



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

6 January 2017

Ref. : ERI/MSP/2017/1

Sir/Madam,

Let me first extend to you my warmest regards and best wishes for a successful, prosperous and happy 2017.

The coming year will be marked by important events for us, notably the next session of the General Conference in autumn. The 4th Interregional Meeting of National Commissions will also take place in the margins of that session of the General Conference at the UNESCO Headquarters.

Let me now share with you the outcomes of two recent events in the field of culture.

16 new elements have been added to the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, following the decisions adopted by the eleventh session of the intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held from 28 November to 2 December 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, now numbering a total of 366 items, shows the diversity of this heritage and raises awareness about its importance. You may find more information about the List through [this link](#).

Another important event was the tenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, held from 12 to 15 December 2016 at UNESCO Headquarters. The Committee examined, among others, how to enable greater access to digital technologies and adopted the draft Operational Guidelines on the implementation of the Convention in the digital environment, which aim to encourage new policies and measures based on principles of openness and access. You may get more information under [this link](#).

15 January 2017 – deadline for submission of the Celebration of anniversaries with which UNESCO will be associated in 2018-2019

The National Commissions are invited to inform the Secretariat of the commemoration(s) with which their countries would like UNESCO to be associated during the 2018-2019 biennium, in accordance with the revised criteria and procedures relating to the Celebration of Anniversaries, adopted by the Executive Board through 195 EX/Decision 25.

Each Member State may submit **two requests** for the celebration of anniversaries in association with UNESCO and preferably, one of these relating to gender equality.

In addition, Member States who have anniversaries approved by the 38th session of the General Conference (check here the [List of anniversaries to be celebrated in 2016-2017 in association with UNESCO](#)) are kindly reminded that **they are responsible for the implementation of the activities relating to the celebration of anniversaries** and must submit to the Director-General, on completion of the project, a **detailed activity report** on the results achieved and their usefulness to the Member State(s) and UNESCO. No new anniversary proposals will be considered until the Member State concerned has provided all of the requisite activity reports.

You may find the Circular letter under [this link](#). On-line forms for the submission by the Member States of new proposals and for the submission of reports can be found at: <https://teams.unesco.org/ORG/eri/anniversaries/>. Further information can be obtained on UNESCO's website at <http://en.unesco.org/celebrations/anniversaries> and on the Member States' website <http://www.unesco.int/>.

Contact: Ms Monica Crutescu (mo.crutescu@unesco.org).

13 February 2017 – Celebration of World Radio Day

In 2017, the theme of the Day is “Radio is You”, which is about radio stations “listening to their listeners”. I would like to invite the National Commissions to join us to celebrate the World Radio Day on and around 13 February 2017.

Here are some interesting ideas for your participation on the World Radio Day:

1. **Open Day** – partner with radio stations and invite them to do a special broadcast. Encourage your community to inform the radio stations of their local issues.
2. **Radio Fair** –last year, the city of Bhubaneswar in India, organized a fair that brought together different radio stations, UNESCO partners and local non-government organizations. It is a great way to encourage the theme that “Radio is You”.
3. **Radio Forum** - With your government officials, UNESCO, NGO members, or industry representatives, hold a forum with a local radio station partner on the issues affecting your community. Record it and broadcast on World Radio Day. If it works, you could have a regular listener club attached to a local radio, to really encourage the voices of the local community to be heard on the air.

4. If you are doing an event, don't forget to use social media! You can tweet using the hashtag #worldradioday or visit and "like" us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/WorldRadioDay

The World Radio Day website was launched for the New Year, and for now, you are welcome to register your details by visiting www.worldradioday.org to keep up-to-date with all the latest news. Visit the website in early January to explore the full site and many suggestions of how to participate in the Day.

I would also be grateful if you could disseminate this information to stakeholders and relevant partners, and to register your events on our worldwide map in order to obtain a UNESCO certificate of participation.

Contact: Ms Alison Meston (a.meston@unesco.org)

15 February 2017 – Deadline for submission of candidates for the 2017 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize

Further to the letter from the Director General on 12 September 2016 (Ref No. [CL/4174](#)), I would like to remind you that the deadline for submission of candidates for the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize is 15 February 2017.

Member States are encouraged to submit candidatures for the prize which aims to "honour a person, organization or institution that has made a notable contribution to the defence and/or promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world, especially if this involved risk. Member States and international and regional professional and non-governmental organizations working in the field of journalism and freedom of expression may nominate candidates for the Prize".

