



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Hundred and eighty-second session

182 EX/54

PARIS, 20 July 2009
Original: English

Item 54 of the provisional agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF 34 C/RESOLUTION 58 AND 181 EX/DECISION 47 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

SUMMARY

This document is presented in compliance with 34 C/Resolution 58 and 181 EX/Decision 47. It summarizes the progress made by UNESCO, since the 181st 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. The Director-General intends to issue an addendum to the present document before the 182nd session of the Board.

No financial or administrative implications.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present document reports on progress achieved in the implementation of UNESCO assistance to the Palestinian Authority (PA) and to relevant stakeholders in the Palestinian Territories, since March 2009. The focus is on assistance for development in support of the Palestinian reform agenda as put forward in the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (2008-2010), in particular the priority areas of cooperation identified during the eighth meeting of the UNESCO/Palestinian Authority Joint Committee, held at UNESCO Headquarters on 4 and 5 March 2008.

2. Complementary to the present report is the information contained in document 182 EX/55 (“Contribution to the Reconstruction and Development of Gaza”), which presents an update on the UNESCO response to the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND MAJOR PROGRESS IN UNESCO’S ASSISTANCE

EDUCATION

3. During the period under review, and in parallel to its education response to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, UNESCO consolidated its assistance to the PA Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), in particular, on the four major priority areas agreed upon during the 8th Joint Committee meeting: teacher education; educational planning; technical vocational education and training (TVET); and science education.

4. Technical assistance to the MoEHE in the area of **teacher education** focused on improving the management and institutional capacity of the teacher education system. Support was provided to the MoEHE for the set-up of the “Commission for Developing the Teaching Profession” (CDTP), which will act as a permanent MoEHE structure with responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the National Professional Standards for Teachers, Licensing of Teachers, and Quality Assurance of teacher training programmes. The CDTP will be officially launched in early July 2009. UNESCO facilitated the earmarking of funds from the Government of Norway to cover the salaries of the core staff of the CDTP for the first two years of its establishment, which served to catalyse the establishment of the CDTP. UNESCO’s technical support to the MoEHE in the implementation of the Teacher Education Strategy was further strengthened with the effective start of a three-year technical assistance programme “Quality Systems for Quality Teachers” funded by the European Commission for a total of €3.6 million.

5. Parallel to this support, and aimed at capacity development through international exposure and promotion of networking, two MoEHE staff participated in the 12th UNESCO-APEID International conference on “Quality Innovation for Teaching and Learning” held in Bangkok, Thailand in March 2009.

6. In the area of **educational planning and management**, UNESCO supported, in cooperation with Finland, the participation of three educational planners from the MoEHE to attend a course at IIEP on “Planning Education in Fragile Contexts” which will be held from 20 to 31 July 2009. The course will provide the participants with practical knowledge about effective mechanisms for planning and implementing education in fragile contexts, which had recently appeared to be a gap in educational planning in the oPt.

7. Progress was also achieved in assisting the MoEHE in the establishment of a **national Career Guidance (CG) system**. A half-day seminar, organized on 16 April 2009, was chaired by H.E. Mrs. Alamis, Minister of Education and Higher Education, involving representatives from the relevant Ministries, NGOs, educational institutions, and development partners. The result of the mapping exercise regarding the CG initiatives in the Palestinian Territories, carried out in early

September 2008, formed the basis for discussion. The initiation of a National CG Task Force (NCGTF) was announced as part of the seminar. The NCGTF, with technical support from UNESCO, will be responsible for articulating a coherent and holistic strategy for CG.

8. In support to the development of **science education**, and with technical assistance from UNESCO, a training manual was developed for the dissemination of micro-science kits in Palestinian schools and their adaptation of their use within the Palestinian education system and curriculum. Work continues in preparation for training workshops to be held during summer 2009, targeting science teachers from 30 marginalized schools in the West Bank.

9. UNESCO has initiated support to the MoEHE in elaborating **a national policy framework for science innovation and technology**. A three-step approach was developed to address this need. The approach includes: mapping existing structures and capacities in science, innovation and technology; identification of potentially strong areas for science, innovation and technology in the oPt; and a stakeholder consultation process which will result in a draft policy document. A national partner was identified in cooperation with the MoEHE to undertake the first mapping phase.

CULTURE

10. During the period under review, UNESCO strengthened its action towards the safeguarding of Palestinian cultural heritage, in both its tangible and intangible components, and the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. Assistance to the institutions of the Palestinian Authority, namely the Ministry of Culture (MOC) and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA), as well as to civil society organizations, was provided in the context of extrabudgetary projects, as well as through the Regular Programme's activities.

