⁴

I.2.c. Social and Cultural Challenges

Social disparities

24. Iran has a multiethnic and multicultural population, with the country's many social groups facing differing economic and social perspectives and life options. People settle increasingly in urban areas, where unemployment is high and competition is increasing. The remaining rural populations rely mainly on agriculture and face competition from imported cheaper agricultural goods, worsening ecological conditions, and natural disasters threatening their livelihoods. A small and decreasing group of tribal and nomadic peoples continues living on a self-sufficient basis, often largely out of reach of basic social services. Between all these groups and within the urban population, income disparities have increased²⁵ and access to basic services and life opportunities remain unequally distributed. Rural locations of some of provinces are still well behind the national average in terms of human development and lack access to basic health and education services.²⁶



Photograph 3: (Left) A woman vendor on Qeshm Island waiting for customers.
Photograph 4: (Right) A man climbing up a date palm tree to harvest dates.

²³ MDG Monitor, UNDP: http://www.mdgmonitor.org/factsheets_00.cfm?c=IRN&cd=

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Poorest 20%'s share of national income was 5.1% and richest 20%'s share was 49.9% in 2005. Source: UNESCO.

²⁶ This concerns particularly the provinces of Sistan and Baluchistan, Kurdistan and Western Azerbaijan. Sources: NHDR 2006, Iran UNES report 2008.

25. Such imbalances in economic growth generate relative poverty within cities and result in slower development in disadvantaged provinces and rural areas. They lead to decreased levels of social trust, the erosion of solidarity among people and tightened attitudes between the rich and poor. Among those benefiting from economic growth, the proliferation of easy and shortsighted lifestyles often leads to patterns of misuse and waste of energy resources.

26. The lack of social opportunities also brings about harmful secondary effects, reflected in an increasing amount of people suffering from drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, psychological health problems,²⁷ or other more intangible repercussions, such as a perceived lack of social consciousness and solidarity and the tendency of many young people to withdraw from active society.

Knowledge, dialogue and information networks

27. A climate of widespread access to knowledge and information is one aspect of an enabling social environment. Although facilitating the transfer of knowledge is a key priority of Iran's government, disparities in access to information persist between social groups : library services only reach a small part of the population; the press and other media are heavily monitored by the government and need to develop capacities for quality journalism; ICT skills are well developed among the young and wealthy segments of the population, but remain weak in rural areas and smaller communities; and Internet access and web-based services remain limited.

28. Communication and information policies aiming to strengthen the quality and diversification of media and information services will lead to increased public awareness and knowledge capacities. A strong and pluralistic knowledge base will significantly improve the Iranian people's social, cultural and economic productivity. It will also help to prevent challenges partly due to lack of information, such as information related to waste of natural resources, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS prevention.²⁸ Ongoing government initiatives aiming to increase online services and e-government portals are an important step in laying the foundations of a knowledge society. This approach should be expanded and complemented with stronger library and information services.

Cultural heritage and identity

29. The territory of Iran hosts one of the most diverse and rich compilations of cultural heritage found in contemporary societies today. The Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization's (ICHHTO) registry for immovable national heritage now includes 27,500 properties of significant cultural heritage around the country. Nevertheless, new discoveries of heritage, ranging from prehistoric (e.g. rock art), ancient, medieval to Islamic period are being constantly made or recognized. Consequently, research, documentation and conservation activity needs are ever increasing.

²⁷ An epidemiological survey of psychiatric disorders in Iran in 2005 says the mental health disorders prevalence was about 10.81% (14.34% females and 7.34% males). In 2002, this rate was 21.9% (14.9% males and 25.9% females), according to a national survey by MoHME. It seems, however, these rates are also increasing.

²⁸ HIV infection rates rose from 0.10% in 2001 to 0.20% in 2007 in the 15-49 age group. 83% of those infected are males, and most infections are caused by intra-venous drug use and needle sharing. Source: UNSTATS and UNESCO.



Photograph 5: (Left) Rituals of the Kurd *Darvish* communities, Kurdistan Province.
 Photograph 6: (Right) Long procession during Ashura, one of the most important Shia Muslim mourning days, Tehran City.

30. Modern developmental trends that emerged in the early 20th century, notably in urban areas, started a process of significant transformation of both the built cultural heritage and of cultural ways of life, sometimes resulting in irreversible damage to much of the numerous heritage sites and urban morphologies. Urban transformations and urban development plans such as the demolishing of historic quarters to make way for major avenues have often been pursued without due consideration to negative impacts on traditional ways of life, cultural expressions, intangible and tangible heritage and the very identities of local communities.

31. After the Islamic Revolution, the protection of Iran's cultural heritage has mainly involved archaeological and monumental heritage, notably the restoration of monumental heritage destroyed in the Iran-Iraq War or by the numerous natural disasters which regularly strike the country. The successful international admission of outstanding properties on the World Heritage List has however highlighted existing weaknesses in long term conservation and management plans and their implementation. In some cases and mainly because of ill-planned tourism development, exceptional cultural heritage properties or ensembles of vernacular architectural heritage of unique heritage value are over-exploited, and renovated in ways that impact negatively on their original value. Environmental and cultural impact assessments of public and large scale private works are rarely undertaken prior to implementation, even when the works are within or in the vicinity of heritage areas.

32. Vulnerable historic quarters and communities also suffer from degrading infrastructure and services, or counterproductive policies brought about by a lack of co-ordination between authorities and inadequate consultations of local communities. UNESCO has frequently been requested to facilitate the stakeholders' consultation process to enable more sustainable plans to be developed.



Photograph 7: Historic houses in Kashan City being demolished, Isfahan Province, 2009.

Creative industries

33. Iran has a wide variety of traditional crafts and a vibrant industry of cultural expressions, ranging from cinema to music. Emerging from a long tradition of storytelling, Iranian cinema has developed into a large and flourishing industry. It now produces popular comedies and revolutionary drama, as well as internationally recognized, award-winning artistic films. Iranian music, both traditional and contemporary, is promoted and easily accessible.

34. The diversity in material, function, and type of handicrafts has few international parallels. The ICHHTO has 15 registered categories of traditional crafts, and 243 registered sub-fields within these categories. The 2008 UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts was granted to 45 handicraft products in Iran. Nevertheless, the quality of traditional crafts has been declining in the last few decades, as social transformations have undermined general awareness of their value. Craft producers' marketing capacities are low, and without significant governmental and private sector collaboration, many of Iran's endangered craft skills are likely to decay and disappear quickly.



Photograph 8, 9, 10: Traditional musical instrument (left), detail of a decorative miniature painting on camel bone (middle) and glazed ceramic tripod (right) – three of the 45 products which received the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicraft in 2008.

Culture-related limitations to physical education and health:

35. Several aspects of physical health are also linked to the social and cultural context. Iran has excelled in the Paralympics as many disabled Iranians have benefited from opportunities to engage in sports activities. However, especially girls and women suffer from limited physical activities. Paired with the effects of significant air pollution in the cities, degrading sports opportunities can negatively impact both physical and mental health. Especially schools have an important role in the promotion of healthy lifestyles, engaging both boys and girls in physical activities.

Diverse linguistic and cultural societies:

36. There are several ethnic and minority populations in Iran, making it a diverse multilingual and multicultural society. Iran has been ranked among those countries which have a relatively high Linguistic Diversity Index (0.797)²⁹. Since a monolingual education system has been introduced in Iran, vitality of many indigenous languages³⁰ has been

²⁹ UNESCO World Report: Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue, 2009.

³⁰ According to the Ethnologue 2005 Edition, there are 75 living indigenous languages in Iran.

undermined. Several other key factors contribute to the degradation and gradual disappearance of indigenous languages, including, among others, weak governmental policies, attitudes, absence of institutional recognition, limited use of indigenous languages mostly in daily verbal communications within minority communities, lack of documentation systems and promotional activities, lack of education programmes and materials for language education and literacy in these indigenous languages,. To preserve the expressions of the diverse linguistic and cultural societies as an investment for sustainable development, national policies and action plans need to be elaborated and implemented to preserve and promote cultural and linguistic diversity in Iran.



Photograph 11: (Left) Jewish congregation holding services, Tehran City.
Photograph 12: (Right) Zoroastrian service in Shiraz City, Fars Province.

I.2.d. Priorities in Cultural Development and Communication

Cultural identity

37. Iran's rich, ancient and multifaceted cultural heritage will continue to function as the backdrop of the development of Iranian cultural identity. With the country's social landscape now defined by the emergence of a young and urbanized population, the formation of cultural identity among the young requires particular attention.

38. It is essential to preserve traditional knowledge, tangible and intangible heritage throughout social changes. Cultural expressions and traditional skills – from the ancient Iran and Islamic-Iranian traditions or from traditional music and poetry to cinematic expressions and theatre – need to be continuously promoted. Still, what remains crucial for today's Iran is the need to mainstream multiculturalism and respect for a diverse society.

39. A stronger level of coordination between the ICHHTO, the MHUD, municipal organizations and the private sector is key to ensuring a sustainable management of cultural and historical resources. To preserve tangible cultural and natural heritage, conservation and research institutions need to be staffed with trained professionals. Management capacities for integrated cultural heritage conservation also need to be reinforced.

40. In addition, and since cultural heritage can serve as a vector for dialogue, reconciliation and social cohesion at national level, engaging in intercultural dialogue at the regional and international levels will help correct flawed cultural representations, values and stereotypes and contribute to enhanced mutual understanding, tolerance and respect for cultural diversity, thus building solidarity among peoples, nations and cultures

Cultural capacities and creative industries

41. Cultural capacities and industries are a central resource for the country's development. They are necessary for the promotion of peace and positive engagement. From a human development point of view, a dynamic population needs to have options for innovation and productivity. Promoting cultural capacities – be it through art, historical heritage, poetry or creative industries – is therefore a genuine investment in future growth, both from an economic and from a human development perspective. Iran's young population needs to access expanded opportunities to actively participate in the country's development. Iran Government's 5th Five-Year Development Plan clearly emphasizes these development aspects, calling for action to foster cultural assets such as life skills, occupational skills and civic participation. Stronger design and marketing skills, as well as national level quality control mechanisms are examples of systems still needed to develop competitive creative industries in Iran.

42. Positive cultural development goes beyond traditional heritage, religious beliefs and national identity. It encompasses the day-to-day attitudes and values of people, the character of the environment in which they live and the learned practices through which they manage their lives. Immaterial cultural practices are often difficult to define, but can have a significant impact on social development. Cultural transformations in day-to-day attitudes are reflected at all levels of society, including in the ways life plans are made and businesses are managed.



Photograph 13: (Left) Women harvesting saffron while a musician entertains them, South Khorasan Province.
Photograph 14: (Right) Spring sprouts on sale for Nowruz (New Year) celebrations, Tehran City.

An enabling social environment

43. As emphasized in the Government's 5th Five-Year Development Plan, Iran needs to adopt policies that promote positive social and cultural environments for men and women and that increase social trust and solidarity. A focus on ensuring civic rights and accountability, a spirit of cooperation and law-abidance, and strengthened legal guarantees for the activities of public oversight bodies, can directly contribute to an enhanced social consciousness and an attitude of responsibility, and to help prevent brain drain from the country.

Media and information services

44. Communications media and information networks, and related institutions have a pivotal role in building a culturally empowered population and preserving acquired knowledge. National institutions, such as the National Library and Archives or the municipalities, play a key role in the organization, preservation and dissemination of information. Wider, socially inclusive access to information, through quality media and more accessible library services, e-government initiatives and the widespread use of ICT, will form the required base for Iran's development as an advanced knowledge society.

45. In raising public awareness, Iran stands to gain significantly if the media can be further harnessed to disseminate information on health issues, environmental responsibility and intercultural awareness. Commerce will benefit from long-term prospects to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technology via new communication channels and to extend access to emerging soft and hard technologies, especially through the national broadcasting agency IRIB as anticipated in the 5th Five-Year Development Plan. As the Iranian knowledge and information society develops, the country will increasingly benefit economically and socially from the opportunities created by a young and creative workforce, empowered to act in a knowledge-based economy.

46. In the longer term, knowledge-based economies demand high levels of media and information literacy among the public. To be able to participate in and contribute to the new economy, Iranians should be able to critically assess information emanating from different sources, to express their views and ideas and to participate in public debate. Professional journalists have a key role in the creation of quality communication and in ensuring that all Iranians have access to varied sources of information. To be really effective, this will eventually require increasing openness and press freedom, both in the traditional press and broadcasting, and in the new media. Although pluralism of the press remains a long term objective in the Iranian centralized context, gradual increase in the free flow of information will deeply advance social and economic development.

I.2.e. Challenges in Education

47. Since the adoption of the international Dakar Goals of Education for All in 2000, Iran has made significant advancements in basic and early childhood education, literacy and the expansion of educational opportunities for women. Article 30 of Iran's Constitution, as well as the country's Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plans underline the obligation to provide free primary and secondary education to all Iranians. With 98.8% of young children now entering primary school at the official age³¹, significant progress has been made in providing basic education at the national level, and Iran remains in a position to achieve this Millennium Development Goal by 2015.³²

Basic education and literacy

48. A major task however remains the full inclusion of the most disadvantaged children into the education system, including their retention throughout secondary education. Regional disparities between urban and rural areas are significant. The HDR Education index values range between 0.595 and 0.856 within the country, revealing a wide gap between the least and most developed provinces. This reflects the challenges faced by the

³¹ 2006 statistics of Ministry of Education, Deputy for Management Planning and Organization.

³² This is while increasing poverty and tough economic situation can hinder these progresses and developments.

education system in remote rural and tribal regions, where poverty, lack of transport and cultural factors pose a difficult challenge to full enrolment.

49. Alongside basic education, the overall literacy rates in Iran have largely improved in the past decades. Nearly full literacy has been achieved in the 15-24 age group, for both males and females. Adult literacy has also risen considerably at the national level, from 65.2% in 1991 to 82.4% in 2004. Disparities however remain between men and women, and between different provinces. To ensure equal socio-economic development, literacy programmes need to be increasingly targeted at disadvantaged groups.

Education system reform

50. While Iran has made such progress in the provision of basic education, a new challenge has emerged with the increasing youth unemployment rates. The scarcity in job opportunities has led to a significant brain drain in recent years, with young people leaving the country in search of opportunities abroad.

