



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Hundred and eighty-seventh session

187 EX/41

PARIS, 26 August 2011
Original: English

Item 41 of the provisional agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF 35 C/RESOLUTION 75 AND 186 EX/DECISION 34 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

SUMMARY

This document is presented in compliance with 35 C/Resolution 75 and 186 EX/Decision 34. It summarizes the progress UNESCO made since the 186th session of the Executive Board in providing assistance to the Palestinian people and their educational and cultural institutions, as well as to such institutions in the occupied Syrian Golan.

There are no financial or administrative implications.

No decision is proposed.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present document reports on progress achieved in the implementation of UNESCO assistance to the Palestinian Authority and to relevant stakeholders in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and the occupied Syrian Golan, since January 2011.

II. UNESCO'S ASSISTANCE IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

EDUCATION

2. During the period under review, UNESCO continued its assistance to the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Education and Higher Education in priority areas agreed upon during the 8th Joint UNESCO/PA Committee (March 2008), such as teacher education, educational planning and management and science education. In agreement with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, new assistance in the field of inclusive education and early childhood care and education was initiated in cooperation with other United Nations agencies. UNESCO also strengthened its emergency education programmes for both West Bank and Gaza (for more information 187/EX 42, Report on the reconstruction and development of Gaza).

3. At regional level, UNESCO supported the participation of the Minister of Education and Higher Education in the launch of the 2011 Education for All Arabic Global Monitoring Report held in Amman on 30 May 2011, in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah, which was followed by a Ministerial High Level Panel.

4. Within the programme on "Quality Systems for Quality Teachers" funded by the European Union (€3.6 million), technical assistance was provided for developing systems and operational frameworks needed for the implementation of the **Teacher Education Strategy (TES)**, particularly through support to the Commission for Developing the Teaching Profession (CDTP). During the period under review, the National Professional Standards for teachers and new teachers were approved by the CDTP Advisory Board. These standards will help in improving the process of selecting and assessing the performance of teachers. They will also help Palestinian universities in adapting their current teacher education programmes to better match the new standards. The draft Code of Conduct, as well as the Provisional License of teachers, were completed and are ready to be approved by the Advisory Board. In early June 2011, a national workshop was conducted to review the new Qualifications Framework developed to upgrade the qualifications of teachers already in the system. A research study on "The Palestinian Teachers' Working Conditions" has also been completed.

5. In the area of **educational planning and management**, UNESCO continued to support the strengthening of national education planning capacities in the occupied Palestinian territory. At the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's request and with financial support from the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, UNESCO initiated a comprehensive needs assessment on education service provision in Area C in the West Bank. During the period under review, UNESCO undertook an initial assessment of education provision in Area C and made preliminary recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education for a response plan/strategy for Area C aimed at redressing service provision and better protecting education, as part of the Education Development Strategic Plan of the Ministry (EDSP). The final assessment will be available in August 2011.

6. In further support to the EDSP, UNESCO also initiated the design of an integrated United Nations response addressing capacity-building needs at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in **inclusive and child-friendly education, as well as in early childhood care and education**. The overall objective of this package is to strengthen the capacities of the Palestinian Authority to promote quality basic education for all children in the occupied Palestinian territory, in order to increase access of school-aged children and students of all education levels, improve the

ability of the education system to retain them, and improve the quality of teaching and learning. During the period under review, UNESCO, as the lead agency of the United Nations Education Strategic Area Group in the occupied Palestinian territory, conducted an assessment of existing programmes (partners and Ministry of Education and Higher Education) focusing on early childhood care and education, particularly inclusive and child-friendly education in order to identify gaps in providing quality education services and areas for further United Nations support. On this basis, a draft proposal for the United Nations response is being developed to build further institutional capacities of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

7. In the field of **science education**, UNESCO provided 270 micro-science kits (chemistry, biology and physics) to 18 schools in the West Bank for scientific learning in grades 1 to 9. Each school is receiving 15 kits, enabling students and teachers to interact, explore and gain knowledge through experimental learning.

8. As part of its **emergency response programme**, UNESCO provided learning opportunities for vulnerable and marginalized communities in the Nablus governorate in response to a school demolition in the area. In cooperation with the Multipurpose Community Resource Centre (MCRC), a non-formal education centre in Nablus, educational and recreational activities were organized during the winter holidays. All activities were designed to meet the psychosocial needs of the students, providing them with outlets to express themselves and adhering to “the do-no-harm principle”. This was complemented by a teacher sensitization workshop for teachers from the Khirbet Tana and nearby Beit Furik School. The workshop focused on providing teachers with learner-centred tools and approaches that focus on the needs of individual students and are sensitive to their psychosocial well-being.

