



Annual Report - 2017

70 Years in Egypt

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States Celebrates its 70th Anniversary

On Wednesday 6 December 2017, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Egypt and the Egyptian National Commission for UNESCO, celebrated the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States in Cairo.



UNESCO's Director-General, Ms. Audrey Azoulay addressed the gathering by video message.

The celebrations to mark this major event - held under the slogan **“70 years of building peace in the minds of men and women in the Arab region”** - were organized at the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization under the patronage of H.E. Mr. Sherif Ismail, Prime Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt.



National Museum of Egyptian Civilization lit up for UNESCO's 70th Anniversary Celebrations



Selection of items from the buffet



The celebration brought together over 300 distinguished guests including Egyptian Ministers, Ambassadors, representatives of the diplomatic corps, United Nations agencies working in Egypt, representatives of cultural and educational institutions that work with UNESCO, and entities working in the field of scientific and technological development.



Arriving guests were entertained by two young Egyptian musicians and warmly welcomed by Mr. Ghaith Fariz, Director of the Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States & UNESCO Representative to Egypt.

In her video message to participants, UNESCO's Director-General, Ms. Audrey Azoulay lauded the achievements of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States in Cairo and saluted the strong cooperation provided by the Government of Egypt. She proclaimed it "a relationship with milestones that have changed the world". Ms. Azoulay also recognized and praised the contribution of regional partners such as the League of Arab States and Al-Azhar in the "bolstering of intercultural dialogue, promoting science, technology and innovation across the region, sustainable water cooperation as well as the protection of the region's unique biodiversity". In reaffirming UNESCO's strong and enduring commitment to the region, Ms. Azoulay reiterated her commitment to fruitful collaboration, "I look forward to opening new historic chapters with you as we move forward across the region".

In his opening remarks H.E. Dr. Khaled Abdel Ghaffar, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research/ representative of H.E. the Prime Minister commended the long-standing relationship and cooperation between UNESCO and the Government of Egypt since 1947, which has "greatly advanced the agenda of knowledge and science in the region". H.E. the Minister expressed his happiness and pride about the decision to host this celebration at the National Museum for Egyptian Civilization, which was inaugurated early 2017. He also praised the UNESCO Cairo achievements particularly in the last years in the various areas of UNESCO action including education, communication and information, & promotion of science and highlighted other recent activities, such as the restoration of the Museum of Islamic Art.

A short video was screened that highlighted the UNESCO Cairo office's accomplishments throughout the years.





(L-R) H.E. Dr. Khaled Abdel Ghaffar, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research; and Mr. Ghaith Fariz, Director of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States & UNESCO Representative to Egypt address the gathering.

Mr. Ghaith Fariz, Director of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States expressed appreciation “to the Government and the people of Egypt for their support to UNESCO over the past seven decades”. He also made special mention of the new building in 6th October City provided by the Government that opened earlier this year as the UNESCO Office. In his closing remarks, Ghaith Fariz thanked all partners as well as current and past staff “for their continued support and outstanding efforts, which were the foundation of this shared success”. He reiterated “UNESCO’s commitment to “pursuing further actions and efforts to achieve the goals of sustainable development and the improvement of human well-being in Egypt and in the Arab region”.



A selection of the treasures on display at the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization. UNESCO provided technical guidance in the construction of the museum and training of its personnel and continues to provide operational oversight. The museum opened to the public early in 2017.

The official ceremony was followed by a guided tour of the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization, an Award Ceremony, and a cultural performance by the Light and Hope Orchestra. The Award Ceremony provided an opportunity for UNESCO to recognize the contributions of key governmental partners, former and long-serving partners as well as various friends of UNESCO. The Light and Hope Orchestra received a standing ovation and joyful audience applause following their hour-long performance. This classical orchestra of visually impaired, Egyptian women have been delighting audience in numerous global capitals with their musical renditions.



(L-R) Award recipients included amongst others, Mr. Hassan Abdel Aaty, the Porter; Ms. Dalia Khalil, Assistant to the Director, 25 years of service; Ms. Hoda Abdel-Meguid 20 years of service and H.E. Dr. Tarek Shawki, Minister of Education and former Director of UNESCO's Cairo Office.



(L-R) Award recipients included amongst others, Ms. Inas El Ibrashy, former National Professional Officer for Culture; Ms. Mona Nahas, former Senior Administrative & Communication Assistant; Ms. Mouchira Nagy, former Senior Financial Assistant; Dr. Ghada Gholam, former Education Programme Specialist.



The Light and Hope Orchestra is composed of visually impaired female, Egyptian musicians. They regularly perform in global capitals delighting and inspiring audiences.

The UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States is part of UNESCO's global network of 52 field offices. Established in 1947, the Cairo Office holds the distinction of being amongst the oldest UNESCO Field Offices in the world. Through targeted interventions, it is supporting Arab countries to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

UNESCO is the UN Specialized Agency responsible for coordinating international cooperation in education, science, culture and communication. It strengthens the ties between nations and societies, and mobilizes the wider public so that each child and citizen has access to quality education to grow and live in a cultural environment rich in diversity and dialogue. UNESCO also works to protect universal human values and ensure that all can fully benefit from scientific advances



Executive Summary

Here are some of the areas that we focused on in 2017, in each of our program areas: Education, Natural & Physical Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture, and Communication & Information.

In line with its role as a UNESCO Regional Bureau, the Office continued to build its human resources in 2017. All five of UNESCO's Programme areas – Education, Natural and Physical Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture as well as Communication and Information - are represented. UNESCO Cairo Office (UCO) is therefore able to provide Member States with support across the full-breadth of UNESCO's mandate. To ensure balanced growth and effective programme delivery, the office has also been strengthening its administrative and infrastructural support. The Office implemented a number of risk mitigation and performance measures, organized some 60 events, and issued over 500 contracts. These procurement processes have benefitted from a rigorous evaluation process and cover a wide range of goods and services ranging from conservation and restoration equipment to learning platforms. With a shared understanding of internal control objectives and heightened sense of ethics, the Office personnel aims at efficiently and effectively serving its member states and beneficiaries. After 70 years in Cairo's Garden City district, UCO relocated to a new premise in Sixth October City generously provided by the Government and People of Egypt. The onsite cafeteria and conference rooms will enable us to organize meetings in our premises. We also have state of the art security equipment and we are upgrading the library and records management system. Our modern, expanded premises will provide ample room for UNESCO's growth over the coming years and enhance our ability to serve the Region.

The Education Programme at UCO has been fully engaged in and committed to providing technical support to education authorities in the context of Education 2030 Agenda. To this end, the Programme has provided policy advice to the education authorities in Egypt and Sudan in reviewing policies, plans, strategies, programmes and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, as well as integrating SDG-4 targets into their strategic planning processes at national and decentralized levels. In Egypt, the Programme has focused essentially on target 4.6 concerning literacy and numeracy, where a number of pioneering projects were mobilized to develop and test new gender-sensitive curricula, and harness the potential of ICT in promoting literacy.

The Ecology and Earth Science programme at UCO in collaboration with HQ has initiated the Arab Geopark Network through a 2-days dialogue bringing together 25 Member States representatives from the region whereby countries have unfolded the potential and priority sites with global geological importance (November 2017- Amman, Jordan). In conjunction with the Hydrology programme and in collaboration with Rabat office, it has launched the Arab-African Biosphere Reserve Initiative (AABRI) to back up the Marrakech Accord with member states to have the biosphere reserves as observatory of Climate Change (October 2017- Agadir, Morocco). The programme in cooperation with Hydrology programme and in partnership with United Nations - Economic and Social Commission for



Western Asia, League of Arab States and United Nations Environment Programme's Regional Office for West Asia shared regional initiatives and success stories on mainstreaming climate change in regional and national policies in the Arab region and promoted science policy interface through informed decisions about key negotiations issues at the COP23 to the UNFCCC held in Bonn in Germany (November 10, 2017). The programme worked together with the Social and Human Sciences programme to tackle for the first time in the region environmental ethics during the International Youth Day 2017 (August, 2017 - Abu Qeer, Egypt). During the International Symposium on Native Seeds in Restoration of Dryland Ecosystems organized by Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, scholars and practitioners recommended the UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and UNESCO Global Geoparks as hubs for seed preservation in arid ecosystems (November, 2017 - Kuwait).

UCO is leading the implementation of a program on "Water Education Training for Teachers" promoting responsible water use, a culture of water conservation, the sharing of best management practices, as well as improving awareness and understanding of water challenges in the Arab region. The program activities comprise the development of general guidelines for teachers, development of supportive illustrative water educational tools (8-12-year-old students) and development of interactive educational activities (13-18-year-old students). Regional and national training workshops for more than 50 teacher trainers (26 women, 24 men) were organized in Sharm El Shiekh, Egypt and Luxor, Egypt. Currently, the developed UCO water educational tools, mainly the illustrative booklet and Cartoons, are being disseminated to the main stakeholders in Egypt, Oman, Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan. More than 80 schools are involved and 250 teachers (half of them are women) are using UCO WET tools and implementing the program. More schools and students are being involved in the program.

UCO, Social and Human Sciences sector launched in 2017 a number of initiatives that promote inclusive and equitable sustainable development in the Arab region, based on ethical values and human rights. In particular, the Coalition of Arab Cities against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance was revitalized, and a series of activities were organized to support Arab cities as inclusive spaces where no one is left behind. Moreover, UCO partnered with the League of Arab States and Al-Azhar to promote narratives of tolerance and prevent extremism by building the capacities of youth to engage in inter-cultural dialogue. Finally, and in cooperation with League of Arab States and several Arab countries, UCO launched a regional process to develop an Arab Charter of Ethics of Science and Technology to frame, support, protect and guide science and technology in the region to become pillars and powerful drivers of sustainable human development.

In close cooperation with its partners such as the Ministry of Antiquities and Ministry of Culture, the UCO Culture Sector strives to contribute to enhance protection, preservation and promotion of the rich cultural heritage of the countries under its cluster. This heritage ranges from cherished historic monuments and museums to traditional practices and contemporary art forms. This cultural heritage, often-breathtaking example of human and natural wonders attracting nationals and international tourists are also important economic engines creating jobs and supporting development. For this reason, capacity building has been at the top of UCO's priorities ranging from management of sites, conservation, fight against illicit traffic of cultural property, protecting heritage in the event of armed conflict,

developing museums and awareness raising on the contribution of culture to sustainable development. Heritage and creativity are the ingredients to create knowledgeable and inclusive societies.

