



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

Ref. : ERI/MSP/2016/13

5 April 2016

Sir/Madam,

First of all, please be kindly reminded that, on the occasion of the 199<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board, we will hold our traditional meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO on 11 and 12 April. The invitation to the meeting as well as its agenda have been sent to you. We would be grateful if you could confirm your participation as soon as possible.

I believe that many of you participated in the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves which ended on 17 March, in the capital city of Peru, with the adoption of a Declaration and a new ten-year Action Plan for UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

As you are aware, the Lima Declaration adopted by consensus by some 1,000 participants attending the Congress, has set out to promote synergies between Biosphere Reserves and the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the Agreement on Climate Change, adopted in Paris in late 2015.

You can get more information about this successful event by connecting to the [webpages on the Congress](#) and [on the 20 sites newly added to UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves](#).

### **UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education**

On International Women's Day (8 March), UNESCO launched a call for nominations to the first edition of the UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education. Supported by the Government of the People's Republic of China, the Prize is conferred annually on two laureates (individuals, institutions or organizations) to recognize their exceptional contributions in advancing education for girls and women.

First UNESCO Prize of this nature, it is unique in showcasing successful projects that improve and promote the educational prospects of girls and women and in turn, the quality of their lives. Established in 2015 by UNESCO's Executive Board, the Prize contributes to the attainment of the Organization's global priorities and to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, in particular Sustainable Development Goals 4 on education and 5 on gender equality.

National Commissions are invited to submit nominations for the first edition of the Prize before 20 April 2016 (midnight, Paris time). Submission documents and all details regarding the Prize are available at: <https://en.unesco.org/prize-girls-women-education>.

### **30 April 2016 – International Jazz Day**

Washington D.C. will serve as the Global Host City for the 2016 celebration of this Day. It will host a multitude of jazz performances, community service initiatives, and education programmes in schools, libraries, hospitals, community centers and arts venues across the city. Washington D.C. is the birthplace of the great jazz pianist and bandleader Duke Ellington, and the city has enjoyed a thriving jazz scene for the past century.

Washington D.C. will join with towns, cities and villages in over 190 countries on all seven continents to observe International Jazz Day through thousands of performances and programmes.

This Day brings together nations and communities to celebrate the art of jazz, and to highlight its important role in encouraging dialogue among cultures and civilizations, eradicating discrimination and promoting human dignity.

As in the past five years, UNESCO's official partner in the organization of this Day is the *Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz*. The Institute is leading both the programme and outreach efforts on behalf of UNESCO.

I encourage you to join us for this celebration. You will find more information on how to get involved and start your own celebration on our dedicated website following [this link](#).

### **3 May 2016 – World Press Freedom Day, Helsinki, Finland**

UNESCO and the Government of Finland will co-host the World Press Freedom Day's main event, which will take place in Helsinki from 2 to 4 May, as well as the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize Ceremony, which will take place on 3 May. Under the theme "Access to Information and Fundamental Freedoms - This Is Your Right!" the 2016 celebration will highlight the links between press freedom, a culture of openness and the right to freedom of information, and sustainable development in the digital age.

Every year, the World Press Freedom Day celebrates the fundamental principles of press freedom; to evaluate press freedom around the world, to defend the media from attacks on their independence and to pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession. Hundreds of celebrations take place each year to commemorate this Day. You are therefore encouraged to join these celebrations around the world in favor of press freedom.

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 [our website](#) on the World Press Freedom Day and the [dedicated webpage](#) on the Prize to get more information.

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

## **2-5 May 2016 – World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2016, Geneva, Switzerland**

Co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD, the WSIS Forum 2016 represents the world's largest annual gathering of the 'ICT for development' community and will provide structured opportunities to network, learn and participate in multi-stakeholder discussions and consultations on WSIS implementation.

The Agenda and Programme for the Forum are based on official submissions received during an Open Consultation Process aiming at actively engaging governments, civil society, the private sector and intergovernmental organizations in the preparatory process.

WSIS is a unique United Nations summit that was initiated in order to achieve a common vision, desire and commitment to build a people-centric, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information.

Contact: Mr Cédric Wachholz ([c.wachholz@unesco.org](mailto:c.wachholz@unesco.org))

### **UNESCO Publications**

➤ The 2016 edition of the World Water Development Report (WWDR), led by UNESCO and entitled "Water and Jobs", is now available in English, and for the first time, in French and Spanish, under [this link](#). The Report illustrates that nearly three out of four jobs of the global workforce (3.2 billion people) are moderately or highly dependent upon access to water and water-related services. It seeks to inform decision-makers about the importance of the water and jobs nexus for the social and economic development and environmental sustainability of countries, rich and poor.

➤ Published by the UNESCO Amman Office, the study *Assessment of Media Development in Jordan*, based on the Organization's Media Development Indicators (MDIs), is part of the 'Support to Media in Jordan' project aiming to increase media freedom, media independence and journalistic professionalism in the country. The UNESCO Media Development Indicators offer a comprehensive framework for assessing the contemporary media landscape in any country at any given time, but do not hold the ambition to compare countries with each other. You can download the study in English [under this link](#).

➤ The issue *World Heritage and Gender Equality – N°78* explores how gender plays a role in the management and conservation of World Heritage. Case studies include Mount Athos (Greece) – forbidden to women and children; Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range (Japan); Flemish Béguinages (Belgium) – *béguines* were women who dedicated their lives to God without retiring from the world; and Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi (Uganda). It is available in French, English and Spanish at the following address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/review/78/>

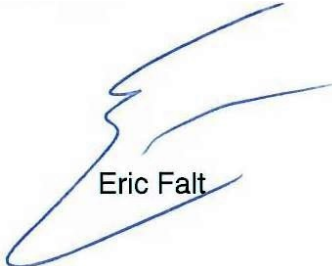
### **Appointments of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions (February/March 2016)**

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

In Haiti, Mr Jean Beauvois Dorsonne has been appointed Chairperson, succeeding Mr Nesmy Manigat.

In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Ms Yaneth Arocha has been appointed Chairperson, succeeding Mr Porfirio Pestana.

Yours sincerely,



Eric Falt