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Educational, Scientific and  
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**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE PROGRESS  
OF THE COMMEMORATIVE ACTIVITIES AND THE REVIEW  
OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNESCO'S PLAN OF ACTION  
FOR THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 60th ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

**SUMMARY**

This document is presented pursuant to 34 C/Resolution 38, by which the Director-General was requested to further refine UNESCO's plan of action to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to submit a report which includes progress made for this commemoration and other relevant information to the Executive Board at its 179th session.

Decision proposed: paragraph 10.

## I. BACKGROUND

1. The 34th session of the General Conference discussed elements for a UNESCO plan of action to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (34 C/59). Although divergent views were expressed as to the content and structure of the plan, there was consensus on the need for UNESCO's active involvement in the commemoration of the anniversary and on the focus to be given to the specific responsibilities and competence of UNESCO with regard to human rights. There was also agreement on the need to engage in reflection on emerging ethical and social challenges in the context of the Organization's core mandates. By 34 C/Resolution 38, the General Conference requested the Director-General to further refine the plan of action.

## II. LAUNCH BY UNITED NATIONS OF A SYSTEM-WIDE YEAR-LONG CAMPAIGN

2. On 10 December 2007, Human Rights Day, at the United Nations Office in Geneva, a year-long campaign leading up to the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was launched in which the entire United Nations system is to take an active part. The United Nations Secretary-General declared that the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Declaration were still not a reality for everyone, and that the anniversary year was an occasion to build up the implementation of the international norms and to make the Declaration an integral part of everybody's life.<sup>1</sup> "Dignity and justice for all" was proclaimed the motto for this campaign which is coordinated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, each United Nations entity concentrating its efforts on the rights most pertinent to its work.<sup>2</sup>

3. The speakers at the ceremony reaffirmed the indivisibility of all human rights. The celebrations all over the year should provide an opportunity for the international community to reflect upon the situation of human rights and to make efforts to eliminate the obstacles to their implementation, namely poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, instability, hunger, lack of access to health care, discrimination, defamation of religions and religious intolerance, etc.

4. On the same day, the Director-General launched UNESCO's year-long action to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration during a ceremony at UNESCO Headquarters that gathered representatives of Member States, civil society organizations, educators and academia. The Director-General underlined the particular attention to be paid within UNESCO's plan of action to new ethical and social challenges linked to human rights within the context of the Organization's mandate.<sup>3</sup> The representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Mr Bacre Ndiaye, stressed the close cooperation between the two organizations, as stipulated in the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2003. Speakers at the event included the representative of the government of the host country, Ambassador for Human Rights, Michel Doucin, H.E. Mr Hector Gros Espiell, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Uruguay to UNESCO, and Professor Karel Vasak, first Secretary-General of the International Institute of Human Rights in Strasbourg and former Director of the Division of Human Rights and Peace and Legal Adviser of UNESCO. Four renowned human rights experts: Ms Camilla Crosso, General Coordinator of the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE), Mr Kwamé Karikari, Executive Director of the Media Foundation for West Africa, Ms Virginia Bonoan Dandan, a member of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and Ms Yvonne Donders, Deputy Director of the Amsterdam Center for International Law, shared their views on the history of the Universal Declaration and on current and

<sup>1</sup> The full text of the United Nations Secretary-General's message can be found at the following web address: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/60UDHRSGStatement.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> Information about the initiatives of the OHCHR to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the UDHR can be found on the following webpage: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/60UDHRIntroduction.aspx>.

<sup>3</sup> The statement of the Director-General is available at the following address: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001557/155758f.pdf>.

future obstacles and challenges regarding the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence, namely the right to education, the right to take part in cultural life, the right to the freedom of opinion and expression, including the right to seek, receive and impart information, as well as the right to enjoy the benefits from scientific progress and its applications.

### III. DIALOGUE WITH UNESCO MEMBER STATES

5. Pursuant to 34 C/Resolution 38, the Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences invited Member States to submit proposals of activities for the plan of action and convened a consultation meeting with Permanent Delegations on 6 February 2008 with the participation of representatives of UNESCO programme sectors. Ninety-two delegations attended the meeting.

