

# BIENNIAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2014/2015



**UNESCO** Tehran Cluster Office  
for Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and  
Turkmenistan





United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

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## Message from the UNESCO Cluster Office in Tehran

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This biennial report summarizes the work and achievements accomplished between 2014 and 2015 by the UNESCO Cluster Office in Tehran, which covers Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

All activities were implemented in line with the strategies of the UNESCO 37C/5 Programme and Budget (2014-2015) as well as national development plans.

The report focuses on the progress and achievements in the following areas:

1. Enhancing Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All
2. Protecting and Conserving Our Cultural Heritage
3. Building Media Capacity and Strengthening Knowledge Societies
4. Science for a Sustainable Future
5. Promoting a Culture of Peace

As a Member of the United Nations Family, the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office forms part of the United Nations Country Teams (UNCT) in Iran and Turkmenistan, and actively contributes to the overall efforts of the UN by supporting both governments in UNESCO's areas of expertise. The activities implemented jointly with sister UN agencies during the 2014-2015 period are also covered by this report.


Looking ahead at the next programming period of 2016/2017, and capitalizing on the achievements made and partnerships forged, UNESCO will be at the forefront of supporting Member States to operationalize the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development through the Organization's fields of competence.

On behalf of the UNESCO Cluster Office in Tehran, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to our Cluster countries; national, regional and international partners; and donors for the excellent cooperation and collaboration during this past biennium.

I would also like to reiterate our firm commitment and readiness to contribute to national and regional efforts towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

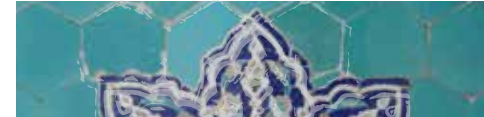
**Esther Kuisch Laroche**

Director and Representative  
UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office



BIENNIAL  
ACTIVITY REPORT  
2014/2015

UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office for Afghanistan,  
Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan



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## List of Acronyms

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<b>ABU</b>	Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union
<b>BHRC</b>	Building and Housing Research Centre (of Iran)
<b>BP</b>	Business Plan
<b>CLCs</b>	Community Learning Centres
<b>COMFAR</b>	UNIDO COMFAR Software
<b>CRIHAP</b>	Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO
<b>DRM</b>	Disaster Risk Management
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>ECO</b>	Economic Cooperation Organization
<b>EFA</b>	Education for All
<b>EFA GMR</b>	Education for All Global Monitoring Report
<b>ER</b>	Expected Result
<b>GEM-EMME</b>	Global Earthquake Model - Earthquake Model of the Middle East (Project)
<b>GMR</b>	Global Monitoring Report
<b>G-WADI</b>	UNESCO's programme for Water and Development Information for Arid Lands – a Global Network
<b>IAUNS</b>	Iranian Association for United Nations Studies
<b>ICH</b>	Intangible Cultural Heritage
<b>ICHCAP</b>	International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (under the auspices of UNESCO)
<b>ICHTTO</b>	Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization
<b>ICQHS</b>	International Centre on Qanats and Historic Hydraulic Structures under the auspices of UNESCO (Iran)
<b>ICTs</b>	Information and Communication Technologies

<b>IGOs</b>	Intergovernmental Organizations
<b>IDI</b>	International Drought Initiative
<b>IFAP</b>	Information for All Programme
<b>IGTU</b>	Institute of Geophysics of Tehran University
<b>IHE</b>	International Institute for Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering
<b>IHP</b>	International Hydrological Programme
<b>IIEES</b>	International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology
<b>IOC</b>	UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanography Commission
<b>ISESCO</b>	Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>ISTT</b>	Isfahan Science and Technology Town
<b>IWA</b>	International Water Association
<b>JICA</b>	Japan International Cooperation Agency
<b>KOERI</b>	Kandilli Observatory and Earthquake Research Institute (Turkey)
<b>LMO</b>	Literacy Movement Organization of Iran
<b>MAB</b>	Man and Biosphere
<b>MIL</b>	Media and Information Literacy
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MLA</b>	Main Line of Action
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>Nat.Com</b>	(Iranian) National Commission for UNESCO
<b>NEXUS</b>	Systemic NEXUS
<b>RCUWM</b>	Regional Centre on Urban Water Management, under the auspices of UNESCO (Iran)
<b>SC/EES</b>	Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences of UNESCO

<b>SEE7</b>	7th Int'l Conference on Seismology and Earthquake Engineering
<b>SFDRR</b>	The Sendai Framework of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
<b>SRC</b>	Strategic Research Centre
<b>STI</b>	Science, Technology, Innovation
<b>TED</b>	TED International Institute on Territorial and Environmental Dynamics
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>TVTO</b>	Technical and Vocational Training Organization
<b>UIS</b>	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UN-Habitat</b>	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNIDO</b>	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
<b>UNISDR</b>	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction)
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>UTC</b>	UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office
<b>UNWTO</b>	United Nations World Tourism Organization
<b>WSIS</b>	World Summit on the Information Society



## About the UNESCO Cluster Office in Tehran

**T**he UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office (UTCO) covers four countries in the region, namely the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

In implementing UNESCO's mandate to "build peace in the minds of people", the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office underscores the importance of dialogue and sharing of knowledge through all its operations. Building upon the shared cultural, social, historical and spiritual heritage of the Cluster countries, the Office co-operates with national and regional partners in the four countries in implementing its key activities in the fields of Education, Culture, Natural Sciences and Communication & Information.

