



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

15 March 2017

Ref. : ERI/MSP/2017/6

Sir/Madam,

The 201st session of the Executive Board is fast approaching. As already announced, our traditional meeting of the National Commissions will take place on 27 and 28 April 2017 in Room IV at UNESCO Headquarters from 8:30 am to 10:00 am. Please find attached the draft agenda of our meeting.

I should be very grateful if you would confirm your participation through the network of National Commissions (natcom@unesco.org).

I look forward to meeting many of you on this occasion.

Updated information on the 2017 calendar of deadlines for UNESCO prizes, Conventions and Recommendations

Since many of you expressed the wish to receive a calendar of deadlines for UNESCO prizes, I am pleased to provide you with such a list together with related information as attached. I hope this will facilitate your planning of work during this year.

Surveys of National Commissions on UNESCO Science Report and UNESCO's work in Capacity Building in the Basic Sciences and Engineering

The UNESCO Internal Oversight Service in cooperation with an external team of consultants from Technopolis Group is conducting two evaluations in the Sciences Sector, i.e. the evaluation of the UNESCO Science Report and the evaluation of UNESCO's work in Capacity Building in the Basic Sciences and Engineering. In this context, Technopolis Group will launch surveys to all National Commissions during March 2017.

We kindly request your support in responding to all questions and providing your suggestions and ideas for the future of UNESCO's work in these areas, as well as submitting the completed surveys electronically by the indicated deadlines. In this way, the different perspectives, experiences and suggestions from all Member States can be considered in the evaluation.

Please note that the evaluation reports will become available by July 2017 and are going to be discussed at the 202nd session of the Executive Board in autumn 2017. We count on your cooperation in this important exercise and thank you very much in advance.

Contact: Ms Martina Rathner (m.rathner@unesco.org)

Join, use and share the UNESCO Inclusive Policy Lab

We wish to introduce to you the newly established [UNESCO Inclusive Policy Lab](https://en.unesco.org/inclusivepolicylab), which works on the emerging issues of knowledge co-production and its translation into inclusive and equity-weighted policies. It aims to support the implementation of the SDGs' pillar on inclusive development through policy and practice.

The Lab is both an on-the-ground programme and an online service. The online component is specifically designed to enable web-based crowdsourcing, co-production and circulation of policy- and action-relevant evidence.

This e-platform represents a unique opportunity to connect with policy practitioners, to share expertise and to advocate your messages and agenda around the issue of inclusive policies. National Commissions can leverage, in own work and through promotion amongst their partners, the Lab in various forms.

I strongly encourage you to join, use and share the UNESCO Inclusive Policy Lab (en.unesco.org/inclusivepolicylab) to build more equitable and inclusive societies!

Contact: Ms Iulia Sevciuc (i.sevciuc@unesco.org)

12 - 14 April 2017 – Second International Conference on Youth Volunteering and Dialogue: Preventing violent extremism and strengthening social inclusion, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France

The Conference will gather over 100 young volunteers from all regions. Through four workshops, interactive discussions and side events, the young participants will present their experiences and best practices from their volunteering across the domains of UNESCO's competence. They will submit project proposals and formulate a joint declaration to illustrate their future commitment in volunteering to advance dialogue on the emerging issues raised within the conference.

This second Conference builds on the first event held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in December 2013. This initiative is set within the framework of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Programme for a Culture of Peace and Dialogue and the implementation of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2016-2017) which UNESCO spearheads for the United Nations.

I know that many of you are aware of the importance of youth engagement in building peace and dialogue. I encourage you to find out more about this event via [this link](#).

Contact: Ms Amina Hamshari (a.hamshari@unesco.org)

23-24 April 2017 – World Book and Copyright Day 2017

UNESCO has celebrated this Day for 22 years now, providing an opportunity to reflect on ways to better disseminate the culture of the written word and to allow all individuals to access it, through literacy programmes, open educational resources, and support for careers in publishing, bookshops, libraries, and schools.

This year, events will take place at UNESCO on 24 April and will focus on the need to make books more accessible to readers with handicaps. There will be a roundtable discussion organized by our partner Asfored on this subject in the

morning. And because this year the UNESCO World Book Capital will be Conakry, Guinea, there will also be activities at Headquarters celebrating African literature.

To give an international dimension to the celebration, an interactive map featuring events organised by librarians, booksellers, and publishers around the world will be produced online.

I welcome and encourage your support and cooperation in this celebration. If you wish to propose ideas for activities and initiatives for the celebration in your countries, please contact Ms Caroline Bordoni (c.bordoni@unesco.org).

More information on this Day will be available soon at www.unesco.org/new/wbcd.

Contact: Mr Ian Denison (i.denison@unesco.org)

3 May 2017 – World Press Freedom Day (WPFJ), Jakarta, Indonesia

UNESCO, in collaboration with the Government of Indonesia, and the Press Council of Indonesia, will organize the World Press Freedom Day's main event in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 1 to 4 May 2017, as well as the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize Ceremony, which will take place on 3 May. Under the theme "Critical Minds for Critical Times: Media's role in Advancing Peaceful Just and Inclusive Societies", WPFJ 2017 will focus on why it is vital to strengthen free and quality journalism to enable the media to effectively contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16. Specifically, the interrelationships between freedom of expression, justice for all and the rule of law, peace, and inclusiveness will be explored.

Named in honor of an assassinated Colombian journalist, the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano Prize is intended to honor a person, organization or institution that has made an outstanding contribution to the defense and/or promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world, especially when this has been achieved in the face of danger.

Please consult via [this link](#) on the World Press Freedom Day and the Prize to get more information.

