

**Tehran Cluster Office
for I.R. Iran, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and
Afghanistan**

Dear readers,

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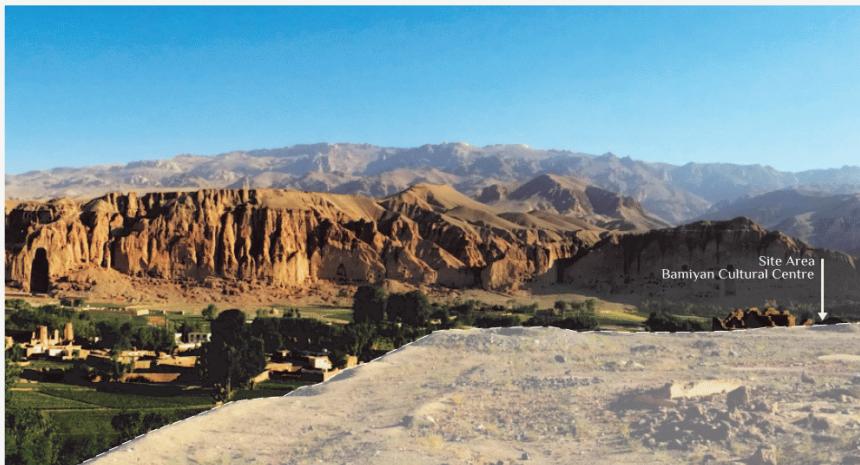
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The months of October and November have been busy and filled with important events.

The President of UNESCO's General Conference visited Iran and inaugurated the country's 17th World Heritage Site; UNESCO Kabul officially launched the design competition for the Bamyan Cultural Center; Turkmenistan pledged a US\$ 5 million extra-budgetary contribution to UNESCO; and UNESCO Islamabad inaugurated a waste water management system in collaboration with the National University of Science and Technology.

Read all about this and much more in the second issue of our newsletter! Should you require additional information on any of our activities, please visit the websites for [Tehran](#), [Islamabad](#) and [Kabul](#).

Esther Kuisch-Laroche
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FEATURE STORIES

President of UNESCO's General Conference, Mr. Ping HAO, visits UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office

Mr. Ping HAO, President of UNESCO's General Conference, visited Iran from 22-26 October. The President was accompanied by Mr Yue DU, Secretary-General of the National Commission of China for UNESCO; Mr Yubiao SHEN, Personal Assistant of Mr Ping HAO as Vice-Minister of Education of China; and Ms Catherine THIOUNN, Assistant to the President of the General Conference.

The main purpose of the visit was to inaugurate the 17th UNESCO World Heritage Site in Iran: Shahr-e Sokhteh. After having unveiled the UNESCO plaque at Shahr-e Sokhteh, Mr. HAO traveled to Kashan where he visited the main cultural heritage sites, including Fin garden, which was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2012.

In Tehran, Mr. HAO paid a visit to the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office, located in Sa'adabad Cultural and Historical Complex. He met with all of the staff and was briefed on the activities of the office.

After that, Mr. HAO met with Dr. Mohammad Ali Najafi, Acting Minister of Science, Research and Technology; Dr. Hossein Salar-Amoli, Vice Minister of Science for International Affairs; Dr. Ali Asghar Fani, Minister of Education. In addition to government officials, Mr. HAO met with the Deans of Universities that have cooperation with China.

During his short time in Tehran, the President of UNESCO's General Conference was also able to pay a brief visit to the Golestan Palace. This lavish palace is a masterpiece of the Qajar era and became a centre of Qajari arts and architecture of which it is an outstanding example. It has remained a source of inspiration for Iranian artists and architects to this day and became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2013.



FEATURE STORIES

Turkmenistan pledges US\$ 5 million extra-budgetary contribution to UNESCO

From 15 to 17 May 2014, Ms Irina Bokova paid her first official visit to the Republic of Turkmenistan, on the occasion of the International Conference entitled “Magtymguly Pyragy and universal cultural values”, which took place in Ashgabat in the context of the 290th anniversary of Magtymguly Pyragy, a renowned poet and thinker of Turkmenistan.

While in Ashgabat, the Director-General held bilateral meetings with Mr Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov, President of the Republic of Turkmenistan; Mr Raşit Meredow, Deputy Chairman of the Government and Minister of Foreign Affairs; Mr Sapardurdy Toyliyev, Deputy Chairman of the Government in charge of Education, Science and Tourism; and Ms Maysa Yazmukhamedova, Deputy Chairperson of the Government in charge of Culture and Television.

Following the DG's mission to Turkmenistan, the Government of Turkmenistan has now pledged a US\$ 5 million extra-budgetary contribution to UNESCO.

The Government has expressed its willingness to support UNESCO's activities *inter alia* in the following areas: Culture and Heritage - in particular tangible and intangible cultural heritage, cultural exchanges, traditional sports, Silk Road, Sustainable Tourism, Creative Cities and Economy, the High Panel of the Director-General on peace and Intercultural Dialogue, Rapprochement of Cultures, 70th anniversary of UNESCO- and Higher Education.

A Framework Agreement is currently under discussion to support the implementation of extra-budgetary activities that are in line with UNESCO's Complementary Additional Programme through the establishment of a Turkmenistan/UNESCO Trust Fund in support of UNESCO's activities.



FEATURE STORIES

UNESCO Representative in Afghanistan visits Herat to monitor education and culture projects



A mission led by the Director and Representative of UNESCO Office in Afghanistan, Mr Paolo Fontani, visited Herat on November 17, 2014, to extend support for the government counterparts and to monitor UNESCO education and culture projects.

Herat is the third largest city in Afghanistan with rich cultural heritage. UNESCO has been conducting projects to support the safeguarding of cultural heritage of Herat for the past decade, and, in recent years, it has also been active on the educational front in the province.

The mission visited the literacy classes in Herat which are conducted under the UNESCO education projects. It also visited the Gawhar Shad Mausoleum complex and Minaret area to monitor the ongoing UNESCO projects. For this visit the UNESCO team comprised of Mr Tarcis Stevens, an expert working on the conservation of both the mausoleum and the Jam Minaret in Ghor, and was accompanied by Mr. Khalili, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Information and Culture, and Mr Ahad Abbasi, Director, Directorate of Historic Monuments. The mission team discussed the future cultural projects to be conducted in Herat for the safeguarding of the Gawhar Shad Mausoleum and the five minarets, including the proposed protection wall within the Mussalla Complex for safeguarding the four Minarets. In order to understand the tile making craftsmanship of Herat, the team also visited the traditional tile making workshop situated in the Friday Mosque.