The Tehran Cluster is heterogeneous. Although its member countries share roots in ancient empires, the histories of all have diverged sharply over the centuries producing four

very different nation states that each presents unprecedented challenges and opportunities for international cooperation.

It is therefore appropriate that the Tehran Cluster, unlike other UNESCO Clusters, contains two national offices in Kabul and Islamabad, as well as the Cluster Office in Tehran. Both national offices in Afghanistan and Pakistan have their own independent budgets and programme specialists, while all programmes in Turkmenistan are managed directly by the Cluster Office in Tehran.

The role of the programme specialists in Tehran is to support the Cluster countries with an eye to strategic regional interventions in all programme areas, as well as to cater to the specific needs of Iran and Turkmenistan. The Cluster countries share the positive connection to the Silk Road, but suffer from the burden of location. Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan lie within the transcontinental earthquake belt between

the Eurasian and Arabian tectonic plates and each of the countries is very prone to seismic hazards.

UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office (UTCO) was established in January 2003, just months before the Bam earthquake in Iran, which left 26,000 people dead and thousands more homeless. UTCO has collaborated with its partners in all Cluster countries to provide targeted and effective interventions across the region to mitigate the impact of earthquakes. UTCO works in close co-operation with the UNESCO National Commissions and key governmental partners of the four Cluster countries, as well as UN Agencies, ECO, ISESCO, IGOs, academic and research institutions, training institutes, civil society, NGOs and the private sector. At the regional level, UTCO also co-operates with UNESCO's regional offices in Bangkok and Jakarta.

### Cluster Strategy from the Programme Perspective

The overall governing framework for the Cluster's programme strategy was the UNESCO 37C/5 together with any

specific regional strategy for the Asia Pacific Region. Summarized below are broad outlines of the Cluster strategy in connection to the five sectors of UNESCO.

#### Education

In Iran and Turkmenistan, the following priority areas were defined:

- a) Capacity building for the achievement of the six "Education for All" (EFA) goals
- b) Supporting the Cluster countries to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all, particularly through:
  - Strengthening national capacities to scale up quality literacy programmes, Introducing new approaches of Community Learning Centres (CLCs); promoting innovative tools, such as mobile learning, to accelerate literacy learning; and supporting the Government of Iran in literacy assessment.
  - Enhancing education through curriculum development, teaching materials and teacher training
  - Strengthening capacities of the Cluster countries to transform TVET

Within the Education strategy, the Tehran Cluster Office also tried to foster cooperation between the four Cluster countries, particularly towards achievement of the EFA goals. For Cluster-wide activities, close partnerships among the Field Offices and national partners (particularly the National Commissions) were established in the planning and implementation of all activities.

#### Natural Sciences

There are four main priorities in the Cluster countries:

- a) Strengthening freshwater security  
Since the Cluster countries are mostly arid or semi-arid, sustainable management of fresh water resources is considered a principal priority. Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan suffer from scarce water and therefore the strategy of the Science programme for this Cluster is to focus on water resources management for sustainable development.
- b) Fostering international science collaboration for earth systems and biodiversity

The Cluster countries are ecologically vulnerable and there is a need to build their capacity to integrate ecological aspects in their overall development plans. UNESCO has an important role in providing information on global initiatives such as the Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme, and, through the World Heritage Centre, to register new biosphere reserves and natural heritage sites.

#### c) Disaster Risk Reduction

The Cluster countries are highly prone to seismic hazards and earthquakes cause huge human and economic loss on a regular basis across the region. Other natural hazards that affect the Cluster are droughts and floods. Disaster preparedness and risk reduction and mitigation are essential aspects of the Science programme.

#### d) Strengthening "Science, Technology, Innovation (STI)" policies, governance and the science-policy-society interface

Development of science and technology policies has been identified by the Cluster countries as a priority and UNESCO acts as a facilitator to build awareness of international best practices in this field.



## Social and Human Sciences

While the Cluster Office does not have a Programme Officer for Social and Human Sciences (SHS) and had not defined any objectives in this programme area, the Office did support some activities implemented by the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO and other national partners in Iran in the following areas:

- a) Focused initiatives to support the emergence of greater intercultural dialogue
- b) Capacity building of decision-makers, civil society organizations and other key stakeholders to design and implement innovative proposals for the development of public policies in favour of social inclusion, particularly targeting people with disabilities
- c) Capacity building to manage bioethical challenges arising from science and technology, operationalize universal bioethical principles, and engage fully in the global bioethical debate
- d) Support to initiatives aimed at inclusive public policies in the field of physical education, sports and anti-doping

## Culture

The priorities of the Culture programme were defined as follows:

- a) Protecting, conserving, promoting and transmitting culture, heritage and history for dialogue and development
- b) Supporting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions, the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, and the development of cultural and creative industries.

## Communication and Information

The Tehran Cluster Communication and Information (CI) Programme priorities were as follows:

- a) Capacity building for journalists and media managers in science journalism (with a particular focus on climate change, disaster reporting and disaster risk reduction), and UNESCO Culture Conventions
- b) Improving access to information for all
- c) Improving access to international debates on CI issues and supporting the adaptation of content to local and national needs.

d) Preserving documentary heritage in all its forms through a strengthened Memory of the World Programme

Although public information is not part of the Communication and Information programme, the Cluster Office recognized the need for a public information and communication strategy for the UTCO Cluster and for each of the three offices within the Cluster. Therefore, during this biennium, the Cluster countries revamped their websites and the Tehran Cluster Office is also starting issuing the first bimonthly e-newsletter for the Cluster, resulting in increased visibility of the activities of the Cluster.

