



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



National Commissions for UNESCO

Annual Report

2014

Cover page: Although many challenges are yet to be overcome to reach Education for All in Brazil, access to primary and lower secondary education has become almost universal in the country, with 94.4 per cent of the population in the ages 7 to 14 currently attending school. In this photo, a teacher from Rio de Janeiro's Escola Canadá (Brazil) uses a traditional corn cake recipe to explain quantities during a mathematics class.

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Inside: Photos from UNESCO staff competing for the UnescoCommunity Photo

Competitions 2013 and 2014 contributed to illustrate this Report.

Special thanks and congratulations go to the colleagues who submitted these photos.

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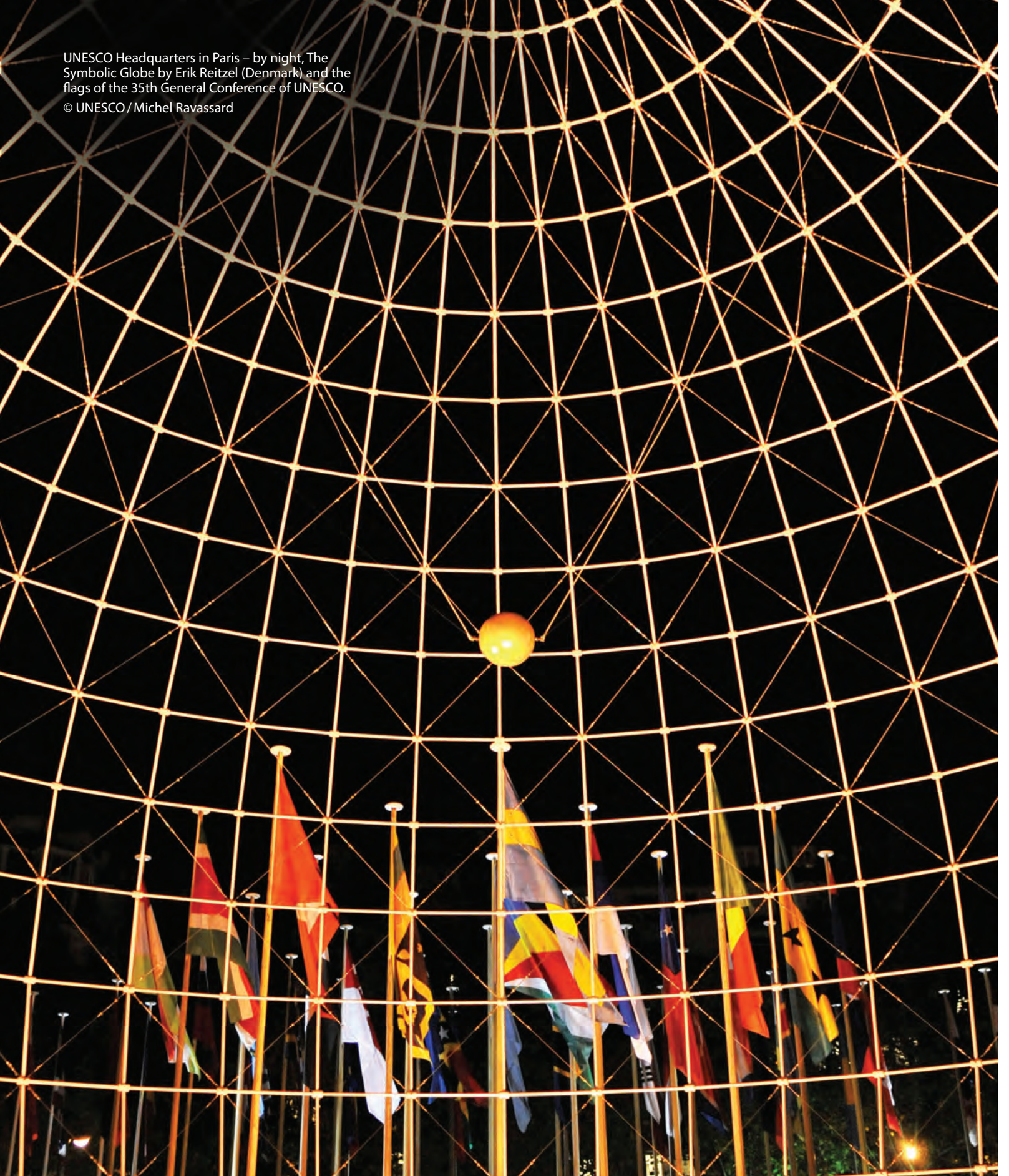
National Commissions for UNESCO

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UNESCO Headquarters in Paris – by night, The Symbolic Globe by Erik Reitzel (Denmark) and the flags of the 35th General Conference of UNESCO.

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FOREWORD

This second edition of the *Annual Report of National Commissions for UNESCO* shows UNESCO in action across the world. Providing an overview of activities carried out by National Commissions in 2014, the report highlights the depth of their commitment to advancing the ideals and objectives of UNESCO. The activities described in this report underline the unique role played by National Commissions in supporting the Organization's programmes in culture, education, the natural sciences, communication and information, and the social and human sciences, at a time when need for them has never been greater.



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This report also constitutes an important step in the implementation of the Action Plan approved by the General Conference at its 37th session, which seeks to improve cooperation between the UNESCO Secretariat and the National Commissions. This year, I am particularly delighted to see that the number of participating National Commissions has risen from 120 to 136. This trend is a good example of the unity and cooperation UNESCO must nurture to meet the challenges of our time.

In 2014, as a follow-up to the Action Plan, the Organization organized the 1st Interregional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO. The meeting took place in July in Astana, Kazakhstan, and replaced a complicated system of sub-regional meetings. I am deeply grateful for this important initiative which was attended by 110 representatives of National Commissions who worked collectively

to reinforce the network of National Commissions and engage in active discussion and cooperation. Many participants have since spoken enthusiastically about the positive spirit of the Astana meeting.

In 2015, the international community will work together to shape the new global sustainable development agenda, and UNESCO will celebrate its 70th anniversary. These turning points provide an excellent opportunity for the Secretariat and the National Commissions to work with Member States to place UNESCO's messages at the heart of the new global agenda.

In these turbulent times, the mandate of UNESCO has never been so relevant. Cooperation between the Secretariat and the network of National Commissions plays a vital role in promoting the values and goals that guide UNESCO. I would like to thank all the National Commissions for their leadership and commitment to the work and ideals of UNESCO and I look forward to building a stronger future together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Irina Bokova'.

Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO

UNESCO Headquarters in Paris – 'Walking Man',
by Albert Giacometti.
© UNESCO / Michel Ravassard



INTRODUCTION

National Commissions for UNESCO are national entities established by Member State governments in accordance with UNESCO's Constitution (Article VII) and the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO. They serve as important bodies for liaison, advice, information and programme implementation. Through their direct links to government and close contacts with academia and civil society networks, National Commissions contribute to the achievement of UNESCO's objectives regarding programme delivery, partnerships with civil society and visibility at national, sub-regional and regional levels. They are considered to be constituent elements of the Organization.

The comprehensive review of UNESCO's cooperation with National Commissions conducted in 2011 and the subsequent follow-up action generated momentum and commitment to strengthen this longstanding cooperation. The Action Plan elaborated by the tripartite working group within the Executive Board, and adopted by the General Conference, provided the Member States and the Secretariat with new direction and guidance to further enhance cooperation with this network.

The Action Plan contained several findings. Notable among these were recommendations that UNESCO should better manage the knowledge generated by the National Commissions, that the National Commissions should regularly report on their concrete actions and major achievements, and that they should endeavour to share and promote best practices among themselves.

Indeed, many National Commissions regularly produce newsletters, annual reports, booklets and electronic materials via their websites and social networks. The UNESCO Secretariat also maintains and updates its websites and databases, and publishes monthly newsletters with the aim of improving communication, raising awareness and sharing information with this network. However, it was only last year that the Organization produced for the first time an overall annual report summarizing the various efforts and achievements made by the National Commissions in their individual countries.

In response to Recommendation 7 of the Action Plan, the Secretariat has continued to invite all National Commissions to provide an update of their activities in 2014, including one success story and a photographic illustration. Based on the contributions received between October 2014 and February 2015, from 136 out of 199 National Commissions around the world, the Secretariat has been able to compile the relevant information and produce this second edition of the Annual Report of National Commissions for UNESCO. This new publication is intended to showcase the real value of our National Commissions and their active contribution to UNESCO's ideals and programmes at country level. It is hoped that the next edition of this Annual Report will reflect the activities of an even larger number of National Commissions.

Please note that the contents of this Annual Report were edited to fit a common format. However, every effort has been made to retain the essence of the information provided. The Secretariat wishes to apologize for any possible oversight or misunderstanding.

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Action Plan for enhancing the cooperation of UNESCO's Secretariat with National Commissions for UNESCO



Students at a secondary and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) school in Bumbu, Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo) where the UNESCO BEAR project is piloting a new curriculum for the construction sector.
© UNESCO / Miriam Preckler



Africa

**BENIN • BOTSWANA • BURUNDI
• CAMEROON • CABO VERDE •
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• SEYCHELLES • SOUTH AFRICA •
SUDAN • SWAZILAND • UNITED
REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA • TOGO •
UGANDA • ZAMBIA • ZIMBABWE**

BENIN

Beninese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Eric Kouagou N'Da, Minister of Nursery and Primary Education

Secretary-General: Mr Marcel N'dah Oya

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Beninese National Commission for UNESCO organized four main activities. The first activity was undertaken to address the lack of synergy between the sectoral ministries that function as members of the Commission and the Permanent Secretariat of the Beninese National Commission. The National Commission worked to identify, train and establish focal points for the ministries with a view to facilitating communication and increasing its own visibility, thereby promoting the ideals of UNESCO in Benin.

For its second activity, the Beninese National Commission celebrated the International Day of Peace (21 September). On this occasion, and to signal Benin's commitment to the ideal of peace advocated by UNESCO, the Commission awarded its first local peace prize (see below).

The third activity consisted of participation in the Ordinary Session of the General Assembly 2014. After each session of

the General Conference of UNESCO, the Permanent Secretariat is obliged to report to the various bodies of the Commission. Thus, following the 37th session of the General Conference, the members of the Beninese National Commission for UNESCO gathered to prepare proposals on behalf of the Government of Benin with regard to the implementation of recommendations and resolutions resulting from the 37th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO. At the same meeting, the National Commission took the opportunity to renew the office of its respective bodies.

The fourth activity comprised the dissemination of good practices advocated by UNESCO throughout UNESCO Associated Schools in Benin. In its short and medium-term development strategy, Benin gives pride of place to youth in several programmes, on the basis that assisting young people with the transition to adulthood can promote sustainable behaviour. The activity was implemented to address the adverse effects of corruption in schools.

These activities, funded by the national budget, were implemented with the collaboration of the academic and intellectual community and UNESCO associated bodies in the various districts of Benin.



A success story

The Beninese National Commission for UNESCO decided to establish a national peace prize. As part of the rigorous selection process, the Commission gathered public testimonies and undertook substantial research, before awarding the prize to Ms Alimatou Abdoulaye and Mr Issakou during the events celebrating International Peace Day. The National Commission also organized a competition on the theme of peace for young people and students. In addition, a carnival parade took place throughout the city of Parakou, encouraging all citizens to uphold the culture of peace.

The National Peace Prize was awarded to Ms Alimatou Abdoulaye on the occasion of the celebration of International Peace Day in Benin.

© Beninese National Commission for UNESCO

BOTSWANA

Botswana National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Rahim Abdool Khan

Secretary-General: Mr Oteng Bosimoldi Mokowe

Website: www.moe.gov.bw

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Botswana National Commission for UNESCO undertook a number of activities in the fields of culture, education, and communication and information.

The National Commission took an active role in celebrations for World Radio Day (13 February), the theme of which was 'Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Radio'. The main event took place in Gaborone and was organized by the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA). The aim of the event was to promote media diversity, pluralism, self-sufficiency and independence of radio as an institution. The commemorative event was also intended to promote collaboration between private and government-owned media stations, including Gabz FM, Yorona FM and Duma FM, and Radio Botswana and Botswana Television (BTV), respectively.

A UNESCO statement was read by the Information and Research Officer of MISA, which highlighted the importance of radio as a means to give voice to the voiceless and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. This collaboration was echoed throughout Southern Africa and funded by UNESCO.

UNESCO also funded an event held in Lobatse to commemorate World Press Freedom Day (3 May) under the theme 'Free Media Contributes to Good Governance and the Eradication of Poverty'. The event was opened by the Deputy District Commissioner and was well attended by representatives of the media. The Guest Speaker was the Chief Executive Officer of the Botswana Meat Commission, who advised practising journalists to act responsibly and observe the highest ethical standards, and in particular to avoid careless reporting. He stated that press freedom and good governance are mutually supportive not only of each other, but of national economic and human development. He also explained that poverty implies more than just a lack of resources, it also constitutes a lack of empowerment – a gap that the media can bridge by providing quality information and creating a platform for public debate.

In 2014, the Botswana National Commission for UNESCO also organized a capacity-building workshop (6–8 February) for local authorities in Kasane Township. The Chief of Kasane presented the welcoming remarks and emphasized the vital role of the National Commission for UNESCO, including as an intermediary between Botswana and the outside world. Various stakeholders gave presentations including the Coordinator of the Botswana Education Hub, who underlined the importance of UNESCO's Participation Programme for the country. He highlighted UNESCO's five main areas of action and shared some of the achievements of the Botswana National Commission.



A success story

The Okavango Delta is the largest inland delta in Africa. The National Commission, assisted by UNESCO, submitted a nomination to inscribe the area on the Representative List of World Heritage. On 22 June 2014 the Okavango Delta was accepted as a World Heritage Site. As a result of inscription, Botswana is expected to develop and maintain partnerships with universities, non-governmental organizations and wildlife experts to coordinate and systematically monitor activities in the delta for its protection and conservation.

By 1 February 2016, a report on the state of conservation of the property should be submitted to the World Heritage Committee at its 40th Session.

© Botswana National Commission for UNESCO

BURUNDI

Burundi National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Joseph Butore, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Permanent Secretary: Mr Salvator Nyabenda

Update of activities in 2014

The Permanent Secretariat of the Burundi National Commission is small and has limited human and financial resources. Most of its activities in 2014 were supported through UNESCO's biennial Participation Programme.

In order to strengthen coordination, the Council of Ministers adopted Decree No. 100/239 (29 October), which aimed to restructure the National Commission. According to the decree, the National Commission shall consist of fifteen persons who make up the colleges of members with a renewable five-year term, in addition to the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary, ten technical advisers and seven support staff who make up the General Secretariat. Pending implementation of the decree, these duties are being performed by the current staff of the Commission.

In 2014, the National Commission worked in close collaboration with UNESCO Headquarters, the UNESCO House for a Culture of Peace in Burundi, partner ministries, civil society and the media to implement programmes, projects and activities, and to improve the visibility of UNESCO's resolutions

in the country. It participated in the process to select and submit seven projects to the Participation Programme for the 2014-2015 biennium, four of which have already been approved. It coordinated the implementation of requests approved under that Programme, and forwarded evaluation and financial reports for two completed projects to UNESCO.

The National Commission coordinated emergency assistance work undertaken by UNESCO to assist schoolchildren in primary schools located in communes to the north of the capital, Bujumbura. These schools were affected by severe flooding in February. It also took part in conferences, workshops and meetings organized by UNESCO.

The National Commission contributed to various activities leading to the inscription of 'Burundi's Ritual Dance of the Royal Drum' on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The National Commission also took part in the process to draw up and submit two projects in response to a call for proposals from the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD), one of which has been selected and is in the process of being evaluated.

The Secretariat of the National Commission signed a partnership agreement with the German Commission for UNESCO aimed at hosting and training German volunteers to work as part of a programme for bilateral German-Burundian cooperation. In September, it welcomed its first German volunteer.



Workshop on the theme 'Training in sign language communication techniques for teaching and supervisory staff in pilot schools for inclusion in primary school education', in Gitega.

© Burundi National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Permanent Secretariat of the National Commission, in collaboration with the 'Les Rebeccas' Foundation, organized a workshop on the theme 'Training in sign language communication techniques for teaching and supervisory staff in pilot schools for inclusion in primary school education' (22–26 September). The workshop was financed by UNESCO through its Participation Programme 2014–2015.

The aim of this workshop was to promote the right to equal access to Education For All. It focused especially on the inclusion of children with hearing impairments. Thirty teachers and thirty directors of pilot primary schools received training and preparation for teaching and accommodating children with a hearing or speech impairment within existing school structures.

As a result of the project, thirty pilot schools began the process of including these children into basic public education. Children already identified as having a hearing or speech impairment were admitted to these schools during the 2014–2015 school year.

CAMEROON

National Commission of the Republic of Cameroon for UNESCO

President: Ms Adjidja Youssouf, Minister of Basic Education

Secretary-General: Mr Owona Ada

Update of activities in 2014

The year 2014 was an exceptional year for the National Commission of the Republic of Cameroon in terms of the quantity and quality of activities conducted within and outside the country. It began with the submission of a draft decree to restructure the National Commission. This new instrument should invest the Commission with the legal, human and financial capabilities to enable it to carry out its statutory tasks more efficiently.

As part of its new responsibilities with respect to UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations, the National Commission produced two documents to relaunch and revitalize these networks.

In collaboration with the multisectoral Regional UNESCO Office in Yaoundé, the National Commission participated in the Pointe-Noire regional workshop on 'Slavery and the Slave Trade', at which Cameroon made two presentations. It also commemorated World Book and Copyright Day (23 April), which inspired a drama competition held for secondary schools in Cameroon.

In cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters, the Commission participated in the 1st Interregional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO, held in Astana, Kazakhstan

(22–24 July), and the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), held in Nagoya (10–12 November).

The Commission also conducted missions to evaluate the Microscience Experiments Excellence Centre in Yaoundé, which Cameroon wishes to upgrade to a Category II Centre, and the Dja Biosphere Reserve, whose outstanding universal value is considered by UNESCO to be under threat from economic activities on its periphery.

The Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, made her first visit to Cameroon in 2014. During her stay she met with the President of the Republic and participated in a working session with Cameroonian ministers responsible for UNESCO's fields of competence. The Director-General was present for the inauguration of the UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for Central Africa, which took place in the presence of the Secretaries-General of the National Commissions of the States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and visited the new headquarters of the National Commission for UNESCO. Lastly, she was awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa in Educational Sciences by the University of Yaoundé.

Finally, the National Commission carried out several activities in cooperation with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), including the implementation of a programme of technical and material assistance to twenty Cameroonian women in sewing and embroidery.



© National Commission of the Republic of Cameroon for UNESCO

A success story

In partnership with UNESCO's Multisectoral Regional Office for Central Africa, the National Commission organized a twofold celebration of the 'Mvet' epic, with a performance and a lecture-debate held at the Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) of Yaoundé (26 November).

The performance was attended by an enthusiastic audience consisting of academics, researchers, students, artists, musicologists and pupils from the UNESCO Associated Schools and UNESCO Clubs. The ceremony began with a Mvet performance during which Mr Denis Bidjo and his troupe held the audience spellbound for almost an hour.

In the lecture, Mr Bidjo, outlined the similarities between the Mvet instrument of Central Africa and the kora of West Africa and looked at the different schools of Mvet epic playing and the role and significance of each type of Mvet. He explained that the Mvet traces the genealogy and political, economic and sociocultural institutions of the Engong people, who possessed immortality.

The following debate discussed potential strategies to ensure the long-term future of this rich cultural asset, including the organization of annual Mvet festivals, the establishment of a Mvet school, and the production and safeguarding of a body of scientific documentation on the Mvet.

CABO VERDE

Cabo Verdean National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr António Correia E Silva, Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation

Secretary-General: Ms Maria da Gloria Rendall Ribeiro Serrano Santos

Activities in 2014

The Cabo Verdean National Commission is part of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation. It maintains a good relationship with UNESCO Headquarters and has strong working links with the UNESCO Office in Dakar.

In 2014, the National Commission organized a programme of events to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Slave Route Project, in partnership with government, local UN organizations, schools, universities and private entities (see below).

In education, the National Commission organized a series of activities to promote the Sandwatch programme, including two national training courses for trainers of teachers, technicians and associations. Sandwatch provides a framework for schoolchildren and local communities to monitor their beach environments and develop sustainable management solutions to emerging problems.

The Commission also implemented the 'Environmental Education – Energy Efficiency' project, with teacher training,

educational kits and a national schools competition. In addition, the National Commission supported and participated in a training course, and associated school activities, for teachers and technicians from Portugal and Portuguese-speaking Countries in Africa (PALOP), which took place in Sao Tome and Principe.

In partnership with the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP) and the National Commission of Sao Tome and Principe, the National Commission organized and financed the second 'Strengthening Water Education at the School Level' workshop for PALOP countries (Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Sao Tomé and Principe), held in Sao Tomé and Principe (28–30 May).

The National Commission also jointly organized a five-day training course on water management for professionals in cooperation with UNESCO-IHP, the Institute for Water Education (UNESCO-IHE) and the International Centre for Education, Capacity Building and Applied Research in Water (UNESCO-HidroEx).

Lastly, the National Commission took part in the 13th National Meeting of the Associated Schools Project (ASPnet), held in Portugal, and coordinated the activities of ASPnet across a range of activities including the 'Development of Reading in Schools' project and other educational initiatives. Three travelling cultural and historical exhibitions and one scientific exhibition were exhibited in ASPnet schools.



A success story

In the framework of the 20th anniversary of the 'Slave Route Project: Resistance, Liberty, Heritage', the National Commission coordinated, implemented and supported activities as part of a three-month national programme, launched on 11 September, to commemorate the memory of peoples affected by the slave trade and slavery.

The programme targeted both students and the general public, and transmitted a message of learning and reconciliation. The National Commission promoted films and travelling exhibitions about slavery and the slave trade, with the assistance of specialist guides. The programme proved highly educational for teachers, students and civil society, and laid the groundwork for open lectures and courses at university level.

Launch of the 20th anniversary celebration of the 'Slave Route Project: Resistance, Liberty, Heritage' at the National Assembly in Praia.

© Cabo Verdean National Commission for UNESCO

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Central African National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Elois Anguimate, Minister of National Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research

Secretary-General: Ms Georgette Florence Koyt-Deballe

Website: www.unesco.cf

Update of activities in 2014

Due to the recent national turmoil, the functioning of administrative services in general and the National Commission in particular was much disrupted in 2014. For example, there was looting by unknown gunmen of all materials and documents acquired under UNESCO's Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA). The National Commission's offices were vandalized and damaged ten times, also by gunmen. Materials were stolen and documents were sabotaged and dispersed.

In spite of these setbacks, the National Commission celebrated World Teachers' Day with banners displayed in the city and

a speech delivered by the Minister of Education on 'The contribution of teachers in the prevention and resolution of conflicts'. Future activities are planned under the patronage of the President of the Republic and financed by the UNESCO Multi-sectoral Regional Office for Central Africa in Yaoundé.

Following the recent looting and damage to the Barthélemy Boganda Museum, operations to secure the collections are underway in cooperation with the UNESCO Multi-sectoral Regional Office for Central Africa.

However, the recent national insecurity unfortunately prevented continuation of the Associated Schools programme and UNESCO Clubs, which were launched in 2011.

Widespread insecurity has also prevented assessments of World Heritage protected areas. However, from the information received, it appears that the Bamingui-Bangoran National Park, located in a war zone, has been heavily impacted, and the Dzanga-Sangha National Park has lost several elephants, while the Basse-Lobaye Biosphere Reserve remains unaffected. An assessment of these areas will be made as soon as the situation allows.



A success story

In spite of the current difficulties, the National Commission managed to organize two capacity-building activities to train staff with funding from UNESCO. Four staff members were trained in office automation and two in programming. In addition a website for the Central African National Commission for UNESCO is currently under development.

© Central African National Commission for UNESCO

CHAD

Chadian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Ahmat Khazali Acyl, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Abdelkérîm Adoum Bahar

Update of activities in 2014

The Chadian National Commission works with nine ministries in UNESCO's fields of competence, as well as non-governmental organizations, the media, and youth and women's associations, and media with which it maintains good relations.

In 2014, with the Ministry of Education, the Chadian National Commission participated in activities including the creation of a support fund for literacy and non-formal education; the development of a pilot project (2014–2017) on integrating ICTs in teaching and training; and the formulation of an interim strategy (2014–2018) for technical and vocational education and training (TVET). All these activities were undertaken with the technical and financial support of UNESCO, UNICEF, the French Development Agency (AFD) and the International Organisation of La Francophonie (IOF). The National Commission also participated in the drafting of the national EFA 2015 review report.

In the natural sciences, the Chadian National Commission with the technical and financial support of UNESCO's Bioethics

Section, helped the Ministry of Education to create the National Bioethics Committee and train its members.

In culture, and in conjunction with the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of the Environment, the Chadian National Commission assisted with the preparation of World Heritage nomination files for Zakouma National Park and the Ennedi Natural and Cultural Landscape. This process also benefited from the technical and financial support of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the University of Cologne.

The Chadian National Commission has also worked to forge strong partnerships, such as that with the network of student ambassadors for peace, established in 2000 within the framework of the International Year for the Culture of Peace and the associated Decade. The network has units in many secondary schools and is very active in promoting a culture of peace and non-violence. Another example is the National Commission's close partnership with UNESCO Clubs and Associations, which focuses in particular on issues related to desertification and preservation of the environment.

The most important challenge facing the Chadian National Commission is the influx of applications for funding and support, as a result of UNESCO's reputation in Chad. The most interesting proposals are routed towards the Participation Programme or the UNESCO Office in Yaoundé for evaluation.



Sewing workshop for teenage mothers at the 8th District of N'Djamena.

© Chadian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

Under the Participation Programme, the Chadian National Commission has obtained approval for six projects, submitted by youth and women's associations and two ministries. The six projects comply with UNESCO's priority programmes, in particular youth and gender equality.

Among the six projects approved was a project submitted by the Association of Volunteers for the Training and Social Integration of Child Mothers. The project consisted of sewing workshops for the training and social integration of teenage mothers and generated an overwhelming response in the 8th District of N'Djamena and beyond.

This widely publicized initiative is trying to resolve one of the most pressing problems of society: how to find an activity that generates income for teenage mothers, who are often rejected by their family, leave school owing to lack of support, and are at risk of being driven into prostitution with all the problems that this implies.

The workshop's launch was attended by the Mayor and a Member of Parliament of the 8th District of N'Djamena, as well as representatives from UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), all of whom expressed their interest and promised to assist the Association.

CONGO

Congolese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Georges Moyon, Minister of Higher Education

Secretary-General: Mr Gabriel Bokoumaka

Update of activities in 2014

The Congolese National Commission for UNESCO acts as an interface between the Congolese Government and UNESCO. It implements UNESCO's programmes at the national level and prepares the views and opinions of the Government in connection with the elaboration of UNESCO documents.

The National Commission organized a number of key activities in 2014. In spite of their apparent success, the outcomes would have been more conclusive if the Commission had had access to sufficient funding and material and human resources.

Important flagship events included a major campaign to revitalize the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) (see below) and the organization of the first UNESCO Clubs Day, hosted by the Congo Federation of UNESCO Clubs and Associations. Both activities enjoyed considerable national success. The National Commission also organized celebrations and activities for World Science Day for Peace and Development (10 November).

The Congolese National Commission for UNESCO played an active role in the Consultative Meeting on Greater Cooperation between National Commissions and UNESCO Offices in Central Africa. The meeting took place in Yaoundé (17–18 September) in partnership with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The National Commission also contributed actively to preparations for Congo's participation in the sessions of the Executive Board at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.



Students from an ASPnet school in Congo participating in a cultural activity.

© Congolese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The campaign for the revitalization of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) took place in June 2014, in Brazzaville. It brought together the heads of Associated Schools, UNESCO Clubs, national education inspectors and educational advisers. Organized by the Congolese National Commission for UNESCO, with the financial support of the Ministry of Higher Education, the campaign was organized within the framework of events marking the 60th anniversary of the creation of ASPnet. It also formed part of activities marking ongoing cooperation between the West African Associated Schools Network (RESEAO) and the Central African Associated Schools Network (RESEAAC), held in Lomé in July 2013.

The aim of the campaign was to share experiences in the lead-up to a national drive of Associated Schools and to encourage other schools to join the network.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Côte d'Ivoire National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Kandia Camara, Minister of Education and Technical Education

Secretary-General: Mr Lou Mathieu Bamba

Update of activities in 2014

Côte d'Ivoire is on the path towards reconstruction after a decade of severe crises. To assist the nation in achieving this aim, the Côte d'Ivoire National Commission, supported by UNESCO, organized a campaign for the promotion of human rights, a culture of peace, democracy, non-violence and dialogue for post-crisis reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire. The campaign relied on two main forms of activity to promote UNESCO's ideals: awareness-raising sessions and lectures (7 January – 17 April).

Abobo and Yopougon were the neighbourhoods hardest hit by the post-election crisis and the women of these neighbourhoods, especially women traders, paid a heavy price. Experts from the Côte d'Ivoire National Commission worked to raise awareness among this group to encourage forgiveness, reconciliation and social cohesion.

In addition, the National Commission educated and trained pupils of schools in Abobo, Bassam and Yopougon through discussion sessions built around UNESCO's ideals of peace and tolerance. The pupils went on to create UNESCO Clubs in their schools and undertook activities to promote human rights and a culture of peace.

The lecture series organized by the National Commission proved a great success (see below). This was due in no small part to the commitment of the target audience to rebuilding peace among communities.



Women gather at Abobo market to attend a campaign organized by the National Commission for the promotion of human rights, a culture of peace, democracy, non-violence and dialogue for post-crisis reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire.

© Côte d'Ivoire National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the National Commission organized a series of lectures to promote post-election reconciliation and peacebuilding.

The first, on the role of women in the reconciliation process in Côte d'Ivoire, was delivered by Ms Aimée Zebeyoux, President of the Association of Women Lawyers. Drawing on United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on the prevention and resolution of conflicts and the protection and participation of women in peacebuilding, it highlighted women's ability to play a leading role in the process of national reconciliation and peaceful co-existence among communities.

The second lecture explored how religious denominations can contribute to interreligious dialogue and peace in Côte d'Ivoire and was delivered by Reverend Ediemou Blin Jacob, President of the Forum of Religious Denominations. Using the Forum as an example he demonstrated how peace could be achieved through religious tolerance and co-existence between different religious faiths.

The third lecture, on the contribution of women to peacebuilding in society, was delivered by Ms Namizata Méité Sangare, Vice-President of the Coalition of Women Leaders. She discussed the role of women as peacemakers and as a force for social reconciliation.

The last lecture in the series, on the importance of tradition and peace in countries in post-crisis situations, was co-facilitated by Nanan N'Depo Didas and Nanan N'Dori Joseph, members of the High Council of Kings and Traditional Chiefs of Côte d'Ivoire. They reaffirmed the importance of tradition in social conflict resolution through strategies such as discretion, the ability to listen, responsibility, commitment and inter-ethnic alliances.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

National Commission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for UNESCO

President: Mr Maker Mwangu Famba, Minister for Primary and Secondary Education and Initiation into the New Citizenship

Secretary-General: Mr Liema Ibongo-Botie Lazare

Update of activities in 2014

The National Commission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for UNESCO conducted a campaign in 2014 to raise awareness and knowledge of UNESCO and the National Commissions throughout the provinces. This involved setting up provincial committees to put the aims and ideals of UNESCO into practice.

The National Commission also took part in a working meeting with the Deputy Permanent Delegate of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to UNESCO, the Chief of the UNESCO Office in Kinshasa, the Director of the Regional Post-graduate Training School of integrated management of tropical forests and lands (ERAIFT) and the ERAIFT Academic and Research Secretary (29 August) to discuss the conversion of ERAIFT into a UNESCO Category II Centre.

As a result of the meeting, the participants decided to contact the ministries of higher education, universities, scientific research and the environment to ascertain the practical and/or official steps necessary to consolidate the school's status. They also decided to approach other Member States known to be strategically favourable to the project (Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon) in order to seek their support for the initiative. They further decided to hold discussions with the Secretariat to determine the practical steps needed to implement the project, and to organize an information and awareness-raising meeting with Member States, partners and the Secretariat prior to submitting the request for the establishment of the Centre.

In 2014, the National Commission also coordinated a project for the creation of a Training Centre for Education Planning and Management in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The project aims to contribute to the development, modernization and effectiveness of the education system in the country.

The Centre will offer initial and continuing training programmes in the fields of educational planning and management, and will work to improve the professional skills of managers and employees involved at every level of educational planning and management. It will also undertake programmes of research, action and development in the fields of educational planning and management, and provide, on request, consulting services, studies and/or technical support to national, international or private institutions. Lastly, it will promote a culture of statistics, planning, monitoring and evaluation in education systems with all stakeholders, including communities, non-governmental organizations, parents' associations, teacher's unions, and technical and financial partners, with a view to playing an active role in the development of education.



(From left to right) the focal point for the project, the President of the Parents' Committee, the Director of the School and the delegate of the Permanent Secretariat after the visit to Bandelebi Primary School.

© National Commission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the National Commission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo supplied equipment to five schools in Goma and the surrounding area, which had been looted following the war in the east of the country. The donation was made possible through emergency assistance supplied by UNESCO and was used to equip the schools with computers and printers, furniture and textbooks.

The provincial educational authorities of the town of Goma and the parents and pupils expressed their thanks to UNESCO and the National Commission for support, which contributed significantly to the visibility of UNESCO in the remoter parts of the country.

ERITREA

Eritrea National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Semere Russom, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Mehret lyob

Update of activities in 2014

Eritrea celebrated its 21st Anniversary as a Member State of UNESCO in September 2014. As a signatory to the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage (ICH), and in collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Office in Nairobi, the Cultural Affairs Bureau developed a project entitled 'Strengthening national capacities for implementing the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Eritrea through a capacity-building programme for the implementation of the 2003 Convention'. This project receives support from a voluntary contribution of the Government of Norway. The major activities of the project are to strengthen policy, legal and institutional frameworks; undertake community-based inventoring; and prepare nomination files and files to request international assistance.

In 2014, the regional administration of Zoba Maekel in the Central Region of the State of Eritrea launched a cultural initiative entitled the Asmara Heritage Project (AHP).

The project concerns the safeguarding of Asmara Heritage. The AHP team with technical support from UNESCO and other renowned international conservation experts from ICCROM and ICOMOS is highly engaged in the preparation of key documents for submission to the World Heritage Centre at UNESCO. These include: a nomination dossier for Asmara – Africa's Modernist City; a management plan for the Asmara Historic Centre; a conservation master plan and a set of conservation planning norms.

Research teams have been established to focus on key areas of the study, including disaster and risk management, socio-economic issues and infrastructure. Specific activities include the inventoring of every building in the historic perimeter, 3D-scanning of selected buildings, scanning of archived documents, and the development of data management software. Work is also underway on data entry of the information collected on buildings and other infrastructures.

In August, Ms Mulekeni Ngulube, Programme Specialist for Culture in the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa (Nairobi), visited the Asmara Heritage Office to discuss overall cooperation with Eritrea, with a special emphasis on implementation of the World Heritage Convention on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage and the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).



A success story

In the field of education, the Ministry of Education in cooperation with UNICEF organized a National Conference on Education for All (2–3 October). Around 350 participants from all six regions attended the conference and worked to finalize the conference document. They also made preparations for the upcoming World EFA Forum meeting and the Post-2015 Education Agenda, due to be held in the Republic of Korea.

Ms N. Mulekeni, Culture Expert from UNESCO Nairobi Regional Office with the staff at the Asmara Heritage Project Office

© Eritrea National Commission for UNESCO

GABON

Gabonese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Ida Reteno Assououet, Minister of Education and Technical and Vocational Education

Secretary-General: Mr Juste Joris Tindy-Poaty

Website: www.unesco.ga

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the operating budget of the Gabonese National Commission for UNESCO decreased by almost two-thirds. In addition, a delay in the implementation of the State budget meant that funding was not available until April.

In terms of activities, the National Commission established a working group to draft, in collaboration with the UNESCO National Office in Gabon, its first ever UNESCO country programming document (UCPD), for the period 2014–2017. The working group brought together thirty-four national experts in addition to programme specialists from the UNESCO Office in Gabon.

As part of the country programming document, the Commission developed a cooperation programme, which is awaiting validation. This initiative defines a number of areas of cooperation over a given period, and aims to give coherence

and clarity to key areas of cooperation between Gabon and UNESCO. In the past, this cooperation has lacked coordination at the national level owing to insufficient understanding of the role and tasks involved in coordination.

The Gabonese National Commission continued to revitalize the national network of the UNESCO Associated Schools (ASPnet), by organizing celebrations for the International Day for Tolerance (16 November).

In partnership with the Omar Bongo Ondimba Foundation for Peace, Science, Culture and the Environment, the National Commission also organized a pan-African forum entitled 'African Youth and the Challenge of Promoting a Culture of Peace in Africa', held in Libreville (11–13 December) (see below).

Constraints on the preparation and holding of this important international meeting unfortunately forced the Commission to postpone a number of other activities. These planned events, including the signing of a partnership agreement with the Marcel Doupamby Matoka Foundation, the creation of a subregional prize to reward the initiatives and achievements of UNESCO Associated Schools and UNESCO Clubs in Central Africa, and the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the 'Slave Route Project', among others, will now take place in early 2015.



Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, with participants to the Pan African Forum held in Libreville (11–13 December).

© Gabonese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The organization of the pan-African forum on 'African Youth and the Challenge of Promoting a Culture of Peace in Africa', with the support and participation of UNESCO and its Director-General, Ms Irina Bokova, was by far the most successful activity of the National Commission in 2014.

The forum brought together ninety young African men and women from some forty countries to officially launch the network 'Youth and a Culture of Peace', comprising national youth councils and associations of Africa and the diaspora involved in activities to promote peacebuilding. Gabon will host the General Secretariat of the network.

To support the network, the Omar Bongo Ondimba Foundation for Peace, Science, Culture and the Environment has announced the creation of a youth and a culture of peace international award. The award was presented to three youth associations, who will share a total prize of CFA 45 million.

GAMBIA

Gambia National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Fatou L. Faye, Minister of Basic and Secondary Education

Secretary-General: Mr Momodou Sanneh

Website: www.unesco.gm/

Update of activities in 2014

The Gambia National Commission for UNESCO enjoys a stable financial allocation from the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, which allows it to maintain and motivate qualified staff and cover expenses related to its operations. The Commission operates as an autonomous entity and assumes multiple responsibilities in the promotion of UNESCO ideals in the country. Indeed, the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO is deeply committed to strengthening its relationship with local partners such as non-governmental organizations and civil society by fully engaging its staff in all programmes organized in the country that relate to education, the sciences, culture, information, youth matters and gender issues.

In 2014, the Commission entered into strategic partnerships with the Banjul City Council, the Gambia Teachers' Union, the Gambia College School of Education (teacher training institution) and the Education For All (EFA) Campaign Network to develop joint project proposals and establish collaborative approaches to programme implementation.

With the support of the UNESCO Office in Dakar, the Gambia National Commission in partnership with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education successfully completed the review, validation and dissemination of the government policy on Adult and Non-Formal Education.

The National Commission with the support of UNESCO Office in Dakar and the African Union also facilitated research into matters related to teacher quantity, quality, migration and professional development. Following its completion, the research was validated by the Ministries of Education of the Gambia and Nigeria.

Collaboration between the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO led to the successful development of a training kit for teachers on human rights education. This collaboration was also responsible for the organization of a campaign to sensitize teachers and education workers about human rights education (18–19 June).

Under the UNESCO Participation Programme 2012–2013, the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO was able to implement the project 'Promoting intercultural dialogue, social cohesion and a culture of peace and non-violence and supporting the education systems' response to contemporary challenges for ESD in ASPnet Schools in the Gambia'. Implementation of the project enabled the National Commission to explore innovative approaches, while the partnership with the Banjul Municipal Council allowed the project to continue in a sustainable manner.



Local communities participating in the Sandwatch project in Banjul.
© Gambia National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

Under the UNESCO 2012–2013 Participation Programme, UNESCO ASPnet schools in the Gambia were mobilized to address issues relating to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and to strengthen their capacity to respond to contemporary challenges, in particular regarding environmental awareness education plans and programmes.

One key activity was the 'Adopt a Village Project' for ASPnet schools inland. The project seeks to increase awareness in village schools and communities about ways to preserve and converse natural resources, with a view to avoiding hazardous environmental problems. The project aims to increase understanding of recent drastic changes in climatic conditions, and convince local people of the need for adaptation and mitigation measures.

A second key schools activity is the Sandwatch project, which focuses on the protection of coastal environments. In 2014, the Banjul City Council mobilized additional financial resources to widen participation and expand the scope of the project beyond schools. Project implementation also involved local women's groups, the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, the Gambia Navy and the National Environment Agency. In the future the City Council plans to conduct regular beach-cleaning exercises in collaboration with the National Commission for UNESCO.

GHANA

Ghana National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, Minister for Education

Secretary-General: Mr Riche-Mike Wellington

Website: www.unescoghana.org

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO collaborated with the UNESCO Office in Accra, the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) and the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) to observe World Radio Day (13 February). As part of national activities marking the day, a television panel discussion was held on the contribution of radio to gender equality in Ghana. In addition, a forum was organized to discuss gender equality in media organizations and gender portrayal in media content, with exhibitions presented by radio stations. A newspaper feature on the contribution of radio to socio-economic development in Ghana was also published.

The National Commission in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Accra also observed International Literacy Day (8 September) on the theme 'Mother Tongue Literacy: Necessary foundation for attaining literacy for all and sustainable development'. The day was dedicated to the promotion of reading

and writing in local languages as a means to promote sustainable development. The Commission also disseminated a press release to sensitize Ghanaians about the importance of the day and published a feature in local newspapers on 'Using mother-tongue as a solid foundation for attaining literacy for all'.

To celebrate World Teachers' Day, the National Commission supported a radio discussion on 'Teaching Today: an overview of professional development and promotion of quality education in Ghana'. The activity included a phone-in segment, which allowed listeners to congratulate teachers on their role in nation building.

UNESCO in partnership with the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO and UNIC jointly organized a forum on the 'State of journalists' safety in Ghana'. This forum was organized to commemorate the first ever UN Day to end impunity and crimes against journalists. Over 100 journalists from different media houses participated in the event, after which a paper on the topic was presented by the Executive Director of Media Foundation for West Africa.

Lastly, a National Steering Committee is currently underway to plan and implement year-long activities to observe 2015 as the International Year of Light and Light-Based Technologies, with the full involvement of the UNESCO Office in Accra. The year was proclaimed by the United Nations at its 68th Session in 2013 and the website dedicated to Ghana's events can be accessed at www.light2015.unescoghana.org



A success story

In 2014, the Chairperson of the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO hosted the regional African launch of the *UNESCO Climate Change Guidebook for Journalists* (20 May). The event took place at the Accra International Conference Centre, and was attended by the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Climate Change and the former President of Ghana, John Agyekum Kufuor. The event also drew large numbers of people from journalism institutions, academia, government institutions, the diplomatic community and the mass media.

In a speech read on behalf of the current President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, the Chairperson of the National Commission and Minister for Education, Ms Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, recounted various government efforts geared towards climate change adaptation and mitigation. In the speech, the President noted that 'Climate change must be seen as a developmental issue and not an environmental problem because it impacts all aspect of social lives'.

The President also emphasized the importance of journalists as major stakeholders in propagating information about climate change impacts and cited the UNESCO Guidebook as an essential instrument designed to help journalists play their role effectively.

Ms Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang delivering President John Dramani Mahama's statement, at the regional African launch of the *UNESCO Climate Change Guidebook for Journalists* on 20 May, in Accra.

© Ghana National Commission for UNESCO

GUINEA

Guinean National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Bailo Teliwel Diallo, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Secretary-General: Ms Ibrahima Solo Conde

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Guinean National Commission for UNESCO organized a series of activities designed to meet the particular needs of the country. These activities helped UNESCO to reach out to civil society and increase its visibility at the national level.

In education, the National Commission organized a 'Training the Trainers' workshop at the Labé University Centre. The workshop provided essential training for both teachers and teacher-researchers based at the Centre.

The Guinea National Commission also supported the national workshop 'Functional literacy of minors and young people in trouble with the law', organized by the Union pour la Solidarité et le Développement (USD), a non-governmental organization (NGO). The workshop was designed to give young people the opportunity to learn sewing and literacy skills.

In the social and human sciences, the National Commission supported a national workshop on the theme 'Stopping crimes against women and girls', organized by the Sustainable Peace and Development Organization (SPADO), and held in Conakry (11–15 August). The aim of the workshop was to give the participants (fifty women and girls) an understanding of the appalling consequences of STDs/AIDS and violence against women and girls.

Lastly, in culture, the National Commission organized a national workshop on the theme 'Training the Managers of Guinea's Cultural Heritage in the Content of the Conventions ratified by Guinea', held in Conakry (18–22 August). The workshop drew up a training programme for managers responsible for Guinea's cultural heritage with regard to the UNESCO Conventions (see below).



Participants at the workshop 'Training the Managers of Guinea's Cultural Heritage in the Content of the Conventions ratified by Guinea', held in Conakry from 18 to 22 August.

© Guinean National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The five-day workshop 'Training the Managers of Guinea's Cultural Heritage in the Content of the Conventions ratified by Guinea' enabled actors in the world of culture to familiarize themselves with key concepts of cultural heritage and the content of the UNESCO Conventions (1972, 2003 and 2005). The participants learned the distinction between rules, decisions, decrees, regulations, constitutions and orders, among other concepts, and were highly appreciative of the training sessions.

Guinea is the repository of a rich cultural heritage. In the long term, this training will enable the country to derive significant benefits in the sphere of international relations. Experience shows that bilateral and multilateral cultural cooperation at the African and international level is the best way to increase dialogue and enhance solidarity between peoples.

KENYA

Kenyan National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Jacob Kaimenyi, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education Science and Technology

Secretary-General: Ms Evangeline Njoka

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO developed its first Strategic Plan 2014–2018, after acquiring its new status as a State Corporation with increased autonomy. The strategy integrated the development goals of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, the Kenya Vision 2030, the Second Medium-Term Plan 2013–2017 (MTP II), and the UNESCO Programme and Budget 2014–2017 and Medium Term Strategy 2014–2021.

In education, the National Commission in liaison with the State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the UNESCO Regional Office in Nairobi undertook a National Education For All (EFA) 2015 Review to inform discussions on the Post-2015 Education Agenda. The National Commission also led the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Agenda, participated in the World ESD Conference, held in Aichi-Nagoya (10–12 November), coordinated the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and Commonwealth activities in Kenya, organized the annual launch of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR)* in Kenya, and established the national Associated Schools Projects Network (ASPnet).



The National Commission celebrates fifty years of collaboration and partnership between Kenya and UNESCO.

© Kenyan National Commission for UNESCO

In the natural sciences, the National Commission carried out the periodic review of the Kiunga and Malindi Watamu Biosphere Reserves and initiated the periodic review of the Mt. Kenya Biosphere Reserve. The ongoing nomination process for the Mt. Elgon Transboundary Biosphere Reserve is now at an advanced stage. The National Commission also undertook key research initiatives to establish the first UNESCO Geopark in Africa in the Baringo region of Kenya.

In culture, the National Commission explored UNESCO's Cultural Heritage Conventions with a view to safeguarding Kenya's tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Kenya presently has six World Heritage Sites and advocacy efforts to list other heritage sites are underway. The National Commission also carried out surveys in two counties to identify significant cultural elements for inventorying and safeguarding under the 2003 ICH Convention with the aim of producing a national inventory.

The National Commission also spearheaded the implementation of a Students Entrepreneurial Training Programme (STEP) at Kenyatta University in collaboration with Leuphana University Germany and the German National Commission for UNESCO. The National Commission also operates a Cultural Exchange Programme 'kulturweit' with the German National Commission for UNESCO.

A success story

Kenya became a Member State of UNESCO in 1964, a year after attaining independence. To mark the 50th anniversary of Kenya's Membership of UNESCO, the Kenyan National Commission for UNESCO organized celebrations in 2014 at county, national and international levels (Paris) under the theme 'Kenya and UNESCO@50: Together for Peace and Sustainable Development'. The majority of local governments held cultural festivals in their respective counties in September and October, with the object of increasing UNESCO's visibility at the grassroots level and stimulating local peace initiatives.

The national celebrations served as an avenue of rapprochement for Kenyan cultures, as different communities celebrated each other's rich heritage through song, dance and exhibitions. The highlight of the celebrations was the launch of the book, *The Fifty-Year Journey of Kenya and UNESCO Cooperation 1964–2014*. This publication, developed with UNESCO's support, captures the past and present collaborations as well as future projections and expectations. The international celebrations during Kenya Week at UNESCO (24–28 November) promoted Kenya as a preferred tourist destination and an investment hub. The colourful week was rife with cultural exhibitions and dances, and educational and scientific exhibitions.