The Communication and Information (CI) Sector demonstrated UCO's convening power, and capacity to effectively use networks to support collaboration and sharing of experiences at the national, regional and international levels. In Sudan, with our Khartoum Office and national partners, over 600 female journalists have been trained in personal safety practices. This has enabled them to carry out the crucial task of informing the public of contemporary issues while reducing the potential for incurring personal harm. In Egypt, and also across seven Arab countries, UCO joined forces with our Sister UN Agency, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), to organize the first ever ICT Accessibility Week for Arab States. The event which coincided with the celebration of UNESCO's International Day for Universal Access to Information served to underline the life-changing potential of ICTs in supporting the social participation of the estimated 15% of Arab populations who live with a disability. The event also served as an important staging point for 2018 when Egypt will celebrate its National Year of People with Disabilities. Through the Arab Open Educational Resources Forum, a regional community of practice created by UCO, we have supported regional inputs and preparations for the World OER Congress held in Ljubljana in September and the crafting of the Congress' Declaration and Action Plan. We are also supporting its implementation. The UCO was also entrusted by UNESCO Headquarters to be its liaison and to lead UNESCO's participation in the substantive and logistical preparation of ICEGOV2017, the 10th edition of the International Conference on the Theory and Practice of Policy-driven Electronic Governance. The conference organized under the theme Building Knowledge Societies: From Digital Government to Digital Empowerment was held in New Delhi in partnership with the Government of India, Government of Portugal and the United Nations University. The annual ICEGOV conference is the largest and most important global event in this field gathering policy-makers, researchers and industry actors. These CI events play an important role in supporting the establishment of inclusive knowledge societies in the Arab region.



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Education

National Conference on Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education (SDG-4) May 22nd and 23rd, 2017

The UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab Region in Cairo co-organized a national conference on SDG-4 under the patronage of H.E. Dr. Tarek Shawki, the Minister of Education and Technical Education, along with the National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD) in its capacity as national focal point for SDG-4. The conference was geared towards mainstreaming SDG-4 at national level and developing a general framework for adopting SDG-4's targets.



The conference brought together 250 participants from concerned agencies and stakeholders on the national level, who were divided on the second day into seven working groups (one group per SDG-4 target) to develop the national framework.

This conference is one of many efforts exerted by UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab Region in Cairo to build national capacities in synthesizing, mainstreaming, and monitoring SDG-4 at the national level.



Collaboration Between UNESCO and Microsoft to Advance Mobile Literacy Learning

UNESCO and Microsoft signed an agreement to pilot an ICT-based literacy project in four selected countries, including Egypt, under the title “*Advancing Mobile Literacy Learning*”. The objective of the project is to pilot innovative ICT-based learning materials and tools that could harness the potential of ICT in promoting literacy. The genesis of the project’s design was to test the concept of linking technology with literacy and assess the impact it would have on attracting learners, maintaining their interest in the literacy programme, and achieving favorable results in illiteracy eradication. In Egypt, the project targets 300 girls and women aged 15–35 in Giza governorate.

From the outset, UNESCO Cairo Office sought to create a good model for collaboration between governmental bodies, private sector, civil society and development partners. Therefore, a project steering committee was formed to include all relevant stakeholders and direct the project in a participatory manner. The steering committee comprises



representatives of the following organizations: UNESCO Cairo Office, Microsoft Egypt, Ministry of Education and Technical Education, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Adult Education Authority, Regional Center for Adult Education in Sirs El Layyan, and civil society. It is an exemplary model of demonstrating public-private-partnership (PPP) in realizing Education 2030 commitments.

The project is currently developing an educational, interactive, cross-platform digital application based on “*Al Mar’ah Wal Hayah*” literacy curriculum through a specialised digital solutions agency.



The project team has selected 30 highly experienced literacy facilitators and supervisors from Giza governorate to be engaged in this pilot, according to a rigorous set of criteria to ensure the best outputs. This core group of facilitators and supervisors received training on delivering “*Al Mar’ah Wal Hayah*” literacy curriculum in the period from 27 Nov. – 1 Dec. 2017. This will be followed by a series of training workshops for the core group on using ICT and creating simple digital activities and templates as ancillary materials that accompany the literacy curriculum. The project has also invested substantially in hardware, where modern laptops and tablets have been purchased and will be provided to both facilitators and learners to commence a journey of digital literacy and empowerment.

UNESCO Cairo Office Develops National Quality Standards for Adult Education in Egypt

UNESCO Cairo Office is currently collaborating with the Adult Education Authority (AEA) to develop a set of national quality standards for adult education in Egypt. This is the first phase of an ambitious, well-rounded project to provide capacity building and technical support to AEA. Following the finalization of the quality standards, selected AEA staff will receive training and coaching on how to adopt the quality standards in the field, to cover all aspects of the learning process in its entirety. The training system and literacy curricula adopted by AEA will also be reviewed and assessed in light of the newly developed quality standards, and will be upgraded accordingly if needed.

To this end, an expert meeting was organized on December 11th, 2017 at UNESCO Cairo Office premises to present the draft proposed standards and discuss the different components included, such as human resources, technological infrastructure, content, lifelong learning, monitoring, learning environment, and assessment.



The meeting brought together 20 experts in the field of literacy and adult education in Egypt from governmental organizations, academia, adult education centers and civil society. After a full day of consultations, the experts had discussed and reviewed the draft standards' various components, and agreed on the next steps towards finalization. Participants commended the work achieved thus far, which is well aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 - Education 2030 and Egypt's Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030.



UNESCO Cairo Office Pilots New Literacy Curriculum and Methodology for Women's Empowerment

As one of the leading UN agencies working in the field of literacy and adult education, UNESCO Cairo Office recently launched a pilot to adopt a new literacy curriculum and methodology entitled “*Al Mar’ah Wal Hayah*”. This program is carefully designed to address the needs of illiterate girls and women, and does not only promote basic alphabet literacy and numeracy, but aims to enable learners to acquire a diversified set of life skills and social empowerment, thereby constituting the notion of “multiple literacies (functional)” conceptualized by UNESCO. The pilot phase targets 600 girls and women aged 15-35 from four governorates: Giza, Ismailia, Sohag, and Aswan.



The launch event took place on November 20th, 2017 and was attended by UNESCO Cairo Office’s staff members, Adult Education Authority’s Director and staff on the central and governorate level, and the Arab Network for Literacy and Adult Education (ANLAE) as the project’s implementation partner.

This ambitious pilot is the last phase of a two-year project generously funded by the UNESCO Malala Fund for Girls’ Right to Education. During the previous phases, the literacy methodology “*Al Mar’ah Wal Hayah*” was developed, and 124 trainers from six governorates were trained on its adoption in the field.



Paving the Road for Education 2030 in Sudan

In August 2017, representatives from UNESCO/Khartoum, UNESCO/Cairo, UNESCO/Beirut Office and UNESCO/HQ joined the Minister of Education and other high-level officials in a validation workshop for the education policy review in Sudan. Some 70 participants, including development partners, and civil society organizations actively took part in validating the final draft of the education policy review document. The resulting policy review shall serve as an overall policy direction to assist the government in reaching these objectives and making strategic choices for the implementation of the forthcoming five-year plan (2018–2022).



Related link of the Education Sector:

<http://en.unesco.org/news/education-policy-review-validation-workshop-sudan>



Natural Sciences

Second Regional Meeting on Planning the Establishment of UNESCO Global Geoparks in the Arab Region

Building on the outcomes and recommendations of a first Arab experts meeting held in Cairo in 2016, the second regional geopark meeting brought together a wider group of stakeholders including government representatives, scientists and practitioners to mobilize efforts at the governance level as well as academic and research to promote the concepts, practices and approaches of UNESCO Global Geoparks in the Arab region. The second meeting of this 2-day dialogue was held on November 15 and 16, 2017 in Amman in Jordan. It brought together a wide group of 25 participants from 12 countries including government representatives, scientists, planners and practitioners.



Keynote speakers and participants from twelve Arab States joining the 2-days dialogue on Geoparks.



From L to R: Ms. Eqbal Enazi, KISR, Kuwait; Ms. Samar Taha, Jordan; Ms. Natalia Boulad, RSCN, Jordan; Ms. Asma M. Ali, NIAD, Bahrain @UNESCO/W. Shawki

The meeting's main objectives were to integrate geological heritage and their values within national policy agendas and plans, leverage the value of Earth sciences and research in the Arab region and strengthen the capacity of Arab countries to promote the establishment of UNESCO Global Geoparks in the region. The meeting highlighted the importance of the establishment of an Arab Geopark Network (AGN) and identified national priorities based on the importance of the geological heritage in the region. During the working group sessions, Member states' representatives discussed

national priorities relevant to the conservation and management of geological heritage as well as the national capacities needs at all levels. The regional priorities included the assessment of sites preparadeness and strengthening the principle of UNESCO Global Geoparks through workshops, development and prioritization of a list of proposed sites of global geological importance in the Arab region, development and implementation of an awareness plan at both local and regional levels, development and management of an electronic list-server gathering experts and practitioners in geosciences and earthsciences in the Arab region among others. At the end of the meeting, Member States' representatives agreed on the establishment of the AGN and selected the sites in different countries based

on their readiness in terms of natural resources management and engagement of local communities. Those sites are Wadi Mujeb in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Shouf-Jezzine in Lebanon, Valley of the whales and Wadi Al Rayan in the Arab Republic of Egypt, Marshlands and Swamp Sawa in Iraq, and Banda Al-khairan and Ophiolite rocks in the Sultanate of Oman. The list-server was launched during the first week of December 2017 with a set of news about geoparks and geosciences brought to the list-adherent from all over the world [Interested in joining the list-server, please drop an email to: e.sattout@unesco.org]. <https://buff.ly/2BTOzRA>

Arab and African Biosphere Reserves Joining Hands to Support Climate Change Initiatives

The UNESCO Regional Office for Sciences in the Arab States in close cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Rabat, ISESCO, ALECSO and the Government of Morocco organized the 2nd IHP-MAB initiative meeting to promote the biosphere reserve as an observatory to monitor climate change and to share lessons learned on sustainable development in the Arab and African region. The meeting gathered more than 50 participants from the Arab and African countries in the Royal Atlas Hotel in Agadir in Morocco from November 17 till 19, 2017. The field visit to the Arganeraie Biosphere Reserve (ABR) showcased community involvement, biodiversity conservation and ecosystems restoration as well as the importance of indigenous knowledge and cultural preservation. It is worth noting that the IHP-MAB initiative stemmed from UNESCO's COP initiative entitled 'Changing minds, not the climate'.



Arganeraie Biosphere Reserve field visit @UNESCO/E. Sattout.