9. In addition, and similar to activities under the emergency education programme in Gaza, two separate two day capacity building trainings on the right to Education were organized in Ramallah and benefitted around 40 participants (predominantly members of the education cluster working with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, international and local NGOs, United Nations Agencies and the media). Also under the purview of promoting schools as safe zones, UNESCO commissioned, and is currently finalizing, a mapping of the right to education in the occupied Palestinian territory.

10. UNESCO continued cooperation with the humanitarian **Education Cluster and Child Protection Working Group** has supported the development of a joint response plan that incorporates education and children protection programming for vulnerable communities; the development of a needs assessment framework to support such response in the first instance; and the coordination of joint education and child protection programming over the summer holidays (including the prioritization of vulnerable communities, data collection on current and planned interventions, establishment of standards of intervention and coordination with national authorities).

CULTURE

11. During the reporting period, UNESCO continued delivering specialized technical assistance to Palestinian cultural institutions both governmental (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and Ministry of Culture) and non-governmental - in the form of an inclusive programme to help safeguard the tangible and intangible Palestinian cultural heritage and to promote its cultural expressions and industries. This assistance addressed priorities identified in the Palestinian National Development Plan (2011-20) and reflected in the United Nations Mid-Term Response Plan (2011-20).

12. At the strategic level, UNESCO continued implementing the MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) Joint Programme for “Culture and Development in the occupied Palestinian territory” (US \$3 million, of which \$1,514,437 million is earmarked for UNESCO). The programme, led by UNESCO and implemented with FAO, United Nations Women and UNDP, in partnership

with Palestinian Authority governmental institutions, entered its third and final year of execution. The main achievements during the reporting period were:

- (i) Finalization of an integrated conservation and management plan for Sebastiya (Nablus Governorate) and the preliminary design of a tourist facility as the first pilot project of the plan;
- (ii) Development of Palestinian cultural heritage inventories, in particular a database of archaeological sites and artefacts, as well as an inventory for three domains of intangible cultural heritage - food culture, fishing culture and agricultural practices;
- (iii) Establishment of two strategic partnerships for the promotion of Palestinian cultural expressions, one with Al-Housh, a regional initiative for the promotion of Arab arts and design, and one the Freedom Theatre, a Jenin-based organization for building local capacities in the field of drama and theatre;
- (iv) On-the-job training for enhancing design skills utilizing elements of local heritage. A first training course was conducted in the West Bank in May 2011 and a second training will be conducted in the Gaza Strip in the coming months;
- (v) Training on alternative tourism, notably home hospitality and tour guiding. Forty beneficiaries from various West Bank locations have been trained.

13. A number of **cultural events** were supported, namely: (i) the 4th Palestinian Cultural and Educational Forum organized by the Palestinian National Committee for Education, Culture and Science; (ii) the rehabilitation of the historic core of Birzeit through an architectural competition organized by the Palestinian NGO Riwaq – Centre for Architectural Conservation – in cooperation with the School of Architecture of St. Martin in London; (iii) the display of one of Pablo Picasso's paintings (Buste de Femme, 1946, from Van Abbe museum in Eindhoven) in the occupied Palestinian territory for the first time. This event was organized by the International Art Academy – Palestine with UNESCO's provided logistical facilitation and financial support.

Bethlehem and its Governorate

14. The premises of the basement of the Bethlehem Peace Center were fully renovated to host the "**Riwaya Museum – Bethlehem**", funded by the Government of Norway (US \$1,323,631). The funding proposal for the completion of the museum until its inauguration was submitted to Norway for potential funding. Thanks to the Norwegian Refugee Council secondment scheme with UNESCO, the project manager/curator of the museum has been selected and recruited and will manage the implementation of the final phase of the project, coordinate and lead the audio-visual production of the museum's contents and its installation.

15. Further to the completion of the project, the final evaluation of the "**Bethlehem Area Conservation and Management Plan**", funded by the Government of Italy (US \$500,000), was carried out by a team of three independent consultants and its report is available. The publication of the project results has been finalized in digital format and will be printed in 500 copies.