11. On the occasion of the 2009 World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (21 May), the UNESCO-led **MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) Joint Programme for "Culture and Development in the oPt"**, was officially launched with a ceremony and guided visit in the historical city of Sebastiya (Nablus Governorate). This programme was funded by the Government of Spain (US \$3 million in total, of which, \$1.5 million was earmarked for execution by UNESCO). The event was attended by the Consul General of Spain and the Head of the Spanish Cooperation in Jerusalem, by senior representatives of Palestinian Authority line ministries concerned, by the United Nations Resident Coordinator and by the Heads of Office of the four United Nations participating agencies, namely FAO, UNDP, UNIFEM and UNESCO.

12. Technical and financial assistance was provided to develop the capacities of the MOC in inventorying and archiving of forms of **intangible heritage** of the *Hikaye* (folktales). A research study analysing distinctive elements in the Palestinian *Hikaye* is ongoing. This assistance builds on the completion of the "Action plan for the safeguarding of the Palestinian *Hikaye*" sponsored through the Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan Prize (United Arab Emirates). The prize, awarded in 2006, contributed to supporting the implementation of the five-year action plan elaborated in the framework of the candidature file for the proclamation of the Palestinian *Hikaye* as a masterpiece of oral and intangible heritage of humanity (2005).

13. A new multifaceted programme of cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA) was defined and agreed upon, focusing on: site conservation and management; inventorying of archaeological heritage; landscape protection; combating illicit trafficking; cultural heritage education; preparation of one nomination dossier for future inclusion of a first Palestinian site on the World Heritage List (Bethlehem); and the reprinting of the "Inventory of cultural and natural heritage sites of potential outstanding universal value in Palestine" in English and Arabic.

14. Partnerships with some major Palestinian cultural NGOs were also strengthened. Together with the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, UNESCO promotes oriental classical music in the Palestinian society. Support was extended to develop the Arabic music programme, in which

160 young students are enrolled in the West Bank. Also, support was provided to the Ramallah Contemporary Dance Festival, an international festival organized annually aiming at promoting mutual understanding and building bridges of communication and cultural exchange between different societies.

Bethlehem

15. The project “**Bethlehem Area Conservation and Management Plan**”, funded by Italy (US \$500,000), was completed. As a result, significant progress towards the operationalization of a conservation and management plan for the area has been achieved. The continuation of the project is currently under discussion with Italy. Such continuation would allow further enriching of the Preliminary Conservation Plan and the start of a participatory phase in which the citizens of the Bethlehem Area would be actively involved in an urban planning practice which respects the rich cultural heritage of the area.

16. The documentation and training components of the project “**Safeguarding Historical and Environmental Resources Towards Sustainable Development in Bethlehem Governorate**”, funded by Norway (US \$115,000) were completed. Findings of the multidisciplinary research are currently used as reference data in piloting the conservation plan and guidelines. The results, as well as the lessons learnt from this experience, will be used to inform similar components in the execution of the above-mentioned MDG Trust Fund programme.

17. Within the framework of the project “**Riwaya Museum – Bethlehem**”, funded by Norway (US \$1,323,631), intense consultations were held with local stakeholders on the production of the audiovisual material for the interactive exhibition. A three-day retreat was organized in March 2009 in Jericho, gathering all stakeholders and resulting in a set of clear recommendations for the finalization of the museum display and its design. In addition, progress was achieved in the renovation of the museum premises. Synergies between this pilot project and the technical assistance to MOTA for the updating and publishing of the National Museum Policy, as well as for a pilot ethnographic museum in Dura (Hebron Governorate) were established.

Nablus

18. Progress was achieved under the project “**Old City of Nablus Renovation – Restoration and Adaptive Re-use of Khan al-Wakala**”, funded by the European Union (US \$1,327,000), as civil works were resumed after the awarding of the international tender for the structural works and mechanical/electrical installations of the new block to complete the missing part of the building.

19. The physical renovation of two sites (Al-Habalaeh and Al-Qarion) identified in the “**Revitalization Plan for the Old City of Nablus**”, funded through the Munir Sukhtian Group-Jordan (US \$100,000), was completed. The renovation works, based on the winning proposals of the architectural competition organized in 2006, were carried out by the professionals selected through the competition, in close cooperation with MOTA, the Municipality of Nablus, An-Najah National University and the Multipurpose Community Resource Centre-Nablus.