The initiative aims to boost efforts and enhance trans-regional cooperation. The second joint IHP-MAB meeting focused on the implementation of the recommendation of the 1st joint meeting (Tangier, Morocco, 18-20 Oct. 2016) concerning biosphere reserves as laboratories for monitoring climate change and SDGs with water being a primary focus. This second meeting comes to better contextualize the IHP-MAB joint initiative and to provide insights on concrete actions to be adopted and implemented over the next period of time through the Arab African Biosphere Reserve Network Initiative (AABRI). The initiative will be exposed globally in November in the UNESCO pavilion hosted by the Conference of the Parties 23 to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.



Mainstreaming Climate Change in Regional and National Policies in the Arab Region at the COP23



From L to R: Dr. Ayman Shasly, President, Arab Negotiators Group; Dr. Anil Mishra, UNESCO-HYD/HQ; Dr. Tarek Sadek, UN-ESCWA; Dr. Ashraf Nour, LAS; Dr. Elsa J. Sattout, UNESCO-EES/Cairo.

During the Conference of the Parties (COP23) 23rd to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Bonn in Germany, a side event was organized by UCO on November 10th 2017 in partnership with the League of Arab State (LAS) in Egypt; United Nations-Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (UN-ESCWA) in Lebanon and United Nations for Environment-Regional Office for West Asia in Bahrain. The event hosted in the UNESCO pavilion, served to foster dialogue among the Arab representatives on the ongoing initiatives aiming at mainstreaming regional and national policies on climate change in the region.

It presented capacity development initiatives undertaken in the Arab region to ensure effective engagement of Arab delegates in climate change negotiation in the COP to the UNFCCC. In addition, it highlighted regional initiatives and success stories with an aim to put at hand of the Arab negotiators and officials the needed information and knowledge pertaining to climate change impact and vulnerability assessments of key sectors to inform about key negotiations issues based on establishing a science policy interface. The main outcome was the strengthening of existing partnerships to ensure the alignment and implementation of Climate Changes policies in the region. It reinforced the role of Biosphere Reserves as observatories for monitoring climate change impacts and sustainable development.



Lessons Learned on Natural Hazards in Africa from 1992 Cairo Earthquake

The UNESCO Regional Office for Sciences and Technology in Cairo brought to the 9th IPRED meeting and International Conference on Impact of Natural Hazards in Africa, good practices on natural hazards especially flash floods management from previously implemented projects in the Arab region. The meeting and international conference was organized by UNESCO-HQ in close cooperation with National Research Institute of Astronomy and Geophysics (NRIAG) from 23-26 October, 2017 in Cairo in Egypt. More than 50 participants from all over the world convened to share lessons learned on the mitigation of Natural Hazards impacts in Africa and to provide opportunities to exchange experience on seismology and earthquake engineering among African scientists, in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of 1992 Cairo earthquake.

In his opening speech, Mr. Ghaith Fariz, UCO Director highlighted the underlying rationale for averting losses caused by natural hazards, while addressing gaps in management and social preparedness and resilience of existing infrastructure and construction. He added that the meeting is very important and timely as we are at the verge of COP 23 to the UNFCCC. As confirmed by many studies, climate change is one of the major elements contributing directly and/or indirectly to the escalation of natural disasters – such as floods. Along with that, it is important to stress the importance of addressing climate change issues through a global collective approach. The outcomes of the event reiterated on the importance of fostering targeted collaborative research, training, and education, revisiting and refining national and regional multi-hazard early warning systems, synergizing national policies and plans and reinforcing their implementation tools, establishing dialogue between scientists and decision-makers and politicians (science policy interface and citizen sciences) and putting in place Decision Support Systems based on scientific knowledge, relying on good practices in pre- and post- disaster effects as well as resource mobilization.

On a more focused note, the mobilization of resources remains at the heart of advancement and outreaching people at the grass-root level in this field in either Sciences or Technology and Innovation. Dr. Hayat Sindi Senior Advisor at the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), presented the IDB vision and shed light on the lines of budget accounted for Technology and Innovation and the importance of those lines to learners and young professionals in the region. The conference provided a ground to other potential sources of funding such as the Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development, the Egyptian Science and Technology Funds for Africa and the African Funding Opportunity.



Conservation Pulses in the Arab States

Historic 'Waterscape' and Cultural Stepping-stones in the Arab region Sustainable Oases Initiative

UCO joined the Sustainable Oases Initiative (SOI) meeting held in Agadir on September 12, 2017. The event aimed at making the voice of the oases communities' heard during the Second Climate Change Summit gathered more than one thousand participants from all over the world. The 'Agence Nationale pour le Developpement des Zones Oasiennes et de l'Arganier' (ANDZOA) was keen to meet its commitment towards the global communities convened at the COP22 to UNFCCC in November 2016 in Marrakesh. The SOI goals and objectives are aligned with the UN

Conference statement 'the future we want' (RIO+20), Paris Agreement (COP21) among other conservation issues and International Organizations' strategic objectives. The event gathered representatives of international organizations (i.e. FAO, UNESCO, Arab Maghreb Union, International Foundation for Agricultural Heritage), Arab countries delegates as well as international experts.

Recognized as hidden gems in arid ecosystems, oases are stepping stones for migratory birds and other animal species in the desert. They are hubs for the preservation of genetic resources of date Palms among other wild relative species. They hold the historical and cultural narratives of our ancestors- travelers, traders, farmers and even artists. Known to be spread all over the world with more than fifty percent (66%) found in Africa, they constitute unique ecosystem which is nowadays highly threatened. The initiative goals target the conservation of oases while accounting for the vulnerability of oases vis-à-vis the changes in the climate and their resilience to ensure their adaptation to changes in temperature and physical environment.



From L to R: Mr. Brahim Hafidi, Director General, ANDZOA; Mr. Michael G. Hag, Sub regional coordinator for North Africa, FAO; Mr. Taieb Baccouche, General Secretary of the Maghreb Arab Union, Morocco; Dr. Ghaith Fasriz, Director, UNESCO/Cairo. @UNESCO/E.



Preparatory meeting of representatives from the Arab countries discussing the SOI framework @UNESCO/E. Sattout.

The importance of SOI in the Arab region and the need to maintain a momentum in the application of ecosystem-based approaches overseeing environmental, economic and social aspects as the driving forces to keep the pace of operationalizing the SOI was highlighted. UCO expressed its support to the initiative on sustainable oases and referred to the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme and Geoparks Programme as resourceful learning grounds for the initiative. Thus, UNESCO committed to provide all the support needed in close coordination with UNESCO Office in Rabat.

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and Geoparks in MENA region: Reconnecting Societies with Nature

During the BioDiversity Informatics Summer School held in Hurghada from August 22 till 28, 2017, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and Geoparks in MENA region were presented as sites for reconnecting human with nature and observatories for various ecological aspects. The aim of the summer school was to build the capacity on scientific data management in the biodiversity domain, big data analytics and data science, and intercultural communication, where it will be sponsored by Dell/EMC. The activity is part of a project managed by Assiut University in Egypt and Friedrich-Schiller University in Germany. It brings together Assiut University and Ain Shams University from Egypt, University of Sfax from Tunisia, and Friedrich-Schiller University from Germany to work together on the biodiversity database in their respective countries.



From L to R: Dr. Tim Hirsch, Deputy director, GBIF; Dr. Elsa Sattout, Programme Specialist, UNESCO/Cairo-EES; Dr. Birgitta König-Ries Heinz-Nixdorf, Chair, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena; Dr. Hesham Elkassas, Environmental Center, University of Ain Shams, Egypt

The project was conceived under the DAAD framework on Higher Education Dialogue with the Islamic World program. Participants were from different disciplines including computer science, information systems, engineering, science, geosciences, and agriculture. The event hosted speakers from GBIF, iDiv, Dell/EMC, and other experts. The UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve and Geoparks Programmes were presented. The talk highlighted the World Network on Biosphere Reserve, Biosphere Smart initiative, outcomes of the Peru meeting and the Lima action plan.

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks: Hubs for Seed Preservation in Arid Ecosystems

The International Symposium on Native Seeds in Restoration of Dryland Ecosystems held in Kuwait from November 20 to 23, 2017 was the ground for researchers and practitioners from all over the world to recommend collective efforts towards enabling UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Network in the Arab States, UNESCO Global Geoparks and other relevant resources as hosts of living seed and gene banks in the region. The event was organized by Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) in close partnership with the International Network for Seed-based Restoration (INSR), Kuwait National Focal Point (KNFP), Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and Islamic Development Bank (IDB). The Symposium brought together scientists to present their work on the seeds ecology and propagation techniques and protocols as well as on ecological restoration and seed banks accessions. UNESCO Regional office for Sciences in the Arab States (UCO) presented a keynote to open the session on 'Native Plant Conservation and Selection'. The keynote entitled 'UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks: Hubs for Seeds preservation in Arid Ecosystems' presented the concept of Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks. It shed the light on both UNESCO designated sites in the Arab region under arid ecosystems. It also presented UCO insights on the role of Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks as living seed and gene banks and their importance as observatories to learn about seed ecology and ecological restoration in the Arab States.

International Youth Day 2017: The Role of Youth in Promoting Harmony Between Human and Nature

More than 150 Egyptian youth came together on August 13th to celebrate the International Youth Day 2017 (IYD 2017) in Abu Qir city in Alexandria. The event was organized by national and regional offices of the United Nations Organizations based in Egypt in close partnership with the Egyptian Ministry of Youth and Sports. The 3-days' camp Motto 'Youth Building Peace' guided UN organizations tracks from the 13th till 16th of August 2017. Keen to learn new skills and strengthen their capacities to face the world and life related matters, youth came along from various governorates to mingle together and with refugees who reside in Egypt, to work on tracks related to the environment, employability, entrepreneurship, women empowerment, health and wellbeing as well as life skills.





Participant mapping solutions of conserving built and natural environment @UNESCO/E. Sattout.

UNESCO Regional Office for Science in the Arab States-Cairo took the lead of the Environment track through a real case scenario inspired by the history and culture of the city of Alexandria. The track's main aim was to engage youth in reflecting on their role in promoting harmony in the relationships between human and nature and in re-stitching the path towards strong engagement of the private and public sectors in nature conservation. The sessions guided participants on how to become engine for

positive change in the preservation of natural and built environments through the provision of mechanisms to sustain human well-being, reconnect with nature and transform the prevailing mindsets. They also stimulated discussions to define good practices in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

The real case scenario treated the impacts of mass tourism on the environment and its resulting externalities on society and economy where youth identified the driving forces and pressures and state of the environment in Alexandria. Crowded city and congested traffic are affecting all human senses including scenic beauty, sound and air quality especially during summer. Throughout the sessions, the close link between the youth's sense of places, resilient spaces and their assets and richness emerged. Participants came up with responses including respect for the carrying capacity of the environment, designing awareness campaigns, foresee communication strategies to promote eco-citizenship, and foster public-private partnerships.