Mr Fontani, during the official meeting with H.E. Hajji Sayed Fazlullah Wahidi, the Governor of Herat Province, discussed the cooperation between UNESCO and the Herat provincial government concerning education and culture. They exchanged ideas about UNESCO education programmes in the province, namely Enhancement of Literacy in Afghanistan (ELA), Literacy for Empowerment of Afghan Policy (LEAP), as well as culture projects related to preserving the cultural heritage sites in Herat, in particular Gawhar-Shad Mausoleum and Minaret complex.



[Read the full story on our website.](#)

FEATURE STORIES

UNESCO Pakistan develops waste water management system in collaboration with National University of Science and Technology

Zahid Hamid, Federal Minister of Science and Technology inaugurated the wastewater management system in NUST Campus in Islamabad.

Realizing the need and importance of wastewater treatment, UNESCO Islamabad in collaboration with NUST Institute of Civil Engineering (NICE) executed the project, "Application of FILTER Technology for Wastewater Treatment - Pilot Study at NUST Islamabad Campus" in 2013. The main objective of the project was to demonstrate the use of FILTER Technology for wastewater treatment and re-use it at NUST Islamabad Campus under a Pilot Study.

The wastewater being generated from offices, student hostels and staff residential colony located at NUST Islamabad Campus was directed towards a Sedimentation Tank and after settling of solid waste & scum was discharged into a Constructed Wetland divided into eight compartments. The effluent from the Constructed Wetland will be discharged, through a distribution system, to FILTER plot for further wastewater quality improvement. The effluent from the FILTER will be collected through the tile drainage system and its quality compared with the inflow wastewater. The treated wastewater is being used for horticulture and replenishing underlying groundwater aquifer, thus not only conserving fresh water being presently used for horticulture but also raising the water table of the local area. A set of piezometers are also planned to be installed to monitor the flow towards drains. The solid waste collected from the Sedimentation Tank is dried up and used as fertilizer for trees & plants, thus converting the whole project into "Zero Waste".



EDUCATION

First 40 Afghan civil servants from MoE graduate from National Training Programme in Educational Planning and Management

The first 40 civil servants of the Ministry of Education (MoE) graduated on 12th November 2014 from the two-year degree course administered as part of National Training Programme in Educational Planning and Management (NTP). They all work in provincial education departments and district education offices and will bring their expertise to improve planning, monitoring and evaluation at the sub-national level.

The NTP is a flagship training programme which has been generously supported by the Governments of Norway and Denmark since 2008. The Department of Planning and Evaluation at the MoE, and the Educational Planning Department of the Accounting and Administration Institute under the Deputy Ministry for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (DM TVET) manage the NTP programme with technical support from the UNESCO International Institute of Educational Planning.



The 40 civil servants from the MoE who graduated today have acquired skills on education planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Their programme of study included two three-month semesters of full time training in Kabul with two nine-month semesters of practical work experience in the provincial and district offices. These graduates will contribute to the strengthening of the Government of Afghanistan's capacity in the areas of education sector policy and planning. As one trainee from Ghor Province expressed during the event, "we work for the day when pens will substitute guns in the hands of us all".

EDUCATION

Pakistan marks World Teachers Day 2014: Investing in quality education and teachers crucial

"Investment in teachers and quality teaching required well trained teachers and a conducive learning and encouraging environment, as well as efficient use of teachers particularly in disadvantaged areas, by offering incentives. These were the foundations that could be built upon through recruitment, preparation, professional development, evaluation systems, equitable teaching and learning conditions and adequate funding. All of this would be a crucial investment in today's young generation and the best investment in the future. To get the best results, there is an urgent need to overcome the key challenges such as making teaching an attractive profession and getting young people interested in teaching, recruiting teachers based on merit and improving low level subject knowledge, deficiency of structured promotion mechanisms and overall shortage of teachers where they are most needed."

These remarks were delivered by Abdul H.A.Hakeem, officer in charge, UNESCO Islamabad on the occasion of World Teachers Day 2014 under this year theme, "Invest in the future, invest in teachers". The conference was organized by UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO and WFP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training here in Islamabad. In relation to the importance of this observance, the Pakistan Education for All (EFA) Review Report 2015 was also launched during the conference. The conference was attended by officials and representatives of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MFE & PT), Provincial Area/Education Departments, USAID, UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP, ILO, civil society, teachers and students participated in the event.

Representatives of the different UN agencies, emphasize the need for more joint efforts towards achieving Millennium Development Goals through investment in teachers and quality education and a more conducive learning and encouraging environment, as well as efficient use of teachers particularly in disadvantaged areas, by offering incentives.

Secretary Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training also launched the Pakistan Education for All (EFA) Review Report 2015 that aimed to ensure systematic monitoring of the progress towards achieving Education for All goals. Students and teachers, on the occasion of World Teachers Day 2014 paid tribute to the important role and value of teachers for the development of the country. Read more about this event on [our website](#).



EDUCATION

UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office to support literacy efforts in I.R. Iran

On 17 November 2014, the Director of UTCO met with Dr Ali Baghezadeh Farouji, Vice-Minister of Education and Head of Literacy Movement Organization (LMO); Mr Mohammad Mehdizadeh, Education Deputy of Literacy Movement Organization (LMO); and Mr Hassan Nejad, International Relations of Literacy Movement Organization (LMO) to discuss possible cooperation between UNESCO and the Literacy Movement Organization.

Mr Bagherzadeh started the meeting with providing a background of the country-wide activities of the Literacy Movement Organization in the field of literacy education and expressed the existing challenges that the country faces. He highlighted in particular the difficulties in determining the number of illiterate people in the country.



The Vice-Minister of Education referred to three different areas in which they wish to benefit from the successful experiences of other countries and UNESCO:

1. **Statistics and data management.** They would like UNESCO to present them with successful models for data collection on literacy and alternatives to the current method using the national census. They would be willing to visit other countries with very successful models or host a national workshop/conference with experts from other countries and UNESCO to present these models.
2. **ICT in Education for literacy:** LMO would also like expertise from UNESCO in the field of ICT in Education. They are interested in learning about successful tools that have been used in other countries to promote and improve literacy.
3. **Community Learning Centers:** In Iran there are Community Learning Centers which provide local training to illiterate people. LMO would like to benefit from UNESCO's global experience with these types of centers and would be happy to receive any recent publications on successful models, learning techniques etc.

The UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office will be working closely with the Education Sector and the regional office in Bangkok to follow-up on these requests.

EDUCATION

“Sewing happiness” - Enhancement of Literacy in Afghanistan (ELA)

Miss Asma, 16, lives in Badakhshan province, in north-eastern Afghanistan. She was a trainee of basic literacy and skill development classes under Enhancement of Literacy in Afghanistan (ELA) programme. She has successfully completed a 9-month literacy course three years ago, which included basic literacy and numeracy skills, as well as tailoring classes, for the outstanding literacy graduate learners.

It is true that most Afghans suffer from poverty, but there are not many like Asma who has lost her father at the age of 4 and also suffers from a birth-illness which affects her normal physical activities. Her mother became the sole bread-winner and supporter of Asma and her two younger brothers.

Asma explains, “My mother tries hard to make end our problems and take care of me and my brothers. One of my brothers is affected by polio and this has made our problems even worse”. Her mother, who is illiterate, did whatever she could to raise her children, such as working in a school as a cleaner.

“I have always had the dream to help my mother. I was taking care of home chores, but wanted to do more, to help her in meeting the daily expenses,” told Asma.

Asma came closer to her dream in bringing home income under the ELA skills based literacy project. With her great record in basic literacy class, it was no surprise that she was chosen as a candidate for the skills development classes.

“It was a cold winter day. My mother and I were sitting at home when someone knocked at our door. The elder of our village along with two other men were behind the door. They asked if I was interested in participating in the project,” she recalled. “I had no hesitation in saying ‘Yes’ and applied to learn tailoring – something I liked doing since I was a child.”

“Both my mother and I could not believe that I was able to learn tailoring for free and be provided with tailoring machines and other necessary equipment.”

After three months, Asma had learnt to sew simple clothes and is quickly advancing. She already feels excited about her achievements. She sewed her first clothes for her mother as a gift for Mother’s Day.

“I was so happy to prepare my first ever Mother’s Day gift. I can’t remember the last time I saw such happiness in my mother’s eyes,” Asma said. “I will try to become a professional tailor and help my family financially. I am sure I will bring happiness to my family by sewing.”

CULTURE

UNESCO representative in I.R. Iran attends annual Qālišuyān rituals in Mašhad-e Ardehāl

The mayor of Kashan invited Ms. Esther Kuisch Laroche, Director and Representative of UNESCO's cluster office in Tehran, to attend the seminar on "Intangible Cultural Heritage and Religious Tourism in Kashan", which took place on 2 October and to take part in the annual Qālišuyān rituals (also referred to as "carpet washing ceremony") in Mašhad-e Ardehāl the next day.

The Qālišuyān rituals of Mašhad-e Ardehāl were inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2012.

The origin of the ceremony can be traced back to the time when Sultan Ali (son of the fifth Imam Muhammad al-Baqir) was killed in the village by his enemies. After his followers from the area arrived too late to save him, they wrapped his body in a carpet. They then washed his body in a stream 150 meters away, before burying him. For hundreds of years, the people from the surrounding area have flocked to Mashhad-e Ardehal to mourn and represent this event each year. ([Read more about the rituals on our website.](#))

On the occasion of this year's [carpet washing ceremony](#), the UNESCO Representative and Iranian Vice President and Head of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO) Mr. Massoud Soltanifar, unveiled the UNESCO certificate of inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in front of the crowd of pilgrims gathered at the Imamzadeh Sultan Ali shrine. After the ceremony, Ms. Esther Kuisch Laroche also visited the cultural heritage sites in and around Kashan.



CULTURE

Preserving the Cultural Heritage of Afghanistan

On the 9th November Paolo Fontani, Director and Country Representative for UNESCO Kabul office gave a key note speech at the opening sessions for a series of workshops with the theme, 'Preserving the Cultural Heritage of Afghanistan'. Mr. Fontani spoke on the topic "Meeting the Challenges of the Past, Present and Future: Towards Safeguarding the Cultural Heritage of Afghanistan" in the session on 'Organizational Frameworks, alongside Deputy Minister Sayed Khalili and Laura Tedesco, representative from the U.S. Department of State.



Mr. Fontani stressed the nature of the current critical development challenges facing the country and how this can negatively affect the sustained impetus required for the long-term rehabilitation of Afghan cultural heritage, and any associated socio-economic development. He emphasized the absolute significance of the contribution culture can make towards broader development goals within the country, including local and regional employment, income generation, education and the promotion of a cohesive society within the all-embracing context of promoting peace and nation building, drawing specifically on examples from UNESCO's forthcoming programmes in Bamiyan and Herat. Mr Fontani also reiterated the importance of promoting positive public discussion to promote inter-cultural understanding at both provincial and national level.

The introductory session was also privileged to receive a live, personal phone call (broadcast to the delegates) from the newly inaugurated President, H.E. Ashraf Ghani, who spoke concerning the great importance of the work the Afghan cultural sector and international partners are undertaking to document and preserve the country's wealth of historical monuments and ancient artefacts, along with the more intangible aspects of the nation's heritage. He concluded by asking all those involved in the cultural heritage sector in Afghanistan to coordinate and cooperate on new initiatives and bring forward any ideas to him, which he assured would receive his utmost attention and support.

The series of workshops, which ran from the 9th – 11th November, was officially opened by His Excellency Sayed Makhdoom Raheen (Acting Minister for Information and Culture), hosted by the Afghan Centre at Kabul University (ACKU) and organised by the Chicago Institute for Oriental Studies whom are currently in the final stages of a two year programme to digitally record the National Museum of Afghanistan's existing paper archive. The workshops brought together a wide range of Afghan and international specialists from the ministry departments, museums, international organizations and research institutes with the objective of assessing the current state of the efforts to preserve cultural heritage in Afghanistan and future prospects in this area.

[Read the full story on our website.](#)

CULTURE

UNESCO Islamabad organizes capacity building training workshop on mitigating the impact of bio-growth on Taxila World Heritage Site



UNESCO in partnership with Comsats Institute of Information Technology (CIIT), launched four days training workshop on understanding and mitigating the impact of bio-growth on Taxila World Heritage Site here in Islamabad. The training workshop will enhance capacity building of relevant institutions including academia and the Department of Archaeology Punjab through scientific study of the bio-growth, its impact on the site and conservation measures against the bio-deterioration. The training workshop is being conducted for the first time in Pakistan and will be imparted to twenty five government officials and academic practitioners of the Provincial Departments of Archaeology, Hazara University and CIIT, from 23 to 26 November.