16. The project "**Safeguarding Historical and Environmental Resources Towards Sustainable Development in the Bethlehem Governorate**", funded by the Government of Norway (US \$115,000), is concluded. As a project output, the "Battir Landscape Plan" was awarded the "Melina Mercouri International Prize for the Safeguarding and Management of Cultural Landscapes" at UNESCO Headquarters in May 2011. The prize will be used to prepare a scientific publication about Battir and its Landscape Protection Plan. Furthermore, UNESCO is leading the formulation of a joint United Nations initiative, notably the "Safeguarding Bethlehem Western Villages", which builds on the results of this project and seeks to protect and promote livelihoods and sustainable development needs in this area. The initiative was presented to a group of Arab

donors, during the occupied Palestinian territory United Nations Country Team Briefing of Arab Partners held in June 2011 at the Dead Sea, Jordan.

Nablus

17. In the context of the project “**Old City of Nablus Renovation – Restoration and Adaptive Reuse of Khan al-Wakala**”, funded by the European Union (US \$2,387,822), an international consultant specialized in restoration of traditional masonries was hired in March 2011 and delivered plans for the reconstruction of the Main Gate. The reconstruction of the Gate was started, as were rehabilitation works in the streets adjacent to the Caravanserail. It is expected that the caravanserai and its facilities will be ready for opening to the public in November 2011.

18. The project “**Tell Balata Archaeological Park – Scientific Research, Conservation and Site Management**” funded by the Government of the Netherlands (US \$431,655), entered its second year of execution. The second archaeological clearance and excavation campaign was conducted in June-July 2011, by the University of Leiden jointly with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, bringing 10 archaeology students and five professors from The Netherlands to work together with their Palestinian colleagues. The campaign contributed to shed light on the history of the site and prepare it for visitors. In May 2011, an architectural studio from Nablus was selected to design the visitors’ facilities through an architectural competition.

Jericho and the Jordan Valley

19. In the framework of the project for the “**Protection of the mosaics at Qasr Hisham Archaeological Park – Archaeological excavations and executive design for the protective shelter of the Great Bath Hall and visitors’ facilities at the site**”, a structural study for the foundations and the durability of the pillars of the Great Bath Hall has been carried out to verify the capacity of the pillars to hold a future protective shelter. UNESCO continued fund mobilization efforts for the realization of the shelter to protect the mosaic of the Great Bath Hall, which would allow it to be uncovered and accessible to the public. In early 2011, a contribution was received from the Swiss Federal Office of Culture (CHF 100,000) for the purpose of further developing the design. Also the Bank of Palestine has confirmed interest in contributing US \$100,000 to the design and planting of a pilot garden, as part of the archaeological park.

20. Within the framework of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security Joint Programme “**Livelihood Protection and Sustainable Empowerment of Vulnerable, Rural and Refugee Communities in the Jordan Valley**” (US \$4,629,085, of which \$1,033,620 million is earmarked for UNESCO), UNESCO started the construction of the first demonstration structure in Akbet Jaber Refugee Camp in Jericho. The building will serve as a community centre for the local population and as a field office during the implementation of the project. A documentary film is being produced during the execution of the works.

21. It should finally be noted that during the reporting period, several inter-sectoral activities were carried out, combining cultural heritage conservation, water resource management and environmental protection. In the context of the project “Livelihood Protection and Sustainable Empowerment of Vulnerable, Rural and Refugee Communities in the Jordan Valley” activities focused on the optimal use of water resources to complement the revival of earthen architecture. Also, as part of follow-up to the project on the “Safeguarding Historical and Environmental Resources Towards Sustainable Development in the Bethlehem Governorate” project specialized expertise was utilized to map natural resources in the area of Battir (near Bethlehem) and in the area of Wadi Malaki (near Nablus), with specific focus on water resources. The production of geo-referenced thematic maps (topography, geomorphology, hydrography, land use, etc.), with the purpose to elaborate protection plans, is ongoing. A specific consultancy addressing land reclamation in Wadi Mahrouf is also ongoing.

COMMUNICATION

22. Thanks to a contribution from the Government of Finland (€500,000), UNESCO has entered into partnership with four local organizations focused on promoting freedom of expression, the safety of journalists and empowering women in media. The four local organizations are: the Palestinian Centre for Development and Media Freedoms, the Media Development Centre of Birzeit University, Filastiniyat and MAAN News Network.