51. It is therefore vital to focus on high quality learning throughout the education system, to steer the young population toward productive employment and opportunities for innovation and creativity. Economic development also requires sound social and entrepreneurial skills, especially management skills and responsible leadership, which must be nurtured already by the education system.

52. Simultaneously, the demands faced by the national education system have been transformed by demographic changes. In past decades, the system faced a tremendous challenge due to a peak in school-aged children, whose number rose from 8 million in 1980 to 18.5 million in 1997. With decreasing population growth, this number has reduced to 14.2 million pre-university level students in 2006, with a further decrease to 10 million expected by 2012. Educational planning can therefore now be centred on fostering education quality and providing improved learning beyond basic education³³.

53. A high quality education system takes a holistic approach to learning environments. Years spent in schools are formative, not only in terms of acquisition of knowledge, but also to build life skills, knowledge management skills and creativity and to forge social attitudes. Considering these impacts, the MoE promotes a new approach to school curricula, moving from a textbook-centred approach to a skills development approach. Based on the "20 Years Vision Document", the Government is focusing more on a quality education in tertiary education. The newly established UNESCO Chair in Management, Planning & Quality Assurance in Higher Education will certainly contribute to the achievement of this goal.

54. Changes in educational planning lead to the establishment of new funding arrangements. In April 2009, the Commission of Education and Research of the Majlis (Islamic Parliament), requested officially UNESCO to make an assessment of the current situation in the education system in Iran as a whole (primary, secondary and higher education) and recommendations for considering the role of the private sector in the financing system of the education. This shows clearly the awareness of the governance in the need to improve the quality of education. The government will increase the share of private financing to educational institutions, especially in the area of technical and vocational education. This will gradually create a more demand-driven education system.

³³ According to the President's Deputy Office for Strategic Planning and Control (SPAC)

Education and well-being

55. Along with new curricula based on skills development, additional initiatives are needed to expand the young generation's well-being and positive engagement in society. Schools have a central role in promoting regular physical activity and increased health and environmental awareness throughout the country. They are also a key location where people from different backgrounds learn to know and understand each other. By fostering an inclusive education system, with the facilities and opportunities for children with special needs or disabilities to participate, schools can contribute to the development of social trust and cohesion.

56. Arts and culture also have a unique role in education. They foster creativity, innovation and motivation, and help to channel thoughts and feelings. Arts education, such as teaching music, theatre or painting, is a means for young people to learn to express themselves and to connect with their cultural heritage. On the other hand, teachers can increasingly take advantage of museums, artistic performances or electronic resources to enrich their teaching methods and to help students learn in diverse and creative ways.

I.2.f. Priorities in Education

57. Iran's education system has achieved much in a short amount of time. While efforts are still needed to achieve all the goals of EFA, policy focus has shifted toward the effective inclusion of different minority groups and the improvement of educational contents, infrastructure and facilities, and teaching capacities.

58. Regional planning aimed at facilitating the enrolment of nomadic and other hard-to-reach children includes the establishment of boarding schools and village-centre schools, free school meal initiatives and flexible curricula sensitive to minorities' needs. Targeted efforts are required, especially aiming at girls who often have fewer chances to access education than their male siblings.

59. Improved communication and coordination among sectors responsible for child health care, primary and pre-primary education, will contribute to an enhanced access of young children to the education system. The MoE will increase the public sector's share of the provision of ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) to ensure more equitable access to early childhood education. In disadvantaged regions, the impacts of poverty, child labour and attitudes related to girls' schooling are the key elements that need to be countered before full enrolment can be attained. The willingness of the Government and the Majlis to review in depth the current situation and to have a better view on how public and private sectors could cooperate, will be one of the most important challenges and reform that the education system will have to go through.

60. One of Iran's main challenges is to redistribute existing human resources in education. Demographic change and rapid urbanization have created shortages or oversupplies of teachers depending on their geographic location. As the focus of the education system shifts to secondary education and beyond, the profiles of education personnel must also change. Creating a model to redeploy teachers based on these current needs is a key priority of the Iranian government.

61. Iran's technical and vocational education (TVE) system has been actively strengthened since the mid-1990's. The system previously lacked social status, and most students opted for academic education. With diversified and upgraded study tracks, TVE has now become a viable option to academic studies, and the proportion of students

choosing TVE is increasing. The proportion of female students also rose considerably, from 20.1% in the beginning of the 1990's to 36.8% at the end of the decade. Differences in girls' participation rates however persist at the regional level, and girls and boys still choose vastly different subjects of study.

62. The technical and vocational education system is divided into formal and non-formal sectors, managed by different governmental authorities. The current priority is to create a comprehensive approach to curriculum development, engaging industry, agriculture and commerce in the process and also in the substantive development of educational contents. The Union of Universities of Technology (UUT) has a mandate to link industry with education and to initiate international cooperation. Upgraded TVE requirements have also challenged current teacher profiles, and extensive teacher training programmes need to be carried out to balance the new system.

On going and planned national initiatives in the education system:³⁴

- Develop human resources and strengthen teacher productivity.
- Shift from a memory-based system of evaluating learning results to a performance-oriented system, with a focus on practical skills, such as problem-solving and team work.
- Provide curricula based on labor market needs, emphasizing the practical application of skills rather than theoretical learning.
- Strengthen curricula especially in the areas of mathematics and sciences.
- Diversify teaching methods and curricula to reflect regional interests and cultural expectations.
- Adopt a strategic plan for literacy, with a focus on the differing geographical, environmental and social environments of children.
- Develop ICT applications in education.
- Increase primary school enrolment rates, particularly in rural areas and for girls.
 - Develop education for children with special needs, such as children with disabilities.
- Strengthen the literacy movement for adults and decentralize the literacy programme.



Photograph 15: Schoolgirls listening to their teacher in Shiraz City, Fars Province.

³⁴ Based on national assessments of the 4th and 5th Development programmes, the UNESS, the EFA Mid-term Assessment, the 2007 Assessment Report on Technical and Vocational Education, and data of the President's Deputy Office for Strategic Planning and Control (SPAC)

I.2.g. Challenges in Higher Education, Research and Science

63. With the increased number of the students seeking higher education, the Government was focusing in recent years to increase the number of universities and higher education institutes, both public and private. Now the challenge is to ensure the quality of the higher education to match the development needs, both in industry and services. This will be the most important issue that the new established UNESCO Chair in Management, Planning & Quality Assurance in Higher Education will face and likely focus on.

64. In line with the country's 5th National Development Plan (2010-2015), comprehensive knowledge-based development is a key objective of the Iranian government's social policies. Innovation and research are promoted as fundamental priorities contributing to social, economic and environmental development. Financial support from the Government has increased research budgets by 16.5% from 2000 to 2003³⁵.

65. Although long-term national policies and strategies are well formulated aiming at promoting research and innovation, translating these policies into practice remains to be a tremendous challenge for different government bodies.

66. Iranian universities function mainly as teaching establishments, with only 15% of their resources invested in research. Scientific research is thus mainly conducted by specialized research institutes. Strong focus areas in research and higher education include nano-technology, nuclear technology, electricity, water management and medical research.

67. A variety of specialized research and development institutions has been established in recent years. However, due to the lack of co-ordination amongst many institutes and universities, this has sometimes led to the duplication of work and subsequent loss of resources. In 2007, the post of Vice Presidency for Science and Technology was created to co-ordinate amongst and harmonize the work of different ministries, universities, research institutes and industrial zones. Although this office holds a considerable budget, concrete positive results still awaited. Additionally, resources have not systematically been targeted evenly across different fields of research. For instance, in a survey by the Information Science Institute of the University of California, out of 22 research fields chemistry, engineering, physics and clinical medicine accounted for 67% of Iran's scientific production, whereas fields such as economy and business were yielding very few scientific results³⁶.

68. For scientific communities to prosper and high-performing science units to develop, scientific exchange and research co-operation is needed across borders. International sanctions against Iran pose special obstacles for individual scientists and Iranian research centers to access resources they need from around the world to be competitive and innovative.

69. Beyond basic sciences, it is also necessary to promote the application of science and the creation of technology based upon scientific research. A number of Iranian evaluations have pointed out that more attention should be devoted to technological production and to the commercial aspects of science, with the private sector more actively engaged in research activities.

70. From a gender equality perspective, although women's education levels have dramatically improved in recent years, Iran suffers from a phenomenon shared by many

³⁵ Second Macro-assessment of Science and Technology, the Board of Supervision and Assessment of Cultural and Scientific Affairs, Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution, 2005-2006

³⁶ Ibid.

countries, whereby universities have the majority of female students but women's accession to professional scientific careers remains lower than men's.

I.2.h. Priorities in Research, Science and Technology

Higher education reform

71. Committed to the long-term development of scientific capacities in the country, the Iranian Government prioritizes higher education programmes in basic sciences, statistical capacities, and monitoring and evaluation.

72. In 2006, 800,000 students attended Iran's 207 establishments for higher institution. The number of students entering institutions of higher education is growing by 10.5% per year, resulting with considerable constraints to the existing teaching resources³⁷. A new approach promoting distance learning, increased financing by the private sector and further managerial independence to universities is intended to alleviate the situation. Internal and cross-cutting communication need to be strengthened to develop stronger ties between universities and research centers, as well as between research and higher education.

73. In the 5th National Development Plan, emphasis is placed on knowledge development policies with important allocations envisaged for science and research. The objective for this emphasis is to build a comprehensive programme for scientific and technological development in the country. This will include reform of research policies, with further promotion of research in non-public and private institutions, and overall increased support from the private sector. Higher education curricula are being reviewed to also reflect this emphasis, and the concept of entrepreneur-universities is expected to be further developed in the coming years.

74. Within the current UNDAF in Iran and based upon the Government's explicit request, "Transfer of Science and Technology in all Areas of Co-operation" has been defined as one of the five main priorities of co-operation in Iran to help improve the quality of research at the level of universities and industries.

Science and technology parks

75. In addition to private funding in universities, initiatives are undertaken at many levels to promote more substantive linkages between research establishments and entrepreneurs. The objective is to move towards universities that generate better entrepreneurial skills and prospects to their students, and to foster innovation based on science in the private sector. Several science parks, incubators and research centers have been established to promote such research commercialization and innovation and to build networks of scientists, science policy administrators and private sector representatives³⁸.

76. These science and technology parks and incubators are an effective way of promoting the application of science and taking scientific results and initiatives to a broader public. Standardization of the procedures for the creation of new science parks are still under preparation. Nevertheless, a number of science parks have been established by the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology, and one Technology Park has been created under the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology. Since 1997, Iran has set up 21

³⁷ President's Deputy Office for Strategic Planning and Control (SPAC)

³⁸ Based on the information provided by the President's Office, the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, the I. R. of Iran Development Plan and Development Vision Plan.

science and technology parks and 65 technology incubators. Iran is preparing to launch a Virtual Science Park in the near future.

77. Science parks go a long way to promote the local commercialization of science and technology, but this needs to be paired with increased national and institutional support to small and medium enterprises [SME]. SMEs using innovative technology applications can empower men and women to develop productive employment, if legislation and institutional structures support innovation through SMEs. Support to SMEs is also likely to help highly competent graduates, especially women, to properly apply and benefit from the knowledge they have acquired through their studies.



Photograph 16: Qeshm Geo-park, located in Qeshm Island of Iran

78. In its 5th National Development Plan, the Iranian Government pursues to become the second most advanced country within the region in the field of science and technology. In fact, Iran perceives science and technology advancement as the means for the well-being of its nation and a political force for its further stabilization within the neighboring countries. To this end, heavy investment, research and actions are placed on IT, energy, bio-technology, nano-technology, environment, airspace and nuclear sciences. Key strategies followed by the Government include: advocacy, synergy among policy and implementation of the national innovation plan, support to the commercialization of technologies as well as monitoring and evaluation of science parks.

I.2.i. Environmental Challenges and Natural Disasters

79. Iran has a varied landscape and vast natural resources. Recognizing the many vulnerabilities of this natural environment, the Government has undertaken a series of measures to protect it from degradation. The country's protected areas have consistently been increased and now encompass a total of 165 sites, with 19 national parks, 33 wildlife refuges, 16 national natural monuments, 88 protected areas and 9 Biosphere Reserves.

Water scarcity and land degradation

80. However, several current processes are contributing to an alarming deterioration of Iran's natural environment. Iran faces threatening prospects of diminishing basic natural resources – most critically, its soil and water resources. Soil loss is caused primarily by the salination, sedimentation and erosion of the soil, desertification, deforestation, poor land-use management, and overgrazing. With an average annual precipitation of 250 mm, Iran faces serious water shortage, which is becoming more severe with rapid population growth. The agriculture sector consumes over 80% of the water share, drinking, industrial and environment sectors count for less than 20% of the freshwater consumption. Moreover, water allocation in rural areas is not based on actual demand, therefore often resulting in further waste of water. Inappropriate agricultural practices such as low efficiency irrigation methods, land-use conversion and livestock policies further aggravate environmental deterioration in rural areas. Moreover, illegal extraction of sand and gravel from river beds for use as construction material is causing enormous damage to river beds and provoking landslides.

81. Current annual water consumption in Iran amounts to 90,000 billion m³ (BCM). One third of this is being drawn out of groundwater resources, exceeding groundwater replenishment capacity. This leads to depletion of groundwater resources, at a rate of 6 billion m³ (MCM) per year³⁹. Should consumption shares remain at their current level, water demand will reach 130 BCM per year in 20 years, with the annual depletion of groundwater rising to 10 MCM:



Photograph 17: Hamoon Lake in Sistan-Baluchistan Province, formerly the largest water reservoir of the Eastern Iran, has dried up completely since a decade ago.⁴⁰

Pollution

82. Rapid urbanization, fragmented approaches to urban planning and changing lifestyles with high private and industrial consumption habits have resulted in the significant depletion and pollution of water resources in urban areas. Sedimentation and the emission of nitrates from industrial zones, along with insufficient waste management practices, pollute both groundwater and surface water resources.

83. Pollution is also a main factor affecting the manifold degradation of coastlines. Oil pollution is increasing in the Persian Gulf, and on the northern side, the Caspian Sea faces coastal and marine life deterioration and groundwater pollution due to high construction activities and over-fishing.

84. In rapidly urbanized areas, severe air pollution originating from vehicle emissions, refinery operations, and industrial effluents has become a serious environmental and public health hazard concern. The continued heavy use of fossil fuels across the country accelerates the pollution process.