Vibeke Jensen, Director/Representative UNESCO Islamabad in her inaugural remarks stressed that Pakistan possesses diverse cultural heritage with great potential to contribute to peace, cultural diversity and sustainable development adding further that Pakistan had signed the World Heritage Convention of 1972 and the 2003 Convention on safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage which indicates its commitment to safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value of its cultural and community heritage and transmit the same in the upcoming generations. She also mentioned that the joint initiative by UNESCO, CIIT and Department of Archaeology Punjab, to protect the World Heritage Site of Taxila against Bio-deterioration is a good example of public private partnership and sharing expertise, knowledge and resources to protect the irreplaceable cultural heritage of the nation", she added.

Dr. Saleem ul Haq, Director Archeology Punjab appreciated the role and efforts of UNESCO in safeguarding the world heritages of Pakistan and applauded the valuable support of UNESCO provided in relation to Mohenjo-daro, Lahore Port, Shalimar Garden and Taxila World Heritage Site.

Taxila is one of the six World heritage sites of Pakistan inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1980, with a vast complex of archaeological heritage, including a Mesolithic cave, 4 settlement sites, a number of Buddhist monasteries of various periods and Muslim Mosques of the medieval period. Most of the Buddhist Stupa and monasteries at Taxila are dated from 1 to 5 century A.D. Bio-growth is one of the major issues of the site that not only affects the visibility and appearance but also causes structural damage to the site particularly in the Sirkap and Dharmarjika sites of Taxila.

UNESCO Islamabad has planned to carry out four scientific surveys of the bio-growth appearing during various seasons during the year to explore the types of bio-growth and its impact on archaeological structures. First survey has already conducted during August this year to find the type of vegetation during monsoon season. The team of plant scientists visited the site and collected about 50 plants which included herbs, shrubs, trees, bryophytes. Ferns specimen and soil samples were also collected for micro-flora. The specimen and samples were brought to CIIT Labs. The plants are being identified and are dried before making herbarium sheets. Based on the finding of the surveys, conservation guidelines will be developed to mitigate the impact of the bio-growth.

CULTURE

City of Isfahan (I.R. Iran) organizes International Intangible Cultural Heritage Festival

From 9-11 October, the city of Isfahan successfully hosted the International Intangible Cultural Heritage Festival and the Women's Forum and General Assembly of the Inter City Intangible Cultural Cooperation Network (ICCN), which were attended by the UNESCO Representative.

The first-ever Women's Forum discussed the important role of women in safeguarding and inter-generation transmission of intangible cultural heritage, and was opened by Iranian Vice President for Women and Family Affairs, Dr. Shahindokht Molaverdi.



At the end of the forum, the participants adopted the "Isfahan Declaration", which called upon national authorities and local governments to promote women's role and status in intangible cultural heritage as a driving force of human creativity, cultural diversity and inter-cultural dialogue.

The following day, the ICCN General Assembly was opened by Mr. Joyoung Kim (ICCN Representative) and Dr. M. Soltanifar, Vice-President and Head of ICHHTO.

Other high-level participants included the Deputy Head of ICHHTO, Mr. Hassan Talebian and former Minister of Foreign Affairs and current Special Advisor to the Supreme Leader on International Affairs, Mr. Ali Akbar Velayati.

The different panel discussions focused on the role of intangible cultural heritage in cultural tourism, urban diplomacy, community development, environment and human identity.

On the sidelines of the conference, the city of Isfahan organized the International Intangible Cultural Heritage Festival with numerous activities in different parts of town. There were demonstrations of ancient sports, performing arts, exhibitions of handicrafts from every region of Iran, and stands with different types of local cuisine. The festival allowed foreign visitors and locals to see some of Iran's rich intangible cultural heritage.

The colorful events were concluded with a closing ceremony in the beautiful Chehel Sotoun museum garden, which was attended by several high-ranking officials and broadcasted live on national TV.

CULTURE

Tehran hosts regional symposium “Iran & The Silk Road: Context for Cultural Interaction and Common Values”

On 22 October, Tehran hosted the regional symposium entitled “Iran & The Silk Road: Context for Cultural Interaction and Common Values”. The symposium was organized by the Center for International Research and Education (CIRE) and the International Institute for Central Asian Studies (IICAS).

Ms. Krista Pikkat from UNESCO’s office in Tashkent delivered the opening remarks of the conference. During the first panel discussion the Director of the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office, Ms. Kuisch Laroche, presented UNESCO’s programmes and initiatives related to the Silk Road.

Ms. Kuisch Laroche mentioned that in 1988 UNESCO launched its “Integral Study of the Silk Roads, Roads of Dialogue”. This initiative became one of the major programmes of UNESCO during the 1990s for over fifteen years, up to 2002. The project focused on different forms of contacts and exchanges that occurred along the historical Silk Roads. Through this project, UNESCO mobilized scientists, scholars, researchers and media of more than fifty countries along the historical Silk Roads and beyond, for an immense programme of research consisting of five major expeditions as well as more than 50 exhibitions, scientific conferences and seminars.

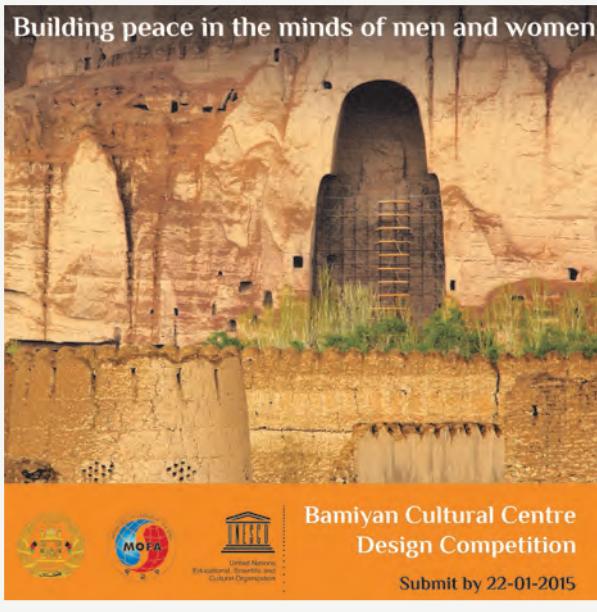
UNESCO’s “Integral Study of the Silk Roads, Roads of Dialogue” did not only revive the historical Silk Roads but also promoted the present-day legacy of human interactions, shared values and common heritage. Ms. Kuisch-Laroche said that UNESCO resumed its Silk Roads programme in 2008 through new initiatives including the “Silk Road World Heritage Transnational Nomination”, the “Silk Roads Heritage Corridors Tourism” and the “Silk Road Online Platform for Dialogue, Diversity and Development”. She encouraged UNESCO member states to nominate sites along the Silk Roads to be registered as World Heritage sites, and to also nominate intangible cultural heritage for inscription on UNESCO’s Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The Director of UTCO also presented the Online Platform, which aims to promote and disseminate knowledge on the Silk Roads Cultural Heritage. The online portal provides a platform for dialogue and exchange between academics, cultural and artistic communities of UNESCO Member States alongside the historical Silk Roads and beyond. She encouraged participants to submit their proposals and initiatives for collaboration on this project. For more information about UNESCO’s Silk Road Online Platform for Dialogue, Diversity and Development, [please visit the website](#).