## Cooperation and partnerships

In the implementation of its activities, the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office relies on support from the regional offices in Bangkok and Jakarta, UNESCO HQ, UNESCO Centres, Cluster field offices, National Commissions, and sister UN agencies. During this past biennium the Office has fostered partnerships with several other UN agencies (including UNICEF, UNODC, UN-Habitat, UNWTO,

UNIDO, and UNHCR) and implemented joint activities in different programme areas. The Cluster Office also developed excellent relationships with the UNESCO Category II Centres based in Iran and implemented a number of joint activities with them.

## Donors

During this biennium, the Regular Programme (RP) budget served as seed money, which was supplemented by external sources, particularly from the Governments of the Cluster countries and other national partners. Drawing on significant extrabudgetary (EXB) resources for Iran and Turkmenistan proved to be difficult, particularly due to the economic sanctions imposed on Iran. However, in spite of these significant challenges, the Office managed to implement all of its planned activities by leveraging partnerships with other organizations (including UN agencies and UNESCO Centres) and through in-kind contributions from the Governments of Iran and Turkmenistan.

In addition, the Office managed to

secure some EXB resources from the private sector. The Cluster Office signed a partnership agreement with Bel Company and also received financial support from the Michael Succow Foundation for the Protection of Nature.

Most importantly, the Government of Turkmenistan signed a Framework Agreement with UNESCO for the establishment of a Turkmenistan-UNESCO Trust Fund of US\$ 5 million.

**Education** 



## Education for the 21st Century

### Enhancing Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All

**U**NESCO Tehran Cluster Office (UTCO) has been promoting quality and lifelong learning opportunities for all in its Cluster countries, in particular by providing policy advice and technical support on major policy issues based on evidence obtained through analytical work and research. One key aspect of UNESCO's work is to disseminate internationally tested best practices and innovative ideas on education quality among policy makers and practitioners. The main objective of UTCO's Education programme was to advance the six international goals of Education for All (EFA). Partnering with government authorities, UTCO works to develop national education plans and to promote catalytic activities. The emphasis is on quality education, teachers' education, ICT in education, Technical & vocational education Training (TVET), and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) through sharing international best practices and UNESCO expertise.

### Advancing Education for All

**MLA 3:** Advancing Education for All (EFA) and shaping the future international education agenda

**ER 11:** Coordination and monitoring mechanisms established and evidence from research generated in support of sustained political commitment for Education 2030

### Launch of Education for all Global Monitoring Report

Every year between 2002 and 2015, UNESCO published the EFA Global Monitoring Report, assessing where the world stood on its commitment to provide a basic education to all children, youth and adults by 2015. The UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office translated and published the 2013/2014 and 2015 reports in Farsi and organized dedicated launch events to provide visibility to the findings of the reports. On 28-29 July 2015, a two-day



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sub-regional event was co-organized by UTCO, UNICEF, the Iranian Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Iranian NatCom to discuss the findings of the 2015 report. The meeting brought together Government representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, representatives of UN Agencies in I.R. of Iran, NGOs and donor countries, as well as UNICEF and UNESCO Education experts from several countries in Asia and the Middle East. It provided an important technical forum for the neighbouring countries to share their experiences, achievements, challenges and lessons learned on the six Education for All Goals, and to reflect on their post-2015 education agendas.

## Promoting Literacy

### Celebration of International Day of Literacy

**MLA 1:** Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning opportunities for all

**ER 2 :** National capacities strengthened to scale up inclusive and gender-responsive quality literacy programmes

Every year, on September 8th, UNESCO raises the flag for literacy as a human right, as a force for dignity, and as

a foundation for cohesive societies and sustainable development. Both in 2014 and 2015, UTCO took part in the International Literacy Day celebrations in Iran. In 2014 a Forum on “Literacy and Sustainable Development” was jointly organized by UTCO and NatCom on 7 September 2014. The forum included an expert panel discussion, during which several of the participants talked about the challenges they faced in tackling illiteracy. The theme for 2015 was “Literacy and Sustainable Societies” and on 8 September 2015, a high level national meeting on the “Role of Literacy and Adult Continuing Education in Creating Sustainable Societies” was jointly organized by UTCO, the Iranian NatCom and the Literacy Movement Organization (LMO) - a Government body under the Ministry of Education responsible for addressing all literacy-related matters. The meeting included three working sessions that focused on: a) Literacy, adult education and sustainable development; b) Improving the quality of literacy and adult education; and c) Strengthening inter-sectoral cooperation and participation of local communities as an important element for improving adult education.

## National Expert Meeting on Literacy

UTCO also supported a high-level expert meeting on “Participatory Literacy guided by National Determination and Governmental Support” organized jointly by LMO and the Iranian NatCom. The meeting focused on the achievements and challenges of the country’s literacy programmes. The outcomes of this national expert meeting resulted in formal requests for UNESCO support in the areas of literacy assessment tools, the development of flexible learning strategies in order to reach the most marginalized persons, and the use of ICTs and mobile devices to promote literacy and lifelong learning.

## National Workshop on Community Learning Centres and Mobile Learning for Literacy

As a follow-up to the National Expert Meeting on Literacy, UNESCO trained 30 literacy experts from different Government bodies including the Ministries of Education, Interior, Health, and Agriculture, as well as TVTO and LMO on Community Learning Centres (CLCs) and Mobile Learning for Literacy. UNESCO’s



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regional expert on Lifelong Learning, Mr. Ichiro Miyazawa facilitated a three-day workshop (11-13 May 2015) organized by the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office. The participants learned about policy and practices of lifelong learning through CLCs in Asia, discussed equivalency programmes and national qualification frameworks, and reviewed experiences from other countries in the region, including in supervision and evaluation of CLCs. The workshop also focused

on innovative programmes to promote literacy through mobile learning and explored the possibility of implementing such programmes in Iran.