Biodiversity

85. Located at a crossroad between South-East Asia, Central Asia and the Arabian Peninsula, and being a geographically diverse country with arid zones and high mountainous regions, Iran benefits from a wide range of biological resources. It ranks among the world's ten richest countries in biodiversity. The biome of the Zagros Mountains is an outstanding ecosystem displaying some unique flora and fauna. In the central parts of the country, North African species such as the leopard have found a suitable habitat. However, several factors are contributing to the loss of biodiversity. Illegal hunting and the natural habitat destruction caused by the hunters' activities are major problems. Adequate protection policies and legislation, regulated tourism development and sufficient protection and rehabilitation activities are lacking and thus causing continued degradation. The consequent losses in biodiversity are taking many forms and occurring at the genetic, species, and ecosystem levels. According to Iran's Department of Environment, 20 mammal species are now facing extinction whereas plant studies are not complete in many key areas of the country.

³⁹ Ministry of Energy statistics

⁴⁰ Many rivers and some large lakes in Iran have been subject to similar situation and some others are continuing to drastically shrink.



Photograph 18: A landscape from mountainous areas of Qazvin Province.

Oceans & coastal zones

86. Iran, having two separate coastlines at its north and south of about 3000km length, with very different characteristics, suffers from various coastal problems⁴¹. While its northern coastal area is over-populated and its sensitive and unique habitats must be protected from destruction, most of its southern coastal areas are undeveloped and deserted. Intensive oil and gas exploitation activities in the Caspian Sea region and occurrence of two wars in the Persian Gulf during the last two decades have rendered hydrocarbon pollution a major issue for this country's marine and coastal environment. Biodiversity especially those related to marine biodiversity such as coral reefs is under threat in some areas and natural resources are deteriorating. To overcome the problems, a national Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) study project was developed and implemented by the Government as a long-term and sustainable solution. A bill has been also prepared and submitted to the Parliament for establishing a comprehensive management and monitoring system through ICZM at national and local levels. The study of impacts of climate change on oceans and alternatively food security and biodiversity loss is a challenge facing the Government. The Iranian National Center for Oceanography, the national counterpart for UNESCO-IOC, has engaged in scientific research on marine and coastal environmental monitoring and assessment, marine hazards preparedness and early warning and scientific studies on marine biodiversity and response to climate change.



Photograph 19: A grandfather and grandson fishing near the Coast of Qeshm Island, Persian Gulf region.

⁴¹ Pak A. and Farajzadeh F., Iran's Integrated Coastal Management Plan: Persian Gulf, Oman Sea, and southern Caspian Sea coastlines, Ocean & Coastal Management Volume 50, Issue 9, 2007, Pages 754-773

Vulnerability to natural disasters

87. Iran is prone to many natural disasters including earthquakes, floods and droughts. These disasters have become more frequent and destructive partly due to global climate change, partly because of localized environmental damages. Earthquakes pose great threats particularly in high populated major cities, three quarters of which are in potential major earthquakes zones. Some of the earthquakes hitting urbanized areas in the recent decades have been above 7.0 on the Richter scale. While the probability of earthquakes has always been high due to the geological characteristics of the location of Iran, the probability of floods has increased during recent decades and has affected more people. While Iran has no control over increasingly intense rains being caused due to global warming, it must pay attention to flood management and measures of flood prevention, most importantly those which stop the deterioration of the water retention properties of the land and vegetation through deforestation. The degrading of rangeland and drought represents another hazard which has affected large parts of the country. Direct damage caused by drought alone is estimated to be over USD 1,200 billion.⁴²

88. In UNDP's report on reducing disaster risk, Iran is ranked number one in the list of countries with the largest average number of earthquakes per year with a magnitude equal to or greater than 5.5 on the Richter scale. It is also ranked one of the highest in terms of relative vulnerability and also in terms of the number of people killed per year as a result of earthquakes. The seismicity of Iran and its general vulnerability to earthquakes have been graphically and catastrophically illustrated by the Bam earthquake in December 2003, in which thousands of people were killed. In May 2004, the earthquake in the Alborz Mountains with a magnitude equal to or greater than 5.5 on the Richter scale, shook Tehran and produced 155 aftershocks within three days. The particular geological setting of Iran means that it is particularly prone to shallow (<10 km deep) earthquakes.⁴³

89. The 2003 Bam earthquake, in addition to the great human loss it caused, also destroyed a large part of the area's traditional groundwater management system, the Qanats, thus intensifying regional water management problems.



Photograph 20: (Left) Qanat technicians repairing qanat systems in January 2004 in Bam City which were destroyed by the December 2003 earthquake, Kerman Province. Photograph 21: (Right) A devastated woman in Bam City immediately after the earthquake which destroyed a large portion of the built assets.

90. Moreover, the UNDP analysis⁴⁴ shows Iran which experiences frequent earthquakes is suffering proportionally far higher loss of life than other countries, such as Chile or the United States of America which are prone to frequent large earthquakes too.

91. Statistics show that in a ten years period (1991-2001), an average of USD 1.1 billion financial loss per annum has been incurred on the Iranian economy due to the frequent

⁴² Interim National Progress Report on the Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, IRAN, December 2008, P.5

⁴³ Earthquake Vulnerability Assessment and Preparedness, Reynolds Geo-Sciences Ltd, 2005

⁴⁴ Reducing Disaster Risk: a challenge for development, UNDP, New York, 2004

disasters. If added with other secondary damages and losses due to the disasters, total damages would reach 10% of the country's GDP.⁴⁵

Environmental awareness

92. National laws have introduced compulsory Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) to be conducted under the guidance of the Department of Environment to mainstream environmental policies into industrial, construction and urban development plans. However, the technical and institutional capacities to monitor environmental trends are not sufficiently developed or disseminated to have the required level of impact. Moreover, weak enforcement of laws and regulations often results in an incomplete or non-implementation of the EIAs. As a result many, if not most industrial, infrastructural and urban development projects are implemented without due consideration to possible negative impact the projects may have on the cultural and environmental assets of the country.

93. Consumer behavior plays a significant part in energy waste and unsustainable use of natural resources. There is ample room for improvement in the environmental awareness of Iran's industry and individual energy users. A comprehensive approach to environmental education, ranging from primary to vocational education and from industry representatives to the general media, can contribute to decrease the pace of environmental degradation.

94. Sustainable development and environmental protection need to be promoted at policy, capacity and advocacy levels to halt or reverse the trends of natural resource depletion and degradation in Iran. The linkages between natural resources and sustainable economic growth need to be further emphasized. The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve concept contains a useful approach, applied by the Government at nine areas, draws on three pillars for sustainable development: Conservation (landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation), Development (economic, human and culturally adapted) and Logistic support (research, monitoring, environmental education and training).

Inter-linkages between environment and disasters

95. Environmental management and disasters are interrelated, and this can be seen by examining the links between wasted resources and time, compromised disaster management effectiveness and lost opportunities for efficient risk reduction. Unfortunately environment management experts are not sufficiently committed to contribute to the national disaster risk management and disaster co-ordination structures. Therefore, disasters and environmental issues are dealt with separately. Hence decisions and actions on environment and disasters are taken separately. There is a large lacuna in disaster and environment management policies and programmes⁴⁶, which demonstrates that environmental management has not yet been effectively integrated into disaster management and disaster risk reduction policies, and consequently, in its execution.



Photograph 22: Water buffaloes crossing Karoon River, Khuzestan Province.

⁴⁵ Report of the Secretariat of the National Disaster Task Force, 2005, P.3

⁴⁶ For the manifestation of some of these challenges, please refer to the Interim National Progress Report on the Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, IRAN, December 2008, P.21-22

I.2.j. Priorities in Environment and Disaster Management

Co-ordination

96. With increasing environmental concerns affecting Iran in the form of energy misuse, natural resource degradation and frequent climatic disasters, strong capacities are required in environmental planning and policy development to provide an efficient national capacity. Coherence and co-operation between stakeholders is indispensable to address the varied causes of environmental degradation. A Supreme Council for the Protection of the Environment (SCE) has been established, as a legislative body chaired by the President of Iran. Its task is to co-ordinate the implementation of relevant regulations and to lead the classification of protected areas.

97. Efforts should be made to mainstream linkages between environmental management and disaster management for effective and more sustainable co-ordination. There is also essential need for close dialogue, collaboration and partnership between environment and disaster managers and professionals.

Water management

98. To combat the ongoing deterioration of water resources, water allocation and water efficiency must be improved. The Ministry of Energy has developed a plan for a more optimal system for the distribution of water, based on the needs of different sectors, users and provinces. Two pilot projects under UNESCO G-WADI programme are engaged in the development of comprehensive five-year action plans on river basins and adaptation to climate change. Needs to work on trans-boundary water issues, including ground water, have also been identified. The safeguarding, continuation and modernization of Iran's historic hydraulic systems and Qanats, are other ecological and energy-saving ways to ensure water distribution.

99. In recent years, very large dams with a total reservoir capacity of 34 CM have been built. These dams provide water for agriculture, and fill 98.6% of urban and 71% of rural water requirements. Some dams, however, have caused negative effects, including ecological impacts. Water scarcity remains a key policy concern, along with the improvement of sustainable water resource management. As groundwater resources account for one third of the total water supply of the country, innovative and efficient methods for water harvesting, groundwater recharge and management are required. In urban areas, policy emphasis is on the enhanced management of pollutants, application of modern water measurement equipments, control over abstraction of groundwater resources, repairing and renewing of old water delivery networks, balanced water fees and improved consumption styles.

Biodiversity

100. The priority for biodiversity in Iran is to move from simple protection to a more proactive approach of intervention and facilitation. Should a species be extinct or on the verge of extinction in one area, it could be imported from another site (intervention), or the necessary food or shelter can be provided to ensure its survival in that location (facilitation). Involvement of the local community through on-site training and improved communication with the local government remains as a key challenge toward sustainable biodiversity conservation. Effective biodiversity conservation also requires more detailed knowledge on Iran's natural environment. Such information can be produced by the research communities, provided they receive the necessary institutional and technical capacities to upgrade and expand their work.

Oceans & coastal zones

101. Iran's priorities for oceans are listed below:

- Improvement of national capacity for effective and sound management of the ocean and coastal resources;
- Protection of marine environment;
- Coral reefs conservation and management;
- Connection to and operation of global ocean observing systems;
- Comprehension of the impacts of climate change on oceans;
- Application of the UN Law of the Sea;
- Effective use of Tsunami early warning systems.

102. To this end, sharing of best practices, experience and knowledge with other countries is recognized as the principle method to address these priorities.

Disaster Mitigation

103. In the occurrence of natural disasters, the national response has been focused on assistance provided to affected areas in a post-disaster setting. As natural disasters in Iran are recurrent, a more coherent and co-ordinated approach is needed to shift attention toward disaster preparedness and disaster mitigation, not only post-disaster response.

104. The Government hopes that this approach will be advanced by establishing a new Higher Council for Water, which brings together national authorities on energy, agriculture and the environment. This co-ordination mechanism is helping to develop a nation-wide and consistent approach to cope with droughts. Similar efforts need to be undertaken to address other disaster effects, in particular earthquakes. Co-ordinated contingency plans should aim to facilitate due consideration on the important role played by local communities in disaster situations, in addition to ensuring safety nets for vulnerable groups.

105. Education for natural disaster preparedness, school-based disaster management and schools safety, quality assurance of education in emergencies, community-based approaches in disaster management, flood management, disaster mitigation of urban cultural heritage (DMUCH), disaster preparedness and response for cultural heritage can be considered key areas for UNESCO's support to Iran.

PART II: UNESCO IN IRAN

II.1. The United Nations in Iran – Overarching Objectives for 2010-2014

106. Seventeen United Nations agencies and programmes are currently represented in Iran. They partner with the government in different development sectors and in the provision of humanitarian assistance to Iran's refugee population and victims of natural disasters.

107. The UN agencies operate through a common Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), aligned with the Government's Five-Year Development Plan. The UNDAF is based on a joint assessment of national priorities and on the competencies and comparative advantages of each organization.

108. The current UNDAF covers 2005-2010. It focuses on five key areas for cooperation: 1) Strengthening Capacities and Capabilities for Achieving the MDGs 2) Strengthening Good Governance 3) Improving Economic Performance and Management and Generating Employment, 4) Sustainable Development, Disaster Management and Energy Efficiency and 5) Facilitating the Transfer of Science in All Areas of Cooperation, a focus area of the UN team that is led by UNESCO.

109. In Iran, much progress has been made in the achievement of the MDGs. Key challenges lie in the application of the best cross-sectoral and knowledge-based policies to implement the principles of the National Development Plans. Emphasis should be placed on overall consistency and follow-through in policies and regulatory frameworks. This includes the establishment of effective inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms and the promotion of evidence-based policy approaches.

110. To contribute to these national planning processes, the United Nations agencies in Iran focus on strengthening institutional planning, programming and implementation. These institutional processes are central to the fulfilment of national plans to further combat poverty and inequalities, to strengthen the economy and employment, to reorient consumption and production towards ecologically sustainable practices and to enact social policies conducive to human development.

111. The perspective of human rights and socio-economic equity emphasizes equal human development throughout society, an approach that can help to curb the tendency of social problems to intensify with time. Consequently, the UN agencies promote mechanisms and policies that take into account gender biases and economic and regional disparities. In Iran, the overall positive development in social and economic perspectives and life options of Iran's young population remains the UN development agencies' main area of work.

112. The programme priorities of the UN Development Assistance Framework for 2010-2014 will be centered around: 1) Supporting Governance; 2) Supporting the Development of Socio-Economic Equity; 3) Supporting Knowledge and Innovation for Sustainable Development.

113. These topics are addressed through different policy sectors depending on the mandate and specialized expertise of each UN programme or agency. Individual and joint UN activities should contribute to national efforts for strengthened economic policies and social justice, increased human opportunities and improved health and environmental management.

114. The focus areas of UNESCO programmes, knowledge creation and dissemination, are an indispensable part of efforts to advance sustainable human development. A competent and versatile work force contributes to innovation and efficiency in the management of economic and natural resources. The formulation of effective and balanced policies requires investment in research and knowledge dissemination. And positive social change is rooted in informed cultural attitudes and popular will.

115. UNESCO programmes in Iran, aligned with the UN Assistance Framework, aim to contribute to an enabling environment for innovation, to an informed and educated population, a dynamic culture and a sound natural environment.

II.2. What is UNESCO for in Iran?

