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**(Twenty-fourth)
meeting of the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Council
for the Information for All Programme
(IFAP)**

5 March 2015

UNESCO House, Paris (Fontenoy Building, Room VIII)

9.30 a.m. -12.30 p.m. and 2.30 p.m.-5.30 p.m.

Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda

Review of major IFAP activities undertaken by the IFAP Bureau
and the Secretariat since the 23rd meeting of the IFAP Bureau

This agenda item provides an overview of major activities undertaken by the IFAP Bureau and Secretariat since the 8th session of the IFAP Council and the 23rd meeting of the IFAP Bureau.

Review of major IFAP activities by the IFAP Bureau and the Secretariat

- 1) UNESCO's IFAP and COMEST Secretariats jointly organized the annual WSIS C10 Action Line: Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society meeting in Geneva on 12 June 2014 during the WSIS+10 High Level. The session was organized under the theme "**Information Ecologies: Social Transformations, Ethics and Polic. It** examined the roles and influences of information networks, the content they transmit, the actors they connect and the diversity of their uses; as well as, the impact and influence of the foregoing on new modes of social existence and power. The session identified three areas where greater attention is needed if human rights and development goals are to be realized. These are i) integrating ethical reflection into the design and use of information systems; ii) supporting multi-dimensional responses to the complexity of information ecosystems, and iii) media and information literacy programmes that enhance the capacity to effectively use the virtual spaces. The meeting report will inform the preparation of the post-2015 workplans for this Action Line.

- 2) In June 2014, the IFAP Secretariat published a 17-Country readiness study on Free and Open Source Software (FOSS), Open Data and Open Standards in the Caribbean. The study was informed by a one-year long research program which included national consultations. The study revealed that countries in the region were at very different stages of development. Also, while most Caribbean countries and territories surveyed have national ICT policies in place; with the exceptions of Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts-Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines; they contain little if any explicit reference to FOSS and Open Solutions. The study however came at an opportune moment as it has served to sensitize several ongoing policy-reviews to the need and benefits of Open Solutions, which in turn is paving the way for their incorporation into the national frameworks and strategies. This project was made possible with the financial support received from UNESCO's Emergency and Multi-donor Fund and has provided the basis for developing national implementation roadmaps, highlighting regional best practices and areas for improvement.

- 3) In Southern Africa, UNESCO's Harare Field Office has worked closely with existing National IFAP Committees to organize 4 national events to build the capacity of policy makers in the information ethics priority area. In a similar manner UNESCO's Beijing, Cairo, Libreville, San Jose and Tehran Offices have been strengthening existing National IFAP Committees and working with UNESCO National Commissions to support the establishment of new ones.

- 4) Within the framework of the implementation of Resolution 52 adopted by the 37th session of UNESCO's General Conference, the IFAP network has been contributing to the preparation of the Internet-related study: access, free expression, privacy and ethics. The study will be discussed at the international conference CONNECTing the Dot: Options for Future Action that will be held 3-4 March 2015 at UNESCO Headquarters. IFAP is an official conference partner and various IFAP network members have been involved in the preparations as well as expert panel organized during this event.

- 5) In cooperation with the Government of Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug-Ugra (Russian Federation), the Permanent Delegation of the Russian Federation for UNESCO and the Russian Committee of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP), UNESCO's Knowledge Societies Division organized a two-day international expert meeting on multilingualism in cyberspace from 28-29 October at UNESCO's Headquarters. The event brought together more than 60 experts from 26 countries to discuss trends, challenges and opportunities for linguistic diversity in cyberspace. The event focused on supporting Member States to effectively implement UNESCO's Recommendation Concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace (2003), advance the recommendations of IFAP's international conferences on multilingualism and to develop a plan of action aimed at transforming UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger into a global platform for sharing languages resources and technological solutions, monitoring and promoting the world's languages. The recommendations and action plan adopted by the meeting will amongst others support the development and adoption of sustainable national language policies; promote the development of multilingual operating systems and tools; safeguard the linguistic heritage of indigenous and endangered linguistic communities; and support the realization of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda.*

