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Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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Hundred and ninety-first session

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Item 35 of the provisional agenda

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF GAZA: IMPLEMENTATION OF 190 EX/DECISION 39

SUMMARY

This document summarizes progress made by UNESCO since the 190th session of the Executive Board in providing assistance to the reconstruction and development of the Gaza Strip.

There are no financial or administrative implications.

No decision is proposed in this document.

1. This document presents an update on the UNESCO response to the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip since the 190th session of the Executive Board. It covers the period from August 2012 to January 2013.

EDUCATION

2. Within the programme “Quality Systems for Quality Teachers” funded by the European Union, technical assistance was provided for developing systems and operational frameworks needed for the implementation of the Teacher Education Strategy, particularly through continued support to the Commission for Developing the Teaching Profession. Further focus was placed on its implementation in Gaza through capacity development programmes benefiting schools and universities. The purpose of these activities was to strengthen the capacity of different education personnel on defined topics and competencies in order to support the Teacher Education Strategy, with particular focus on planning and implementing innovation in education; improving the understanding of the concept of special needs and inclusive education; training on educational leadership in implementing improvements and project development; using ICT-based facilities in education and modern teacher training. The activities were implemented under the umbrella of the United Nations/Ministry of Education package on inclusive and child-friendly education, whose purpose is to strengthen these principles in the educational system both at higher education institutions and in primary schools. During the period under review, 171 teachers and supervisors benefited from these capacity development programmes.

3. UNESCO also continued to ensure effective coordination of the United Nations Education Group and particularly coordination of the implementation of the United Nations/Ministry of

Education package on inclusive and child-friendly education and early childhood development in Gaza with the objective of strengthening capacities to promote access to quality education for all Palestinian children. Fourteen pilot schools were selected in Gaza and their needs assessed. With the support of UNDP, UNRWA, WFP and UNICEF, UNESCO coordinated the installation of 14 classrooms in these pilot schools in order to mainstream inclusive education approaches to teaching and learning and establish a grade 0 (pre-school).

4. UNESCO continued close collaboration and established agreements with four universities in Gaza to improve teacher education programmes and strengthen linkages between universities and schools, as well as communities. Focus will be on strengthening the capacity of teacher educators to design and implement inclusive and child-friendly education programmes; and improving relevance of teacher education programmes to prepare student teachers to better address the diverse needs and abilities of children in Gaza.

5. Furthermore, UNESCO was an active partner in preparing the United Nations response following the heightened hostilities in Gaza in November 2012, through its support to the Education Cluster. Through timely field visits, UNESCO contributed to the Humanitarian Country Team's Initial Rapid Assessment. UNESCO also coordinated and prepared a short assessment on the damages to the higher education institutions in the Gaza Strip. The experience of UNESCO in implementing emergency education programmes in Gaza has been critical in reactivating the International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE, 19 Master trainers). UNESCO Ramallah Office also held consultations with schools in the Gaza Access Restricted Areas regarding the update of contingency plans which were prepared in the past under the emergency education programme funded by the Office of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missend of Qatar. A follow-up to the Conflict-Disaster Risk Reduction is included in the 2013 Consolidated Appeals Process.

6. The educational needs are immense, and there is urgency in responding to the needs of students. The Education Cluster's database lists 280 damaged education facilities in Gaza, affecting approximately 250,000 students. UNESCO also received data from the Israeli authorities on the harmful effects of continuous exposure of Israeli children to missile attacks from Gaza in the south of Israel; causing long-term trauma and critical developmental damage.

CULTURE

7. The partnership is continuing between UNESCO, the French Biblical and Archaeological School of Jerusalem and the Islamic University of Gaza concerning the conservation of the archaeological site of Saint Hilarion Monastery/Tell Umm Amer in Nuseirat, south of Gaza City. Critical conservation activities are financed until December 2013. However, additional funding will be needed to complete the emergency measures and guarantee the safety of the site. Long-term interventions are also necessary to establish the first archaeological park in the Gaza Strip, for the benefit of its population, in particular the children and youth.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

8. The research on the Media Development Indicators in Palestine, in cooperation with the research team from Birzeit University's Media Development Center, is being pursued and will continue until June 2013.

9. In the context of UNESCO's efforts to enhance media capacities of Palestinian journalists, UNESCO Ramallah Office, together with Maan TV Network, developed trainings on electoral issues and on conflict sensitive reporting, based upon UNESCO's conflict-sensitive journalism curriculum. At the end of the workshops, a report including recommendations for future initiatives was produced.



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ADDENDUM

The Executive Board,

1. Having considered document 191 EX/35,
2. Acknowledges the Director-General good offices mission to lead to an understanding between all concerned parties and to the implementation of resolution 34COM7A20 (Brasilia consensus resolution) as reflected by the Israeli representative's letter of 23 April 2013 to the Director-General and thanks her for these efforts;
3. Decides to include this item on the agenda of the 192nd session of the Executive Board and invites the Director-General to submit to it a follow-up report thereon.