LESOTHO

Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Makabelo Mosothoane, Minister of Education and Training

Secretary-General: Ms Palesa Montsi

Website: www.unesco.org.ls

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the main areas of activity of the Lesotho National Commission related to UNESCO's Communication and Information, Education and Natural Sciences programmes.

The main focus in communication and information lay on promoting access to information through the establishment and nurturing of community multimedia centres and community radio in two districts of Lesotho (see below).

The education work of the National Commission focused on Education for All (EFA). The highlights were a series of celebrations planned for EFA Week through to the Education Fair and the EFA Big Push, designed to accelerate achievement of the six EFA goals by 2015. Teacher education was also a central theme of National Commission activities in 2014.

Meanwhile, the natural sciences programme was involved in the preparatory stages of the nomination of a biosphere reserve in Lesotho with the assistance of the UNESCO Harare Multi-Sectoral Regional Office and funded by the German Commission for UNESCO.

The Lesotho National Commission has also developed strong ties with the National Commissions of the Republic of Korea and Germany. Lesotho benefits from links with the Republic of Korea through the Africa BRIDGE programme, which has enabled the Commission to establish two Community Learning Centres in rural areas of the country. The work was intended to strengthen the literacy capabilities of local communities, especially young girls, by advancing progress towards EFA. The German National Commission has assisted the Lesotho National Commission both through its natural sciences programme, as mentioned above, and through the Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP) programme. This aims to empower tertiary education students to become entrepreneurs, by providing them with essential knowledge and skills to set up their own businesses. The STEP training is further intended to provide a solution to adverse labour market conditions and limited opportunities in Lesotho.



Mafeteng Community Radio correspondents during one of the SIDA-funded workshops.

© Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the UNESCO-funded Mafeteng Community Radio (MCR) undertook an initiative to address matters of local concern and to take into account gender issues, both in its operational structure and in its programming. These changes were supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) project 'Empowering local radios with ICTs'.

The SIDA project also facilitated the provision of ICT equipment, such as smartphones, which increased community participation in radio through the use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, and the usage by correspondents of ICTs for reporting and interviewing. Another milestone was the establishment of a network of correspondents, which enabled MCR to cover news from multiple perspectives and areas of the Mafeteng district.

The radio staff were further provided with extensive training on media ethics and radio programming, financial planning, management and sustainability. These activities have resulted in significant progress in the quality of programming at the radio station.

MADAGASCAR

Malagasy National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Paul Andrianaina Rabary, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Hanta Raboanary

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Malagasy National Commission developed and strengthened key partnerships, and participated in numerous activities in UNESCO's fields of competence.

In education, on the occasion of World Teachers' Day (5 October), the National Commission adopted a resolution to translate the text of the 1966 Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers into Malagasy. Moreover, a Malagasy delegation participated in the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, held in Aichi-Nagoya (10–12 November), and planned a national workshop.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission created a National Committee for the International Hydrological Programme (IHP). It also held a conference on the occasion of World Water Day (22 March) that aimed to mobilize ministries to optimize the use of available energy and promote effective access to drinking water. In addition, fifteen rural schools benefited from a pilot project, organized in partnership with Panasonic, that donated solar panels and computer hardware.

In the social and human sciences, the Commission revitalized the Malagasy National Committee for the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme and developed a project on proposals for national priorities. The National Commission also celebrated International Youth Day (12 August) and World Philosophy Day (19 November), highlighting the role of youth and the value of philosophy in society.

In culture, national mobilization efforts highlighted the importance of the protection and promotion of cultural and heritage resources. The National Commission participated in various workshops and thematic projects, including an emergency conservation plan for the rainforests of the Atsinanana to create conditions conducive to the site's removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

In communication and information, the National Commission, working in collaboration with the Ministry of Communication, implemented two projects to celebrate World Radio Day (13 February) and World Press Freedom Day (3 May). Media cooperation was highly instrumental in the success of these activities.

Lastly, the Commission organized a cultural activities workshop for the school holidays entitled 'ALA VOLY'. The workshop, aimed at children in difficult circumstances, was held at the media library. Reading sessions enabled children to discover the benefits of literacy and learn to read for the first time. Other activities were also conducted within the programme and the children were provided with school supplies to round off the workshop.



One of the events organized in celebration of International Day for Tolerance (16 November).

© Malagasy National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

Madagascar is currently emerging from a post-socio-political crisis. Education and development stakeholders are sparing no effort to restore social peace, which still remains very fragile. In this context, the National Commission's celebration of International Day for Tolerance (16 November) was a flagship activity.

A conference and debate on the theme of 'Valuing cultures, respecting diversity' was held in the region of Itasy (24 November), prompting a dialogue among stakeholders based upon respect for different ideas and perspectives. The conference was attended by representatives of all ministerial departments, UNESCO Associated Schools and Clubs, and decentralized local governments, with support from the Prime Minister, the National Assembly and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Football and basketball matches were held during the event with cups and trophies donated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Socio-cultural events, attended by schoolchildren from Associated Schools, both nearby and from Antananarivo and other areas, punctuated the opening and closing ceremonies.

MALAWI

Malawi National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Lonely Magareta

Secretary-General: Mr Francis Mkandawire

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Malawi National Commission for UNESCO organized a media training workshop on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (2–4 November). The workshop, which was financed by the UNESCO Office in Windhoek, was designed to strengthen UNESCO's advocacy role with regards to increasing media visibility of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

To this end, the National Commission invited representatives from various electronic and print media organizations. The workshop focused on concepts and issues relating to ESD and the role of media in promoting education for sustainable development. The participants were also introduced to international environmental agreements and the role of investigative journalism in environmental reporting.

The workshop highlighted ways for UNESCO to increase its work with the media on ESD topics to maximize audience and outreach, including capacity-development activities for media professionals.

In the field of culture, the Malawi National Commission supported the successful nomination of the Tchopa sacrificial dance of the Lhomwe people of Southern Malawi (see below).



The Malawi National Commission supported the nomination of Tchopa, sacrificial dance of the Lhomwe people of southern Malawi for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This practice was inscribed on the List in 2014.

© UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Malawi National Commission supported the nomination of the Tchopa sacrificial dance of the Lhomwe people of Southern Malawi. Tchopa, a dance that is performed by the Lhomwe communities in Southern Malawi, has now been inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Tchopa is usually performed during celebrations after good harvests and successful hunting trips, though it is also danced during offerings to ancestral spirits after calamities, such as droughts and disease outbreaks. The dance entails knowledge of particular dancing skills and singing, and is primarily performed by older men and women, but is now increasingly performed by children. A key aspect of Tchopa is the provision of mutual support among Lhomwe communities in times of need, such as during ill health and bereavement. This strengthens social cohesion among the Lhomwe communities.

MALI

Malian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Mountaga Tall, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Secretary-General: Ms Sangare Coumba Toure

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Malian National Commission organized a series of activities in cooperation with local partners with the financial support of UNESCO. These activities achieved largely satisfactory results, but were hindered by budgetary restrictions arising from the politico-institutional crisis in 2012.

The Malian National Commission prepared and summarized documents for the representative of Mali to enable him to participate fully in the 194th and 195th sessions of the Executive Board.

Another activity was the launch in Bamako of the *Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report 2013–2014*. At an official launch held in the National Assembly building (24 March), the Secretary-General of the National Commission presented the report and the Minister of National Education gave an update on EFA in Mali. The launch provided an ideal opportunity to raise awareness of EFA in Mali among senior political leaders.

The National Commission also helped organize a capacity-building seminar for members of the National Memory of the World Committee (6–8 June) financed by the UNESCO Office in Bamako. The seminar was organized in the aftermath of the looting and destruction of ancient manuscripts in Timbuktu. The meeting enabled participants to gain basic knowledge about documents, documentary heritage and preventive conservation. They identified problems encountered by professionals in preserving and providing access to documentary heritage, and learned about the role of the National Memory of the World Committee in the management of common documentary resources. Lastly, they received information about the nomination process for inclusion of documents on the Memory of the World Register, as well as the four categories of selection criteria: authenticity, world significance, comparative criteria and contextual information.

A final activity consisted of the training of twelve staff members from the Malian National Commission, three staff members from the Communications Unit of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and one from the Ministry of Culture in techniques involved in producing press articles. The aim of the training was to improve the content of the Malian National Commission newsletter 'Faisceau', and to reduce its production costs. The training was a genuine success, thanks to the financial support of UNESCO and the professionalism of the trainer.



Training in traditional carpet-making techniques held from 20 to 27 October at the Nyéléni Centre in Ségou.

© Malian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Malian National Commission organized a workshop to train women trainers in traditional carpet-making techniques (20–27 October). This activity was organized in cooperation with the National Department for Traditional Crafts and the National Department for Cultural Heritage of Mali, and funded under the UNESCO Participation Programme 2014–2015. The workshop took place at the Nyéléni Centre in Ségou, located 235 kilometres from Bamako by road.

During the week, the women learnt a variety of weaving skills and techniques involved in making different kinds of carpets, many of which require patience, application and a great deal of effort.

The session was organized as a response to the changing needs of women for training in appropriate crafts and skills. It also offered a way to enhance the value of the country's raw materials, by creating added value for wool and cotton fibre, which were previously exported and sold at low prices. Given the extent and potential for cotton growing and production in Mali, this training should be of lasting benefit for women's associations.

MAURITIUS

Mauritius National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Vasant Kumar Bunwaree, Minister of Education and Human Resources

Secretary-General: Mrs Aneeta Ghoorah

Update of activities in 2014

The Mauritius National Commission for UNESCO operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. Exchange programmes and networking are presently being worked out with the Regional Office in Nairobi and the East Africa Cluster Office. Assistance in funding from other National Commissions is also envisaged.

The National Commission successfully implemented a number of projects in 2014 including: 'Provision for Learning Support and SEN Practice to reduce low performance – Failure at the end of Primary Level and throughout all standards in Primary Schools' and 'Sustainable Agriculture for food security, poverty alleviation, environmental stewardship and climate change adaptation in Rodrigues, a dependency of Mauritius' (see below).

In July, the Mauritius Federation of UNESCO Clubs in collaboration with the National Commission organized a workshop to familiarize UNESCO Club Leaders with the areas of competence of UNESCO.

The National Commission also facilitated a high-level 'Ministerial and Experts Workshop on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Policy Systems and Governance for Sustainable Development and Climate Change Resilience of Small Islands Developing States (STI for SIDS Sustainability)', held under the aegis of UNESCO and the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology at Bagatelle in Mauritius (27–28 August). One of the outcomes of the workshop was the creation of a UNESCO Regional Centre for Ocean Science and Innovation with a focus on capacity development and research in partnership with international stakeholders.

In culture, an international conference was organized to mark the 180th anniversary of the first arrival of Indian indentured labourers at the Apravasi Ghat in Mauritius (3–5 November). The conference traced the journey of indentured labourers from India to Mauritius after the abolition of slavery in 1834. This activity complemented the UNESCO Slave Route Project, which commemorates the movement of enslaved peoples.

At the end of the year, the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (24–28 November) evaluated the nomination of *Séga* during its 9th session. *Séga Tipik* is a traditional form of music and dance performed in Mauritius. The World Heritage Committee accepted the nomination and inscribed the element on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.



Training courses on organic farming at the University of Mauritius.
© Mauritius National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Mauritius National Commission organized four short-term training courses on organic farming at the University of Mauritius with funds from the Participation Programme. The theme of the courses was 'Sustainable agriculture for food security, poverty alleviation, environmental stewardship and climate change adaptation in Rodrigues, a dependency of Mauritius'.

The courses explained how the adoption of sustainable (organic) farming systems will reduce the use of harmful synthetic agrochemicals. Farmers have already recognized the various alternative technologies that exist for soil health and fertility and crop protection. This in turn will help strengthen agricultural production, improve the environment, reduce pressure on natural resources, and help alleviate poverty through the production of organic crops (which have a higher market price). These new technologies will also address the issue of organic animal production. The adoption of sustainable agricultural technologies will further assist in adaptation to climate change.

This project was in line with the needs of the country in the area of sustainable agriculture and climate change, as outlined in various government strategy and policy documents, and has contributed to the capacity-building of farmers and herders, as well as scientific, technical and extension staff in the public sector.

MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Augusto Jone Luis, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Élia dos Anjos Vaz Bila

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Mozambique National Commission for UNESCO undertook a number of activities in the main fields of UNESCO's competence.

In education, the Mozambique National Commission in cooperation with the National Directorate of Teacher Training organized an 'In-Service Capacity-Building Workshop on Management Skills for Teacher Training Institutions' (8–10 April). The overall objective was to facilitate the drafting of a strategy for the training of secondary and technical and vocational teachers. Representatives from teacher-training institutes, universities and other higher educational institutions attended the workshop, as well as directors and teachers from secondary and technical/vocational schools. The workshop was funded by UNESCO through the Participation Programme.

The National Commission also implemented the second phase of the 'Capacity Building in Bilingual Education Project' in cooperation with District Directorate for Education, Youth and Sports (15–22 March). This phase was carried out at Marracuene Primary School and focused on training teachers

from the Marracuene district in bilingual education, and in particular in specific pedagogical, linguistic and cultural skills. The overall objective was to train thirty teachers in bilingual education methodologies, with the objective of improving the quality of education and expanding bilingual education in rural areas of the Marracuene district. The project was funded by UNESCO through the Participation Programme.

In culture, the National Commission implemented the project, 'The Impact and Challenges of Climate Changes on Social-Cultural and Environmental Life of Coastal Community of Mozambique Island'. The project, which took place from January to March, was designed to raise awareness among communities residing in Mozambique Island, and in particular adolescents and young people, of issues related to the management of their cultural heritage and environment. The project also set up a platform for communication and local management of these issues, employing local resources such as Associated Schools and other stakeholders on the Island. Through the project, more than fifty participants were trained and lectures were delivered for nearly 350 students. A survey was administered to 500 island residents and a local Coordinating Committee was established to lead activities related to the protection and valorization of Mozambique Island.



Staff from the Mozambique Island Conservation Office, which works to implement climate change awareness on Mozambique Island.

© Mozambique National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

Hunger and chronic malnutrition reduce the learning achievements of children in school. In poor households the problem begins early, with malnutrition and the poor health of mothers. With 2014 being the International Year for Family Farming, the UNESCO Associated Schools Network in Mozambique decided to undertake a pilot experimental initiative in some Associated Schools in Mozambique.

The project was entitled 'School Vegetable Garden Project'. The objectives included offering opportunities to young students to become better acquainted with their food and learn about sustainable agriculture and consumption. The project also aimed to ensure that schoolchildren are provided with nutritious and healthy meals, which help to them stay fit and focused in school. In addition, it promoted the adoption of healthier nutrition, built up ties among participants in the academic and school communities, and helped the students to learn new abilities.

Seven secondary schools are involved in this pilot project and the activities are underway. Students and teachers are being trained in techniques for creating a vegetable garden project in their schools, and their school meals are being supplemented with vegetable dishes and snacks. In addition, families and the wider community are involved in the garden programme.

NAMIBIA

Namibia National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr David Namwandi, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Roderick April

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Namibia National Commission for UNESCO undertook numerous activities in line with its mandate. The Commission participated in the 194th and 195th sessions of the UNESCO Executive Board, prepared and submitted Participation Programme requests and reports, and facilitated Namibian participation in UNESCO conferences, workshops and meetings.

In February, the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education visited Namibia (22–25 February) and in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Faculty of Education at the University of Namibia (UNAM) launched the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013–2014*. During his visit he also launched the UNESCO-China Funds-in-Trust (CFIT) project 'Enhancing Teacher Education for Bridging the Education Quality Gap in Africa'.

In March, a consultative workshop to conduct a National Survey on Climate Change in Education for Sustainable Development (CCESD) was held at the Habitat Research and Development Centre on behalf of UNESCO. The workshop brought together stakeholders in CCESD activities to assess the current situation and identify key areas of focus in

understanding and awareness, mitigation, adaptation and attitude (behaviour).

In May, the Minister of Education met with the Director of the UNESCO Multi-sectoral Regional Office for Southern Africa in Harare to discuss UNESCO field network reform and to examine ways in which the Office could best serve the region. The meeting included the participation of the Chairpersons of the Programme Committees of the National Commission, representatives of the University of Namibia and the Polytechnic of Namibia, and the representative of Namibia on the Executive Board.

In July, a Namibian delegation led by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry visited the Jaroslav Cerni Institute for the Development of Water Resources, a UNESCO Category II Institute. The mission explored possible areas of collaboration and cooperation with Namibia in the development of water resources and measures for adaptation to climate change with a particular focus on capacity building.

In August, the Namibia National Commission for UNESCO and the UNESCO Office in Windhoek hosted a workshop on Information Ethics, facilitated by the African Centre of Excellence for Information Ethics at the University of Pretoria. Policy-makers, academics and relevant stakeholders participated in this awareness-raising workshop to examine the meaning and importance of information ethics.

In September, Namibia hosted the 32nd Annual Conference for Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development at the University of Namibia, Windhoek (9–12 September). The conference identified and exchanged best practices and challenges from the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development to inform the post-DESd agenda.



Participants at the 2014 ASPnet camp, held in the Erongo Region.

© Namibia National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) held its annual camp at the Gobabeb Research and Training Centre and Coastal High School in the Erongo Region (27 April – 1 May). The overall objective of the camp was to better understand the impacts of climate change and raise awareness of the need for sustainable living.

A total of 149 learners, ASPnet coordinators and principals participated from twenty ASPnet schools across Namibia. The camp provided a platform to present innovative research and to debate topics such as the impact of climate change on biodiversity, agriculture and land management, sustainable cultural practices, and sustainable water management and water security.

NIGER

National Commission of Niger for UNESCO and ISESCO

President: Ms Ali Mariama Elhadji Ibrahim, Minister for Primary Education, Literacy, Promotion of National Languages and Civic Education

Secretary-General: Mr Namata Issa

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the National Commission of Niger for UNESCO and ISESCO undertook a series of activities in the field of education, thanks to the continuing support of the Government of Niger, UNESCO and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO).

The National Commission carried out a study for the national Education For All (EFA) report on countrywide progress towards achieving the EFA goals. The study enabled a thorough analysis of Niger's achievements and identified obstacles and prospects for the post-2015 period.

The study was followed by the national launch of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013–2014*, organized in conjunction with an event held in Addis Ababa to mark the 11th edition of this major international publication (29 January).

Finally, a notable success in education during 2014 was the signature of a Letter of Intent between the Government of Niger and the Multisectoral Regional Office of UNESCO in Dakar (see below).



Signature of a Letter of Intent between the Minister for Primary Education, Literacy, Promotion of National Languages and Civic Education and the Director of the Multisectoral Regional Office in Dakar.

© National Commission of Niger for UNESCO and ISESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Department for Initial and Continuing Training organized the 'Cooperative Workshop for Actors and Partners in Initial and Continuing Training', held in Niamey (3–4 July). The general aim of this workshop was to exchange views on the strategy for initial and continuing training of teachers, so as to identify future directions and to promote synergies between partners.

The workshop formed part of a capacity-building programme (CapEFA), which aims to bring an integrated approach to the training and professional development of teachers in Niger.

The occasion saw the official launch of the programme under the joint presidency of the Minister for Primary Education, Literacy, Promotion of National Languages and Civic Education and the Director of the Multisectoral Regional Office for West Africa (Sahel) of UNESCO in Dakar.

In her address, the Director of the UNESCO Regional Office, Ms Ann Therese Ndong-Jatta, underlined the importance of cooperation between the UNESCO Office and Niger and emphasized UNESCO's commitment to this third phase of CapEFA, which seeks to support the government in its implementation of the Sectoral Programme for Education and Training (SPET) (2014–2024).

The highlight of the ceremony was the signing of a Letter of Intent between the Government of Niger and UNESCO.

NIGERIA

Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Malam Ibrahim Shekarau, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Magdalene Anene-Maidoh

Update of activities in 2014

The Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO worked closely with the UNESCO Line Ministries/Agencies, the UNESCO Office in Abuja and civil society organizations. This collaboration facilitated successful implementation of programmes as well as promoted visibility to UNESCO activities in the country. Some of the key activities implemented include:

African Regional Summit on Culture and Sustainable Development

The Summit, organized by the Category 2 Institute on Cultural Understanding, Abeokuta, had thirteen countries in attendance. The theme was "Harnessing Culture for Sustainable Development". Activities included paper presentations, inter-university debates and young farmers competition.

Sensitization Workshop on Trans-boundary Water Security and Cooperation in West African Sub-Region

The Workshop was organized by the Category 2 Regional Centre for Integrated River Basin Management (RC-IRBM), to create awareness on trans-boundary water cooperation and security and build capacity of researchers and IHP Committees.



Participants at the meeting of the Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO with Line Ministries and Agencies held in Abuja.

© Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO

Participants were from Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo. One of the recommendations of the meeting was that these countries sharing trans-boundary water are to develop early warning signals and embark on joint activities on shared water.

Empowerment of Girls and Women through the Use of ICTs in Literacy and Skills Development

The project, sponsored by Procter and Gamble, aims at addressing the illiteracy challenge in Nigeria. The project targets women and girls in Rivers State and the Federal Capital Territory. It utilizes a mix of face-to-face and distance education modalities using ICTs, particularly radio and television with gender responsive training modules including literacy and life skills.

Observance of International Days

The Commission in collaboration with relevant agencies and UNESCO, observes International Days to create awareness on the various themes as well as give visibility to UNESCO. In 2014, activities were carried out to mark the following days: World Press Freedom; World Culture Day; International Literacy Day; and World Teachers Day.

Nigeria supports the International Bureau of Education

Nigeria's representative assumes the current chairmanship of the Council of the International Bureau of Education (IBE). In line with its commitment to position the Institute to deliver on its mandate as a Centre of Excellence, Nigeria is providing a long term, predictable and sustainable budgetary support with effect from 2014. The support for the year has been remitted to the IBE.

A success story

The National Commission convened a meeting with Line Ministries and Agencies (MDAs) to deliberate and elaborate on the draft review of the Nigeria-UNESCO Special Plan of Cooperation with a view to strengthening Nigeria's collaboration with UNESCO; and to improve on country-level implementation of UNESCO programmes. The rationale for the meeting was the need to inject emerging issues into Nigeria-UNESCO Cooperation in line with the country's Transformation Agenda and to examine the roles of Ministries and Agencies to ensure a fruitful cooperation. There was the need to promote ownership of programmes and activities by the MDAs through initiatives they propose and for which they make annual budgetary provision.

The meeting was very successful as MDAs identified the critical enablers for success as well as outlined their roles for a fruitful cooperation with UNESCO. They expressed commitment to encourage joint action with NGOs, CSOs and the media; as well as promote the visibility of UNESCO through the implementation of programmes. The meeting will be held quarterly as it will improve working relations among MDAs on one hand and with the Commission and UNESCO on the other.

RWANDA

Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Fidèle Ndahayo

Secretary-General: Mr Eliphaz Bahizi

Website: www.unesco.rw

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO focused on four main areas of activity in line with its 2014 Action Plan.

The first objective was to increase the visibility of UNESCO and the activities undertaken by the National Commission across Rwanda. To this end, several articles on UNESCO and National Commission activities were published in local print media and a 30-minute documentary was broadcast on Rwanda Television.

The second objective was to provide assistance to strengthen the technical and financial capacity of local partners. Computers and printers were supplied to forty-five UNESCO Clubs in schools across the country, and eleven laptops with Job Access With Speech (JAWS) software and accessories were provided to a Blind Students Association, thanks to funds made available by the 2014–2015 Participation Programme. In addition, the

National Commission equipped an ICT Laboratory in a Girls, School with forty-five desktop computers.

The third objective was to strengthen capacity building. To accomplish this, the Rwanda National Commission organized a four-day study trip for head teachers of Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) schools. They visited five secondary schools considered as models in ASPnet programme implementation countrywide. The aim of the trip was to share and exchange best practices and experiences with a view to promoting better education and fostering good leadership in schools (see examples below).

The last objective was to strengthen cooperation with other National Commissions for UNESCO. In this context, the National Commission organized a three-day training workshop for thirty district officers in charge of culture. The objective was to strengthen their capacity and knowledge of UNESCO conventions related to culture and ratified by Rwanda. Forty-two UNESCO Club Coordinators countrywide received training linked to the Kwibuka20 programme, which commemorates the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. In addition, fifteen journalists were trained in the International Programme for the Development of Communication, and twenty-eight blind students received training in ICTs.



Training session for UNESCO Clubs coordinators.
© Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO organized a four-day (4–7 March) study visit for head teachers of ASPnet schools to visit model secondary schools. Among the schools visited, Groupe Scolaire Indangaburezi is considered a model for its region because of the community work it undertakes in Ruhango City to safeguard the local environment. The school has also organized 'Urubohero', a craft programme for girls led by an older and experienced teacher, and 'Itorero' a programme for boys, where students learn more about social values, taboos and sexual education.

Another school, Groupe Scolaire Mère du Verbe de Kibeho, has created a club called 'Gusasa Inzobe', which include teachers, school authorities and students. The club creates an informal atmosphere that allows students to learn more about social culture and sexual education. Students acquire the confidence to discuss these issues with school authorities and teachers within the club and speak openly without fear. Each club has a motto (ikivugo) highlighting weekly goals and objectives. Every Friday evening the students and adults sit together to check whether the goal has been reached.

SENEGAL

Senegalese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Serigne Mbaye Thiam, Minister of National Education

Secretary-General: Mr Aliou Ly

Website: www.unesco.sn

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Senegalese National Commission for UNESCO, with support from the Participation Programme, the Multisectoral Regional Office for West Africa (Sahel), and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), coordinated the implementation of projects in UNESCO's main areas of competence.

In education, the Senegalese National Commission coordinated the national launch of the *Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report 2013–2014* (26 February). The Commission also prepared the 3rd statutory meeting of the Steering Committee of the West African Associated Schools Network (RESEAO) on the theme 'Education for world citizenship, a new vision for sustainable development' (2–4 December), and organized a regional workshop to raise awareness and advocate for the promotion of values in education through sport and physical education (16–17 December).

In culture, the National Commission organized two national workshops on 'Promotion and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage for young people', held in Pikine (26–30 August). The workshops brought together young people from the *Navétanes* cultural and sports movements, allowing them to better appreciate tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The National Commission also coordinated a national workshop on 'Training and capacity building for operators in the cultural and creative industries', held in Dakar (27–28 May).

In communication and information, the National Commission coordinated a national workshop on 'Building the capacities of journalists from the printed press, community radio and online media', held in Dakar (25–26 March). The workshop focused on two joint priorities of UNESCO and ISESCO – building an information and knowledge society and combating media stereotypes of Islam.

In the social and human sciences, the National Commission organized a national workshop on the 'Promotion and popularization of self-study modular courses from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Manual for Peace Education, Human Rights and Citizenship', held in Dakar (28 October).

In communication and information, the National Commission participated in a training course on 'Building the capacities of the administrative staff of the National Commissions of French-speaking African States in the use of free software', held in Dakar (23–25 September) with representatives from the National Commissions of Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo.



Participants at the programme 'Young women from disadvantaged backgrounds and the fight against extreme poverty: a training project for long-term subsistence' held in Pikine (September to December 2014).

© Senegalese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Senegalese National Commission coordinated the programme 'Young women from disadvantaged backgrounds and the fight against extreme poverty: a training project for long-term subsistence'. The programme falls within the scope of UNESCO's mandate on gender equality, extreme poverty reduction and empowerment of young women.

In Senegal, certain communities on the outskirts of Dakar still live in poverty, despite policies devised by the State authorities to create conditions for sustained, long-term economic growth. As poverty affects women more than men and undermines human rights, it became important and necessary to find other ways and means to lift this marginal population out of poverty and ignorance.

The National Commission therefore coordinated an inclusive empowerment programme designed to increase both awareness and capacity building with regard to the importance and role of small anti-poverty projects.

The project, which took place in Pikine from the months of September to December 2014, provided short-term training courses to 200 young women in sewing, knitting, embroidery, dyeing, and fruit and vegetable processing. The object of this training was to enhance the social and economic autonomy of these women by building their capacities and awareness in terms of the design, implementation and long-term management of small-scale income-generating projects.

SEYCHELLES

Seychelles National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Macsuzy Mondon, Minister for Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Marie-Reine Hoareau

Update of activities in 2014

The Secretariat of the Seychelles National Commission for UNESCO is based at the Ministry of Education. The annual meeting of the Seychelles National Commission for UNESCO was held on 23 June 2014.

Throughout the year, Seychelles celebrated most UN International Days in collaboration with other stakeholders and received extensive media coverage. The Seychelles National Commission also attended the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan (10–12 November), while the Assistant Secretary-General attended the 1st Interregional Meeting of National Commissions of UNESCO held in Astana, Kazakhstan (22–24 July).

Seychelles attended three regional workshops organized by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) on educational data and

indicators in Eastern and Southern Africa, held in Harare and Gaborone. The regional workshops explored the integration of core indicators on education and HIV/AIDS into Education Management Information Systems (EMIS).

As follow up to the UNESCO General Education Quality Analysis Framework (GEQAF) report, Seychelles carried out an extensive classroom survey in all state primary and secondary schools. The collected data was then analysed and presented to schools to highlight their strengths as well as the challenges they face in drawing up and implementing plans to improve education quality.

In response to UNESCO's request for an Education for All (EFA) Review, the Seychelles National Commission set up an EFA Review Team including key stakeholders from relevant bodies to coordinate and implement the main review tasks for the National EFA 2015 Review Report. In March, a national two-day workshop was held and facilitated by the Regional Programme Coordinator from the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa. The workshop sensitized stakeholders on EFA goals, roles and responsibilities in preparation for the assessment review. Six technical committees were formed to carry out in-depth review tasks pertaining to each of the six specific EFA goals, strategies and themes. Another workshop with EFA stakeholders was held in July to validate the report. The final report was produced and circulated to UNESCO.



Stakeholders meeting for the validation of the Education Sector Medium-Term Strategy (MTS).

© Seychelles National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The Education Sector Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2013–2017 is the first comprehensive strategic planning exercise carried out by the Ministry of Education based on a systematic situation analysis of the education system. The MTS is an excellent illustration of working relationships throughout the education sector encouraging and supporting modernization through a sustainable partnership process. It represents the Ministry's ongoing engagement to further transform the education and training landscape. The strategy was formulated by experts from the International Institute of Education Planning (IIEP) and staff of the Ministry, in accordance with a cooperation programme between the two institutions.

The MTS Plan 2013–2017 uses a new programme performance-based budgeting (PPBB) approach. This approach enabled the Ministry to view its strategic plan with a more critical eye, especially with regard to programme costing. In consequence, the Ministry has become more focused with greater emphasis placed on programme performance and the smarter use of allocated funds.

The plan is geared towards improvement of overall students performance and will see new benchmarks being set to measure level of attainment at different key stages with new demands imposed to ensure delivery to the required standards. The successful implementation of the plan will bring significant improvement in the performance of students and learning outcomes.

SOUTH AFRICA

South African National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Yousuf Gabru

Secretary-General: Mr Carlton Lufuno Mukwevho, snr.

Website: www.dbe.gov.za/unesco

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the South African National Commission for UNESCO continued to assist with the implementation of UNESCO programmes and activities in its fields of competency throughout the country.

As part of its Presidency of the UNESCO Science Commission, South Africa committed to hosting and implementing several UNESCO activities. In particular, the Minister of Science and Technology, Mrs Naledi Pandor, and UNESCO officials launched Africa Engineering Week (1–4 September) at the University of Johannesburg. This event formed part of South Africa's contribution towards the realization of UNESCO's Engineering Initiative on the continent.

In the same month, the National Commission, with support from the UNESCO Office in Windhoek, and together with the Department of Science and Technology and the South African National Editor's Forum (SANEF), held a 'Colloquium on the Development of Science Journalism' at the University of the Witwatersrand (12 September). The aim of the colloquium was to develop science journalism in the country.

In 2014, South Africa also submitted two new biosphere proposals to UNESCO for the Magaliesberg and Gouritz Biosphere Reserves.

In the field of culture, South Africa attended the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Doha (15–25 June), and hosted a World Heritage Buffer Zone workshop (16–17 October) to provide a forum for management authorities of the country's eight World Heritage Sites to share experiences and lessons learned.

In the field of communication and information, South Africa established a national committee for the Information for All Programme (IFAP) in 2014.

The African Centre of Excellence for Information Ethics (ACEIE), sponsored by the UNESCO Multi-sectoral Regional Office for Southern Africa, also conducted workshops on Information Ethics in Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland. The workshops focused on the development of information societies, training for government officials, education on information ethics, knowledge distribution, and the internationalization of information ethics policies and practices.

With support from the UNESCO Office in Windhoek, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) hosted a seminar on 'Promoting Genuine Qualifications in Africa through Effective Verification' (24–25 November). The seminar brought together key stakeholders from countries on the African continent to establish a network to verify qualifications, with the purpose of countering fraudulent practices.

Lastly, in recognition of the importance of philosophy in shaping the world and promoting international peace and tolerance, the National Commission and the Kara Heritage Institute jointly hosted a World Philosophy Day Dialogue (21 November) focused on African Philosophy.



A success story

In an effort to encourage youth awareness and participation in matters related to UNESCO's mandate, the South African National Commission for UNESCO, with the support of the UNESCO Office in Windhoek, launched the UNESCO Secondary Schools Essay Competition, which was open to grade 10 and 11 learners at all schools across the country.

Africa Engineering Week
(1–4 September).

© South African National Commission
for UNESCO

SUDAN

Sudanese National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mrs Souaad Abdelrazig Mohammed Saeed, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Abdulgadir Muhammad Hassan Nouredin

Update of activities in 2014

The Sudanese National Commission for UNESCO receives support from the Ministry of Finance and the private sector and cooperates with national institutions, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to fund the implementation of its activities.

In 2014, the National Commission celebrated a large number of International Weeks and Days, including World Wetland Day, World Radio Day, World Water Day, EFA Week, World Oceans Day, World Day to Combat Desertification, World Peace Day and the World Day of Arabic Language. In each case, the Commission collaborated with relevant institutions, IGOs and NGOs.

During the year the National Commission cooperated with several institutions to implement seven approved projects under the UNESCO Participation Programme. It was also involved in the preparation of two important documents: the 'Sudan Science, Technology and Innovation Policy' and the 'EFA Report'.

The National Commission organized numerous experts meetings, workshops, seminars and symposia. Among these

were the MAB Young Scientists Awards, an expert meeting for the establishment of an Arab network for monitoring the marine environment, a workshop on youth immigration, a national workshop on techniques of public consultation and mechanisms for conflict resolution, a regional symposium on promoting technical education and vocational training in the Arab world, a workshop on bioethics and a national workshop on the promotion of cultural industries in Sudan.

The National Commission also organized a trip for seventeen teachers and seventy-eight students of Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) secondary schools to visit natural heritage sites in the country and exchange experiences. This initiative was implemented under the auspices of the Republic Presidency and was sponsored by the Ministry of Finance and MTN (a communications company)

The National Commission submitted a proposal with the Ministry of Culture to document and inventory intangible cultural heritage in the Republic of Sudan. The proposal has been approved and the first pilot phase in Kordofan and the Blue Nile Regions will receive support from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. In addition, the National Commission submitted an amended scientific file for Sanganeb Marine National Park (SMNP) and Dungenab Bay/Mukkawar Island Marine National Park (DMNP) for inscription on the World Heritage List.

Lastly, the Sudanese National Commission maintains good relation with other National Commissions (especially the African and Arab Commissions) and the UNESCO Office in Khartoum, as well as the Regional Offices in Cairo and Beirut. During 2014, the National Commissions exchanged visits and continued to develop joint projects to achieve the goals of the Organization.



A success story

Under the auspices of the Minister of Culture, the Sudanese National Commission organized a sub-regional teacher-training programme in Khartoum on intercultural dialogue for peace, in cooperation with the King Abdul Aziz Centre for National Dialogue and the UNESCO Office in Beirut. The training programme was organized within the framework of a royal project to spread a culture of dialogue for peace in Arab communities. The training programme covered key aspects concerning the values of dialogue, and included exercises and practical applications to enhance the skills of participants in the communication arts with respect to positive social and cultural interaction.

At its conclusion, the programme recommended that similar training courses be organized in targeted States and that trainees work to organize such sessions in their own institutions. It also suggested that participants take advantage of the provided training manual to integrate some of the core concepts and values, especially when implementing the programme in other states.

The Director General of UNESCO and the Sudanese Minister of Education and Chairperson of the National Commission.

© Sudan National Commission for UNESCO

SWAZILAND

Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Phineas L. Magagula, Minister of Education and Training

Secretary-General: Ms. Hazel Zungu

Website: www.gov.sz

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO continued to receive support from the Ministry of Education. Further capacity building is required for fundraising and partnerships and serious short staffing and budget constraints within government continue to be a strain. However, with financial and technical support from UNESCO and the commitment of officers, partnerships were established with government and the private sector. As a result, the activities conducted by the Commission have had a positive impact on the people of Swaziland and succeeded in raising the visibility of UNESCO.

During the year the Swaziland National Commission commemorated Global Action Week for EFA, International Literacy Day and World Teachers Day with financial support from the UNESCO Office in Windhoek.

The year also saw an increase in collaboration between the National Commission and the communication and information sector in Swaziland. With financial support from the UNESCO

Office in Harare, the National Commission together with the Swaziland Editors Forum organized an event to celebrate World Press Freedom Day (3 May) in the form of a symposium on the 'Status of Women in the Media'.

UNESCO Headquarters also supported training for journalists with the aim of raising awareness of National Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy. Participants were given training in writing science articles and linking them to STI policy. To ensure the sustainability of the initiative an award is now presented each quarter for the best article.

In collaboration with the South African National Commission, the Swaziland National Commission organized training sessions for institutions of higher learning in Swaziland given by the African Centre of Excellence for Information Ethics. As a result of these sessions, the institutions established a forum to pursue the possibility of introducing information ethics into the curriculum.

The Swaziland National Commission also benefited from the annual joint capacity-building event for National Commissions of Southern Africa, which this year was organized and hosted by the Malawi National Commission. This event forms part of an initiative by National Commissions in the sub-region to build mutual capacities.

Through support from the EDUCAIDS programme and in collaboration with UNICEF and others, the Swaziland National Commission assisted the Guidance and Counselling Unit of the Ministry with the finalization of a series of teacher's handbooks for age-specific comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) targeting HIV prevention in secondary schools. Now approved by the National Curriculum Coordinating Committee, the handbooks will be distributed to secondary schools in 2015.



Some of the data collectors during training on the Social Participation indicators.

© Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

One success story was the finalization of the Culture for Development Indicators (CDIS). The aim of these indicators is to demonstrate, through quantitative and qualitative data, the enabling and driving role of culture in sustainable development. During the development process, it became apparent to the task team that there was no tangible evidence of the contribution of culture to sustainable development. This led the Swaziland National Commission to partner with the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and other stakeholders. The outcome was the inclusion of the Social Participation Indicator (culture-related indicator) in the national Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) conducted in 2014. The UNESCO Office in Harare and the Swaziland National Trust Commission contributed funds for the MICS data collection.

This process created awareness among data collectors of social inclusion and its importance and contribution to sustainable development. It also raised awareness of this issue among survey respondents. Lastly, it generated new key data showcasing culture's value to national development processes from an inclusive perspective.

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

UNESCO National Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania

Chairperson: Mr Shukuru Kawambwa, Minister of Educational and Vocational Training

Secretary-General: Mr Moshi M. Kimizi (Acting)

Website: www.natcom.go.tz

Update of activities in 2014

The UNESCO National Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania receives government support to cover general operational costs and facilitate the coordination and implementation of UNESCO programme activities. The year 2014 began with a number of challenges, notably regarding disbursement of Ministry funds. However, in spite of these and other difficulties, the Commission managed to work with stakeholders to implement its activities.

In education, the National Commission collaborated with the UNESCO Office in Dar es-Salaam and the British Council to launch the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013–2014* (15 May) under the theme 'Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All'. The launch of this report brought together diverse stakeholders to discuss and debate key issues

surrounding teaching and learning, with a real focus on the underlying challenges that confront marginalized groups in obtaining equal access to quality education.

The UNESCO National Commission in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (Mainland and Zanzibar) and with the assistance of the UNESCO Office in Dar es-Salaam also organized an Education stakeholders' consultation meeting to examine the present status of EFA in the country and consult on the Post-2015 Education Agenda. The meeting aimed to prepare the groundwork for the Sub-Saharan Education Ministerial meeting in Kigali (9–11 February 2015), where the position of the African continent will be drafted for presentation at the 3rd World Education Forum in Incheon, South Africa (May 2015).

In culture, the National Commission and its development partners collaborated with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism to implement restoration activities for the Ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani and the Ruins of Songo Mnara. The success of this restoration programme led to the removal of the site from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

In science, through the MAB National Committee and the UNESCO Office in Dar es-Salaam, the National Commission implemented and completed the Green Economy for Biosphere Reserve (GEBR) project. The project trains farmers to develop and maintain green businesses and implements biodiversity education for schools around the Amani Nature Reserve.

Taking part in the information society is essential for citizens of all age groups. In this context, the UNESCO National Commission, in collaboration with the Computing and Information Association, conducted a series of training workshops for secondary schools in Dar es Salaam. The workshops aimed to train students to use the internet responsibly and to avoid or manage risks related to online activity.



Temporary classrooms at Magole Primary School at Morogoro.
© UNESCO National Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania

A success story

In 2014, the UNESCO National Commission submitted a request on behalf of the government for emergency assistance to support teaching and learning environments in schools devastated by recent floods, in particular Magole primary school in Kilosa Morogoro. UNESCO responded positively and quickly, providing funds to build two temporary classrooms and buy teaching materials including textbooks, desks, technical equipment, a first aid kit and musical instruments. This support was the result of an educational needs assessment undertaken by the National Commission in collaboration with the regional and district administration, village leaders, teachers, parents and pupils. The emergency assistance greatly reduced stress among all concerned. As such, the United Republic of Tanzania through the UNESCO National Commission expressed its sincere gratitude and highly appreciated the assistance and cooperation offered by UNESCO to address and resolve this disaster.

TOGO

Togolese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Octave Nicoué Broohm, Minister for Higher Education and Research

Secretary-General: Mr Akoété Ayao Kougblenou

Website: www.unesco.tg.refer.org

Update of activities in 2014

The Togolese National Commission for UNESCO carried out a number of activities in 2014.

The Commission organized two workshops to validate the translation into Ewe and Kabyé (the two national languages of Togo) of a reference manual on how to teach a culture of peace, human rights, citizenship, democracy and regional integration in formal education. The French language version and the translations are intended for use in teacher-training institutes. The workshops were attended by experts from the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) and were funded by the African Development Bank.

The National Commission is working towards implementation of UNESCO's intergovernmental programmes. In 2014, the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) National Committee, set up in July 2013, held its opening meeting under the auspices of the National Commission for UNESCO (26 June). In a similar vein, the National Committee for the Memory of the World Programme organized an awareness-

raising tour of the different ministerial departments on the importance of management of documentary resources (4–13 November), and an awareness-raising workshop attended by departmental focal points (18 December).

A third training workshop for the members of Togo's National Advisory Committee on Bioethics, created in 2007, was held in April, in Lomé, under the auspices of the National Commission.

Following a request from the UNESCO Offices in Dakar (Senegal) and Abuja (Nigeria), the National Commission organized a shared subregional workshop on the implementation of an integrated system for teachers in basic education. The workshop brought together the subregion's national educational inspectors and literacy specialists.

The Togolese National Commission organized an inter-school basketball tournament (29 November – 13 December) for eight middle and secondary schools in Lomé. Two tournaments were organized for male and female teams with cups awarded to the winners. The National Commission also organized an inter-school theatre tournament for primary-school pupils from four schools on the theme of 'Associated Schools and the challenges of sustainable development' (20 December). Both activities were organized within the framework of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet).

Finally, the National Commission has been working on the publication of its newsletter, which is due to appear in February 2015.



Participants at the 3rd Science Camp for Schoolgirls receive instruction on the use of ICTs.

© Togolese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Togolese National Commission for UNESCO organized the third Science Camp for Schoolgirls, held at the National Institute for Agricultural Training at Tové, 120 kilometres from Lomé (31 August – 7 September). The participants consisted of forty-six girls representing the six educational regions of Togo, all of whom obtained high grades in recent examinations. The objective of the camp was to dispel stereotypes about gender and science and to encourage the girls to opt for science subjects at school and university.

Under the technical supervision of female students in their final year at the University of Lomé, the participants were taught the use of computer tools and acquired practical knowledge through scientific workshops in physics, chemistry and botany. They learned about the various science and technical schools and faculties in Togo's universities and also visited industrial premises, including a factory producing mineral water. Lastly, the girls received information about the mission and activities of UNESCO.

UGANDA

Uganda National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Jessica Alupo Epel, Minister of Education and Sports

Secretary-General: Mr Augustine Omare-Okurut

Website: www.unesco-uganda.org

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO worked closely with its partners and implemented a number of activities in line with its mandate.

In education, the National Commission organized a capacity-building workshop for selected district officials, teachers and early childhood development (ECD) centre management committee members to effectively implement ECD policy and provide for the needs of children.

To mark the end of the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), the National Commission for UNESCO organized a National Conference for stakeholders in ESD. Eighty participants attended the conference and shared experiences of implementing ESD at different levels. The participants also evaluated progress made to date and established commitments for post-2014 ESD activities in Uganda.

In the social and human sciences, and with support from UNESCO, the Uganda National Commission supported the implementation of the Participation Programme, 'A cultural approach to counselling perpetrators and victims of domestic violence in families and local communities'. The programme developed, printed, launched and disseminated a counselling model and trained thirty-four community counsellors and social workers.



A success story

Ikirah Education Centre is a private pre-primary and primary school located in Lwentale Kyazanga Town Council, Lwengo District. It is also one of the ASPnet schools in Uganda to embrace ESD as a flagship theme. Currently, 564 pupils are enrolled in the centre's programme, whose overall goal is to provide a holistic education. The Uganda National Commission for UNESCO supports the school to ensure its ESD plan is successfully implemented.

To mark the end of the Decade for ESD, a celebration was organized at Ikirah Education Centre to showcase a number of activities carried out during the last ten years. The event attracted community members, partners from Germany and political leaders. Activities included soap and jelly-making; tree-planting; use of solar, biogas and energy-saving stoves as a means to reduce tree cutting; separation of waste; planting of fruit and vegetable gardens to improve the nutrition and health of teachers and pupils; and the use of cow dung to produce biogas for lighting and cooking. The school is now renowned throughout the entire community for its best practices in the field of ESD.

A German volunteer fries eggs using a solar cooker installed at Ikirah Education Centre in Kyazanga in the presence of the Secretary-General of the Uganda National Commission.

© Uganda National Commission for UNESCO

ZAMBIA

Zambia National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr John Phiri, Minister of Education, Science, Vocational & Early Education

Secretary-General: Ms Nondo Chilonga

Update of activities in 2014

The Zambia National Commission for UNESCO enjoys continued support from the Ministry of Education, which enables it to contribute effectively and sustainably to UNESCO activities in its five areas of competency.

In education, the National Commission facilitated Zambia's participation in the International Year of Crystallography and coordinated the Crystal Growth Competition in four Associated School Project Networks (ASPnet) schools. Two hundred and eighty learners participated in this international activity, which sought to promote 'learning by doing' and to increase the visibility of UNESCO activities in ASPnet schools. Teachers who participated in this activity were exposed to a network of other science teachers around the globe via the dedicated competition website and portal.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission partnered with the Engineering Institution of Zambia during Africa Engineering Week to carry out activities in five newly established secondary schools. The activities promoted awareness of engineering as a career and highlighted its importance for sustainable development. At the end of the activities, the Commission organized a quiz for secondary students, which was hosted by the University of Zambia School of Engineering. This activity aimed to motivate learners and develop their potential in engineering and the sciences in general.

In culture, the National Commission in conjunction with the Ministry of Tourism and Arts organized a 'Training of Trainers' workshop dedicated to implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The workshop was designed to impart knowledge and skills to cultural experts, who in turn would train others in their respective localities on various aspects of the UNESCO 2003 Convention. This activity received funding from the Government of Flanders.

In communication and information, UNESCO worked to empower community radio stations through ICTs. This project has benefitted communities by facilitating quality information gathering and dissemination.



Girls playing volleyball as part of the Health and Sport Project.
© Zambia National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the National Commission implemented a Health and Sport Project with support from UNESCO Headquarters. The project involved carrying out sporting and health activities for three primary schools, who came together to play friendly sporting games at one central school. Girls played volleyball and netball while boys played football. The essence of these activities was to encourage positive interactions among the targeted audience. This avoided traditional methods of teaching and encouraged close interaction between pupils and their mentors and teachers. The activity also helped to bring pupils, teachers and their administrators together to discuss HIV/AIDS and other health-related issues while playing sport. Free health services were provided in designated places within the school premises, including HIV Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT), diabetes testing, malaria testing and blood pressure tests. The activity successfully provided an opportunity for participants to access free health services in the context of sporting activities.

ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mrs Olivia Muchena, Minister for Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development

Secretary-General: Mr Temba Petros Ndlovu

Update of activities in 2014

The year 2014 was a busy one for the Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO. Despite financial challenges, the National Commission realized a number of projects in the areas of education, culture, the sciences, and communication and information, with the support of funds made available by UNESCO in collaboration with the Multi-Sectoral Regional Office.

During the year the Harare Cluster Office was upgraded to a Multi-Sectoral Regional Office. The Chairperson of the Zimbabwe National Commission and the Minister for Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development welcomed Secretaries-General from the Southern Africa Region on a familiarization tour to visit the new office.

In culture, the National Commission organized a training workshop to assist stakeholders in making applications to the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD). Local participants attended the workshop from both government

and civil society, as well as from the National Commissions of Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and Swaziland. The Zimbabwe Reproduction and Rights Organisation (ZIMCOPY) was successful in its application and was awarded funding for a project to develop a copyright strategy for Zimbabwe.

In education, the National Commission produced the EFA 2015 Review Report. It also launched the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013–2014*. Under the 2014–2015 Participation Programme, the Commission conducted a workshop on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) with School Coordinators of the Associated Schools Programme Network (ASPnet) from the ten provinces in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe also benefitted from the UNESCO Fellowship Programme with one candidate selected.

In communication and information, the National Commission successfully coordinated celebrations for World Radio Day (13 February) and World Press Freedom Day (3 May), bringing together national and private broadcasters. In addition, civil society organizations and institutions received funding to produce gender mainstreaming workshops.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission in cooperation with the UNESCO Global Observatory of Science and Technology and Innovation Policy Instruments (GOSPIN) and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology completed a national survey on Research and Innovation. UNESCO published the results of the survey in April under the title 'Mapping Research and Innovation in the Republic of Zimbabwe'.



A success story

The outstanding event for the Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO in 2014 was the Training of Trainers Workshop on Inventorying Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). Twenty-one participants comprising cultural officers and representatives of community organizations took part in this workshop held in Chiredzi District, Zimbabwe. The workshop imparted both theoretical knowledge on ICH and the 2003 Convention and practical skills on inventorying intangible cultural heritage, including the use of video and digital cameras and voice recorders in the field, and techniques for interviewing and transcribing recorded information, as well as completing the inventory framework.

Traditional fire-making methods.

© Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO



Since 2012, UNESCO has been coordinating the Education for All (EFA) Package for Palestine, a partnership between the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and the United Nations (9 Agencies involved). It focuses on inclusive and child-friendly education and early childhood development (ECD) which are key areas to ensure the right to quality education for all Palestinian children. In this photo, Grade-4 schoolgirls from the Umm Al-Qura Co-Basic School in West Gaza (one of the pilot schools of the Package) child-led activities with their teachers and the school principal in June 2014.

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Arab States

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ALGERIA

Algerian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture

President: Mrs Nouria Benghebrit, Minister of National Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Dalila Nedjraoui

Website: www.unesco.dz

Update of activities in 2014

The Algerian National Commission works in close cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters and regional offices in Rabat, Cairo and Beirut to communicate UNESCO's programmes and projects to relevant ministries and civil society. In 2014, the National Commission continued its work to promote the ideals and objectives of the Organization.

During the year the Secretary-General of the National Commission participated in meetings organized by UNESCO, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). Outcomes of this cooperation included a training workshop for the benefit of managers who are responsible for the preparation of programmes and methods for adults in the Arab world, organized in cooperation with the National Office for Literacy and Adult Education (ONAEA) and held in Algiers (23–28 November). The National Commission in conjunction with

the ISESCO Chair for 'Women, Science and Technology' also organized 'Science and society: the role of women', hosted by Houari Boumediene University of Sciences and Technology (USTHB) (15–16 June).

In conjunction with UNESCO Headquarters the National Commission prepared the 'Avicenna Virtual Campus Project' for national and higher education. In addition, the Commission submitted seven projects to UNESCO for the Participation Programme, four of which were selected for 2014–2015.

The National Commission also organized several activities in partnership with the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network. These included a seminar on the 'Status of Muslim women, between religious law and substantive law' (March); a study day on 'Women in the Maghreb' (11 October), which explored the topic of why female saints are absent from North African hagiographies; and a conference entitled 'Algiers, foundation and evolution of a medieval city (tenth to fifteenth centuries) in the framework of heritage promotion', presented by Professor A. Allaoua of the University of Constantine (14 June).

In collaboration with Algerian National Radio, the National Commission organized a 'Workshop on gender equality and women's empowerment', which was broadcast on the radio (13 February).

Finally, the National Commission awarded the UNESCO-Confucius Prize for Literacy 2014 to the Algerian Literacy Association (IQRAA), for the programme 'Literacy, training and integration of women'; and presented the L'Oréal-UNESCO 'For Women in Science' 2014 scholarship to the PhD student Lilia Lazli.



Presentation of the 2014 UNESCO-Confucius Prize for Literacy, awarded in Dhaka in September 2014.

© Algerian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture

A success story

In 2014, the National Commission organized a training session at National Commission headquarters for associations integrated into the Algerian Federation of UNESCO Clubs (9 August). The training, under the theme 'How to plan your life', aimed to meet the self-development needs of young people and lead them towards individual and societal achievement.

The session was moderated by Mr Boussouf Zakaria, a professional coach graduated from the American board institution and the Canadian world centre for human development. The training was supplemented by visits to nationally approved training centres.

Following the training, members of the Algerian Federation of UNESCO Clubs held a day of awareness-raising on self-development for young people at a world heritage cultural site: the Kasbah of Algiers (5 December).

EGYPT

Egyptian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Elsayed Ahmed Abdul Khaleq, Minister of Higher Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Zainab Elwakeel

Website: www.egnat.com.org.eg

Update of activities in 2014

In February, the Egyptian National Commission for UNESCO held a training course on the theme of 'Enhancing the role of mass media in building capacities in the field of urgent immediate relief, reviving and rehabilitation'. The course was organized within the framework of UNESCO's efforts to support Member States in post-conflict situations and to coordinate executive assistance for states witnessing social transformations and revolutions. The principal aim of the training was to support efforts to revive social development, restore behavioural balance to society, build institutional capacities, and meet the educational and cultural needs of society. Numerous experts from faculties of arts and information attended and participated in the training course.

In August, the Egyptian National Commission organized and hosted a sub-regional consultation meeting for the Cluster of Arab National Commissions of Egypt, the Sudan and Libya (24–25 August). The aim of the meeting was to enhance cooperation among the National Commissions and foster better partnerships and programmes within the Cluster and the UNESCO Regional Office for Science and Technology in Cairo. During the meeting, the Egyptian National Commission for UNESCO presented a summary of its main priorities and

activities implemented within the sectors of education, culture, science and ICT.

In September, the Egyptian National Commission organized a one-day training workshop via videoconference (17 September) for staff members of the Egyptian National Commission and technical experts cooperating with the Commission in different fields.

In cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Office the Egyptian National Commission also organized a two-day high-level forum on the themes of 'Galvanizing Higher Education and Scientific Research towards an Innovation Economy' and 'Galvanizing Science Education for a Knowledge-based Economy'. The President of the National Commission, the Egyptian Minister of Higher Education, the Minister of Education and the President of the Sudanese National Commission for UNESCO attended the forum. The two-day meeting aimed to highlight innovative educational programmes within the concerned ministries, discuss approaches for achieving educational priorities in Egypt and the Arab world, and develop proposals to implement a pilot project for reaching those priorities.

Lastly, the UNESCO Office in Cairo in collaboration with the Swedish International Development Corporation (SIDA) and the Egypt National Commission for UNESCO organized a 'Seminar on Localization of the Media Information Literacy (MIL) Kit' in the Middle Eastern and Northern Africa (MENA) region. The seminar took place in Cairo (1–2 December) and was attended by forty-five delegates including policy-makers, curricula experts and teachers from nine countries (Algeria, Egypt, Qatar, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen) who deliberated on strategies to adapt MIL in their respective countries.



A success story

A key activity implemented by the National Commission in 2014 was the two-day training course on 'Building Centres for Managing Disasters in Developing Countries' (18–19 March). This capacity-building session targeted scientific research groups at national and regional levels implemented within a framework of cooperation with UNESCO. The main aim of the course was to offer training to participants in founding centres for managing disasters and crisis, and to encourage existing centres to upgrade the performance of their staff. The course offered training in building a culture of managing disasters and crises (both social and natural), with a focus on analysing and managing details and key mechanisms for critical decision-making in crisis situations. Experts from Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon and Tunisia participated in this activity, in addition to experts from faculties of commerce, education and science, and specialized national centres.

Participants at the training course on 'Building Centres for Managing Disasters in Developing Countries'.

© Egyptian National Commission for UNESCO

JORDAN

Jordan National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

President: Mr Mohammad M. Thneibat, Minister of National Education

Secretary-General: Mr Suheil Shaheen

Website: www.moe.gov.jo/

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Jordan National Commission for UNESCO organized the 1st Annual Forum for fifteen Associated Schools from the north, central and southern regions of the country. The forum took place in King Abdullah II School in Aqaba City (24–25 April) and was hosted by Mr Sultan Al-Khalif, the National Associated School Project (ASP) Coordinator.

The main goal of the forum was to highlight activities undertaken by UNESCO Associated Schools in Jordan and to facilitate the exchange of experiences between students and UNESCO ASP school coordinators.

The forum also aimed to identify successes achieved in ASP schools through interactive working sessions based upon dialogue among students on the concepts of sustainable development and cultural heritage. Forty-five students and teachers took part in the sessions and also participated in organized activities, including a visit to the Marine Science Station, a Heritage Gallery, and the organization of a twinning project between the ASP schools represented at the forum.

The Jordan National Commission also organized an awareness-raising campaign in the Balqa governorate to advance the ideals and objectives of UNESCO in the safeguarding and protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Students and teachers from several schools were encouraged to participate in traditional handicraft exhibitions and traditional folkloric dances and rituals, all of which presented tangible and intangible elements from Jordan. Representatives and guests from civil society were invited to visit the exhibitions and to sample traditional dishes at a buffet prepared by students, teachers and the local community.

The Jordan National Commission for UNESCO and the Jordan National Committee for Ethics of Science and Technology (JNCEST) also organized, the Global Scientific Conference about Ethics of Medical Research and the Role of Young Researchers, under the patronage of the Prime Minister. The conference, which took place at the University of Jordan (29–30 April), constituted a major activity of the National Committee's five-year strategy. Its main aims were to highlight the prominent role JNCEST plays nationally in the field of ethics of science and technology; to exchange experiences with developed countries on ways to cope with debatable ethical issues, especially those concerning human beings; and to shed light on the key role of the Institutional Review Board in ensuring ethical research.

Experts from international universities in the United Kingdom and the United States participated in the conference as well as over seventy instructors and postgraduates from Jordanian universities. A key recommendation was the formulation of an ethical and legal framework and standards to deal with unethical issues resulting from medical research.



A success story

The Jordan National Commission and JNCEST in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Beirut and Hashemite University jointly organized the Regional Ethics Teachers' Training Course (ETTC), held in Zarqa, Jordan (19–23 October). The course forms part of UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences programme and aims to introduce participants to the means, resources and methodologies necessary for teaching ethics.

Trainers from Egypt, Kuwait and Qatar demonstrated elements of the UNESCO Core Curriculum in Bioethics, provided practical examples, and gave participants the chance to discuss and negotiate much-debated ethical issues. The President of Hashemite University delivered a national report on the status of teaching bioethics and presented the bioethics course taught at Hashemite University, as well as the experiences of other public universities. Twenty-two instructors participated in the training course.

Participants at the Regional Ethics Teachers' training course (ETTC) at Hashemite University.
© Jordan National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

KUWAIT

Kuwait National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Bader Al-Essa, Minister of National Education

Secretary-General: Mr Abdullatif Ahmed Al-Baijan

Website: www.kwtnatcom.org

Update of activities in 2014

The Kuwait National Commission for UNESCO had an eventful year during which it promoted and supported UNESCO's main fields of competence.

In May, the Kuwait National Commission, in cooperation with IEARN (the International Education and Resource Network) and the American Embassy in Kuwait, hosted an end-of-year exhibition for the Kuwait High-School Journalism Programme. IEARN is a vast, non-profit global network that promotes collaborations between teachers and youth via ICT-based projects for enhanced learning. Representatives from the Kuwait Ministry of Education and the US Ambassador to Kuwait attended the event, which saw programme participants, including forty-five students, twenty educators and four journalist mentors, share their experiences of the year-long programme through PowerPoint and poster presentations. In total, over eighty participants attended the event and learned about the work of the students and the achievements of the programme.

In the same month, the National Commission organized the fourth awards ceremony for the UNESCO/Emir Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize to Promote Quality Education for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (26 May). The purpose of the prize is to reward outstanding activities of individuals, groups, organizations or specialized centres in fields relating to special needs education. Sponsored by the current Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah and attended by the Minister of Education, the biennial prize was awarded to Mr Gordon Porter from Canada and Ms Susanna Tadevosyan, Founder and President of the 'Bridge of Hope' non-governmental organization in Armenia.

The Kuwait National Commission also organized the Education For All Forum (EFA) (16 June), sponsored by the Under Secretary of Education. The forum focused on government outreach efforts to promote the advancement of education in all parts of society.

Towards the end of the year, the Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah sponsored and attended a ceremony (5 November) held to honour the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the first Minister of Education in Kuwait. The ceremony highlighted his cultural and educational achievements, and his influential role in the promotion of education in Kuwait. The ceremony formed part of a series of celebrations of notable anniversaries during the 2015–2016 biennium, and was jointly organized by the Kuwait National Commission and the Emiri Diwan.



A success story

The 'Big Tree Society' initiative, which UNESCO adopted in cooperation with Boubyan Bank and the Kuwait National Commission, aims to spread environmental awareness among students by organizing and promoting environmentally friendly projects in schools. In 2014, a contest was organized around key project themes: saving energy, water preservation, waste reduction and healthy environments.

The National Commission organized two workshops to publicize the contest among schools and answer questions. Projects entered by students and schools were displayed in an exhibition, with prizes awarded at a ceremony sponsored by the Ministry of Education.

Workshop organized in Kuwait City as part of the 'Big Tree Society' initiative.

© Kuwait National Commission for UNESCO

LEBANON

Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Henri Awit

Secretary-General: Mrs Zahida Darwiche Jabbour

Website: www.lncu.org

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the National Commission involved national educational, scientific and cultural organizations in the planning and implementation of UNESCO activities, against a backdrop of significant changes and social challenges. The Commission worked in close collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Beirut, the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), UNESCO Clubs, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and the private sector, to organize workshops, meetings and conferences at national, regional and international levels in UNESCO's fields of competence.

During the year the Commission also participated in several international meetings, including the 1st Interregional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO, held in Astana, Kazakhstan (22–24 July); the World Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations (WFUCA) International Conference on Global Ethics, Sustainable Development and Social Media and the

34th Ordinary Session of the WFUCA Executive Board, held in New York (6–12 March); and the Annual Meeting of National Commissions (22–23 October), held on the occasion of the 195th session of the Executive Board at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris.

Among its many events, the National Commission organized a successful conference of UNESCO Clubs from both shores of the Mediterranean to discuss 'The role of UNESCO Clubs in facing the challenges of the modern world' (6–7 February), organized in partnership with the Rotary Club of Beirut (see below).

In the field of education, the Commission organized a seminar on 'Poetry in primary school classes' to celebrate World Poetry Day (20 March), and a literary roundtable entitled '*La Grande maison au miroir de l'écriture*' on the occasion of International Francophonie Day (26 March).

The National Commission also organized a seminar and workshops for universities and schools on the theme of 'Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development', held at UNESCO Office in Beirut (26–27 May); a training workshop on Arabic calligraphy on the occasion of World Arabic Language Day (18–19 December); and a roundtable on 'Philosophy curricula in secondary school classes', on the occasion of World Philosophy Day (20 November).



Participants at the conference on 'The role of UNESCO Clubs in facing the challenges of the modern world', held at the UNESCO Office in Beirut.

© Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Beirut and under the patronage of the Minister of Culture, organized a conference of UNESCO Clubs from both shores of the Mediterranean entitled 'The role of UNESCO Clubs in facing the challenges of the modern world', held at the UNESCO Office in Beirut (6–7 February).

Despite the precarious security situation, the National Commission managed to bring together experts, ambassadors and presidents of the World Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations (WFUCA) and the Arab Federation of UNESCO Clubs (FEDACLU), as well as representatives from the UNESCO clubs of Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen.

The key issues were discussed by experts from the academic world while representatives of UNESCO Clubs presented good practices in facing challenges such as violence, diverse forms of exclusion and discrimination, isolationism and radicalization, social transformations, climate change and environmental issues. Professor Joseph Maïla presented the closing address, entitled 'Towards universal solidarity', organized in cooperation with Saint Joseph University.

The participants from different cultures and backgrounds worked together to draft the 'Beirut Declaration', in which they declared their commitment to joint efforts in the face of these challenges. The event received significant media coverage and the conference discussions were published as a book.

MAURITANIA

Mauritanian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture

President: Mrs Vatta Vall Mint Soueina

Secretary-General: Mr Ismail Ould Chouaib

Update of activities in 2014

The Mauritanian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture, as its name indicates, is a public institution under the Ministry of Culture and Crafts, which presides over the Commission. The Commission works as a focal point for UNESCO promoting culture and the sciences, basic education, and cultural and artistic education in UNESCO Associated Schools, according to the vision put forward by the Organization.

The Commission's role is to promote UNESCO's ideals of peace and religious and cultural diversity and mutual understanding, as well as solidarity and support for genuine global development.

The Commission works in close cooperation with other international organizations such as the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), with which it implements certain programmes at national level under their biennial or triennial strategies. The Commission also acts as the National Correspondent of the International Organisation of La Francophonie (IOF).

The mission of the Mauritanian National Commission is to study all matters relating to education, culture and science in the country and to play a key role in the popularization of Mauritanian culture through its quarterly cultural magazine *Al Mawqib Althaghafi* ('The Cultural Caravan'), which is distributed worldwide.

In addition to its efforts in the implementation of projects pertaining to UNESCO's five fields of competence, the Mauritanian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture supports the efforts of nine UNESCO Clubs, UNESCO Associated Schools and the network of women journalists and civil society, through non-governmental organizations such as Traversées Mauritanides, SOS-Esclaves, the Trade Union of Free Mauritanian Journalists and the Association of Poets.



Family education class in Nouakchott.
© UNESCO/Gary Fullerton

A success story

In 2014, the Mauritanian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture, in collaboration with the seven presidents of UNESCO Clubs in Mauritania, initiated a project to motivate and empower primary and secondary pupils and students to become strong advocates of peace and intercultural dialogue in Mauritania, the subregion and the world.

The initial project reached a wide audience and the National Commission is now seeking to implement similar projects that would enable Mauritania to play the role of catalyst for peace in the subregion. Indeed, owing to its geographical position between the Arab Maghreb and Black Africa, Mauritania is in a position to act as a bridge between two worlds that are interconnected through culture, religion, and sometimes even national or official working languages.

The National Commission plans to initiate this project through the UNESCO Participation Programme, with the support and motivation of all stakeholders.

OMAN

Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

President: Mr Madiha bint Ahmed bin Nasser Al Shaibaniya, Minister of National Education

Secretary-General: Mr Mohammed Saleem Al Yaqoubi

Website: www.onc.gov.om

Update of activities in 2014

The Oman National Commission for UNESCO implemented many educational, cultural and scientific activities in 2014 within the ongoing partnership between the Sultanate of Oman and UNESCO.

In education, the Sultanate of Oman hosted the meeting of the Steering Committee of the International Taskforce on Teachers (11 May). In addition, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Beirut, organized a seminar to discuss the Omani report on a Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER).

In culture, the Ministry of Heritage and Culture, with the participation of the Oman National Commission, organized a 'Workshop on Fighting Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Properties' (19–22 April). The workshop aimed to shed light on international efforts and reviewed international best practice. Oman participated in the meeting of the General Assembly of Member States to the Convention of the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (2–6 June), and the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee in Doha (15–25 June). The National Commission

also participated in the 8th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. During the meeting participants discussed the nomination of Ayala art, proposed by Oman and the United Arab Emirates for inscription on the International List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

In science, the Oman National Commission celebrated a number of international UNESCO events, including World Water Day. The three-day programme comprised scientific competitions related to innovation, research and fine arts around the theme of 'water and energy'. The Sultanate also participated in the 21st session of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (18–20 June). In addition, the National Commission co-sponsored the WSTA 11th Gulf Water Conference 'Water in the GCC, Towards Efficient Management', held in Muscat (20–22 October).

In communication and information, the National Commission organized a workshop on 'Open Educational Resources Support to Prepare Omani Trainers to Develop Teachers Professional Competencies' (30 March – 2 April). The workshop laid out a vision for a teacher ICT-OER capacity framework and explored ways to prepare Omani course developers to adapt OERs to support the application of the UNESCO ICT CFT framework in Oman. The Sultanate also participated in the meeting of the Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme (IFAP) at UNESCO Headquarters (19–20 May).

Lastly, the National Commission organized its annual 'Connecting Cultures' project for Associated Schools (13–17 December) in collaboration with the 'Connecting Cultures' Foundation. The project organizes trips for young boys and girls from different cultures to provide an opportunity for face-to-face interaction, thus helping to promote cultural diversity and the acquisition of communication skills.



Participants at the Global Education For All Meeting, held in Oman.
© Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

A success story

In 2014, the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Education and in collaboration with UNESCO, hosted the Global Education For All Meeting (12–14 May). Among the invited participants were Mr Matata Ponyo Mapon, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo; Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO; about 300 educational leaders representing fifty delegations headed by Ministers of Education or their deputies from five regional groups; and representatives of sponsor agencies for Education For All, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), bilateral and multilateral agencies, United Nations Agencies, regional organizations, civil society organizations, flagship initiatives in EFA, the private sector and research institutions.

This meeting was the last to involve all partners in the EFA Movement prior to the World Education Forum, due to be held in South Korea in 2015. The forum is expected to formulate ideas and visions with regard to education goals, priorities and purposes for the post-2015 agenda. It is also expected to see the adoption of the Muscat Declaration, which will form the reference point for education post-2015.

PALESTINE

Palestinian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

President: Mr Yahya Yakhlef

Secretary-General: Mr Murad Sudani

Website: www.pncecs.org

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Palestinian National Commission for UNESCO worked hard to participate in educational, cultural and environmental workshops and events related to its mandate. In particular, the National Commission organized a workshop to explore techniques for working with olive wood. More than fifty-two women participated in the project and at the end of the workshop they organized an exhibition to exhibit their products.

In October, the National Commission in cooperation with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) presented an exhibition of photographs in Cairo from the collection of the art historian Hisham al-Rajabi.

The photographs taken by Palestinians trace the history of Jerusalem and Palestine throughout the last century and up to the present.

In 2014, the Palestinian National Commission also held the 7th Cultural Educational Forum, which gathered Palestinians from Arab countries as well as Belgium, Norway and Sweden together in Palestine. Participants in the forum visited several Palestinian cities and participated in educational, cultural and social meetings, and folk events. The forum provides Palestinians with a unique opportunity to exchange experiences with those in the Diaspora, and gives those living abroad the chance to discover Palestine.



A success story

In 2014, at UNESCO's 38th Session of the World Heritage Committee, Palestine submitted an emergency nomination to inscribe 'Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines, Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir' on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Battir is located a few kilometres southwest of Jerusalem and contains characteristic stone terraces and remarkable examples of irrigation. Its fertile soil and diversity of crops, as well as the presence of many monuments, make Battir a site of importance for tourists, farmers and archaeologists. The Committee approved the inscription of the site on the World Heritage List and inscribed the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, considering that 'the site faces an emergency for which an immediate decision by the World Heritage Committee could ensure its safeguarding'.

Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, inscribed on the World Heritage List.

© Palestinian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

QATAR

Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

President: Mr Mohammed Abdul Wahed Al-Hammadi, Minister of Education, Higher Education, Secretary General of the Supreme Education Council

Secretary-General: Mrs Hamda Hassan Al-Sulaiti

Website: www.sec.gov.qa

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Qatari National Commission played an active role in events organized to celebrate the 20th anniversary of World Teachers' Day. In particular, the National Commission took part in a series of Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) forums, which highlighted the role of teachers in the community and prompted dialogue between school administrations, teachers, parents and students. The National Commission was immensely pleased to present certificates and awards to high-performing teachers who made significant contributions to ASPnet activities.

The Qatar National Commission also collaborated with ASPnet schools to organize an exhibition to showcase successful practices in the context of Education for Sustainable Development. The exhibition was held in Ahmed Bin Hanbal Independent Secondary School (6 May) within the framework of the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development.

Twenty-four government and private schools participated, sharing artworks prepared by ASPnet students to highlight key principles of the Sustainable Development Goals – promotion of a culture of peace, respect of human rights, gender equality and maintenance of a pollution-free environment.

The Government of the State of Qatar signed a Cooperation Agreement with UNESCO to develop a Junior Professional Staff Programme (4 July). The agreement aims to provide recent graduates and junior staff members with extensive experience in multi-faceted technical cooperation in the fields of education, culture, science, communication and information, and social sciences, through a two-year hands-on training programme at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris or in regional offices around the globe.

UNESCO also collaborated with Qatar University, Northwestern University and Qatar Petroleum to launch the Al-Bairaq educational outreach programme, designed to increase involvement in research and development in areas such as science and technology among high-school students. The programme offers students the opportunity to learn new scientific research methods and approaches, attend training courses, and undertake research projects under the direction and presence of professional academic researchers. The programme comprises three tracks based around research, technical materials and challenges facing industry. The closing ceremony for the initial research track (29 October) was attended by Qatar University faculty members, students, directors of sponsoring organizations, and representatives of the Qatari National Commission and the UNESCO Regional Office.



38th session of the World Heritage Committee in Doha.
© Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

A success story

In 2014, Qatar hosted the 38th Session of the World Heritage Committee (15–25 June) in Doha, with the participation of the Qatar Museums Authority and the Permanent Delegate of the State of Qatar to UNESCO. The 38th Session aimed to study files submitted by countries with a view to inscribing sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It also assessed the state of conservation of sites already inscribed on the List, and examined the cases of endangered sites. The 38th Session was preceded by the World Heritage Youth Forum, led by the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Qatar Museums Authority, who invited young people from Member States of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee to attend the forum. The young participants submitted a report to the World Heritage Committee, which was read in the Plenary Session of the 38th Session.

A number of Arab countries and friendly states also attended the World Heritage Youth Forum in an effort to learn more about Qatari Heritage Sites inscribed recently on the World Heritage Committee List, such as Al-Zubarah Archeological City. The forum also enabled attendees to learn more about castles and forts in Qatar that form part of the country's tangible cultural heritage.

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi National Commission for UNESCO

President: Prince Khalid Al Faysal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Ghormallah Al Ghamdi

Website: natcom.moe.sa

Update of activities in 2014

Saudi Arabia is one of the twenty founding countries of UNESCO and the third signatory to the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO. The Saudi National Commission for UNESCO is responsible for strengthening and sustaining relations between UNESCO and Saudi Arabia by transmitting UNESCO's various projects, ideas and requests to Saudi Arabia's different governmental and private sectors, and submitting Saudi Arabia's requests to the relevant sectors at UNESCO.

The Saudi National Commission is represented at most of UNESCO's international, regional and local conferences

and expert meetings, through activities conducted by its representatives in the field, as well as its permanent delegation in Paris. The members of the National Commission, particularly the Secretary-General, participate at sessions of the General Conference and the Executive Board, and are involved in the coordination, preparation and distribution of reports and requests.

The year 2014 was another important milestone for the Saudi National Commission for UNESCO. The Commission participated fully or partially in various UNESCO activities, and reports were drawn up and distributed to the relevant authorities in UNESCO's fields of competence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Secretary-General of the National Commission attended regional meetings such as the coordination meeting between the heads of the National Commissions of the Arab Gulf States and Yemen and the UNESCO Office in Doha, held in Oman in November 2014, where he presented a vision of the Saudi Ministry of Education and the Saudi National Commission for UNESCO. He requested that relations be strengthened between National Commissions in the region and the UNESCO Office in Doha, and that its regional role be enhanced and its programmes and meetings stepped up.



Mr Gormallah Al Ghamdi, Secretary-General of the National Commission.

© Saudi National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Saudi National Commission organized a series of meetings convened for members of the Saudi delegation in preparation for the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan (10–12 November). Given the importance attached by UNESCO to the Conference, the National Commission prepared full information packs on the Organization, the Conference, the host country and city where the Conference was held and its activities, as well as Saudi Arabia's achievements in the field of education for sustainable development, and distributed these to members of the Saudi delegation participating at the Conference. The National Commission also prepared and organized tours for members of the delegation to visit educational and scientific sectors in Nagoya and Tokyo.

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

Syrian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Hazwan Al-Waz, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Nidal Hassan

Website: www.syrianatcom.gov.sy

Update of activities in 2014

The Syrian National Commission for UNESCO is the national platform for policy-makers and social actors in the Organization's fields of competence. It coordinates cooperation between eight ministries, three national academic/scientific institutions, non-governmental organizations, beneficiaries and the general public.

In 2014, faced with the consequences of the current crisis, the National Commission focused its activities on strengthening the capacities of the above-mentioned national players in partnership with the UNESCO Office in Beirut, whose Director visited Damascus (12 February) and met with the Ministers of Education and Culture.

The National Commission has responded to the growing needs of education, science, culture, communication and information, youth, early childhood and sport, by providing logistical back-up and coordination to support these sectors in accordance with UNESCO guidelines.

The Commission has stepped up its participation at the regional level through a series of activities held throughout the year. These included a meeting on the implementation of the

UNESCO Action Plan for the Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage, held in Beirut (5 March); a national workshop for youth encouraging technical and vocational skills development in Syria, held in Damascus (20–22 May); a regional consultation meeting for Arab States on sustainable development, held in Beirut (16–18 September); a meeting on issues relating to emergency conservation of cultural heritage (17 September); a national forum on early childhood education (23–24 November); a training workshop on action to combat the trafficking of Syrian cultural property, held in Beirut (10–14 November); a training workshop on the emergency safeguarding of cultural heritage attended by more than thirty Syrian experts, held in Beirut (24 November – 6 December); and a workshop on computerized education, held in Damascus (16–18 December).

In Paris, representatives of the National Commission attended the first meeting of the Working Group for the revision of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention (23–24 January). They also participated in the first European forum on media and information literacy (27–28 May); an expert meeting entitled 'Rallying the International Community to Safeguard Syria's Cultural Heritage' (26–28 May); the 5th session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2–5 June); and a meeting on emergency assistance and support for the museums of Aleppo (28–30 October). The Commission also participated in the 3rd International Conference on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace, held in Yakutsk, Russian Federation (28 June – 3 July).



Participants at the workshop on the 'Implementation of education for sustainable development, technical skills and staff development in technical and vocational courses', held in Latakia (25–27 November).

© Syrian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

Among its numerous activities in 2014, the National Commission organized two key workshops. The first, the 'National workshop for youth and encouraging technical and vocational skills development in Syria', held in Damascus (20–22 May), aimed to define interdisciplinary links between sustainable development and education, including technical and vocational education. The workshop emphasized the urgency of modernizing curricula by integrating advanced technologies and the economic impact of these prospects.

The second workshop on the 'Implementation of education for sustainable development, technical skills and staff development in technical and vocational courses', held in Latakia (25–27 November), was attended by a number of educational managers and supervisors. Using their multidisciplinary expertise they explored the relations between educational supervision, training, learning, and technical and vocational education in combating youth unemployment.



Toddlers in the nursery of the Sikharapur Community Learning Centre in Pharping, Nepal, during a visit by staff from the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu.
© UNESCO / Tina Miedtank



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Asia and the Pacific

AUSTRALIA • BANGLADESH
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AUSTRALIA

Australian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Annmaree O’Keeffe

Secretary-General: Mr Andrew Thackrah

Website: www.dfat.gov.au/intorgs/unesco/

Update of activities in 2014

The Australian National Commission for UNESCO focuses on advancing Australia’s priorities and interests in UNESCO policy areas. The Commission has three core objectives – to promote and publicize UNESCO’s objectives and programmes in Australia and the broader Asia-Pacific region; to provide expert analysis and policy advice to the Australian Government on UNESCO matters; and to contribute to the development and implementation of programmes in support of UNESCO’s priorities.

The Commission administers an annual small grants programme to support community initiatives that promote UNESCO goals. The most recent grant round supported six projects. As part of this round, the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Committee was provided with funding to help preserve valuable archive holdings in Australia; the Australian National University received a grant for a project on teaching the use of

crowd-sourcing apps (for smartphones and tablets) to document endangered Australian Indigenous languages; and the Community Leadership Network of Victoria was given support to run a health-training programme for women from culturally diverse or marginalized backgrounds. The Commission is now in the process of finalizing its latest grant round.

The National Commission was pleased to meet with Mr Etienne Clement, the Director of the UNESCO Office in Apia during his visit to Australia. Mr Clement outlined the different models for UNESCO engagement with National Commissions in the Pacific, and the Commission provided him with information on the newly formed World Indigenous Network. The Commission looks forward to strengthening ties with the Apia Office.

Mr Vincent Defourney, from UNESCO’s Division for Cooperation also visited Australia, meeting with the Commission’s Chair and with the CEO Institute to discuss cooperation on education initiatives.

Finally, the Commission was delighted to receive the Director-General, Ms Irina Bokova, during her visit to Australia (November). Ms Bokova spoke at the Asia-Pacific Rainforest Summit and the Opening Ceremony of the World Parks Congress, and also visited the Great Barrier Reef, inscribed on the World Heritage List.



(From left to right) Christopher Castle, Chief of the HIV and Health Education Section at UNESCO, Alischa Ross, Chief Executive Officer at YEAH, and Annmaree O’Keeffe, Chair of the Australian National Commission for UNESCO, at the launch of the HIV and Sexual Health Peer Education Hub.

© Australian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In conjunction with the 20th International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2014) held in Melbourne (20–25 July), the organization Youth Empowerment against HIV/AIDS (YEAH) launched a HIV and Sexual Health Peer Education Hub. In 2013, the Australian National Commission for UNESCO provided financial support to YEAH to develop the Hub.

The Hub is a cutting edge online platform that encourages free, open-source sharing of youth HIV and sexual health peer education resources and tools among those working in similar programmes around the world. It aims to build a culture of sharing and maximizing collective impact and reach.

The launch of the Hub in 2014 was attended by the Chair of the National Commission and UNESCO’s Chief of HIV and Sexual Health Education, both of whom spoke about the importance of disseminating lessons learned and best practices among National Commissions arising from the sharing of youth HIV and sexual health resources.

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Nurul Islam Nahid, Minister of Education

Secretary General: Mr Md. Nazrul Islam Khan

Website: www.bncu.gov.bd

Update of activities in 2014

The Bangladesh National Commission undertook numerous initiatives in UNESCO's fields of competence in 2014.

The year started with a seminar on the project outcomes of the UNESCO Participation Programme 2012–2013, organized by the Bangladesh National Commission (11 February). Within this framework, the Commission also launched a publication produced by the project 'Documentation on Terracotta Temples of Bangladesh'.

In collaboration with the Department of Archaeology, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, the Cultural Heritage Administration of the Republic of Korea and the Korean National Commission, the Bangladesh National Commission organized a three-day international workshop entitled 'Workshop on the Preparation of Nomination Files for the UNESCO World Heritage List' (22–24 April).

The National Commission also organized a Launching Ceremony for the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013–2014*, held at the Bangladesh National Commission Conference Hall in Dhaka (1 June), in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Dhaka and Save the Children Fund.

In collaboration with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) the Bangladesh National Commission arranged the successful 'National Training Workshop on the Role of Culture in Promoting Peace and Solidarity' (17–19 June), which highlighted the importance of sustainable development for the country.

Another successful activity was the organization of a 'Regional Workshop on Flood Management and Flood-Related Disaster Mitigation' with the cooperation of ISESCO (26–28 August). The workshop focused on measuring flood risk potential within the framework of overall flood management and flood-related disaster mitigation.

To commemorate World Book and Copyright Day (23 April), the National Commission encouraged students from the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) to participate in an International Drawing Competition. ASPnet schools were also invited to arrange a voluntary programme of activities to commemorate the International Day of Peace (21 September). In addition, a delegation comprising one Bangladesh National Commission official and four ASPnet students participated in the UNESCO ASPnet International Education for Sustainable Development Events, held in Okayama, Japan (4–8 November).

As part of ASPnet activities, the ASPnet National Coordinator for Bangladesh and a National Commission programme officer participated in the conference 'Learning and Living Together: Modern Strategies of Education for People with Disabilities', held in Kazan, Russian Federation (15–17 May). As a contribution to the conference, the National Commission submitted an article to a journal co-published by the Russian National Commission.



Closing ceremony of the ICOn project.
© Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

Following the inscription of 'The Traditional Art of Jamdani Weaving' on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013, the Bangladesh National Commission and the Korean National Commission launched a unique joint project in 2014, under the Increasing Capacities of National Commissions (ICoN) programme, entitled 'Safeguarding Jamdani – the Intangible Cultural Heritage from Bangladesh and Promoting a Creative Economy'.

In recent years, the jamdani industry has suffered a serious decline resulting from gradual loss of interest among many women in wearing jamdani. As the weaving of jamdani is laborious, protracted and expensive, women below the middle class are also frequently unable to bear the cost of buying a sari (a traditional dress frequently worn by girls).

In this context, the ICoN project initiated safeguarding measures to revitalize the creative jamdani economy. The two National Commissions organized an inaugural seminar with workshops to discuss ways to keep this wonderful and lucrative tradition alive, in particular by widening the target market both at home and abroad. The seminar and workshops were a notable success and were followed by a wrap-up seminar and closing ceremony.

BHUTAN

Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Mingbo Dukpa, Minister for Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Sangay Zam

Website: www.education.gov.bt

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Bhutan National Commission held its first executive meeting following the second democratic parliamentary election (9 April). Members reported on previous activities and agreed new plans for implementation.

The National Commission provided assistance to the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) to help schools observe Global Action Week (4–10 May). The schools conducted school-based-cluster workshops on 'Education for International Understanding' with a focus on the concept of 'Learning to Live Together'. The programmes involved the whole school and the community, as well as local leaders, parents and some Members of Parliament.

The schools also observed International UN Days in the form of assembly speeches, literary activities, stage shows, field trips, the creation of gardens and fishponds, cleaning campaigns and visits to World Heritage Sites.

The National Commission provided assistance to the Ministry of Education's Blue Print task force including office space and technical support, leading to the successful launch of the task force in December. The National Commission also collaborated with the UNESCO Offices in Bangkok and New Delhi.

Lastly, seven Participation Programme projects were submitted to UNESCO during the year, three of which have already been approved.

The only constraint on the work of the Commission was a lack of staff. This limited its capacity to carry out plans and make schools visits to meet with coordinators. A few ASPnet schools were not as active as expected, and the National Commission has resolved to visit them in the New Year with a view to understanding their difficulties and helping them to improve their capacity to promote UNESCO's ideals and objectives.



Participants of The Village Map, an activity to foster the concept of 'Learning to Live Together'.

© Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Bhutan National Commission conducted a national capacity-building workshop on the theme 'Global Citizenship Education' at Phuentsholing Higher Secondary School (24–27 December). The aim of the workshop was to train new ASPnet school coordinators to promote UNESCO's aims and ideals.

Youth volunteers from schools helped to organize the workshop and prepared support materials. They also participated in workshop activities designed to promote the concept of Global Citizenship.

The workshop focused on key global issues including environmental degradation, climate change and HIV/AIDS. It also explored topics such as cultural diversity and resilience, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), prevention and resolution of conflict, and child rights within the framework of global citizenship education.

Feedback from participants showed increased awareness of these issues and the work and resolutions of UNESCO. The participants also indicated a willingness to share the knowledge they learned with colleagues and peers, and an increased desire to promote global citizenship and peace in their schools and communities.

CHINA

Chinese National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Hao Ping, Vice Minister of Education, President of the General Conference

Secretary-General: Mr Du Yue

Website: www.unesco.org.cn/index.jsp (in Chinese)

Update of activities in 2014

The year 2014 witnessed frequent high-level exchanges between China and UNESCO resulting in strengthened bilateral ties. At the beginning of the year the President of the People's Republic of China, Mr Xi Jinping, paid a visit to UNESCO Headquarters (27 March) at the invitation of the Director-General, where he delivered a speech on the importance of mutual exchange and learning.

The Vice Premier of China, Mrs Liu Yandong, paid a visit to UNESCO Headquarters in the second half of the year, where she met with the Director-General and jointly inaugurated the 'Exhibition of the Silk Road and Creative Cities' (18 September).

The Director-General, Ms Irina Bokova, visited China in June, opening the International Conference on Engineering Science and Technology, in Beijing (3 June), and the International Conference on Languages, in Suzhou (5 June), both co-organized by the Chinese National Commission. The Director-General also presented a lecture at Tsinghua University,

Beijing, on the theme of 'Leadership, soft power and values for a better future for all'.

The UNESCO-Chinese Funds-In-Trust project entered the implementation phase with agreements signed with the HNA Group and the Weidong Group in support of UNESCO's efforts in girls' and women's education and ICTs in education, respectively.

UNESCO and China also signed a new agreement under which China will send one to two junior programme officers and twenty interns to work at UNESCO each year.

Other highlights of 2014 included the inscription of three new nominations on the World Heritage List: the Silk Road (jointly submitted with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan), China's Grand Canal and South China Karst. Three cities also joined the UNESCO Creative Cities network: Suzhou, Jingdezhen and Shunde.

The regular staff exchange programme continued to gather participants from Japan, the Republic of Korea and Thailand (14–20 December). The National Commission also organized field visits to schools and the Category II Centre to enhance understanding of its activities and Chinese culture.

Finally, more than 150 participants attended the 29th session of the Plenary Meeting of the Chinese National Commission (5 December), where they discussed the Annual Report and the Action Plan for the following year.



First Lady of the People's Republic of China, Ms Peng Liyuan, was named UNESCO Special Envoy for the Advancement of Girls' and Women's Education at a ceremony held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

© Chinese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In March, the First Lady of the People's Republic of China, Mrs Peng Liyuan, was named UNESCO Special Envoy for the Advancement of Girls' and Women's Education. The appointment was made in recognition of her commitment to empowering girls and women through access to quality education, her outstanding contribution to fighting inequalities in education, and her dedication to UNESCO's ideals and aims.

Addressing the First Lady, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova said, 'To succeed, we need role models, and you are an immense role model for millions of young girls in China and beyond.' At the ceremony held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (27 March), the First Lady expressed her commitment to her new role and to the right of access to education for girls and women worldwide.

In her capacity as Special Envoy, Mrs Peng Liyuan also sent an open letter to the Director-General, expressing her concern over the recent abduction of Nigerian schoolgirls. She emphasized the importance of protecting the girls' safety and their right to education, and calling for the international community to take measures to rescue them and ensure their safe return home.

COOK ISLANDS

Cook Islands National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: pending appointment

Secretary-General: Mrs Sharyn Paio

Update of activities in 2014

The members of the Cook Islands National Commission for UNESCO are drawn from across the public and private sector, representing a good cross-section of agencies and networks. The Commission works hard to engage the wider community in UNESCO programmes and opportunities.

The National Commission places a strong emphasis on engaging with youth. In its work in the social and human sciences, the Commission expends considerable effort on creating relationships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individuals working on youth-related issues. As a result, youth representatives attended a number of regional meetings in 2014, particularly in the areas of development and the environment.

In culture, the National Commission focuses on reviving traditional art forms and preserving important cultural artefacts. With UNESCO's support the Commission has been able to take advantage of a range of capacity-building opportunities, and in 2015, it is hoped that the Cook Islands will be able to ratify the Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Cook Islands has a strong interest in education for sustainable development (ESD). In 2014 with UNESCO support the National Commission continued to train teachers to integrate concepts and ideas relating to ESD into the curriculum. The Cook Islands also emphasizes the importance of incorporating language and identity, indigenous knowledge, traditional practice and life skills into ESD programmes.

This year saw the launch of the UNESCO/LINKS programme 'The Canoe is the People', which examines traditional voyaging and navigation across a range of curricular activities. The programme is supported by the National Commission, the LINKS Centre and the UNESCO Office in Apia. The Cook Islands Science Curriculum also fully integrates the UNESCO Sandwatch Project, which engages youth in activities related to observation and conservation of coastal areas.

The National Commission's activities in the Natural Sciences concentrate on biodiversity and biosphere reserves relating to the ocean. The involvement of youth in these efforts is seen as a key aspect of this work and is implemented across a range of programmes and agencies.

In 2014, the National Commission also received approval for a number of projects under the Participation Programme. Current projects include a Youth Environmental Camp, a project to developing leadership skills among girls and women through sport, and a documentary project on traditional fishing practices. The Commission is extremely grateful for the opportunities that these projects provide for the wider community of the Cook Islands.



A success story

The 1891 'E Tuatua Akakite' proclamation records the British declaration of a Protectorate over some of the Cook Islands. In 2013, a UNESCO-funded workshop led to the nomination of the proclamation to the Memory of the World Register. In 2014, the council accepted the submission and listed E Tuatua Akakite on the MOW Register.

The document is kept at the Cook Islands Library and Museum and can only be handled by experts, due to its age and condition. The proclamation is very old, frayed and starting to crumble. A meeting between the Library and Museum curator, Jean Mason, and an Australian expert in preservation, Roslynn Russell, led to an offer by the Australian Memory of the World Committee to engage a professional restorer to work on the document. Although the proclamation will need to travel overseas, once the work is done its lifespan will be significantly lengthened.

The 1891 'E Tuatua Akakite', or The Proclamation, which records the British declaration of a Protectorate over some of the Cook Islands, was inscribed on the Memory of the World (MOW) Asia Pacific Register in 2014.

© Cook Islands National Commission for UNESCO

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

National Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for UNESCO

President: Mr Pak Myong Guk, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Han Tae Song

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the National Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for UNESCO celebrated the 40th anniversary of its membership of UNESCO.

In education, the National Commission concentrated its efforts on formulating the National EFA Review, describing in full the current situation of education in the country. The review gives a comprehensive account of government education policy and the national education system, as well as the development of the new universal twelve-year compulsory education system.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission prepared and submitted a nomination file to the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme on behalf of Mt. Chilbo and its surrounding area. The nomination consisted of a detailed plan and site inspection and was reviewed and accepted by the Council. The site was designated

a biosphere reserve and accepted for inclusion in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The National Commission organized an official ceremony for the presentation of the certificate to the MAB National Committee and an unveiling ceremony for the plaque at the Mt. Chilbo site (see below).

In culture, the National Commission, in cooperation with the National Authority for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, prepared a nomination file on 'Arirang' folksong in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for submission to the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The Commission presented the file for examination at the 9th Session of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Intergovernmental Committee meeting, held in Paris (24–28 November). Following examination, the Committee agreed to inscribe 'Arirang' folksong on the Representative List, a testament to the long history and richness of this cultural tradition.

The National Commission also invited personnel from the UNESCO Office in Beijing to visit and discuss issues relating to communication and information in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As a result of this visit, a number of projects were initiated relating to the establishment of a digital library at the Grand People's Study House in Pyongyang.



Presentation of the certificate for Mount Chilbo Biosphere Reserve and its official plaque.

© National Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the National Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea worked in close cooperation with the MAB National Committee to prepare a nomination document for the Mt. Chilbo area. The process involved a detailed investigation and comprehensive assessment of the biodiversity found at the site.

The nomination process also involved close cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Beijing, which provided invaluable support in the formulation of the document.

As a result of the process, the Mt. Chilbo area was designated a Biosphere Reserve and included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves at the 26th session of the International Coordinating Council of the MAB Programme, held in Jönköping, Sweden (10–13 June).

Mt. Chilbo is the fourth natural area in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to join the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, following Mt. Paektu in 1989, Mt. Kuwol in 2004 and Mt. Myohyang in 2009.

FIJI

Fiji National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Mahendra Reddy, Minister for Education, National Heritage, Culture and Arts

Secretary-General: Mr Amani T. Cirikisuva

Website: www.education.gov.fj

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Fiji National Commission arranged for twenty-five of its officers from the Ministry of Education, as well as teachers, students and other stakeholders, to attend conferences and trainings sessions both locally and abroad.

UNESCO also initiated a research study to assess current programmes in the fields of science and technology undertaken in schools and tertiary institutions in Fiji and the Pacific, and to make future projections. The study is being prepared by Dr Amaradasa Ranasinghe from the University of Fiji and will be published in the *UNESCO World Science Report 2015*.

In education, the National Commission also completed and submitted the Fiji Education for All Report (2000–2015) to the UNESCO Office in Bangkok.

Fiji continues to pilot its 'Quality Physical Education Policy Package' in selected schools. Its main objective is to promote revision and adaptation of physical education policies to ensure inclusion and quality provision. UNESCO is coordinating this project in partnership with the United Nations Development programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization

(WHO) and the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE).

The revival of the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) continues to gain momentum. Four students and the ASPnet Coordinator attended UNESCO ASPnet International Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Events, held in Okayama, Japan (4–8 November).