116. UNESCO is a specialized, inter-governmental UN agency that develops international perspectives and innovation in education, science, culture and communications. UNESCO programmes encourage the creation, application and preservation of knowledge in its many facets. The Organization's ultimate aim is to build peace, to alleviate poverty and to contribute to sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through the creation and dissemination of knowledge and technical expertise in its fields.

117. At the global level, UNESCO engages in standard-setting action, preparing and adopting international instruments and recommendations in its fields. At the regional and country levels, UNESCO provides expertise, information and capacity-building. It transfers and shares knowledge through contributions to national research, training and teaching activities. In countries, it works closely with the National Commissions for UNESCO, established by individual Member States to promote UNESCO's work at the country level and to connect local experts with UNESCO's worldwide network.

118. The organization is represented in Iran by the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office (UTCO), established in January 2003. The Cluster Office covers UNESCO's partnerships with four countries in the region: Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan, with UNESCO National Offices also in Kabul and Islamabad.

119. The Iranian National Commission for UNESCO was established in 1948. It has been working in-country for sixty years to promote UNESCO's mandate and apply its programmes. The Iranian National Commission for UNESCO works in close co-operation with UTCO since the establishment of the office in 2003.

II.3. Anticipated Challenges and Opportunities

Table 1: Opportunities & Challenges in Iran for UNESCO

Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5th National Development Plan's emphasis on significant budget allocations to scientific research in Iran. • National willingness and capacity to engage in regional and international exchanges, especially at expert level. • New partnership agreements between UNESCO and UNDP, and UNESCO and UNEP, on pairing technical expertise and comparative advantages. • New UNDAF with strengthened UN cooperation framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political and economic sanctions against Iran result in limited international opportunities for cooperation and fund-raising. • Global economic and financial crisis affecting the national economy may weaken prospects for social development. • Social and political developments and trends after the recent disputed presidential election in Iran may introduce new challenges for sustainable development and smooth cooperation with the Government and civil society.



Photograph 23: Stone relief and inscription of Bisotun World Heritage property, Kermanshah Province.

II.4. UNESCO Tehran Office's key guiding principles and policy documents at a glance

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are directly linked to the UNESCO work

- Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development

New UNDAF (2011-2015) Focus Areas

- Supporting Knowledge and Innovation for Sustainable Development
- Supporting Governance and National Institutions
- Supporting the Development of Socio-economic Equity

Iran's 5th National Development Plan (NDP 2010-2015)

From a total of 199 articles of the NDP, 29 articles are directly related to the UNESCO fields of competence (i.e. about 11 articles related to education, 14 articles on science, 6 articles on culture and 3 articles on CI).

UNESCO Fields of Competence

Education	Natural Sciences	Social and Human Sciences	Culture	Communication & Information
Promoting quality education systems to all people, at all levels of study, with curricula that address global priorities.	Promoting research in natural sciences to respond to challenges in health, ecology, biodiversity, climate change, sustainable development and disaster reduction.	Promoting research and intellectual exchange in Social and human sciences to address questions of global ethics and social change.	Promoting dialogue between the different thought and belief systems of the world, fostering the vitality of cultures and recognizing and leveraging their impact on human development.	Promoting strong knowledge societies with free and fair dissemination of information to all people, in particular on topics relevant to the global agenda.

UNESCO mission and strategic objectives at a glance

UNESCO Mission Statement:

As a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information.

Attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning	Mobilizing science knowledge and policy for sustainable development	Addressing emerging social and ethical challenges	Fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace	Building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthening UNESCO's global lead and coordination role for EFA and providing support to national leadership in favour of EFA ▪ Developing policies, capacities and tools for quality education for all, and lifelong learning as well as promoting education for sustainable development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leveraging scientific knowledge for the benefit of the environment and the management of natural resources ▪ Fostering policies and capacity-building in science, technology and innovation ▪ Contributing to disaster preparedness and mitigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promoting principles, practices and ethical norms relevant for scientific and technological development ▪ Enhancing research-policy linkages on social transformations ▪ Fostering research on critical emerging ethical and social issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthening the contribution of culture to sustainable development ▪ Demonstrating the importance of exchange and dialogue among cultures to social cohesion and reconciliation in order to develop a culture of peace ▪ Sustainably protecting and enhancing cultural heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhancing universal access to information and knowledge ▪ Fostering pluralistic, free and independent media and info structures

II.5. Achievements – Past and present UNESCO activities in Iran

120. Since the establishment of the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office (UTCO) in 2003, UNESCO has built active in-country programmes for the Education, Natural Sciences, Culture and the Communication and Information sectors. Key focus areas and partnerships have been created around capacity development for the national education system, the preservation of cultural heritage, management of water resources, environmental sustainability, disaster preparedness and mitigation, and institutional capacity building of the media.

II.5.1. Education (ED) Sector

121. The main objective of UNESCO's Education programme is to advance the six international goals of Education for All (EFA) and the two Millennium Development Goals related to education. Partnering with Iranian authorities, UNESCO works to develop national education plans and to promote catalytic activities. The emphasis is on quality education (with its main components which are : education planning and strategy, child friendly education, inclusive education, arts education, physical education and sports, health education including HIV/AIDS and drugs prevention education), teachers' education, ICT's in education, peace and human rights education, Technical & vocational education (TVE), science & technology education (STE), education for sustainable development through sharing international best practices and UNESCO international expertise. Within many of these programmes joints activities had been conducted with FAO, UNAIDS and UNODC. Several publications as toolkits and teachers' materials have been published in Farsi.

Achievements

- The agenda to reach the EFA Goals has significantly been advanced in Iran through the development of a national EFA policy document, a UNESCO National Education Support Strategy (UNESS) and the establishment of an EFA Bureau in the Ministry of Education.
- Special focus had been on Education Planning and Strategy with several training specific sessions for Iranian national and provincial education planners in close cooperation with UNESCO Institute of Statistics and UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning. Several UNESCO Education Planning resource materials had been translated, adapted into Farsi and disseminated within education planners. Majlis requested also UNESCO to conduct in the coming biennium an assessment study on the state of education system in Iran.
- Regional cooperation on EFA goals is encouraged and advanced at ministerial levels, and Iranian-Afghan cooperation has been developed to support the reconstruction of the Afghan education system.
- Education for cultural knowledge and artistic capacities has been developed with the establishment of an innovative Creative Music Training Centre (CMTC) in Tehran. In 2008, for the first time a classical music performance by 9-15 years old children took place in Tehran Concert Hall. "Arts Greenhouse" project developed for the creation of an Arts in Education Gallery and Centre destined to the youth and artists for the best development of Arts in Education (AiE) concept.

- Environmental education has been strengthened through policy development and teacher training, and with the establishment of a secretariat of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the Ministry of Education.
- International materials and best practices in health education have been disseminated to Iranian stakeholders through publications and translations. School health, HIV/AIDS and drug prevention and physical education were reinforced through UNESCO's EDUCAIDS and FRESH initiatives (Focusing Resources on Effective School Health) in national EFA planning.
- The UNESCO Chair on Higher Education and quality had been established in June 2009.
- ICT's in education was one of the areas of cooperation with Iran MoE but also as cross cutting theme in cooperation with CI sector focusing on journalism in schools piloted in twelve primary and secondary boys and girls schools and a specific interest to ASPnet schools to be revitalized.

Pioneering Education in the City of Bam

In 2007, a new Bam Model School Complex (BMSC) was opened at the ruins of this ancient Iranian city and World Heritage property, devastated in the 2003 earthquake which cost the lives of over 26,000 people.

From its inception the school was conceived and built around the principles of an inclusive and learning-friendly education environment. It welcomes children who have in many ways suffered from the earthquake, regardless of their gender, physical or intellectual, linguistic or other characteristics. Striving for a resourceful learning environment and high quality education, the Bam School encourages children to commit to their education and to take pleasure in learning. Exceptional facilities, such as Iran's first observatory for primary school children and a Teachers' Research Centre (BTRC) help to create a proactive and innovative learning environment.

The school's inclusive approach focuses on the overall physical, emotional and intellectual needs of its students. This helps to prevent school drop out and thus to better achieve the EFA education goals in an area still struggling to overcome the impacts of a natural disaster.

Conceived and developed by the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office (UTCO), the project brought together Iranian and international organizations. The Government of Iran donated land. The Japanese Committee to Help the Children of Bam supported the architectural design. The Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO) provided technical advice. Invaluable support was also received from UNICEF, The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Common Humanity, a Swiss NGO, and Basel Communication Co, an Iranian IT company, and the French Bam Association. Attracting such support from within and outside Iran, the project is an excellent example of different organizations working together to assist a community recovering from a natural disaster.

II.5.2. Natural Sciences (SC) Sector

122. Through its natural science programmes – especially related to water and biodiversity - UNESCO advocates for environmental protection and the sustainable use of natural resources. Partnering with Iranian authorities, UTCO's Science sector promotes international scientific cooperation and links researchers with policy-makers and the private sector. The dissemination of scientific and technological applications contributes to improved environmental practices and expands the economic prospects of commerce based on the use of technology⁴⁷.

Achievements

- UTCO creates links to information on the scientific causes and responses to natural phenomena leading to disasters. With partners such as the ISDR (UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction), UNDP and the International Institute on Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIEES), ongoing cooperation has been developed with Iranian institutions engaged in research, risk mitigation and risk preparedness, and disaster management. Joint activities, such as five series of international conferences on Seismology and Earthquake Engineering, an International Workshop on Groundwater for Emergency Situations, an IIEES-ICTP international training course on Seismology, Engineering Seismology and Wave Form Modelling, and a publication on the Iranian Experience on Earthquake Risk Management Strategies, have increased Iranian access to specialized knowledge on natural disasters.
- UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere programme (MAB) develop a global network of the world's main ecosystems and promote the preservation of natural diversity, helping local communities to adopt sustainable practices in the use of their natural resources. UTCO provides continuous support to Iran's 9 Biosphere Reserves, and helps the country prepare nominations for 7 new sites under this concept. UTCO science programmes have led to the dissemination of technical expertise, reviews and assessments, research in Iran's biodiversity, and project development to empower affected communities. In 1992, a UNESCO Chair in Biology was established at the University of Tehran to further promote research in this area.
- In the Persian Gulf island of Qeshm, a Geo-Park was established in the context of UNESCO's Global Network of National Geo-Parks. UTCO provides continuous support to the site, which is an example of geological heritage that contributes to sustainable socio-economic and cultural development.
- In a partnership with Iran's Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution, UTCO monitors the development and application of science and technology in Iran. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics is developing an up-to-date assessment on this topic by end of 2009. Moreover in cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters' Section for Science Policy for Sustainable Development, Iran's chapter is developed for inclusion in the World Science Report 2010.
- UNESCO has in recent years led UN-wide efforts to build Iranian science and technology capacities for the benefit of social, economic and environmental

⁴⁷ See also Annex 4 for the list of Iran's biosphere reserves registered in the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme and geo-parks.

development. Assessments of the status of Science and Technology within the I.R of Iran were undertaken with the Supreme Council on Cultural Revolution. Advocacy initiatives have broadened the knowledge base of policy-makers, researchers, curriculum developers, officers and private sector representatives on scientific and technological opportunities.

- UTCO provides support, advocacy and best practices for science parks, such as the Isfahan Science and Technology Town and the Pardis Technology Park. These parks are a high priority of the Iranian government and a successful initiative for the transfer of science and technology. In an innovative way, they bring together representatives of government, research and education institutions, entrepreneurs and technopreneurs from the private sector for S&T application and development.

Improving Water Resource Management

The sustainable management of freshwater resources is a key focus of UTCO's natural science programme. UNESCO Tehran partners with Iranian authorities to increase understanding on hydrological issues and on the challenges of water use and management.

Two water-related centres have been set up in Iran under the auspices of UNESCO: the Regional Centre for Urban Water Management (RCUWM) in Tehran and the International Centre on Qanats and Historic Hydraulic Structures (ICQHS) in Yazd. UNESCO partnerships with the centres have led to the organization of several training courses, conferences and workshops as well as production of a Training of Teachers Manual on Integrated Urban Water Management (with RCUWM) and the organization of the first international training course on Qanats with ICQHS.

UTCO has also been instrumental in the promotion of a holistic understanding of the benefits of the Qanats. Exploring the different aspects of the Qanats of Bam - from hydraulics and engineering to geology, archaeology, and socio-economic and managerial factors - UNESCO has regenerated interest and capacity to preserve and restore these traditional, environment-friendly water networks across the region in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan.

New international partnerships forged by UTCO around water-related knowledge have brought freshwater initiatives and capacity to Iranian experts. The Global Network on Water and Development Information for Arid Lands (G-WADI) provides technical support to the two G-WADI pilot basins in Iran, Mashhad and Taleghan-Hashtgerd. A climate change adaptation Action Plan is being prepared for the two basins to serve as national pilots for further development in this regard. International partnerships also provide visibility to Iranian projects, with UNESCO's World Water Assessment Programme for instance promoting the Water Allocation Model developed and applied by Iran's Ministry of Energy for scientific distribution of water among different provinces.

II.5.3. Communication and Information (CI) Sector

123. The CI Sector in Iran emphasizes inclusive access to information, media and information literacy, and capacity building of media professionals. Particular attention is given to cross-cutting issues and the role of media and ICT for education, science and culture.

Achievements

- In partnership with the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD), UTCO builds institutional and technical capacities of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Broadcasting (IRIB), including through training for investigative journalism and reporting on key issues, such as HIV/AIDS, climate change and natural disasters.

- UNESCO partners with Iran's National Library and Archives, working to identify and preserve Iranian documentary heritage through the Memory of the World programme. Two documents have already been approved as registered heritage, and the National Library and Archives prepares to host a meeting of the Memory of the World International Advisory Committee.
- Partnering with the Education Sector, the CI programme develops innovative, cross-cutting approaches to advance media and information literacy in schools, through teacher training and media education.
- Contributing to the UNDAF Iran, UTCO promotes policies for socio-economic equity in access to knowledge and information, and innovative use of ITC for development.

Building Regional Approaches and Media Capacity to Raise Public Awareness

→ A regional workshop organized by UNESCO on the role of the media in protecting cultural heritage brought together participants from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Lebanon and resulted in the Tehran Declaration on the Role of the Media in Protecting Cultural Heritage.