CULTURE

UNESCO Kabul announces the Bamiyan Cultural Centre Design Competition



15 November 2014 marked the official announcement of the design competition to build the new Bamiyan Cultural Centre in Afghanistan. UNESCO, together with the Government of Afghanistan, decided to select the design of the Cultural Centre through an open international competition. The competition will generate interest in the project and ensure that the winning design is both iconic and also commensurate with the worldwide significance of the site itself. Proposals are welcome from qualified and experienced applicants with a vision for sharing the importance of cultural identity of Afghanistan from the past, present and into the future.

UNESCO believes that culture represents an essential element of nation building in every country, and has an important role to play in Afghanistan. Culture makes a valuable contribution to socio-economic development, and in the case of Bamiyan, it paves the way towards

future tourism opportunities and the participation of local communities, in not only protecting and preserving their cultural heritage, but also in sharing it. The Bamiyan Cultural Centre will support artistic and cultural processes, using the institution as a platform to connect the public with Afghan cultural traditions and practices. The space will host permanent and temporary exhibitions, with the overall aim of promoting cross-cultural understanding and heritage safeguarding through education, training, research, lectures and performance events.

This competition has been announced through national and international media outlets as well as the UNESCO Kabul Website. A worldwide outreach campaign will invite architects, engineers and students from around the world to submit a design proposal for the Centre. It is especially important to encourage the people of Afghanistan to participate.

The realization of this project within its designated land in one of the most prominent sites overlooking the Buddha Cliffs was made possible by the support of the Bamiyan Governor and Mayor, the Ministry of Information and Culture, the Ministry of Agriculture and the people of Bamiyan. This

project of public significance is near to the UNESCO World Heritage property of Bamiyan which has outstanding universal value.

For more information about the design competition, [please consult our website](#).

Other related links:

<http://bamiyanculturalcentre.org/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QY8jIWAcuA>

<https://www.facebook.com/unescokabul?ref=hl>

<http://moic.gov.af/en>

CULTURE

Shahr-e Sokhteh inaugurated as Iran's 17th World Heritage Site



The President of UNESCO's General Conference, Mr. HAO Ping, visited I.R. Iran from 22-26 October. The main purpose of his visit was to inaugurate the newly inscribed UNESCO World Heritage Site Shahr-e Sokhteh.

Shahr-e Sokhteh, meaning 'Burnt City', is located near Zabol in the East of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The remains of the mudbrick city represent the emergence of the first complex societies in eastern Iran at the junction of Bronze Age trade routes crossing the Iranian plateau. Founded around 3200 BC, it was populated during four main periods up to 1800 BC, during which time there developed several distinct areas within the city: those where monuments were built, and separate quarters for housing, burial and manufacture. Diversions in water courses and climate change led to the eventual abandonment of the city in the early second millennium. The structures, burial grounds and large number of significant artefacts unearthed there, and their well-preserved state due to the dry desert climate, make this site a rich source of information regarding the emergence of complex societies and contacts between them in the third millennium BC.

Shahr-e Sokhteh was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in June 2014 in recognition of its outstanding universal value.

On 23 October, the UNESCO plaque was unveiled at the site by Mr. HAO Ping; Dr. Soltanifar, Vice-President and Head of ICHHTO; the representative of the Supreme Leader in Sistan and Baluchestan Province; and the Director of UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office.

To read more about Iran's World Heritage Sites, [please consult the website](#).

CULTURE

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) sends technical evaluation mission to Susa, Iran

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission took place in Susa from 5-6 November 2014 to assess the ancient site which has been nominated for UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Mr. Tang Jigen (China) of the Institute of Archaeology, CASS in Beijing carried out the evaluation and was accompanied by Dr. Talebian (Deputy Head of ICHHTO), Ms. Maryam Mehran (Advisor to Deputy of ICHHTO for International Affairs) and Ms. Esther Kuisch Laroche (Director and Representative of UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office).

Susa is located about 100 km south of Ahvaz in Khuzestan province. Covering about 350 hectares, Susa constitutes one of the world's largest archaeological sites. It was formed on the bank of Sha'ur River since the 4th millennium BC and has been uninterruptedly inhabited until the 8th century A.H.

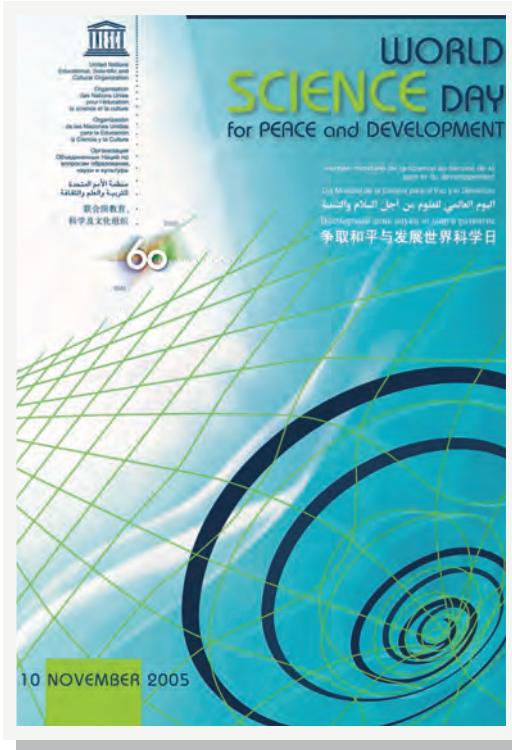
Along this period it was the capital of the Elamites and subsequently the Achaemenians for some 2.800 years. Since about 150 years ago, first the French Archeological Mission and then Iranians archaeological teams have carried out excavations here, retrieving artifacts, buildings and objects from various periods, and, most importantly, knowledge about Elamite history and culture.