#### **Consultative Meeting on Literacy Assessment in Iran**

Based on the request of LMO, UTCO co-organized a four-day consultation meeting to explore feasible approaches

to assess different levels of functional literacy in Iran. The meeting brought together Government representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Statistical Centre of Iran, the Ministry of Interior, the Management & Planning Organization and academia. The discussions were facilitated by Mr. Shailendra Sigdel from the regional office of UNESCO's Institute of Statistics (UIS) in New Delhi, India. The forum pursued important objectives including: a) outlining census regimes and methods on literacy and its assessment in Iran; b) presenting models of monitoring and measurement of literacy already implemented in other countries; and c) developing and presenting a model for literacy assessment in Iran based on experiences, technical capabilities and cultural specifications of the country in order to acquire and gather accurate data about population regarding literacy skills at different geographical, gender, age group and vocational dimensions and presenting an image of the quality of education for classifying the illiterates and low-literates in the society.

#### **“Nutrition and Water Saving Booklet for Literacy Learners and Their Families” Project**

Based on a request from LMO regarding curriculum development, UTCO initiated the “Nutrition and Water Saving Booklet for Literacy Learners and Their Families” project in November 2015. The overall objective of the project was to share advances in curriculum development and to develop a training package on Healthy Nutrition and Saving Water for Low Literacy Adults covered by LMO literacy programmes. The project was financed by Bel Company and carried out in cooperation with the Regional Centre for Urban Water Management (RCUWM) under the auspices of UNESCO. It was implemented in three phases: 1) Needs assessment of literacy learners with regards to nutrition and water-saving; 2) Developing a booklet on nutrition and water saving; 3) Testing the designed booklet in the target group. In the first phase of the project, Nutrition and Water experts prepared the contentm based on library research and Focus Group Discussions. In the second phase, a 5-day workshop was conducted by Nutrition



and Water experts with participation of 15 literacy experts (of which, one third were women) selected from the major provinces of Iran. In the third and last phase, the designed booklet was tested in literacy classes (selected by LMO) for one week. The booklets distributed among literacy learners targeted both learners and their families, as it would be part of the “read with the family” project by LMO. The project will be evaluated in the form of a competition among literacy learners at district, province and ultimately at national level.

## ICT in Education

**MLA 1:** Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning opportunities for all

**ER7:** National capacities strengthened to develop and implement technology policies in education, particularly in teacher training and professional development

### High-level meeting on the power of mobile learning in advancing quality education, empowering women

UTCO and its national partners marked Mobile Learning Week in Iran with a series of events, including a high-level meeting on 23-27 February 2015, which sought to illuminate how increasingly popular, affordable and powerful mobile technology can be leveraged to accelerate high quality education, especially for women and girls.

## National research seminar on Applying Modern Technologies to the Teaching-Learning Process in Tehran

During UNESCO’s Mobile Learning Week, UTCO also supported a national research seminar on “Applying Modern Technologies, particularly Mobile Learning Tools, to the Teaching-Learning Process” on 25 February 2015 at Shahid Rajaei Teacher Training University in Tehran. The research seminar was attended by many university professors working in the field of teacher training. During the working sessions they explored the following key topics: a) Theoretical and Methodological Fundamentals of Applying Mobile Learning Tools to the Teaching-Learning Process; b) Best Practices and Localizing the Use of Mobile Learning Tools for Integration into the Iranian Teaching-Learning Environments; and c) Foresight to Check the Modalities of Effectively Integrating the Use of Modern Technologies, especially Mobile Electronic Tools, into the Iranian Educational System. The seminar followed the high-level meeting on mobile learning held on 23 February.

## Advocating for TVET

**MLA 1:** Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning opportunities for all

**ER 3:** Capacities of Member States strengthened to design and implement policies aiming at transforming TVET

### Advocating for Skills Development through TVET

UTCO is helping the Cluster countries to reform their TVET systems by providing advisory support for public policies and related capacity-building activities in the field of TVET. Upon the request of the Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO), UTCO in cooperation with UNIDO, the Isfahan Regional Center for Technology Business Incubators & Science Parks Development (IRIS) under the auspices of UNESCO, and TVTO conducted a four-day workshop on Entrepreneurship Development from 28 November to 1 December 2015 in the city of Isfahan. The workshop aimed at

enhancing knowledge and skills necessary for conducting feasibility studies on entrepreneurship projects with the help of UNIDO's COMFAR Software for small and medium entrepreneurship businesses. The 38 participants (including 15 women) were TVTO entrepreneurship trainers from 19 provinces of Iran. As part of the training, the participants were provided with a tour of the facilities for entrepreneurship incubators running for small and micro businesses in the Isfahan Science and Technology Town (ISTT) and were introduced to related business development and applicable entrepreneurship. The participants requested more follow-up training workshops specifically on SMEs, Advanced Business Plan (BP) and Business Models.