6. The Delegations appreciated the more focused and better structured plan of action. Several Delegations put the accent on the right to education and human rights education while others requested an additional focus on freedom of the press and the safety of journalists. A number of Delegations argued against the organization of costly international conferences. Instead, they recommended to make efforts to further integrate a human rights component into activities planned under the regular Programme and Budget of the Organization (34 C/5) and to link several major events already envisaged in document 34 C/5 to the 60th anniversary. The 48th session of the International Conference on Education on the theme "Inclusive education: The way of the future" and the events marking World Press Freedom Day were cited as examples. Several Delegations expressed the opinion that attention should be paid not only to the four rights within UNESCO's competence, but also to other issues relating to the mandate of the Organization. The abolition of slavery, migration, children's rights, the problem of child soldiers, the contribution of the South to human rights and emerging human rights were among the suggested themes. Others called for more operational activities and proposed *inter alia*, an event to increase the visibility of the procedure set out in 104 EX/Decision 3.3 of the Executive Board, the organization of capacity-building seminars for teachers, and the translation of the Universal Declaration into indigenous languages. It was agreed that National Commissions for UNESCO and other UNESCO partners, including the NGO community, should play an active role in the year-long celebration with a view to ensuring a greater outreach especially at the grass-roots level.

### IV. UNESCO'S REFINED PLAN OF ACTION

7. In light of the above-mentioned consultations of the Member States and programme sectors, and bearing in mind UNESCO's Strategy on Human Rights, the Director-General submits to the Executive Board the refined plan of action. It has three objectives: (a) to promote the implementation of human rights within the Organization's fields of competence; (b) to encourage reflection and exchange on issues linked to the core mandate of UNESCO in the field of human rights, including on emerging ethical and social challenges; and (c) to raise awareness about human rights standards and procedures for their promotion and protection.

8. Accordingly, it is composed of the following three parts:

(i) Promoting the enjoyment of the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence

Activities will focus on the four rights within UNESCO's competence as well as on human rights education. The aim is to analyse the state of implementation of these rights, identify obstacles and challenges and to elaborate recommendations on possible UNESCO actions in order to advance their realization. Such recommendations could be presented to UNESCO's governing bodies in 2009 for possible integration into the future programme of the Organization. To the extent possible, activities already

planned within document 34 C/5 will be oriented towards the aforementioned objectives.

(ii) Encouraging reflection on pressing human rights issues and emerging ethical and social challenges within the mandate of UNESCO

This reflection will be the subject of round tables to be organized by interested parties both at UNESCO Headquarters and in various regions. The main purpose will be to encourage and promote reflection on current and future challenges to human rights, as well as reflection on emerging ethical and social challenges in the context of UNESCO's core mandates. The costs relating to the events will be borne by the organizers with the UNESCO Secretariat providing technical assistance whenever appropriate. Partners interested in organizing such events will be invited to submit detailed proposals to the Director-General explaining the content and format of the activity.

(iii) Awareness-raising and outreach

Awareness-raising activities to transmit the message of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will be targeting specific groups, such as youth, women and indigenous peoples and will be aimed at better acquainting them with the letter and spirit of human rights standards and increase their capacity to claim their rights. These activities will be implemented in close cooperation with the OHCHR.

9. With regard to numerous activities to be placed within the framework of the commemorations of the 60th anniversary (enumerated in Annex IV of document 34 C/59), additional efforts will be deployed to increase their human rights component. Information about these activities and their implementation will be available at the following UNESCO webpage: [www.unesco.org/shs/humanrights/udhr\\_60anniversary](http://www.unesco.org/shs/humanrights/udhr_60anniversary). This page will also provide information submitted by Member States and UNESCO partners about their activities linked to the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration.

### **Draft decision proposed**

10. In light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 34 C/Resolution 38 concerning the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
2. Further recalling UNESCO's key role in the promotion of human rights,
3. Taking note of the appeal of the United Nations Secretary-General for a year-long United Nations system-wide campaign to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
4. Having examined document 179 EX/8, which contains a draft of the refined UNESCO's plan of action for the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
5. Welcomes the refined UNESCO plan of action as annexed hereto;
6. Urges all public and private institutions within the Member States, civil society, including non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and educators, National Commissions for UNESCO, as well as human rights institutions to contribute

to the commemoration of the 60th anniversary by undertaking activities in order to further promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms;

7. Requests the Director-General to continue implementing UNESCO's plan of action in consultation with other United Nations entities, and in particular with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in view of its role of coordinator of the activities of the United Nations system in the field of human rights;
8. Invites the Director-General to seek extrabudgetary resources to ensure the implementation of that plan and invites Member States and other funding sources to consider making extrabudgetary contributions in this regard;
9. Invites the Director-General to report to the 180th session of the Executive Board on the 60th anniversary commemorative activities.