Susa has been on Iran's Tentative List since 1997.



SCIENCES

World Science Day celebrations in Iran and Pakistan



In support of UNESCO's 70th anniversary celebrations, the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office in cooperation with the Iranian Association for the Popularization of Sciences and the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO organized an event on the occasion of World Science Day for Peace and Development to highlight the organization's scientific achievements over the past 70 years. The event was attended by many diplomats, scientists, academics and UNESCO partners.

Among the speakers were Dr. Salar-Amoli, Vice-Minister of Science for International Affairs; Madam Mazaheri, Deputy Head of the Department of Environment for Research and Educational Affairs; Mr. Daemi, Deputy Minister of Energy for Planning and Economic Affairs; and a message was delivered by Ms. Rahmati on behalf of Mr. Meydani, Deputy Minister of Energy for Water and Wastewater Affairs.

During her **opening remarks**, Ms. Esther Kuisch Laroche talked about UNESCO's main programmes in the field of natural sciences and mentioned that since 1945 UNESCO has promoted the advancement of science and its applications to develop

knowledge and capacity as a key to economic and social progress, and as the basis of peace and sustainable development.

She said that UNESCO had led the movement to protect the environment and had sounded the alert over the planet's shrinking biodiversity at an early stage. In 1968, UNESCO organized the first intergovernmental conference aimed at reconciling the environment and development, which resulted in the creation of UNESCO's "Man and the Biosphere" programme. Through this programme UNESCO sought to reconcile the use and conservation of natural resources, which was the first step towards sustainable development.

Sustainable development was an important theme throughout the event. Ms. Mazaheri, Deputy Head of the Department of Environment for Research and Educational Affairs, stressed the importance of science for the conservation of the environment and sustainable development. She said that much irreversible damage had been done to the environment due to a lack of science-based decision making.

The message from Mr. Meydani, Deputy Minister of Energy for Water and Wastewater Affairs, focused on the importance of water and the many challenges that Iran and the world are facing today when it comes to managing water resources. He also stressed the importance of science in that regard.

The celebration of World Science Day also marked the opening of a science exhibition that was open to the public all week in Tehran's Milad Tower, as well as the beginning of the International Science Week.

Throughout the week, a number of conferences and seminars took place in Tehran (organized jointly by UNESCO, the Iranian Association for the Popularization of Sciences, and the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO) and there were open days at selected universities and scientific institutes for students from several parts of Tehran.

SCIENCES



World Science Day was also celebrated in Islamabad.

"UNESCO has urged all the stakeholders to renew their commitment to creating a scientifically literate knowledge society for all, with sustainable development as a top priority", said Vibeke Jensen, the incumbent Director/Representative, UNESCO Islamabad on the occasion of World Science Day seminar titled 'Quality Science Education: Securing a Sustainable Future for all' here in Islamabad.

In connection to the World Science Day for Peace and Development 2014, celebrated on 10 November annually,

UNESCO Islamabad has organized two different events in Islamabad. The first event was organized by UNESCO in collaboration with Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) and COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT) at the PSF Head Quarters in Islamabad. Zahid Hamid, Federal Minister for Science and Technology was the chief guest on the occasion.

In the second event, a seminar was organized in Islamabad by Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) and ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF), in collaboration with UNESCO office Islamabad. Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad, the former Advisor to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Science & Technology was the Chief Guest.

Both the events had a mixed gathering of over hundred science students, representatives of scientific institutions, researcher, scholars, academicians, civil society organizations as well as policy makers and members of the diplomatic community in Islamabad. Remarks and discussions during the seminar deliberated upon the role of HEC in improving the standard of education and research in the country; new trends in life sciences; interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial nature of modern science education; ensuring ethical disposition; quality teaching; as well as, challenges of providing quality science education in schools of Pakistan.

At the concluding sessions of both the events, awards and cash prizes were distributed among students and researchers for preparing posters on illustrating the role of science for a progressive society with respect to various themes, included agriculture, health, biosciences, nanotechnology and computational sciences.



SCIENCES

International Day for DRR organized in Quetta, Pakistan

International Day for Disaster Reduction with this year theme, "Older People and Disasters" was organized by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in partnership with the University of Balochistan, Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) of Balochistan, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNWOMEN) at Quetta in the Balochistan Boy Scouts Association Head Quarters, aimed to raise awareness about DRR in the masses.



The International Day for Disaster Reduction is being celebrated every year on 13 October, on how people and communities are reducing their risk to disasters and raising awareness about the importance of DRR. It's also a day to encourage every citizen and government to take part in building more disaster resilient communities and nations.

Representatives and officials of the government, government institutions and the United Nations in Pakistan in their separate remarks emphasized on the joint efforts along with communities, academia and experts for sustainable development. They also highlighted the importance of the observance of the DRR, emphasizing the need for timely preventive measures as well as taking measures to reduce the vulnerability to hazards of elderly people despite of limited resources and other key challenges.

Detail presentations were made by PDMA Balochistan and representatives of the various UN entities for their specific DRR interventions in Balochistan and Pakistan as a whole. The event also featured awareness raising lectures on DRR. An advocacy walk and technical work group sessions were also organized to take inputs from the partners and stakeholders on

disaster risk management's challenges and opportunities, which will help towards the formulation of Balochistan Provincial disaster management policy in the future. Moreover UNESCO in collaboration with the University of Balochistan have started awareness raising sessions on DRR for the students, teachers, NGOs and government officials in the province.

In total there will be 20 sessions organized and special emphasis has been given to the maximum participation of females in these sessions.



SCIENCES

UNESCO Representative in I.R. Iran meets with Deputy Minister of Energy for Water and Wastewater Affairs

On 23 November, the Director of UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office (UTCO) met with H.E. Mr Meydani (Deputy Minister of Energy for Water and Wastewater Affairs and Chair of National IHP Committee), Mr Ebrahimnia (DG of Bureau of Master Planning for Water and Wastewater Affairs), Dr Ms Rahmati (UNESCO focal point at the Ministry) and the Iranian National Commission.

The meeting was arranged on the request of Ministry of Energy pursuant to a letter sent by Ms. Kuisch Laroche in October 2014 proposing activities for joint collaboration in 2015.