**Natural Sciences** 



## Science for a Sustainable Future

**U**NESCO helps to strengthen capacities of developing countries in the sciences and technology. UNESCO provides data, advice and technical assistance to support governments in formulating and implementing effective science and technology policies. Through its natural sciences programmes – especially related to water and biodiversity, UNESCO advocates for environmental protection and the sustainable use of natural resources. Partnering with Iranian authorities, UTCO's Natural Sciences Programme promotes international scientific cooperation and links researchers with policy-makers and the private sector.

### Water Management

**MLA 6:** Strengthening freshwater security

**ER 10:** Responses to local, regional and global water security challenges strengthened

### Capacity Building on International Water Conventions

In 2015, UTCO supported a course on "Water Law" organized by the Iranian Association for United Nations Studies (IAUNS). Over 60 graduated and Masters level students with different majors in water management, as well as law and political science students attended this short course, which was held on 17-19 February 2015 at the Center for Legal International Affairs of the Presidency's Office in Tehran. The course covered 13 different domains of international water law.

### Round table meeting on "Future of Qanats"

At the invitation of the International Centre on Qanats and Historic Hydraulic Structures (ICQHS) under the auspices of UNESCO, as well as the Strategic Research Center (SRC) of the Presidency's Office of Iran, UTCO participated in a round-table discussion on the "Future of Qanats" that was held in Yazd, Iran on 2 June 2015.



The main objective of the round-table was to see if the role of Qanats in water supply from groundwater resources could be redefined in the contemporary water management structure of Iran. UTCO emphasized the importance of Qanats from both a cultural perspective as well as a sustainable means for groundwater harvest, and provided new approaches on how to modernize the Qanats system in order to re-assume their role in the water supply of the country. The ICQHS compiled the results of the meeting in the form of a comprehensive report for submission to the Presidency's office.

### High-level meeting on Groundwater and Droughts Management

UTCO in collaboration with the Regional Centre on Urban Water Management, under the auspices of UNESCO, organized a high-level international meeting in Iran from 16-13 June 2015 on "Advances in Groundwater Management & New Tools and Strategies for Coping with Droughts", with participation of global experts from two important networks under UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme: the Asian G-WADI network (UNESCO's global

network for sharing of knowledge and experience in water management of arid countries) and the International Drought Initiative (IDI). The meeting was attended by international scientists, UNESCO experts in ground water management and government officials from several countries, including Afghanistan, Australia, India, Chile, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Thailand and Vietnam. Dr. Soroosh Sorooshian, distinguished professor of University of California, Irvine, was the leading scientist of both the advisory group of G-WADI and IDI Networks. The meeting brought together a very wide audience of some 260 different stakeholders who exchanged views, experiences, and novel tools and strategies in groundwater management and drought mitigation. On the third and fourth day, the experts paid a field visit to Isfahan where they met with local authorities, water experts and academic community to discuss the problems related to the Zayandehroud River. UNESCO and RCUWM summarized the conclusions of the expert meeting and published them in a final report to inform policy-makers.



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## Preserving biodiversity and strengthening biosphere reserves management

**MLA 5:** Strengthening the role of ecological sciences and biosphere reserves

**ER 9:** Use of biosphere reserves as learning places for equitable and sustainable development and for climate change mitigation and adaptation strengthened

## Enhancing capacities on biosphere reserves management

UTCO, in cooperation with the Michael Succow Foundation for Environmental Protection (Germany), the Department of Environment of Iran and the Iranian NatCom, organized a national stakeholders' consultation meeting in Tehran from 4-6 October 2015, aimed at enhancing the capacities of local biosphere reserve managers and coordinators in Iran; reviewing the current situation in Iran's

biosphere reserves and identifying the areas for improvement; and producing a comprehensive roadmap on how to address the identified challenges (such as hunting and poaching, unsustainable use of resources, management and legal issues, impact of climate change, vulnerability and adaptation strategies). The meeting, which was attended by the Director of UNESCO's MAB Secretariat, brought together managers of Iran's 11 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, as well as the civil society, academic experts and biosphere managers also from Afghanistan and Pakistan. The consultation meeting was followed by a field visit to the Miankaleh biosphere reserve. A major outcome of the meeting was a concrete national action plan on how to overcome the common challenges identified by the 11 Biosphere Reserves of Iran.



## Disaster Risk Reduction

**MLA 4:** Fostering international science collaboration for earth systems, biodiversity, and disaster risk reduction

**ER 8:** Risk reduction improved, early warning of natural hazards strengthened and disaster preparedness and resilience enhanced

### Support to 7th International Conference on Seismology and Earthquake Engineering

UNESCO provided financial and technical support to the 7th International Conference of Seismology and Earthquake Engineering (SEE7), which took place in Tehran on 18-20 May 2015. Ms. Flavia Schlegel, UNESCO Assistant Director General for Natural Sciences opened the Conference, organized by the International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIEES), which brought together engineers, geologists, seismologists, disaster management practitioners, academics, public and private contractors, researchers and

scientists, as well as government officials involved with issues related to seismology, earthquake engineering and disaster risk management. The main theme of the conference was “Earthquake Risk Reduction in Vulnerable Urban Fabrics”.

### Examining the Role of Science and Technology in SFDRR implementation

As a side event of the SEE7 conference, UTCO, in cooperation with IIEES, UNDP, UNISDR and UN-Habitat, organized a roundtable discussion on the “Role of Science and Technology in implementation of the Sendai Framework of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 (SFDRR)” to examine how scientific entities could contribute to SFDRR to lessen disaster risk and improve resilience of societies.

Government counterparts, UN agencies, internationally renowned experts, international projects such as GEM and leading international organizations in the field of DRM participated in the discussion, which was held on 19 May 2015.