23. In the context of the partnership with MAAN News Network, two safety training courses benefitting 51 Palestinian journalists, photographers and cameramen from 33 different media outlets were organized respectively in the West Bank and in Gaza in June 2011. The training concentrated on practical and professional aspects of media coverage in hazardous situations. To complement the training 65 first aid kits for media professionals were distributed.

24. The Palestinian Centre for Development and Media Freedoms's partnership focuses on promoting freedom of expression through monitoring, reporting, peer support networking and legal aid for media professionals. The Palestinian Centre for Development and Media Freedoms organized an awareness campaign on freedom of expression on the occasion of the World Press Freedom Day, which involved public figures, decision-makers and journalists through radio and television flashes, newspaper caricatures and advertisements. A special photo gallery was established on attacks on journalists. Workshops for lawyers working on the protection of freedom of opinion and expression were held on 3 May 2011.

25. Filastiniyat together with Birzeit University established a peer support group for young women journalists and an internship scheme offering professional opportunities for female journalists in the West Bank. The purpose is to support Palestinian newly graduates from Palestinian journalism schools in finding job opportunities and to facilitate their advanced studies in the field of journalism. In this context, special attention is given to women from marginalized communities, such as Bedouin, rural and refugees' communities.

26. In the context of United Nations Democracy Fund funded project "Strengthening Palestinian Participatory Democracy and Dialogue" (US \$290,000), a series of advanced workshops and training sessions on blogging and citizen journalism were organized with AMIN News Network in the West Bank and Gaza. The project, which is about to be completed, generated broad interest and participation.

27. In March 2011, two new projects were approved for funding as part of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC): (i) "Citizen Media: a tool for a change" (\$10,000). The project will be implemented with AMIN News Network and seek to complement and consolidate the results of the United Nations Democracy Fund funded project "Strengthening Palestinian Participatory Democracy and Dialogue"; (ii) Enhancing women's roles and voices in media (\$15,000). The project supports Nissa FM, the first women community radio station in the occupied Palestinian territory.

SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

28. Thanks to the support from the Government of Norway (\$1.4 million), UNESCO continued supporting the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in the Palestinian society through the activities of the Palestinian Women Research and Documentation Centre. The Centre focused on conducting research to inform advocacy and policy level. During the period under review, the Centre accomplished research on gender and environment, disability and Palestinian legislations that discriminate women against participation in the labour force and in decision making. In addition, two policy briefs were developed focusing on violence against Palestinian women and girls, and suggested policy interventions for Palestinian Legislative Council members in order to decrease gender-based discrimination in the occupied Palestinian territory.

29. The Palestinian Women Research and Documentation Centre also introduced gender audit as a research and advocacy tool, to assess the situation of women professionals' participation and status in promoting gender equality in the Palestinian labour market. Other capacity-building activities benefitting governmental and non-governmental organizations included four long-term trainings: capacity building for gender units, English for social sciences, project management and training on action research.

30. The Palestinian Women Research and Documentation Centre further strengthened collaboration and partnerships with six United Nations agencies in the context of the Joint Programme on "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the occupied Palestinian territory: Millennium Development Goal 3". In this context, the following activities were carried out: trainings for national counterparts and women's organizations on research findings, regulatory frameworks and advocacy; awareness-raising of teachers, students and parents on gender equality and violence against girls and boys; database on women in different decision-making positions; and gender review of all laws that impede women's labour force participation.

III. UNESCO'S ASSISTANCE IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN

31. The Scholarship programme for Syrian students in the occupied Syrian Golan (\$113,000 from the Japanese Funds-in-Trust) was launched in July 2009 to grant 24 scholarships for four academic years to the students from the occupied Syrian Golan. Implementation of the project continued over the reporting period in cooperation with the Syrian authorities. Fourteen new scholarships have been granted for the academic year 2010-2011, in line with the agreed criteria. Three scholarships from the previous academic year (2009-2010) will be renewed following the submission of the required documents by the Syrian Ministry of Higher Education. Seven remaining scholarships have been deferred to the academic year 2011-2012 due to the reduced number of applicants meeting the selection criteria agreed with the Syrian authorities. On 22 May 2011, the Syrian Ministry of Higher Education organized a celebration to distribute the scholarships to student beneficiaries from the academic years 2009-2010 and 2011-2012. The Japanese ambassador and UNESCO Beirut office Director attended the ceremony. Advertisement for the scholarships of the next academic year (2011-2012) will be launched in September 2011.