



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للترقية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**The Assistant Director-General
for External Relations and Public Information**

To Secretaries-General
of National Commissions for UNESCO

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Sir/Madam,

As the New Year approaches, I would like to keep you updated on recent developments following the 36th session of the General Conference. As you may know, our current situation, which is being deeply affected by the withdrawal of the financial contribution of the United States, forces us to reposition ourselves. We are working closely with US authorities to rectify the situation, and our Management Team is trying to cope with the subsequent effects.

Multi-Donor Emergency Fund

The Director-General launched a Multi-Donor Emergency Fund to compensate for our current budget deficit. The Fund has already achieved significant success including substantial contributions from Qatar, Indonesia, Gabon and Timor-Leste.

Meanwhile, we will continue to count on your support for this fundraising effort. Please post our link (www.unesco.org/donate) on your respective websites. Currently, some National Commissions and partners have already posted the link on their websites in the following countries: Andorra, Austria, Canada, Spain, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and Rwanda. The National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan also joined this effort. We gratefully acknowledge their prompt cooperation.

Participation Programme for 2012-2013

As emphasized by Member States during the 36th session of the General Conference, the Participation Programme is an important mechanism to support activities, falling within the Organization's two global priorities of Africa and gender equality as well as the other priority targeted groups, including Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Small Island Developing States, (SIDS) and youth. It was also highlighted that National Commissions are the main beneficiaries of the Participation Programme.

To improve the operation of the Participation Programme, we have endeavoured to facilitate all stages of the process including preparation, evaluation, approval, implementation of projects, and communication with Member States. To this end, guidelines were prepared to help you formulate your requests and are annexed to the Circular Letter of the Director-General, which will be sent very shortly. We are trying to assess the due impact of budget deficit on the Participation Programme.

Review of UNESCO's Cooperation with National Commissions

Concerning the draft report on the *Review of UNESCO's Cooperation with National Commissions*, the Internal Oversight Service has received comments from 30 National Commissions and a few Permanent Delegations. These comments will be taken into consideration in the process of finalizing the Report, which will be released in January 2012.

These comments highlighted, in particular, the diversity of the network as an asset and the need for better coordination, sharing of best practices, improving networking, promoting partnerships with civil society and building capacities.

In addition, a tripartite working group (composed of the Secretariat, two Permanent Delegations and two National Commissions from each region) responsible for the follow-up of the Review's recommendations will be established. In this regard, some regions have already nominated their representatives, while others will do so shortly. The Section for National Commissions and Related Networks is at your disposal to facilitate this process. I hope that this working group could begin its work in the second quarter of 2012.

New Guidelines on UNESCO's partnership with NGOs

These new Guidelines, adopted by the 36th session of the General Conference, brought a change in the number of partnership categories of NGOs maintaining official relations with UNESCO from three to two, namely "consultation status" and "association status". The Committee for Non-governmental partners (new title of the NGO committee) will endorse the reclassification of all NGOs in relation with UNESCO into one of the two new categories during the 189th session of the Executive Board in February 2012. In this regard, a consultation with NGOs on the New Guidelines was held on 5 December.

The next important step for implementing the Guidelines will be the organization of the International Conference of NGOs in December 2012. The Conference agenda includes the election of new members of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee and its Chairperson, according to the new procedures of improved geographical representativeness.

Forthcoming UNESCO publications

- "Borobudur: the Road to Recovery – Rehabilitation Work and Sustainable Tourism Development" is being published by the Culture Sector and will be available in English and Bahasa Indonesian.

This publication provides stories and accounts of how the volcanic eruption of Mount Merapi has affected the entire temple compound of Borobudur as well as the life of the surrounding community. It shows the community involvement in the restoration of the site. The book will be produced in coffee table book format to showcase the vibrant photos of this UNESCO World Heritage site. An official launch is being held on 17 December, 2011, which includes a media conference at the site with special guests Mr. Herbie Hancock, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador.

Please also note that the book is also available through a donation mechanism through the National Geographic Indonesia website and will be distributed to anyone making a donation for UNESCO's activity in Borobudur.

- "Freedom of Connection, Freedom of Expression: the changing legal and regulatory ecology shaping the internet" is published by the Communication and Information sector. The English version is available on the UNESCO website and the French will be at the end of this month.

In 2010, nearly 2 billion people worldwide – over one quarter of the world's population – use the Internet. However, during the same period, defenders of digital rights have raised growing concerns over how legal and regulatory trends might be constraining online freedom of expression. This report provides a conceptual framework for discussing the broad context of policy and practice that should be taken into consideration in discussions related to this issue.

Appointment of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions for UNESCO (Mid-November and Mid-December 2011)

In Guyana, Mr. Priya Devi Manickchand (Minister of Education) was appointed President, succeeding Mr. Shaik Baksh.

In Lebanon, Ms. Zahida Darwish Jabbour was appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms. Salwa Saniora Baassiri.

In Libyan, Mr. Soliman Elshahley (Minister of Education) was appointed President, succeeding Mr. Mohamed El Abdelkabir Fakhrey.

In Nepal, Mr. Dina Nath Sharma (Minister of Education) was appointed President, succeeding Mr. Ganga Lal Tuladhar.

In Peru, Mr. Ricardo Villanueva Valverde has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms. Maria Isabel Chiabra of Miyan.

In Turkmenistan, Mr. Sapardurdy Toylyev (Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministries) has been appointed President, succeeding Mr. Hydyr Separlyev.

In concluding, allow me to express my most sincere and cordial wishes for health, success and happiness in coming New Year. While 2012 will begin in difficult circumstances, the Management Team of UNESCO, beginning with the Director-General, is firmly committed to overcoming these obstacles and to making the Organization stronger out of this hard time.

Please accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Eric Falt