Mr Meydani opened the meeting congratulating the Director on her appointment. He underlined the importance of water in Iran's development agenda and the huge water scarcity which Iran is facing. He stated that Iran wishes to learn from the experience and knowledge of other countries in terms of their expertise in water resources management and is expanding its network of working with imminent international water experts. He requested UNESCO to help facilitate this sharing of experience and to connect Iran with pioneering countries in the field of water resource management.

Mr Meydani additionally identified three areas for joint collaboration between UNESCO and Iran IHP Committee:

- Stakeholders' participation in water resource management through local community engagement and empowerment;
- Groundwater management;
- Newest methods for calculation of the water balance across a River Basin.

He elaborated that what is expected from UNESCO is mainly technical expertise and sharing of knowledge and experience of successful countries in these areas. He emphasized that hands-on practical experiences from other countries is the need rather than theoretical concepts from academia.

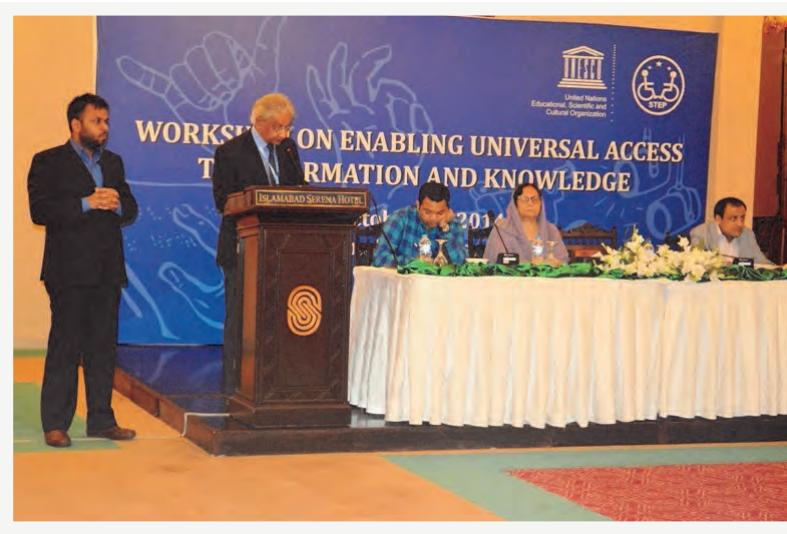
Ms Kuisch Laroche welcomed cooperation in these areas and suggested that UTCO submits concept note(s) for each or combination of the above areas for his review. She suggested engaging FAO-Iran in the first area (community empowerment, especially in rural areas) which will be coordinated by UTCO.

The Director of UNESCO Tehran Cluster also discussed the proposal of the FIT project on Kashafroud, which is currently being developed with the Khorasan Water Authority with support from the Ministry of Energy. It was agreed that once the proposal is finalized and cleared by UNESCO/SC, an MoU will be signed between the Ministry of Energy and UNESCO for implementation of the project .



COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

UNESCO Islamabad organizes media sensitization workshop on enabling universal access to information and knowledge



To empower persons with disabilities by enabling them to universal access to information and knowledge platforms, UNESCO Islamabad in collaboration with Special Talent Exchange Programme (STEP), organized a Media sensitization workshop in Islamabad. More than 50 media practitioners, officials and representatives of the civil society organizations, Government, and the United Nations participated in the workshop.

The workshop aimed at bringing together various stakeholders to raise awareness and learn about ways of improving accessibility to information and knowledge platforms and

disability-friendly warning systems through information and communication technologies, sign language, policy, technical and design modifications with a particular focus on barriers faced by persons with hearing and visual impairment.

The workshop attendants stressed the importance of creating an enabling environment perspective rather than focus on how to "fix" persons with disabilities. An interactive dialogue segment focused on the importance of and need for the development of sign language for the private and public media; captioning and subtitling (open and wide) for deaf people; brail newspapers and signs; screen readers; screen magnification as well as use of web page layout and browsers that can enable the blind or visually impaired to access websites as easy to implement solutions. Key suggestions and recommendations were shared by the participants, which will be incorporated in a study on barriers faced by persons with disabilities in Pakistan to access information and knowledge to be published soon.

Read more about the workshop on [our website](#).



COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office organizes two-day Science Journalism Workshop in Tehran

The UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office organized a Science Journalism Workshop on 26-27 November in cooperation with the Iranian Association for the Popularization of Sciences and the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO. The workshop was part of a series of events related to the 2014 World Science Day for Peace and Development.

During the two-day workshop, a group of 37 journalists were introduced to basic science literacy and had the opportunity to gain new skills of reporting scientific findings and developments in a way that is easy to understand for the public. They also learned about the key bio-ethical questions to consider when reporting. During the two days, the participants discussed a wide variety of topics ranging from biotechnology to medicine to environmental issues, such as climate change.

"Science needs a stronger presence in the media, because science and technology are central to sustainable development", said Ms. Esther Kuisch Laroche, Director and Representative of UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office during her opening remarks. "Journalists like you have an important role to play in educating the general public on issues such as information and communication technologies, environmental issues and medical issues".

The training was facilitated by Professor Jackson Banda, a programme specialist for media and civic participation at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. His co-facilitator was Dr. Zarrin Zardar who currently works as a researcher at Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB).

"I hope that this workshop will result in the creation of a network of science journalists in Iran and that we will see the tangible impact of this training in the form of more and better quality reporting on scientific topics for sustainable development", said Ms. Esther Kuisch Laroche on the first day of the training.



During the closing session of the workshop, the participants proposed the creation of a national association of science journalists in Iran. The Iranian National Commission for UNESCO offered its support in setting up such an association and UNESCO proposed to organize follow-up training sessions in order to continue strengthening science reporting in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

The National Library of Iran and UNESCO mark World Day for Audiovisual Heritage



On 27 October the National Library of Iran hosted an event to mark World Day for Audiovisual Heritage in the presence of Vice-President Dr. Ebtekar. During the opening ceremony, Ms. Esther Kuisch Laroche, Director of UNESCO's Tehran Cluster Office delivered the message of UNESCO's Director-General, Ms. Irina Bokova.

This year's theme is "Archives at Risk – Much More to Do" and Ms. Bokova's message focused on the fact that all audiovisual heritage is endangered today due to monumental changes in the way

that information and resources are generated, accessed and managed. Millions of films, audio and video tapes are at risk of crumbling into dust, fading away and disappearing.