- 6) The 8th International Conference on the Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance held in Guimarães, Portugal from 27 to 30 October 2014 was organized by the United Nations University Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV), the University of Minho and the Agency for Administrative Modernization of the Portuguese Government, under the High Patronage of His Excellency the President of the Portuguese Republic. UNESCO/IFAP's contribution to the event comprised co-organization and co-chairing of the conference track on "Ethics, Accountability and Transparency", as well as two UNESCO-sponsored sessions on "Ethical Challenges of the Information Society" and "Building Knowledge Societies: Lessons from the Mekong River". The conference outputs have been included in the UNU-EGOV official submission to the preparation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

- 7) The first ever high-level conference to examine how ICT can promote the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities was held in New Delhi from 24 to 26 November, 2015. Organized by UNESCO and the Government of India, the conference, "From Exclusion to Empowerment: Role of ICT for Persons with Disabilities", brought together some 1,000 persons including persons with disabilities, policy-makers, experts as well as representatives from civil society and the IT industry.

- 8) During a special IFAP session, the Inclusive Learning Lab (I2L) concept, which focuses on creating dynamic, inclusive and accessible spaces for formal and informal learning was presented. Comments and indications of support for the I2L received during the conference are being taken onboard with a view to supporting the development and roll-out of prototypes in late 2015. The conference recommendations and follow-up actions have been incorporated into the workplans of United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) and other key UN System actors such as UNGIS, ESCAP, UNDESA and ITU.

- 9) The ICEGOV2014 event as well as the visit to UNESCO in November 2014 by the UNU Rector has provided opportunities for the IFAP Secretariat to provide concrete inputs into the new UNESCO-UNU Memorandum of Understanding. Joint activities being discussed include the updating of the National Information Society Policy Template and its conversion to an on-line format which could enable the incorporation of case studies and new material.
- 10) More than 50 international experts representing 20 countries from across 5 continents gathered in Israel for the first international IFAP conference on Well Being in Digital Media from 17 - 19 February 2014. The event held under the auspices of UNESCO was organized by the Israel National Commission for UNESCO and its National IFAP Committee along with the Department of Education at Ben Gurion University, the Sammy Ofer School of Communication at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya and the Open University of Israel. The Forum on Well Being, launched during the conference, will serve as a global observatory supporting monitoring and measurement, as well as collating research and policy documents on digital well-being. It will also host an online community of practice that links researchers, policy makers, users and industry actors to share information and develop responses that enhance well-being for individuals and society.
- 11) The Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and the Information Technology Authority (ITA) organized the Second International Conference on Free and Open Source Software FOSSC-Oman, in Muscat from 18-19 February, 2015. The event attracted some 500 participants and contributed to sharing regional experiences in the use of FOSS, supported collaboration and networking between industry, academic and policy actors, and provided insights into new trends and opportunities as well as challenges for sustainable FOSS-based ecosystems.
- 12) With financial support received from the Zain mobile telecom company a series of workshops were held in South Sudan in July 2014 under the YouthMobile Initiative. This innovative project seeks to empower youth with the skills to develop smart mobile apps for sustainable development. Similar training activities were also undertaken in Kenya in August 2014. To inform the project future planning and as inputs to national policy frameworks, comprehensive assessments of mobile app training initiatives have been conducted in Nigeria and Lebanon. Youthmobile continues to emphasize a gender-balanced approach with around 45% female beneficiaries.
- 13) With a view to enhancing access to high-quality educational content and opportunities, UNESCO has been assisting the Governments of Kenya, Oman, and Bahrain to develop national-level policies for Open Educational Resources (OERs). UNESCO is also assisting the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) to transform all their courses into OERs and to support the development of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOCs) which will be amongst the first in Africa.

- 14) In May 2014, UNESCO hosted the IGF Open Consultations and MAG meetings from 19-21 May, contributing to enhanced cooperation between the IGF and UNESCO Secretariat. As a follow-up, UNESCO participated in the 9th Internet Governance Forum (IGF) on "Connecting Continents for Enhanced Multistakeholder Internet Governance", held in Istanbul, from 1 to 5 September 2014. UNESCO co-organized with its partners some 12 sessions including the High-Level Leader's Meeting. UNESCO's interventions reinforced and raised the visibility of ongoing actions in the 6 IFAP priority areas and identified new areas for collaboration.