→ With UNAIDS and UNODC, UNESCO built Iranian media capacities to report on HIV and AIDS and narcotics, encouraging co-operation between AIDS experts and national authorities in Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 2006, a regional workshop, in collaboration with UNESCO Islamabad, AIBD, UNDP, the Pakistan National AIDS Control Programme, HUM TV and Pakistan TV, helped disseminate information on HIV/AIDS to young people. The initiative brought together young TV producers from Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Tajikistan, who created short films on HIV/AIDS for broadcasting in their home countries.

→ In 2006, UTCO engaged with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) to improve access to information for disadvantaged people. Through a regional workshop with IRIB, the Asia-Pacific Institute of Broadcasting Development (AIBD), UNHCR and IOM, the topic of refugees and cultural minorities in the media was raised. Participants attended from Iran, Pakistan, Syria, UAE, Afghanistan and Turkey under the frame of UNESCO's Declaration of Cultural Diversity.

II.5.4. Culture (CLT) Sector

124. To preserve Iran's significant cultural heritage and to foster a cultural environment conducive to peace and development, UNESCO promotes in Iran the adoption and implementation of international conventions and recommendations for culture. This includes building knowledge, capacity and networks to safeguard both tangible and intangible heritage as well as encouraging practices of intercultural and interfaith dialogue⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ See also Annex 5 for the list of Iran's cultural heritage sites and UNESCO Conventions ratified by Iran.

Achievements

- In support of national efforts to upgrade Iran's network of museums, UNESCO has undertaken needs assessments and trained museum managers on best practices for heritage conservation and promotion.
- Through its networks of international expertise on arts and crafts and the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicraft, UNESCO has helped empower Iran's manufacturers in the marketing and promotion of their crafts and designs.
- To assist Iran in the overall efforts to ensure a more sustainable management of the environment, UNESCO has provided training and advocacy for an integrated approach to heritage conservation, disaster management, and sustainable urban development. The establishment of the Iranian Heritage Cities Network in 2009 is expanding work related to the Consortium for Enhanced Urban Heritage Conservation, a catalytically initiative created with UNESCO support in 2007.
- Intercultural and interfaith dialogue were promoted in the region with the launch of a regional Intercultural – Interfaith open debate, to be televised featuring key figures in 2009.
- Advocating for Natural World Heritage protection, UNESCO has helped Iran safeguard delicate natural areas. As a result, a joint proposal is being prepared for the Hyrcanian Forests, located between Azerbaijan and Iran, to be nominated as a trans-boundary Natural World Heritage property.

Safeguarding National Treasures

Iran has ten cultural properties that have been inscribed on UNESCO's list of World Heritage treasures of exceptional value to humankind.

The preservation of these properties is a long-term commitment that has benefited from a strong partnership between Iran and UNESCO. The management of the sites as well as of other expressions of tangible and intangible cultural heritage has been advanced through training and capacity-building of national consultants, professionals and policy makers. UNESCO has been instrumental in creating a national network of stakeholders on heritage issues, led by the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization.

In the case of World Heritage properties in danger, UNESCO offers tailored assistance to states parties. The property of the Iranian ancient city of Bam and its Cultural Landscape was devastated by the 2003 earthquake. UNESCO has helped the community recover through a series of comprehensive efforts to conserve the site, to launch basic services and to empower the local communities.

The World Heritage Property of Chogha-Zanbil is another example of multi-partner cooperation taking place under the auspices of UNESCO. The degradation of Chogha-Zanbil was halted with the help of UNESCO-Japan funds in trust for the training and initiation of conservation activities.

PART III: Prospects- UNESCO Cooperation **Framework in Iran for 2010-2013**

125. UNESCO advances internationally agreed goals and priorities through education, science, culture and communications. In Iran, the core of UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office (UTCO) action is built around initiatives for quality education, the preservation of natural resources and cultural heritage, innovative policies for science, and the development of cultural capacities and quality, inclusive media and information networks.

126. UNESCO offers a holistic perspective on the social impacts of all levels and types of knowledge. Knowledge contributes to human development from local belief-systems to cultural values and scientific capacities. With its mandate placed at the center of learning, teaching and sharing knowledge, UNESCO works as a global facilitator of intellectual development in all its forms. To help Iran develop into an inclusive and dynamic knowledge society, UTCO builds capacities and shares best practices to advance learning, information sharing, and engagement in scientific and cultural exchanges.

127. UNESCO supports policy-makers as well as a large array of professionals working to develop, maintain and enhance knowledge and learning. The UTCO 2010-2013 programme for Iran is guided by three main frameworks that provide the basis for priority settings and activity plans:

- 1) National priorities of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and other local partners;
- 2) The UN's joint UNDAF priorities for Iran in 2010-2014;
- 3) The global objectives set by the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 and its biennial programmes and budgets.

Main Objectives of UTCO for 2010-2013

- 1) To mobilize the Iranian knowledge, communication and research communities to contribute to human development in the country.
- 2) To assist Iranian authorities in the planning of policies aiming to:
 - Upgrade education and research institutions
 - Foster sustainable natural resource management
 - Mainstream science to technology for economic growth
 - Nurture and preserve a dynamic cultural environment
 - Build media and information literacy and universal access to information
- 3) To encourage communication and cultural dialogue both nationally and internationally with the purpose of contributing to a culture of peace.

UTCO Contribution to the Three Main UNDAF Focus Areas of 2011-2015

- 1) UNESCO supports national processes of governance and management in policies aimed at *building intellectual capital* at all levels of society in Iran.
- 2) UNESCO subscribes to the promotion of just and inclusive societies, encouraging the establishment of policies conducive to *socio-economic equity in access to knowledge and information*.
- 3) UNESCO contributes to national scientific capacities and *mobilizes knowledge and information resources* towards the promotion of sustainable development in Iran.

Methods of Work

- Providing policy advice on education, natural sciences, technology, communication and social and cultural policies, derived from up-to-date and innovative international expertise in these fields;
- Supporting the creation of national policy coordination and implementation mechanisms for the management of cross-cutting policies;
- Coordinating networks of experts and stakeholders to build strong institutional knowledge bases;
- Hosting events to advocate for the UNESCO's main initiatives and activities;
- Facilitating cooperation with research institutions to support the management of research processes;
- Building the capacities of local experts and professionals;
- Promoting international norms and standards;
- Promoting international cooperation and partnership;
- Promoting a culture of dialogue;
- Disseminating knowledge through publications and their translation;
- Funding strategic and catalytic activities and fellowships.

Gender Equality as a Priority Cross-Cutting Issue

Guiding principles and goals:

The UTCO, in line with the goals, strategies and directions identified in MDG3, Beijing Platform for Action, UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2008–2013 (34 C/4) as well as UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2008-2013 and monitoring framework for gender mainstreaming, will strive to maximize its support to gender equality and women's empowerment in Iran through all of its activities and initiatives in coordination with national entities and United Nations system in Iran.

The UTCO approaches:

To do so, the UTCO will mainly focus on mainstreaming gender equality throughout the programming cycle at all programme levels by results-based planning, monitoring and reporting results against specific gender-relevant indicators. Specific attention will be paid to gender mainstreaming, its promotion and advocacy in policy developments, basic education, girls' education, HIV/AIDS prevention and disaster risk reduction, science and culture programmes as well as in using ICT and in media.

III.1 Proposed UTCO Cooperation Programme in Iran for 2010-2013, by Sector:⁴⁹

III.1.1. Education

Iran's 5th National Development Plan articles & subjects with direct relevance:

- Article 18 on review of educational curriculums
- Article 23 on Integrated Plan for Institutional Development in Educational systems
- Article 24 on higher education, research and technology & TVE, education & sustainable development
- Article 26 on privatization/administration of schools
- Article 28 on non-governmental schools and decentralization

Relevant New UNDAF (2011-2015) Focus Areas:

- Supporting Knowledge and Innovation for Sustainable Development;
- Supporting Governance and National Institutions;
- Supporting the development of socio-economic equity.

UNESCO's expected results and key activities⁵⁰

Expected result 1:

National educational systems and mechanisms reviewed and enhanced in line with the goals and principles of EFA

Key activities:

- Provide support to the assessment and review of the education system planning and budgeting;
- Promote of EFA-related policies in Iran;
- Identify areas where further contribution to EFA achievements can be made;
- Build blocks for EFA: literacy, teachers and skills;
- Mainstream about the needs of vulnerable groups as well as gender equality;
- Help foster literacy and quality education for all at all levels and through both formal and non-formal lifelong learning, especially for the youth;
- Strengthen national capacities in education planning and management;
- Promote cooperation with all UN Agencies to collectively provide support in achieving MDGs and joint programming through UNDAF.

Expected result 2:

National authorities better equipped to integrate the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into curricula and learning processes.

Key activities:

- Disseminate best education practices to contribute to content development at all levels of the Iranian education system;
- Advocate for a holistic perspective on safe, fair and enabling learning environments and their social impacts;

⁴⁹ See also Annex 1 for examples of proposed programmes and projects.

⁵⁰ See also Annex 2 for areas of intervention.

- Promote arts education and the use of arts in education;
- Encourage environmental education, health education, physical education and creative education;
- Promote the role of the education system as a forum for articulating ethical, normative and intellectual issues and fostering dialogue;
- Enhance health education, focusing on HIV/AIDS and drugs preventions education and by contributing to the assessment and review of the education system planning and budgeting;
- Enhance cooperation with UNAIDS and UNODC for school health and HIV/AIDS and Drugs prevention education as well as with FAO for quality education in rural areas.

Expected result 3:

National capacities strengthened to develop educational programmes at secondary and higher educational levels that are more relevant to the world of work.

Key activities:

- Strengthen capacities in technical and vocational education, science & technology education towards productive employment for Iran's youth;
- Assist in improving the quality of higher education from content and methodology wise and science policy improvement and implementation, mainly through the support to be provided to the UNESCO Chair in Higher Education and Quality;
- Enhance cooperation with UNIDO for TVE.

III.1.2. Natural Sciences

Iran's 5th National Development Plan articles & subjects with direct relevance:

- Article 19 on the national target for science and increase of the research budget
- Article 20 on technology towns and S&T parks
- Article 21 on the State's S&T Development Fund
- Article 22 on the support to S&T innovators
- Article 127 on water management
- Articles 163-165, 166, 168, 170-173, and 191 on environmental sustainability
- Article 192 on disaster mitigation and management.

Relevant New UNDAF (2011-2015) Focus Areas:

- Supporting Knowledge and Innovation for Sustainable Development;
- Supporting Governance and National Institutions;
- Supporting the development of socio-economic equity.

UNESCO's expected results and key activities

Expected result 1:

Support provided for national policies and local initiatives for improved natural resource management.

Key activities:

- Build capacity for high quality reporting on water and biodiversity issues, through the use of qualitative assessments, statistics and global networks of expertise;
- Explore new opportunities and partnerships for coastal zones management;
- Build alliances of public and private institutions for innovation in natural resource management;
- Advocate for sustainable management of water resources in arid and semi-arid zones;

- Advocate for the integration of holistic climate change studies in pilot river basin development plans;
- Advocate for better coordination and co-operation among various authorities involved in natural resources development, management and conservation.

Expected result 2:

Researches and capacity-building promoted in the field of geo-sciences, ecology, biodiversity and biology.

Key activities:

- Strengthen the work of the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme in Iran, through an expansion of the network of Biosphere Reserves and further support to existing reserves;
- Advocate for biosphere reserves as learning laboratories for sustainable development;
- Contribute to the promotion of sustainable biodiversity as well as cultural diversity conservation in biosphere reserve sites.

Expected result 3:

Evidence-based science and technology policies for sustainable development applied in national plans.

Key activities:

- Monitor the development of Iran's science and technology policies;
- Help promote statistical capacities and recognize contribution of local and indigenous knowledge;
- Enhance national capacity for developing S&T policy for national development plan;
- Provide grounds for a better understanding about the situation of science and technology in Iran;
- Help enhance knowledge of Iranian experts on Science Parks;
- Assist in the adoption of National R&D plans of actions and merit-based management frameworks;
- Advocate for and support the establishment of a Regional Category II Centre for Science Park and Technology Incubator Development, under the auspices of UNESCO;
- Advocate for women's participation in science and technology transfer;
- Increase capacities in the production of scientific papers and patents through joint international research projects;
- Improve knowledge-based enterprise for the enhancement of economic development by establishment of UNIDO-UNESCO chair.

Expected result 4:

Authorities are better equipped to design policies and initiatives for disaster risk reduction and prevention at national and regional levels

Key activities:

- Promote knowledge management and education for disaster preparedness at policy, media and educational levels;
- Help establish systems and networks for natural hazards mitigation, including early warning systems;
- Promote networks for disaster mitigation across the country;
- Promote women's role as key actors in disaster risk reduction;
- Contribute to strengthening disaster risk management capacity, including enhanced community awareness and participation and enhanced coordination mechanisms among all stakeholders at local and national levels;
- Help build capacities in the development and application of early warning systems and hazard mapping for effective disaster risk management at all levels;
- Disseminate information on disaster risk reduction and preparedness.

III.1.3. Communication and Information

Iran's 5th National Development Plan articles & subjects with direct relevance:

- Article 49 on IT systems & IT for development of scientific networks;
- Article 11 on the use of internet and satellite use.

Relevant New UNDAF (2011-2015) Focus Areas:

- Supporting Knowledge and Innovation for Sustainable Development;
- Supporting Governance and National Institutions.

UNESCO's expected results and key activities

Expected result 1:

An inclusive knowledge society promoted and access to knowledge and information expanded among all groups, men and women, including minorities and disadvantaged people.

Key activities:

- Help universal access to knowledge and information through the development of library and ICT services;
- Help enhance media and information literacy through media education;
- Help develop outreach strategies to increase access to information among disadvantaged groups;
- Help develop national strategies in using ICTs and improvement of infrastructures for quality education, science/technology transfer and campaign for preservation of documentary heritage.

Expected result 2:

Capacities and competencies of media and information professionals enhanced.

Key activities:

- Build institutional capacities of media establishments through targeted training and capacity building initiatives;
- Strengthen journalism training both in higher education curricula and through service creation for media professionals;
- Promote a culture of quality journalism;
- Increase media capacity to disseminate information on sustainable development, HIV/AIDS, health and narcotic drugs, disaster preparedness and other topics of public interest.

Expected result 3:

Key parameters for an enabling environment for knowledge creation, preservation, access and sharing identified, monitored and made available to the Government.