Fiji also took part in an online consultation concerning the 2001 Revised Recommendation Concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), organized in July.

In addition, alumni of the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU) training programme have formed a team to conduct training workshops on APCEIU themes. These include: a culture of peace, ESD, human rights and global citizenship among others.

In culture, the Memory of the World Committee for Asia/Pacific (MOWCAP) granted approval for the inscription of Fiji's Polynesian Immigrants Records 1876–1914 on the Asia and Pacific MOW (APMOW) Register (May).

In communication and information, the University of the South Pacific was granted approval by the Director-General of UNESCO to join the UNAOC-UNITWIN Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue (MILID) University Network.

Finally, one of the senior officers of the National Commission received a grant under the UNESCO/People's Republic of China Co-sponsored Fellowship Programme to pursue a postgraduate qualification in China during 2015.



The Fiji Steering Committee on Teacher Standards attends presentations by consultants from the South Pacific Board for Education Quality (SPBEQ).

© Fiji National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

Fiji is very grateful to the Japan Funds-in-Trust programme and the UNESCO Office in Apia for their funding and assistance in reviewing the Fiji Schools Competency Framework (FSTCF) and the Fiji School Principals Competency Framework (FSLCF). The Ministry of Education partnered with the South Pacific Board for Education Quality (SPBEQ) to provide consultancy work for this project, and consultations with stakeholders commenced in February.

This assessment of teacher standards is based on four dimensions: (i) facilitating student learning, (ii) assessing and reporting student learning outcomes, (iii) engaging in professional development, and (iv) forming partnerships in school communities. Each dimension is divided into sub-areas with corresponding indicators. At the end of the assessment, teachers will be able to upload their data via a software program called FijiSmite.

INDONESIA

Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Anies Baswedan, Minister of Education and Culture

Secretary-General: Mr Arief Rachman

Website: <http://kniu.kemedikbud.go.id>

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO developed eight projects, under the Indonesian Funds-in-Trust programme, with the cooperation of the UNESCO Office in Jakarta.

In education, the National Commission developed a project to establish guidelines for the creation and promotion of Adiwiyata Green Schools and the empowerment of low-income communities for the sustainable future of Indonesia.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission implemented three projects, the first of which was an international conference on 'Ecological and Eco-hydrological Solutions for Sustainable Management in Indonesia and the Asia-Pacific Region'.

The second project was a Strategic Environmental Assessment of threats to the tropical rainforest heritage of Sumatra, with a focus on climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

The third project, entitled 'Building Model Disaster Resilient Cities in Indonesia: Tsunami Hazard' focused on strengthening the tsunami warning chain and preparedness at local

level. Its objectives include capacity-building for tsunami risk assessment and school and community preparedness, strengthening of the tsunami early warning chain, and the development of education materials.

In the social and human sciences, the National Commission launched 'A Sustainable Future: Supporting Indonesia's Strategies to Address the Social Implications of Climate Change'. This project highlights the social dimensions of climate change and its effects on local communities.

In culture, the National Commission implemented two projects. The first was 'Old City, New Vision: First phase project for the revitalization of Kota Tua, Jakarta, through sustainable tourism and heritage conservation'. A series of workshops was organized within the framework of this project to strengthen the preparation of nomination dossiers in Indonesia and to discuss the preparation of Tentative Lists.

The second project was entitled 'Promoting Intercultural Dialogue through Capacity Building Training for Museum Development at UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Indonesia and Afghanistan'. It aimed to provide technical training to museum staff in Indonesia and Afghanistan to interpret cultural heritage sites and associated collections, and to increase cross-cultural understanding and awareness between the two countries through exhibitions.

Lastly, in the field of information and communication the National Commission organized 'The Global Media Forum: The Role of Media in realizing the Future We Want for All', held in Bali (26–29 August). More than 200 participants, including journalists, government officials, scholars and other stakeholders from thirty-five countries gathered to work towards the inclusion of media as a standalone goal in the next global development agenda.



Participants in the ESD Rice Workshop in Malang, Indonesia.

© Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Indonesian National Commission in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) organized the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Rice Workshop in Malang, Indonesia (3–6 September) within the framework of the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet). The project covers nineteen schools from six countries: India, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand.

The ESD Rice Project has identified the theme of rice as an entry point to ESD. This common theme enables easier interaction across schools, and links the various local and regional contexts and issues of ESD. The ESD Rice project tries to capitalize on the energy of ASPnet schools for promoting quality ESD practices in different countries in Asia and the Pacific.

The object of the workshop was to review and evaluate each school project, enhance international collaborative learning activities, and discuss possibilities for future development and the achievement of goals.

During the workshop the participants explored good practices, identified challenges and solutions of international collaborative learning, and explored themes including 'rice and water', 'GMO rice' and 'paddy and my town'. They also observed the dry rice farming activities of SMA Negeri 10 Malang, one of the schools participating in the project.

IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)

Iranian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Mohammad Farhadi, Minister of Higher Education

Secretary-General: Mr Mohammad Reza Saeidabadi

Website: www.irunesco.org

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO contributed to activities aimed at promoting a range of programmes including lifelong learning and literacy, Education for Sustainable Development and Education For All. It also worked to enhance knowledge and understanding of UNESCO's activities within the framework of the Organization's international and intergovernmental programmes.

The National Commission planned awareness-raising workshops and events, and organized regular meetings of the National Committees of the Iranian National Commission in the main areas of UNESCO's mandate. To this end, it engaged with non-governmental and governmental organizations, universities, legal experts and representatives of civil society.

As in previous years, the Commission participated in the search for eligible candidates for UNESCO prizes, fellowships, conferences, events and so on. It also organized celebrations to

highlight UNESCO and UN International Days, and nominated eminent personalities for inclusion on the list of anniversaries of personalities celebrated by UNESCO.

The National Commission participated in the establishment of UNESCO Chairs and Category II Centres in Iran. It also undertook initiatives to promote the general objectives of UNESCO at national, regional and sub-regional levels, with special emphasis on capacity-building and empowerment activities, especially in relation to women and marginalized groups of society (see below).

The National Commission undertook efforts to highlight the important role of cultural heritage, with a particular emphasis on the need to safeguard important documentary materials. In this context it nominated examples of documentary heritage for inscription on the international Memory of the World Register and the relevant regional register, in an attempt to preserve and share this common heritage of humanity. UNESCO legal documents, recommendations and related conventions were also promoted through translations and countrywide distribution of UNESCO publications, thereby fostering the objectives of the Organization at national level.

Finally, the National Commission organized a week long initiative to promote the mental and physical health of school pupils as the basis for securing a mentally and physically well future generation, with a special emphasis on children with special needs.



Training and empowering women heads of households in Yazd province.

© Iranian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Organization organized a pilot two-month project on 'Training and Empowering Women Heads of Households'. The initial phase took the form of a 'training of trainers' workshop for specialists from the Provincial Rehabilitation and Welfare Organization of Yazd province.

Once trained these specialists offered training to eighty women in the Maybod district of Yazd, who function as heads of households. The courses included life and self-care skills, and recognition of social issues and challenges and ways to confront them.

The efficacy of the project was widely recognized and plans are underway to replicate it in other provinces, where deprived and marginalized communities are deemed a priority.

JAPAN

Japanese National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Yuichiro Anzai

Secretary-General: Mr Yoshio Yamawaki

Website: www.mext.go.jp/english/unesco/

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Government of Japan and UNESCO co-organized the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), held in Okayama (4–8 November) and Nagoya City (10–12 November). Over 1,000 people attended the conference, including seventy-six ministerial-level officials from 150 countries and regions. The delegates unanimously adopted the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration, which calls for urgent action to mainstream ESD and ensure its inclusion in the post-2015 development agenda. To further the ESD agenda the Declaration called on all stakeholders to implement the Global Action Programme (GAP), a follow-up to the UN Decade of ESD, which aims to generate and expand ESD activities in five

priority areas: policy support, whole-institution approaches, educators, youth and local communities.

UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) schools are central hubs for ESD in Japan. There are presently 807 ASPnet schools in the country, the largest number in the world. As the host nation for the UNESCO World Conference on ESD, Japan believes that interest in ESD should not end with the conclusion of the UN Decade. It has therefore renewed its commitment to ESD and has announced plans to launch new efforts to further enhance and broaden implementation of ESD activities (see below).



Opening address by Mr Hakubun Shimomura, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan, at the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), held in Aichi-Nagoya.

© Japanese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The establishment of the UNESCO-Japan Prize on ESD was approved at the 195th session of the Executive Board of UNESCO and was officially announced at the UNESCO World Conference on ESD. The prize recognizes outstanding efforts in the field of ESD around the world from 2015 to 2019, corresponding to the proposed dates for implementation of the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD.

Funded by the Government of Japan, the US\$50,000 prize will be awarded annually to three winners, either individuals or organizations, that have made outstanding contributions in one or more of the five priority action areas. It is hoped that the prize will further motivate practitioners around the world to adopt new challenges and generate even better approaches and activities for ESD.

KAZAKHSTAN

National Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan for UNESCO and ISESCO

Chairperson: Mr Arystanbek Mukhamediuly, Minister of Culture and Sports

Secretary-General: Mrs Assel Utegenova

Website: www.unesco.natcom.kz

Update of activities in 2014

During 2014 the National Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan for UNESCO and ISESCO followed the National Action Plan, adopted during its annual meeting. Throughout the year the National Commission implemented activities in accordance with the main priorities of UNESCO's mandate.

Within the framework of the 194th session of the Executive Board and following the recommendations of the Open-ended Tripartite Working Group, the Kazakhstan Delegation hosted the 1st Interregional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO in Astana, Kazakhstan (22–24 July, see below).

In April, the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, was awarded the honorary 'Dostyk' Order of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan for her commitment to strengthening and enhancing cooperation between UNESCO and Kazakhstan in the spheres of education, the sciences and culture.

In culture, Kazakhstan participated for the first time as a member in the 38th Session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Doha (15–25 June). Twenty-six new inscriptions were added to the World Heritage List, including the joint nomination by China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan of 'Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor'.

In the natural sciences, two Kazakh natural reserves, the Katon-Karagay State National Park and the state natural reserve Akzhayik, joined the World Network of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves.

The Kazakhstan National Commission is planning to further enhance its activities and visibility at national, regional and global levels in the coming year, particularly within the framework of the upcoming 70th anniversary of the Organization.



The 1st Interregional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO was opened in Astana on 22 July 2014.

© National Commission of Kazakhstan for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the 1st Interregional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO was organized by the Republic of Kazakhstan and UNESCO in Astana (22–24 July). The meeting, held for the first time outside of UNESCO Headquarters, aimed to bring National Commissions from all regions of the world together to discuss perspectives for capacity-building, strengthening cooperation and promoting best practices.

The interregional meeting was held under the auspices of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022), which received the support of the National Commissions of all Member States. The Kazakhstan National Commission actively participates in promoting the objectives and goals of the Decade.

All the distinguished participants stressed the need for continuous improvement and refinement of the relationship between National Commissions and UNESCO Field Offices. They emphasized the need for mutual and systematic consultations, particularly with regard to strategic planning processes and improved implementation of activities under the major programmes.

Following the recommendations of a specially formed Drafting Group, the participants of the Astana meeting developed an updated set of 'Guidelines for Interface and Cooperation between UNESCO Field Offices and National Commissions for UNESCO'.

This event made a significant contribution to the strengthening of cooperation between the National Commissions, UNESCO Headquarters and Field Offices, leading to an enhanced overall sense of 'one UNESCO community'.

KYRGYZSTAN

National Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic for UNESCO

President: Mr Daniyar Narymbaev, Head of the Executive Office of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic

Secretary-General: Ms Elnura Korchueva

Website: www.unesconc.kg

Update of activities in 2014

The National Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic for UNESCO consists of representatives of respective ministries, institutions and prominent experts in the main areas of UNESCO's mandate. The Commission provides a strong network to promote and raise awareness of the key programmes of UNESCO.

In 2014, the National Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic granted patronage to five projects implemented by national institutions and non-governmental organizations related to UNESCO's programmes. It processed applications for fellowship grants co-sponsored by UNESCO and donor countries. In addition, it participated in the establishment of the First UNESCO Club in Kyrgyzstan and the development of its Action Plan.

In culture, the National Commission coordinated two mid-term projects, related to preparation of the serial nomination of the Silk Roads and capacity-building activities in the field

of intangible heritage development and management, in cooperation with the UNESCO Cluster Office in Almaty.

The Commission also developed a long-standing cooperation with the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICHCAP), completed a three-year project on inventorying and documentation of ICH, and organized a workshop on the Memory of the World programme with support from the Korean National Commission for UNESCO.

In addition, 2014 saw the inscription of the multinational nomination 'Traditional knowledge and skills in making Kyrgyz and Kazakh yurts (Turkic nomadic dwellings)' on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

In communication and information, the Commission organized a national conference on 'Community media and its role in promoting good governance for social justice', with the support of the UNESCO Cluster Office in Almaty and UN agencies.

The conference, held in Bishkek (18–19 February), was dedicated to three worldwide days: World Radio Day (13 February), World Day of Social Justice (20 February) and International Mother Language Day (21 February). It addressed a variety of issues including access to information as a means to improving governance and providing social justice at local and national levels.

Finally, the UNESCO Director-General, Ms Irina Bokova, paid her first official visit to Kyrgyzstan in 2014. During her stay she met with the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Mr Almazbek Atambaev, and other dignitaries, and paid a visit to the Issyk-Kul Biosphere Reserve.



Filming of a documentary on the famous Kyrgyz epic trilogy *Manas*, *Semetei* and *Seytek*.
© National Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, in collaboration with ICHCAP and under the auspices of UNESCO, the National Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic implemented a project on the documentation of intangible cultural heritage.

This collaborative project led to the launching of a national site for ICH, capacity building of national experts in the field of safeguarding, and the establishment of cooperation between experts in ICH from Central Asian states.

Within the framework of this project, the National Commission organized a workshop to allow experts from Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Korea to exchange experiences regarding the documentation of intangible cultural heritage. As part of this project, the Korean National Commission worked with experts to film a 30-minute documentary on the famous Kyrgyz epic trilogy *Manas*, *Semetei* and *Seytek*.

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Lao National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Phankham Viphavanh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education and Sports

Secretary-General: Mr Somboun Masouvanh

Website: www.moe.gov.la

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Lao National Commission for UNESCO implemented a series of workshops on education for sustainable development (ESD), disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change education, with technical support from the Asian Regional Initiative for Climate Change Education (Asian RICE Project).

Eighty-four principals and teachers from primary and secondary schools attended workshops designed to promote understanding of the concepts of ESD and DRR, while thirty-three Associated School Project Network (ASPnet) schools attended workshops organized to promote localized adaptation to climate change, including schools selected for their best practices as part of the Asian RICE Project.



The capacity building workshop to promote the gender equality for contributing towards the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), with the participation of ASPnet school principals and teachers, in Vang Vieng District, Vientiane Province, in the Lao PDR, on 22–26 September 2014.

© Lao National Commission for UNESCO

The National Commission also organized ASPnet orientation workshops on ESD and DRR for ninety-six participants, including representatives from the Provincial Education and Sport Services, ASPnet coordinators, and principals and teachers of ASPnet schools from Vientiane and the provinces. The object was to exchange information and experiences, with a view to better disseminating the concepts of ESD and DRR to colleagues, students and people in their schools and local communities.

During the year the Lao National Commission also undertook a joint capacity-building project with the Korean National Commission to promote gender equality in ASPnet schools in Laos PDR. Sixty-four participants from ASPnet schools took part in the project, which explored the importance of gender equality and underlined the need to ensure equal representation and the involvement of women in school activities.

The participants also learned about national government policies on gender equality and discussed decrees and regulations related to gender. This information acts as a useful resource when disseminating the concept of gender equality to other teachers and students, in particular concerning the role of gender equality in poverty reduction and improving living standards.

The series of workshops implemented by the National Commission achieved mostly positive outcomes with participants gaining more knowledge about ESD, DRR, climate change and gender equality. The principals and teachers who participated felt more confident overall about disseminating information to their students and promoting the concept of gender equality to their students and communities.

A success story

In 2014, the Regional Initiative for Climate Change Education (RICE project) recognized two ASPnet schools and the Renewable Energy and New Materials Institute (REMI), which operates under the supervision of the Lao National Commission, for their good practices.

The local ASPnet projects implemented by the Orphanage School and Pasathipatay Secondary School in Luang Prabang province were devised to ensure their school environments were clean and green. They focused on clearing garbage, eliminating carbon emissions, planting organic vegetables and mushrooms, improving the soil with bio-fertilizer made by the students, and generating income from recycling.

The Renewable Energy and New Materials Institute provides the local community with the capacity to explore renewable energy resources and appropriate technology to improve their living conditions, through the use of sustainable natural resources. The institute works to increase public awareness of renewable energy and appropriate technology to improve socio-economic and environment protection. It also supports the study, learning and teaching of renewable energy technology by students and teachers at primary and secondary levels.

MONGOLIA

Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr S.E.M. Lundeg Purevsuren, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Gundegmaa Jargalsaikhan

Website: www.unesco.mn

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO coordinated several training workshops focused on inclusive teacher education. Six hundred participants attended the three-day workshop on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), including students from nine Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) schools and universities. The National Commission also supported the translation into Mongolian and publication of *Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Advocacy Guides* and *The Climate Change and Life Styles Guidebook*.

The Mongolian National Commission in collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the UNESCO Office in Beijing also organized a three-day National Training Workshop on Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators (14–16 October) with 120 participants from science and research organizations. In addition, the Commission organized a workshop on Integrated Water Resource Management (22–26 September) in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

Within the framework of the 1954 Convention and the 1970 Convention, the Mongolian National Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and the Ministry of Justice, organized an expert meeting on legal aspects of criminal acts relating to cultural heritage. The National Commission also organized four training courses in the provinces to support capacity building of museums in the context of sustainable development, and prepared a Mongolian version of the guidebook series *Running a Museum*.

The Mongolian National Commission also organized a National Roundtable Meeting on a Strategy for the Crafts Sector in Mongolia (May) with the participation of the Vice-Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism, officers of relevant ministries, local authorities, representatives from the Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site and craft entities/non-governmental organizations.

The National Commission co-organized an international conference on 'Peace Studies in the 21st Century' with the School of International Relations and Public Administration of the Mongolian State University. A project on the dissemination of knowledge about the International Convention against Doping in Sports also received the support of UNESCO.

Finally, the National Commission organized a series of events to celebrate International Days, including World Poetry Day and World Press Freedom Day among others, and issued and disseminated information through the media about the activities of UNESCO and its cooperation with Mongolia.



Participants at a seminar on cooperation towards strengthening networking and information sharing of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in North-East Asia.

© Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO organized a three-day seminar on cooperation towards strengthening networking and information sharing of ICH in North-East Asia, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the UNESCO Office in Beijing and the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region. The seminar took place in Ulaanbaatar (29 June – 3 July) and was attended by representatives from the region (China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea), relevant governmental agencies and local communities in Mongolia.

During the seminar participants were able to become acquainted with current standards and issues related to Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) documentation, the current state of ICH safeguarding in North-East Asian countries and associated challenges. The seminar also focused on ways to build a more effective cooperation network and ensure better information sharing. In particular, the participants stressed the need to develop a regional network for the exchange and dissemination of ICH documentation and information.

At the end of the seminar, an agreement was reached to hold an annual sub-regional meeting for North-East Asian countries to facilitate exchange among experts and promote the organization of joint festivals and performances.

NAURU

Nauro National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Charmaine Scotty, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Jerielyn Teleni

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Nauru National Commission collaborated with UNESCO to implement activities in celebration of specific International Days and other UNESCO observances. Celebrations were held to promote and validate the importance of mother tongues, to enhance literacy and acknowledge the professionalism of teachers, to publicize the impact and importance of radio and media, and to highlight the diversity of multicultural groups in Nauru. These activities involved the participation of schools, students, teachers and the community at large, and featured floats, games, dancing, food and prizes.

National Commission members also contributed to reviews and reports to ensure alignment with national and international development priorities. Visiting consultants assisted Heads of Departments to ensure that accurate information was provided for all documents, in particular those concerning Education For All.

Some members of the National Commission were invited to attend development workshops including on the monitoring

and updating of statistics, climate change education and the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme, to name but a few.

Projects implemented under the Participation Programme 2012–2013 concluded in March 2014. Even though the projects were approved late due to technical difficulties, it was evident that the funds and support given to the project managers and facilitators were utilized effectively and efficiently resulting in the achievement of the stated outcomes and objectives. The National Commission would like to thank the UNESCO Intersectoral Committee for considering and approving these projects.

One of the highlights of the year was the inaugural celebration of UNESCO's 70th Anniversary in 2015. All UNESCO's main areas of work were represented and an information booth was established outside government buildings for general and public viewing. Colourful tents were erected which housed projects, Convention texts, intangible and cultural artefacts, solar and water systems, videos of UNESCO celebrations and other displays. It was an auspicious occasion that contributed significantly to promoting the visibility of UNESCO and its programmes.



Sea Pinnacles in Nauru.

© Sachiko Haraguchi

A success story

International Mother Language Day was celebrated for the first time in Nauru on 21 February 2014. The occasion proved an auspicious one with plans under development for the formalization of the Nauruan language as an official language of communication, as well as the standardization of the Nauruan script, both verbal and written.

The theme of the days was 'Local languages for global citizenship through science'. Activities addressed the diverse interactions of the biosphere, magic, people and creation through drama, poetry, songs and chants.

The day was well attended by students, teachers, principals, the general public and National Commission staff. Visitors from the Church World Mission also partook in the celebrations and refreshments. Among the distinguished guests were Mrs Louisa Waqa, the First Lady of Nauru, Ms Maria Gaiyabu, the Secretary for Education, Mrs Clarissa Jeremiah, Director for Curriculum, Assessment, Statistics and Examinations, and Mrs. Joan Moses, Member of the Nauru Language Committee.

Mrs. Teleni, Secretary-General of the National Commission, acknowledged the support received to enhance language development on Nauru. She also acknowledged the work of facilitators and the financial support of UNESCO.

NEPAL

Nepal National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Chitra Lekha Yadav, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Bishwa Prakash Pandit

Website: nncu.org.np

Update of activities in 2014

The Nepal National Commission for UNESCO was established in 1953 by the Government of Nepal in accordance with the Charter of National Commissions. Since its establishment, it has served as liaison between UNESCO and the Government of Nepal, providing policy advice relating to UNESCO's main areas of competence.

The Nepal National Commission organizes debates on contemporary national issues, undertakes research in a variety of areas, and implements projects on education for sustainable development (ESD), climate change education, and the promotion and preservation of tangible and intangible heritage. To this end, the Nepal National Commission works to mobilize civil society, academia, UNESCO Clubs and Associated School Project Network (ASPnet) schools.

Along with its regular functions, the Nepal National Commission organized a variety of activities during 2014. One key project was 'Planning Effective Delivery of Education in Future Federal Structure', implemented with the UNESCO

Office in Kathmandu. Its principal aim was to foster constructive dialogue and planning for education within the development process for the new Constitution. The project focused in particular on effective delivery of inclusive quality education services in the future federal structure. Based on reviews and consultation with stakeholders, a preliminary draft report was prepared and submitted to the Constituent Assembly. The report is expected to function as a key point of reference for the framing of education in the new Constitution.

A second key activity was the project 'Local Initiatives for Climate Change Education (Local ICCE)', a formal and non-formal education initiative implemented by the Nepal National Commission with the financial support of the Korean National Commission and the Government of Nepal. Fifty-six community schools, representing the different geographical areas of the country, implemented ESD-related micro-projects focusing on climate change education, disaster risk reduction, school greening and learning environments. Similarly, eleven community learning centres (CLC) initiated local micro-projects focusing on building green, clean, safe and sustainable households and local communities. The projects emphasized no-cost and low-cost projects, and promoted indigenous knowledge and skills, mobilizing local resources and participation, and stressing ownership by local stakeholders. Preliminary results from these projects show strong examples of local sustainability with tangible evidence of social transformation.



Plant-gifting, a key activity of 'the green and clean community' campaign launched by the Local Initiatives for Climate Change Education (Local ICCE) project schools.

© Nepal National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

Nepal National Primary School is one of several Local ICCE project schools located in the core area of Nepalgunj, a sub-metropolitan municipality of mid-western Nepal. As the school lacks adequate space to develop a school garden and plantation, it instead developed a project to initiate 'green and clean community' campaigns, mobilizing members of local communities, civil society, teachers and student clubs.

The school began by established a communication network, contacting neighbouring schools and community and asking them to join the campaign. It then organized an orientation and sensitization programme for concerned stakeholders in the respective schools and communities, and joined with them in undertaking joint micro-activities around the 'green and clean community' concept.

One such activity was the exchange and gifting of young plants. This activity was implemented in particular among students of neighbouring schools and their parents. It proved an exemplary way of sensitizing local people of the importance of maintaining their environment and succeeded in enhancing their feelings of ownership of their community.

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Ian McKinnon

Secretary-General: Ms Elizabeth Rose

Website: www.unesco.org.nz

Update of activities in 2014

This year saw the appointment of all six members of the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO. The Commission refocused its work programme and revised its priorities in line with the new UNESCO strategic objectives adopted at the 37th General Conference.

The National Commission launched a new biannual funding process to identify new partners and projects that support its revised strategic priorities. Twelve projects were approved with amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000. Each project is based in New Zealand and will support UNESCO's mandate in New Zealand and the Pacific.

In education, the New Zealand Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) has grown to twenty-one institutions, ranging from primary to tertiary, with a new focus on Global Citizenship Education (GCE). The coordinator manages the network through two clusters – one established in the North Island and one in the South. Together, members develop resources to support the integration of GCE into the New Zealand Curriculum. The New Zealand ASPnet was also represented at UNESCO ASPnet International Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Events, held in Okayama, Japan (4–8 November), by

four students and one teacher from Auckland Girls' Grammar School.

The 2014 Beeby Fellowship was launched in October in partnership with the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER). The fellowship, named after former Assistant Director-General of UNESCO Clarence Beeby, is awarded for the development of educational resources based upon an innovative educational research programme designed to enhance classroom practice and student learning.

The National Commission continues to support the New Zealand Memory of the World programme. In 2014, the New Zealand Committee added three new inscriptions to its Register, bringing the number of listed documentary heritage items of historic, aesthetic or community significance to fourteen.

The National Commission is an active member of the National Committee for the International Year of Light 2015. The Committee consists of members drawn from the scientific community and science educators who promote New Zealand's engagement in the International Year, including the endorsement of official activities, the identification of sponsorship opportunities and the maintenance of a national webpage.

In 2014, the National Commission actively promoted the third *World Social Science Report on Changing Global Environments* among New Zealand stakeholders. The Commission held a launch event and conference presentations, and organized an online conversation to discuss New Zealand's response to the report's key findings.



Participants at the Looking Beyond Disaster (LBD) UNESCO International Youth Forum held at Christchurch in 2011 after several earthquakes had hit the city.

© New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The *Looking Beyond Disaster Toolkit* is a practical guide that supports young people in the creation of community change to enhance disaster resilience. The guide is based on lessons from the 'Looking Beyond Disaster (LBD) UNESCO International Youth Forum', which took place in Christchurch, New Zealand (December 2011). The LBD Forum, organized in partnership with the UNESCO Office in Bangkok, brought together 100 young people from nineteen countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and encouraged them to create positive change in their own communities through the development and implementation of action plans.

The Toolkit, developed with the support and collaboration of the Bangkok-based UNESCO Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific, will be launched at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) in Sendai, Japan (March 2015) by the Toolkit's author and National Commission Special Advisor on Youth, Jason Pemberton. Youth engagement with the WCDRR is based in part on the LBD model, and is being led by a team of alumni from previous LBD Forums called Youth Beyond Disasters.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman, Minister of State for Education

Secretary-General: Mr Muhammad Taimur Khan

Website: www.pncugovpk.com

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO undertook activities at national and international level in line with its mandate. It also shared information on the objectives, programmes and activities of UNESCO and ISESCO with the concerned government ministries at federal and provincial level, the private sector and civil society organizations.

A key moment in the activities of the Pakistan National Commission was the visit of the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, to Pakistan (5–7 February). The National Commission was responsible for coordinating the activities of the Director-General throughout her visit, and recommended that she be awarded the state's highest civil award, the Hilal-i-Pakistan, in recognition of her generous support to the country in a variety of fields. The President of Pakistan conferred the award in a special ceremony held in Islamabad.

During her two-day stay in Pakistan the Director-General signed two agreements. The first established a UNESCO Chair on Knowledge Systems for Integrated Water Resources Management at the COMSATS Institute of Information

Technology in Islamabad. The second agreement, co-signed with the Minister of State for Education, established the Malala Funds-in-Trust. This initiative aims to support better access, improved quality and safe learning environments for girls in hard-to-reach areas of Pakistan. The National Commission played an instrumental role in mobilizing government support for the Malala Fund, which promotes the right to education for girls worldwide.

In 2014, the National Commission also worked with the government to promote the concept of education for sustainable development (ESD), with a focus on Pakistan's participation in the World Conference on ESD, held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan (10–12 November). The conference provided an ideal opportunity to demonstrate best practices and learn from global experiences.

In addition, the National Commission worked with the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) and the Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) to implement the Flood Management Project in cooperation with the UNESCO Category II Institute International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM) in Japan.

Lastly, on the recommendation of the National Commission and the approval of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, the UNESCO–Poland Co-Sponsored Fellowship 2014 was awarded to two Pakistani students to carry out advanced research in the fields of software engineering and drilling engineering.



The Director-General of UNESCO and the Minister of State for Education sign an agreement to establish the Malala Funds-in-Trust.

© Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Islamabad organized a goodwill event in an open-air school operated by a volunteer teacher. About 260 students are currently studying at the school in Islamabad which has been running for 28 years. The school operates three shifts – afternoon and night schools for young street children and home schooling for grown-up girls. The underlying aim of the school is to provide deprived children with the opportunity to have an education. Many graduates later return to work as teachers in the school.

During the event the Director of the UNESCO Office coordinated games on the theme of disaster risk reduction, while the Secretary-General of the National Commission distributed sets of learning resources including picture books among the students.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Korean National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Woo-yea Hwang, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Dong-seok Min

Website: www.eng.unesco.or.kr

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO celebrated its 60th anniversary. A ceremony, attended by the UNESCO Director-General, Ms Irina Bokova, was held to mark the occasion, during which the UN Secretary-General Mr Ban Ki-moon conveyed his congratulations by video message.

During the year the Korean National Commission aligned its activities with the vision of 'Building peace with the people of Korea, sharing dreams with the world through education'. As part of this process, the National Commission launched a partnership development scheme designed to expand UNESCO activities through fundraising.

A key activity of the National Commission is the 'Bridge Africa Project', which aims to improve education quality and contribute to the achievement of UNESCO's Education For All goals. The Korean National Commission has worked with six National Commissions in sub-Saharan Africa to establish sixteen Community Learning Centres to provide both basic and functional literacy. It has also contributed to strengthening the capacities of National Commissions and local civil society

organizations, and has endeavoured to establish mutual partnerships.

The Bridge Asia Project is also designed to mobilize resources and competencies to achieve the goals of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Two ongoing education projects, the 'Sejong Project' and the 'Asian RICE Project', were revamped in 2014 to more effectively tackle the key issues of illiteracy and climate change.

In 2014, the Korean National Commission collaborated with fellow National Commissions through the Increasing Capacities of National Commissions Project (ICoN). Within the framework of this project the Korean National Commission worked with the National Commissions of Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Laos PDR and Uzbekistan to organize joint projects to promote creative industries, cultural diversity, gender equality and women's empowerment, respectively.

In a continuing effort to support developing countries in the field of culture, the Korean National Commission also hosted the '2014 Memory of the World Training Workshop in the Asia Region' in Kyrgyzstan, and a workshop on the preparation of nomination files for the UNESCO World Heritage List in Bangladesh. Both activities provided practical consultations to fellow Member States on the implementation of these UNESCO programmes.

The Korean National Commission is currently carrying out a research project to analyse the social, cultural and economic values of UNESCO activities in the Republic of Korea over the past sixty years. The study, entitled 'Values and Impacts of UNESCO Activities in Korea', consists of both quantitative and qualitative assessments. The National Commission plans to translate its report into English in 2015 and share the outcomes with fellow National Commissions.



Participants at the website training workshop co-organized by the Korean and Jamaican National Commissions.

© Korean National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the Korean National Commission launched the Website Development Project to promote the sharing of information and experience among National Commissions. The project assisted fellow National Commissions with the creation of their websites and increased their capacity to manage their online activity.

In 2014, to celebrate the International Year of Small Island Developing States, the Korean National Commission launched the project in the Caribbean region. The participants included the National Commissions of Aruba, Curaçao, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Sint Maarten. From April onwards, the Korean National Commission dispatched step-by-step guidance materials to help the participants organize their website structure and produce online content. The National Commissions generated the material and the resulting websites went live in August.

The Korean National Commission and the Jamaica National Commission then co-organized a training workshop, held in Kingston (2–4 September), to teach National Commission website managers how to manage their website and edit multimedia content. The workshop was well attended and proved a success with all website managers now able to manage and maintain their own websites.

SINGAPORE

Singapore National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth, Second Minister for Ministry of Communications and Information

Secretary-General: Mrs Rosa Daniel

Website: www.unesco.sg

Update of activities in 2014

The Singapore National Commission for UNESCO had a fruitful year during which it continued to champion UNESCO's mandate through its various programmes.

In May, the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, paid a visit to Singapore and met with the Prime Minister, Mr Lee Hsien Loong. They exchanged views on education, heritage and ASEAN-UNESCO cooperation. During her visit the Director-General chaired a roundtable at the World Cities Summit Mayors Forum on the importance of cultural heritage, creative industries and 'learning cities' for the quality of urban life.

Singapore participated in the 38th Session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) in Doha (15–25 June). At a ceremony attended by Ms Irina Bokova, Ms Sheikha Al Mayassa, Chairperson of the 38th WHC, and Mr Lawrence Wong, Chairperson of the Singapore National Commission, a new species of orchid was named *Dendrobium UNESCO* in honour of the Organization.

In July, the Singapore National Commission participated in the 1st Interregional Meeting of National Commissions for

UNESCO, held in Astana, Kazakhstan (22–24 July), and was involved in the drafting committee to review the 'Guidelines for Interface and Cooperation between UNESCO Field Offices and National Commissions'.

At the World Cities Summit 2014 (1–4 June), Singapore organized a panel on heritage preservation challenges and sustainable solutions, featuring technical experts from the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). In September, Singapore's National Heritage Board, in collaboration with ASEAN, successfully convened over 150 regional and international experts for the 'Future of Preservation' conference, which resulted in fruitful discussions on heritage preservation issues.

On the education front, representatives from Singapore participated in conferences convened by the UNESCO Office in Bangkok. These included the Central Asia Symposium on ICT in Education, held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan (27–29 May), the Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference, held in Bangkok (6–8 August) and the 17th UNESCO-Asia Pacific Programme of Education Innovation for Development International, held in Bangkok (29–31 October). Singapore gave presentations on topics ranging from teacher education in the twenty-first century, to professional development of sports teachers in Singapore.

To promote better appreciation of heritage, peace and intercultural dialogue among young people, Singapore's Ministry of Education (MOE) incorporated UNESCO materials in school textbooks. Singapore also became a member of the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) in 2014.

Finally, in the natural sciences the National Commission nominated two outstanding candidates for the 2014 L'Oréal 'For Women in Science' National Fellowships.



Delegates from 'The Future of Preservation' visit one of Singapore's most iconic national monuments, the recently restored Victoria Theatre and Victoria Concert Hall.

© Singapore National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Singapore National Heritage Board organized a conference on 'The Future of Preservation' (10–11 September) in collaboration with ASEAN and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), and with the support of the Singapore National Commission.

Over 150 regional and international experts took the opportunity to discuss key issues of heritage preservation, including authenticity, sustainability and the use of technology. Member States from ASEAN countries were invited to share case studies related to the preservation of sites or monuments in their country, resulting in a rich exchange of best practices. The conference also provided a platform for participants to share expertise and contribute to conversations on the value of heritage preservation in the context of sustainable development.

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Akila Viraj Kariyawasam, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Dhammika Wijayasinghe

Website: http://sri_lanka.comnat.unesco.org

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO carried out numerous activities in Sri Lanka in its various fields of competence. The National Commission also provided opportunities for numerous government officials in sectors relating to education, the sciences, culture and communication, to participate in and benefit from international training seminars and fellowships.

In education, the Sri Lanka National Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, organized the national launch of the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013–2014* under the theme 'Teaching and learning: achieving quality for all'.

In this context the National Commission inaugurated the Lee Young-ae Scholarship Fund to enable students from low-income families to follow technology streams for advanced levels. The Commission also re-activated the UNESCO scholarship fund to advance the education of disabled and displaced students.

The Sri Lanka National Commission also signed an agreement with the Ministry of Education and UNESCO to establish the South Asian Centre for Teacher Development (Category II Centre) in Meepe, Sri Lanka, under the auspices of the National Institute of Education.

In the natural sciences, the Sri Lanka National Commission organized a variety of projects, including workshops for students to raise awareness of Disaster Risk Management and activities to promote Integrated Water Resources Management among farming communities. It also cooperated with the Korean National Commission to implement the Bridge Climate Change Education Project, which organizes community-based projects on climate change education and action within Asia.

In culture, the National Commission participated in the 'Training Course on the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage in the Asia Pacific Region 2014', held in Nara, Japan (2 September – 3 October); the '2014 Advance Course on Conservation and Restoration Techniques of Traditional Architecture for the Asia Pacific Region', held in Suzhou, China (24 October – 2 November); and the 'Asia Pacific conference on Underwater Cultural Heritage', held in Honolulu, Hawaii, the United States (12–16 May).

The Commission also disseminated the *World Heritage in Young Hands Education Kit* among schools.



Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on the Follow-up to the National Action Plan on EPSD.

© Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In January 2012, the President of Sri Lanka, Mahinda Rajapaksha, launched the National Action Plans on Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (EPSD) in the presence of stakeholders, with a draft framework for the implementation of EPSD in Sri Lanka.

Education for Peace and Sustainable Development is not merely limited to schools, universities and places of social education, such as community centres, but also includes local government, local communities, public and private sector enterprises, and mass media, who need to incorporate EPSD into their programmes and actions with a view to building a sustainable future.

In 2014, the Sri Lanka National Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, coordinated a national consultation meeting to follow up on implementation of the National Action Plan for EPSD, and organized a series of provincial workshops to train teachers. The main objectives of this activity were to catalyse implementation and identify key issues to be addressed, along with corresponding implementation strategies. The meeting also discussed the formation of national committees to ensure implementation and the creation of monitoring mechanisms to evaluate progress.

TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Shamsiddin Orumbekzoda, Minister of Culture

Secretary-General: Mr Sarvar Bakhti

Website: www.unesco.tj

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan met with the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, during the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York (26 September). The parties agreed to continue and deepen cooperation between Tajikistan and UNESCO in the fields of education, the sciences and culture. In this regard, both parties emphasized the necessity for closer bilateral cooperation with the aim to strengthen the capacity of the National Commission of the Republic of Tajikistan for UNESCO.

During the year the National Commission assisted specialists within the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Tajikistan with the preparation of the nomination 'Chakan', which was submitted to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The National Commission also submitted a nomination for the ancient city of Hulbuk, which forms part of the heritage of Silk Roads, to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage for 2015.

In the framework of the Participation Programme for 2014–2015, ministries and other relevant organizations presented sixteen projects to the Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO. After careful analysis eight projects were selected that meet the requirements of UNESCO and were submitted to the Participation Programme.

The Republic of Tajikistan is party to several UNESCO Conventions and is the only country in Central Asia to have ratified the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. In 2014, for the first time, the Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO submitted the quadrennial periodic report to the Secretariat of the 2005 Convention.

In the framework of the UNESCO project 'Strengthening national capacities for effective safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in the countries of Central Asia', the National Commission organized a week of training in Dushanbe, Tajikistan (12–18 May). The main objective of the training was to teach and reinforce skills necessary for the identification and inventory of ICH.

Lastly, in 2014, on the proposal of the Republic of Tajikistan, UNESCO celebrated the 600th anniversary of the great Tajik-Persian poet, scholar and thinker Mavlono Abdurrahman Jami. In accordance with this decision, Tajikistan declared 2014 the 'Year of honouring Mavlono Jami'. A commemorative ceremony was held in the great hall of the Tajik Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre of Sadridin Ayni with the participation of President Emomali Rahmon and representatives of the relevant ministries and agencies, scientists, artists and intellectuals, on the occasion of this 600th anniversary.



Staff of the Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO.
© Parviz Najmidinov

A success story

In 2011, the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia and the Pacific Region (IICHAP) signed an agreement with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Tajikistan for the project 'Facilitating ICH Inventory-Making and Utilizing Online Tools for ICH Safeguarding in the Central Asian Region' in Tajikistan. The project implementation period lasted from 2011 to 2014.

In November 2014, the project was successfully completed and approved by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. The inventory list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Tajikistan is now available on the websites of the Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Tajikistan.

THAILAND

Thai National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Narong Pipatanasai, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Kamon Siriban

Website: www.bic.moe.go.th

Update of activities in 2014

Since its establishment in 1949, the Thai National Commission has followed and supported UNESCO's mission to build peace in the minds of men and women, and has worked with the Organization to implement programmes in the fields of education, the natural sciences, the social and human sciences, culture, and communication and information to meet both national and international development targets.

In 2014, the Thai National Commission for UNESCO prepared Thailand's EFA 2015 Review to evaluate Thailand's progress towards achieving the six goals of Education for All. The report reflects the ongoing and active role of the Thai Ministry of Education in raising the level of learner achievement to reach international standards, particularly in the sciences, mathematics, technology, foreign languages and critical analysis. Teacher and teaching reforms have been undertaken to ensure that education personnel and curricula meet and match more closely the country's needs. At the same time, the country has increased its efforts to instil the '12 core values of the Thai people' in Thai learners – values that help the Thai people to live together with others in peace and harmony.

During the year the Thai National Commission for UNESCO worked with international partners to shape the future global agenda through the promotion of peaceful and sustainable development. One of the highlights was the organization of the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Education, held in Bangkok (6–8 August). The outcome was the Bangkok Statement, which will shape and guide the region's learning sector over the next fifteen years, and constitute one of the main regional contributions to the World Education Forum in the Republic of Korea in 2015.

In 2014, the Thai National Commission worked closely with the UNESCO Office in Bangkok to co-host several regional conferences in Thailand. These included the 17th UNESCO-Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) International Conference, held in Bangkok (29–31 October). This brought together policy-makers, educators, academics, researchers and, most importantly, teachers to discuss approaches for the development of educational personnel. The Thai National Commission also co-hosted an 'Expert Meeting on Device and Contents Development: Mobile Literacy for Out-of-School Children', held in Bangkok (29 August), which highlighted Thailand's commitment to the promotion of equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all.

Another important event in 2014 was Thailand's celebration of World Teachers' Day. The event provided an excellent forum for delegates from Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries to meet and exchange views, in particular regarding possible ways to develop the full potential of teachers and assist them in improving teaching methods.



Empowering ESD through ASPnet.
© Thai National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, The Thai National Commission collaborated with the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) to develop and share sound educational practices and methods with schools, teachers and students, with a view to fostering and delivering activities promoting Educational for Sustainable Development (ESD). The National Commission initiated a project entitled 'Empowering ESD through the ASP Network', which aimed to strengthen collaborative learning in ASPnet schools using rice as a theme to illustrate the ESD concept.

As part of this project the Thai National Commission organized school camps at Jirasart Witthaya School in Ayutthaya and Princess Chulabhorn's College in Trang. These camps revolved around activities for students that promote ESD. They also emphasized Thai ways of life, drawing on local wisdom about sustainable development and the philosophy of the 'Sufficiency Economy'.

TIMOR-LESTE

Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Bendito dos Santos Freitas, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Angelina Sarmento

Website: www.unesco.org.tl

Update of activities in 2014

The Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO was created in 2009. As a newly established institution, the National Commission is working to implement programmes in line with UNESCO's overall mandate and objectives.

The Timor-Leste National Commission carried out a number of activities in 2014 in celebration of UN International Days, including International Mother Language Day, World Science Day for Peace and Development, and UNESCO's 70th anniversary.

In early 2014, the National Commission organized its four-year Strategic Planning workshop (2014–2017), which was attended by the former Chairperson, current board members and the staff of the Commission. The Strategic Planning Document was presented at a coordination meeting organized by the UNESCO Regional Office in Jakarta in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, and attended by education directors, relevant government directors and other partner organizations.

Education is a fundamental issue for Timor-Leste as a post-conflict country. In 2011, a programme called 'Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE)' was introduced and implemented in three districts of the country. As the MTB-MLE programme provokes debate at the national level, an annual promotion event was planned as an effective mechanism for advocacy at the district level, with the aim of raising awareness among key players of the importance of improving quality education through MTB-MLE.

The National Commission conducted the annual promotion event in a district on the border with Indonesia (16 May). The event was designed to inform the community of the importance of MTB-MLE, primarily by encouraging students and teachers to use their own languages in the teaching and learning process, and to enhance the visibility of UNESCO and the National Commission at country level. The activity brought together more than 200 participants including education partners, religious organizations, local authorities, students and teachers, and other civil society organizations. In parallel with this activity the science team of the National Commission (SESIM) conducted a hands-on science exhibition, focusing on physics and mathematics, that introduced students to new and interactive approaches to learning.

The National Commission attended several international UNESCO events during the year including the 5th International Seminar on Science Education in School, organized in Paris by the foundation 'La Main a La Pate' on the theme of 'Professional development of teachers teaching science' (2–7 June). It also participated in the Mother-Tongue Pre-school Education Conference, held in Malaysia (27–29 July), and the 1st Interregional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO, held in Astana, Kazakhstan (22–24 July).



A success story

The new National Commission Decree Law was drafted in cooperation with the Legal Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Law was approved in June 2014 in conjunction with a new education curriculum endorsed by the Ministry of Education. The process culminated with a presentation at the Council of Ministers. As a result, the National Commission now holds the official status of a semi-governmental organization.

In 2014, the Ministry of Education asked the science team of the National Commission to review the junior high-school curriculum for science and mathematics, with a view to implementing a revised curriculum throughout the territory of Timor-Leste. The support of the National Commission was instrumental in achieving the central objective of the Ministry, which is to develop a national school curriculum that is both indigenous in character and in line with international standards.

The Vice Minister of Education, the National Director for Basic Education and a representative of the UNESCO Office in Jakarta presenting science kits for schools.

© Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO

UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistani National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Adkham Ikramov, Deputy Prime Minister

Secretary-General: Mr Alisher Ikramov

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Uzbekistani National Commission for UNESCO organized national and regional conferences, meetings and symposia in the Organization's main areas of competence.

In communication and information, the National Commission organized the 'Central Asia Symposium on ICT in Education' (27–29 May, Tashkent). The symposium was coordinated in partnership with line ministries of Uzbekistan and in cooperation with the UNESCO Offices in Bangkok and Tashkent, the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE) in Moscow, and the Korea Education and Research Information Service (KERIS). The symposium, dedicated to the theme of 'Embracing Technologies, Empowering Teachers', provided a platform for education policy-makers, officials, practitioners and development partners to share issues and challenges that Central Asian countries face in integrating ICTs into education systems, with particular emphasis on creating an empowering environment for teachers to use ICTs.

In culture, the National Commission organized 'the 5th Central Asia Sub-Regional Network Meeting on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage' (11–13 September, Tashkent). The meeting was held in cooperation with the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia and the Pacific Region (ICHCAP), the

UNESCO Offices in Almaty and Tashkent, the International Institute for Central Asian Studies (IICAS), the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Uzbekistan and the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan. It gathered together officials, scholars and ICH bearers from States Parties to the 2003 Convention, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. An International Symposium on 'Safeguarding the Creative Value of ICH in Central Asia: Oral Traditions and Epics' was organized within the framework of the meeting. Discussion centred on the evaluation of cooperation projects, and the participants adopted recommendations for future collaboration with ICHCAP.

In education, the National Commission organized the national conference 'Adult Education in Uzbekistan: Reforms and Perspectives', held in Tashkent (24–25 September). The conference was organized as a follow-up to CONFINTEA VI in close cooperation with DVV International (German Adult Education Association), the UNESCO Office in Tashkent, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (Hamburg), the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education of Uzbekistan, non-governmental organizations in the field of education, the TVET Institute for Teacher Training and the Navoi National Library of Uzbekistan. It brought together representatives of governmental, non-governmental and private organizations, as well as experts from international and regional organizations. The conference also provided a platform for comprehensive discussion in three fields of adult education – social partnership, quality education, and access and equity – and elaborated and adopted an outcome document with recommendations.



Business start-up training sessions for women.

© National Commission of Uzbekistan for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Uzbekistani National Commission implemented the project 'Achieving Women Empowerment through Training Programmes on Entrepreneurship' (June–November) with the support of the Korean National Commission within the framework of the UNESCO Bridge Capacity-Building Project.

