



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**The Assistant Director-General
for External Relations and Public Information**

To Secretaries-General
of National Commissions for UNESCO

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18 NOV 2011

Sir/Madam,

As the 36th session of the General Conference has just concluded, I would like to inform you of some recent developments and the most important upcoming events.

36th session of the General Conference

As you may know, the session was marked by important moments and crucial decisions such as the admission of South Sudan and Palestine as Member States, and Curaçao and Sint Maarten as Associate Members; the presence of several Heads of States and Governments including the Presidents of Indonesia, Bulgaria, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Palau and Brazil as well as Prime Ministers of Grenade, Benin and Kenya; two major events including the Presentation of a Blueprint for Ocean and Coastal Sustainability and the Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

A large number of National Commissions attended the session and made great contributions. We had an opportunity to meet on various occasions including the Interregional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO held on 24 October, the PRX Commission meetings, and other informal gatherings. At these meetings, the discussions were mainly focused on the follow-up of the Review of UNESCO's Cooperation with National Commissions.

Review of UNESCO's Cooperation with National Commissions

The draft report of the review, on which you were invited to make comments, was sent to you and Permanent Delegations on 12 October. The deadline, which was initially set for 18 November 2011, has been extended to 30 November 2011. All comments will be certainly taken into account when finalizing the report.

As you may well be aware, this review is part of UNESCO's reform process, which aims, among other things, to strengthen mechanisms for cooperation with National Commissions, including their functioning and their contribution to the works of UNESCO.

We had a chance to discuss the establishment of a mechanism to follow up the review, which would include Permanent Delegations, National Commissions, and the Secretariat of UNESCO. This tripartite working group may consist of approximately thirty people: two representatives of National Commissions and two representatives of Permanent Delegations by electoral groups and from different countries, and some members of UNESCO Secretariat including Field Offices if possible. This working group could meet twice in 2012 to make recommendations and submit them to the Governing Bodies of the Organization in the framework of the follow up of this review.

I will have an opportunity to come back soon on this proposal.

New Directives concerning UNESCO's Partnership with Non-governmental Organizations

As you may know, the new Directives concerning UNESCO's partnership with non-governmental organizations were adopted by the General Conference.

This new statutory framework modernizes, simplifies and renews our mutual engagement for a stronger and more efficient partnership between UNESCO and civil society. This initiative bears witness to UNESCO's determination to be more open to external partners and civil society in particular, which represents a comparative advantage that the Organisation is committed to maintain and develop. The salient points of this text are:

- The change from three partnership categories to two: association and consultation;
- The possibility for NGOs in official relations with UNESCO to use the label "UNESCO partner NGO";
- A specific consultation process of NGOs on the elaboration of UNESCO's strategy and programme (C/4 and C/5) both at a bilateral and multilateral level;
- An improved representation of all the regions within the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee.

Increasing the Visibility of National Commissions at the Grass Root Level

In order to increase the visibility of your contributions to UNESCO's programmes, some parts of the website "for Member States and their National Commissions" (www.unesco.int) will be fully dedicated to the promotion of your activities, publications, and other practical information. In this regard, we will send you a standard-template (including a summary of your recent actions with a photo or video clip) for uploading information on this website.

Emergency Multi-Donor Fund

The Director-General has launched an Emergency Multi-Donor Fund at the closing session of the General Conference to help fill a shortfall of 65 million USD resulting from dues withheld by the United States. This announcement has stimulated an unprecedented outpouring of support for UNESCO from individuals, associations and private corporations worldwide.

The Fund is open to all donors, including Member States, public institutions, foundations and individuals, all of whom can make their donations online at the following website: www.unesco.org/donate.

We count on all the support and enthusiasm directed at maintaining our core activities. The National Commissions are in prime positions to widely disseminate this information to all prospective partners, institutions and individuals and to mobilize them at the national level. Please post our link **Donate** on your respective websites in your national language.

Forthcoming UNESCO publications

- "Echoing Voices: Cultural Diversity: A Path to Sustainable Development" is published in English and French by the Culture Sector and will be available in the other four official languages of the Organization.

This anthology celebrates the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. It compiles the voices of intellectual and political leaders of our times from all continents. They demonstrate the value and strength of cultural diversity, echoing many important issues raised by the Declaration.

- "From Green Economies to Green Societies: UNESCO's Commitment to Sustainable Development" is available in English, French and Portuguese and produced by the UNESCO Bureau for Strategic Planning.
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002133/213311f.pdf>)

This brochure articulates UNESCO's contribution to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or 'Rio + 20') to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 4-6 June 2012. It provides a range of concrete examples demonstrating UNESCO's work to promote sustainable development and presents a vision of UNESCO for sustainable development that takes full advantage of the transforming power of education, science, culture and media.

Appointment of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions for UNESCO (Mid-October and Mid-November 2011)

In Bulgaria, Ms Rumiana Mitreva was appointed as Secretary-General.

In China, Mr Du Yue was appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Fang Maotian.

In Colombia, Dr Luis Armando Soto Boutin was appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms Victoria Gonzalez-Ariza.

In Gabon, Mr Joris Just Tindy-Poaty was appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Jean-Marie Vianney Bouyou.

In Haiti, Mr Reginald Paul was appointed President, succeeding Mr Joel Desrosiers Jean-Pierre.

In Latvia, Ms Zaneta Jaunzeme-Grende was appointed President, succeeding Ms Sarmite Elert.

In New Zealand, Mr Neil Walter was appointed President, succeeding Mr Bryan Gould.

Please accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.


Eric Falt