The added value of UNESCO's track is that it went deep with the youth to address

Environment Ethics lines of thoughts- those that craft unconsciously human's mindsets that are at the base of human relationships with nature. At the end of the youth camp, the essence of discussions was revealed during the role-play presented by the participants. Youth expressed that humans during their self-development paths are transformed from being self-centered to turning outwards to others and embrace



Young participants during the International Youth Day 2017 celebration in Abu Qir city in Alexandria.

individuals which promote peace in societies. A higher stepping-stone will lead humans to care for the community and have strong sense of belonging to the universe which strengthen social responsibility and promotes harmony in the relationship between human and nature.

The track adopted a Human-Centered Design methodology- a creative approach for problem solving which develops a deeper understanding of the needs and challenges of youth and

translates them into priorities and proposals for actions to integrate them more in the United Nations activities targeting youth.

World Science Forum 2017 – Jordan



Mr. Ghait Fariz, Director of UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Sciences for the Arab States presents the "Water Security for All Initiative during the special session at the World Science Forum 2017.

In line with the outcomes of the 1999 World Conference on Science (WCS), and the 2015 Budapest Declaration on The Enabling Power of Science, the 2017 Jordan Science for Peace World Science Forum (WSF) 2017 was successfully organized in Dead sea, Jordan; 7-11 Nov.2017 with the participation of over more than 3,000 science leaders from more than 120 countries.

The forum was implemented under the slogan "Science for Peace" in joint collaboration among UNESCO, the Royal Scientific Society of Jordan, the International Council for Science (ICSU), and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. UCO's contribution was sizable, tangible and highly visible and included the following sessions:

- a) A Special Session on "Science Diplomacy: Lessons learnt and future prospects for management of shared/ transboundary water resources in the Arab region". The main objective of the session was to present for discussion and deliberation, a proposed new vision of a major science/water diplomacy programme in the Arab region and neighboring countries. Building on previous experiences, the suggested programme envisages a "developmental bottom-up science diplomacy approach", with achievement of the globally endorsed SDGs providing the overall umbrella. The panelists included the President of the Arab Ministerial Council on Water (Iraq), the Chair of the IHP Bureau of the Council and UNESCO Chair for Water Resources at the Islamic University of Um Darman, Sudan. More than 100 forum participants attended the session and deliberated the proposed initiative.



- b) A Thematic Session on "Knowledge and Technology in Developing Countries: Issues of Brain Drain and Transfer" that included well renowned experts as panelists in the field of science and research education such as Professor Ritzen, ex-Minister of education and Science in the Netherlands, Professor Mohamed Hassan Hag Ali ex-executive director of TWAS since its inception, Professor Lierd



Goletinge, the head of the COST Initiative with the EU, and Professor Chieng Chong, the young-TWAS scientist from Malaysia. The session concluded with the recommendation to undertake a study with case studies of developing countries that have successfully made the leap towards strong economic growth, in order to deduce a list of best practices that other countries could follow. 93 experts attended the session with about 20 women amongst the attendance.

- c) A Special Session on "An Arab Charter of Ethics for Human-Centered Science and Technology in the Arab region" was organized with both regional and international experts. See p. 29 for further details.

- d) "A Nexus and Security of Natural Resources: Towards a Peaceful Future" Thematic Session was also co-organized by UCO and UNEP, ICSU, among others organizations. The session concluded with a message on the importance of cooperating to find innovative scientific solutions to the world's contemporary issues hindering sustainable development and the achievement of the 2030 development agenda.



Climate Change Negotiators

UNESCO Cairo Office, in partnership with United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia organized the 9th Capacity Building Workshop for Arab Climate Change Negotiators Egypt, 9-12 September 2017. During the workshop, UCO provided a short training session on water governance and climate change, with emphasis on the impact of climate change on groundwater resources.





ESCWA-UNESCO 9th Capacity Building Workshop for Arab Climate Change Negotiators

Groundwater in a Changing Environment

Groundwater Governance: A Global Framework for action, was promoted during the expert group meeting on groundwater governance in the Arab region, which was held in Manama, Bahrain, 2-4, October 2017. The meeting was organized in partnership with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Regional Office for the Near East, and the Arabian Gulf University. Forty (40) high-level experts representing the ministry agriculture and ministry of water resources in 14 Arab Countries, namely (Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Mauritania, Palestine, Tunisia, Oman, and Yemen) participated in the meeting.



The participants also included experts representing partner organizations including the Arab Water Council (AWC), the secretariat of the Arab Ministerial Council on Water, the regional office of the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), International Center for Agricultural

Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), and the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid zones and Dry lands (ACSAD). The objective of the meeting was to identify critical capacity needs to facilitate the adoption of the global framework and to draw a regional roadmap to that effect.

Water Education

UNESCO Cairo (UCO) is leading the implementation of a program on “Water Education Training for Teachers” promoting responsible water use, culture of water conservation, best management and practices, improving awareness and understanding of water challenges in the Arab region.



The program activities

comprise the development of general guidelines for teachers, development of supportive illustrative water educational tools (8-12-year-old students) and development of interactive educational activities (13-18-year-old students).

Regional and national training workshops for more than 50 teacher trainers (26 women, 24 men) were organized in Sharm El Shiekh, Egypt and Luxor, Egypt. Currently, the developed UCO water educational tools, mainly the illustrative booklet and Cartoons, are being disseminated to the main stakeholders in Egypt, Oman, Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan. More than 80 schools are involved and 250 teachers (half of them are women) are using UCO WET tools and implementing the program. Large number of school students are being involved in the program. The number of involved schools is increasing.



IHP Regional Meeting

UCO, in cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources of Oman, organized the 16th Session of the regional meeting of Arab IHP National Committees (Muscat, Oman, 17-18, September, 2017). The thematic focus of the session was “Towards Empowerment of the National Committees of IHP in the Arab Region.” The meeting was attended by representatives of 15 Arab countries, namely (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen, Syria, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania, Palestine, Sudan).



The meeting issued a resolution calling on Member States to support the establishment of national committees/focal points for IHP. The resolution also invites UNESCO National Commissions in the Arab Region to utilize the participation programme to support activities of national IHP committees. The participants also invited the IHP secretariat with support from Cairo office to extend technical and advisory support to member states concerning the establishment of IHP Committees. The participants also presented national water strategies and highlighted areas of intersection with IHP strategic plan in those strategies. The meeting was also attended by observers representing the Arab G-WADI network and the network of water related chairs and centers in the Arab region.

16 Representatives of 16 Arab Member States participated in the 16th Regional Meeting of the National Committees of the UNESCO international Hydrological Programme in Muscat, Oman



Nubian Sandstone Meeting

Following a request from the National Water Research Centre (Egypt), UCO extended its support to the Joint Authority of the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer (Egypt, Libya, Sudan, and Tchad) to organize a technical meeting on the UNESCO UNDP-GEF proposal “Enabling implementation of the Regional SAP for the rational and equitable management of the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer System (NSAS)”. The meeting was held on July 2017 in Cairo and was attended by all members of the Joint Authority (JA) and the JA Secretariat. A number of national technical experts also attended the meeting.



Members of the Joint Authority of the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer (Shared between Sudan, Libya, Egypt, and Tchad) discuss the UNESCO proposal for support of cooperation on Shared Management of the Aquifer



Social and Human Sciences

Towards an Arab Charter for the Ethics of Science and Technology

In recent years, Arab countries have shown an increasing interest in the ethical dimension of science and technology. In fact, scientific research and technology applications intersect with society in many ways; they often bring about societal impacts that raise ethical dilemmas. Appropriate and innovative strategies and tools are needed at the institutional, national and regional levels to promote reflection and debate on ethical issues in science and technology, raise awareness among specialists and the general public, educate researchers, and ensure science and technology are respectful of human dignity and freedom.



Opening of the Regional consultation. From left to right: Mr. Ghaith Fariz (Director of UNESCO Cairo), Mr. Marwan Hamadeh (Minister of Education and Higher Education) and Mr. Henri Awit (President of the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO)

At first, a regional consultation ...

Recognizing the above need, UNESCO's Regional Offices in Cairo and Beirut partnered with the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO (LNCU), the National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS-L), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology in Egypt (ASRT), in organizing a Regional consultation on "Ethics in Scientific Research and Technology Applications in the Arab Region", in Beirut on 11-12 July 2017. The meeting was held under the patronage of Lebanon's Minister of Education and Higher Education, Mr. Marwan Hamadeh, and with the presence and contribution of HRH Princess Sumaya bint El Hassan, President of Jordan's Royal Scientific Society, an advocate of science as a catalyst for change in the Arab world. It brought together around 50 ethics experts from 10 Arab countries, including high-level representatives of universities, research institutions and research councils from the region.

The two-day conference included 4 panels : the first one, titled "From national to regional approach to research ethics", presented an overview of different research ethics tools developed nationally or at the institutional level, and which can represent a regional approach to research ethics; the second, titled "Research ethics and inter-disciplinarily to address societal challenges", highlighted the contribution that various disciplines could bring into a prospective regional research ethics tool; the third one, titled "Ethics, Higher

Education, Technology and Innovation”, aimed at identifying elements of an ethical framework that is best suited for promoting quality in higher education and advancing humanistic technologies and innovation in the Arab region. Finally, the last session presented a summary and the recommendations of the regional consultation.

The main outcome of the meeting was mutual agreement on the need to elaborate an Arab Charter of Ethics of Science and Technology that will help frame, support, protect and guide science and technology in the region to become pillars and powerful drivers of sustainable human development. They entrusted UNESCO to coordinate the process of drafting the Arab Charter, in collaboration with the League of Arab States and several regional entities.

Elaboration of the 1st draft of the Charter ...

Based on a review of experiences in the Arab region and beyond, a preliminary draft of the Charter was prepared by a group of experts and shared with participants of the Regional Consultation.



The draft highlighted the role envisioned for the Charter to: protect individuals and groups engaged in research, as well as other living creatures and environmental elements that may be concerned by scientific research; prevent deviations and malevolent use of science and technology applications; and guide professionals

engaged in science, to safeguard the credibility of their work, and foster their responsibility. The draft Charter is underpinned by fundamental principles and values such as integrity, respect for human dignity, protection of nature, beneficence, justice and protection of rights, freedom, and openness. It is comprehensive, covering various stages of science and technology and the responsibilities of all concerned stakeholders, and is therefore expected to provide an umbrella document, on which discipline-specific and country-specific ethics charters can be elaborated.