Key activities:

- Conduct a participatory assessment of the Iranian media, applying relevant media development indicators;
- Monitor and advocate for freedom of the press;
- Monitor the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Plan of Action in Iran;
- Monitor the development of the Iranian knowledge society and information and communication – related policies;
- Advocate and promote UNESCO-IPDC media development indicator (MDI) for developing free, independent and pluralistic media.

Expected result 4:

Iranian documentary heritage safeguarded and archives management enhanced.

Key activities:

- Continue cooperation in the Memory of the World Programme.

III.1.4. Culture

Iran's 5th National Development Plan articles & subjects with direct relevance:

- Article 3 on handicrafts and cultural heritage;
- Article 12 on tourism;
- Article 13 on museums.

Relevant New UNDAF (2011-2015) Focus Areas:

- Supporting Knowledge and Innovation for Sustainable Development;
- Supporting Governance and National Institutions.

UNESCO's expected results and key activities

Expected result 1:

Safeguarding Iranian cultural and natural heritage resources enhanced.

Key activities:

- Support the management, preservation and development of Iranian cultural expressions and endangered cultural and natural heritage resources, including World Heritage properties, museums and handicrafts;
- Enhance urban management and heritage conservation;
- Build the capacities of local institutions and professionals working to preserve Iranian cultural heritage;
- Build capacities to curb illicit traffic of cultural heritage;
- Build capacities for inventorying intangible heritage.

Expected result 2:

Implementation of international norms and tools promoted for the protection of culture.

Key activities:

- Encourage the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to adopt international normative tools which the country has not yet ratified, namely: The UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005); the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001); and the Universal Copyright Convention (1952, 1971);
- Use UNESCO's legal instruments (International Conventions and Recommendations) and international programmes, awards and certificates to foster new national initiatives for culture.

Expected result 3:

The value of culture to human development, social cohesion and inter-cultural exchange promoted.

Key activities:

- Leverage UNESCO's lead role in the Global Agenda for the Dialogue among Civilizations to support local, regional and international initiatives for interfaith and intercultural dialogue.
- Contribute to national development planning, integrating perspectives of culture and diversity into governmental and UN development programmes, and encouraging inter-disciplinary coordination.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Examples of Proposed Programs and Projects

PROJECT PROFILE 1

Arts Greenhouse

Location: Iran

Partners: All concerned ministries and governmental organizations, communities, the media, NGOs, the private sector, UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Network.

General objectives: To demonstrate a distinct role in bringing the principles of quality education into practice and in making education more relevant in the modern world through arts in education (AiE).

Background: “Arts Greenhouse” is a concept developed and initiated jointly by UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office (UTCO) and Sa-ad Abad Cultural & Historical Complex (SCHC) with the support and sponsorship of private sector. “Arts Greenhouse” (600 sq/m) is a pilot initiative at the level of Asia-pacific in an ancient greenhouse using green and renewable energy, to develop creativity and critical thinking among children, students and youth and it is conceived on two pillars : as a place for the best understanding of all expressions of arts through conferences and workshops and also for the international ex-change among artists in the areas of *music, painting, theatre, performing arts, photography, cinema, architecture and traditional arts*. “Arts Greenhouse” includes also “Greenhouse Gallery” as the largest arts gallery in I. R. of Iran and where arts in education exhibitions will be possible. Facilitating an arts-based learning approach that involves, for example, kinaesthetic, musical and interpersonal intelligences as well as verbal and logical intelligences and team working spirit, educators can make learning easier and more rewarding for all. Recognizing the value of AiE and of the AiE approach, UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office (UTCO) seeks to encourage policy makers, teachers and educators in I. R. of Iran to explore ways and means by which to mainstream AiE into educational systems and thereby improve the relevance and quality of Education for All students.

Objectives:

- To Advocate the impact of learning in and through the arts;
- To encourage policy makers, teachers and educators in Iran to explore ways and means by which to mainstream AiE into educational systems and thereby improve the relevance and quality of education for all students;
- To train arts education practitioners;
- To promote research and international/regional cooperation;
- To promote inter-ministerial cooperation and partnership between the public and private sectors in education;
- To promote cooperation between schools and communities.

PROJECT PROFILE 2

Mobile Library and Education Centre in Tehran

Location: Iran

Partners: Tehran Municipality, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, and other local authorities.

General objectives: To encourage public reading, especially by children and youth that creates an atmosphere of learning community in urban neighbourhoods.

Background: In a large city like Tehran, access to libraries is often restricted by heavy traffic and the remoteness and limited number of facilities. A mobile library can provide a very accessible and intimate setting for the discovery of exciting books, films or music CDs. Such a service can be targeted especially to children and youth and extensively used by school or day-care groups, families and other local groups. The weekly passage of a library bus, according to a fixed schedule, can become an anticipated event. The project aims at the creation of such a mobile library service. The creation of a library bus includes design, manufacturing, furnishing, and the acquisition of necessary equipment such as computers, web access, film projectors etc.

Objectives:

- To provide the public with the diverse material that supports reading and learning for fun
- To provide main services such as lending of books, periodicals, CDs and DVDs and screening of educational films
- To provide free internet access and internet resources for e-learning
- To provide children's books and books for youth, prose and poetry, periodicals, music and film to appeal to different interests, along with more educational contents such as information on the environment, nature, history, geography, arts, culture, etc.

PROJECT PROFILE 3

Climate Change Adaptation in G-WADI Pilot Basins

Location: Iran

Partners: Iranian National Commission for UNESCO; Iranian National IHP Committee; Ministry of Energy of Iran; Forests, Range and Watershed Management Organization of Iran; Department of Environment of Iran; Iranian Meteorological Organization, Tehran University; Ferdowsi University of Mashhad; Toossab Consulting Firm and research institutes.

General objectives: to provide policy advice and technical support towards national authorities for developing national strategy for climate change adaptation

Background: the Global Network on "Water and Development Information for arid lands (G-WADI) was established under UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP) in 2003 for which pilot G-WADI river basins have been identifying throughout Asian countries since then. Iran has two pilot basins; one in northeast of the country called Kashroud River Basin and the other one close to the capital named Taleghan-Hashtgerd Basins which are closely linked to the G-WADI network. By the ever increasing signs of the climate change, detailed study and further projection of the impacts of this phenomenon are essential. To this end, UNESCO took the initiative to develop a concrete action-plan on Climate Change within the two G-WADI Pilot basins to serve as examples for formulation of the national strategy for climate change adaptation. This plan, "Iran G-WADI Action Plan on Climate Change", shall provide a short inception report on a five years road-map to anticipate and interpret the impacts of Climate Change on the two basins. Climate Change will be looked at from various angles including freshwater resources, agriculture and food security, animal husbandry, urban waters, water quality, sedimentation & erosion, traditional water management techniques, sea level rise, human health, sustainable development, tourism & eco-tourism, modelling needs and future needs and recommendations

Objectives:

- Brining together concerned decision makers/authorities for collective action on climate change adaptation
- Developing pilot studies on impacts of climate change within two river basins to be utilized for deriving national strategy for climate change adaptation

PROJECT PROFILE 4

Creation of an Eminent Scientific Board on Qanats and Historic Hydraulic Structures; “Qanats Club”

Location: Countries holding Qanats worldwide

Partners: International Centre on Qanats and Historic Hydraulic Structures; UNESCO-IHP; Iranian National Commission for UNESCO; Iranian National IHP Committee; Ministry of Energy of Iran; Universities and Research Institutions.

General objectives: to promote scientific research, documentation and reinforcement of traditional water management structures/techniques together with advocacy for cross-regional collaborations in these fields

Background: Water is not only vital for human existence, but also substantially needed in any food production process as well as environmental sustainability. In a time when many countries are facing water scarcity threatened to become more severe by the climate change, introducing new methods/techniques in water resources development, if not successful, may lead to a mass disaster of severe hunger and thirst in areas with water shortage. This is while learning from past experiences will minimize the risk of failure of these innovations. This is while our ancestors have been facing similar challenges since ancient times. However they managed to overcome the water scarcity constraint by devising unique techniques such as the environmental friendly invention called Qanats system which helped them to utilize groundwater resources for over three millenniums. In this connection, the International Centre on Qanats and Historic Hydraulic Structures (ICQHS) was established in Yazd, Iran under the auspices of UNESCO to study such traditional water management techniques. A board of eminent international experts is required to work together and to also share their knowledge and experience in study, documentation and research on traditional water management techniques. As a first step and taking into account Qanats spread over 34 countries worldwide, it is intended to create a board of high level Qanats experts in a prestigious club at ICQHS via an official honouring ceremony.

Objectives:

- To strengthen international cooperation and network on historic hydraulic structures for addressing global changes in light of learning from traditional/indigenous know-how
- To systematically disseminate knowledge on Qanats system by deploy of eminent internationally recognized experts

PROJECT PROFILE 5

Integrating Intercultural Dialogue and Cultural Diversity into National Policy of Iran

Location: Iran

Partners: Public Broadcasters, especially IRIB, Parliament, Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Iran Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO).

General objectives: Public information awareness raising and capacity building of stakeholders responsible for innovative cultural policy formulation to enhance Iran’s cultural policies.

Background: Iran’s cultural policy needs enhancement for integration of cultural diversity and cultural dialogue. The past years have witnessed policies which have not placed emphasis on cultural diversity

and intercultural dialogue. Through this project a training seminar will be organized for MPs, professionals, officials, policy makers who contribute to formulation of cultural policies in Iran. This seminar as well as UTCO activities will be fully covered by IRIB in the form of TV programs.

Objectives:

- To Mainstream culture in national development policy frameworks
- To Strengthening intercultural dialogue and interreligious dialogue at local, national and regional levels
- To contribute to the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures and a Culture of Peace
- Promoting policies and tools

PROJECT PROFILE 6

Enhancing Urban Management and Heritage Conservation in Persian Historic Cities

Location: Iran

Partners: Cole d'Architecture Belleville (Paris), Urban Development Agency of Strasbourg, Cole d'Architecture Strasbourg, School of Architecture of Istanbul Technical University, Association of Historic Cities of Turkey, Indian Heritage Cities Network Foundation (IHCN-F), Association Natl des Villes et Pays d'Art et d'Histoire (ANVPAH-VSS), Association of Urban Planning Agencies of France, Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO), Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD), ICOMOS-Iran, Iranian Society of Consulting Engineers (ISCE), Network of Small Historic Cities (NSHC), Higher Council for Architecture and Urban Planning (HCAUP).

General objectives: Coordinating actions of partners for the sustainable heritage conservation and development planning in historic cities.

Background: The centralized planning and decision making structures and the weak inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms have led to rapid deterioration of historic fabrics. Current urban planning excludes historic areas and subjects them to a separate regulation. This segregated approach in turn leads to lack of investment and excessive deterioration in the historic fabric. A Network of Small Historic Cities (NSHC) has been recently established in Iran and the Government intends to develop special urban development plans for these cities. This project seeks to help NSHC for better enhanced and coordinated urban development and master plans in historic cities.

Objectives:

- To provide assistance to the recently established NSHC;
- To contribute to the reform process in the urban planning procedures in Iran;
- To replicate the project by demonstrating the value of its achievements.

PROJECT PROFILE 7

Enhancing Museum Management for Persian Cultural Heritage

Location: Iran and Afghanistan

Partners: Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO), Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Public & Private Museums, ICOM, UNIDC.

General objectives: To build and enhance capacity of Iranian museum staff on museology, museum management and prevention of illicit trafficking of movable cultural heritage.

Background: Despite the wealth of movable heritage in I.R. of Iran, the Iranian and Afghan museums have insufficient display space, secure storage facilities for housing and regularly exhibiting their valuable property. The facilities and presentation methods employed in Iranian museums have not been upgraded for several decades. The Iranian and Afghan museums also face serious staff, governance and management challenges, whereby more than half of the museums have prioritized museology and museum management as their most important training needs. This project will aim to tackle the above mentioned challenges through capacity building of the Iranian museum staff.

Objectives:

- To provide training to the Iranian and Afghan museum staff to enhance their museology, museum management as well as normative and operational activities such as the prevention and curbing illicit trafficking of movable heritage;
- To provide assistance to a local museum as a pilot project in enhancing museum management and presentation;
- Replicate the project by demonstrating the value of its achievements.

PROJECT PROFILE 8

Development of National Strategies in Using ICTs and Improvement of Infrastructures for Quality Education, Science/Technology Transfer and Campaign for Preservation of Documentary Heritage

Location: Iran, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan

Partners: Agricultural Bank of Iran, ICHHTO, Tehran's municipality, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Communication, Ministry of Science and Technology, UNESCO National Commissions.

General objectives: Developing strategies for using ICTs in knowledge acquisition and sharing as well as reinforcing preservation of documentary heritage in countries of Tehran Cluster.

Background: Among the four countries of Tehran Cluster, Iran has invested enormously on establishing the ICT infrastructure with ongoing government initiatives aiming to increase online services such as virtual science parks, e-learning's and e-government portals as an important step in laying the foundations of a knowledge society. This approach should be expanded and complemented with stronger library and information services as well. The proposed activity will tailor a number of national activities based on the national conditions and priorities of each country to achieve the above mentioned general objectives.

Objectives:

- To promote the use of ICT in education within Iran;
- To enable exposure of experts and decision makers to different UNESCO initiatives on ICTs applications for education, science and culture carried out in various regions;
- To develop partnership with concerned national authorities of the cluster countries and work together for identification and preservation of documentary/digital heritage, especially through the Memory of the World program.

PROJECT PROFILE 9

Capacity Building in Key Media and Journalism Training Institutions for Quality Media Contents related to Sustainable Development

Location: Iran, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan

Partners: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Communication, UNFPA, UNDP, UNODC and UNIC.

General objectives: Increasing capacities of media training and journalism education institutions to reach the established criteria of excellence in training, including the pursuit of gender equality as well as enhancing media and information literacy to foster informed decision-making.

Background: Aiming at becoming a knowledge-based society in its 20 years vision plan, Iran needs to acquire a wider, socially inclusive access to information, through quality media and more accessible library services, e-government initiatives and the widespread use of ICT as the base for country's development as an advanced knowledge society. In the longer term, knowledge-based economies demand high levels of media and information literacy among the public which will also impact commerce by facilitating the transfer of knowledge and technology via new communication channels. As the key to achieve, UTCO has already organized a number of trainings for capacity building towards professional journalism on various themes including investigative journalism and reporting on key issues, such as HIV/AIDS, climate change and natural disasters. Taking into account the gap still existing in the capacity of journalists within the four countries of Tehran cluster, such trainings need further consolidation in the coming biennium with more technical input from UNESCO.