The project aimed to empower economically vulnerable women in remote rural areas of Tashkent and the Syrdarya region of Uzbekistan. To this end, one of the largest non-governmental organizations of the country – the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan – was selected as a national partner and beneficiary.

The project developed adult education programmes tailored to the needs of the vulnerable population. Three business start-up training sessions were organized for ninety unemployed women and girls. The target population had an opportunity to meet with representatives of the tax, business registration authorities and Microcreditbank. The project also developed training manuals on the basis of the 2006 UNESCO Training Module on 'Starting my own small business'.

Overall, the project had a positive effect on strengthening the participation of women in the socio-economic development of society and promoting their potential in business.

VIET NAM

Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Le Hoai Trung, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Pham Sanh Chau

Update of activities in 2014

Representatives of the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO attended the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Doha (15–25 June). As a member of the World Heritage Committee and alongside other States Parties of the Convention, the National Commission actively examined, discussed and approved thirty-six World Heritage dossiers, and assessed the state of conservation of more than 100 of 981 existing World Natural and Cultural Heritage properties, as well as World Heritage sites in danger. It also formally requested States Parties to promote the protection and preservation of the Outstanding Universal Values of these sites. During the meeting Viet Nam made a commitment to contribute US\$60,000 to the UNESCO World Heritage Fund to support activities related to the protection of World Heritage sites.

The Viet Nam National Commission collaborated with the Academy of Science and Technology of Viet Nam and the Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission (IOC–UNESCO) to

organize the 9th IOC/WESTPAC seminar, entitled ‘A healthy ocean for prosperity in the Western Pacific: scientific challenges and solutions’. The seminar gathered over 520 scientists, managers and activists in the field of marine research from twenty-one countries, and fifty young scientists received funding to attend the event. The seminar evaluated marine scientific achievements from the last twenty-five years, and also served as a platform to exchange knowledge and facilitate cooperation for more efficient management and better policy development processes.

During the year the Viet Nam National Commission for the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme evaluated and consolidated its structure, with a view to strengthening its management system and improving coordination between different ministries, local governments and institutions. The National Commission also continued to update the operational regulations issued by the Viet Nam National Commission for the Memory of the World (MOW) programme, and strengthen the mechanism for approval of MOW nominations.

Finally, the National Commission, in cooperation with local governments, submitted Nomination Files to UNESCO for inscription on the World Heritage List (‘Tràng An Scenic Landscape Complex’); the Memory of the World (‘Imperial records of Nguyen Dynasty 1802–1945’); and the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (‘Ví and Giặm folk songs of Nghệ Tĩnh’).



A success story

In 2014, the Đồng Văn Karst Plateau Geopark was accepted as a member of the Global Geopark Network. This is a great honour for Viet Nam and for Hà Giang province where the geopark is located. The province is responsible for actively conserving and promoting the precious values and heritage of this Geopark.

The recognition of Đồng Văn Stone Plateau as a Global Geopark has resulted in a rise in visitor numbers to Hà Giang, with consequent benefits for the local population. Accordingly, the entire local population from village and schools has been educated about the values of the site and the need to ensure its protection.

Exchange of ideas between local site managers and international experts on site conservation at Đồng Văn

© Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO



Fourth international festival of traditional cultures and crafts Ethnoraduga ('Ethnorainbow') held in Kaluga, Russian Federation. Supported by the UNESCO Office in Moscow, the Festival contributed to the preservation, revival and popularization of forgotten folk arts and crafts.

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ALBANIA

Albanian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Lindita Nikolla, Minister of Education and Sports

Secretary-General: Mr Virgjil Muçi

Website: www.unesco.al

Update of activities in 2014

The Albanian National Commission for UNESCO is an intergovernmental body that operates within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2014, the National Commission placed a high priority on regional cooperation, in particular with the National Commission for UNESCO of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Hellenic National Commission. The Commission took an active part in the Participation Programme for 2014–2015, and also presented two projects within the framework of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity.

In March, the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, made her first official visit to Albania (28–30 March) since becoming head of the Organization in 2009. During her stay she held meetings with the highest authorities of the Albanian State (see below).

As part of World Book Day (23 April), the Academy of Sciences in cooperation with the Albanian National Commission organized a meeting under the theme 'Books are not immune

from a changing world'. Academics, writers, translators and publishers, among others, participated in activities hosted by the National Library of Albania and the Faculty of Language and Literature of the University of Tirana.

After a lengthy process, the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme approved the nomination of the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Ohrid-Prespa in the city of Korca, Albania. The new reserve was inaugurated at the 26th meeting of the ICC in Joenköping, Sweden (11 June). The integrated territory of the reserve comprises 446,244.52 hectares of Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia belonging to the watersheds of the Ohrid and Prespa sub-basins. It also accommodates 454,000 inhabitants living in twenty-three villages and municipalities on the Albanian side and six municipalities on the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia side. The entire area is rich in biodiversity, hosting rare and endangered species. The Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Ohrid Prespa will be governed by the Ohrid Watershed Management Committee (OWMC), an institution established by a bilateral agreement of the two littoral countries, signed in 2004 and ratified by both Parliaments.

The Historical Archive of the Foreign Service of Albania, which preserves diplomatic documents, was accepted as a member of the International Council of Archives (ICA) in 2014. This organization was established under the auspices of UNESCO in Paris in 1948. The ICA continues to work in close collaboration with UNESCO in areas related to its work.



City of Berat. Its historic centre is inscribed on the World Heritage List.
© Albanian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

During her official visit to Albania, the Director-General, Ms Irina Bokova, was invited to tour the city of Berat, whose historical centre forms part of the cultural heritage of humanity (29 March). While there she participated in the 3rd meeting of 'Balkan Bridges Speak', an organization that provides a forum for participants from various countries of the Balkan region to emphasize the idea of culture as a dynamic tool of collaboration and innovation for economic development, social cohesion and peace. The meetings use bridges as a powerful symbol of communication and mutual understanding; the symbol of this meeting was the Bridge of Gorica.

The meeting was organized in collaboration with the Foundation Balkanika, the Municipality of Berat and other regional partners. The 'Balkan Bridges Speak' meetings feature roundtables on the organization's priority areas of work, artistic and cultural performances, and public readings, and provide an opportunity for artistic personalities, national and local authorities, cultural professionals, private partners and universities of the sub-region to exchange experiences on cultural policies, strategies and practices that foster intercultural dialogue and stimulate the economic and social viability of the cultural activities sector.

ANDORRA

Andorran National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Elisenda Vives

Secretary-General: Mr Jean-Michel Armengol

Website: www.unesco.ad

Update of activities in 2014

During 2014, the Andorran National Commission for UNESCO continued to work on the development of annual projects and organize new activities in collaboration with national and international institutions such as the Andorran Government, other National Commissions, and permanent delegations and UNESCO Headquarters.

In education, the Commission contributed to the organization of several activities for schools across the country to promote art, culture, science and Francophonie. In celebration of International Francophonie Day (20 March), the Commission organized a competition to create collages based on the poems of Jacques Prévert. The Commission also organized a travelling exhibition for several schools dedicated to the International Year of Crystallography.

In culture, and in accordance with the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022), the National Commission organized several events to promote diversity and peace through intercultural dialogue and artistic expression. Notable among these was a collaboration to produce a video

on the cultural and folkloric diversity of Andorra (see <http://vimeo.com/97439794>). The most important event of the year, however, was Art Camp, which brought together artists from all five continents of the world for the fourth year running (see below).

In the social and human sciences, the National Commission encouraged citizen participation – particularly among youth – with projects such as the Connecting Cultures programme (www.universityofthedesert.com), the Youth Forum 2014, a day of community activities (www.funatpal.com) and sustainable cooking sessions using solar ovens.

To help promote gender equality, the Commission supported a project on the prevention of discrimination against women, entitled 'Estima'm bé'. The project targets mainly young people and includes outreach activities such as conferences and workshops.

The National Commission promoted development in the field of natural sciences through a number of fruitful meetings. It also organized activities in celebration of World Tree Day. Artists from around the world worked with Andorran children to paint trees and young people participated in a reforestation project organized by the Commission in collaboration with the Municipal Department of the Environment.

Finally, as part of International Mountain Day (11 December), the National Commission had the honour of organizing a conference featuring the world-famous Swiss mountaineer Ueli Steck.



Art Camp 2014 was the most important event organized by the Andorran National Commission to promote diversity and peace through intercultural dialogue and artistic expression.

© Dorte Passer

A success story

Art Camp 2014 was one of the year's most important events for the Andorran National Commission for UNESCO. The project, which aims to promote peace and intercultural dialogue through artistic expression, was as usual highly successful. Since 2008, when the first Art Camp was launched in Andorra, this international meeting of artists from the world's five continents has received recognition both at home and abroad, particularly in the field of arts. In 2014, some thirty artists participated in the event with each artist painting three pictures. From the ninety works produced, thirty will be exhibited in national and international travelling exhibitions throughout 2015. Ms Hedva Ser, UNESCO Artist for Peace, has acted as the patron of the project since 2012.

Art Camp 2014 (14–24 July) had the honour of receiving Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, who visited the workshops where the artists were working on their projects. The artists and the Director-General had the opportunity to exchange their views on art, culture and its contribution to the promotion of peace.

ARMENIA

Armenia National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Edward Nalbandyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Vahram Kazhoyam

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Armenian National Commission for UNESCO continued its active participation in UNESCO programmes and initiatives, and worked to build close and effective collaboration with the UNESCO Secretariat in collaboration with the Permanent Delegation of Armenia to UNESCO.

During the year the Commission fostered ties between UNESCO and Armenian state agencies, institutions, organizations, civil society and individuals working within UNESCO's fields of competence. The Commission also contributed to UNESCO's standard-setting work by mobilizing the assistance and support of expert communities in Armenia.

In 2014, a decision was taken to upgrade the functions of the Commission to establish closer and more effective interaction among stakeholders and more productive action in UNESCO's fields of competence. To this end the National Commission convened a meeting of stakeholder ministries (29 July) to discuss amendments to the original Charter. The new Draft Charter was agreed and submitted to the Prime Minister's Office for approval.

The Commission attaches great importance to its role in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of UNESCO programmes, especially the Participation Programme. In 2014, the Commission examined twenty-one project proposals received from different Armenian agencies and non-

governmental organizations (NGOs) out of which seven were selected and submitted to the Organization.

In 2014, Armenia was elected as Vice President of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict. Armenia actively contributed to the proceedings of the Committee, and to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

During the year the National Commission actively promoted UNESCO fellowship programmes aimed at enhancing human resources and capacity building. Candidatures were presented for programmes including L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science, UNESCO-Keizo Obuchi and UNESCO-ISED. A representative of Armenia was awarded a fellowship by the UNESCO-Israel (Mashav) 2014 programme and given an opportunity to participate in the 'Addressing the Urbanization Challenge International Training Course'.

The Commission also encouraged the participation of national institutions and individuals in the UNESCO Prizes Programme to promote international recognition for outstanding local efforts in UNESCO's fields of competence. Nominations were submitted for the UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence 2014 and the UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences.

In 2014, the Armenian non-governmental organization 'Bridge of Hope', which specializes in supporting inclusive education for children with disabilities, was awarded the UNESCO-Emir Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize.

The National Commission also contributed to efforts directed at the safeguarding, preservation and international recognition of Armenian cultural heritage. In 2014, the number of Armenian nominations to the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity increased to four with the inscription of 'Lavash – the preparation, meaning and appearance of the traditional bread as an expression of culture in Armenia'.



Mr Edward Nalbandyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Armenian National Commission for UNESCO, discussing with colleagues the adoption of the draft of the revised Charter of the Armenian National Commission.

© Mr Artur Adamyan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia

A success story

During the year the Commission continued to implement the 'Learning Countries and Cultures' project designed for the Armenian Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet). The project promotes intercultural dialogue, respect for cultural diversity and tolerance. At this year's meetings school students met with the Ambassadors of Lebanon and Switzerland with the aim of enriching their knowledge of cultural traditions in these countries.

During the year the National Commission and its ASPnet National Coordinator also supervised the implementation of 'Learning for the Future', a pilot project of the UNESCO International Indigenous ICT Task Force, and provided necessary guidance and technical assistance. Upon completion of the project a meeting of local stakeholders was organized at the UNESCO Chair of Education for Sustainable Development to examine the results achieved and to find ways of sharing best practices.

AUSTRIA

Austrian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Eva Nowotny

Secretary-General: Mrs Gabriele Eschig

Website: www.unesco.at

Update of activities in 2014

The Austrian Commission for UNESCO plays an advisory role to Austrian federal and state governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with a view to implementing UNESCO's objectives. It acts as a link between UNESCO and national partner institutions and informs the public of UNESCO's goals and programmes.

In culture, the National Commission is responsible for implementation of the 2003 Convention in Austria, through its responsibility for the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage. In 2014, eleven traditions applied successfully for inscription on the National Inventory, which consists of a total of seventy-nine elements (see below).

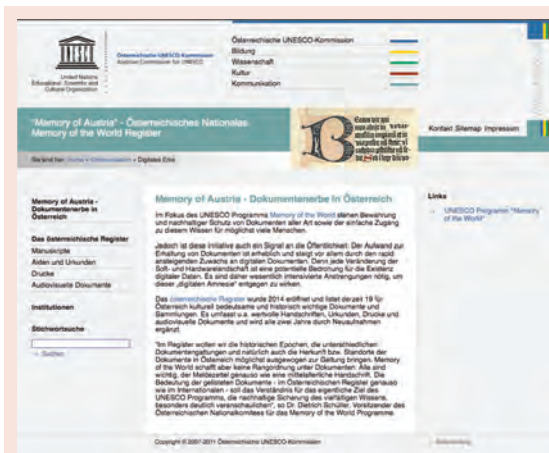
Likewise, the Commission has been appointed as a point of contact for the 2005 Convention, tasked with coordinating information sharing and cooperation between all relevant government and non-government stakeholders at sub-national and national level. Furthermore, the Commission acts as a forum for discussion on pertinent issues relating to implementation of the Convention, such as facilitating artist mobility and the importance of culture in trade agreements. In 2014, it organized inter-ministerial exchange sessions on issues relating to the field of culture, prepared comments

on policy developments, and hosted expert workshops with international guest speakers.

In the field of World Heritage the Commission assumes a supportive role, conducting the annual meeting of the nine Austrian World Heritage Sites and preparing the follow-up workshop on the UNESCO Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscapes.

In education, the National Commission coordinates the Austrian Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), which held an international teacher's seminar for Austrian, Hungarian and Slovakian ASPnet schools. Besides the publication of the annual network magazine, the Commission issued a brochure on Global Citizenship Education (GCE) to raise awareness among educators. In addition, the Commission successfully implemented the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) at the national level and held a closing event for stakeholders. Between 2007 and 2014 the Commission honoured a total of 201 projects.

In the natural sciences, the Austrian, German and Slovenian Commissions organized an international workshop on Sustainability Science in Central and Eastern Europe. More than forty representatives from ministries, academies of science, universities and National Commissions attended the workshop to discuss the potential opportunities raised by Sustainability Science for the region. Also in the sciences, 2014 saw the establishment of the UNESCO Chair on Integrated River Research and Management. Lastly, in collaboration with L'Oréal Austria and the Austrian Academy of Science, the Commission once again awarded four fellowships 'For Women in Science' to support excellent young female scientists.



Database of the Austrian National Memory of the World Register.
© Austrian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

As a complement to the international Memory of the World Register and in conformity with the General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage, Austria has established a National Memory of the World Register comprising documents of great national significance. The official launch of the Austrian National Memory of the World Register took place at the Austrian State Archive with a ceremonial presentation of certificates accompanied by a press conference (21 October). Nineteen documents and collections of historical and cultural importance for Austria were inscribed. Both the general feedback and media response were very positive.

The National Memory of the World Committee within the Austrian Commission for UNESCO is entrusted with the selection of documents and collections. Following international procedure and alternating with international nominations, the Austrian National Memory of the World Register will be complemented with further nominees every two years.

The database of the Austrian National Memory of the World Register is published on the website of the National Commission: <http://memory.unesco.at/>

AZERBAIJAN

National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO

President: Mr Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Ms Gunay Afandiyeva

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan continued to promote UNESCO's ideas and objectives throughout the country. Ongoing cooperation was further strengthened by an Agreement signed by the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan to establish a Junior Professional Officer Programme (24 January).

In addition, the Director-General and the Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan at a celebration at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in honour of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the famous Azerbaijani writer and playwright Ilyas Afandiyev (19 May).

During the year Azerbaijan hosted a series of events supported by UNESCO, including the Baku World Forum of Young Scientists (26–31 May), the Baku International Humanitarian Forum (2–3 October), and the 1st Global Forum on Youth Policies (28–30 October). These events enabled representatives of different countries and international organizations to meet and discuss key priorities of the Organization.

The National Commission also organized events in cooperation with state bodies, including the 12th conference on 'The Role of National Human Rights Institutions in ensuring the rights of women' (18–20 June), the 4th International Conference on Culture of Sustainable Development (8–9 July), and the World Book and Copyright Day International Symposium (23 April).

The efforts of the National Commission in the field of culture met with success with the inscription of 'Traditional art and symbolism of Kelaghayi, making and wearing women's silk headscarves' on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO during the 9th Session of the Intangible Heritage Committee (24–28 November).

In the natural sciences, the National Commission played a major role in coordinating the establishment of a UNESCO Chair in Bioethics at Baku State University.

Lastly, the National Commission co-organized several events highlighting the importance of tolerance in policy-making in Azerbaijan. Two international conferences, 'The history and cultural heritage of the ethnic groups of the Caucasian Albania in the context of the human rights' (10 June 2014) and 'Strengthening religious tolerance: Azerbaijan's model, challenges in the OSCE area and beyond' (17–18 November), brought participants together to discuss issues of multiculturalism and religious tolerance.



Fifth meeting of the National Commissions and Committees for UNESCO of TURKSOY Member States held in Baku.

© National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan together with the International Organisation of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY) hosted the 5th Meeting of National Commissions and Committees for UNESCO of TURKSOY Member States, held in Baku (18–19 December). The event, devoted to the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the National Commission, gathered together sixty-five representatives of different countries to discuss the implementation of ongoing projects.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan presented a history of the work of the National Commission and highlighted the activities of the First Lady of the Republic of Azerbaijan, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Ms Mehrban Aliyeva. The Secretary-General of TURKSOY then presented future plans aimed at the protection of Turkic-root languages. The Secretary-General of the National Commission emphasized the importance of joint activities among Turkic-speaking countries for the promotion of cultural heritage.

The participants took part in roundtable discussions on tangible and intangible cultural heritage, education and the Memory of the World programme, and delivered their respective proposals during the closing ceremony of the meeting.

BELGIUM

Flemish National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Marc Vervenne

Secretary-General: Mr Tijs D'Hoest

Website: www.unesco.be

Update of activities in 2014

The Flemish Commission for UNESCO (Belgium) undertook a number of activities in 2014, starting in January with a bilateral plenary Commission meeting organized with the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO. This joint cooperation resulted in the creation of the exhibition 'Culture under attack' (www.cultureunderattack.org), which was shown in Antwerp, Den Haag and Leiden in the Netherlands, and Bruges in Belgium.

In cooperation with the UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels and the European Commission, the Flemish UNESCO Commission initiated an expert seminar in April on 'Mass Digitization and Open Access to Cultural Heritage'.

In May, the National Commission and the Government of Mozambique supported the publication of a work entitled *Malangatana*, dedicated to the Mozambican painter and poet Malangatana Valente Ngwenya (1936–2011) who worked to sensitize the people of his country to the value of culture.

In June, the National Commission cooperated with the Government of Flanders to organize a remembrance meeting in Bruges to commemorate 'The Great War'. This cooperative effort also produced the publication *Underwater Cultural Heritage of the Great War*. During the same month, the Commission organized a screening of the film *La face cachée des 1000 merveilles du monde*, by Stéphane Bentura, which draws attention to the increasing politicization of the World Heritage Convention.

In October, the National Commission organized, in cooperation with the Flanders Department of Foreign Affairs, an in-depth meeting with the Embassy of Colombia in Belgium (see below).

During the year, the National Commission also played a significant role in the creation of the UNESCO Chair on Critical Heritage Studies and Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Commission also actively involved the Youth Representative in its brainstorm sessions and activities.

Lastly, the National Commission began the editing of its new Work and Policy Plan (2014–2016), wrote a Memorandum to the Government of Flanders, and commenced a project to map all Belgian actors involved in UNESCO's work. The latter provides the Commission with an opportunity to better streamline its own efforts and those of (potential) Belgian partners.



Exchange of good practices for World Heritage nomination procedures between Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Colombia, in Brussels.

© Flemish (Belgium) National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

A number of Flemish sites are presently undergoing feasibility studies to apply for nomination to the UNESCO World Heritage List. Following the recent inscription of the Colombian Coffee Cultural Landscape on the List, international experts from Belgium, France and The Netherlands became interested to learn from the Colombian experiences and to share knowledge and good practices. To this end, the Flemish Commission for UNESCO (Belgium) and the Flanders Department of Foreign Affairs organized an in-depth meeting with the Embassy of Colombia in Belgium (30 September – 2 October 2014).

After a field visit with Colombian experts to the landscape site 'de Hoge Kempen' in Flanders (30 September), an international colloquium was organized to study the Colombian nomination file and sustainable coffee growing. The second day also featured the formal inauguration of the exhibition 'Colombian Coffee Cultural Landscape' in the presence of several Latin American Ambassadors and prominent figures from the academic, private and public sectors. On the last day, Flanders presented its efforts in the field of water within the framework of the Flanders UNESCO Scientific Trust Fund (FUST), where it focused on broadening the scope of some of its projects to include Colombia.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Sredoje Nović, Minister of Civil Affairs

Secretary-General: Ms Biljana Čamur

Update of activities in 2014

The Bosnia and Herzegovina National Commission for UNESCO undertook activities in accordance with its Statute and the Charter of National Commissions to promote the programmes and objectives of UNESCO. In 2014, the Commission focused on the promotion of regional cooperation through education, science and culture, to ensure better universal respect for justice, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Commission endeavoured to contribute effectively to the implementation of UNESCO's objectives, programmes and activities through the dissemination of information among ministries, agencies, institutions, civil society organizations and individuals able to contribute to the strengthening of awareness on the importance of education, science, culture and information in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The National Commission regularly publishes and disseminates such information through its web portal, in addition to calls for entry and competitions opened by UNESCO.

In culture, the year saw the start of reconstruction works on the Mehmed Pasa Sokolovic Bridge in Visegrad, which is inscribed on the World Heritage List. The Government of Turkey is funding the cost of the project to the amount of €5 million. The National Commission also supported the preparation of the nomination of 'Dinaric Karst' to the World Heritage List, and contributed to preparations for a joint exhibition of countries of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), held in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Centre.

In addition, the National Commission participated in a meeting of the South East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in Limassol, Cyprus, which contributed directly to the nomination of 'Konjic Woodcarving' by Bosnia and Herzegovina for inscription on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Members of the Commission participated in several regional meetings, notably a Conference in Belgrade (March) that aimed to strengthen the capacities of National Commissions for UNESCO from Southeastern Europe.

The National Commission also strengthened cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Sarajevo, reflected through the rapid response to a request for emergency assistance funds to address the consequences of catastrophic floods in May. This response from UNESCO greatly assisted the reconstruction of schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were damaged during the floods.



'Konjic Woodcarving' nominated for inscription on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

© Bosnia and Herzegovina National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

During the meeting of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe, held in Ohrid (June), the President of the National Commission officially submitted the Nomination File and Management Plan for the inscription of 'Stecaks' on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The Nomination File represents five years of hard work by a team of experts from the four countries involved – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro. The process began in Sarajevo, in November 2009, with the signing of a Letter of Intention by the ministers of culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro.

The nomination comprises a total of thirty necropolises with Stecak tombstones from the region, including twenty-two from Bosnia and Herzegovina, three from Serbia, three from Montenegro and two necropolises from Croatia. Out of the 70,000 registered tombstones, 60,000 are located in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

BULGARIA

Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Katya Todorova, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Ms Maria Donska

Website: www.unesco.bg.org

Update of activities in 2014

The Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO acts as an advisory body to the government and the private sector in promoting the implementation of UNESCO programmes and initiatives in Bulgaria. It works in close cooperation with the National Committees of UNESCO, including Man and the Biosphere (MAB), the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) and the Memory of the World programme, as well as the Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission (IOC), ICOMOS and the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe, in addition to UNESCO Chairs, the Associated Schools Project Network and the Foundation Sozopol – a non-governmental organization (NGO) working in partnership with UNESCO. The Secretariat of the Commission consists of a Secretary-General and four programme experts who operate within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In 2014, Bulgaria focused its efforts on the field of culture resulting in the successful implementation of several major projects. The Bulgarian Ministry of Culture in collaboration with ICOMOS organized the international forum 'Study, conservation and socialization of immovable cultural property

– methods, technologies and materials' with the participation of national and international experts and local authorities.

In April, Sofia hosted a meeting of the 'Informal Working Group of the Subsidiary Committee to the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property'. The participants elaborated the third draft of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the Convention. The event was hosted by the Government of Bulgaria and organized with the support of the Permanent Delegation of Bulgaria to UNESCO.

In partnership with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the UNESCO Office in Venice, the Commission organized the regional workshop 'Protecting World Heritage: Disaster Risk Management and Sustainable Tourism Planning' (3–6 November). This meeting brought together World Heritage site managers from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

Another significant event in 2014 was the 3rd International Forum of NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO: 'The role of youth in the safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage' (28–30 November). The event, co-organized by the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee and the Bulgarian Sozopol Foundation, gathered together over eighty participants from around the world.

Lastly, the Bulgarian National Commission focused on the promotion and celebration of UNESCO International Days and developed a wider partnership network with media and civil society associations. In 2014, the Commission granted its patronage to six events in the field of education, culture and sport.



Participants in the ProKARSTerra Edu project. This project has been designed to interest young people in studying and pursuing a research career in karsts.

© Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

'ProKARSTerra Edu: Integration between the research concept of Karst geosystems and the educational concept "Lifelong learning"' is a project designed to provoke the interest and desire of young people to study and develop a research career in karst issues. Its activities include the development of educational resources, book publishing, educational seminars, travelling summer schools, public discussions and international competitions, among others.

The project was implemented during 2013–2014 with the support of UNESCO. Following its completion two students began research for their doctoral dissertation on the theme of karst and education, and another successfully defended an MA thesis on the topic.

The project has become a sustainable model for collaboration between different stakeholders, including the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Environment and Waters, the Ministry of Education, the UNESCO Associated School Network, the Municipality of Shumen, the Regional Museum and Library of Shumen and the Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO, who all joined forces to ensure the successful implementation of the project's objectives.

CANADA

Canadian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Christina Cameron

Secretary-General: Ms Louise Filiatrault

Website: www.unesco.ca

Update of activities in 2014

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO connects Canadians with the work of UNESCO. Its aim is to create a society in which Canadians share knowledge and learn from each other, locally and globally, in order to build a peaceful, equitable and sustainable future. As stated in its strategic plan (2014–2021), the National Commission promotes collective reflection, sets priorities, and facilitates concerted action in the fields of education, science, culture, and communication and information. Very much aware that its mandate cannot be completed without the commitment of partners from a wide range of backgrounds, the Commission fosters cooperation in all its activities.

The National Commission operates within the Canada Council for the Arts. This provides it with a great degree of independence and allows it to serve as a bridge between civil society and the government. The various Canadian federal departments regularly call upon the Commission to consult civil society on the implementation of UNESCO's various conventions. In 2014, the Commission undertook three consultations: on a review of the 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific

Researchers; on a draft of the document 'Safeguarding the Memory of the World – UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Preservation of, and Access to, Documentary Heritage in the Digital Age'; and on measures taken to implement the Recommendation on the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace (2003). For example, the consultation on multilingualism and cyberspace showed that Canada contributes significantly to the implementation of the Recommendation by means of many laws, policies and initiatives promoting Canadian linguistic diversity.

Thanks to its outgoing President, Mr Axel Meisen, the National Commission exercised its leadership in 2014 in the development of a proposal to UNESCO and other National Commissions to hold interregional meetings of National Commissions.

The last year was also marked by the visit to Toronto of the Director-General of UNESCO for a conference entitled: 'Safeguarding the Past, Shaping a Better Future: UNESCO Soft Power in the Digital Age' (18 November). The National Commission collaborated with the University of Toronto in the planning of this event in connection with the Memory of the World programme.

Finally, in 2014 the National Commission cooperated closely with the Government of Quebec and Laval University to organize the 8th extraordinary session of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST), held in Québec City in October.



Kaitlyn Bluecoat takes a photo during a media seminar organized at Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) First Nation, Ontario, in cooperation with the Northern Ontario Initiative.

© Kimberly Stinson

A success story

Canadian aboriginals are not well represented in the Canadian media. This has made it difficult for them to share their concerns and advocate for their rights. A new initiative by the Canadian non-governmental organization, Journalists for Human Rights (JHR), in collaboration with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, is working to give young Aboriginal people the journalistic skills they need to share their stories, interpret current events and raise awareness of human rights issues. As part of the Northern Ontario Initiative, JHR is training Aboriginal journalists to report on their communities through mainstream media outlets. Since early 2014, the organization has been working on a project aimed at building the capacities of twenty-four Aboriginal trainers over a three-year period who, in turn, will mentor some 600 journalists using a Human Rights Toolkit developed using UNESCO's resources.

The project is expected to result in better representation of Aboriginal voices in the Canadian media, increased understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians as a result of a broader and improved media coverage, and greater awareness of human rights and contemporary human rights issues.

CROATIA

Croatian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Vladimir Markovic

Secretary-General: Mrs Rut Carek

Website: www.min-kulture.hr/unesco/

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Croatian National Commission for UNESCO undertook a series of activities to further promote the main objectives and aims of the Organization.

In culture, Croatia collaborated with the National Commissions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia to finalize the joint nomination of Stećci (Stecak) tombstones for inscription on the World Heritage List. The countries worked together for more than four years to complete the Nomination File and Management Plan.

The Croatian National Commission also cooperated with the Ministry of Culture to organize the 5th meeting of the International Steering Group responsible for coordinating the establishment of a Permanent Joint Exhibit Space within the Renovated Ex-Yugoslav Pavilion of the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Poland. The National Commissions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia participated in the meeting, held in Zagreb (6–7 February), along with representatives of the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau and the Holocaust Memorial Museum (USA), UNESCO, the Mémorial de la Shoah (France), the Topography

of Terror (Germany) and the National Fund for Victims of National Socialism (Austria).

During the year the Croatian National Commission also worked with its partners in the area of underwater archaeology. A meeting organized with UNESCO Headquarters, the UNESCO Office in Venice and the International Centre for Underwater Archaeology (ICUA) was held in Zadar on the implementation and ratification of the 2001 Convention (30 September – 1 October). Representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey were invited to take part. The National Commission in collaboration with ICUA also supported training seminars for Balkan and Mediterranean countries in the field of underwater and cultural heritage.

In the natural sciences, the Croatian National Commission and L'Oréal ADRIA awarded the ninth national 'For Women in Science' fellowships to four young female scientists in the last stage of their PhD studies. Each scientist was awarded a fellowship amounting to €5,000.

The National Commission also coordinated with UNESCO Headquarters to establish two new UNESCO Chairs: the UNESCO Chair on the Free Movement of People, Migration and Inter-Cultural Dialogue, established at the University of Zagreb, and the UNESCO Chair in Social Sciences and Medical Humanities, established at the University of Rijeka. The Commission also deepened cooperation with existing UNESCO Chairs.



World Heritage Education practical work with pupil.

© Croatian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

One of the key successes of 2014 was a series of teacher-training workshops on the implementation of the *World Heritage in Young Hands* (WHYH) educational kit. Organized in six major cities throughout the Republic of Croatia, in collaboration with the Croatian National Commission for UNESCO, the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, these workshops gathered together and trained more than 500 teachers.

The UNESCO WHYH Educational Kit seeks to encourage and enable tomorrow's decision-makers to participate in heritage conservation and to respond to continuing threats facing the world's valuable cultural heritage. The National Commission in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports was also responsible for the translation of the Kit into the Croatian language.

The Commission and its partners further organized and hosted a Youth Forum on Cultural Heritage in Young Hands. An international seminar based upon teachers' experiences of implementing the educational kit is foreseen for 2015.

CYPRUS

Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Loukia Loizou-Hadjigavriel

Secretary-General: Mr Pavlos Paraskevas

Website: www.unesco.org.cy

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Cyprus National Commission undertook efforts to further UNESCO's programme objectives and priorities by establishing and enhancing partnerships with other governmental stakeholders, the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local communities and civil society. The Commission also worked to promote cooperation between existing and emerging national and regional networks and bodies.

In culture, the National Commission coordinated activities related to the inventorying, safeguarding and transmission of elements of intangible cultural heritage (ICH); supported the organization of exhibitions for the promotion of world heritage, archaeological sites and ICH; and encouraged the participation of experts and NGO representatives in capacity-building workshops organized by Regional Centres for the protection of cultural heritage in South-East Europe.

The National Commission also organized the 1st Coordination Meeting for the Protection and Promotion of the Mediterranean

Diet (inscribed on the Representative List of ICH), held in April. The meeting, which was funded by the A.G. Leventis Foundation and the Agros Community Council, aimed to enhance cooperation at the regional level, and was attended by participants from Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. In addition, the Commission organized the Annual Meeting of the South-East European Experts Network on ICH (8 May) under the theme 'Intangible cultural heritage and education: Experiences, good practices, lessons learned'. The meeting was funded and supported by the UNESCO Office in Venice and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus, and attended by participants from fourteen countries.

For the second consecutive year, the National Commission implemented the apprenticeship programme 'Studying Lefkaritiko embroidery lace making' in Lefkara village, in collaboration with local authorities and the association of embroiderers. The Commission also celebrated and promoted the work of the renowned Cypriot poet Costas Montis, in cooperation with the Costas Montis Foundation, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth.

Finally, to promote UNESCO's educational objectives in the areas of human rights, gender equality and sustainable development, the National Commission continued its close collaboration with the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), the South Eastern Mediterranean Sea Project (SEMEP), and the two UNESCO Chairs established at the University of Nicosia and the University of Cyprus.



Seminar held within the framework of the 'One in Five' campaign to combat sexual violence against children.

© UNESCO Chair, University of Nicosia

A success story

Since 2013, the National Commission has participated in the Multi-stakeholder Steering Committee for the promotion of the Council of Europe 'One in Five' campaign to combat sexual violence against children. Within this framework, the Commission has worked closely with the Rapporteur on Children of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Commissioner for Children's Rights and other local partners, to develop a national action plan to promote the ratification of the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (the 'Lanzarote Convention'), and to equip children, their families and society at large with the necessary knowledge and tools to prevent and respond to sexual violence.

In 2014, as a direct result of the Committee's efforts the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus unanimously ratified the 'Lanzarote Convention' (13 November). This move constitutes an important step in ongoing efforts to prevent sexual violence, protect child victims and prosecute perpetrators.

In this context, the Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO, in collaboration with the UNESCO Chair at the University of Nicosia, organized a training seminar in November for 200 teachers, on the role of educators in preventing and responding to all kinds of sexual abuse against children.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Czech Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Petr Gazdik

Secretary-General: Mr Karel Komárek

Website: www.mzv.cz/unesco

Update of activities in 2014

The Czech Commission for UNESCO was founded by Government Decree (1 June 1994) as an advisory body to the Government. It consists of representatives of ministries, important institutions and individual experts in the fields of UNESCO's competence. Its main tasks are to facilitate cooperation between national institutions, experts and UNESCO, and to promote the goals and objectives of the Organization within the country.

The Czech Republic is a Member of the Executive Board of UNESCO. Consequently, preparation for the Executive Board and evaluation of its results were the main topics discussed at meetings of the National Commission, its Executive Committee and Sub-committees throughout the year.

In 2014, the Czech Commission for UNESCO celebrated its 20th anniversary at a meeting (June) attended by high ministerial representatives and former members of the Commission and the Secretariat. The meeting provided a good opportunity to highlight the wide range of activities implemented during the last two decades. A publication

dedicated to this topic was presented at the meeting, along with a specially prepared information brochure available in two language versions (Czech and English).

The Czech National Commission granted patronage in 2014 to nineteen projects directly related to UNESCO programmes organized by national institutions and non-governmental organizations.

In education, the Commission coordinated the creation of three long-term fellowships for graduate studies, placed at the disposal of UNESCO by the Government of the Czech Republic to benefit certain developing countries.

As coordinator of the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), the Commission organized the 20th Annual Meeting of ASPnet in Hořovice (September). The meeting adopted steps to formalize the network and make it more dynamic.

In culture, the Czech National Commission coordinated restoration works in Průhonice Park, part of the Historic Centre of Prague and a World Heritage site. The works were financed by the World Heritage Fund.

The National Commission also organized two meetings of respective ministries and institutions participating in the implementation of the Memory of the World programme. Concrete measures were taken to establish a national inventory of documentary heritage and to identify potential nominations to the Memory of the World Register. The parties further envisage the creation of a formal national Memory of the World Committee.

The National Commission continues to publish monthly online information bulletins on UNESCO programmes and its own activities, which are distributed to a broad range of governmental and non-governmental institutions.



Meeting on the implementation of the Memory of the World Programme.

© Czech Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Czech Commission for UNESCO organized two important roundtables devoted to art education.

The first focused on formal and non-formal education (26 February). Representatives of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, and experts from cultural institutions discussed concrete measures to improve art education. At the end of the discussions, the roundtable adopted a Declaration calling on the respective ministries and cultural institutions to further develop formal and non-formal art education.

The second roundtable was devoted to the media's role in art education (8 October). The participants, who included journalists, students and representatives of the Ministry of Culture and important cultural institutions, emphasized the important role of the media in art education and its responsibility in the promotion of culture. The Declaration adopted at the end of discussions underlined the unfortunate predominance of economic aspects, which often conflict with the expected role of the media, and concluded with a call for more effective support from public institutions to strengthen the role of the media in art education.

Both roundtables were very well attended and attracted broad public attention. The Czech Commission for UNESCO clearly demonstrated its capacity for organizing high-level discussions on important topics and consequently helped to promote formal and non-formal art education in the country.

DENMARK

Danish National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Linda Nielsen

Secretary-General: Mr Jens Dalsgaard

Website: <http://uvm.dk/Om-os/Ministeriets-internationale-arbejde/UNESCO>

Update of activities in 2014

In many ways 2014 was a year of transition for the Danish National Commission for UNESCO. Denmark ended its term on the Executive Board and the focus of its efforts shifted towards strengthening the visibility and relevance of UNESCO in the development of education, science, culture, and communication and information. As a key stakeholder, the National Commission was strongly involved in developing a new national strategy for UNESCO for 2014–2017, which was launched by the Minister of Education in September. This strategy has four transversal priorities and ten action areas to be pursued in the coming years through outreach to relevant authorities, institutions, civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The ten action areas are: (i) learning for global citizenship; (ii) education for sustainable development (ESD); (iii) learning

cities as a lever for holistic and cross-sectoral learning strategies; (iv) optimizing the potential of UNESCO branding of heritage and geoparks for sustainable development; (v) strengthening the synergy between UNESCO's cultural conventions; (vi) UNESCO science prizes and quality of science education; (vii) the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the candidacy of Denmark to its Executive Council; (viii) freedom of expression, free media and safety of journalists; (ix) the International Programme for the Development of Communication and the efforts of Denmark as member of its Council and Bureau; and (x) access to information, digital participation and privacy.

The National Commission also advised the Danish government on issues relating to the post-2015 sustainability Agenda and the importance of due attention to freedom of expression and free access to information in this context.

In 2014, the Danish Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) demonstrated inspiring progress through their work on World Heritage Education, the Baltic Sea Project and the Transatlantic Slave Trade Education Project. In particular, the schools participated in fruitful exchanges and cooperation with partner schools in the Baltic region, Africa, the Arab region and the Caribbean. The Commission wishes to thank the National Commissions in all partner countries for their kind support and cooperation.



© Danish National Commission for UNESCO

A success story



HRH Princess Marie, Patron of the Danish National Commission for UNESCO (left), and the Minister for Education, Ms Christine Antorini (right).

© Danish National Commission for UNESCO

Oman, Tanzania and the US Virgin Islands came to Denmark in October to work together for one week to produce examples and recommendations for teaching global citizenship. The final outcomes and recommendations were presented to the Danish Minister for Education and to H.R.H. Princess Marie at the closure of the seminar. For more information see: <http://globalcitizenship.unesco-asp.dk/>

In 2014, Denmark celebrated the 200th anniversary of compulsory education for all. Danish ASPnet schools made an important international and global contribution to the festivities. In line with the overall strategy for ASPnet, the Danish network invited students from eight countries to develop ideas for a school based on the theme of global citizenship. After six months of online preparation and communication, pupils and teachers from Cuba, Estonia, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon,

ESTONIA

Estonian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Kristin Kuutma

Secretary-General: Ms Kerli Gutman

Website: www.unesco.ee

Update of activities in 2014

The Estonian National Commission for UNESCO serves as focal point for liaison and coordination between UNESCO and Estonian national institutions and organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, as well as private individuals connected with UNESCO's work.

In 2014, Estonia began its first term as a Member of the Executive Board. The work of the Executive Board has proved an inspiring challenge for the delegation and the National Commission has been happy to play an important role in representing the country on the governing body of UNESCO.

The National Commission continued its work on the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) International Co-ordinating Council and

has begun preparations to host the 2015 EuroMAB meeting in Estonia.

In the field of education the Commission has developed a strong partnership with a local non-governmental organization (NGO) active in global education issues. Together with the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) the Commission renewed the framework for Estonian ASP Schools and implemented the guidelines 'Schools to support education for sustainable development and the formation of responsible global citizen'. The National Commission also successfully organized a UN General Assembly simulation game for the ASP Schools Network. The game has been running for several years and has received much positive feedback (see below).



UN simulation game for Estonian ASPnet schools.
© Estonian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

For the last four years the National Commission has organized UN simulation games developed for the Estonian ASP Schools Network. This successful three-day event, aimed at students aged 15–18 years, begins with ice-breaking games followed by two days of discussions, and culminates in a UN assembly simulation. Time is also made available for social activities.

Prior to the event, participants are divided into groups, with each group representing one country. Before the simulation each group must undertake a number of tasks, such as gathering information about the country they have been assigned and making a short video in which members will have to act as the country's delegates and give presentations. Participants are expected to research the discussion topics of their Commission.

The topics discussed in 2014 related to current challenges in the world and included themes such as world health systems, the right to privacy, challenges for youth, children's rights and Syrian refugees. Planned topics for 2015 relate to the proposed sustainable development goals.

The simulation was originally developed for UNESCO ASP schools in Estonia, but has since become an international event with participants from several other countries.

FINLAND

Finnish National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Jutta Urpilainen

Secretary-General: Ms Zabrina Holmström

Website: www.minedu.fi/OPM/Kansainvaelistet_asiat/kansainvaelistet_jaerjestoet/unesco/suomen_unesco-toimikunta/index.html?lang=en

Update of activities in 2014

The Finnish National Commission for UNESCO consists of a Chairperson and eleven members nominated for a four-year term by the Government. The members of the National Commission represent high-level expertise in the fields of UNESCO's competence. They advise the Ministry of Education and Culture and contribute to the work and visibility of UNESCO. The Commission meets approximately six times per year.

In 2014, the Commission contributed to the national debate on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. As part of intensive cooperation and dialogue on UNESCO-related issues between the Nordic countries, the Commission discussed the post-2015 agenda and the recent governance review at the Annual Nordic Coordination Meeting, held in Norway.

The National Commission also participated in the 6th International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG) World Conference organized in Helsinki (June) under the

patronage of UNESCO. The Director-General of UNESCO addressed the Conference and met with representatives of the Government, the National Commission and other stakeholders.

On behalf of Finland, the National Commission and its partners submitted a proposal to host a conference for World Press Freedom Day in 2016. The Director-General approved the proposal and the National Commission is now actively participating in the planning arrangements for the event.

The National Commission also sat on the prize jury of the National L'Oréal-UNESCO Awards 'For Women in Science', and on the National Geopark Committee, where it supported the application of the Golden Geopark of Lapland to join the Global Geopark Network.

In 2014, the Commission backed Finland's proposal to UNESCO to commemorate the birth of Jean Sibelius, the renowned Finnish composer. The proposal was endorsed by the 37th Session of the General Conference, and the Commission is now engaged in plans for the celebration in 2015.

The National Commission also chaired the national Memory of the World (MoW) Committee, which was established to maintain the register of nationally significant collections and to propose collections for inclusion on the International MoW Register.

In 2014, the Finnish UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) met for its annual meeting under the leadership of its new national coordinator (September). Several new schools joined the network, which focused on, among other topics, education for sustainable development. In November, a Baltic Sea Philosophical Essay competition was organized to celebrate the International Day of Philosophy.



Network meeting of the UNESCO ASPnet of Northern Finland, called POLARIS, in November 2014.

© Finnish National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, Finland ratified the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, with the support of the Finnish National Commission. In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Culture assigned the National Board of Antiquities the task of coordinating national implementation of the Convention, and requested them to draw up a national plan by May 2015 with the support of stakeholders such as the Finnish Foundation for Cultural Policy Research (CUPORE). The ministerial working group includes an expert from the National Commission.

The Commission consulted with experts on various aspects of intangible cultural heritage and the implementation of the Convention. In December, the National Board of Antiquities organized a successful seminar in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Culture, CUPORE and the National Commission to discuss and broadly inform various stakeholders of the preparatory work undertaken to implement the Convention and the progress made to date.

FRANCE

French National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Daniel Janicot

Secretary-General: Mr David Fajolles

Website: www.unesco.fr

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the activities of the French National Commission focused on issues relating to youth and education. During the year the Commission embarked on or pursued a variety of initiatives designed to increase transversality in these two key areas. For example, the Commission organized exchanges between the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) of France and the Republic of Korea, and ensured the participation of ASPnet in a conference organized by the Japanese National Commission in Okayama ahead of the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, held in Nagoya.

The Commission also organized annual meetings of Associated Schools and UNESCO Chairs, as well as the study trip of the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). Additionally, it launched initiatives aimed at developing partnerships at national and international levels, including between the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme and the National Agronomics Research Institute (INRA).

The National Commission published presentations made as part of the study day on 'Illiteracy in the knowledge society', held with the participation of the National Agency for Combating

Illiteracy. The French National Commission also organized a plenary session dedicated to the topic 'Knowing how to move forward in the age of digital sustainable development'.

In culture, the National Commission published a 'Critical Glossary of Cultural Diversity in the Digital Age', aimed at contributing necessary expertise to the complex process of implementing the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in the digital age. Publication of this glossary brings to fruition two years of work involving some fifty French experts and researchers.

In the natural sciences, the French National Commission held a seminar at the Ecole nationale supérieure (ENS) entitled 'Science teaching and ethical issues in secondary education'. The seminar is designed to highlight the link between the teaching of science and ethics and identify conditions for implementation in the classroom.

The French National Commission also organized the French L'Oréal-UNESCO Fellowships 'For Women in Science' for the eighth consecutive year, bringing together seventy-five experts to work with the L'Oréal France Foundation. Twenty fellowships were awarded from among 693 applicants, bringing to 100 the number of recipients since 2007.

Lastly, the French National Commission would like to pay tribute to the memory of Robert Barbault, President of the French MAB Committee, and Jean Favier, former President of the French Commission, both of whom passed away this year.



The Luberon-Lure Biosphere Reserve, organizer of the first Biosphere Reserve Awards in France.

© French National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the MAB France network organized the first Biosphere Reserve Awards in France to reward original initiatives in the field of sustainable development by biosphere reserves. These awards encourage commitment to the sustainable management of natural resources, biodiversity, sustainable development and combatting climate change, and are accompanied by financial support.

Five biosphere reserves took part in 2014. The jury consisted of various eminent persons (politicians, researchers, teachers, people from the world of business and technical experts from the biosphere reserves) who selected twenty-seven local projects at a ceremony held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. The awards were presented by the Director of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences and the President of the French MAB Committee.

GEORGIA

Georgian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Tamar Beruchashvili, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Ms Ketevan Kandelaki

Website: www.unesco.ge

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, Georgia joined more than 1 billion people worldwide in celebrating International Jazz Day (30 April). The Georgian National Commission in cooperation with the relevant Ministries lent its support to the 3rd edition of this celebration.

In line with UNESCO's request for National Commissions to play a pivotal role in delivering the Organization's ideals and activities, the Georgian National Commission created a bilingual website in Georgian and English, which can be accessed at www.unesco.ge.

The exhibition 'Recovery of Medieval Georgia's Cloisonné Enamel Production' was shown at the Georgian National

Museum in Tbilisi during 2014. The exhibition is a follow-up to a project implemented with the Georgian National Commission in the framework of the Participation Programme. It consists of the permanent display of high-quality cloisonné enamel replicas produced according to recovered medieval technologies. The exhibition also included the non-stop screening of the UNESCO documentary *Following Lost Technologies — Cloisonné Enamel*.