A multi-stage consultation process was launched and is on-going ...



Participants at the expert consultation on the Arab Charter of Ethics of Science and Technology (Cairo, 1 October 2017)

UNESCO Cairo Office organized an expert meeting to discuss and review the preliminary draft of the Arab Charter. The meeting, which was held at the UNESCO Cairo office on 1 October 2017, was attended by distinguished representatives from the National Council for Scientific Research in Lebanon, the League of Arab States, the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology in Egypt, the Royal Scientific Society of Jordan, and Institut Pasteur

de Tunis. In addition, a number of experts in the fields of scientific research, the ethics of science and technology, law and intellectual property rights participated in the meeting. The

meeting constituted a first step in a multi-stage consultative process designed to ensure wide participation by all stakeholders in the development of this important Arab document.

A Special Session during the 2017 World Science Forum ...

In collaboration with the League of Arab States and a number of regional partners, the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States organized during the 2017 World Science Forum, on 9 November at the Dead Sea in Jordan, a special session to discuss the draft Charter of Ethics of Science and Technology in the Arab Region.

Panelists and participants confirmed the usefulness of the Charter and its relevance to the challenges facing science and technology in the region. The role of the Charter in enhancing the quality of research in the region and protecting vulnerable groups was highlighted. Freedom of research, open access to knowledge, and the ethics of emerging technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence were among the questions raised in the session. Several participants stressed the importance of operationalizing the Charter through its adoption by universities and other stakeholders, and the elaboration of an evaluation and follow-up mechanism.



Special session on the Arab Charter at the World Science Forum.

The importance of the Arab Charter was also highlighted by Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya bint el Hassan, President of the Royal Scientific Society of Jordan. In her Forum closing speech, she considered the adoption of the said Charter to be a top priority for science in the region, and congratulated the contributing partners for the initiative, inviting them to continue their efforts until the Charter is adopted by the Arab countries.

Towards Inclusive and Sustainable Arab cities

UNESCO Cairo Office is supporting local governments in the Arab region to achieve inclusive and sustainable cities in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (notably Sustainable Development Goal 11) and the New Urban Agenda.

Beginning with an inception meeting ...

Towards that end, representatives of local governments, national human rights institutions, and civil society in the Arab region gathered in Tunis, 4-5 April 2017, during the meeting entitled "Towards Inclusive and Sustainable Cities in the Arab Region: A Human Rights Approach". Organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights (ETC Graz), and hosted by the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR), the meeting aimed at mapping the urban inclusion priorities for the Arab Region based on the global agendas; identifying opportunities, challenges, gaps and ways forward, including good practices, for developing joint initiatives and building partnerships; and developing a short-term roadmap for collaboration.



In his opening statement, Mr. Ghaith Fariz, Director, UNESCO Cairo Office, highlighted the scale of the social transformations that Arab cities are undergoing due to increasing urbanization rates and migration. He called for a people-centered approach to achieve inclusive and sustainable cities in the region.

Opening of the meeting entitled “Towards Inclusive and Sustainable Cities in the Arab Region: A Human Rights Approach” (Tunis, 4-5 April 2017)

The meeting was followed by a meeting to revitalize the Coalition of Arab Cities against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance as an active member of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities - ICCAR (6-7 April, Tunis), and thus prepared the ground for the discussions held in the latter context.

In-depth discussions among Arab cities pursued in Cairo ...

Under the patronage of H.E., the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Egypt, and in collaboration with the European Training and Research Center for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC-Graz), UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States organized a workshop on “Concepts of sustainability and inclusiveness within the context of cities and their application in the Arab region”. The Workshop was held at UNESCO’s new premises in Cairo during 27-28 September 2017. Representatives from 11 cities members of the UNESCO-supported Coalition of Arab Cities against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance participated in the workshop.

The workshop provided participants with knowledge, tools and practical solutions that can be applied in Arab cities to promote sustainable and inclusive development. It helped to consolidate the multi-dimensional concept of an “inclusive city”, and deepen the practical understanding of integrated, rights-based approaches for implementing this concept on the ground. The workshop was opened by Mr. Ghaith Fariz, Director of the UNESCO Cairo Office, Ms. Ulrike Nguyen, Deputy Ambassador of Austria to Egypt, and Dr. Klaus Starl, Executive Director of ETC-Graz.



In his opening remarks, Dr. Fariz pointed out the importance of addressing all forms of discrimination and promoting a culture of inclusion, rights and citizenship, in light of the prevailing context in the Arab region, which has become increasingly urban and increasingly diverse.

Opening of the workshop on “Concepts of sustainability and inclusiveness within the context of cities and their application in the Arab region” (Cairo, 27-28 September 2017).

He also highlighted UNESCO’s role in promoting social cohesion and a culture of peaceful coexistence in cities through the integration of vulnerable and marginalized groups into the development process, especially migrants, women and youth. Ms. Nguyen congratulated the organizers for selecting the workshop topic, stressing the importance Austria attaches to promoting inclusive development in the region. Dr. Starl pointed to the key role that local city authorities play in ensuring that “No one is left behind”, being the closest to their inhabitants and the most familiar with their circumstances. He stated that ETC-Graz is ready to cooperate with Arab cities in advancing inclusive local policies.

Presentations and discussions addressed the regional development context in Arab cities. Participants exchanged their views and experiences in dealing with the consequences of rapid and unplanned urbanization, the refugee crisis, and the proliferation of informal settlements.



Group work during the workshop on “Concepts of sustainability and inclusiveness within the context of cities and their application in the Arab region” (Cairo, 27-28 September 2017)

These challenges often result in the marginalization of vulnerable groups and difficulties in providing quality services for all. Participants highlighted the importance of developing the capacities of city officials and facilitating the exchange of international expertise through networking with other regional coalitions supported by UNESCO.



Group photo following the conclusion of the workshop

Arab and Austrian Cities Exchange Good Practices in Urban Inclusion ...

The UNESCO Cairo Office and the European Training Center for Democracy and Human Rights (ETC-Graz) co-organized during 11-15 December 2017, a study visit covering the Austrian cities of Graz, Vienna and Salzburg. Mid-level city managers and executives representing eight Arab city members of the Coalition of Arab Cities against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance participated in the visit, which provided a unique opportunity for exchange on good city-level practices in promoting urban inclusion.

The delegation of Arab cities from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania and Morocco met a number of high-level officials including the Mayor of Graz Mr. Siegfried Nagl, the Vice Mayor of Salzburg Ms. Anja Hagenauer, and Head of the Human Rights Office of Vienna Ms. Shams Asadi. Extensive discussions covered the following topics:



Participants of the study tour meet with the Mayor of Graz



- Human rights institutions at the city-level;
- City planning for inclusive and sustainable urban development;
- Promoting inhabitant's participation in local-level decision making;
- E-government solutions for enhanced efficiency and quality of service delivery.

The visit was part of the on-going collaboration between UNESCO and ETC-Graz in support of inclusive urban development that "leaves no one behind", as preconized in the 2030 Agenda. This partnership will be further strengthened in 2018, with the declaration of the "International Center for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels" as a UNESCO category 2 center at the 39th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO in November 2017.

Together to Prevent Extremism and Promote Dialogue

The UNESCO Regional Bureau of Science in the Arab States / Cairo, in cooperation with the League of Arab States, Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, and the World Organization for Al-Azhar Graduates, organized in Cairo on 19-20 November 2017 an international workshop held under the title "Together to prevent extremism and promote dialogue". More than 40 young men and women from 17 Arab and non-Arab countries participated in the event.



The workshop aimed to provide young people with a scientific and cultural content that would allow them to play a positive role in preventing extremism in their societies. It also provided an opportunity for young people from different cultures to communicate and exchange views about this complex phenomenon and the reasons behind it, and think together about strategies to

address it. Participants learned about success stories where societies have achieved peaceful coexistence among their inhabitants despite religious, ethnic and ethnic differences.

In the opening statement of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States, it was pointed that preventing extremism has become a critical issue in our world today, and that extremism is a direct threat to universal values and the development progress achieved over the past decades, especially in developing countries. The fight against extremism begins by raising awareness about hate speech, its causes and consequences, and by establishing new platforms and networks for dialogue and mutual understanding, especially among young people.

The workshop responds to Resolution 197 EX / 46 of the Executive Council, issued in 2015, which called on UNESCO to support its Member States in developing strategies to prevent extremism through a multi-sectoral approach. Indeed, UNESCO's work begins at school, where curricula are designed to engrain the values of citizenship, responsibility and tolerance among young people, and to consolidate inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue skills.



This stems from the belief that multiculturalism is an essential factor enabling peaceful coexistence in an increasingly diverse world. As extremist groups increasingly use social media and digital means to promote violence, UNESCO promotes media and information literacy, especially among young people, to foster responsible behavior on the Internet and on social networking sites, and to prevent the use of hatred speech in the media. UNESCO also seeks to protect cultural heritage from deliberate destruction in areas of conflict, and establishes cultural pluralism as a message of peace. Moreover, UNESCO's key approach to preventing extremism is to empower young people in various fields, build their capacities and enhance their civic engagement. This stems from the Organization's confidence in youth, their capacities and creativity, and their consideration as key development partners.



UNESCO Cairo Office Launches a Youth Vocational Capacity-building Programme in Upper Egypt

Within the framework of the Social and Human Sciences Sector's activities in the area of youth capacity building, the UNESCO Cairo office launched on 15 July 2017 a series of vocational workshops in Upper Egypt. This activity was conducted in full cooperation with the Egyptian Ministry of Youth and Sport (MoYS) and in collaboration with the Youth Association for Population and Development (YAPD).



The workshops aimed to equip disadvantaged youth with good technical skills that will enhance their chances for gainful employment. The workshops are being organized in Youth Centers in the five Governorates of Upper Egypt (Menia, Luxor, Quena, Assiut, and Sohag), and cover skills development in the fields of electricity, carpentry, plumbing and paints.

Cooperation between UNESCO and MoYS is on-going. In the summer of 2016, a series of workshops were successfully organized in Tanta, Port Said and Cairo under the theme "A Society with Gender Equality and Non-Violence". These workshops helped to sensitize young Egyptian men and women to these vital issues through the use of artistic expression.