I encourage National Commissions to disseminate this information to interested participants and register [here](#) to participate in the main event of the World Press Freedom Day 2017. You are also encouraged to join these celebrations around the world in favor of press freedom.

Contact: Ms Sylvie Coudray (s.coudray@unesco.org) and Ms Flavie Romer (f.romer@unesco.org)

17 – 19 May 2017 – International Conference on Youth and Information and Communication Technologies: Preventing violent extremism in cyberspace, Byblos, Lebanon

UNESCO, in collaboration with the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO, is organizing in cooperation with the Information for All Programme (IFAP), an International Conference on Youth and Information and Communication Technologies: Preventing violent extremism in cyberspace in Byblos, Lebanon from 17 to 19 May 2017.

The Byblos Conference will bring together researchers, experts in sociology and social media, civil society representatives as well as government officials to explore ways of preventing youth extremism, violence, radicalization, discrimination and hatred on the internet. It will focus on the importance of engaging the youth in identifying the causes of the phenomenon, sharing good practices and in developing proposals to counter extremism in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 2250/2015.

I encourage you to share this information with interested partners, institutions and individuals in your country.

Contact: Hara Prasad Padhy (h.padhy@unesco.org)

13 – 15 July 2017 – Sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS VI)

The Sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport, [MINEPS VI](#), will be held in Kazan, Russian Federation, from 13 to 15 July 2017 and is expected to mark a shift from declarations of policy intent towards measurable action. Consequently, the conference's goal is to agree on a plan of actions to which the ministers commit.

The agenda of MINEPS VI will be structured around [three main themes](#):

- (i) Developing a comprehensive vision of inclusive access for all;
- (ii) Maximizing the contributions of sport to sustainable development and peace;
- (iii) Protecting the integrity of sport. MINEPS VI will focus on the implementation and its monitoring of the [Declaration of Berlin](#), adopted by MINEPS V, and the new [International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport](#).

A common framework for the international follow up to the Declaration of Berlin and the International Charter will be developed. One of the main objectives of MINEPS VI is to clarify [the linkages](#) between the above follow-up framework and the Sustainable Development Goals / Agenda 2030, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015. Thus, MINEPS VI will provide a platform to discuss physical education, physical activity and sport in light of their contribution to achieving the SDGs. Over 150 government and non-government experts participate in the programmatic preparations of the conference.

Contact: Mr Alexander Schischlik (A.Schischlik@unesco.org)

National Commissions' Community Board – sharing initiatives

- As you are aware, the European Network of National Commissions for UNESCO is an informal sub-regional network, which aims to strengthen the cooperation between the European National Commissions and their relevant partner organizations. This year, hosted by the Hellenic National Commission, an annual meeting of the this Network will take place from 2 to 5 April 2017 in Thessaloniki, Greece.
- In support of UNESCO's commitment and problem-solving actions for SIDS, the Government of Pakistan has committed to provide support to help the SIDS countries in addressing their problems and challenges through education collaboration. It will offer 10 scholarships per year for Masters and PhD studies (7 for MS and 3 for PHD) for a period of three years for the citizens of SIDS. These 30 scholarships would be provided through the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan in the field of Climate Change and

Water. You may find enclosed the detailed modalities as well as the application form for the scholarships. For more information, please contact: Engr. Waheed Ahmed Mangi, Deputy Director HRD, Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (whahmed@hec.gov.pk)

UNESCO Publications

- The publication *Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives* is designed as a guide for education professionals on the use of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in learning for the SDGs, and consequently to contribute to achieving the SDGs. The guide identifies indicative learning objectives and suggests topics and learning activities for each SDG and presents implementation methods at different levels, from course design to national strategies. A French version is also available.
- *Getting Climate-Ready - A Guide For Schools On Climate Action*, is based on a survey looking especially at climate action projects implemented in 55 ASPnet (Associated Schools Project Network) schools in 12 countries. It aims to include action for reducing climate change in every aspect of school life, in a “whole-school” approach. The Guide in English is available under [this link](#).
- The goal of the report *Counting (on) Women in Politics: Experiences from Morocco & Tunisia* is to provide a factual basis for policy reform in favour of women’s political participation in the region. It focuses on the experience of women within political parties in Tunisia and Morocco, countries that have shown strong political will and reformed their legislation to increase women’s political participation in recent years. The report is available in English under [this link](#).

Appointments of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions (February/March 2017)

I am pleased to welcome to the National Commissions network the following new members:

In Albania, Mr Sokol Gjoka has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms Amanda Vrana.

In Aruba, Ms Zetsia Ponson has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms Zahira Zaandam.

In Ecuador, Ms María Isabel Flores Ruiz has been has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms Amparo Miranda.

In France, Ms Laurella Rincon has been appointed Acting Secretary-General, succeeding Mr David Fajolles.

In Ghana, Mr Matthew Opoku Prempeh has been appointed Chairperson, succeeding Ms Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang.

In Kyrgyzstan, Ms Sabira Soltongeldiyeva has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms Elnura Korchueva.

In Malawi, Mr Emmanuel B Z Kondowe has been appointed Acting Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Francis Mkandawire.

In Mali, Mr Amadi Hamadi Diarra has been appointed Acting Secretary-General, succeeding Ms Sangare Coumba Toure.

In San Marino, Ms Marcella Michelotti has been appointed President, succeeding Ms Sara Mancini, and Ms Patrizia De Luca has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms Silvia Marchetti.

In the United States of America, Mr Paul T. Mungai has been appointed Acting Executive Director, succeeding Ms Allison Wright.

In Viet Nam, Mr Pham Vinh Quang has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Pham Sanh Chau.

Yours sincerely,



Eric Falt