The exhibition has received numerous visitors and has been incorporated into diverse educational programmes prepared for different groups, including school-age children, students, researchers and the public at large.



Recovery of Medieval Georgia's cultural practice of cloisonné enamel production.

© Georgian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia, in cooperation with the Georgian National Commission for UNESCO, the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection, and the National Museum of Georgia organized the 'Conference on World Heritage and Sustainable Development', held in Mestia, Upper Svaneti, Georgia (24–25 September).

The conference aimed to shed light on the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and to discuss possible ways of improving strategies for protection and development of World Heritage at the regional level.

Representatives from the World Heritage Centre, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), as well as delegates from countries of the South Caucasus region, shared their experiences on a range of topics, including the role of international organizations in the protection and promotion of cultural and natural heritage, and best practices in preservation and management of World Heritage and cultural landscapes. The discussions and recommendations developed during the conference are expected to increase the effectiveness of joint actions in the future.

GERMANY

German Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Verena Metze-Mangold

Secretary-General: Mr Roland Bernecker

Website: www.unesco.de

Update of activities in 2014

The German Commission organized a national conference in September 2014 to celebrate the successful implementation of the UN Decade Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Germany. More than 500 participants from the German ESD community attended the conference and discussed best practices and remaining challenges. The conference adopted the Bonn Declaration 2014, which lays out priorities for the implementation of the Global Action Programme on ESD.

In 2013, Germany became State Party to UNESCO's 2003 Convention. Subsequently, the German Commission coordinated the first countrywide call for proposals to establish a national inventory and nominees for the UNESCO list, reaching out to all relevant experts and civil society. A multi-stage comprehensive process including a new expert committee of the German Commission selected the inventory and nominees from more than 100 submissions.

Inclusive education is a priority of the German Commission, based in particular on the UN Convention on the Rights

of Persons with Disabilities. In March 2014, the German Commission organized a national summit that took stock of the success of recent reforms in Germany and future challenges. More than 350 representatives from politics, civil society, academia and the private sector, as well as parents and teachers, agreed on priorities for the further implementation of inclusive education in Germany.

The German Commission for UNESCO has continued to maintain and expand its intensive knowledge partnerships with Africa. Since 2012, the CONNEXIONS programme has built on UNESCO's 2005 Convention to empower civil society and work towards cooperative cultural policies in North Africa and the Mashriq. More than 1,000 stakeholders have been engaged so far, including young professionals. The Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP) programme has successfully been implemented in Kenya, Liberia and Uganda and has already empowered more than 1,000 university students to set up their own business. In addition, the German Commission organized four workshops in 2014 for the managers of African UNESCO Biosphere Reserves to jointly formulate a management manual.

In January, the German Commission together with the German Government and UNESCO organized the inaugural meeting of the new Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) of the UN Secretary-General in Berlin. The Board consists of twenty-six leading international scientists, who have already submitted three reports to the UN Secretary-General with recommendations to strengthen the interface between science, policy and society in areas relevant to sustainable development.



Celebrating five years of 'kulturweit' with Mr Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Foreign Minister of Germany.

© German Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The German Commission organizes the International Voluntary Service 'kulturweit' in cooperation with the Federal Foreign Office and other partners in the field of foreign cultural policy. The programme offers volunteers aged 18 to 26 the opportunity to work, for 6 or 12 months, in German cultural and educational institutions abroad, as well as for numerous National Commissions for UNESCO. Since its inception in 2009, 'kulturweit' has made an important contribution to transcultural understanding and cooperation with Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. Many volunteers continue global citizenship activities once back in Germany, with more than 1,000 'kulturweit' alumni engaging in intercultural dialogue and activities in twenty regional groups located across the country. To date, 1,900 young people have volunteered and the number of applications surpasses 10,000, which demonstrates the relevance of youth exchange in today's globalized world.

In September 2014, 'kulturweit' celebrated its fifth anniversary in Berlin – a milestone in the history of this successful initiative. At the ceremony, the German Foreign Minister, in the presence of 300 invited guests, underlined the importance of engaging youth in German foreign policy. During the celebration, Ministry representatives, civil society, experts and former volunteers discussed ways to further improve 'kulturweit' and its contribution to global youth citizenship.

GREECE

Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Ekaterini Tzitzikosta

Secretary-General: Ms Christina Boulakaki

Website: www.unesco-hellas.gr

Update of activities in 2014

For the Hellenic National Commission, 2014 was a constructive year, despite ongoing budget and personnel restrictions stemming from the financial crisis.

In education, the National Commission coordinated the 14th Annual Symposium of the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) of Attica, under the theme 'UNESCO's World Heritage Monuments', and established the ASPnet Symposium of schools of Central Macedonia. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Commission coordinated Greek representation at the UNESCO ASPnet International ESD Events for Students and Teachers, held in Okayama, Japan (4–8 November), and saw the number of ASPnet schools rise to 167. The National Commission established the Awards for Educational Contribution in Primary Education in Border and Remote Areas of Greece and the UNESCO Chair on 'Solid Earth Physics and Geo-hazards Risk Reduction'.

In the natural sciences, the Commission organized the 9th L'Oréal Hellas–Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO Awards 'For Women in Science' and coordinated the

candidature of Sitia Nature Park and the Grevena-Tethys Geopark for membership of the European and Global Geoparks Network.

In the social sciences, the National Commission supported the newly established UNESCO Observatory on Women, Sport and Physical Education in Athens, and embraced, through its Youth Committee, various youth-related activities.

In culture, the Hellenic National Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Greek National Tourism Organization to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage. Accordingly, the two institutions jointly planned a travelling photographic exhibition of Greek World Heritage Monuments abroad, with the cooperation of their counterparts in other Member States. The Commission is currently organizing the International Conference 'Culture-Tourism-Development', with the broad participation of high-ranking governmental officials. In addition, the Commission actively participated at the UNESCO World Forum on Culture and Cultural Industries in Florence (2–4 October), and submitted a proposal to host in 2015 the '3rd South Eastern Europe World Heritage Youth Forum' including the organization of festivities to celebrate 'International Museum Day'.

In communication and information, the National Commission supported the nomination of 'Derveni Papyrus: the oldest "book" of Europe' for inscription on the International Memory of the World Register. It also celebrated the UNESCO-associated 400th anniversary of the death of the painter El Greco and is planning 2015 nationwide festivities for the 70th anniversary of UNESCO.



The main areas of activity of the Hellenic National Commission.

© Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO embraced the green photo journey 'Green Project in South America: Bogota – Land of Fire: from Geodiversity to Biodiversity', brought to life by the non-governmental organization (NGO) 'Green Project' in mid-2014. Following two successful journeys in Africa (2010) and Europe (2012), both of which were supported by the National Commission, the 'Green Project' Team, consisting of citizens, scientists and artists inspired by UNESCO's 'World Solar Programme 1996–2005', travelled using low-combustion automobiles throughout South America (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina). The aim was to raise awareness of the potential of renewable energy sources to overcome energy poverty, improve water management and promote sustainable development, through meetings, presentations and exchanges with national authorities, local stakeholders and members of civil society. Over the course of their journey, the team used photography and video to capture points of interest relating to renewable energy resources, geodiversity and biodiversity, and the region's UNESCO World Heritage Sites. This initiative was made possible through the support and cooperation of the National Commissions involved, who responded eagerly to the request of the Hellenic National Commission and ensured the success of this ambitious project.

HUNGARY

Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Miklós Réthelyi

Secretary-General: Ms Mariann Géher

Website: www.unesco.hu

Update of activities in 2014

The Secretariat of the Hungarian National Commission is located at the Ministry of Human Capacities in Budapest. In 2014, a new Secretary-General was appointed.

Throughout the year the National Commission organized events to celebrate key anniversaries associated with the Organization, including the 200th anniversary of the birth of Miklós Ybl and the 100th anniversary of the death of Ödön Lechner, both renowned Hungarian architects. The Commission also commemorated the 150th anniversary of the death of the celebrated Hungarian physician Ignác Semmelweis and the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Hungarian archaeologist Flóris Rómer.

The Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO also commemorated the 50th anniversary of the death of the physicist Leó Szilárd, who developed the idea of the nuclear chain reaction. As was noted at the 37th General Conference of UNESCO, Szilard fought actively for the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy.

The National Commission also partnered with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to celebrate the International Year of Crystallography, and with the Szeged Information History Workshop to commemorate the outbreak of the First World War.

The National Commission organized a number of key events to celebrate International Literacy Day. The Commission partnered with the Reading Clinic, the Alternative Secondary School of Economics Foundation and the Marczi Community Space to organize a two-day event promoting reading as an enjoyable source of pleasure, a key competence and a tool to a successful career. The event comprised community and family activities including lectures, demonstrations and a school-based community reading programme.

For World Teachers' Day the National Commission co-organized a conference with the Hungarian Language Strategy Institute, entitled 'Civic Education – digital education, language and method'. The conference included numerous presentations on the possible roles of digital technologies in education.

Lastly, in 2014 the L'Oréal-UNESCO 'For Women in Science' programme awarded one of its grants to the Hungarian neurobiologist Dr Katalin Czöndör.



A speaker addresses the audience during the 'Nostra Aetate – Our common future, our common responsibility' conference which took place in Tihany.

© Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, a two-day conference took place at the Abbey of Tihany, Hungary (19–20 March) under the title 'Nostra Aetate – Our common future, our common responsibility'. The Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with the Ministry of Human Capacities organized this initiative to promote interfaith dialogue. The speakers included politicians, Jewish rabbis and Christian clergymen of several denominations.

The conference's main working document was the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions of the Second Vatican Council, commonly known as 'Nostra Aetate'. For the first time in history, Nostra Aetate called for Catholics and Jews to engage in friendly dialogue as well as biblical and theological discussions, so as to better understand each other's faith.

In the spirit of Nostra Aetate, the participants emphasized that present and future generations must be raised in an atmosphere of empathy and tolerance, which allows for honest dialogue. The participants adopted a joint declaration that condemned all forms of cruelties and violence perpetrated in the name of religion, as well as any open or hidden forms of anti-Semitism, exclusion and discrimination.

ICELAND

Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Gunnar Haraldsson

Secretary-General: Ms Áslaug Dóra Eyjólfsdóttir

Website: www.unesco.is

Update of activities in 2014

The National Commission provides advice, guidance and support to UNESCO networks and civil society partners in Iceland, including the Icelandic UN association and a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and associations. In 2014, the Commission placed greater emphasis on facilitating, monitoring and coordinating activities, and increased its online presence with the creation of Facebook and YouTube pages and improvements to its website.

In January, a joint delegation from Iceland, Denmark, Germany, Latvia and Norway, delivered a nomination dossier for the transnational serial nomination of Viking Age Sites in Northern Europe to the World Heritage Centre, at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. The nomination was coordinated by Iceland and encompasses some of the most scientifically important sites from the Viking Age, considered to be a vital part of the history of humanity.

In May, the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, paid a visit to Iceland. She met with the President, Mr Ólafur

Ragnar Grímsson, to discuss cooperation between UNESCO and Iceland, in particular regarding the future of the Arctic, the role of culture in sustainable development and the importance of linguistic diversity.

As part of her visit, the Director-General accompanied by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture and the former President of Iceland, Ms Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, visited the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Þingvellir (Thingvellir), the seat of the first democratic parliament in the world, the Althing. Ms Bokova welcomed Iceland's work in the field of cultural cooperation, especially concerning multilingualism, and the study and recognition of Viking cultural sites. She also visited and addressed an international language conference in Reykjavik, held under the patronage of UNESCO, and gave a lecture at the University of Iceland on languages and cultural diversity.

Lastly, The National Commission was actively involved in the preparation of the Nordic conference 'Tradition for Tomorrow – Safeguarding Nordic Intangible Cultural Heritage' held in Iceland in August. The central theme of the conference was the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which represents an important tool for maintaining Nordic musical and dance traditions. Through conferences, workshops and performances, the project facilitates dialogue between practitioners, researchers and officials aiming to safeguard Icelandic and Nordic intangible cultural heritage in accordance with the Convention. The National Commission continues to work with NGOs and other partners on the implementation of the Convention.



Ms Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador and former President of Iceland, and Ms Irina Bokova at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Þingvellir (Thingvellir), the seat of the first democratic parliament in the world.

© Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The Icelandic National Commission organized a week of events (21–28 February) to celebrate and highlight International Mother Language Day in collaboration with the newly established UNESCO Category II Centre, the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir World Language Centre. Among the events were lectures and seminars focusing on mother languages and UNESCO. The National Commission invited NGOs, teachers' associations, the University of Iceland, the Reykjavik Education Board and other stakeholders to join in the preparations and to be active participants. This initiative was highly appreciated by all participants and raised the profile of language diversity and culture, UNESCO and the National Commission in Iceland.

One of the initiatives taken was a survey of schools in Iceland to ascertain the number of spoken in each school. The survey found that at least ninety-two foreign languages are spoken in Icelandic schools. The National Commission realized the importance of creating links between schoolchildren who speak the same languages. This effort gained media attention and country-wide participation, and succeeded in raising awareness of cultural diversity in Iceland.

LATVIA

Latvian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Dace Melbārde, Minister of Culture

Secretary-General: Ms Dagnija Baltiņa

Website: www.unesco.lv

Update of activities in 2014

Since 2011, the Latvian National Commission has organized an annual week in Latvia to raise awareness about the aims and objectives of UNESCO and to encourage partners such as museums, schools, libraries and municipalities to organize activities devoted to UNESCO themes and programme. In 2014, approximately eighty events took place at more than forty sites, celebrating national cultural heritage and traditions inscribed on UNESCO's international and national lists or registers.

In 2014, the Commission launched a new digital application to provide access to informative, creative and educational materials about UNESCO heritage in Latvia. Called the 'UNESCO's Heritage Shelf', the interactive publication provides online access to multimedia tools and materials, and encourages users to become involved by gathering and contributing stories, memories and legends about their local heritage with the assistance of a specially prepared questionnaire.

To help improve the accessibility of information on UNESCO themes and programmes in Latvia, the National Commission also created an interactive map. The 'UNESCO Treasure Map of Latvia' (<http://unesco.lv/latvijasdargumi>) provides information about all objects or items inscribed on UNESCO international and national heritage lists and/or registers, as well as existing partnerships working to implement UNESCO programmes.

International UNESCO Decades, Years and Days are useful instruments for promoting the ideals of UNESCO in Latvia. In 2014, the National Commission celebrated the International Year of Crystallography by organizing discussions on science communication in addition to an interactive science show called 'Science of the Future' for more than 300 schoolchildren, their parents and teachers.

To celebrate International Mother Language Day, the Commission organized a contest for schools called 'Make Your ABC', which introduced students to the Latvian alphabet compiled in the eighteenth century by Gotthard Friedrich Stender. The idea of the contest was simple: young students drew the image of a letter on an interactive board and, most importantly, had to include a special message or valuable advice for their peers. The twenty-first century ABC is available here: http://ej.uz/21_ABC



Students taking part in 'The Baltic Way Stories' campaign dedicated to celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Baltic Way.

© Latvian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 1989, more than 1 million people joined hands to form a 600-km-long human chain through the three Baltic countries, uniting Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in a mass demonstration for freedom. Known as the Baltic Way campaign, the most significant documents of this unique and peaceful event are inscribed on the UNESCO International Memory of the World Register.

The year 2014 marked the 25th anniversary of the Baltic Way. To commemorate this campaign, the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO together with partners from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania implemented the project 'The Baltic Way Stories' raise awareness of this historic campaign and collect and preserve memories for posterity. The project invited people to document their Baltic Way experience and share it on a webpage (www.thebalticway.eu). It also encouraged participants to gather the stories of friends, relatives, colleagues, visitors and other interested persons, and make them available to the rest of society. Museums, libraries and schools participated by organizing story-based activities with an emphasis on intergenerational dialogue. More than 800 memory stories were gathered from across the Baltic States and over 100 events took place at the national level.

LITHUANIA

Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Romas Pakalnis

Secretary-General: Ms Marija Drėmaitė

Website: www.unesco.lt

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO focused on training and capacity-building activities. The Secretariat organized training sessions for Lithuanian World Heritage site managers, and young people and students were invited to undertake internships at the National Commission. In addition, the National Commission, in cooperation with the Lithuanian Folk Culture Centre and public and private funding sources, organized 'Kukutyne 2014', a summer camp offering traditional cultural activities for schoolchildren and teachers of the Lithuania Minor region.

Throughout the year, the Lithuanian National Commission organized twelve exhibitions (one per month) at its gallery and supplemented these activities with newly developed educational events including lectures, educational seminars,

films and so on. These public events helped to increase the visibility of the National Commission and to promote UNESCO values to a broader audience.

The Commission also organized four public lectures on UNESCO World Heritage issues in Lithuania and the World, including underwater heritage, the Struve Geodetic Arc, the 60th anniversary of The Hague Convention, and the 20th anniversary of the Nara Document on Authenticity. It also held several creative seminars for teachers dedicated to the celebration of the 300th birth anniversary of the Lithuanian writer Kristijonas Donelaitis. All lectures and seminar materials are available online and are widely used as educational materials.

Lastly, in 2014 the Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO established a National Information For All (IFAP) Committee for the period 2014–2017 in coordination with the UNESCO IFAP Intergovernmental Council.



The Vilnius Forum gathered at Vilnius Town Hall, on 4 December.
© Vilnius Municipality

A success story

In 2014, Lithuania celebrated the 20th anniversary of the inscription of Vilnius Historic Centre and the 10th anniversary of the inscription of Kernavė Archaeological Site on the World Heritage List. To mark these occasions and to raise awareness of World Heritage in Lithuania, the National Commission organized two international events – an academic seminar and a forum.

The international seminar 'World Heritage Challenges in Lithuania: Revisiting Vilnius Historic Centre (1994) and Kernavė Archaeological Site (2004)' took place in May, and was organized by the National Commission with Vilnius University, the ICOMOS National Committee and the State Cultural Reserve of Kernavė. It provided an occasion for renowned scientists, academicians and practitioners to share their knowledge and collaborate with one other. Participants from Lithuania and abroad presented topical issues on World Heritage, such as the Historic Urban Landscape approach, management of historic cities and the latest research in the field of conservation.

The international cultural heritage forum 'Evolution and Preservation of Historic Urban Landscape' took place in Vilnius in December. Mayors and political and administrative authorities from Azerbaijan, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as representatives of international organizations, gathered to discuss issues relating to the conservation of cultural tangible heritage and to strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones.

MONACO

Monegasque National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Geneviève Vatrican

Secretary-General: Mr Jean-Charles Curau

Website: infodac@gouv.mc

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the President of the Monegasque National Commission attended the meeting of the National Commissions on the occasion of the 194th session of the Executive Board of UNESCO (April).

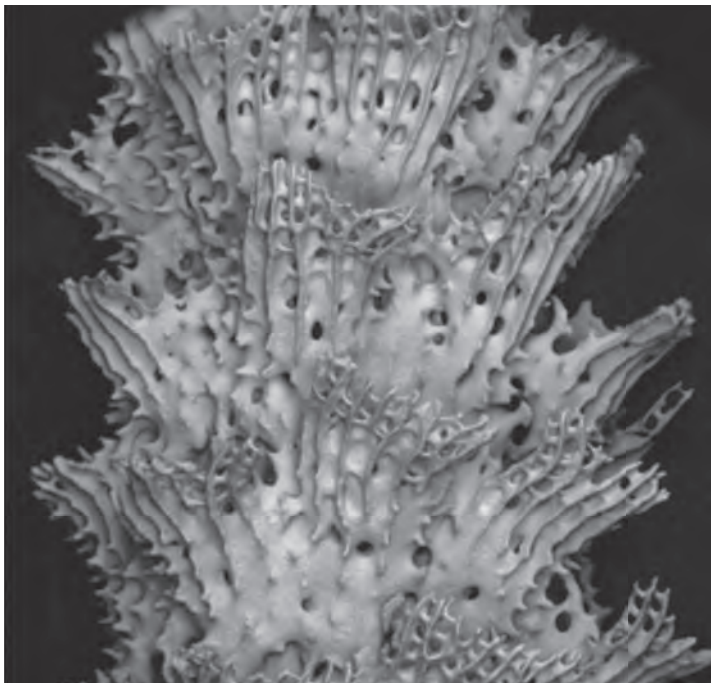
For the second consecutive year, the Monegasque National Commission hosted an event to celebrate World Theatre Day (27 March). Six Monegasque theatre companies took part performing in succession at the Princess Grace Theatre.

Throughout the year the National Commission organized a series of activities in honour of UNESCO International days and weeks. As a contribution to the International

Year of Crystallography, the Scientific Centre of Monaco hosted a photographic exhibition entitled 'Between Art and Science, Coral in Images: from Creature to Crystal' (see below). To celebrate International Jazz Day (30 April), the Music Academy – Fondation Prince Rainier III hosted a concert performed by the Jazz and Modern Amplified Music department.

The National Commission also supported a two-day international symposium on 'Humankind, fauna and the climate in prehistoric times', held at Monaco's Museum of Prehistoric Anthropology (23–24 October), which brought together leading experts from around the world.

Finally, the Director of Education, Youth and Sports of the Principality of Monaco attended the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan (10–12 November). This theme receives particular attention in Monaco's schools and is the subject of many awareness-raising activities at all educational levels.



A success story

As part of the International Year of Crystallography, the Scientific Centre of Monaco hosted a free photographic exhibition entitled 'Between Art and Science, Coral in Images: from Creature to Crystal' (7 April – 3 June).

Scientific topics are often perceived by the general public to be highly specialized. However, nature seen through a microscope reveals beauty often hidden from the naked eye. Corals, the architects of coral reefs, impress immediately with their visual beauty and colours. However, when viewed through a microscope the hidden details of these natural objects are revealed. Scientific photography is indispensable for determining the inner mechanisms of structure and form, but also reveals works of art.

The exhibition displayed some sixty enlarged macro pictures taken in normal and fluorescent light, as well as images made with a scanning electron microscope.

Acropora sp., photograph made with a scanning electron microscope, magnification: X20 – a fine example of scientific photography revealing works of art.

© Scientific Centre of Monaco

NETHERLANDS

Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Andrée van Es

Secretary-General: Mr Robert J. Quarles van Ufford

Website: www.unesco.nl

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO undertook numerous activities in line with UNESCO's main fields of expertise and continued to raise awareness about these domains through its website and social media channels.

In education, the National Commission together with the Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development published the book, *Addressing the Quality Challenge: Reflections on the Post-2015 UNESCO Education Agenda*, as a contribution to the international discussion on quality education.

The efforts of the National Commission also saw the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) in the Netherlands expand from twenty-four to thirty-two schools.

In the natural sciences, the Commission focused on UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme and the Geopark Network. In January, a workshop was organized for representatives of Dutch natural areas, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), relevant institutions and ministries to exchange information with international specialists. As a result, three natural areas are now considering application for MAB status. Following the designation of the first Geopark in the

Netherlands in 2013, the National Commission also took the initiative to establish a National Geopark Committee.

May 2014 marked the 60th anniversary of the UNESCO 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Event of an Armed Conflict. To celebrate this anniversary, the National Commission organized several activities to highlight the importance of this Cultural Convention, including a symposium at the Peace Palace in The Hague and a travelling photography exhibition (see below).

The National Commission also devoted significant resources to the organization of a four-week training course, entitled 'First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis', to be held in Amsterdam in early 2015. The course has been organized, together with ICCROM and the Smithsonian Institution, to equip participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to help protect and preserve cultural heritage in emergency situations.

In 2014, the Commission participated for the first time in Vakantiebeurs, the biggest tourism fair in the Netherlands, to raise awareness of sustainable forms of tourism. More than 12,500 people attended the stand and received an educational card game.

In communication and information, the Commission organized an expert meeting on 'Endangered Languages and Endangered Data'. The main focus of the meeting was to explore ways to save the *UNESCO Atlas on Endangered Languages*.

The National Commission also directed significant energy towards the UNESCO PERSIST Project, which promotes digital sustainability and stimulates debate on this subject among archives, museums, libraries, governments and the ICT industry. In its current phase, PERSIST is coordinated by the Netherlands National Commission.



A success story

The highlight of 2014 for the Netherlands National Commission was the organization of the travelling outdoor photo exhibition 'Culture under Attack', which marks the 60th anniversary of the 1954 Hague Convention. The exhibition is specifically aimed at the general public and focuses on the impact of armed conflict on societies and their heritage. Although the loss of cultural heritage cannot compare with the loss of human lives and human suffering, culture is part of our identity and the destruction of cultural heritage constitutes a loss for humankind.

The twenty photos that were selected show scenes from recent conflicts and highlight the devastating level of destruction of cultural heritage. They also emphasize the resilience of the affected societies and highlight their reconstruction efforts.

The exhibition was shown in Antwerp, Bruges and The Hague and is due to be exhibited in the garden of the Museum of Ethnology in Leiden in 2015. The digital version of the exhibition can be found at: cultureunderattack.org.

The exhibition 'Culture under Attack'.

© Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO

NORWAY

Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Tora Aasland

Secretary-General: Ms Tanja Kristine Hegge

Website: www.unesco.no

Update of activities in 2014

There is increased interest in UNESCO activities in Norway. In 2014, the Norwegian National Commission was actively involved in consultations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prior to the publication of a government white paper on Education for Development. Two UNESCO Chairs were also nominated for the first time in Norway on Sustainable Lifestyles at Hedmark University College and on Sustainable Heritage and Environmental Management at the University of Bergen. In addition, the National Commission together with other relevant partners invited 160 members of the education community to the national launch in February of the latest *Educational For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report*, entitled *Teaching and Learning*. Among the contributors to this edition were the Chair of the National Commission, the Deputy Minister of Education and Research, and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Education is a priority for the National Commission and staff participated in numerous meetings relating to its place in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Commission organized two seminars last year in the field of communication and information. The first was held on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day and focused on the following themes: the current situation in Ukraine; the increasing reliance among young Norwegians on social media as a source of information; and the views of Norwegians on freedom of expression. The conference generated several articles in the press. The second seminar was held to mark the 1st International Day against Impunity and focused on dilemmas raised by reporting in areas of conflict, with Syria as a case study. The National Commission participated in the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) Council and followed closely the debates on freedom of expression and the media in relation to the SDGs, as well as ongoing discussions about the internet and cyberspace.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission together with the Research Council of Norway presented the 2013 *World Social Science Report*, entitled *The Changing Global Environment*. Senior scientists commented favourably on the report, in particular regarding its emphasis on the linkages between environmental change and other crises, risks and vulnerabilities that affect society.

In 2014, the National Commission organized the annual two-day meeting for the Nordic countries and Faroe Islands (August). Sixty participants gathered to discuss preparations for the next General Conference and joint UNESCO activities.

The National Commission also distributed NOK 3.1 million (€370,000) to UNESCO-related activities in Norway. The Commission received over sixty applications on its website from interested organizations from which it selected thirty applicants.



The Director-General with organizers and participants of the Bergen conference.
© Bjarte Brask Eriksen

A success story

In 2014, the National Commission in cooperation with the University of Bergen and local authorities organized an international UNESCO Conference on 'Synergies for Development – Using Natural and Cultural Heritage in Sustainable Development' (24–26 March). The conference, held in Bergen, was opened by the Director-General of UNESCO and highlighted synergies between the various UNESCO Cultural Conventions (1972, 2003 and 2005).

The participants included numerous practitioners working in World Heritage, Man and the Biosphere (MAB), Creative Cities and other UNESCO programmes related to heritage and sustainability.

The lively exchange of ideas highlighted the importance of natural and cultural heritage to identity, as well as its capacity to mobilize responsibility for collaborative work towards sustainability. The conference also emphasized the importance of sustainable tourism and culture for development, and noted that cultural practices and identity can have a profound influence on creating understanding and appreciation of sustainability with regard to the ways in which different cultures organize societies and human activities.

POLAND

Polish National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Andrzej Rottermund

Secretary-General: Mr Sławomir Ratajski

Website: www.unesco.pl

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Polish National Commission fulfilled its mandate in UNESCO's fields of competence, responding to challenges and current needs in Poland.

In education, the National Commission's supported a conference of the Polish-German Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) entitled 'I look and I see, we act and we are effective – UNESCO ASPnet', and associated workshops in Opole (2 April), co-organized by the Opolskie and Silesian authorities, the German Consulate in Opole and the UNESCO Initiative Centre in Wrocław.

The Commission continued to provide multicultural educational workshops for Polish schools as part of the Euro-Arab Dialogue project 'In the World of Islam', organized in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education, Warsaw University and Jagiellonian University. Over 900 students and 600 teachers have participated in the workshops since the project's launch in 2005.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission supported the UNESCO–Poland Co-Sponsored Fellowship Programme for sixty-seven young researchers in the field of engineering, held at AGH

University of Science and Technology in Krakow. The Commission also implemented its own Fellowship Programme for sixty-two young researchers (Eastern European and developing countries), based at Polish higher education institutions.

In communication and information, the National Commission and the Polish IFAP Committee, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the National Library and the National Audiovisual Institute, organized an expert seminar 'Public Use Models in Library and Audiovisual Resources' in Warsaw (9 June). The seminar was organized to discuss professional expectations regarding planned changes in copyright law, and its conclusions were forwarded to the Government.

In culture, the National Commission, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Polish Memory of the World (MOW) Committee, prepared an expert meeting as part of the ongoing process to elaborate a UNESCO recommendation on documentary heritage (37C/Resolution 53). The meeting took place in Warsaw (26–27 June) and was convened by the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova.

In 2014, the National Commission and the Polish MOW Committee also celebrated the launch of the Polish National MOW Register in Warsaw, under the auspices of the President of Poland (17 October).

The National Commission also worked to raise awareness among non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the general public of the aims of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, through articles, interviews, conferences and seminars.

Finally, the National Commission actively supported the establishment of the 10th UNESCO Chair in Poland – the UNESCO Chair for Holocaust education at Jagiellonian University in Krakow.



Debate on the social dimensions of cultural and natural landscape, the Royal Castle, Warsaw.

© Janusz Szpytko

A success story

Urbanization processes present some challenges for sustainable development and quality of life. Within the framework of the UNESCO Recommendation on historic urban landscape, the Polish National Commission organized a debate on social dimensions of cultural and natural landscape in Warsaw (29 September). The conference entitled 'Cultural and natural landscape: its significance for society' gathered together representatives of Government and local authorities, as well as NGOs, architects, urban planners and heritage experts, under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland.

The debate focused on the legal framework of the protection and management of landscape and public space, as well as on expectations concerning social participation in ongoing urban processes and changes. Young participants from NGOs shared their recent experiences concerning the safeguarding of tangible and intangible urban heritage, and discussed ways of involving local inhabitants in innovative projects.

The conclusions relating to the legal framework, social participation and education were submitted to the ministries concerned. The Polish National Commission for UNESCO is now preparing a publication to demonstrate the significance of cultural and natural environment for social cohesion, the identity of individuals and communities, quality of life, and sustainable economic and social development.

PORTUGAL

Portuguese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Ana Martinho

Secretary-General: Ms Rita Brasil de Brito

Website: www.unescoportugal.mne.pt

Update of activities in 2014

The majority of the activities of the Portuguese National Commission are undertaken in cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters, Portuguese institutions dealing with UNESCO's core themes and programmes, UNESCO networks and Portuguese-speaking countries. The National Commission develops projects in domains such as education for cultural and natural heritage, education for global citizenship, intangible and underwater cultural heritage, geoparks, and media literacy and sustainable development.

In 2014, the Portuguese National Commission focused on communication and information. To this end, it produced twelve information leaflets on UNESCO projects and programmes, including the Memory of the World programme, youth education and World Heritage, and education for sustainable development. It revamped its website and launched an institutional Facebook page. Editorial activity also increased with the launch of pedagogical materials and brochures, namely *World Heritage in Portugal: 30 Years of Good-Practices*, the *UNESCO Clubs Practical Guide* and the *Associated Schools Practical Manual*.

The National Commission organized events aimed at exchanging experiences and good practices, such as the 13th National Meeting of Associated Schools, with the

participation of schools from Cape Verde and Mozambique, and the 2nd National Meeting of UNESCO Clubs and Centres. It also participated in training activities and launched annual prizes, including the Creativity and Innovation Prize and the Human Rights and Integration Prize for journalists.

The number of UNESCO Associated Schools, Clubs and Chairs grew significantly during the year. Among these can be mentioned the launch of the UNESCO Chair for Biodiversity and Sustainable Development at the University of Coimbra, thirteen Associated Schools and three UNESCO Clubs.

The Portuguese National Commission collaborated with a working group established by UNESCO to create a new structure and guidelines for the scientific programme Global Geoparks of UNESCO, sharing with all Members States its own best practices in this field. Within the framework of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, the National Commission collaborated with partners to launch the online Platform EDS2014+ (www.plataforma2014mais.cidaads.org) in line with the Plan of Action 2015.

The Portuguese National Commission thoroughly prepared and supported Portugal's participation in the 2014 World Heritage Committee session and assembled a group of experts to revise Portugal's Tentative List. It also gathered together a group of specialists to analyse Portuguese elements for possible nomination to the List of Intangible Heritage and to give advice on initiatives to be implemented at the national level. The World Heritage in Portugal Network, which brings together the managers of fifteen World Heritage properties, was established in July 2014 to promote the exchange of knowledge and share experiences, as well as to facilitate joint participation in projects and initiatives. The Portuguese National Commission also promoted other UNESCO Conventions and programmes in the field of culture by writing articles to publications, participating as trainers in courses, making presentations and disseminating information.



The official launch of the exhibition 'Crystallography and Fundamental Sciences'.
© Portuguese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The Portuguese National Commission in partnership with the Portuguese National Committee for the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP) of UNESCO and the Portuguese National Committee of Mathematics of Planet Earth organized the launch event for the International Year of Crystallography (IYCr) in Portugal, with the support of the Division of Fundamental Sciences of UNESCO and the University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD). During this event, the Commission also launched the itinerant exhibition 'Crystallography and the Fundamental Sciences' and the Portuguese version of the UNESCO brochure 'Crystallography Matters!' Within this framework, the Portuguese National Commission also collaborated in the publication of official stamps celebrating the IYCr.

ROMANIA

Romanian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Remus Pricopie, Minister of National Education

Secretary-General: Mr Ani Matei

Website: www.cnr-unesco.ro

Update of activities in 2014

During 2014 the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO launched a series of initiatives to raise awareness of UNESCO and its main objectives. In particular it undertook outreach activities aimed at governmental and non-governmental organizations, civil society partners, other institutions and individuals working for the advancement of education, science, culture, communication and information in Romania.

The National Commission organized a number of activities throughout the year to celebrate International Days. To mark the International Day of the Family (15 May), for example, the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) organized a national art competition entitled 'My family is the most beautiful' aimed at young people. The competition highlighted the importance of the right to education and the right to leisure. To mark World Poetry Day the National Commission launched the 'Film a Poem' project. This initiative encouraged high-school students to creatively adapt poems into original artistic works in other media.

On the occasion of the European Day of Languages (24 September), the National Commission supported a recital of the Madrigal Choir at the National Library in Bucharest.

The repertoire of this Romanian choir encompasses six languages and is recognized worldwide as a unique form of cultural heritage. The Commission also launched the 'Jeunesses Musicales Conducting Masterclass and International Competition' (25–30 August), which enabled young conductors from fifteen countries to attend a master class. The most talented participants were then invited to conduct the Royal Chamber Orchestra in a Gala Concert held at the Romanian Athenaeum.

Other cultural events supported by the National Commission included the 45th edition of the International Folklore Festival 'Calusul Romanesc'. The festival is committed to encouraging the promotion of folk dance heritage valued by UNESCO, stimulating international cultural exchange, and establishing a viable forum for promising folk artists to demonstrate their talent. In addition, the International Art Creation Studios of the Romanian National Commission invited twelve professional visual artists of proven ability and achievement to undertake a six-month residency at Eforie Nord and Busteni (1 April – 30 September). The artists were selected for the innovation, experimentation and excellence of their work in terms of contemporary visual arts practice and discourse.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission organized the METAMORPHOSIS Summer School, which provides an opportunity for young people to explore areas of science not addressed in school, such as astronomy, biophysics, renewable energy, robotics and nanotechnology.

Lastly, in 2014 a number of national and international programmes focused on biodiversity, notably the 'Blue Danube River Project'. Romania was responsible for international coordination of the project, which culminated in a series of meetings at the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, with teachers and students attending from countries participating in the programme.



The exhibition 'Bucharest, rediscovered – Metamorphosis 6', by George Dumitriu, on display in the Metropolis Centre, Bucharest.

© Romanian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the National Commission collaborated with the Alumnus Club for UNESCO and the European Federation of Clubs, Centres and Associations of UNESCO to organize an itinerant photography exhibition by the renowned artist George Dumitriu, entitled 'Bucharest, rediscovered – Metamorphosis 6'. The exhibition highlights the process of rediscovery by each generation of Bucharest, its history and its charms. As such, it targets young people, as well as Romanian and foreign tourists visiting Bucharest, and encourages them to rediscover the architecture of the city, both new and old.

The exhibition was accompanied by the production of an album with text in three languages – Romanian, English and French – providing a historical perspective on Bucharest, with stories and insights into the city. The project was considered a best practice and was presented by the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO and the Alumnus Club during the 37th UNESCO General Conference in Paris. The exhibition will be exhibited in several European capitals throughout 2015.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO

President: Mr Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Grigory Ordzhonikidze

Website: www.unesco.ru

Update of activities in 2014

In April 2014, the Russian Federation celebrated the 60th anniversary of the USSR/Russia's membership of UNESCO. The Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO held a ceremonial meeting with the participation of the UNESCO Director-General, Ms Irina Bokova, heads of diplomatic missions of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Baltic countries, representatives of the Russian Government, federal ministers, leaders of UNESCO projects and programmes in Russia, and representatives of civil society and the media.

In December 2014, the National Commission was a co-organizer of Saint Petersburg's 3rd International Cultural Forum dedicated to the 250th anniversary of the State Hermitage Museum. The forum was attended by the Director-General, who met with the President of the Russian Federation to discuss ongoing multifaceted cooperation.

The National Commission also organized the international conference 'Ob'-lrytysh River Basin: the Youth Study and Preserve Natural and Cultural Heritage in the Regions of the World's Great Rivers' (25–29 May), which took place within the framework of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission initiated a meeting at the 40th Scientific Assembly of COSPAR in Moscow to discuss technological heritage within the framework of the UNESCO Thematic Initiative on Astronomy and World Heritage (6 August). In addition, the Commission co-organized the 2nd International Forum on 'Renewable energy: Towards Raising Energy and Economic Efficiencies' (November), which focused on effective promotion of innovative renewable energy.

In education, the Commission collaborated with the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE) to organize the international conference 'To learn and live together: Modern strategies of education for persons with disabilities'. The conference brought together representatives from thirteen countries to discuss the modalities of inclusive education. This cooperation also formed the basis of the international conference 'UNESCO Chairs Partnership on ICT Use in Education' (June 2014), which included the participation of members of the IITE Governing Board and UNESCO Chairs from fourteen countries.

In communication and information, the National Commission participated in the 3rd International Conference on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace, held in Yakutsk, Russian Federation (28 June – 3 July) within the framework of UNESCO's Information for All Programme (IFAP). The conference was organized to implement the decisions of the World Summit on the Information Society. The participants adopted the final document, the Yakutsk Declaration on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace.

The Commission also launched the Andrei Stenin International Press Photo Contest (22 December 2014 – 3 June 2015). The contest aims to promote photography, discover new names in photojournalism, draw wider attention to issues in photojournalism, and support young photographers.



International Symposium for Green Chemistry.
© Russian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In September 2014, the National Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO organized an International Symposium for Green Chemistry at the Y. Samoilov Scientific Research Institute for Fertilizers and Insectofungicides. At the opening ceremony, UNESCO, the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) and the Russian producer of phosphate-based fertilizers, PhosAgro, launched a new green chemistry programme and awarded its first six grants to young scientists from around the world.

This partnership programme was initiated by the National Commission with the goal of harnessing the talents of young scientists to promote green chemistry and its contribution to environmental safety through innovations that help to minimize or prevent environmental and health hazards. The programme also aims to develop energy-efficient processes and to introduce new environmentally sound technologies.

SERBIA

Commission of the Republic of Serbia for UNESCO

President: pending appointment

Secretary-General: Mrs Jasna Zrnovic

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Commission of the Republic of Serbia, in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Venice and with funds from the Participation Programme, convened a meeting of National Commissions of South-East Europe (SEE) in Belgrade (18–19 March). The meeting defined regional priorities for cooperation with UNESCO, and was attended by participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Republic of Moldova, Slovenia, Turkey and representatives of the Culture Authority of the UAE, with the assistance of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Italian Embassy in Belgrade.

In culture, the Commission supported the organization of an exhibition of Slovak naïve painting. The exhibition was organized in cooperation with the gallery Babka from Kovačica and was exhibited at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (10–14 February). The National Commission and the City of Belgrade also organized a celebration for World Jazz Day (30 April) with the participation of eminent jazz musicians.

The National Commission supported the nomination of 'Slava, celebration of family saint patron's day' for inscription on

the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This element, the first to be submitted by Serbia, was inscribed on the List at the 9th session of the ICH Committee.

The Music Art Project – El Sistema Serbia (MAP) also received support from the Commission. MAP promotes the social inclusion of children, especially from disadvantaged communities, through music education. In less than a year it has reached children and teachers in cities throughout Serbia.

The Commission also participated in celebrations organized by the Serbian Academy of Science and Art commemorating the 200th anniversary of the birth of the scientist Josif Pančić and the 100th anniversary of the death of the composer Stevan Mokranjac.

In the natural sciences, the Serbian Parliament ratified the Agreement to establish a UNESCO Category II Centre for Water for Sustainable Development and Adaptation to Climate Change (September).

In addition, the L'Oréal-UNESCO 'For Women in Science' National Fellowships were awarded to three young Serbian female scientists (8 October). Launched in Serbia in 2010, in partnership with L'Oreal Balkan, the National Commission and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, the fellowships are awarded within the global L'Oréal-UNESCO programme to encourage scientific careers and research among women in Serbia. In 2014, the fellowship programme focused on astrophysics, biotechnology and biochemistry.



The President of the Republic of Serbia, Mr Tomislav Nikolic, speaking at the Milankovitch Anniversary UNESCO Symposium, held in Belgrade.

© Commission of the Republic of Serbia for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Milankovitch Anniversary UNESCO Symposium was held in Belgrade (3–5 September) under the auspices of UNESCO and the Serbian Government. The symposium was co-organized by the Centre for Water for Sustainable Development and Adaptation to Climate Change and the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and opened by the President of the Republic of Serbia, Mr Tomislav Nikolic. The event comprised two conferences: 'Water Management in Transition Countries' and 'Past Climate: A Lesson for the Future – Regional Climate Change Aspects'.

Participants included distinguished Serbian and international professionals, scientists, academicians and university professors. The symposium highlighted the impacts of climate change and social, political and economic transition on water resources management, and highlighted some of the economic, political and legislative requirements imposed on transition countries as they strive to achieve sustainable management of water resources.

The conclusions of the symposium were included in the final document, the Belgrade Statement of Water Sector Sustainability, and used to define some of the thematic areas for the 7th World Water Forum to be held in Daegu, the Republic of Korea (April 2015).

SLOVAKIA

Slovak National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Ľudovít Molnár

Secretary-General: Mrs Aurélia Füle

Website: www.unesco.sk

Update of activities in 2014

During 2014 the Slovak Commission for UNESCO focused its attention on priorities such as the natural and social sciences and sustainable development. In collaboration with the German and Austrian National Commissions, the Slovak National Commission organized an international workshop on 'Sustainability Science' in Central and Eastern Europe in Bratislava (June), with the aim of promoting the concept and strengthening cooperation within the region.

In collaboration with the Association for Youth, Science and Technology (AMAVET) – a non-governmental organization – the 10th EXPO Sciences Europe 2014 took place in Žilina, Slovakia (September) under the auspices of the Slovak National Commission. The main objective of the event was to interest and motivate young people in the field of research, science and technology innovation. Within this framework the Slovak National Commission also participated in the preparations for Science and Technology Week in Slovakia.

The Slovak Committee for the UNESCO Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme organized a 'Sub-regional International Conference on Cross-Border Migration and its Implications for the Central European Area'. The conference took place in Bratislava (November) and was attended by representatives of the region, Germany and the United Kingdom, who shared their views on the political, socio-cultural, economic and security dimensions of cross-border migration.

In cooperation with the Austrian and Hungarian National Commissions, the Slovak National Commission organized a UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) meeting, in Vienna (March), to enhance regional exchanges between ASP schools. The ASPnet and Clubs coordinator in Slovakia also organized a cycle of lectures and presentations for schools and the wider public, dedicated to the Philosophical Heritage of Humanity and UNESCO International Days.

The Slovak National Commission traditionally sponsors the International Contest of Children's and Youth's Artistic Creativity – Green World, with the aim of encouraging a love for nature and environment through artistic expression. The contest has been held annually since 1996 during the Environmental Film Festival ENVIROFILM.

An international conference on 'Selected Aspects of Integrated Management of Environment' took place in Banská Štiavnica on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the creation of the UNESCO Chair for Ecological Awareness and Sustainable Development (November). Stakeholders from academia, state and public institutions and non-governmental organizations attended with the aim of evaluating the development process of integrated environmental management.



10th National Conference on Biosphere Reserves.
© Slovak National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The Slovak Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Committee is one of the most active bodies of the Slovak National Commission. In 2014, it participated in the project 'Nature to People – People to Nature' to design a new management model and Action Plan for the Slovak Polana Biosphere Reserve. The Director of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences and the Secretary of the MAB Programme visited the reserve on the occasion of the final project workshop (November).

In October 2014, the Slovak MAB Committee organized the 10th National Conference on Biosphere Reserves, held in Stará Lesná, Tatra Biosphere Reserve. The main theme was 'Biodiversity and Landscape Ecosystems Utilization in UNESCO Biosphere Reserves'. Twenty-seven oral presentations and three poster presentations documented the permanent presence of science in the Slovak Biosphere Reserves and demonstrated the availability of results from scientific projects for proper science-based management.

Each year the Slovak MAB Committee organizes 'Open Doors to Biosphere Reserves' with local stakeholders, allowing youth and adults people to discover the values and approach of the biosphere reserve.

SLOVENIA

Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Radovan Stanislav Pejovnik

Secretary-General: Ms Marjotka Hafner

Website: www.unesco.si

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Slovenian National Commission organized a series of activities in UNESCO's main areas of competence.

In the field of World Heritage, the National Commission supported the transnational serial nomination of the property 'Dinaric Karst' to the World Heritage List and the extension of the existing nomination 'Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany'.

In culture, the National Commission actively promoted initiatives within the framework of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022). Numerous youth-based activities were organized in partnership with the Slovenian UNESCO Youth Platform, the Slovenian Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) and the United Nations Association of Slovenia.

The National Commission gave its support and patronage to the International Alpe Adria Folklore Festival 2014, which took place in Slovenia under the organization of the International Council of Organizations of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts (CIOFF).

The National Commission also supported and participated in international and national events throughout Slovenia, including the Cultural Bazaar (March), the OpenCourseWare Consortium Global Conference (May), the International Symposium on Soren Kierkegaard (September) and the International Conference on Video Documenting of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Short Videos for ICH Registers (September).

Throughout the year twenty-four UNESCO Heralds, youngsters aged 12–23, shared and spread UNESCO's ideas, topics and goals. They met with the Slovenian Minister of Education, Science and Sport and exchanged their ideas with the UN Secretary's Special Envoy for Youth. Two UNESCO Heralds from Slovenia also visited the UN Vienna International Centre and attended lectures.

For the seventh year, the National Commission and the Slovenian Philosophy Society celebrated World Philosophy Day, this year under the theme 'Orientation in life – orientation in belief'. A traditional event was organized and well-attended by philosophers, teachers and students.

The National Commission also supported the Slovenian translation and publication of the picture book *My Hiroshima* by the author Junki Morimoto. Offspring of survivor trees from Hiroshima were planted in a ceremony to mark the occasion.

Lastly, in 2014 the first two UNESCO Chairs in Slovenia were approved. The UNESCO Chair on Karst Education was established at the University of Nova Gorica, in cooperation with the ZRC SAZU Karst Research Institute, and the UNESCO Chair on Open Technologies for Open Educational Resources and Open Learning was established at the Jožef Stefan Institute.



Field trip during the international conference Presentation of the Pile-Dwelling Culture (World Heritage Site).

© Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In November, the Ljubljana Marsh Nature Park hosted an international conference entitled 'Presentation of the Pile-Dwelling Culture (World Heritage Site)', organized with the Ministry of Culture, the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO, the Municipality of Ig and the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia. The two-day conference presented examples of pile-dwelling culture from Austria, Germany, Italy and Switzerland, as well as best practices.

The main obstacle to presenting pile-dwellings is their inaccessibility, as they remain invisible and hidden under the earth or water. The conference therefore assembled experts from diverse fields including archaeology, nature conservation, tourism development, planning and architecture together with representatives of local civil society.