Youth from Upper Egypt participate in vocational capacity-building workshops on electricity

Culture

Inauguration of the Temporary Exhibit of the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo – NMEC: “Egyptian Crafts through the Ages”



H.E. Ms. Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO, interviewed for the Egyptian Television on the night of the “soft” opening of the NMEC © UNESCO/Bee Media

On 15 February 2017, the temporary exhibit “Egyptian Crafts through the Ages” was inaugurated. The official opening took place in the presence of H.E. Prof. Dr. Khaled El-Enany, Ministry of Antiquities of Egypt and H.E. Ms. Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO, as well as personalities from the cultural and political spheres. The exhibit showcases objects that portray the development of four crafts from the beginning of the Egyptian Civilization to the present day. The four crafts highlighted in the exhibition are pottery making, jewelry making, woodworking, and textile production.

The inauguration of the exhibit was a result of a collaborative effort between the UNESCO Cairo Office and the Ministry of Antiquities of Egypt. It was one of the recommendations of the 18th session of the Executive Committee of the International Campaign for the Establishment of the Nubia Museum in Aswan and the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo. It is a step towards establishing NMEC as an educational lighthouse protecting the different facets of Egyptian Civilization through crafts, history, languages, depicting Egypt as a pioneer in philosophy, architecture, medical sciences, arithmetic, and astronomy.



Temporary Exhibition Hall showing “Egyptian Craft through the Ages” © UNESCO/NMEC



Assistance to Enhance Capacities in Conservation for Egyptian and Libyan Museums – Training on Handling of Mummies and Human Remains at the GEM and NMEC

From 29 October to 2 November 2017, the UNESCO Cairo Office organized a workshop on “**Treatment and Handling of Mummies and Human Remains**” at the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC) and the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM). This training, part of a long-term capacity building programme devoted to this important issues, follows several seminars held in 2016. It brought together national and international renowned experts such as Dr. Yehia Zakaria Gad, Dr. Rokia Abd El Shafy, Dr. Somaia Ismail, Dr. Rabab Khairat, Dr. Rania El-Atfy, and Dr. Somaya Abdel-Khalek, Dr. Jens Klocke, Dr. Frank Rühli, and Dr. Roger Seiler.



These experts in Mummies conservation, DNA Studies and evolutionary medicine were able to share their knowledge with more than 30 archeologists, conservators and heritage managers from different Egyptian and Libyan museums and archaeological sites.

Group picture at the NMEC © UNESCO/t.villegas

Human disease vulnerability, disease etiologies from the evolutionary perspective, genetics, environment, pathogens, health and safety (Infested, Cursed, Contaminated) – Microbial and Chemical Contamination in Mummies; fight against Insect and Microbial Infestation for the Conservation of Mummies, were amongst the subjects covered during this event that contributed to enhancing national capacities to successfully undertake projects involving the reassembly of study and preservation of Egyptian Mummies.



19th Session of the Executive Committee of the International Campaign for the Establishment of the Nubia Museum in Aswan and the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo

The 19th session of the Executive Committee for the International Campaign for the Establishment of the Nubia Museum in Aswan and the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo met in Cairo on 19 October 2017.

The (NMEC) Committee members from Egypt, Sudan, Czech Republic and France met in the NMEC premises where they were able to admire the outstanding architectural features of this emblematic museum in the heart of Cairo. The Museum opened the doors of the Temporary Exhibition and the Education Center to the public on February 15, 2017 with the theme of the exhibit “Egyptian Craft through the ages”, that was inaugurated by H.E. Prof. Dr. Khaled El-Enany, Minister of Antiquities of Egypt and H.E. Ms. Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO.



Steady advancements have taken place in the interior design and in the enhancement of capacities for the staff in all domains including conservation, curatorial and management skills. The conservation and research laboratories of the NMEC will be a landmark for scientific archeological analysis and training.

The Committee produced a series of recommendations to confirm its full support to the Egyptian authorities and to UNESCO Cairo and encouraged them to continue with the same pace towards the completion of the four main galleries that will host the permanent exhibitions on the Nile, the Royal Mummies, the Core Exhibit and the Capital Museum to see them opened in 2018.



Dr. Christiane Ziegler, Delegate from France, vice President, Mr. Ghaith Fariz, Director UNESCO Cairo, H.E. Prof. Dr. Khaled El Enani, Minister of Culture and President of the Committee, and Professor Dr. Mamdouh EL Damaty, previous Minister of Culture

Safeguarding Hassan Fathy Architectural Legacy in New Gournia Project

Within the framework of a UNESCO-Ministry of Culture of Egypt project for safeguarding Hassan Fathy Architectural Legacy in New Gournia, the launching of the first phase was held in October 2017. This on-site operation on the ground covers the conservation and restoration of two buildings: the Khan and the Mosque. The Ministry of Culture has assumed responsibility for Project Management to the National Organization for Urban Harmony, under the supervising Eng. Mohamed Abou Seada.



The Khan begging rehabilitation © UNESCO/A. Ortiz



The Mosque © UNESCO/t.Villegas

Various meetings took place between NOUH and UNESCO Cairo Office, where a detailed work plan was approved. The project was officially announced to the public on 13 November 2017 in NOUH, where a photo gallery of Hassan Fathy's work was put on display. The ceremony was organized by NOUH in collaboration with UNESCO Cairo Office and the American University in Cairo (AUC). The site of the Khan was officially handed over from the Governor of Luxor for the launching of the first phase on 15 October 2017.

Strengthening National Capacity on the UNESCO 1972 Convention in Egypt

In cooperation with the Ministry of Antiquities, UNESCO Cairo hosted two courses on "Management of World Heritage Sites" as part of its capacity building programme to enhance the management and conservation of World Heritage Sites in Egypt. The first training was held in the new premises of UNESCO Cairo Office and the second in Luxor.





Participants during the training session of the workshop

More than 30 inspectors and sites managers, from the six Egyptian cultural sites inscribed on the World Heritage List and from several sites inscribed on the World Heritage Tentative list, came to the UNESCO Cairo new premises in sixth of October City to attend the one-week seminar. The main focus was enhancing the technical skills of Ministry's employees, sites managers and inspectors in the Management Plan for the sites under their responsibility.

This workshop built on the outcomes of the previous biennium's initiatives supporting capacity building courses in the framework of the implementation of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972. Participants shared the motive that cultural heritage is our legacy from the past that we live with today and that we have the responsibility to pass on to future generations.



Participants in the workshop on "Management of Heritage Sites"

Cairo Joined the Creative Cities Network in 2017 for its Crafts and Folk Art as a Driving Force for Sustainable Development

In a ceremony held at the Governorate of Cairo on November 1, 2017 the crucial role of cities in promoting sustainable development focused on people was enhanced by the Governor of Cairo, the Director of UNESCO and the Egyptian National Commission for UNESCO.



The governor of Luxor and the Director UNESCO Cairo at the round table © UNESCO/T.Villegas



Mr. Ghaith Fariz receiving the city emblem from the Governor of Cairo H.E. Eng. Atef Abdel Hamid © UNESCO/T.Villegas

The Fifth International Conference on Heritage Conservation and Site Management on the Subject of “Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development: A Tourism Perspective”, was Organized in Aswan 8-11 December 2017.

Helwan University (HU), the Brandenburg University of Technology (BTU) and the German Academic Exchange Service HU-BTU in close collaboration with UNESCO Cairo and the World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme, brought together scholars from both Universities, archeologists and experts from the relevant Ministries and other academic institutions and archaeological missions in Egypt to discuss new approaches.



Dr Ghaith Fariz, Director of UNESCO Cairo during his presentation © UNESCO/t.Villegas



Workshop on the Fight Against Illicit Traffic of Cultural Property Convention of 1970 and the 1954 Convention on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Event of Armed Conflict, Cairo, 10-14 December 2017

In the framework of UNESCO's assistance to Egypt, Libya and Sudan in the fight against Illicit traffic of Cultural Property and in the protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict, UNESCO Cairo and the 1970 and 1954 Conventions' Secretariat, organized a workshop with national and international experts addressed to members of the tourism Police, customs officials and heritage managers in these countries.



Thanks to the cooperation of the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities, the UNESCO Khartoum office, the Sudanese National Commission and the Department of Antiquities of Libya, more than 60 participants came together in Cairo to exchange experiences, learn from experts and create networks to enhanced international cooperation in this fields.



Communication & Information

UNESCO Cairo Office Contributes to the Success of ICEGOV2017

On Wednesday 10 March, 2017, the curtains came down on a tremendously successful 10th edition of the international Conference on the Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance (ICEGOV2017) organized in New Delhi, India.

The 3-day conference entitled “Building Knowledge Societies: From Digital Government to Digital Empowerment”, was held under the patronage of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India, UNESCO and the United Nations University’s Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV).



ICEGOV is the most important global e-government conference

Befitting the 10-year anniversary of the ICEGOV Conference Series, this year’s event was larger than any of the earlier editions. It also attracted more than 1000 delegates from over 50 countries. Delegates benefitted from a rich programme that included keynote lectures by thought leaders like H. E. Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union Minister of Law & Justice and Information Technology (India) as well as Mr. Frank La Rue, UNESCO’s Assistant Director-General for

Communication and Information.

Attendees expressed appreciation and were deeply engaged and highly attentive throughout the packed programme which included 4 plenaries, 12 invited sessions organized by various regional and global organizations and 12 conference tracks during which 68 papers were presented. ICEGOV2017 also provided a global platform for launching Digital India, the nation’s ambitious programme to enhance Internet connectivity, build capacity, empower citizens and more effectively deliver government services.



UNESCO Headquarters, UNESCO New Delhi and UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States played pivotal roles in the preparation and roll-out of the conference. Dr. Aoyagi Shigeru, Director of the New Delhi Office represented the organization in the official opening and closing ceremonies, which was attended by Senior Union and State Cabinet Ministers as well as members of the diplomatic corps. The closing keynote lecture was presented by Mr. Frank La Rue.

The Representative of the Director-UNESCO accepts welcome bouquet during the opening ceremony of ICEGOV2017

UNESCO also led or had key roles in other events such as the UNESCO Invited Session, "Making Empowerment a Reality – Accessibility for All" organized in the framework of UNESCO's intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP). This policy-oriented event built on the outcomes of UNESCO's 2014 New Delhi Declaration and presented global experiences aimed at supporting the social participation of persons with disabilities through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Egypt's ongoing policy and project initiatives in this area were ably highlighted by Dr. Abeer Shakweer, Advisor for Social Responsibility and Services to Egypt's Minister of Communication and Information Technology, Mr. Yasser El Kady.

Dr. Paul Hector, Advisor for Communication and Information in the Cairo Office, was an expert panelist in the plenary session «Building Digital Government Capabilities for Sustainable Development Goals: Condition or Outcome?» He also chaired as in past year the Conference Track on Ethics and the Dark Side [of technologies]. Reflecting on the month of behind the scenes preparations and involvement in his roles as UNESCO Conference Liaison, International Conference Steering Committee, and Chair of a conference Track Dr. Hector expressed satisfaction with the outcome of this year's event as well as the recognition that UNESCO received for its role in this year's conference.