### UNESCO represents GAD3RES in Second Safe School Leaders Meeting

UNESCO participated in the Second Safe School Leaders Meeting in Tehran on 4-5 October 2015, in support of the implementation of the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools. It brought together government representatives from many countries, who shared their experiences and discussed how to translate their school safety commitments into concrete actions at national and local levels. The participants visited three

schools retrofitted and reconstructed by local private donors and then conducted a peer-review of Iran’s achievements in school safety. Ms. Kuisch Laroche, UTCO Director and Representative, represented the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GAD3RES) and provided an overview of the support that GADRRRES could offer to Member States. The meeting was closed by a series of agreements among the participating countries on the way forward.

### Support to 17th National Earthquake and Safety Drill in Schools in Iran

On 29 November 2015, the 17th National Earthquake and Safety Drill took place in schools all across the Islamic Republic of Iran. The UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office supported the national exercise by



attending a drill at Pasdaran Vocational Girls' School in the Abdulabad district of Southern Tehran.

UTCO also invited disaster management officials from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkmenistan to attend the national earthquake drill in Tehran and hopes to be able to replicate the exercise in all other Cluster countries during the next biennium.

### Kick-off meeting of the joint UNESCO UN-Habitat Project on Seismic Risk Assessment of Tehran Cluster Countries

UTCO and UN-Habitat developed a joint project proposal on Seismic Hazard and Risk Analysis of UNESCO Tehran Cluster Countries. Key decision makers and experts in the area of earthquake risk assessment and mitigation were identified and invited from Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan to attend the kick-off meeting of the project from 29 Nov- 1 Dec 2015. The director of the regional GEM-EMME Project from KOERI Turkey, UNESCO colleagues from SC/EES and UNESCO Islamabad, the ECO secretariat and representatives of JICA, and the embassies of Germany, Norway,

Afghanistan and Pakistan in Tehran also attended the meeting. The meeting focused on the implementation of the "Sub-regional Project on Seismic Hazard and Risk Analysis of UNESCO Tehran Cluster Countries" and during the meeting available earthquake hazard and risk data were presented by the regional GEM-EMME Project Director, the ECO project on hazard mapping, the representatives of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkmenistan; and by various concerned entities working on hazard analysis and mapping in Iran. The meeting concluded that despite considerable work carried out on earthquake hazard analysis and mapping, little work was done on earthquake risk assessment which is the main objective of the UNESCO and UN-Habitat Project. At the end of the meeting, the available data and information sources in each Cluster country were identified and documented. The experts of the four Cluster countries agreed upon the scientific methodology of the project and endorsed the implementation modalities. In 2016, the first step of project implementation will be carried out with the support of the ECO secretariat.

### Science, Technology and Innovation Policy

UTCO helps the countries of the Cluster to formulate national policies for investment in science and technology by offering policy and methodology options, and technical advice on formulation, implementation, monitoring, and review of policies and plans. It promotes university-industry partnerships and encourages countries to develop sound science governance.

**MLA 1:** Strengthening STI policies, governance and the science-policy-society interface

**G1:** STI policies and governance bolstered nationally, regionally and globally

### Marking the start of the International Year of Light

On 1 February 2015, Iran officially marked the launch of the International Year of Light with a ceremony in Tehran's Milad Tower. It followed the proclamation of 2015 as the International Year of Light

and Light-based Technologies (IYL 2015) by the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly, in recognition of the importance of raising global awareness about how light-based technologies promote sustainable development and provide solutions to global challenges in energy, education, agriculture and health. The Islamic Republic of Iran was one of the countries actively involved in IYL 2015. The Optics and Photonics Society of Iran hosted the National Executive Committee for IYL 2015. Speaking at the launch ceremony, the Director of UTCO focused on the importance of light for sustainable development and talked about how light has revolutionized medicine, opened up international communication via the Internet and has changed the lives of millions by providing energy and heat.



### Participation in NAM Ministerial Conference on STI

On 23 February 2015, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for Sustainable Development was opened in Tehran. South-South cooperation, North-South partnership, technology and innovation development and the concept of knowledge-based development were amongst the issues that were reviewed and discussed by the participants. Iranian President H.E. Hassan Rouhani, in his capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement addressed the gathering and emphasized that having access to science, technology and innovation was a fundamental right of all countries, leading to development and peace. He emphasized the importance of participation of women in science and technology as an important focus of the NAM conference. The Iranian Science Minister mentioned UNESCO as a key international partner in the field of science for sustainable development. After the President's speech a video message was shown by Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO. The UNESCO

Representative in Iran attended the full Ministerial Conference on behalf of the Director-General, which concluded with the adoption of the Tehran declaration by the NAM Member States.

### Role of women in promotion of sciences highlighted during celebration of National Women's Day in Iran

On Sunday 12 April 2015, UTCO in collaboration with Sa'adabad Historical and Cultural Complex celebrated the Iranian Women's Day. The event consisted of a series of speeches on the role of women in different aspects of life, particularly in science, as well as cultural performances. The event was attended by over 100 participants and was addressed by the UN Resident Coordinator in Iran, and several Government officials. The keynote speaker of the event was Dr. Masoumeh Ebtekar, Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Head of the Department of Environment.