Contact: Ms Sylvie Coudray (s.coudray@unesco.org)

15 - 16 February 2017 – Knowledge Forum on Water Security and Climate Change, UNESCO Headquarters

Organized by UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP), the Forum is dedicated to connecting young and senior scientists and water practitioners to facilitate collaboration, learning and knowledge-sharing primarily through events, workshops, and new communication and information technologies (ICT). The Forum will focus on facilitating access to recent information on regional, national or international research projects, as well as enhance cooperation between developing countries (South-South cooperation) for future research and enhancing citizen science. It will comprise several lectures, a young scientists' poster exhibition, and opportunities to enhance partnerships on water security and climate change.

The registration deadline is **30 January 2017**. Please disseminate this information to scientists and institutions in your county, who may be interested to participate.

You can find out more information under [this link](#).

Contact: Ms Barbara Avila (b.avila@unesco.org)

21 February 2017 – International Mother Language Day 2017

UNESCO will celebrate the International Mother Language Day 2017 on the theme “Towards Sustainable Futures through Multilingual Education”. The opening ceremony of the celebration will be held at UNESCO Headquarters on 21 February 2017, while other promotional activities of mother language and multilingual education will be undertaken at country level.

The Day will be in line with "Education for People and the Planet: Creating Sustainable Futures for All", theme of UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report on Education, 2016. International Mother Language Day also supports Goal 4.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): "Ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy". You can find more details on this year's celebration under [this link](#).

Given the importance of mother and local languages as channels for safeguarding and sharing indigenous cultures and knowledge, which are vast reservoirs of wisdom, I encourage you to organize events in your country to celebrate this important Day.

Contact: Mrs Noro Andriamiseza Ingarao (n.andriamiseza@unesco.org)

28 February - 3 March 2017 – African Regional Conference on Humanities, Bamako, Mali

In preparation of the World Humanities Conference (Liège, Belgium, 6-12 August 2017), the Government of Mali will host an African Conference on Humanities on the theme "Languages, Cultures, History and Territories" in Bamako, from 28 February to 3 March 2017.

The African Conference will prepare the contribution of Africa and answer specific African questions. Like the World Humanities Conference, its main objective is to study how the Humanities contribute or may contribute at national, regional and international levels to measure, understand and better manage the cultural transformations that are expressed in economic, social and environmental dimensions related to the progressive globalization of exchanges.

In view of the importance of the issues discussed, interest in them, the diversity of responses that they can involve in different countries, disciplines and intellectual orientations, the Bamako African Conference has the vocation to constitute the time beacon of a wider African discussion and consultation process in time and in space. In Bamako, and in Liège, the Conference will ensure a truly inclusive and pluralistic African contribution to global thinking on the future of the humanities.

I would be grateful if you could disseminate the information on this important symposium to the scholars in your country who may wish to participate and contribute.

Contact: Marema Touré Thiam (m.toure-thiam@unesco.org)

UNESCO Publications

- Launched on 5 December 2016 at UNESCO Headquarters during a high-level panel on “Targeting Heritage: in search of new paradigms – save heritage through dialogue”, the new publication *Military Manual on Protection of Cultural Property* is intended to be used by all governments to enhance the capacity of their military to address the new challenges of

protecting cultural property in times of conflict. This publication is the first-of-its kind training tool published by UNESCO with the support of the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (Sanremo, Italy) and funded by the Republic of Azerbaijan. This publication is available in English under [this link](#).

- UNESCO, in collaboration with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) on Education and School Health and UN Women, launched a publication *Global Guidance on Addressing School-related Gender-based Violence* following recommendations by the Global Working Group to End School-Related Gender-Based Violence. This publication provides key information to governments, policy-makers, teachers, practitioners and civil society who wish to take concrete action against school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV). It introduces approaches, methodologies, tools and resources that have shown positive results in preventing and responding to SRGBV. The publication is available in English under [this link](#).
- *Human rights and encryption*, the eighth title in the UNESCO series on Internet Freedom, was launched at the 11th Internet Governance Forum in Guadalajara, Mexico, held from 6 to 9 December 2016. This study addresses the relevance of encryption to human rights in the media and communications field and offers policy recommendations for state practice and other stakeholders. The publication is available in English under [this link](#).

Appointments of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions (November/December 2016)

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

In Botswana, Mrs Nnosang Mhutsiwa has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Oteng Basimolodi Mokowe.

In Curaçao, Mrs Elsa Rozendal has been appointed President, succeeding Ms Irene Dick.

In New Zealand, Ms Robyn Baker has been appointed Chair, succeeding Mr Ian McKinnon and Ms Vicki Soanes has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms Elizabeth Rose.

In Peru, Mrs Marilú Martens has been appointed Chair, succeeding Mr Jaime Saavedra Chanduví.

Yours sincerely,



Eric Falt