Mr. Frank La Rue, Assistant Director-General for Communication & Information gives closing key note address

ICEGOV 2018, the 11th edition of this conference will take place in Galway, Ireland under the theme « Transforming Digital Governance for Sustainable and Resilient Societies. For more information you may visit the conference website : www.icegov.org

CI Sector Deepens its Cooperation with the League of Arab States

The UNESCO Cairo Office has been deepening its cooperation with the League of Arab States (LAS) across the 5 programme areas of Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture as well as Communication & Information. In the field of Communication and Information, efforts are currently underway between LAS, UNESCO and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism's UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) to develop a joint project that seeks to remove conditions in the region that are conducive to the spread of terrorism and extremism. The project aims to achieve this by strengthening capacities in media and information literacy amongst youth and media professionals in order to create a climate enhanced dialogue, respect and mutual understanding. The initiative is expected to launch in 2018.



Participants at the First Preparatory Meeting for the seminar "A Message to Media Professionals" © Ms. Samia Bibars

Also in the area of media, along with other national and international partners such as the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), UNESCO is collaborating with LAS in the preparation of a seminar to be held in June 2018 under the theme "A Message to Media Professionals".

The seminar aims to provide a platform for facilitating dialogue and collaboration between young media professionals in the Arab world and their global peers. The event will seek to highlight the role of dialogue, intercultural and interfaith cooperation in promoting a culture of tolerance and acceptance and develop a network of media partners collaborating to support mutual understanding, build peace and overcome divides.

Arab OER Forum Presents its Actions at Second World OER Congress

On Tuesday 16 September, 2017 members of the Arab OER Forum organized a Satellite Event during UNESCO's Second World OER Congress (WOERC) held in Ljubljana, Slovenia from 18 – 20 September, 2017. This major international conference was organized by UNESCO in partnership with the Government of Slovenia with the support of the Hewlett Foundation and other partners.

The event entitled the “Arab OER Forum: Advancing a Regional Agenda”, brought together more than 50 national, regional and international experts from the governmental, intergovernmental, academic, civil society and the private sectors working in the field of OERs. It provided an opportunity to reflect on specific challenges faced by the Arab States, identify and share areas where the Arab OER Forum was advancing efforts and explore how it could effectively support implementation in the Arab States of the decisions of the Second World OER Congress.



Representative of Prime Minister delivering opening remarks at UNESCO Arab High-Level Forum on WSIS and 2030 Agenda (UNESCWA Sec General a.i. and Chief of ICT Policies are at the dais)

According to Mr. Ghaith Fariz, Director of UNESCO's Cairo-based Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States, “the satellite event provided an important moment for stock-taking, sharing progress on projects underway in Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Sudan as well as mapping the way forward for the Arab OER Congress to support the outcomes of the Second World OER Congress”.



The 2nd World OER Congress was attended by Representatives of governments, international organizations, universities, professional bodies and other global experts

The results of the Arab OER Forum event have been included in the outcome document of the Second World OER Congress. Various stakeholders have also expressed optimism for the role the Forum could play in supporting capacity-building, collaboration and policy efforts across the Arab States. The Arab OER Forum is a broad-based community of OER researchers, practitioners and policy maker established as an outcome of the “Exploratory Workshop on the use of Open Educational Resources (OER) for Arab States”. This regional event was organized from 21 to 22 November 2016 by UNESCO's Regional Office for the Sciences

in Arab States with the support of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), other UNESCO Offices in the region and UNESCO's Intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP).

An online platform hosted by ALECSO has served as a repository for the community's outputs, while a Whatsapp group and mailing list serve as the primary means for communication. The Forum currently has projects underway in Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Sudan and Tunisia.



Panelists in the Arab OER Forum session organized during the Second World OER Congress

Egypt Celebrates First ITU-UNESCO ICT Accessibility Week for Arab

States

On 27 and 28 September, activities organized in the framework of the first ITU-UNESCO ICT Accessibility Week for Arab States took place at the American University in Cairo's New Cairo Campus.

This initiative was a joint effort by ITU and UNESCO to support the celebration of UNESCO's "International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI)", which is commemorated on 28 September, and to advance the implementation of the World Telecommunication Development Conference's (WTDC) 2014 Arab Regional Initiative "Ensuring access to telecommunications/ICTs, in particular for persons with disabilities".



Logo for the ITU-UNESCO ICT Accessibility Week for Arab States

The programme of activities carried out in Egypt included:

Presentation of the project "Mitigating PWD Inclusion Challenges Using ICT": Which has been increasing employment across the disability community through the provision of skills training, coaching, development of adaptive tools and raising the awareness of employers. The ICT Trust Fund, the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are implementing this project.

ITU/UNESCO Web Accessibility Workshop a 2-day course for building the capacity of policy makers, project managers, website developers, and other digital content creators to apply and integrate web accessibility standards.

ITU/UNESCO Workshop on Organizing Accessible Meetings: Raised awareness of measures that stakeholders, particularly regional and international organizations, could take in organizing meetings, workshops, conferences and other activities to ensure that they are accessible to persons with disabilities, and

ITU-UNESCO High-level Symposium, Overcoming Divides and Achieving the SDGs -Supporting the inclusion of people with disabilities and vulnerable group: This event attracted the participation of three Ministers of Government who in their keynote addresses explored impacts in the education, research and ICT Sectors. An expert panel of stakeholders involved in supporting the implementation of the SDGs in Egypt examined ongoing initiatives aimed at overcoming barriers to information and social inclusion. The event served to establish the outlines of a road map for follow-up actions.



President of the American University in Cairo during opening session of the High-Level Symposium

These events were supported by the following partners:

Governmental Partners:

- Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of Egypt
- Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
- Ministry of Education and Technical Education
- National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of Egypt

Strategic Partners:

- The American University in Cairo

Partners:

- UNDP ICT Trust Fund
- International Labor Organization

According to Mr. Ghaith Fariz, Director of UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States, the week “drew attention to the needs of persons with disabilities (PWDs) and the role that information and communication technologies (ICT) could play in overcoming barriers to social inclusion they may face”. Dr. Fariz also underscored the “critical role of information and knowledge in sustainable national development” that ICTs facilitated and their role in “enhancing the social, cultural, political and economic integration of vulnerable persons”.



Panelists of the High-Level Symposium from L to R: Dr. Heba Hagrass, Amina, Dr. Paul Hector from UNESCO, Dr. Gihan Osman from AUC, Dr. Abeer Shakweer, Special Advisor to the Minister for Communication and Information Technology, Mr. Karim AbdelGhani

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), PWDs represent about 15% of the population, so nearly 1 billion persons around the world live with at least one disability. There is limited data on the status of PWDs in the Arab States. However, the presence of disability risk factors such as consanguinity, communicable and chronic diseases, road traffic accidents and armed conflict, underscore the need for greater attention to this area.

Various studies suggest that PWDs are more likely to be denied access to educational

opportunities, be unemployed, and along with their families are more likely to live in poverty. By increasing awareness, overcoming stigma and discrimination, we can help PWDs reach their full potential, making our society more inclusive, equitable, diverse and resilient. In addition to Egypt, activities associated to this first Regional ICT Accessibility Week were organized in Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Tunisia.

“We are very satisfied with the widespread interest this ITU-UNESCO Regional ICT Week generated across the Arab States” said Mr. Ebrahim Al Haddad, Regional Director of the ITU Arab Regional Office. “In light of this success ITU and UNESCO are planning to organize a follow-up Regional Digital Inclusion Week for Arab States in 2018”.

By facilitating collaboration, building capacity and providing access to resources, the ITU-UNESCO Week has supported practical implementation of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD), to which at least 18 Arab States have acceded. Furthermore, since five of the 2030 sustainable development goal (SDG) targets specifically address persons with disabilities, the Week supported reflection on advancing this global commitment.



Administrative and Human Resource Matters

The New UNESCO Premises

In January 2017 the soft opening of the new UNESCO Premises in Sixth October City was held in the presence of Ms. Irina Bokova, the then Director-General of UNESCO, His Excellency Dr. Ashraf El-Shihy, Minister of Higher Education, Ambassador Mohamed Negm of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other dignitaries. This event marked an important milestone in UNESCO's presence in the Arab States. The Cairo Office was among three regional offices established by UNESCO in 1947 following the founding of the Organization in 1946. The Cairo Office was located in the historic Garden City District in central Cairo. But after 70 years it was time for UNESCO-Cairo to find a new home.

The new modern and spacious premises provide over 3000 m² of office space. The building has a number of accessibility features allowing it to welcome visitors and staff with different physical abilities. It includes 38 offices, a cafeteria, a dedicated conference room designed for multilingual meetings for up to 100 persons as well as 4 smaller conference rooms. All of the conference rooms support tele- and video-conferencing.



The UNESCO-Cairo Office worked closely with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), UNESCO's own internal security services at Headquarters as well as national security officials to ensure that the new premises comply with current UN security standards. To achieve this, a number of infrastructural upgrades were made to the premises and various process controls implemented. Staff training has also been conducted. We continue to stay abreast of the evolving security requirements to ensure that we remain compliant thereby reducing risk, ensuring the protection of our staff as well as operational and programmatic continuity.

Today, information and communication technologies (ICT) are a crucial part of UNESCO's administrative and operational infrastructure that drive programme implementation. The Office has therefore worked closely with the services for Knowledge and Information Management at UNESCO Headquarters to ensure real-time access and connectivity to the Organization's global digital network. With this in mind, the Future v2 system was installed. A follow-up mission by an IT specialist from UNESCO Headquarters resulted in a number of recommendations being elaborated which we have begun to implement. Other upgrades

underway include the implementation of disaster risk mitigation and business continuity systems, a barcode enabled record and inventory management system.



Co-located with the new UNESCO premises, in their own state of the art building, is the Egyptian National Commission for UNESCO. This proximity should facilitate collaboration and coordination with governmental partners enhancing the implementation of the UNESCO programme.

The new premises are located in Sixth October City, a new, rapidly growing satellite city in the Western segment of the Greater Cairo metropolitan area about 40 kilometers from UNESCO's previous location. UNESCO is grateful to the Government and People of the Republic of Egypt for the new premises they generously provided. We expect that the amenities of the new premises and its future-oriented design will provide ample room for UNESCO's growth over the coming years.