Objectives:

- To advocacies and build capacities for quality journalism and ethics in media communities on priority issues of public interest including climate change, MDGs especially on poverty eradication and gender equality, public health (drugs and HIV/AIDS), natural disaster mitigation;
- To develop innovative, cross-cutting approaches to advance media and information literacy in schools especially the ASPnet schools connected to UNESCO, through teacher training and media education;
- To build institutional capacities of media organizations through technical training and technical consultation and advisory missions.

PROJECT PROFILE 10

Policy Dialogue and Fostering Editorial Independence

Location: Iran and Turkmenistan

Partners: Academies and Universities, Ministry of Communication, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and UNESCO Chairs.

General objectives: Promoting freedom of expression and access to information and knowledge as well as related internationally recognized legal, safety, ethical and professional standards.

Background: While there has been effort from many to push forward the progress on public access to information and freedom of expressions, there remain major challenges and barriers for Tehran cluster countries to the level advocated by UNESCO. In public media sector, the countries of Tehran Cluster stand to gain significantly if the media can be further harnessed to disseminate information on local, national and global concern, including transparency in governance, respect of human rights and cultural diversity, public health issues, environmental problems including climate change and the associated responsibilities, and intercultural contacts. Policy advice on the proper level is required for improving

access to information for all. In this respect, advocacy for UNESCO instruments and international standards can play a key role in the creation of quality communication and in ensuring that all citizens of Tehran cluster countries have access to varied sources of information.

Objectives:

- To advocate and disseminate the concepts of information and knowledge societies and needs for more open access to information and pluralistic media, based on UNESCO standards and instruments;
- To consult and provide advisory services to the counterpart institutions for developing better policies and public services for knowledge and information, mainly in the context of broadcasting, libraries and internet;
- To assist in formulating outreach strategies to increase access to information among disadvantaged groups by exchanging visits and policy dialogue;
- To advise and monitor the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Plan of Action in Iran and Turkmenistan.

PROJECT PROFILE 11

HIGH-TECH ECOLOGICAL PARK

Location: Iran (Tange Vashi – Qeshm Island Geo-park)

Partners: Private Sectors, municipality, Ministry of Education- Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, UNESCO National Commission, Qeshm Free Zone, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Ministry of Agriculture, Minister of Interior, Ministry of Health and Education and NGOs.

General objectives: To provide capacity development and technical support to assist national efforts in achieving the Dakar Goals towards education for sustainable development.

Background: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is an approach to teach and learn based on the ideals and principles that underlie sustainability and concerned with all levels and types of education as a fantastic cross-cutting theme. ESD is comprehensive package for quality education and learning within which key issues such as poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods, climate change, gender equality, arts in education, peace and human rights education, corporate social responsibility and protection of indigenous cultures, are addressed. The project aims to build an environment that allows and recognizes nature, new energies and the recycle process to be nearby, accessible, understandable, educational and attractive to children, youth and their families. Children and youth are seen as independent and competent, supported by specialized educators to be able and handle the challenges of being outdoors and in nature. It is within this approach that “HIGH-TECH ECOLOGICAL PARK” has been developed as major component of Inclusive Education by establishment of a Pilot Centre in Education for Sustainable Development at the level of Asia-Pacific. “Sustainable Island” will take the best benefit of Iran National capacities by enhancing the International cooperation with experts in the area of Outdoor Education as it is meant to be a place for promoting and developing knowledge and achieving what is mattered most as the essence of Quality Education and life skills.

Objectives:

- To enhance quality education with regard to teacher education, peace education, education for citizenship and democratic values, education for sustainable development, science & technology education, arts education and philosophy, physical education and sports, as well as the mainstreaming of gender, HIV and Drugs prevention education and ICTs.;
- To strengthen efforts by making available ESD tools and programmes to key partners;
- To encourage regional and national work on ESD its critical role in achieving sustainable development.

ANNEX 2: UNESCO's areas of intervention in education

In line with national priorities and within the framework of UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy, the UTCO education programme will focus on the following areas of intervention jointly with other programme units:



ANNEX 3: UNESCO Partners and Networks in IRAN

Main UNESCO partners in Iran

- Iranian National Commission for UNESCO
Dr. Mohammadreza Saeidabadi, Secretary-General
#15 First St., Shahid Hesari Street, Mirdamad Blvd, 1548946111, Tehran, I.R of IRAN
Tel: (+98-21) 22250890, unesco@irunesco.org, www.irunesco.org

National Committees within the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO:

- National Committee for Man and the Biosphere (MAB)
 - National Committee for the International Geosciences Programme (IGCP)
 - National Committee for Oceanography (IOC)
 - National Committee for Hydrology (IHP)
 - National Committee for Ethics of Science and Technology
 - National Committee for Bioethics
 - National Committee for the Management of Social Transformations (MOST)
 - National Committee for Higher Education
 - National Committee for Education for Sustainable Development
 - National Committee for Information for All
 - National Committee for Development of Communication
 - National Committee for Natural and Cultural Heritage
 - National Committee for Memory of World
-
- Academy of Arts
 - Department of Environment
 - Forest, Rangeland and Watershed Management Organization
 - High Council of Education
 - Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization
 - Isfahan Science and Technology Park
 - Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance
 - Ministry of Education
 - Ministry of Energy
 - Ministry of Health and Medical Education
 - Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
 - Ministry of Interior
 - Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture
 - Ministry of Labour
 - Ministry of Science, Research and Technology
 - Ministry of Social Affairs
 - National Shahid Beheshti University
 - Pardis Technology Park
 - Parliament (Majlis) Commission of Education & Research
 - President's Deputy Office for Strategic Planning & Control (SPAC)
 - Science and Arts Foundation
 - Sharif University
 - Shiraz University
 - Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution
 - Technical and Vocational Training Organization
 - Tehran University
 - Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

UNESCO Category 2 Centres

- **Regional Centre on Urban Water Management in Tehran, Iran (RCUWM-Tehran):**

The mission of the Centre is to transfer applicable scientific knowledge, and to increase know-how and capacities in all areas and dimensions of UWM in order to promote sustainable development, and to undertake activities in this field in order to enhance human welfare within the a region covering South West Asia, Central Asia and Middle East Countries.

- **International Centre on Qanats and Historic Hydraulic Structures in Yazd, Iran (ICQHS):**

The main mission of the centre is to help recognize and transfer knowledge and experiences as well as promote capacities regarding all aspects of Qanat technology and other historic hydraulic structures. Preservation of these structures and promoting researches to restore Qanats through international cooperation are among other key objectives of this centre.

Institutes Affiliated with UNESCO

- **International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology in Tehran, Iran:**

The main goal of IIEES is seismic risk reduction and mitigation both in Iran and internationally by promoting research and education in science and technology related to seism tectonic, seismology and earthquake engineering. IIEES activity in research covers all aspects of the earthquake from tectonic study to retrofitting complex structure; and in education from public education to PhD program in earthquake engineering.

- **Iranian National Centre for Oceanography (INCO), established under the International Oceanography Commission in Tehran, Iran:**

INCO promotes research in all fields related to marine science as well as better utilization of marine resources especially for commercial purposes. It also facilitates defining the marine strategies of the country within the framework of the government's policies and helps improve the level of knowledge, research and marine technology.

UNESCO Chairs

- **UNESCO Chair in Health Education, Tehran University of Medical Sciences and Health Services, established in 2004:**

The purpose of the Chair is to promote an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation in the fields of health education. It also serves as a means of facilitating collaboration between high-level, internationally recognized researchers and teaching staff of the University and other institutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

- **UNESCO Chair in Management, Planning & Quality Assurance in Higher Education, Higher Educational Planning & Research Institute of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, established in 2009:**

The main objective of the Chair is studying of evaluation and development of policy-making, planning and management in higher education, conducting institutional research, institutionalizing higher education quality assurance and promoting the level of higher education within regional and international interactions.

- **UNESCO Chair in the Study of Human Rights, Peace and Democracy, Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran, established in 2001:**

The purpose of the Chair is to promote an integrated system of research, education, information and documentation in the field of human rights, sustainable development, and culture of peace, democracy and tolerance. It also serves as a means of facilitating collaboration between high-level researchers and internationally recognized professors of the University and other higher education institutions in Iran and Asia.

- **UNESCO Chair in Biology, University of Tehran, established in 1992:**

The purpose of the Chair is to promote an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation activities in the field of biology. It also helps facilitate collaboration between high-level internationally recognized researchers and the research team of the University, and other institutions in the Asian Region.

ANNEX 4: Biosphere Reserves Registered in the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme and Geo-Parks Registered in Iran (all in 1976)



Map 2: Biosphere Location Map of Iran

Source: <http://www.unesco.org/mabdb/br/brdir/asia/iranmap.htm>

- **Arasbaran:**

This biosphere reserve situated in the north of Iran at the border to Armenia and Azerbaijan belongs to the Caucasus Iranian Highlands. In-between the Caspian, Caucasus and Mediterranean region, the area covers mountains up to 2,200 meters, high alpine meadows, semi-arid steppes, rangelands and forests, rivers and springs. Arasbaran is the territory of about 23,500 nomads who are mainly living in the buffer and transition zones (2000). Economic activities in the biosphere reserve are mainly agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture, apiculture, handicrafts and tourism, but business activities can also be found in urbanized areas.



- **Arjan:**

The Arjan Biosphere Reserve is situated in the Zagros Mountains which belong to the Caucasus-Iranian Highlands. Both terrestrial and water habitats are represented in the biosphere reserve. Due to big elevation differences in the area, many different plant communities occur, such as halophytic vegetation around Lake Parishan and xerophilous forests in the mountains. In 2000, 54,400 people lived in villages whereas 5,500 people lived as nomads. Although the inhabitants of the biosphere reserve belong to different families (Persian, Turkish and Lor), they all have the same religion (Islam). They earn their livelihood mainly by agriculture, animal husbandry, carpet sewing and, in the transition area, also in industry.



- **Geno:**

The Geno Biosphere Reserve is situated in the very south of the Zagros Mountains, close to the Persian Gulf and the Hara Biosphere Reserve. In Geno, the warm and humid region of the Persian Gulf in the west and the arid deserts of central Iran are separated by mountains reaching an altitude of more than 3,000 meters above sea level. In this biosphere reserve, the change of vegetation with elevation and varying microclimatic conditions can be observed very well. Several hot springs are located in the valleys. In 2000, about 40,300 people lived in the biosphere reserve, who are mainly engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture, labouring and small industries and tourism.



- **Golestan:**

Golestan Biosphere Reserve is located in the northern part of Iran at the border to Turkmenistan. It belongs to the Caucaso-Iranian highlands and is situated in-between the sub-humid and semi-arid Caspian regions. The biosphere reserve represents three biomes: temperate rain forest, cold (continental) winter and semi-deserts and mixed mountain and highland systems. A vast variety of habitats can be found, such as closed forests, open woodlands and shrubs, mountain meadows, steppes, halophytic, hygrophilous and aquatic communities. Golestan is also designated as a national park. Golestan offers a great ethnic diversity. The 26,000 inhabitants (2000) of the biosphere reserve are Turk, Persian and Kurdish. Their main activities consist in agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture, industry, silk production and tourism.



- **Hara:**

Hara Biosphere Reserve is located in the south of Iran in the Straits of Khuran between Qeshm Island and the Persian Gulf. Situated in the Mehran River delta, it hosts the largest *Avicennia* mangrove along the Persian Gulf shoreline and therefore represents a rich biodiversity in Iran. The Strait of Khuran is also a Ramsar site, providing habitat to two globally threatened species: a wintering habitat for the pelican *Pelecanus crispus*, and a regular feeding place for the green turtle *Chelonia mydas*. In 2000, about 30,500 people lived in the area, mainly engaged in trading. Additionally, there are some palm tree plantations, animal husbandry and fishing activities and ship construction industries.



- **Kavir:**

The Kavir Biosphere Reserve is located – together with the Touran biosphere reserve - in the Anatolian Iranian Desert. The Kavir plain mainly covers flood plains and low mountain ranges. Apart from arid and semi-arid desert vegetation, steppe communities, salted and sandy lands make special characteristics of the biosphere reserve. Including nomads, there are about 35,000 people living in the biosphere reserve (2002) belonging to different tribes. Seasonal grazing by nomads' livestock takes place in the core area.



- **Lake Orumiyeh:**

This biosphere reserve is located at Lake Orumiyeh in the north of Iran and belongs to the Caucasus-Iranian Highlands. Salt flats can be found around the lakeshore, whereas Pistachio forests and *Artemisia* steppe communities are typical of its islands. Other habitats are wetlands, river estuaries and sandy soils and coasts. The lake has been designated as a National Park and as a Ramsar Site. About 211,000 people live in the transition area of the biosphere reserve (2000). Here, agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, handicrafts, apiculture, mining, business and industry play a major role. In the buffer zone, recreational activities, eco-tourism, *Artemisia* harvesting, salt extraction and hunting are going on.



- **Miankaleh:**

The Miankaleh Biosphere Reserve is located at the south-eastern part of the Caspian Sea. Major habitats include wetlands, inter-tidal mud with sandy shore, shallow marine waters, forested peat lands, raspberry shrub forests, tamarix forests and agricultural areas. Miankaleh was designated a Ramsar site in 1975. About 109,200 Turkmen and Iranians live in the biosphere reserve on a seasonal basis (2000). Their main sources of income come from agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, handicrafts, carpet weaving, traditional poultry farming and tourism.



- **Touran:**

Located in the Anatolian Iran deserts, the Touran Biosphere Reserve represents well the vegetation of arid and semi-arid deserts. It comprises salt, gypsum, mountainous, stone and sandy habitats and covers both clay lowlands and mountains with an altitude of more than 2,200 meters above sea level. About 10,700 people live in the biosphere reserve (2000), depending mostly on agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture and carpet sewing.



UNESCO Geo-Park in Iran:

- **Qeshm Geo-Park in Qeshm Island:**

Qeshm Geo-Park is located in western part of Qeshm Island and is one of the world's largest salt caves. It is 6,000 meters long and as unique characteristics. The Qeshm Geopark has many advantages for different sciences, particularly geology, zoology, botany and archaeology.