20. Thanks to funding from the Netherlands, a proposal for a three-year project on the “**Conservation and Management of the archaeological site of Tell Balata**” in Nablus, was drafted in close cooperation with MOTA and the Department of Archaeology of the University of Leiden. The proposal was submitted to the Netherlands for potential funding.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

21. Assistance in this area continued to focus on the promotion and protection of free and independent media in the Palestinian Territories, as well as on access to information through support to the establishment of national audiovisual archives.

22. On the occasion of the **2009 World Press Freedom Day**, UNESCO launched a week-long public information campaign in cooperation with 10 Palestinian radio stations to commemorate the day in the West Bank and Gaza. The radio spots raised awareness on the importance of the press freedom in the development of democratic society and informed general public on the positive role that media can play in creating mutual understanding and dialogue.

23. A new two-year project “**Promotion of the freedom of expression, safety of journalists and empowering women in media**” funded by Finland (€400,000) will strengthen the independent and pluralistic media through capacity-building, psycho-social support, safety equipment, increasing awareness and reporting on the violations against press freedom and building a professional peer support network for journalists in Gaza and West Bank. Special focus will be given to a capacity-building and career development programme, which will encourage gender equality in the media, as well as working conditions and employment opportunities for women journalists.

24. The first Palestinian blogging portal has been launched in Arabic and English languages, using free software. This was developed in the framework of the project “**Strengthening Palestinian Participatory Democracy and Public Dialogue**”, implemented in cooperation with AMIN Media Network/Internews and funded by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF).

25. The project “**Strengthening the Palestinian News and Information Agency Wafa**”, funded by Italy (US \$116,000), was completed. The final activity was a study tour to Turkey and Britain for six staff members of the news agency to look at both regional and international models in the news agency operations and multimedia platforms. This was carried out in March 2009.

26. As a first step to assist the Palestinian Authority in the establishment of **national audiovisual archives**, a comprehensive mapping was completed of existing Palestinian photography and film collections with significant historical, cultural and national value. The mapping includes an assessment on the status of conservation of the audiovisual material and identification of partners and stakeholders. Based on the results of the mapping, an expert mission will be carried out in August 2009 to create a strategy for preserving and promoting Palestinian audiovisual heritage.

27. In order to **promote professional and ethical standards in journalism and Palestinian media**, 500 copies of posters on ethical guidelines were distributed in the West Bank and Gaza. Two workshops on ethical journalism have been held in Hebron and Nablus and a best practices handbook is being produced on the application of guidelines in everyday work of media professionals.

28. A newly approved IPDC project “**Connecting Youth in Hebron and Nablus**” (US \$25,000) will build the capacity of youth in the West Bank in the use of media production and social networking tools in Internet in youth empowerment, dialogue and overcoming isolation and mobility restrictions. The trainees will create a site on Facebook and publish and broadcast stories, discussion forums, audio and video programmes on the Internet and local radio stations.

29. A series of roundtable meetings have been initiated and supported by UNESCO in cooperation with four universities and their media departments (Al Quds, Birzeit, AnNajah and Hebron Universities) to **develop journalism education and curricula** on the basis of the UNESCO handbook. The Universities have committed to increase cooperation and have established a committee to develop and harmonize courses and textbooks in the curricula, exchange students and teachers and address needs and challenges in the Palestinian journalism education.

SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

30. UNESCO assistance continued focusing on strengthening the institutional and human capacities of the **Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Centre (PWRDC)**. Thanks to funding from Norway, as well as in the context of the newly launched MDG Trust Fund project "Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in the oPt", the Centre considerably expanded its research and training activities. In July 2009, the second Board meeting of the PWRDC will be held and attended by ADG/SHS.

THE SITUATION OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN

31. Funding (\$113,000) from the Japanese Funds-in-Trust (JFIT) was approved in May 2009 for a project to develop a **Scholarship Programme for Syrian students in the Occupied Syrian Golan**. This project, prepared in close consultation with the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), is expected to be implemented during the period 2009-2013 (four academic years).

CONCLUSION

32. Given recent developments in the Middle East, the Director-General intends to issue an addendum to the present document before the 182nd session of the Executive Board so as to keep Member States abreast of the situation and UNESCO's response thereto.