The conference also included a field trip and workshops, during which the participants discussed the possibilities and challenges of presentation, as well as the different infrastructural and visual components, contributing with their knowledge and experience to the presentation of Ljubljana Marsh heritage. In addition, the conference facilitated the start of dialogue among local stakeholders in the area.

SPAIN

Spanish National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Mr Luis Ramallo

Secretary-General: Mr Federico Palomera

Website: www.aecid.es/ES/sectores-de-cooperación/cultura-y-ciencia/unesco

Update of activities in 2014

The Spanish National Commission operates under the aegis of the Directorate for Cultural and Scientific Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. It consists of three members and receives expert support in UNESCO's fields of competence from the relevant ministries. The Commission encourages and collaborates with civil society to participate in UNESCO's programmes, celebrate UNESCO International Days, and launch initiatives in accordance with UNESCO's objectives.

During 2014, the National Commission devoted the majority of its resources to continuing the assessment and evaluation of UNESCO Centres and Clubs in Spain, initiated at the end of last year, and supervising the proper use of UNESCO's name and logo by the centres.

In education, the Spanish National Commission participated as part of the Jury for two highly prestigious education awards highlighting values education and literacy projects. In addition, two new UNESCO Chairs were created in Multilingual Education and Social Sciences, bringing the total to seventy-eight Spanish UNESCO Chairs.

The National Commission also supported Spanish participation in the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) International ESD Events for Students and Teachers, held in Okayama, Japan (4–8 November). The event gathered together forty-two ASPnet teachers and 168 ASPnet students. Four ASPnet students from Madrid and their tutor presented experiences in relation to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

In culture, the National Commission endorsed the 9th Biennial of Heritage Restoration and Management, a multidisciplinary event, held at Valladolid (13–16 November). The meeting brought together researchers and experts working in the conservation, protection and restoration of Cultural Heritage. The Commission also granted UNESCO's patronage to the 5th IKUWAS Conference 'Heritage for Humanity', dedicated to the safeguarding of underwater heritage. In addition, the National Commission formally supported and submitted five applications to the Creative Cities Network in the areas of Gastronomy, Design and Literature.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission supported the establishment of the International Centre on Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves in Castellet i la Gornal, Barcelona. This first centre of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme under UNESCO auspices will serve as a model for scientific cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean and provide an excellent platform for information exchange on issues related to biosphere reserves and their sustainable development.

The National Commission also supported the organization of an Open Day at the Villuercas-Jara-Ibores Geopark to raise awareness about geoparks in Spain. In addition, the Commission endorsed the International Ontology Congress on the theme of 'Old Questions on Physics, Contemporary Approaches' and the conference 'Campus Africa: Africa and the Millennium Development Goals' on the subject of tropical diseases.



A success story

In 2014, the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy was awarded to a Centre for Continuing Education in Seville. The Centro de Educación Permanente Polígono Sur developed an educational project in a socially and economically disadvantaged area of the city that targeted people at risk of social exclusion, youth with a high level of dropping out, and new readers who had abandoned the educational system at an early stage. The Director-General of UNESCO awarded the prize in an official ceremony that took place on International Literacy Day in Dhaka (8 September).

The Director-General awarding the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy to a Centre for Continuing Education in Seville.

© Spanish National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

SWEDEN

Swedish National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Inger Davidson

Secretary-General: Mr Mats Djurberg

Website: www.unesco.se

Update of activities in 2014

The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO meets six times a year and has two main tasks – to advise the Government on UNESCO matters and to inform the public in Sweden about UNESCO. The Commission's budget comes from the Ministry of Education and Science, which also hosts the Secretariat of the Commission. All Swedish cooperation with UNESCO is guided by a four-year general government strategy, which sets priorities and working methods.

In March 2014, the National Commission arranged a one-day seminar in cooperation with the Swedish Library Association to launch the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) manifestos along with the publication, *To live and breathe the IFLA library manifestos*. These texts were translated into Swedish and are now available, digitally and in printed format, free of charge. At the event, leading representatives of Swedish libraries gave lectures and held

working groups for library professionals on how to use the manifestos.

More than 220 delegates from some fifty countries met in Jönköping for the annual meeting of the International Coordinating Council of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme (10–13 June). The participants were given the opportunity to visit the biosphere reserve and to learn about its impact and possibilities for local development. The Council meeting was opened by the State Secretary of the Swedish Ministry for Rural Affairs, among others, who stated that biosphere reserves can be instrumental in developing new methods and new knowledge for preserving natural areas and creating conditions that allow people to live sustainably with nature.

Sweden, through the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), is currently one of the major extra-budgetary donors to UNESCO. In November, a new agreement was signed for 2014–2017 that will make US\$ 54 million available for UNESCO's work. This long-term agreement focuses on supporting UNESCO core programmes, and will strengthen UNESCO's capacity to achieve future sustainable development goals. The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO has been an instrumental partner in the development of this agreement, which quadruples the contribution of Sweden to UNESCO, making it one of the four largest donors to the Organization.



University interns at the Swedish National Commission present information on UNESCO to students at an open day at Uppsala University.

© Swedish National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Swedish National Commission took part in preparations for the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, held in Nagoya (10–12 November). In order to develop proposals for the Swedish delegation to the Nagoya conference, the National Commission initiated a participatory process designed to include a broad array of stakeholders.

In June, the Commission invited 125 researchers, policy-makers, teachers and educators to discuss and formulate recommendations with a view to reinforcing and strengthening education for sustainable development (ESD) in Sweden and abroad. In August, more than 100 researchers, teachers and practitioners – together with Members of Parliament – discussed and reviewed these recommendations.

Thirty-two recommendations were developed overall, three of which focus on shaping Swedish ESD-related policies. These include the need for a common vision and a National Action plan for ESD, an amendment to the national Education Act to include ESD, and the need for school authorities to observe and assess how ESD is put into practice in Sweden.

The recommendations were presented to the head of the Swedish Delegation to the Nagoya conference – the Minister for Upper Secondary School and Adult Education and Training. The organizers also met with the Minister after the conference to discuss future cooperation on the development of ESD.

SWITZERLAND

Swiss Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Jean-Bernard Münch

Secretary-General: Mr Nicolas Mathieu

Website: www.unesco.ch/fr/

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Swiss Commission for UNESCO pursued its activities according to priorities identified in the education sector (Early Childhood Education and Education for Sustainable Development) and the culture sector (world heritage, cultural diversity and intangible cultural heritage). Implementation of these priorities is reflected in several initiatives ranging from the organization of meetings to the drawing up of tools such as the Charter (see below).

In Early Childhood Education there is a continuing need to adapt the 'Framework for early childhood reception, training and education in Switzerland' to ensure its content and goals are taken into consideration and translated into practice. The same spirit of collaboration is a feature of activities in the field of intangible cultural heritage, where a series of regional forums has been organized to maintain the interest, participation and interaction of actors involved in implementing the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Youth was at the centre of a new initiative launched on International Youth Day (12 August). The Swiss Council for Youth Activities and the Swiss National Commission chose this date to launch an appeal for projects relating to one of five UNESCO World or International Days: the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, World Environment Day, the International Day of Democracy and the International Day of Peace. Five proposals were selected and given financial support with implementation to follow in 2015.

The Swiss Commission for UNESCO has also demonstrated continued commitment to its network. This aspect of its mandate is currently high on the agenda of all National Commissions, reflecting the determination of UNESCO to forge partnerships to strengthen the relevance, impact, credibility, effectiveness, efficiency and visibility of its work. National Commissions have been given a major role in establishing and maintaining partnerships in their respective countries, and as such are responsible for ensuring that their partners' activities are in line with the aims and principles of UNESCO. The Swiss Commission employs UNESCO's Comprehensive Partnership Strategy as a tool to support its functions of advising, supporting and monitoring the UNESCO network in Switzerland, which includes UNESCO Chairs and Clubs, the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), sponsors and many other partners that bear the UNESCO logo.



The Swiss Charter on World Heritage.
© Swiss Commission for UNESCO

A success story

For the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, the Swiss Commission suggested the idea of drawing up a Charter on World Heritage in Switzerland. The aim was to strengthen the sense of attachment to world heritage, promote the safeguarding of properties, and raise awareness of their outstanding universal value among those concerned.

The Commission submitted a first draft text in 2013, which was subject to a national consultation process in February 2014. Some 180 actors in world heritage – properties, the Confederation, the cantons, the communes, tourism organizations, national institutions and federations – received a letter inviting them to state their position on the text of the Charter. Their comments were integrated and the Charter was adopted at the General Assembly of the Swiss Commission (29 November).

The Charter consists of three parts. The preamble explains the foundations on which it is based. The following chapter sets out the core values of the Charter under five headings: preserving the authenticity and integrity of world heritage; ensuring the protection and management of world heritage; supporting sustainable development; encouraging the building, transmission and development of knowledge; and increasing exchanges, information and cohesion within the world heritage network. The last part of the Charter contains the final declaration by the signatories.

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

National Commission for UNESCO of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

President: Ms Elizabeta Kancheska Milevska, Minister of Culture

Secretary-General: Ms Lidija Topuzovska

Update of activities in 2014

The National Commission for UNESCO of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia acts as a forum for governments and civil society, encouraging national organizations, institutions and individuals to implement UNESCO's programmes and initiatives. A few examples of its work are given here.

In 2014, the National Commission inaugurated the travelling exhibition 'Imagining the Balkans' at the National Gallery of Skopje 'Chifte Hamam' (12 June). The exhibition highlighted the transformation of history museums into reflective places of dialogue and understanding. For the first time, national museums in the region have decided to approach the history of their countries from multiple perspectives, paying attention to cultural diversity and the complexities of national narratives. The exhibition was made possible by the active support of UNESCO, and was exhibited in Ljubljana, Belgrade, Bucharest, Skopje and Athens.

With UNESCO financial support three UNESCO clubs successfully launched a project entitled 'Understanding and respecting cultural diversity – motive for cultural cooperation for and from youth'. The objective was to collect and share information about local traditional folk costumes, songs, instruments and traditions from Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and to establish a network of youth and educators to share this information with the wider community.

During the year the International Coordinating Council of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme approved the nomination of the Ohrid Prespa Transboundary Biosphere Reserve at its annual meeting in Jönköping, Sweden (10–13 June). The biosphere reserve was inaugurated in Korca, Albania (13 October).

In cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Venice and the Italian Government, the National Commission organized a seminar in support of officials from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on the 'Fight against Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property' (12–18 October). The seminar participants included representatives from the Ministry of Interior Affairs, the Customs Administration, the Cultural Heritage Protection Office and the Ministry of Culture.

Lastly, at the 9th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (24–28 November), Kopachkata, a social dance from the village of Dramche in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.



The first regional meeting of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South-East Europe (SEE) with the participation of the Director-General of UNESCO.

© National Commission for UNESCO of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

A success story

In 2014, the Ministry of Culture and the National Commission for UNESCO organized the first regional meeting of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South-East Europe (SEE), 'Enhancing Culture for Development', which took place in Ohrid (27–28 June).

The participants discussed the implementation of a Declaration approved at the last Council. The Declaration would pave the way for the creation of a new unified regional platform at ministerial level, thereby facilitating significant developments in regional cultural cooperation. The platform constitutes an extraordinary opportunity to confirm and enhance joint commitment to the development and promotion of regional cultural cooperation.

Ministerial representatives from South-East Europe, Austria, Greece, Italy and Turkey, the Director General for UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, and representatives from the UNESCO Office in Venice attended the meeting. The participants approved the Second Appendix to the Charter of the Council of Ministers of Culture of SEE and the Ohrid Regional Strategy for Cultural Cooperation in SEE.

TURKEY

Turkish National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Öcal Oğuz

Secretary-General: Ms Sema Dinçer

Website: www.unesco.org.tr

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO re-elected its General Assembly, Executive Board and Committees for the term 2014–2018. The first information exchange meeting was organized in October and was attended by 149 participants. The event included seminars given by members of the UNESCO Secretariat, and provided a platform to initiate dialogue and inform new members about UNESCO strategies.

During the year the Turkish National Commission continued working with other National Commissions, Permanent Delegations, UNESCO Headquarters, Category II Centres, public entities, members of civil society and youth organizations.

The Commission also coordinated several youth-related activities in 2014. A workshop with members of the Children's Assembly of the Municipality of Ankara was organized in partnership with a non-governmental organization (NGO) involved in awareness raising, with the aim of highlighting UNESCO's work in the field of world heritage. The Commission also collaborated with the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education

for International Understanding (APCEIU) to organize a photography class and exhibition lasting one week in Cappadocia, a World Heritage site. The project involved twenty-eight high-school students from Turkey (selected from Associated Schools) and the Republic of Korea. The goal of the project was to use education and culture to promote international understanding and intercultural dialogue.

The Turkish National Commission also organized two events in cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters in the field of culture. In September, the National Commission funded and hosted a category VI expert meeting on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level. The meeting resulted in the submission and approval of Operational Guidelines by the Intergovernmental Committee.

In November, the National Commission co-organized a meeting with the UNESCO Office in Mexico on 'Settlement Dynamics in Human Evolution: Human history from dispersals and migrations to adaptations to sedentary societies, implications for the World Heritage Convention'. This meeting aimed to evaluate current methodologies for defining and establishing the Outstanding Universal Value of early food production-related heritage sites, and its implications within the framework of the World Heritage Convention.

Lastly, the National Commission organized four consultation meetings and published a set of online guidelines to promote understanding of the Commission's approach to anniversaries observed by UNESCO. It also authorized the use of UNESCO logos for twenty-five events carried out by various NGOs, academic and art institutions, ministries, municipalities and the private sector.



Project carried out jointly with the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan on traditional handicrafts.

© Turkish National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO jointly carried out a project with the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan on traditional handicrafts. The project gathered together twelve experts of the two National Commissions from the fields of sociology, gender studies, folklore, ICH studies, media and economics, to collaborate and organize field trips in Azerbaijan and Turkey.

In line with the UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2014–2021, the project aimed to promote recognition of women's contributions to culture and to study the contribution of traditional handicrafts to the empowerment of women and the enhancement of sustainable development at national and regional levels. It also examined the role of women in the transmission of this heritage. The findings of the project are being prepared in both Turkish and English.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Tim Williams

Secretary-General: Mr James Bridge

Website: www.unesco.org.uk

Update of activities in 2014

The remit of the United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO is to provide independent policy advice to the Government of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland on UNESCO-related issues, support the government's agenda in helping UNESCO to become more effective, and help individuals and institutions to access UNESCO resources and accreditation.

The ability of the National Commission to carry out these roles is contingent on its access to pro bono expert advice and support from a wide network of specialists in the fields of education, culture, the sciences, and communication and

information, from across the four nations of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Earlier this year, the National Commission conducted a series of interviews with current and prospective members of its expert network to help it understand how it can grow and strengthen the 'UNESCO family' in the United Kingdom.

This consultation informed the Commission's new expert network communications and recruitment strategies and its expert network brochure. The ultimate aim of this process is to clarify the role of the National Commission and its relationship with UNESCO, and the value of being an active and collaborative member of the United Kingdom's expert network.

Aware of the vital role that National Commissions play in linking UNESCO with academic, scientific, educational and artistic communities in their respective Member States, the National Commission is keen to exchange experiences with other Commissions, particularly in regard to the way they deliver information and advice to government and UNESCO.

Finally, during 2014 the National Commission produced a number of policy advice briefs. These include: *What are the implications for UNESCO of the proposed post-2015 Education For All goals?*; *The 'S' in UNESCO: Key challenges for UNESCO's science programmes and priorities*; and *A critical analysis of results reporting at UNESCO: Current situation and future opportunities*.



A success story

Following the prioritization of the Natural Science programme, the National Commission convened a high-level 'town meeting' at the United Kingdom's national academy of science, the Royal Society, to explore ways in which UNESCO could have the biggest impact in the natural sciences.

Senior representatives from the United Kingdom's scientific and engineering community joined the United Kingdom's Ambassador to UNESCO, the Royal Society's Foreign Secretary and the UNESCO Interim Assistant Director-General (ADG) for the Natural Sciences to interrogate UNESCO's current scientific programme and provide expert advice on where UNESCO should focus resources in future prioritization exercises.

The feedback from a series of breakout workshops went on to inform a new policy brief, which the National Commission plans to share with the new UNESCO ADG for Science, with a view to helping the Organization meet key challenges in the Natural Science sector.

The meeting itself helped to bridge the information gap between UNESCO's scientific priorities and programmes and the scientific community in the United Kingdom. It also helped to raise awareness of UNESCO's prolific role in global science and to highlight opportunities to partner and collaborate with the Organization.

The expert network brochure of the National Commission, available at:
www.unesco.org.uk

© United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

US National Commission for UNESCO

Executive-Secretary: Allison Wright

Website: www.state.gov/p/io/unesco/

Update of activities in 2014

The US National Commission strongly values US membership in UNESCO and encourages the participation of US-based companies, institutions and individuals in UNESCO's programmes and networks. With a diverse membership of 100 individuals from across the United States, at least seventy-five of whom represent civil society, the Commission draws on its vast expertise to educate the American public on the important programmes of UNESCO. The Commission operates as a US government board, with a regulated role, responsible for advice with regard to US policy at UNESCO.

A large and diverse group of Americans are involved in UNESCO programmes. Over the past year, the Commission has continued its efforts to highlight the outstanding value of the work being accomplished. Commission staff continue to

develop lines of communication with current networks such as the Category II Centres, UNITWIN/Chairs, Associated Schools, the International Coalition of Cities against Racism and Creative Cities. The Commission along with its staff looks forward to strengthening and expanding these networks throughout the United States.

National Commission staff employ effective communication tools in their work, such as newsletters and social media. The Commission also conducts in-person meetings and conference calls along with working groups and subcommittees. It enjoys close contact with UNESCO's New York Liaison Office and other Regional Offices, and is working to continue and broaden its engagement with other National Commissions.



A success story

In 2014, the US National Commission launched a roundtable discussion series. By co-hosting these events with US non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and foundations the Commission was able to expand its outreach capacity. The roundtable discussions provided an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss UNESCO-related topics of interest to wider communities. For example, the roundtable on 'Tapping the Tourism Potential of US World Heritage Sites' provided an opportunity for discussions with tourism and preservation professionals, including experts working on world heritage in the US Government, and at prospective and current sites. The discussions also allowed the Commission to highlight the innovative work being undertaken at UNESCO in the Culture Sector.

The Commission also hosted a discussion on 'Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All Global Education Goals' in light of the Education for All Global Monitoring Report and the UN Global Education First Initiative. Both of these events, along with the Annual Meeting of the US National Commission, which was honoured by the participation of the Director-General of UNESCO, were open to the wider community and offered opportunities to broaden and strengthen existing networks as well as understanding of UNESCO's work.

Ambassador Crystal Nix-Hines speaking at the 2014 Annual Meeting of the US National Commission in December 2014.

© US Department of State



Ecuador's Ministry of Education was awarded one of the 2014 UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prizes for its Basic Education for Youth and Adults Project, which has reached close to 325,000 beneficiaries since 2011, including indigenous populations who are taught in their mother tongue.
© Ecuador's Ministry of Education (EBJA)



Latin America and the Caribbean

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REPUBLIC OF)**

BAHAMAS

Bahamas National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Elwood Donaldson, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas to UNESCO

Secretary-General: Mr Leon L. Higgs

Update of activities in 2014

In early 2014, the Bahamas National Commission for UNESCO relocated from the building of the Ministry of Education, where it shared offices with many other departments, to its own offices located on the island of New Providence.

The year was a very eventful one for the Bahamas National Commission. It ratified three of the UNESCO Cultural Conventions, namely the 1972 World Heritage Convention, the 2003 Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention and the 2005 Diversity of Cultural Heritage Convention.

The Bahamas hosted a regional meeting on Underwater Cultural Heritage in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in

Nassau, Bahamas (16–18 July) as a follow up to the 2013 Lima Ministerial Meeting on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage. Representatives from the LAC region, as well as experts from France, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States were in attendance. As a result of the meeting, countries in the region agreed to develop and implement a number of joint projects. As a result of the meeting, all the participating countries now have a much clearer understanding of the benefits of becoming a State Party to the 2001 Convention.

In 2014, Nassau also became a member of UNESCO's Creative City Network in the area of Arts and Craft. To date, Nassau is the only English-speaking city in the region to be awarded such recognition.

Lastly, aside from various other activities undertaken in 2014, the Bahamas National Commission observed important International UN Days, including International Literacy Day (8 September) and World Teachers' Day (5 October) among others.



A success story

In 2014, the Bahamas National Commission participated for the first time in UNESCO's International Jazz Day celebrations (30 April). This special day began with a convocation at the CV Bethel High School, where the music department presented a programme on jazz in the presence of the Minister of Education, and the President and Secretary-General of the National Commission. This Assembly was broadcast live by radio on ZNS, the National Broadcasting Corporation of the Bahamas.

During the day, the President and Secretary-General of the National Commission appeared on a live talk show to discuss International Jazz Day and the work of UNESCO. The broadcast took place in Pompey Square overlooking the Nassau harbour, where a variety of jazz groups performed live from 1 pm to 10 pm.

A particular highlight of the day's activities was a ceremony honouring one of the early pioneers of jazz in the Bahamas, Mr Lou Adams, now 91 years old.

Sample Invitation for International Jazz Day Bahamas 2014.

© Derek Adams

BELIZE

Belize National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Patrick Faber, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports

Secretary-General: Mr Rudolph Anthony Jr.

Update of activities in 2014

The year 2014 was a very busy and successful one for the National Commission of Belize. The Commission began the year by submitting its financial reports for projects implemented under the UNESCO Participation Programme for the previous biennium. These were accepted and approved thanks to the competent and professional staff of the UNESCO PP Office.

The National Commission also submitted seven projects to the Participation Programme for 2014. Three have been approved to date and four are pending review and a final decision.

The Secretary-General of the National Commission attended the 194th Session of the Executive Board at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (8–22 April) in his capacity as the representative for Belize on the Board.

The Secretary-General also attended the '1st Interregional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO', held in

Astana, Kazakhstan (22–24 July). The meeting proved highly successful. Belize would like to publicly thank the team at the UNESCO Secretariat, the National Commission of Kazakhstan and its Secretary-General, and the government and people of Kazakhstan for their hospitality and welcome.

In October, the Secretary-General attended the 195th Session of UNESCO's Executive Board (15–31 October) and participated in all discussions, interventions, deliberations and decisions.

During the year the Belize National Commission celebrated International Days including World Teachers' Day (5 October), World Literacy Day (8 September) and World Press Freedom Day (3 May), to name just a few.

The National Commission also undertook work in 2014 to remove the Barrier Reef system from the List of World Heritage in Danger. Representatives from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) body plan to visit Belize in January 2015 to assess progress made in this regard.

Lastly, the National Commission of Belize continues to work closely with government ministries, non-governmental organizations, private companies and individuals to increase awareness of UNESCO and its programmes in Belize.



The Minister of Education, Youth and Sports handing over a project undertaken through the Participation Programme for the Belize Cancer Society.

© Belize National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, with assistance from UNESCO Headquarters and the UNESCO Regional Office in Kingston, the National Commission of Belize helped many Belizeans to attend workshops throughout the world.

Two staff members from the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) were sent to Mexico for tsunami training; one Belizean went to Jamaica to undertake statistical training; one officer from the Ministry of Fisheries, Forestry and Sustainable Development travelled to Brazil for World Heritage training; and a young female journalist attended a World Press Freedom Day workshop in Kingston (3 May) among many others.

Other activities attended included a workshop on 'Capacity Building on Heritage Conservation in the Caribbean', held in Sint Maarten; a workshop on 'Secondary/Higher Education', held in Kingston; workshops on 'Intangible Cultural Heritage', held in Kingston and Sint Maarten; a workshop on underwater cultural heritage, held in the Bahamas; a one-month course on underwater archaeology, held in St. Eustatius; a workshop on World Heritage, held in Cuba; and the 9th Inter-Regional Workshop on Intangible Cultural Heritage, held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

At present, six of the Senior Education Officers of the National Commission are participating in an online four-month course, organized by UNESCO, under the theme 'Reforming school supervision for quality improvement'.

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

British Virgin Islands National Commission for UNESCO

Chairman: Mr Myron V. Walwyn, Minister for Education and Culture

Secretary-General: Ms Allison Flax-Archer

Update of activities in 2014

The BVI National Commission for UNESCO supports the mission statement laid out by the Ministry of Education and Culture, and that of UNESCO, which is to serve the Virgin Islands community by promoting international cooperation both at home and abroad. This is achieved by fostering partnerships through the UNESCO platform of education, the sciences, culture, communication and information.

During 2014 the National Commission continued its work to promote the objectives and ideals of UNESCO through a range of activities.

In education, the Commission organized events in celebration of UNESCO International Days with a view to educating the public and schools about the importance of Education for All. These activities were undertaken in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and in partnership with other government agencies and civil society. The Commission also organized workshops and meetings funded by UNESCO to promote

the development of education professionals within the Virgin Islands Public Service.

A key activity in 2014 was 'HIV/AIDS education in the British Virgin Island: Promoting health through education'. This project promoted good-quality education in the area of HIV/AIDS, with an emphasis on healthy lifestyles, gender equality, and sharing knowledge and understanding of issues affecting young persons, especially concerning the impact of HIV/AIDS. The project also trained a cadre of young people to share information and experiences with their peers.

Another activity was 'Early childhood education in the British Virgin Islands: Teaching tolerance and respect – training for life'. This project focused on enhancing the contribution of education for sustainable development, peace and global citizenship from early childhood education. Early childhood students learned about the values of tolerance and respect for others through the Early Childhood Education curriculum.

In culture, the National Commission worked to encourage cultural promotion and preservation of national cultural heritage, with the intention of paving the way for the nomination of cultural heritage site(s) on the Virgin Islands.

Lastly, a project entitled 'The hanging of Arthur Hodge – a historical site' highlighted the crimes, trial and execution of Arthur Hodge, a prominent Virgin Islands planter and politician who was hung for the murder of Prosper, one of his own slaves. This unprecedented verdict roused the British anti-slavery movement from the contentment it was enjoying following the abolition of the slave trade and helped to direct its efforts towards the ultimate emancipation of slaves throughout the British Empire.



An electronic assembly competition between two high-school students.

© British Virgin Islands National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The BVI National Commission for UNESCO officially celebrates days recognized by UNESCO. In 2014, the National Commission invited several organizations to partner with it in organizing the 3rd Annual World Science Day for Peace and Development Competition Awards (10 November). The Commission hosted a parade and a highly successful competition encompassing entries from pre-schools, primary schools and secondary schools from across the British Virgin Islands.

Over seventy scientific models illustrating the UNESCO 2014 theme of 'Quality Science Education: ensuring a sustainable future for all', were entered with prizes awarded to the winners in various categories. A timed Electronic Assembly Competition was also held between two high-school students.

The competition and awards ceremony was moderated by the Secretary-General of the National Commission and the event received extensive media coverage.

COLOMBIA

Colombian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Luis Armando Soto Boutin

Website: www.cancilleria.gov.co/unesco

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Colombian National Commission celebrated international UNESCO days and promoted the work of the Organization through a variety of events and activities, as well as the publication of information on its website.

Events hosted by the National Commission included the 'Meeting of Experts for the Revision of the 1978 International Charter of Physical Education and Sport', held in Medellín (7–12 September), and the 'Regional Consultation on Homophobic and Transphobic Violence in the Education Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean', held in Bogotá (28–31 October).

The National Commission also had two requests approved for financial assistance under the UNESCO Participation Programme 2014–2015. The projects 'Music Without Borders' and 'Surfing for Equality Fest' were presented by the Batuta Foundation and Good Point Foundation, respectively. Both are

intended to foster social inclusion for vulnerable communities in Colombia through the practice of music and sports.

In addition, the National Commission submitted the project 'Visibility of Colombian Publishing Production in the Digital Environment' to the International Fund for Cultural Diversity, and received a positive response to its nomination of the documentary heritage 'Tiberio vive hoy: testimonios de la vida de un mártir' and 'Cabildo Colonial de la Villa de Medellín' to the Register of the Memory of the World programme for Latin America (MOWLAC).

Colombia joined Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru in submitting a joint nomination for the 'Andean Road System Qhapaq Ñan' during the 38th Session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Doha (15–25 June). The joint nomination was accepted and inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Colombia also participated in UNESCO's Call for Recognition of Craftsmanship Excellence in relation to cultural practices of the Andean Region. Three Colombian artisanship projects were awarded a Certificate of Excellence, which was presented by the International Committee. In addition, Colombia developed and promoted activities to share its expertise in the field of cultural landscapes through the exhibit 'Coffee Cultural Landscape in Colombia', shown in Belgium and Ecuador.

Finally, the Universidad Nacional de Colombia (Bogotá) created the UNESCO Chair on Intercultural Dialogue in 2014, while the Colombian National Training Centre (SENA) was accepted as a UNESCO-UNEVOC centre (14 August).



Children studying as part of the project 'Colombia and Uruguay work for the quality of education', which aims to share two educational practices: the Colombian programme 'Todos A Aprender' and the Uruguayan ASPnet experience.

© Colombian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Colombian National Commission joined the Colombian Ministry of Education and the Uruguayan National Commission in creating the project 'Colombia and Uruguay work for the quality of education'. The project aims to share lessons learnt from two educational practices: the Colombian programme 'Todos a Aprender' and the Uruguayan experience surrounding the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet).

The initiative was developed in two phases. The first phase took place in Bogotá (19–21 May) where representatives from the Ministry of Education of Colombia met with the Advisor to the Deputy Minister of Education and Culture of Uruguay and the National Coordinator of the Uruguay ASPnet to discuss and learn about the programme 'Todos a Aprender'.

During the second phase (10–12 November), two Colombian specialists from the same programme met with the Deputy Minister of Education and Culture of Uruguay, to learn firsthand their experiences of implementing ASPnet in Uruguay.

The result of the project was a Memorandum of Understanding between the ministries of education of the two countries to support the implementation of ASPnet in Colombia.

COSTA RICA

Costa Rica National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Sonia Marta Mora Escalante, Ministry of Public Education

Secretary-General: Mr Diego Santana Gutiérrez (acting)

Website: www.comisionunesco.cr

Update of activities in 2014

In the framework of International Youth Day, the Costa Rican National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, in coordination with its Youth Committee, organized a youth meeting with the participation of young people from across the country (29 August). The activity included talks on drugs, violence prevention, and youth leadership and motivation. Two reports were presented on the State of the Region and the 2013 Meeting of Youth. The participants also shared experiences from their different youth organizations and ideas to overcome the challenges they face.

Under the theme 'Literacy and Sustainable Development', the Costa Rican National Commission hosted a celebration on the International Day of Literacy (10 September) in the public library of Hatillo 2 district, which was attended by students from the neighbourhood school. The event included animated storytelling activities that focused on topics such as incentives for reading, sustainable development, the environment,

and a culture of peace and tolerance. The celebration also emphasized the practice of good reading and the importance of learning to read and write for the creation of sustainable, prosperous and peaceful societies.

The Costa Rica Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) undertook several activities in 2014. Special mention should be made of two in particular.

The course 'Systematization of Educational Practice: a tool for the recovery of good practices' was designed to support teachers of Associated Schools in the identification and dissemination of good practices. The course addressed concepts such as 'quality education', 'innovation and good practices', as well as those directly related to the methodology of 'systematization of experiences'.

The second activity, the Annual Training of Institutional ASPnet Coordinators, involved teachers from across the active schools network. The training had three components. The first was a Climate Change Workshop, taught by teachers who participated in a course held in May in the Dominican Republic. The second was a workshop linked to the declaration of 2015 as the International Year of Light. The workshop provided an explanation of light and developed five simple, short-term experiments using waste materials. The third component consisted of a presentation of the 2015 Annual Programme by the National ASPnet Coordinator.



Celebration of the 1st International Day of Sport for Development and Peace.

© Costa Rica National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Costa Rican National Commission, in coordination with the UNESCO Office in San José, organized a football game between ASPnet schools in celebration of the 1st International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (4 April). The two participating teams consisted of boys and girls aged between 10 and 12 years of age from Roberto Cantillano Vindas School and Juan Flores Umaña School.

The activity began with a brief formal ceremony attended by Mr José Francisco Porras, ex-goalkeeper of the Costa Rica national team; Mr Osvaldo Pandolfo, President of UNAFUT, which operates the Youth Development Leagues; the Secretary-General (acting) of the National Commission and the Director of the UNESCO Office in San José. The activity emphasized the importance of fair play, equality between men and women and the importance of sport for developing countries and the construction of peace.

CUBA

Cuban National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Juan Antonio Fernandez Palacios

Secretary-General: Ms Alicia González Gutiérrez

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Cuban National Commission for UNESCO focused its efforts on a series of events in line with UNESCO's main objectives, and also celebrated the 67th anniversary of its founding.

During the year, the Cuban National Commission reinforced relations with UNESCO sectors and divisions, and assisted the National Committees for Bioethics, the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme, the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme and the International Hydrological Programme (IHP). The Commission also organized a National Scientific Workshop and a TV programme dedicated to World Water Day.

In education, the highlight was the International Congress 'University 2014' devoted to higher education development, for which the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education gave the keynote speech.

In 2014, the National Commission also implemented and concluded four programmes under the Participation Programmes 2012–2013, which were approved and funded

by UNESCO. The National Commission keenly monitors the implementation of activities under the Participation Programmes and has already launched projects for the 2014–2015 biennium. These new activities cover all UNESCO sectors including gender equality and the participation of young people.

In communication and information, 2014 saw the successful inscription of the collection of documents related to the Foundation of the Republic of Cuba on UNESCO's Memory of the World Regional Register.

In culture, the National Commission supported the 20th Anniversary of the Slave Route, with commemorative events held throughout Cuba as well as in Paris, with the cooperation of the Permanent Delegation of Cuba.

The Cuban National Commission also processed applications for fellowships grants co-sponsored by UNESCO, and supported new applications for UNESCO Chairs.

Finally, the Cuban National Commission for UNESCO took part in meetings for National Commissions organized within the framework of the Executive Board in Paris, and participated in the 1st Interregional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO, held in Astana, Kazakhstan (22–24 July).



A success story

For the Cuban National Commission for UNESCO the most successful activity of 2014 was the celebration of the Annual Seminar of UNESCO Associated Schools in Santiago de Cuba. This special opportunity brought together representatives from the seventy-six Cuban Associated Schools, which were able to exchange and discuss best practices, identify main areas for work, and strengthen links for cooperation to enrich their activities.

Celebration of the 22nd Annual Seminar of UNESCO Associated Schools in Santiago de Cuba.

© Pablo Castilla Weeber

CURAÇAO

Curaçao National Commission

Chairperson: Ms Irene Dick, Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport

Secretary-General: Ms Marva Browne

Website: www.natcomcuracao.org

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO experienced a very successful year implementing and executing UNESCO's programmes throughout the country.

Curaçao was selected to participate in the 2014 Website Development Project, as part of the UNESCO Bridge Capacity-Building Project. This project helped six National Commissions in the Caribbean region to create their own websites corresponding to their specific needs and environments, with a view to enhancing the visibility of UNESCO. This joint project was undertaken in cooperation with the Jamaica National Commission and the Korean National Commission.

The project 'Strengthening the capacities of Suriname and Dutch Caribbean Islands for implementing the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage' was implemented in the Dutch Caribbean islands. The UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office for the Caribbean coordinated implementation with the UNESCO Office in Havana and the

Intangible Cultural Heritage Section at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, with funds contributed by the Government of the Netherlands to the ICH Fund. Joint trainings and national consultations were held in Curaçao and Sint Maarten.

The National Commission organized the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts with two lectures given by professionals in the field of artisanal crafts on a variety of topics, including branding (see below).

Funds were received from the UNESCO Participation Programme for the project 'Media Development and Capacity-Building for Curaçao'. A Media Day was organized with master classes for persons working in the field of communication (journalists, etc.). The second approved Participation Programme was 'Supporting Curaçao's STI Policy Development for the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport'.

The Curaçao National Commission also celebrated a number of International Days observed by UNESCO. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Jazz Islands Promotion Curaçao (JIP-C) to organize a jazz event at a local club in celebration of International Jazz Day (30 April).

Together with the National Library, the Foundation for School Materials and a local bookstore, the National Commission celebrated World Book and Copyright Day (23 April) with the launching of a press conference and an all-day activity at the library, which promoted local writers (30 April).

Lastly, the Curaçao National Commission participated in various training sessions and workshops, and also attended the '1st Interregional Meeting of National Commissions', held in Astana, Kazakhstan (22–24 July).



The recipients of the Award of Excellence for Handicrafts.

© Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In consultation with the Jamaica Cluster Office for the Caribbean, the Curaçao National Commission hosted the '2nd UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts for the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean' (16 July), organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and the Ministry of Economic Development.

The award aims to encourage artisans to produce handicrafts using traditional skills, patterns and themes in an innovative way, to help ensure the continuity and sustainability of these traditional skills. The award programme also aims to support local craft producers and artisans.

An international jury of experts from Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Venezuela met to evaluate twenty-six entries from the Bahamas, Curaçao, Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname following the criteria set out by UNESCO: excellence in design, craftsmanship, innovation, authenticity and marketability. The jury also added sustainability as crucial criteria for this award.

The three members of the jury agreed to award prizes for *Kunutina* by Grupo Ban Krese Huntu, Curaçao, *Awara* and *Coco Necklace for women* by Bianca Betrouw Kensiwel, Suriname, and *Bench drum* by Charles Town Maroon Council, Jamaica.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Dominican National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr José Antonio Rodríguez, Minister of Culture

Secretary-General: Ms María Mercedes Brito-Feliz

Website: www.cndu.gob.do

Update of activities in 2014

During 2014, the Dominican National Commission promoted the realization of activities in different fields, in alignment with the established priorities of UNESCO.

The National Commission devoted significant attention to the education sector with activities undertaken in association with the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) accounting for a large proportion of its efforts in 2014. Almost half of the coordinated activities of flagship ASPnet projects in the Dominican Republic were performed directly by the Dominican National Commission. These encompassed central UNESCO themes: building a culture of peace, education for sustainable development (ESD), intercultural dialogue and ICT in education.

In terms of events, the Dominican National Commission coordinated and implemented a 'National consultation on the

impact of the Internet and its regulation', as well as a 'National Consultation on the work of the International Bioethics Committee', which enabled technical experts in the relevant areas to exchange views and ideas.

The National Commission also participated in the 17th International Book Fair, held in Santo Domingo (24 April –5 May), and the 1st World Ecotourism and Production Fair, held in Santiago (18–26 October). Staff of the National Commission shared the results of UNESCO's work in the country and abroad with hundreds of students, teachers and the general public.

As in previous years, budget constraints constituted a major obstacle to implementation of the Commission's Action Plan. To help overcome this challenge, the Executive Secretariat of the National Commission sought the support of government institutions and civil society. Financial contributions were contributed by the Ministry of Culture of the Dominican Republic and other partner organizations.

Relations with the Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean remained close. The Country Programme (2013–2017) prepared by the UNESCO Office in Havana formed the basis of a framework of cooperation implemented throughout the year. Several official UNESCO missions to the Dominican Republic also provided technical assistance to the Quisqueya Literacy Programme 'Learning with you' and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project 'Communities that are Resilient to Earthquakes and Tsunamis in Puerto Plata'.



Participation of the Dominican National Commission for UNESCO in the 1st World Ecotourism and Production Fair, held in Santiago.

© Dominican National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Microsoft Corporation, the Ministry of Culture through the Dominican National Commission and the Global Shapers Community signed a joint cooperation agreement to implement the Digital Community Programme. This project targets teachers in public and private schools in the provinces of La Altagracia, Santo Domingo, San Cristóbal, San Pedro de Macoris and Peravia, which belong to the UNESCO ASPnet of the Dominican Republic.

The main objective of the programme is to promote the inclusion and use of information and communications technology (ICT) in public and private education through forums, conferences and teacher-training workshops. The programme also aims to develop capacities among teachers to innovate, initiate and develop professional initiatives, and promote learning autonomy through the development of online activities.

ECUADOR

National Commission of Ecuador to UNESCO

President: Mr Augusto Espinosa Andrade, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Alia Hassan

Update of activities in 2014

In September 2014, the National Commission was awarded the UNESCO-King Sejon Literacy Prize for the 'Literacy and Basic Education for Youth and Adults Project'. This Ecuadorian Project has benefited more than 325,000 people. As well as teaching participants to read and write, the project includes civic education, health and nutrition, and provides education in the mother tongue of indigenous communities, based on their ancestral worldview or 'cosmovisión'.

During the year, the Ecuadorian National Commission also prepared and submitted a nomination for the Imbabura Geopark Project to the UNESCO Secretariat. Located in the northern part of Ecuador, Imbabura is characterized by its irregular relief, a variety of microclimates and a rich cultural diversity. Two emblematic mountains – 'Taita Imbabura' and 'Mama Cotacachi' – make Imbabura truly unique, giving rise to numerous myths passed down from generation to generation. The area also encompasses more than twenty lakes around which indigenous communities have settled and continue to practise cultural rituals and traditions. Should

UNESCO select this project, it would be the first Ecuadorian park to form part of UNESCO's Global Geoparks Network.

In addition, Ecuador has five biosphere reserves inscribed on UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves, as well as a number of World Heritage sites in Quito and Cuenca, including the newly recognized Qhapac Ñan-Andean Road System, which traverses six countries in the region.

The Ecuadorian National Commission participated as an observer in the selection process of craftspersons for the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts. The Award Ceremony was held at the Inter-American Craftwork and Popular Arts Centre (CIDAP), located in Cuenca in the southern part of Ecuador. The National Commission also supported the candidature of the CIDAP sub-regional project: 'Strengthening and empowering handicraftsmen winners of the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts in the Andean Region', which received the support of Colombia and Peru and was presented within the framework of UNESCO's Participation Programme for the 2014–2015 biennium.

Finally, the National Commission took part in the 1st Interregional Meeting of National Commissions to UNESCO, held in Astana, Kazakhstan (22–24 July). The meeting underlined the importance of close collaboration between National Commissions and UNESCO Field Offices as a means to strengthen the Organization and ensure its efficiency and proactivity in line with the needs of Member States. It also participated in the 'World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)', held in Nagoya, Japan (10–12 November), during which Member States presented proposals for the launch of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development.



The Minister of Education of Ecuador presenting the findings of the 2014 Terce study.
© National Commission of Ecuador to UNESCO

A success story

In December, the Ecuadorian National Commission participated in the 3rd Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (Terce), undertaken by UNESCO's Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE).

According to this study, Ecuador improved substantially across all evaluated subjects (language, mathematics and natural sciences), placing the country in the same league as other well-performing countries in the region. These results contrast strongly with the results of the 2nd Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (SERCE), undertaken in 2006, in which Ecuador performed relatively poorly.

During his presentation, the Minister of Education indicated that this improvement is a result of profound changes in the educational system over the last seven years. These include a rise in the efficiency and effectiveness of public policies, more political commitment, consistent and equitable economic growth, poverty reduction, greater access to education, teacher training and revalorization of the teaching profession, improved learning standards, and strengthening and updating of the national curriculum.

EL SALVADOR

Salvadorian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Mr Carlos Mauricio Linares Canjura, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Francisco Humberto Castenada

Website: www.mined.gob.sv

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Salvadorian National Commission for UNESCO successfully completed five projects under UNESCO's Participation Programme for 2012–2013.

The five projects were: 'Integral promotion of the healthcare system "Humaniser" in Salvadorian Medical Assistance'; 'Music, dance and painting workshop for indigenous children at Santo Domingo de Guzman, Sonsonate Province'; 'Civic culture for the culture of the environment in El Salvador: changing behaviour to adapt to climate change'; 'Reading houses in El Salvador: enhancing literacy at the national level focusing on gender equality'; and 'Strengthening the Salvadorian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO'.

The Salvadorian National Commission also submitted six projects under the Participation Programme for 2014–2015. These were: 'Design an online professional diploma and vocational and professional guidance for teachers in basic education and secondary school students'; 'Diploma for the training of young indigenous leaders'; 'Strengthening university networks through youth for environmental education, sustainable development and climate change, San Salvador'; 'Capacity-building workshop for inhabitants of the Community of Nueva Esperanza du Bajo Lempa on the importance of the conservation of their resources for the cultural and natural heritage'; 'Creation of a Harp School'; and 'Pipil stories: Documentation of oral tradition of the Pipil people of El Salvador'.

Throughout the year the Salvadorian National Commission also played a highly active role in coordinating the preparation of the Education For All report. The Secretary-General of the National Commission worked with the Vice-Minister of Education to organize meetings in July 2014 with representatives of the different agencies involved to elicit reviews and comments. The Commission also provided support to the committee responsible for drafting and revising the document, in the form of materials and equipment, culminating in the submission of the report by the Ministry of Education.



On behalf of UNESCO, the Vice-Minister of Science and Technology, donates a mobile radio to the Association of Participatory Radio Stations and Programmes of El Salvador (ARPAS).

© Salvadorian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, UNESCO donated a mobile radio to the Association of Participatory Radio Stations and Programmes of El Salvador (ARPAS), a non-governmental organization. The presentation was made by Ms Erlinda Handal Vega, the Vice-Minister of Science and Technology, in her capacity as Secretary-General of the Salvadorian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO.

During the presentation ceremony, the Secretary-General explained that the 'donation contributed towards building the capacity of communities to remain informed and to transmit their news to the rest of society'. The Ministry of Education considers ARPAS to be a highly valuable resource for the promotion of literacy programmes and other services.

GUATEMALA

Guatemalan National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Cynthia Carolina del Águila Mendizábal,
Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Jannina Padilla Fuentes

Website: www.mineduc.gob.gt

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Guatemalan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO worked in close cooperation with the UNESCO Field Office in Guatemala and government institutions related to the work of UNESCO – in particular the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture and Sports, the National Secretariat for Science and Technology, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Guatemalan Permanent Delegation to UNESCO.

The Guatemalan National Commission, which operates as a Technical Secretariat, collaborated with the National Secretariat for Science and Technology, the Ministry of Social Development and the UNESCO Field Office in Guatemala, in the organization of a Summer School for the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme, held in the city of Antigua Guatemala, Sacatepéquez (10–14 November). The theme of the Summer School was 'Science and Social Transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean: The role

of scientific knowledge in economic and social development of the 21st century'. Nine international students from Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico and Peru participated in this activity, as well as twenty-five from Guatemala.

During the year, the National Commission improved its communication with government ministries working on areas related to key UNESCO themes, such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture. Collaborative activities included initiatives in the fields of World Heritage, Intangible Heritage and Underwater Cultural Heritage, among others.

In 2014, the National Commission held meetings with a number of organizations to provide support in the development or improvement of proposals to the Participation Programme. As a result, two projects were approved by UNESCO: 'First stage of the Regulatory/Master Plan of La Antigua Guatemala and Surrounding Areas' and 'Inclusive education of youth, male and female, with disabilities in the formal education sector of Guatemala'. The Commission is working closely with the Ministries of Culture and Education to implement these projects in the coming year.

In 2015, the challenge for the National Commission will be to create its own virtual space to expand the visibility of UNESCO and disseminate the activities of the Organization.



Workshops with different education entities for the EFA National Review.

© Guatemalan National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The principal success story of 2014 was the close and continuous support provided by the National Commission to the Ministry of Education in the preparation of the national Education for All (EFA) Report.

A Coordinating Commission was established to plan, organize, coordinate and implement the main tasks of reviewing and preparing the report. The National Commission initiated this process before subsequently ceding leadership to experts of the Ministry of Education, who guided the process thereafter.

The elaboration of this report was technically and financially supported by the UNESCO Field Office in Guatemala, which formed part of the Coordinating Commission and worked untiringly throughout the process.

The report process was inclusive and participatory. It began with the formation of a Technical Committee that provided the raw information, which was then ordered and compiled by an expert and subsequently validated in workshops. Contributors to the Technical Committee and workshops included different entities related to education, such as non-governmental organizations, private universities, investigative institutes and representatives from the Ministry of Education and other governmental institutions.

The whole process culminated in the public presentation of the report, in the presence of the education sector.

HAITI

Haitian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Mr Nesmy Manigat, Minister of Education and Vocational Training

Secretary-General: Mr Jean Coulanges

Update of activities in 2014

The Haitian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO undertook several activities in 2014. Within the framework of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme the Commission worked to strengthen the Office of the La Selle Biosphere Reserve, and produced a video documentary on the wealth of the reserve and the challenges face. It also launched a campaign for the creation of a transboundary reserve between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and initiated the declaration of a second biosphere reserve in the south-west of Haiti. All these activities were funded by the National Commission, UNESCO Headquarters through the Participation Programme, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and Spain's Autonomous Authority for National Parks (OAPN).

Within the framework of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), the Haitian National Commission supported the organization of an ecological fair (7 June),

which took place during environment week and the start of hurricane season. This educational effort led by ASPnet youth in Haiti aimed to encourage preservation of the environment and sustainable development. The fair was attended by around 4,000 schoolchildren and teachers, with schools presenting pupils' work on sustainable development and disaster risk reduction. Other entities such as the Directorate for Civil Protection, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the German non-governmental organization (NGO) Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland e.V. (ASB) funded the activity and supported the schoolchildren.