G-WADI Pilot Basins in Iran:

- Kashafrud Basin in Mashhad, Khorasan Province
- Taleghan/Hashtgerd Basin in Taleghan

ANNEX 5: Cultural Heritage of Iran

Iranian World Cultural Heritage properties inscribed on the UNESCO List of World Heritage and List of World Heritage in Danger

- **Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran (2008):**

The Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran, in the north-west of the country, consists of three monastic ensembles of the Armenian Christian faith: St Thaddeus and St Stepanos and the Chapel of Dzordzor. These edifices - the oldest of which, St Thaddeus, dates back to the 7th century – are examples of outstanding universal value of the Armenian architectural and decorative traditions.



- **Bam and its Cultural Landscape (2004):** *Inscribed on List of World Heritage in Danger*

Bam is situated in a desert environment on the southern edge of the Iranian high plateau. The origins of Bam can be traced back to the Achaemenid period (6th to 4th centuries BC). Its heyday was from the 7th to 11th centuries, being at the crossroads of important trade routes and known for the production of silk and cotton garments. The existence of life in the oasis was based on the underground irrigation canals, the qanāts, of which Bam has preserved some of the earliest evidence in Iran. Arg-e Bam is the most representative example of a fortified medieval town built in vernacular technique using mud layers (Chineh).



- **Bisotun (2006):**

Bisotun is located along the ancient trade route linking the Iranian high plateau with Mesopotamia and features remains from the prehistoric times to the Median, Achaemenid, Sassanian, and Ilkhanid periods. The principal monument of this archaeological site is the bas-relief and cuneiform inscription ordered by Darius I, The Great.



- **Meidan Emam, Esfahan (1979):**

Built by Shah Abbas I the Great at the beginning of the 17th century, and bordered on all sides by monumental buildings linked by a series of two-storeyed arcades, the site is known for the Royal Mosque, the Mosque of Sheykh Lotfollah, the magnificent Portico of Qaysariyyeh and the 15th-century Timurid palace. They are an impressive testimony to the level of social and cultural life in Iran during the Safavid era.



○ **Pasargadae (2004):**

Pasargadae was the first dynastic capital of the Achaemenid Empire, founded by Cyrus II the Great, in Pars, homeland of the Persians, in the 6th century BC. Its palaces, gardens and the mausoleum of Cyrus are outstanding examples of the first phase of royal Achaemenid art and architecture and exceptional testimonies of Persian civilization.



Persepolis (1979):

Founded by Darius I in 518 B.C., Persepolis was the capital of the Achaemenid Empire. It was built on an immense half-artificial, half-natural terrace, where the king of kings created an impressive palace complex inspired by Mesopotamian models. The importance and quality of the monumental ruins make it a unique archaeological site.



○ **Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System (2009):**

Shushtar, Historical Hydraulic System, inscribed as a masterpiece of creative genius, can be traced back to Darius the Great in the 5th century B.C. It involved the creation of two main diversion canals on the river Kârun one of which, Gargar canal, is still in use providing water to the city of Shushtar via a series of tunnels that supply water to mills.



○ **Soltaniyeh (2005):**

The mausoleum of Oljaytu was constructed in 1302–12 in the city of Soltaniyeh, the capital of the Ilkhanid dynasty, which was founded by the Mongols. Situated in the province of Zanjan, Soltaniyeh is one of the outstanding examples of the achievements of Persian architecture and key monument in the development of its Islamic architecture.



○ **Takht-e Soleyman (2003):**

The archaeological site of Takht-e Soleyman, in north-western Iran, is situated in a valley set in a volcanic mountain region. The site includes the principal Zoroastrian sanctuary partly rebuilt in the Ilkhanid (Mongol) period (13th century) as well as a temple of the Sasanian period (6th and 7th centuries) dedicated to Anahita. The site has important symbolic significance.



○ **Tchogha Zanbil (1979):**

The ruins of the holy city of the Kingdom of Elam, surrounded by three huge concentric walls, are found at Tchogha Zanbil. Founded c. 1250 B.C., the city remained unfinished after it was invaded by Ashurbanipal, as shown by the thousands of unused bricks left at the site.



Iranian Cultural and Natural Properties Submitted as Tentative List Properties to UNESCO (updated in 2008)

- Jame' (Congregational) Mosque of Esfahan (1997)
- Historic ensemble of Qasr-e Shirin (1997)
- Firuzabad Ensemble (1997)
- Nasqsh-e Rostam and Naqsh-e Rajab (1997)
- Tape Sialk (1997)
- Historic-Natural Axis of Isfahan City (2007)
- Bagh-e Fin (Fin Garden), Kashan (2007)
- Historical Ensemble of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardebili (2007)
- Susa (2007)
- The Ensemble of Historical Sassanian Cities in Fars Province (Bishabpur, Firouzabad, Sarvestan) (2007)
- Taq-e Bostan (2007)
- The Complex of Handmade Settlements in Iran (Maymand Village) (2007)
- Kuh-e Khuaja (2007)
- Shahr-e Sukhteh (2007)
- Persepolis and other relevant buildings (2007)
- The Historical-Cultural Axis of Fin, Sialk, Kashan (2007)
- Historical Ensemble of Qasr-e Shirin (2007)
- Historic Monument of Kangavar (2007)
- Bazaar of Tabriz (2007)
- The Historical Structure of Yazd (2007)
- The Historical City of Maybod (2007)
- Tehran Historical – Cultural Axis (Golestan Palace) (2007)
- The Historical Port of Siraf (2007)
- Bazaar of Qaisariye in Laar (2007)
- The Historical Village of Abyaneh (2007)
- Bastam and Kharghan (2007)
- The Historical Texture of Damghan (2007)
- The Cultural-Natural Landscape of Ramsar (2007)
- Kaboud Mosque (2007)
- Tous Cultural Landscape (2007)
- The Historical City of Masouleh (2007)
- The Complex of Izadkhast (2007)
- Cultural Landscape of Alamout (2007)
- Qanats of Gonabad (2007)
- Zozan (2007)
- Khorramabad Valley (2007)
- Jiroft (2007)
- Ghaznavi- Seljukian Axis in Khorasan (2007)
- The Cultural Landscape of Uramanat (2007)
- Golestan National Park (2007)
- Hyrcanian Forest (Caspian Forest) (2007)
- Qeshm Island (2007)

- Lut Desert (the vicinity of Shahdad) (2007)
- Arasbaran Protected Area (2007)
- Sabalan (2007)
- Khabr National Park and Ruchun Wildlife Refuge (2007)
- Alisadr Cave (2007)
- Silk Route (Also as Silk Road) (2008)
- The Natural-Historical Landscape of Izeh (2008)
- The Zandiyeh Ensemble of Fars Province (2008)
- Kerman Historical-Cultural Structure (2008)
- Hegmataneh (2008)
- The Collection of Historical Bridges (2008)
- The Sepulcher Towers (Gonbad-e Ghabous) (2008)
- Touran Biosphere Reserve (2008)
- Hamoun Lake (2008)
- Mangrove Forest (Harra Reserve) (2008)
- Damavand (2008)
- One potential transboundary Natural World Heritage property being considered by the authorities for nomination: Hirkan Forests as trans-boundary Natural World Heritage property from Azerbaijan and Iran

Iranian Membership to the World Heritage Committee

- 1976 - 1980

Iranian Intangible Cultural Heritage inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- **Novruz, Nowrouz, Nooruz, Navruz, Nauroz, Nevruz (nomination from Azerbaijan, India, IR of Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Turkey), inscribed in 2009 (on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity):**
It marks the New Year and the beginning of spring across a vast geographical area covering, inter alia, Azerbaijan, India, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan. It is celebrated on 21 March every year, a date originally determined by astronomical calculations.
- **The Radif of Iranian Music, inscribed in 2009 (on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity):**
It is the traditional repertoire of the classical music of Iran that forms the essence of Persian musical culture. More than 250 melodic units, called gushe, are arranged into cycles, with an underlying modal layer providing the backdrop against which a variety of melodic motifs are set.

ANNEX 6: UNESCO Conventions Ratified by Iran

(as at September 2009)

Ratified Conventions		
Convention	Date of deposit of instrument	Type of instrument
Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention. The Hague, 14 May 1954.	22/06/1959	Ratification
Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. The Hague, 14 May 1954.	22/06/1959	Ratification
Agreement for Facilitating the International Circulation of Visual and Auditory Materials of an Educational, Scientific and Cultural character with Protocol of Signature and model form of certificate provided for in Article IV of the above-mentioned Agreement. Beirut, 10 December 1948.	30/12/1959	Acceptance
Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials, with Annexes A to E and Protocol annexed. Florence, 17 June 1950.	07/01/1966	Ratification
Convention against Discrimination in Education. Paris, 14 December 1960.	17/07/1968	Acceptance
Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. Paris, 14 November 1970.	27/01/1975	Acceptance
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Paris, 16 November 1972.	26/02/1975	Acceptance
Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Ramsar, 2 February 1971.	23/06/1975	Ratification
Protocol to amend the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Paris, 3 December 1982.	29/04/1986	Accession
Protocol to amend articles 6 and 7 of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Regina, Canada, 28 May 1987.	20/07/1994	Ratification
Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. The Hague, 26 March 1999.	24/05/2005	Accession
Convention on Biological Diversity. Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, 29 December 2009	06/08/1996	Ratification
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Cartagena, Colombia, 29 January 2000	20/11/2003	Ratification
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Paris, 17 October 2003.	23/03/2006	Ratification
Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. Paris, 2 November 2001.	16/06/2009	Ratification

The States marked with an asterisk have accepted the amendments to Articles 6 and 7 of the Convention adopted by the Extraordinary Conference of the Contracting Parties (Regina, Canada, 1987). These amendments entered into force on 1 May 1994.

Non-Ratified Conventions	
1	Universal Copyright Convention, with Appendix Declaration relating to Article XVII and Resolution concerning Article XI. Geneva, 6 September 1952.
2	Protocol 1 annexed to the Universal Copyright Convention concerning the application of that Convention to the works of stateless persons and refugees. Geneva, 6 September 1952.
3	Protocol 2 annexed to the Universal Copyright Convention concerning the application of that Convention to the works of certain international organizations. Geneva, 6 September 1952.
4	Protocol 3 annexed to the Universal Copyright Convention concerning the effective date of instruments of ratification or acceptance of or accession to that Convention. Geneva, 6 September 1952.
5	Convention concerning the International Exchange of Publications. Paris, 3 December 1958.
6	Convention concerning the Exchange of Official Publications and Government Documents between States. Paris, 3 December 1958.
7	International Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organizations. Rome, 26 October 1961.
8	Protocol Instituting a Conciliation and Good Offices Commission to be Responsible for Seeking the Settlement of any Disputes which may Arise between States Parties to the Convention against Discrimination in Education. Paris, 10 December 1962.
9	Convention on Technical and Vocational Education. Paris, 10 November 1989.
10	Convention relating to the Distribution of Programme-Carrying Signals Transmitted by Satellite. Brussels, 21 May 1974.
11	Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas, and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific. Bangkok, 16 December 1983.
12	Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Mexico City, 19 July 1974.
13	Protocol to the Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials, with Annexes A to H. Nairobi, 26 November 1976.
14	International Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab and European States bordering on the Mediterranean. Nice, 17 December 1976.
15	Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States. Arusha, 5 December 1981.
16	Universal Copyright Convention as revised on 24 July 1971, with Appendix Declaration relating to Article XVII and Resolution concerning Article XI. Paris, 24 July 1971.
17	Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab States. Paris, 22 December 1978.
18	Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region. Paris, 21 December 1979.
19	Convention for the Protection of Producers of Phonograms against Unauthorized Duplication of their Phonograms. Geneva, 29 October 1971.
20	Protocol 1 annexed to the Universal Copyright Convention as revised on 24 July 1971 concerning the application of that Convention to work of stateless persons and refugees. Paris, 24 July 1971.
21	Multilateral Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation of Copyright Royalties, with model bilateral agreement and additional Protocol. Madrid, 13 December 1979.
22	Protocol 2 annexed to the Universal Copyright Convention as revised on 24 July 1971 concerning the application of that Convention to works of certain international organizations. Paris, 24 July 1971.
23	Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. Lisbon, 11 April 1997.
24	International Convention against Doping in Sport. Paris, 19 October 2005
25	Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Paris, 20 October 2005

ANNEX 7: Iranian Documents registered as UNESCO Memory of the World

- **Administrative Documents of Astan-e Quds Razavi in the Safavid Era (registered in 2009):**
This collection consists of 69,000 pages spanning the period 1589 AD-1735 AD (1000-1148 Lunar Calendar) and relating to a vast geographical area including Iran, especially Khorasan province, and Afghanistan. It contains information on administrative, social, economic, agricultural, endowment, religious and other issues that provide the reader with an image of Mashhad in Khorasan Province as well as the status of social life in the Safavid era.

- **The Deed For Endowment: Rab' I-Rashidi (Rab I-Rashidi Endowment), 13th Century manuscript (registered in 2007):**
The manuscript is 382 pages long, of which the first 290 pages were written by Rashid al-Din, Il-Khan Mahmud Ghazan (King in 1295-1304)'s wazir, or Lord Chancellor himself, and the rest by the Governor of Tabriz (the capital of the Mongol dynasty in Iran), Abdullah Bin Mohammad Tabrizi and two scribes. Due to the vast scope of the endowed properties and the high value of them as well as the high status of the Rab' i-Rashidi, this manuscript is of universal significance. Moreover the institution of the waqf, or endowment, is a central pillar of Islamic society, and this Deed therefore provides an important record of political and economic administration in Central Asia at a time of great dynamism and change.

- **"Bayasanghori Shâhnâme" (Prince Bayasanghor's Book of the Kings), (registered in 2007):**
The Shâhnâme (Book of Kings) is one of the classics of the Persian-speaking world and is on a par with the 'Iliad' and the 'Aeniad' of the Greco-Romano cultural communities. It has been copied countless times and three of these copies could be said to have universal value: the "Demotte Shâhnâme" made in the early 1300s for the Il-Khanid patron, Giyath al-Din; the 16th Century "Houghton Shâhnâme"; and the "Bayasanghori Shâhnâme", which was made in 1430 for Prince Bayasanghor (1399-1433), the grandson of the legendary Central Asian leader Timur (1336-1405). Only the "Bayasanghori Shâhnâme" has survived.

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