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Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Hundred and eighty-second session

182 EX/54 Add.

PARIS, 17 September 2009
Original: English

Item 54 of the agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF 34 C/RESOLUTION 58 AND 181 EX/DECISION 47 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

ADDENDUM

SUMMARY

This document provides an update on UNESCO's action concerning educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories since the issuance of document 182 EX/54, and proposes a draft decision in this regard.

Decision proposed: paragraph 5.

1. This addendum presents an update on UNESCO's activities implemented in the occupied Arab territories since the issuance of document 182 EX/54.
2. In the field of culture, a major new development was the signing of a contribution agreement with the Palestinian Authority (PA) Ministry of Finance granting €407,621.04 to complete the project on "**Old City of Nablus Renovation – Restoration and Adaptive Re-use of Khan al-Wakala**", supported by the European Union.
3. In July 2009, the **United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) Photo and Film Archives of Palestinian Refugees** was included in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register by the International Advisory Committee as documentary heritage of exceptional value. Since the inception of the agency 60 years ago, UNRWA has produced and collected a comprehensive record of photographs and films, covering most aspects of the lives and history of the Palestinian refugees.
4. An international expert mission was carried out in the West Bank in August 2009 to develop a strategy and action plan for preserving and promoting **Palestinian audiovisual heritage**. Based on the mapping of audiovisual heritage and collections done by the UNESCO Ramallah Office, the aim of the mission was to identify key partners and stakeholders, assess the needs for technical assistance and capacity-building and recommend activities for the preservation and promotion of Palestinian audiovisual heritage for the next biennium.

5. In view of the information provided in document 182 EX/54 and Add., the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following draft decision:

The Executive Board,

I

1. Recalling 34 C/Resolution 58 and 181 EX/Decision 47, as well as Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with regard to the right to education, Articles 4 and 94 of the Fourth Geneva Convention with regard to the denial of the right of children to education, as well as the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) and the Hague Convention (1954) and its Additional Protocols,
2. Having examined document 182 EX/54 and Add.,
3. Further recalling the role that UNESCO is called upon to play in order to satisfy the right to education for all, and to meet the need for Palestinians to have safe access to the education system,
4. Committed to the safeguarding of monuments, works of art, manuscripts, books and other historical and cultural properties to be protected in the event of conflict,
5. Deeply convinced that the continuous strengthening of the reconstruction and development process in the Palestinian territories should be carried out in a context of non-violence and of mutual respect and recognition, as promoted by the objectives of the Road Map,
6. Supports the efforts made by the Director-General with a view to the implementation of 34 C/Resolution 58 and 181 EX/Decision 47, and requests him to do everything possible to ensure that they are fully implemented in the framework of the Programme and Budget for 2010-2011 (35 C/5 Approved);
7. Expresses its appreciation for the substantial contributions of all concerned Member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to UNESCO's action in the Palestinian territories, and appeals to them to continue assisting UNESCO in this endeavour;
8. Thanks the Director-General for the results that have been obtained in relation to the implementation of a number of current educational and cultural activities, and invites him to strengthen UNESCO's financial and technical assistance to the Palestinian educational and cultural institutions in order to address new needs and problems resulting from recent developments;
9. Expresses its continuing concern at any actions undermining the cultural and natural heritage, and cultural and educational institutions, as well as at any impediments which prevent Palestinian and all other schoolchildren and students from being an integral part of their social fabric and from exercising fully their right to education, and calls for the observance of the provisions of 34 C/Resolution 58 and 181 EX/Decision 47;
10. Encourages the Director-General to continue to reinforce his action in favour of the reconstruction, rehabilitation and restoration of the Palestinian archaeological sites and cultural heritage;
11. Invites the Director-General to address the needs for capacity-building in all UNESCO's fields of competence by expanding the financial assistance programme for Palestinian students both from the regular budget and from extrabudgetary resources;

12. Requests the Director-General to follow closely the implementation of the recommendations of the eighth meeting of the Joint UNESCO-Palestinian Authority Committee (4-5 March 2008) and to organize, as soon as possible, the ninth meeting of the Joint UNESCO-Palestinian Authority Committee;
13. Encourages Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, and expresses the hope that a just and comprehensive peace will be brought about speedily;

II

14. Also invites the Director-General:
 - (a) to continue the efforts he is making to preserve the human, social and cultural fabric of the occupied Syrian Golan, in accordance with the relevant provisions of this decision;
 - (b) to undertake efforts to offer appropriate curricula, and to provide more grants and adequate assistance to the educational and cultural institutions of the occupied Syrian Golan;

III

15. Decides to include this item on the agenda of the Executive Board at its 184th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a progress report thereon.