Enhancing Financial Risk and Performance Management

During 2017, the Office issued numerous Request for Proposals (RFP), Requests for Quotation (RFQ) and conducted informal bidding exercises. The nature of the goods and services procured varied considerably. This is a reflection of the complexity and breadth of activities covered by UNESCO's mandate. These ranged from conservation and restoration equipment and service providers, vendors for online learning platforms, providers of logistical services in remote areas of Libya. To ensure value for money as well as the attainment of programmatic and operational requirements, rigorous evaluation procedures were developed. These measures enabled the office to implement some 500 procurement contracts and organize over 60 programme-related activities in 2017.

A number of internal trainings and information sharing were also effected in 2017 and served to enhance internal controls, enabling more effective and efficient operations, timely and reliable reporting and compliance with applicable policies and procedures. As a result, UNESCO-Cairo has reduced the number of derogation requests and non-compliant transactions. Measures such as verifying financial statements, budgets and references for high amounts also served to mitigate risks.

Staffing

In line with its role as a UNESCO Regional Bureau, the Office continued to build its human resources in 2017. All five of UNESCO's Programme areas – Education, Natural Sciences,



Social and Human Sciences, Culture as well as Communication and Information - are represented.



UNESCO-Cairo is therefore able to provide Member States with support across the full-breadth of UNESCO's mandate. To ensure balanced growth and effective programme delivery, the office has also been strengthening its administrative and infrastructural support.

First row from L to R: Chongseo Park, Jana El Baba, Tatiana Villages, Dalia Khalil, Elsa Sattout, Amal Gad. Middle row from L to R: Wagdy Gasser, Dina Beshara, Yasmine Abdelgawad, Walaa Shawky, Hoda AbdelMeguid, Nazar Hassan. Third row from L to R: Waleed Mohamed, Amani El- Sheikh, Ghaith Fariz, Dina Selim, Mai El Rouby, Megumi Watanabe. Last row from L to R: Tarek Farag, Mahmoud AbdelRahman, Paul Hector, Ahmed Saleh, Nagy Younes, Abdelaziz Zaki, Bisher Imam

Accordingly, additional staff have been recruited to support the programme officers and administration. To ensure the security of the premises as well as regular maintenance facility management support, janitorial, as well as security personnel were engaged. In light of the increased commuting costs to the new premises, UNESCO instituted a shuttle service to facilitate travel of staff unable to relocate to Sixth October City. At present the total staffing of the new Office stands at 28.



Ms. Hoda Abdel-Meguid celebrates her 20th UNESCO Anniversary



On 28 February 1997, Ms. Hoda Abdel-Meguid joined the UNESCO Cairo Office. In a few days she will be receiving a UNESCO Medal in recognition of her contribution to advancing the Organization's mission. We met with Hoda to hear about her experiences.

UNESCO: So how does it feel to be celebrating your 20th UNESCO Anniversary?

Hoda: Excited and motivated.

UNESCO: Could you tell us what made you decide to pursue a career with UNESCO?

Hoda: For me, what most attracted me and made me want to join UNESCO was its mandate and its goal of contributing to the greater good. I wanted to be part of this work and in particular, to support activities in the field of science and service to humanity. My time at UNESCO helped to appreciate the uniqueness of UNESCO's work and gave the opportunity to work in a multicultural and challenging environment.

UNESCO: Looking back, what contributions or activities that you participated in during your career are you most proud of?

Hoda: Looking back perhaps the most satisfying period of my 20-year career was from 2005 to 2008. This was a time of transition in the organization, which provided me with an opportunity to take on greater responsibility, to develop my skills and to be on the front lines of program implementation. It was a real source of satisfaction to me. Under the direct supervision of the UNESCO Cairo Directors at that time (Dr. Mohamed Jamil Abdulrazzak, Dr. Awad Elhassan and Dr. Tarek Sahwki) and in collaboration with the Program Specialists of UNESCO HQ/CAIRO (Dr. Gérard de Puymège, Dr. Ghada Gholam, Dr. Laurent Levi-Strauss, Ms. Karalyn Monteil, Ms. Suzanne Ogge, and Ms. Assia Bedjaoui), I assisted and coordinated the implementation of four extra-budgetary projects in Egypt and Yemen. Two of the projects were from the Culture Sector and two were from the Communication and Information Sector. This portfolio of extra-budgetary projects had a total value of almost \$1.5 million. The projects were:

- A UNESCO/ JAPAN funds-in-trust co-operation Action Plan for the Safeguarding of the Song of Sana'a, which was declared by UNESCO to be a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in Yemen;

- A UNESCO/ US Special Account for Safeguarding the Jawf Archaeological Sites and Artefacts in Danger in Yemen;
- A UNESCO-Italy Fund-In-Trust Project for the “Support to the Manuscript Museum and the Conservation and Restoration Laboratory at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina” in Egypt; and
- UNESCO-Arab Gulf Fund (AGFUND) Project for the "Introduction of a Bilingual Information System for the Visually-Impaired to Access Numerical Information also at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt.

I was very pleased to play a pivotal role in these above projects that achieved 100% programmatic and financial implementation.

UNESCO: What was the most challenging experience that you have faced during your career at UNESCO?

Hoda: Coordinating with partners and local stakeholders to keep the Yemen project advancing and on schedule was very challenging; however, the projects achieved great success! I also appreciated the support and cooperation of UCO Directors and the HQ colleagues who were involved in the project.

UNESCO: How did your success in these projects impact your career?

Hoda: Although a source of satisfaction for me, and a benefit to UNESCO, my role in this project did not have an immediate impact on my career. However, a few years ago, during the period of job cuts, my job was to be abolished without any clear justification. However, due to this past performance the Bureau of Strategic Planning saved my job and also changed my job title from “Junior Secretary” to “Science Program Assistant”. This happened in 2014.

UNESCO: How has the Organization changed over the 20 years?

Hoda: Over the past years UNESCO has been impacted by many budgetary constraints, which have limited its ability to expand its activities. There has also been an increase in the number of conflict areas in the Arab region and this conflict has expanded to many states. These conflicts have also badly hampered the implementation of activities in our region.

UNESCO: How has UNESCO changed you?

Hoda: My time with UNESCO has helped me to develop and mature professionally, however I still aspire for career advancement within the Organization.

UNESCO: What words of advice would you like to share with other colleagues and especially persons just starting their career at UNESCO?

Hoda: You need to find a way to remain dedicated and motivated in spite of the challenges you face.



UNESCO Cairo Office Celebrates International Day of Sport for Peace and Development 2017

In commemoration of the International Day of Sport for Peace and Development 2017, the United Nations family in Egypt held a friendly football match on 22 April 2017 at Gezirah Youth Center in Cairo. Organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, the event helped to advocate for the role of sport in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and building peace. A team of UN staff members played against a team from Francophone embassies employees and students from the Senghor University in Alexandria. Two staff members from the UNESCO Cairo Office participated in the UN team and demonstrated great team spirit! UNESCO postcards on The Power of Sport Values were distributed to the audience.



UNESCO Cairo staff members participate in the friendly game (holding the cup: Mr. Waleed Mohammed and Ms. Salma Sayed)

UNESCO is the United Nations' lead agency for Physical Education and Sport. It advocates for quality physical education, integrity of sport, as well as values education and women empowerment through sport. To learn more about the work of UNESCO in this area, visit the [UNESCO Physical Education and Sport page](#).

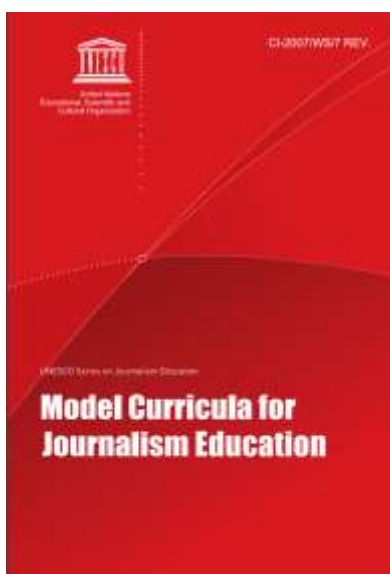


A Tribute in Memory of the life of Dr. Hara Prasad Padhy

Following a prolonged illness, Dr. Hara Prasad Padhy passed away on the 6th of January, 2018. He leaves to mourn his wife and daughter. He was an outstanding professional and a dear friend and colleague to all who knew him. Hara joined UNESCO in 2004 as a Program Specialist in the Communication and Information sector. In January 2012, he joined the UNESCO Kingston office as the Regional Advisor for Communication and Information for the Caribbean, where he implemented the UNESCO programme in 17 English and Dutch speaking countries. From 2014-2016, he served in UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States based in Cairo. In August 2016, he returned to UNESCO Headquarters to assume responsibility for the Inter-Governmental Information for All Program (IFAP) and UNESCO's contribution to the follow-up of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).



Dr. Hara Prasad Padhy who passed away on 6 January 2018 joined UNESCO in 2004. From June 2014 to Aug 2016 he served as Advisor for Communication and Information in the UNESCO Cairo Office.



During his outstanding career at UNESCO, he organized numerous capacity building events around the world, supported the preparation of policy documents, and oversaw the preparation of various training materials such as the Model Curricula for Journalism Education, which has been translated into at least 6 languages. This document is being used in higher education programs around the world. Through these invaluable contributions, Hara's intellectual influence on development processes will live on. May his soul rest in peace.



Cairo 11th January 2018

Mrs. Smitashree Choudhury
Hydrabad, India
E-mail: smitashree@gmail.com

Dear Mrs. Choudhury,

On behalf of the staff of UNESCO Cairo Office, and on my own behalf, please accept our expressions of condolence on the passing away of your dear husband, our colleague Hara.

We came to know Hara during his time at the Cairo Duty Station. Hara touched the lives of everyone he met and worked with. We all admired his professionalism but equally his humanity. Hara was cheerful, humble, cooperative and always ready to give a genuine word of encouragement and support. He was a true gentleman.

Hara worked long hours with dedication and passion. His contribution to UNESCO in the form of projects, trainings, reports and publications that influence policy and shape lives, are a surviving testimony of his intellect and commitment to UNESCO's ideals. We will dedicate one or more of our activities that we organize this year to his memory.

Although we are thousands of miles away, we assure you that Hara is in our thoughts and prayers.

May memories of happy times with Hara sustain you, your beloved daughter and dear family members during this difficult period.

Sincerely,
Dr. Ghaith Fariz
Director
UNESCO Cairo Office

[Signature]
Dalia Khalil
Hoda Abdel Meguid
Bisher Imam
Abdelaziz Zaki

[Signature]
Jana ElBaba
Nazar M. Hassan
M. Mohamed
Chingiz Park
Walaa Shawky

[Signature]
Dina Selim
Nagy Younes
Waleed Mohamed
Amal Gaid
[Signature]