## ANNEX

UNESCO'S PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE COMMEMORATION  
OF THE 60th ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTSPART I  
PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES DIRECTED AT THE FURTHER ADVANCEMENT  
OF THE RIGHTS WITHIN UNESCO'S COMPETENCE

Title of activity	Provisional dates and venue	Sector/Bureau responsible	Financing source
<b>The right to education and human rights education</b>			
<p>48th session of the International Conference on Education on the theme "Inclusive education: The way of the future"</p> <p>A stronger human rights perspective to be integrated into the Conference with emphasis on the enjoyment of the right to education and the promotion of human rights education</p>	<p>25-28 November 2008 Geneva, Switzerland</p>	<p>ED</p> <p>ED, SHS</p>	<p>Within regular Programme and Budget (34 C/5)</p> <p>Within regular Programme and Budget (34 C/5)</p>
<b>The right to freedom of opinion and expression, including the right to seek, receive and impart information</b>			
<p>World Press Freedom Day 2008 – Award of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano Press Freedom Prize; and</p> <p>World Press Freedom Day conference on the freedom of the press and the "Access to information and the empowerment of people"</p>	<p>3 May 2008 Maputo, Mozambique</p>	<p>CI</p> <p>CI</p>	<p>Within regular Programme and Budget (34 C/5)</p>
<p>High-level symposium on freedom of expression, including an exhibition on safety of journalists and press freedom</p>	<p>28 October 2008 UNESCO Headquarters</p>	<p>CI</p>	<p>Subject to availability of extrabudgetary resources</p>
<b>The right to take part in cultural life, and The right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications</b>			
<p>Round table on Human Rights in Science and Culture (Article 27 of the UDHR and Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)</p>	<p>November 2008, UNESCO Headquarters</p>	<p>Joint responsibility of SHS, SC and CLT</p>	<p>Subject to availability of extrabudgetary resources</p>

<b>Protection of human rights within UNESCO's competence</b>			
<p>The 61st annual conference of Non-Governmental Organizations associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI/NGO) on the theme: "A celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights"</p> <p>Special event in the framework of the 61st annual DPI/NGO conference:</p> <p>Testimonies and presentation of the UNESCO human rights procedure set out in 104 EX/Decision 3.3 of the Executive Board: cases examined by the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations (CR) from 1978 to 1988, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 30th anniversary of the procedure</p>	<p>3-5 September 2008 UNESCO Headquarters</p>	<p>ERC in cooperation with SHS, BPI and ADM</p> <p>LA</p>	<p>Extrabudgetary resources</p> <p>Within regular Programme and Budget (34 C/5)</p>

## PART II

### A series of round tables on pressing human rights issues and emerging ethical and social challenges within the mandate of UNESCO

<b>Title of Activity</b>	<b>Provisional dates and venue</b>	<b>Sector/Bureau responsible</b>	<b>Financing source</b>
<b>Theme:</b> (to be proposed by Member States and other interested partners)			
<p>A series of round tables to be organized both at UNESCO Headquarters and in various regions by interested partners. Their main purpose will be to promote reflection on specific responsibilities and competence of UNESCO with regard to human rights, as well as on emerging ethical and social challenges in the context of UNESCO's core mandates.</p> <p>The UNESCO Secretariat could provide technical assistance. Member States and other partners interested in organizing such events are invited to submit detailed proposals to the Director-General explaining the content and format of such meetings.</p>	<p>UNESCO Headquarters or in Member States</p> <p>(dates and venue to be proposed by the organizers)</p>		<p>All expenses relating to the organization of these events will be covered by the organizers</p>

**Part III**  
**Awareness-raising activities to transmit the message**  
**of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

Title of Activity	Provisional dates and venue	Sector/Bureau Responsible	Financing source
<p>Translation and dissemination of the text of the Universal Declaration in cooperation with the OHCHR, as well as of UNESCO human rights educational materials in indigenous and other languages in various regions, targeting especially youth and indigenous peoples. Various formats will be used, such as posters, brochures, a “Passport to Dignity”, etc.</p> <p>The details of this activity will be determined in cooperation with different regional groups.</p>	<p>Throughout 2008 and beyond</p>	<p>SHS in cooperation with programme sectors and central services, as well as interested field offices</p>	<p>Subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources. Potential donors could include UNESCO Member States (through extrabudgetary contributions); private sector institutions; NGOs; international regional organizations; and other international, regional or local donors. If projected costs prove initially to be too high, the goal could be halved to 60 languages, 10 for each of the six geographic regions.</p>
<p>Public event (possibly in cooperation with the host country)</p>	<p>10 December 2008 (possibly at UNESCO Headquarters)</p>	<p>SHS in cooperation with BPI/PCE and other interested programme sectors</p>	<p>Subject to extraordinary resources</p>