The National Commission also signed a collaboration protocol with Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland e.V. (ASB) to harmonize the two parties' actions with a view to ensuring the sustainability of ASB activities in Haiti. The Haitian National Commission intends to contribute to disaster risk reduction action undertaken by ASB in the schools of two communes of Haiti: Petit-Goâve and Grand-Goâve.

In addition, the National Commission facilitated the participation of four ASPnet pupils and one teacher in international events preceding the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), held in Okayama, Japan (4–8 November). The participants were selected on the basis of their participation in national youth forums organized by the National Commission and their performance during these activities.



ASPnet schoolchildren participate in a disaster simulation exercise.
© Haitian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

A success story

Disaster risk reduction begins at school. In partnership with UNDP, the Directorate for Civil Protection (DPC), the Education and Public Awareness Thematic Committee (CTESP), the Permanent Secretariat for Disaster Risk Management (SPGRD) and Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland e.V., a German NGO, the National Commission conducted disaster risk awareness campaigns at ASPnet schools. Specific activities included 'Civil Protection Friday', which brought together some 200 schoolchildren from ASPnet schools (30 May) in Haiti's capital city for educational lifesaving activities (what action to take in the event of a fire, cyclone, flood, tsunami and so forth); and two urban observation series organized in the cities of Gros-Morne (Artibonite Department) (2–3 October) and Petit-Goâve (Ouest Department) on (6–7 November). These series aimed to bring together schoolchildren, teachers and members of the community to work together to identify vulnerabilities in the community and to propose solutions to increase the resilience of cities to disasters.

HONDURAS

Honduras National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Marlon Oniel Escoto, Secretary of State for Education

Secretary-General: Ms Hilda Muñoz Tábora

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Honduras National Commission worked to establish synergies with new government authorities and other national and international organizations. It supported and coordinated activities with UNESCO Regional Offices, and maintained fluid and constant communication with the Permanent Delegation of Honduras to UNESCO. It also coordinated the participation of officials and technicians at a variety of training events and conferences promoted by UNESCO.

In culture, the Commission submitted the collection of works by Honduran painter José Antonio Velasquez for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register. It also organized teacher training sessions at the Jose Maria Medina Basic Education Centre, in Santa Rosa de Copan, on heritage, disseminating knowledge acquired at the 6th World Heritage Youth Forum (see below).

In the natural sciences, the National Commission supported the nomination of 'Celaque Mountain' to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

In education, the Commission participated in the election of the new board of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), and welcomed two new ASPnet schools to the network: Juan Brooks School in Roatán, Islas de la Bahía, and the Honduran Institute of Interamerican Culture (IHCI) in Tegucigalpa, Francisco Morazán.

The National Commission also undertook an evaluation of schools in the departments of Lempira, Santa Barbara, Choluteca, Intibucá and Francisco Morazán, prior to the implementation of the project 'Promotion of Access to Information and Knowledge in Honduran Basic Education through ICT'.

Throughout the year the National Commission coordinated seven projects under the UNESCO Participation Programme and submitted two projects to the International Fund for Cultural Diversity.

Lastly, the Commission produced quarterly information brochures on UNESCO programmes and promoted and disseminated information regarding its activities through the media, with a focus on social media sites.



Performance by students at the 6th World Heritage Youth Forum in Toledo, Spain.

© Honduras National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the National Commission coordinated the participation of two ASPnet students in the 6th World Heritage Youth Forum, held in Toledo, Spain (20–27 July). Students Kimberly Reyes, from José María Medina Basic Education Centre in Santa Rosa de Copan, and Sulmi Lopez, from Juan Brooks School in Roatán, shared examples of world heritage with representatives from fourteen nations.

The main theme of the forum was 'Consideration of heritage as a tool for social cohesion', based on the concept that contemplating and 'owning' heritage may contribute to happiness among communities and help support individual identity.

The forum enabled the students and other participants to appreciate their own culture and that of others, while showing tolerance and respect for the customs of other peoples. Students at the forum were encouraged to promote partnerships that support conservation initiatives and to explore and share their enjoyment of world heritage through participatory work.

In the light of this successful experience, the Honduras National Commission decided to dedicate ASPnet resources to this effort on a more permanent basis. Enabling Associated Schools to develop such events in their respective regions will encourage future generations to appreciate and preserve the cultural heritage of Honduras.

JAMAICA

Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Lisa Hanna, Minister of Youth and Culture

Secretary-General: Mr Everton Hannam

Website: <http://jncunesco.gov.jm>

Update of activities in 2014

The Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO began the year with an Executive Retreat designed to align the activities of the Commission with the priorities of the Government, and finished the year with the relocation of the National Commission to new premises.

During the year the National Commission participated in a number of key meetings, including the 4th Meeting of the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves, held in Palawan, Philippines (17–20 June) and the 1st Interregional Meeting of National Commissions, held in Astana, Kazakhstan (22–24 July). Jamaica also participated in the World Heritage Youth Forum, held in Qatar (4–15 June), the 38th Session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Doha (15–25 June), and the 9th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (24–28 November).

The Jamaica National Commission achieved notable successes in close collaboration with the Kingston Cluster Office in 2014. In communication and information, the Commission organized activities for World Press Freedom Day (3 May) with the involvement of Caribbean journalists. The Commission also

disseminated information through the media on the occasion of World Book and Copyright Day (23 April) on the importance of copyright.

In education, the National Commission participated in the national launch of International Literacy Day (8 September) and supported a retreat on Early Childhood Education. The Secretary-General read to YWCA students as part of the 'Read Across Jamaica' campaign and gave a presentation at the Eduvision 2014 Conference (18–19 March).

The National Commission also implemented Youth4UNESCO, a train-the-trainers project funded under the Participation Programme, which seeks to educate young people about sexual and reproductive health, environmental sustainability and social media. Following a series of informative training sessions, about sixty youths graduated from the project and were presented with certificates by the Minister of Youth and Culture.

In culture, the National Commission established a National Heritage Committee and is working assiduously on its first nomination to the World Heritage List.

The Commission also continues to work with the German National Commission through its 'kulturweit' volunteer programme, hosting at least two volunteers a year. These volunteers gain experience of Jamaica and Jamaican culture through internships with UNESCO and at various sister agencies.

Lastly, in 2014, the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts in the Dutch and English-Speaking Caribbean was awarded to Charles Town Maroon (CTM) Council for the Bench Drum. The drum was originally devised as a means of disguising its purpose from colonial settlers and is still used in spiritual rituals.



Bench drum by Charles Town Maroon Council.
© Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the National Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Korean National Commission to develop its website. The Website Development Project is an initiative of the Korean National Commission and has already resulted in the successful launch of two new National Commission websites.

As part of the project, the Korean National Commission hosted a Website Development Training Workshop for the Caribbean in collaboration with the Jamaica National Commission (2–4 September). Participants at the workshop included staff and representatives of the National Commissions of Curacao, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Aruba, St Kitts and Nevis, and Jamaica.

As a result of this joint effort the new website of the Jamaica National Commission is presently under construction and is due to be launched in 2015.

MEXICO

Mexican National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Mr Emilio Chuayffet Chemor, Secretary of Public Education

Secretary-General: Mrs María Del Socorro Rovirosa Priego

Website: www.dgri.sep.gob.mx

Update of activities in 2014

During 2014, the Mexican Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO conducted a series of activities in accordance with its mandate.

The Secretariat of Public Education hosted the launching of the *Education for All (EFA) Monitoring Report 2013–2014* at its headquarters (29 January) with the participation of the Director of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Director of the UNESCO Office in Mexico and the Minister of Education of Mexico. The participants emphasized the relevance of teacher selection, training and allocation to achieving quality in education, as well as the importance of setting new goals for the post-2015 Agenda.

The Mexican National Commission also contributed to the agreement between Mexico and UNESCO to establish the Regional Centre for World Heritage in Zacatecas as a Category II Centre. The Minister of Foreign Relations and the Director of the UNESCO Office in Mexico signed the joint agreement at the Ministry of Foreign Relations in Mexico City (1 April).

The National Commission participated in ceremonies to hand over documents for inscription on the Register of the Memory of the World (MOW) programme. It submitted documentation to the National Register including educational radio recordings, nineteenth and twentieth century legal documentation from the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation, and examples of twentieth century photography from the ICA Foundation (23 June).

The Mexican National Commission participated in the Regional Ministerial Meeting on 'Education for All (EFA) in Latin America and the Caribbean', held in Lima, (30–31 October). It also fostered the participation of Mexico in the 'Global Meeting on EFA', held in Muscat (12–14 May); the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan (10–12 November); and the '7th Policy Dialogue Forum of the International Task Force on Teachers for EFA', held in Rabat, Morocco (15–19 December).

The National Meeting of ASPnet Coordinators took place in Mexico City (25–26 November) to assess the current situation of the network and to update the participants on progress towards implementation of the Regional Action Plan (Mexico and Central America).

Lastly, the National Commission organized a meeting between its committees and sub-committees, and the UNESCO Office in Mexico, with the purpose of identifying opportunities for cooperation to support new activities and projects (14 October).



Presentation of scholarships for the 2014 ceremony of the Mexican L'Oréal-UNESCO 'For Women in Science' programme.

© Mexican National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

A success story

In 2006, the Mexican National Commission developed a programme in association with L'Oréal in Mexico and the Mexican Academy of Sciences (AMC) to award fellowships to young Mexican researchers each year, as a part of the L'Oréal-UNESCO 'For Women in Science' initiative. Since 2007 the National Commission has jointly awarded thirty-eight national scholarships.

The Mexican version of the L'Oréal-UNESCO 'For Women in Science' programme has succeeded in raising public and institutional awareness of the relevance of young scientific women who develop significant work in public and private universities and research institutions across the country. For this reason, the Director-General of the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT), the institution responsible for the National System of Scientific Researchers, hosted the two most recent ceremonies. The most recent ceremony, held in Mexico City (3 November), was also attended by the Director of the UNESCO Office in Mexico.

NICARAGUA

Nicaraguan National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Miriam Raudez, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Miguel De Castilla Urbina

Website: www.mined.gob.ni

Update of activities in 2014

From 2012 to 2014, the Nicaraguan National Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with the UNESCO Secretariat implemented the project 'Strengthening the Mayangna Culture, Knowledge and Language in BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve'. The aim of the activity was to contribute to bilingual and intercultural education in Nicaragua, specifically by strengthening intergenerational transmission of Mayangna culture, knowledge and language, through the development of educational materials, namely the book *Mayangna Knowledge*

of the *Interdependence of People and Nature: Fish and Turtles*, published in English and Spanish by UNESCO.

The most important aspect of this project was the creation of a technical team of Mayangnas teachers to take charge of the training processes, as well as the reviewing, analysis and validation of the educational materials. In addition, the participation of the Ministry of Education ensured that the educational materials were well adapted the curriculum of the North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN) and Mayangna culture to the extent possible.

UNESCO coordinated the project through its Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme. It was supported by the Nicaraguan National Commission and implemented with funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. To date, it has produced materials for primary school (grade 3) and pre-school pupils. The project will end in mid-August 2015 with the production of all validated educational materials.



A success story

In 2014 the Nicaraguan National Commission for UNESCO was proud to support the production of the documentary film *El canto de BOSAWAS*, which highlights the urgent need to protect the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve. The film was also accompanied by *BOSAWAS*, a CD containing unreleased music recorded by Mayangnas and other Nicaraguan songwriters.

The Bosawas Reserve plays a vital role as the 'Green Lung of Central America' and forms part of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. It is also the ancestral home of the Miskitos and Mayangnas communities.

In 2014, more than 15,000 people watched the film, which was also awarded the Icaro Central American Film Festival prize. The production of the film and CD were also made possible by financial support from the Common Fund for Democratic Governability.

Publicity poster for the documentary film *El canto de BOSAWAS*.

© Nicaraguan National Commission for UNESCO

PARAGUAY

Paraguayan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Ms Marta Justina Lafuente, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Andrea Weiss

Website: www.facebook.com/pages/Comisi%C3%B3n-Nacional-Paraguaya-de-Cooperaci%C3%B3n-con-la-Unesco/804199026256956

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Paraguayan National Commission organized a Cycle of Dialogues on Education and Culture. These sessions constituted an opportunity to explore the relationship between education and culture, and to strengthen the links between educational and cultural policies designed to respond to contemporary challenges. The two sessions focused on 'Education and Culture: the Intrinsic Relationship' (24 September) and 'Education, Culture and Youth: Encounters, Failures and Challenges' (29 October).

The Paraguayan National Commission also took the lead in the preparation and presentation of the National Monitoring Report on Education For All (EFA), summarizing the results achieved

under the EFA programme. Together with the advisory team charged with drawing up the report, the National Commission organized six presentation and discussion workshops. The participants included key players representing the public and private institutions involved in plans, programmes and projects, whose outcomes will contribute to the successful achievement of the EFA goals.

During the revision process the National Commission identified emerging topics and challenges, noted best practices and lessons, and assessed prospects for the future of education in the country. The completed report was presented to the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC).

Through the UNESCO Associated Schools Project network (ASPnet), the Paraguayan National Commission convened the '12th meeting of Teachers for Peace: Investing for the future, investing for teachers' (3 October), as part of celebrations organized for World Teachers' Day (5 October). The chosen theme, 'Inclusive schools, inclusive teachers?', was designed to stimulate discussion of new educational paradigms for inclusive education, and provide formal and non-formal training to teachers responsible for their implementation. About 140 participants attended the meeting, including directors, teachers and teacher-training students from educational institutions of the Paraguay ASPnet, as well as teachers from the education system in general.



Paraguay's 1st Heritage Youth Forum.

© Paraguayan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

A success story

Paraguay's 1st Heritage Youth Forum was organized by the Ministry of Education through the Paraguayan National Commission, the National Committee for Natural and Cultural Heritage, the UNESCO Associated Schools, the National Tourism Secretariat (SENATUR) and the Paraguayan Chamber of Tourism for the Jesuit Missions.

Its aim was to make young people aware of the importance of knowing, valuing and preserving national heritage both at local and global level, and through contact with that heritage, to develop a sense of identity and promote a sense of belonging, so as to help ensure its protection for future generations.

The World Heritage Education Programme has arranged activities and actions on a variety of themes aimed at educating young people about heritage, starting in 2009 with the 33rd Session of the World Heritage Committee in Seville, which incorporated the 1st Ibero-American World Heritage Youth Forum. Paraguay has been a major participant at these forums, which enabled the heritage community to replicate the experience within its own borders, with the presence of heritage experts from the Spanish Ministry of Education.

The participants in the Paraguay Youth Heritage Forum were young students aged 13–15, members of the UNESCO Associated Schools, and educational institutions located in the vicinity of listed World Heritage Sites.

PERU

Peruvian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Jaime Saavedra Chanduvi, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Carmen Beltrán Vargas

Website: www.comiunesco.org.pe

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Peruvian National Commission of Cooperation with UNESCO implemented a series of changes to improve the efficiency of its work. The Commission recruited new personnel, adopted new strategies, strengthened relationships with partners such as government entities and private institutions both nationwide and worldwide, and organized joint events with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture.

As part of its strategy, the National Commission encouraged the participation of Peruvian talent in activities and events around the world. Young Peruvians participated in Art Camp Andorra (14–24 July), the World Heritage Youth Forum Qatar 2014, held in Doha (4–15 June), the UNESCO-Poland Co-Sponsored Fellowships Programme and the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) International ESD Events for Students and Teachers, held in Okayama, Japan (4–8 November). Meanwhile, Peruvian government officials participated in the UIS Latin America Culture Statistics Training Workshop,

held in San José (9–12 September) and the '2nd Follow-up Meeting of the 5th International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS V)', held in Montevideo (6–7 October).

The National Commission also seeks to celebrate events and establish spaces for dialogue and exchange of experiences between its partners. During the year the Commission joined UNESCO in celebrating events such as International Jazz Day (30 April) and granted its patronage to different cultural and educational events held throughout the country.

The National Commission also organized the ASPnet annual meeting (10 October), which represented an opportunity to gather together all the Associated Schools to strengthen their interactions, help them to formulate their projects, and receive their inputs for the ASPnet Action Plan 2015.

In 2014, the Commission also supported the establishment of the UNESCO Chair in 'Cultural Diversity and Dialogue' at the University Ricardo Palma. The National Commission is currently developing additional proposals for 2015.

Lastly, the Commission is proud to announce that the Institute of Tropical Medicine of the Peruvian University Cayetano Heredia won the UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea International Prize. It would also like to congratulate the two Peruvian doctors who were awarded L'Oréal-UNESCO National Fellowships 'For Women in Science'.



Participants at the Regional Ministerial Meeting 'Education for All in Latin America and the Caribbean: Assessment of progress and post-2015 challenges'.

© Peru National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the Regional Ministerial Meeting 'Education for All in Latin America and the Caribbean: Assessment of progress and post-2015 challenges' took place in Lima (30–31 October).

The objective of the meeting was to convene the highest authorities in education and representatives of organizations to discuss the progress attained by countries in the region in relation to the six Education for All goals (up to 2015), and to elaborate a regional proposal for the post-2015 Agenda for education.

The event was organized by the Peruvian National Commission, the Ministry of Education of Peru and the UNESCO Regional Office of Education of Latin America and the Caribbean. It gathered together ministers, vice ministers and officials from twenty-eight countries of the region and representatives from thirty-eight organizations.

The meeting concluded with the adoption of the Lima Declaration, which states that: 'Achieving equity and inclusion requires securing the right to education of all children, young people and adults, and their rights within and through education to realize their potential and aspirations. This also requires responding to the diversity of needs among all learners by increasing their participation in learning, and by reducing exclusion from and within education.'

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

Saint Kitts and Nevis National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Nigel A. Carty, Minister of Education and Information

Secretary-General: Mr Antonio Maynard

Website: www.skunesco.com

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Saint Kitts and Nevis National Commission for UNESCO continued its broad range of activities. Having recently established a local organizing committee to implement the St Mary's Biosphere Reserve site, the National Commission forged ahead with initiatives aimed at raising public awareness about biosphere reserves and their role in sustainable national development and eco-diversity. The year also saw the unfolding of a full-scale awareness campaign including community meetings, public discussions and branding activities. Two main activities of significance during the year were the launch of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) website and the participation of the local MAB coordinator in a workshop for managers held in the Republic of Korea.

The branding and awareness-raising activities also encompassed other initiatives, in particular the launching of a new website

(www.skunesco.com). While the site presents obvious benefits for school-aged children and adults undertaking research on a wide number of UNESCO-related areas, it also represents a case study in cooperation, its construction resulting from a technical assistance programme on website development initiated by the Korean National Commission.

The use of technology for the advancement of education was a main focus area in 2014. The Government's one-to-one laptop project was complemented by a joint initiative launched by UNESCO, the Ministry of Education and Information, and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) to draft a policy framework on ICT use in education. A particular focus of the framework was open educational resources (OER).

The National Commission was also approached by the Ministry to provide technical assistance for an in-depth and independent Education Policy Review, which will form the basis for a medium-term Education Sector Strategy. The technical team of UNESCO experts visited the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis on a fact-finding mission to meet with a variety of stakeholders (June), then returned a few months later (17–21 November) to examine two key policy areas: governance and curriculum.

Lastly, in 2014 the Federation gained a seat on UNESCO's Executive Board. The Federation's accession is timely given the magnitude of the challenges facing Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as Saint Kitts and Nevis, including climate change, vocational education, terrestrial and underwater cultural heritage preservation, and educational gaps in African Ancestral history. The Federation has already begun to address issues relating to the Slave Route Project in the Eastern Caribbean, threats to the world's oceans and climate change.



A success story

The launch of the UNESCO Youth for Human Rights Awareness Project (20 November) constituted a new chapter for many youth in the Federation. Months of preparation by a core team of young stakeholders from organizations throughout the Federation culminated in the launch of this gateway project on human rights issues. One of its main objectives is to establish a Youth Human Rights Club in the Federation.

The project represents a long-standing desire of the Saint Kitts and Nevis National Commission to address the lack of awareness among the general public and youth regarding human rights.

Youth for Human Rights 2014.

© Saint Kitts and Nevis National Commission for UNESCO

SINT MAARTEN

Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Rita Bourne-Gumbs, Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Affairs

Secretary-General: Ms Marcellia Henry

Website: www.unesco.sx

Update of activities in 2014

During 2014, the Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO implemented several activities which increased the visibility of UNESCO and made a significant contribution towards achieving the goals of the Organization.

Three successful meetings were organized and held on Sint Maarten. UNESCO and the Government of Sint Maarten, through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Affairs, hosted a meeting on 'Capacity Building on Heritage Conservation in the Caribbean Small Islands Developing States (SIDS)', held in Philipsburg (8–13 May).

The second and third meetings were a national consultation (3–4 July) and a joint training session (8–12 September), respectively, on the implementation of the project: 'Strengthening the capacities of Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, St. Eustatius, Sint Maarten and Suriname to implement the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)'.

The consultation brought together those involved in the safeguarding of Sint Maarten's intangible cultural heritage with

all stakeholders to facilitate continued dialogue at the national level. A key output from the meeting was Sint Maarten's first draft ICH Inventory List.

The joint training session focused on the requirements for successful implementation of the Convention at the national level. Over thirty participants from Bonaire, Curacao, Saba, St Eustatius and Sint Maarten, in addition to observers from Anguilla, Belize and Jamaica, received training as a part of UNESCO's global capacity-building strategy to safeguard intangible heritage and ensure its sustainable use.

The National Commission also played a lead role in Sint Maarten's accession to the 2003 Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (May), and continues to participate in the development of a National Development Plan for Sint Maarten and the MDG Acceleration Framework Country Action Plan.

In addition, the National Commission organized a number of activities in collaboration with governmental departments and organizations to commemorate International UN Days.

To celebrate International Mother Language Day (21 February) the Commission organized a poetry competition aimed at encouraging secondary students to write and perform poems in their mother language. For World Poetry Day (21 March) the Commission organized school visits and a poetry evening with local poets, and a poetry workshop to encourage creative writing and performance. Finally, for International Literacy Day (8 September), the National Commission organized a read-a-thon for children at the Philipsburg Jubilee library sponsored by the airline JetBlue.



The UNDP Resident Representative in Trinidad and Tobago, students, teachers and observers at the Peace Symposium (21 September).

© Photo by Okama Ekpe-Brook

A success story

In 2014, the Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO planned, organized and implemented a 'Peace Symposium and Cultural Manifestation' to celebrate the International Day of Peace (21 September). The goal of the event was to promote peace and dialogue among youth from the various cultural and ethnic groups on the island.

The Peace Symposium enabled secondary students to participate in a dialogue with local panellists and the keynote speaker, Mr Richard Blewitt, the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Trinidad and Tobago. The Cultural Manifestation event provided an opportunity for the various cultural and ethnic groups on the island to share their cultural traditions, through music, dance and poetry performances, exhibitions and cultural demonstrations.

The Sint Maarten National Commission collaborated with local Rotary Clubs, UNDP, the Department for Interior and Kingdom Affairs, and a number of cultural and ethnic groups, and all secondary schools to organize these activities for the International Day of Peace.

The day's events ended with the participants holding hands around the newly constructed 'Peace Monument', presented by the Rotary Clubs as a symbol of peace and unity.

SURINAME

Suriname National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Michael Adhin, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Anuradha Kamtasing

Website: www.education.gov.sr

Update of activities in 2014

The Suriname National Commission for UNESCO is chaired by the Minister of Education and undertakes activities in UNESCO's main fields of competence. In 2014, lack of funds proved a challenge to operations; however, the Commission was able to implement activities with the support of the UNESCO Office in Kingston, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) and UNESCO Headquarters. The Commission also developed partnerships with International Consultants for Education and Fairs (ICEF)-Suriname.

The Suriname National Commission ensures the implementation of projects funded under the Participation Programme 2014–2015. Three out of seven projects submitted have been approved to date, including the implementation of the *World Heritage in Young Hands* Educational Resource Kit, an Ecosystems Awareness Campaign, and a project entitled 'Suriname Alternative for Youth at Risk'.

In 2014, the National Commission also cooperated with the German National Commission to implement the German

International Volunteer Programme 'kulturweit' in Suriname. The Commission is currently hosting a young German volunteer, who is working to develop assignments for students and teachers under the *World Heritage in Young Hands* project. The completed assignments will be made available online and will form part of the national curriculum, with a view to raising awareness of local and national cultural heritage among students.

In 2014, the Government of Suriname also initiated a reform of the Education Sector, and in particular the TVET sector, to contribute to the demands of the knowledge economy concerning economic growth and sustainable development. In light of increasing unemployed among youth, the role of the TVET sector is crucial to empowering and equipping young people with the right skills for the knowledge economy. In this context, the Government requested technical assistance from the Suriname National Commission in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Kingston to develop a national TVET Policy and Strategy for Suriname, and to provide guidance and technical advice to help establish a Suriname Training Authority.

UNESCO sent a pre-identification expert mission to Suriname (10–14 November) to launch the process of TVET policy review and development, and to ensure that this collaboration is in line with the country's needs and aligned with wider regional and international developments. During the five days the expert team met with ministers, government officials and other public and private stakeholders. Discussions were held on priorities, progress, challenges and problems. A paper has been prepared that outlines the processes, actors and responsibilities for the preparation of the TVET Policy and the facilitating role of UNESCO.



Participants at the National Workshop on Education Statistics, held in Paramaribo.

© Suriname National Commission

A success story

UNESCO in partnership with the Ministry of Education hosted a three-day national workshop, in Paramaribo (14–16 October), on education statistics and indicators, jointly supported by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Santiago, the UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), the UNICEF Office in Paramaribo, the Suriname Ministry of Education and the Suriname National Commission for UNESCO. This workshop was part of an ongoing collaboration to support and improve the statistical capacity of national institutions in the Caribbean. It provided an opportunity for Suriname national education officials and statisticians to enhance education data collection, analysis and reporting.

The overall aim of the workshop was to improve the quality of international education statistics, as well as the related indicators. This necessitated a review of the timeliness, accuracy, coverage and comparability of data, as well as training on indicator methodology and analysis.

The agenda of the workshop was designed to include training on all core education surveys and included specific sessions given by the national teams on their organizational structures and work processes. More thematic sessions focused on challenges and data needs in relation to the post-2015 development agenda on education. Participants included the staff of the Ministry of Education, and representatives of the University and the National Bureau of Statistics.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Tim Gopeesingh, Minister of Education

Chairperson: Ms Krishendaye Rampersad

Secretary General: Ms Susan Shurland

Website: www.unesco.org.tt

Update of activities in 2014

In March, the President, Chairperson and members of the Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) Commission met with the new Director of the Kingston Cluster Office to discuss, among other matters, ways to make UNESCO more visible, more dynamic and a greater force for change in the region. They assessed projects currently under implementation and explored strategies to become more regional in approach, with the heightened involvement of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). As a byproduct of the meeting, communication links were greatly strengthened between the Cluster Office and the T&T National Commission.

The National Liaison Committee for UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) was established in May and has been meeting at the National Commission to discuss its mandate to facilitate dialogue among policy-makers, the research community and civil society at the national level.



The Youth Theatre Project in Primary Schools.
© Schools Broadcasting Unit, Ministry of Education, T&T

The Trinidad and Tobago National Committee for UNESCO's Memory of the World (MOW) programme was very active and responsible for a number of collections being inscribed on the international and regional MOW registers, including the inscription of the Anson Gonzalez collection on the Regional MOW register in 2014. The MOW National Committee was re-constituted during the year and met in October under the aegis of the National Commission.

A full-time ASPnet Coordinator was appointed to the T&T National Commission in June. The former Coordinator, who served for many years as a volunteer and implemented many successful activities under the ASPnet's four main themes, was recognized by the National Commission for his work at a ceremony held in November.

The Ministry of Education and the National Library collaborated with the T&T Commission to conduct a training session on the theme 'Leading for Literacy and Numeracy' in August. The session targeted principals and teachers of Form 1 classes at forty selected secondary schools, whose students needed help in English and Mathematics. Successful school results are now being posted on a dedicated website designed to encourage project feedback.

In September, a selection of papers presented at the 2nd Meeting of the UNESCO Forum of Ministers of Social and Sustainable Development was published and is now available on the Commission's website. The title of the publication is *Promoting Equity and Social Inclusion: Pathways to Prosperity for All*. The regional meeting was organized under the auspices of the Ministry of the People and Social Development in collaboration with the T&T National Commission for UNESCO.

A success story

The opportunity to witness nine year olds sing, dance and choreograph their own performances with the confidence and enjoyment of their adult counterparts in the theatre, made the effort involved in promoting the 'Youth Theatre Project in Primary Schools' worthwhile. This successful project, created under the UNESCO Participation Programme, established a platform for the Organization's goals within the education system of Trinidad and Tobago.

The introduction of Visual and Performing Arts into the curriculum of primary schools has created an upsurge in these activities among the nation's schools. Within this framework, the project sought to help students realize their potential and help students to become more well adjusted, both socially and culturally.

The performances of the students covered a variety of issues ranging from agriculture, the environment, social studies, language arts and science, to bullying. The project also employed innovative new strategies and techniques that are finding increasing acceptance among the teaching fraternity. The overall project received positive feedback from both teachers and students who participated.

URUGUAY

National Commission of Uruguay for UNESCO

President: Mr Fernando Filgueira, Vice Minister of Education and Culture

Secretary-General: Mr Nicolás Pons

Website: www.comisionunesco.mec.gub.uy

Update of activities in 2014

The National Commission of Uruguay is a multisectoral institution that implements a wide spectrum of activities in UNESCO's main areas of competence. The National Commission enjoys a fluid relationship with the Permanent Delegation of Uruguay to UNESCO and the UNESCO Regional Office in Montevideo. It maintains contact with civil society principally through the UNESCO Participation Programme and the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet).

The National Commission provides advice to local government in relation to sites currently listed on the World Heritage List and potential new sites. It also collaborates with the National Heritage Commission in the preparation of inventories, safeguarding plans and management activities.

In the context of South-South cooperation, the National Commission coordinated the first seminar on 'Quality Education' between Colombia and Uruguay, held in Bogotá (19–21 May). The seminar provided an opportunity to showcase Uruguayan ASPnet activities and help revitalize the Colombian ASPnet.

The German Commission for UNESCO also cooperates with the National Commission of Uruguay through the voluntary service

'kulturweit'. Since 2012, eight volunteers have participated in this programme.

Four students and two teachers from the rural high schools of Baltasar Brum and Cerro Pelado participated in the UNESCO ASPnet International Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Events for Students and Teachers', held in Okayama, Japan (4–8 November). Both schools participated in various EDS activities as part of the meeting.

During the year, the National Commission of Uruguay collaborated with the Faculty of Chemistry (Universidad de la República) to organize events in celebration of the International Year of Crystallography. A Type 1 OpenLab was held at the Faculty of Chemistry in Montevideo, motivated by the recent installation of a Bruker D8 Venture diffractometer. Twenty participants were invited to learn the fundamentals and applications of single crystal x-ray diffraction.

The National Commission of Uruguay published three Spanish-language books during the year – *UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network: Uruguay, 2014*, the *Catalogue of the International Photographic Experience of Monuments 2009–2013* and *Tango Revealed*. The National Commission also produced and disseminated information and audiovisual materials about Tango and Candombe music and dance, both of which are recognized by UNESCO as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Lastly, the National Commission in collaboration with the non-governmental organization 'Árbol', and TAL-Televisión América Latina, coordinated the project 'Why Poverty?' The project, co-produced by Steps International, addresses the issue of poverty in Uruguay, and aims to empower individuals and communities by giving them the tools to produce audiovisual documents of their lives.



A Candombe workshop organized by the Candombe Advisory Group with the National Commission.

© National Commission of Uruguay for UNESCO

A success story

In 2014, the National Commission played a major role in the project 'Documentation, promotion and dissemination of the Candombe traditional drum calls, identity expressions of the Sur, Palermo and Cordon neighbourhoods in the city of Montevideo'.

A main component of the project is a series of networking activities related to Candombe held with local stakeholders across the nineteen departments of Uruguay. These meetings allow the Candombe Advisory Group (GAC) to make direct contact with artists, performers and the media. They also constitute excellent opportunities for the exchange of knowledge, advice and dialogue about different expressions and practices of Candombe, and have a strong educational component.

Eleven workshops have taken already place in the departments of Florida, Soriano, Lavalleja, San José, Maldonado, Canelones, Artigas, Salto, Paysandú, Tacuarembó and Rivera. All trips were recorded (photos, films) with the intention to produce short clips, which will be uploaded to the project website, contributing to the preservation of this intangible heritage.

VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)

Venezuelan National Commission for UNESCO

Secretary-General: Mr Porfirio Pestana de Barros

Website: www.cncu.gob.ve

Update of activities in 2014

In 2014, the Secretary-General of the UNESCO National Commission of Venezuela presented certificates to graduating students that had completed the first Diploma in Training for Community Communication at the Bolivarian University of Venezuela (UBV) (14 February). This joint project established between UBV and UNESCO was approved on February 2012, during the 56th Bureau Meeting of the International Programme to Developing Communication (PIDC), held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (22–24 February).

At the 47th Session of the Executive Council of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), held in Paris (1–4 July), the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela presented 'The CARIACO Ocean Time-Series Project: a window into oceanography in Venezuela'. The Carbon Retention In

A Colored Ocean (CARIACO) project studies the relationship between surface primary production (carbon fixation rates by photosynthesis of planktonic algae), regional hydrography, physical forcing variables (such as the wind), and the settling flux of particulate organic carbon in the Cariaco Basin.

During the presentation, the Executive Council of the IOC awarded three certificates to the participating bodies in this collaborative multi-institutional programme – the Venezuela Oceanographic Institute at the University of Oriente, the Salle Foundation of Natural Sciences and the Technological Institute in Maritime Science at Simón Bolívar University – in recognition of their important studies in the area of climate change with relation to the Caribbean Sea, the second biggest anoxic natural basin on the planet.

In culture, five Venezuelan handicrafts were awarded the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts, 2014 (3 September). The presentation ceremony in Cuenca, Ecuador, highlighted the creativity of these handicrafts and underscored the value of these traditional artisanal skills for sustainable development.



A success story

In July 2014, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee acknowledged the significant progress achieved by Venezuela in the preservation, protection and safeguarding of the heritage site of Coro and its Port. The Committee also approved the proposed measures included in the country's Management Plan. The Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre underlined the contribution of local communities in this regard, and recognized the support of the Venezuelan government in line with the principles promoted by the International Convention of World Heritage.

The Committee also highlighted the roles played by the Permanent Delegation of Venezuela in UNESCO, the Venezuelan National Commission for UNESCO, the Cultural Heritage Institute (CHI), and numerous national and local actors, whose cooperation made possible the significant advances in conservation of this site.

Visit to Coro.

© Venezuelan National Commission for UNESCO



194th session of the Executive Board. © Lydie Ndobo Mackongo





1st Interregional Meeting of National Commissions, Astana, Kazakhstan, 22-24 July 2014. © Xiaolin Cheng





195th session of the Executive Board. © Lydie Ndobong Mackongo



195th session of the Executive Board. © Lydie Ndobu Mackongo

Annex

ACTION PLAN
FOR ENHANCING THE COOPERATION OF UNESCO'S
SECRETARIAT WITH NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO¹

PREAMBLE

Guided by the desire to further enhance the cooperation between Member States, their National Commissions and the Secretariat,

Recognizing that the UNESCO Constitution (Article VII) sets the foundation and legal framework for the establishment of National Commissions,

Bearing in mind that the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO reaffirms that it is for each Member State to define the range of responsibilities and the nature of the function of its National Commission.

Considering the need to promote exchanges and networking among National Commissions in the context of their diversity in organization and status by sharing information and best practices in a transparent and cooperative manner,

Emphasizing the responsibility of the Secretariat, including all programme sectors and field offices, to work with Member States and their National Commissions

The open-ended tripartite working group composed of representatives of the Permanent Delegations, National Commissions and UNESCO Secretariat adopts the following findings and recommendations:

I. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND STRUCTURAL ISSUES

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 1**

The UNESCO Constitution (Article VII) and the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO set the foundations and legal framework for the establishment and functioning of National Commissions. They specify basic roles and responsibilities of the UNESCO Secretariat, Member State Governments and National Commissions in this regard. Certain additional responsibilities have been given to National Commissions (for example, in the fields of decentralization, public information, partnerships with civil society, and use of UNESCO's name and logo) by subsequent resolutions and decisions of the General Conference and the Executive Board (Ref. Resolutions 27 C/13.12, 28 C/13.5, 29 C/60, 30 C/83, 34 C/86 and 36 C/104, 174 EX/ Decision 34).

As regards the responsibilities of the National Commissions, the Working Group does not at this stage consider that it is a priority to revise or update either UNESCO's Constitution or the Charter of National Commissions. The guiding principles laid out in these documents – and relevant above-mentioned resolutions and decisions taken subsequently by the General Conference and the Executive Board – should however be drawn to the attention of all Member State governments and National Commissions.

¹ This Action Plan was adopted by the General Conference at its 37 session (37 C/Resolution 97).

It is recommended that, where they have not already done so, Member States adopt legal or administrative instruments specifying the role and the organization of their National Commission within the national context.

Other Member States could review as appropriate their existing provisions to ensure that full account is taken of the relevant legal documents and recent decisions of the Governing Bodies (Ref. Resolutions 27 C/ 13.12, 28 C/13.5, 29 C/60, 30 C/83, 34 C/86, 36 C/104 and 174 EX/ Decision 34) as well as international best practice.

All Member States are invited to provide information to the Secretariat on the legal status (with a copy of the legal text establishing its National Commission where possible) and organization of their National Commission (with a copy of its organizational chart where possible).

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 2**

Each Member State has developed its own way of operating its National Commission, as provided for in UNESCO's Constitution. It is important that each Member State's National Commission should reflect its particular political, legal and administrative context. The Working Group is agreed that, although there are certain features in common to all National Commissions and a measure of standardization can be helpful, no single model can or should be adopted for all National Commissions. Each National Commission's mandate, organizational structure, working modalities and programme priorities, even though guided by the UNESCO Constitution and the Charter of National Commissions, should be decided on its own.

The Working Group recommends that the principle of the diversity of National Commissions continue to be respected.

II. ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBER STATES, INCLUDING PERMANENT DELEGATIONS AND NATIONAL COMMISSIONS

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 3**

Member States have primary responsibility for providing their Commissions with appropriate status and authority as well as the human and financial resources needed to carry out the work of their National Commission in accordance with UNESCO's Constitution and the Charter of National Commissions.

The Working Group recommends that all Member States review the status and structure of their National Commissions and their secretariats to ensure that they have the authority, the capacity and the expertise to work effectively in UNESCO's areas of competence, with their governments, government agencies, as well as intellectual communities, civil society partners, UNESCO Secretariat at Headquarters and field offices and other National Commissions, and fulfil their advisory function.

Member States are requested to ensure that the Secretariat has up-to-date information on the status, organization and resourcing levels of their National Commission.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 4**

The high turnover of appointees to the positions of President/Chair and Secretary-General in a large number of National Commissions creates instability and discontinuity in their National Commission's work. Moreover the mandates of these appointees are in some cases not well defined.

The Working Group recommends that each Member State consider appointing the Secretary-General of its National Commission for a reasonable period of time and that each appointee be issued with a clear and well defined mandate. In view of common practices, the Working Group recommends Member States to consider appropriate measures to ensure continuity.

Member States are requested to ensure that the Secretariat has up-to-date information on their approach to the appointment of President/Chair and Secretary-General of their National Commission.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 5**

With the recent adoption of the Comprehensive Partnership Strategy, UNESCO is increasing its engagement with the government donors, private sector and other funding partners. National Commissions are considered by the Working Group to have the potential to benefit from public and private partnerships. Value is seen in National Commissions engaging more closely and extensively with public and private partners in order to support their own programmes as well as to encourage support and contributions to UNESCO.

The Working Group recommends that National Commissions be encouraged to establish and/or expand the network of partners in their countries and that they may seek sponsorship in accordance with clearly established principles and procedures which are consistent with national legislation and UNESCO's comprehensive partnership strategy.

Member States are invited to report to the Secretariat on actions taken pursuant to this recommendation, and on any lessons learned or experience gained that might be useful to other National Commissions.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 6**

A number of National Commissions have recently started to work more closely with the various UNESCO networks and civil society partners in their respective countries. These networks include UNESCO Chairs, National Committees of Intergovernmental Programmes, networks such as ASPnet, UNESCO Clubs and Associations, category 2 centres and non-governmental organizations. Given the large number and great diversity of these networks, coordination and governance are often needed to better monitor and facilitate their activities. National Commissions are well placed to play such a facilitating, coordinating and monitoring role.

The Working Group recommends that National Commissions and Secretariat consider ways of engaging more closely with the larger UNESCO family, partners and networks, with a view to exchange advice, guidance and, as appropriate, coordination and support. National Commissions have a particular role to play (under the relevant Directives) on the use of UNESCO's name, acronym, logo and internet domain names. Member States are invited to report to the Secretariat on steps taken to create synergies and work more closely with the UNESCO-related bodies in their country.

The Working Group also recommends that National Commissions actively work with civil society and NGOs based in their respective countries, including legally established national branches of those international NGOs which have established official relations with UNESCO in line with the new “Directives concerning UNESCO’s partnership with non-governmental organizations”. They should contribute to the fostering of UNESCO’s partnership with NGOs by identifying and helping new interested non-governmental partners to join the UNESCO-NGO network.

Finally the Working Group calls upon National Commissions to accredit, monitor and assess as appropriate the Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO in their respective countries so as to ensure that activities implemented by Clubs and Centres for UNESCO will be in line with the mission and objectives of UNESCO and the name and logo of UNESCO be properly used by them. The National Commissions may withdraw the accreditation of Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO which are not meeting the required standards, including the “Directives concerning the use of the name, acronym. Logo and internet domain names of UNESCO”.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 7**

Most National Commissions report regularly to their government and partners. Some Commissions communicate also with their counterparts within – and even outside – the region to which they belong. Regular communication and reporting mechanisms such as newsletters contribute to the visibility and public awareness of the activities they undertake, to the profile of UNESCO and to the promotion of effective working partnerships and best practices.

The Working Group recommends that each National Commission report on a regular basis to its government as well as to its members and partners. These activity reports should as a rule be done on an annual basis and on a commonly agreed template.

The Working Group also believes that regular newsletters should be encouraged. All such reports should be shared with other interested National Commissions, Permanent Delegations and the Secretariat, which collects and posts them on UNESCO’s website.

III. STRENGTHENING INTERACTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS AMONG NATIONAL COMMISSIONS

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 8**

Regional and subregional consultations and meetings, as well as informal gatherings of National Commissions during the sessions of the Executive Board and the General Conference, are critical not just for enhancing communication with the Secretariat but for strengthening collaboration among National Commissions and deriving maximum benefit from this global network of like-minded agencies.

The Working Group recommends to maintain biennial regional meetings of the National Commissions. In this regard, the Working Group calls on Member States and other funding partners to co-fund and/or host regional meetings of National Commissions every two years, one of which would include every four years consultations of Member States and their National Commissions on the upcoming programme cycle.

The Working Group recommends that the informal meetings held on the margins of the Governing Bodies meetings be prepared in a manner that will optimize the possibilities for exchanging information and sharing experiences. In particular, the working group recommends that the Secretariat implement structured participatory events with clearly defined outcomes, which will improve both effectiveness and the exchange of best practice. These meetings will be prepared with appropriate advance consultation regarding the needs and wishes of the participants.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 9**

It is clear that a number of National Commissions, particularly those from developing countries or more recently established, would benefit from the opportunity to work more closely with other National Commissions and to receive assistance from them in the form of training, knowledge and experience sharing and occasional secondments or funding grants. This can be done within the same regional grouping, on a North/South or South/South basis or wherever a need on the part of one National Commission can be matched with the ability and readiness of another National Commission to help out. A number of examples have been drawn to the Working Group's attention of where such arrangements have been very successful.

The Working Group recommends that each National Commission which is in a position to assist other less well-equipped National Commissions take steps to make its position known and actively explore avenues for lending a hand in this way. Twinning system, staff exchange programme and cooperative network among National Commissions are most welcome and encouraged.

It is further recommended that National Commissions be invited to report to the Secretariat on their experience with such arrangements from time to time, so that their experience can be used by others.

IV. IMPROVING COOPERATION BETWEEN NATIONAL COMMISSIONS AND THE SECRETARIAT, BOTH AT HEADQUARTERS AND AT FIELD OFFICE LEVEL

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 10**

Although established with different status and structures, assigned different responsibilities and tasks and operating in different ways with distinct audiences and partners, National Commissions and UNESCO field offices have a common mandate to advocate the mission and carry out the work of UNESCO.

They are called upon to work together and to complement each other's effort in promoting UNESCO's activities, partnerships and visibility at country and regional levels.

The respective roles of these two networks are not clearly defined, and in some cases there is considerable confusion and misunderstanding about their respective responsibilities and roles. Inadequate communication and consultation between the two entities is widespread.

The Working Group recommends that the "Guidelines for interface and cooperation between UNESCO field offices and National Commissions for UNESCO" endorsed by the Executive Board in April 2006 (174 EX/34, Annex) be reviewed and updated to take stock of current situation to enhance the

collaboration between UNESCO field offices and National Commissions. It also recommends that Field Offices be reminded of the obligation to work in close cooperation with National Commissions as well as Member States in their region. Similarly, National Commissions should be reminded of the importance of keeping in touch with the field offices and keep them informed and consulted about any programmes of relevance at a regional level.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 11**

Information and knowledge sharing between the Secretariat Headquarters and National Commissions is an important way of enhancing the capacity of National Commissions to engage in various activities of UNESCO. Significant improvements in communication have taken place recently through monthly newsletters, online posting and e-Forum discussions.

Further efforts must be made to enhance two-way communication, using the new ICTs as well as the more traditional methods of communication. Biennial meetings of regional National Commissions remain an important element in this.

The Working Group recommends that the UNESCO Secretariat facilitate the networking of National Commissions by gathering, highlighting and sharing information, knowledge and good practices with National Commissions on a more regular basis. This requires National Commissions to submit, in timely manner and preferably in electronic format, relevant information, newsletters, activity reports and proposals to facilitate the Secretariat's work.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 12**

Member States' Governments, Permanent Delegations and National Commissions are not always kept informed of activities being undertaken by the UNESCO Secretariat (Headquarters and field offices) in their respective countries.

They occasionally learn about them only through the media. Bypassing National Commissions while conducting a project or implementing an activity in their country is neither courteous nor in conformity with the UNESCO Constitution (Article VII) and Charter of National Commissions.

The Working Group recommends that the UNESCO Secretariat ensure that Permanent Delegations and National Commissions be consulted about, informed in advance and involved where appropriate in every activity UNESCO is planning to implement in their countries, including staff missions and meetings with officials and partners; and subsequently be informed of the outcome of these missions and meetings.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 13**

All National Commissions need to constantly build and adapt their capacities and methods of work to effectively and efficiently play their role. Present training modalities and ways of seeking funding are in many cases no longer suited to current needs. There is an urgent need to explore and develop new ways of training by the Secretariat, drawing on the experience of both the Secretariat and National Commissions.

The Working Group recommends that the Secretariat develop training programmes to satisfy the various needs of different National Commissions. While face-to-face training can continue to be organized where needed and when funding sources are available, alternative cost-effective and targeted training modules should be further explored and developed, such as

- **video conferences**
- **online training**
- **study visits or learning stays of members of Commissions at Headquarters or in field offices.**

Initiatives of networking, partnership and cooperation among National Commissions for capacity-building purposes should be supported by the Secretariat.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 14**

As principal beneficiaries of the Participation Programme, National Commissions rely on Participation Programme grants both to implement projects and to build their capacities and partnerships. The delay in approving requests for such items as equipment, celebration of anniversaries, training workshops and the publication of reports/news bulletins have triggered some concern.

Due to the incomplete presentation of a number of Participation Programme requests and the unsatisfactory quality of financial and evaluation reports on past grants, the whole evaluation and approval process has become problematic. It is understood that the Executive Board may be considering rules of eligibility and criteria for Participation Programme funding on the basis of the External Auditor's report.

The Working Group recommends that National Commissions and the Secretariat, including the Field Offices, work closely together to further improve the Participation Programme process. Special efforts need to be made in preparing the financial and evaluation reports.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIME-LINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned above, Permanent Delegations, National Commissions (both are in liaison with their government) and UNESCO Secretariat have the direct responsibilities to implement the respective recommendations.

Any reports by Member States on the implementation of the recommendations of findings 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9 are expected by 30 June 2014.

The Secretariat should submit a progress report on the implementation of all these recommendations to the Executive Board at its 196th Session (Spring 2015). The review of the "Guidelines for interface and cooperation between UNESCO field offices and National Commissions for UNESCO" (recommendation 9) could also be done on this occasion.

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