### Science parks entrepreneurs and managers trained at the Sheikh Bahai Technopreneurship Festival

The 11th Sheikh Bahai Technopreneurship Festival was held at Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran on 9-11 May 2015 to foster a culture of creativity and innovation and to encourage national and international technopreneurs. UNESCO has supported this event annually since 2004. The Festival encompasses all technopreneurial fields including technical and engineering, hygienic and medicine, basic sciences, agriculture, humanities, culture and art, etc., and aims at introducing new technologies and innovative ideas to visitors, paving the ground for cooperation between technopreneurs and investors. The festival was attended by some 200 participants including managers of science parks, incubations, entrepreneurs and various authorities from the Ministry of Science as well as the Vice Presidency for S&T of Iran.

Alongside the festival, an international training workshop was held for managers of science parks. UTCO facilitated the participation of two senior experts from China and Nigeria to the event.

### Celebrations of World Science Day

Both in 2014 and 2015, UTCO co-organized celebrations of the World Science Day in Iran. In 2014, UTCO in cooperation with the Iranian Association for the Popularization of Sciences (IAPS) and the Iranian NatCom organized a national celebration in which UNESCO's scientific achievements over the past seven decades were highlighted in support of the Organization's 70th anniversary. The event was attended by many diplomats, scientists, academics and UNESCO partners. In 2015, two separate events were held in Tehran and the city of Arak to mark World Science Day for Peace and Development. In Tehran, in a national celebration held in partnership with IAPS, UNESCO underscored the role of science, technology and innovation in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the celebration event in Arak, UTCO underlined the importance of women's participation in science and research, and particularly in shaping the research curriculum.



## Oceanography

**MLA 3:** Promoting knowledge and capacity for protecting and sustainably managing the ocean and coasts

**ER 4:** Scientific understanding of ocean and coastal processes bolstered and used by Member States to improve the management of the human relationship with the ocean

### Celebration of World Oceans Day 2015

On 8 June 2015, UTCO joined the national celebration of World Oceans Day, organized by the Iranian National Institute for Oceanography and Atmospheric Science with the theme "Healthy Oceans, Healthy Planet". The event brought together senior government officials, academics, researchers and specialists in oceanography. The event provided an opportunity for UNESCO to highlight the importance of ocean health in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and UNESCO's global initiatives and networks in support of protecting the ocean and managing marine and coastal zone areas.

### Translating "Remembering the 1945 Makran Tsunami" Booklet

In collaboration with the Regional Science Bureau in UNESCO Jakarta Office and Iran National Oceanography Institute, UTCO translated the booklet developed by UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanography Commission (IOC) entitled "Remembering the 1945 Makran Tsunami: Interviews with Survivors Beside the Arabian Sea" into Farsi. On the occasion of World Oceans Day 2015, the translated booklet was disseminated widely among various stakeholders.



**Social and Human Sciences** ➤



# Learning to Live Together

## Environmental Ethics

**MLA 2:** Empowering Member States to manage the ethical, legal, environmental and societal implications of scientific and technological challenges with a view to achieving inclusive and sustainable social development,

**ER 5:** Capacities of Member States strengthened to manage bioethical challenges and engage fully in debates on bioethics and on identification of the ethical, legal and social implications of cutting-edge science, emerging technologies and their application for sustainable development

University of Environment and the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO-IEST). UTCO supported the event, which consisted of speeches and panel discussions by international experts from different countries. Dr. Sarinya Sophia from the Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific (UNESCO Bangkok office) represented UNESCO in the expert panel discussions and highlighted UNESCO's role in environmental ethics.

## Promoting a culture of peace

**MLA 1:** Mobilizing future-oriented research, knowledge and policy-making to support social transformations, social inclusion and intercultural dialogue

**ER 2:** Initiatives based on human rights approach in education, culture, the sciences, communication and information developed that support social transformations for the emergence of more inclusive societies and greater intercultural dialogue

## UNESCO supports International Forum on Environmental Ethics

**T**ehran hosted the International Forum on Environmental Ethics on 6 September 2014, organized jointly by the Iranian Department of Environment, the

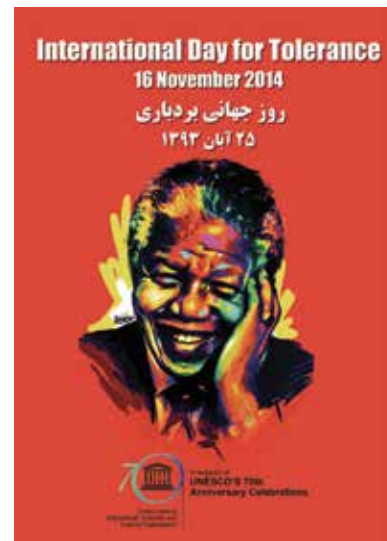
## Celebration of International Day for Tolerance 2014

As part of a series of events to mark UNESCO's 70th anniversary, UTCO organized a celebration of the International Day of Tolerance on 16 November 2014, in Tehran. During the event, which took place in the cinema hall of Mellat Museum in Sa'adabad Cultural and Historical Complex, the UNESCO Representative highlighted UNESCO's mandate and the agency's work over the past 70 years to build a culture of peace. South African Ambassador in Iran, H.E. Mr. Whitehead, paid tribute to the inspirational leadership of Nelson Mandela, which had paved the way for peace, tolerance and reconciliation in his country. After the opening speeches, the movie "Invictus" was screened - a film portraying how President Mandela used sports as a means to unite and inspire his nation and to foster a culture of peace and tolerance.