Through its Memory of the World programme, which was launched in 1992, UNESCO seeks to protect and promote the world's documentary heritage through improved strategies for preservation and access.

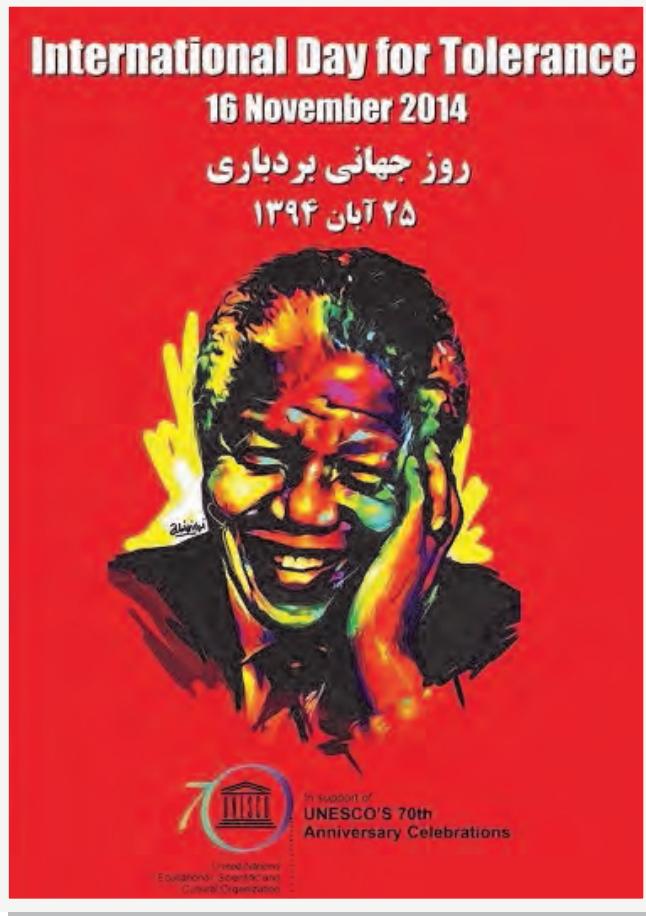
Iran currently has 7 items on the Memory of the World Register:

- A collection of selected maps of Iran in the Qajar Era (1193 - 1344 Lunar Calendar / 1779-1926 Gregorian Calendar)
- Administrative Documents of Astan-e Quds Razavi in the Safavid Era
- Al-Tafhim li Awa'il Sana'at al-Tanjim
- "Bayasanghori Shâhnâmeh" (Prince Bayasanghor's Book of the Kings)
- Collection of Nezami's Panj Ganj
- Dhakhīra-yi Khārazmshāhī
- The Deed For Endowment: Rab' I-Rashidi (Rab I-Rashidi Endowment) 13th Century manuscript

To learn more about UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme and Iran's registered items, please [visit our website](#).

OTHER EVENTS

On the International Day for Tolerance UTCO pays tribute to Nelson Mandela



On the 16th of November, the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office celebrated the International Day for Tolerance as part of a series of events to mark UNESCO's 70th anniversary.

During the event, which took place in the cinema hall of Mellat Museum in Sa'adabad Historical and Cultural Complex, the UNESCO Representative paid tribute to the legacy of Nelson Mandela.

Ms. Kuisch Laroche called Mandela "a giant of the 20th century" and a man of universal significance, who embodied UNESCO's faith in human dignity, and belief in the ability of every woman and man to change society through tolerance and peace. She talked about UNESCO's mandate and the agency's work over the past 70 years to build a culture of peace.

"Tolerance can never be taken for granted. It is a way of living that we must constantly reinvent for new times, to recognize the differences of others as the same as our own, and the riches of other cultures as the wealth of all to share" said Ms. Kuisch Laroche. "Let us therefore all try to carry-on the legacy of Nelson Mandela by spreading a culture of peace and tolerance around us in our day-to-day life."

After the [remarks by the UNESCO Representative](#), the South African Ambassador in Iran, H.E. Mr. Whitehead, took the floor and talked about his personal experience in South Africa. He mentioned that he himself had been involved in the struggle against Apartheid and talked about the inspirational leadership and moral standing of Mr. Nelson Mandela, which had paved the way for peace, tolerance and reconciliation.

After the opening speeches, the movie "Invictus" was screened. The film talks about the early days of Nelson Mandela's presidency in the post-Apartheid era, during which Mandela was particularly concerned about racial divisions between black and white South Africans, which could lead to violence. While attending a game between the Springboks, the country's rugby union team, and England, Mandela recognized that the blacks in the stadium were cheering for England, as the mostly-white Springboks represented prejudice and apartheid in their minds. Knowing that South Africa was set to host the 1995 Rugby World Cup one year later, Mandela decided to use the national rugby team as a means to unite and inspire the nation, and to foster a culture of peace and tolerance.

The International Day for Tolerance is a chance to reflect upon the principles of tolerance and to deepen our commitment to dialogue and solidarity, in our families and communities, and in relations with other peoples. To learn more about UNESCO's work towards building a culture of peace and tolerance, [please see the website](#).

OTHER EVENTS

UNESCO marks World Philosophy Day in Tehran

On the 19th of November, the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO and the Tarbiyat Modarres University jointly organized the first University Philosophy Students' Forum.

During the opening session there were speeches by Dr. Mohammad Taghi Ahmadi, Dean of the University; Dr. Saeidabadi, Secretary-General of the Iranian National Commission; Ms. Esther Kuisch Laroche, Director and Representative of the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office; and Dr. Saeidi Mehr, Secretary of the Conference.

Ms. Kuisch Laroche delivered the message of UNESCO's Director-General on the occasion of World Philosophy Day.

"There is no genuine philosophy without dialogue and, in a globalized world, dialogue must embrace the diverse strands of wisdom that have influenced people throughout history and which are not always sufficiently detailed or documented in conventional textbooks. It is this genuine intellectual and philosophical pluralism that will enable us to identify the best viewpoints for the future", she said.

Ms. Kuisch Laroche also announced the official launch of UNESCO's Philosophy Manual; a South-South perspective, which will hopefully inspire younger generations of students and teachers.

The opening session was followed by several panel discussions on a variety of topics, such as the new and contemporary philosophies, metaphysics, philosophy of ethics and religion. During these panels, selected students presented their research papers which were discussed with the audience.



The UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office wishes all readers
a happy holiday season!



The next issue of the newsletter will appear at the end of February 2015 and will exceptionally cover 3 months.