## Celebration of World Philosophy Day 2014

By celebrating World Philosophy Day each year, on the third Thursday of November, UNESCO underlines the enduring value

of philosophy for the development of human thought, for each culture and for each individual. In Iran, UTCO supported a celebration co-organized by the Iranian NatCom and the Tarbiyat Modarres University on 19 November, where Ms. Kuisch Laroche delivered the message of UNESCO's Director-General on the occasion of World Philosophy Day and announced the official launch of UNESCO's "Philosophy Manual; a South-South Perspective. The event included several panel discussions on a variety of topics, such as new and contemporary philosophies, metaphysics, philosophy of ethics and religion.



## Participation in Conference against Violence and Extremism

Tehran hosted the first international "World Against Violence and Extremism" (WAVE) Conference on 9-10 December 2014, in follow-up to H.E. President Rouhani's WAVE initiative presented at the 68th session of the UN General Assembly, which had been unanimously adopted in the form of a resolution. Organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it brought together participants from 40 countries. The conference included high-level panel discussions with dignitaries from around the world. The Director of UTCO represented the Director General of UNESCO in the event and spoke during one of the panel discussions about the importance of education in the fight against violence and extremism.



## Support to women's empowerment workshops

UTCO supported a series of workshops on empowering women, organized by the Iranian NatCom in cooperation with local universities and city councils in different provinces of Iran. On 2 February 2015, the Director of UTCO attended the workshop in Isfahan, where she addressed about 200 women and men and spoke about the importance of women's empowerment for sustainable development. She said that women's empowerment started with quality education, guided by the



conviction that educating girls and women can break the cycle of poverty and foster greater social justice.

### Participation in Human Security in West Asia Conference

UTCO supported the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Human Security in West Asia on 22-23 April 2015 at Birjand University in South Khorasan province. The first international conference on this topic had been organized jointly by the University of Birjand and UNESCO in November 2008. In the 2015 event, Ms. Kuisch Laroche addressed the participants and spoke about human security as a cornerstone of sustainable development, while highlighting UNESCO's programmes to support a culture of peace.

### Concert for Peace and Friendship

UTCO and Sa'adabad Cultural and Historical Complex jointly organized a concert for peace and friendship at the Ivan Attar Auditorium in Tehran on 7 October 2015. The Director of UTCO introduced the Carino Band, saying that

their music spread an important message of peace and friendship, and was based on a mixture of different cultural influences. The outdoor concert was attended by some 400 guests, including diplomats, UN staff, civil society and government representatives.



## Physical Education and Sports

**MLA 3:** Building policies through a participatory process with stakeholders in both the fields of youth and of sports; supporting youth development and civic engagement and promoting Human-rights based approach in UNESCO's programmes

**ER 7:** Multi-stakeholder and inclusive public policies designed and implemented by Member States in the field of physical education, sports and anti-doping

### Supporting seminar on Women, Sport and Media

UTCO supported the "Third International Scientific Seminar on Women, Sport and Media" at the Olympic Hotel in Tehran on 7-6 December 2014, co-organized by the Iranian Sports Journalists Association, the Ministry of Sports and Youth, the Iranian National Committee for Olympics and the Iranian NatCom. The seminar focused on the role of women in managing sports events; professional ethics and women's rights in sports; media and

women's sports; and the status of women in international sport organizations. Speaking at the event, Ms. Kuisch Laroche highlighted the UNESCO Observatory on Women, Sport and Physical Education, which was tasked to gather, analyse, organize and disseminate information worldwide. She referred to discrimination that women around the world were facing in their access to, and practice of, both amateur and professional sport, and said sport gave women fabulous opportunities to engage in the public sphere, to assert themselves both in the field and in managerial positions, and to develop new skills. The seminar concluded with recommendations and suggested follow-up actions to improve the role of Iranian women in sports.



## Protecting our Heritage and Fostering Creativity

**U**NESCO leads international efforts to safeguard tangible and intangible heritage. The organization focuses on promoting cultural diversity by safeguarding heritage in its various dimensions and enhancing cultural expressions; promoting social cohesion by fostering pluralism, intercultural dialogue, and a culture of peace, as well as securing the central role of culture in sustainable development; and working to preserve humanity's irreplaceable riches, its diversity and shared heritage. To preserve the significant cultural heritage of the countries of its Cluster and to foster a cultural environment conducive to peace and development, UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office promotes the adoption and implementation of international conventions and recommendations for culture. This includes building knowledge, capacity and networks to safeguard both tangible and intangible heritage as well as encouraging practices of intercultural and interfaith dialogue.

### Cultural Heritage Conservation and Management

**MLA 1:** Protecting, conserving, promoting and transmitting culture, heritage and history for dialogue and development,

**ER 1:** Tangible heritage identified, protected, monitored and sustainably managed by Member States, in particular through the effective implementation of the 1972 Convention

### Promoting UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation

On 16 March 2015, the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office organized a media event to promote the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation, which seeks to encourage private sector involvement and public-private collaboration in conserving the region's rich cultural heritage for the benefit of current and future generations. Since

Culture 



2002, four Iranian projects have won the prestigious UNESCO Award. In 2012 Polsheer House in Isfahan won the Award of Merit; in 2005 an Honourable Mention went to Zargar-e-Yazdi House in Yazd; in 2005 Zain-ad-din Karavansara in Yazd received an Honourable Mention; and in 2014 Saryazd Citadel, also in Yazd, won the Award of Distinction. Three of the previous Iranian award laureates attended the media event and talked about their projects and their motivations to get involved in restoration of the cultural buildings. Alongside the media event, there was a photo exhibition to showcase their achievements.



Earlier in the year during a festive ceremony on 7 February 2015, the Director of UTCO had presented the prestigious UNESCO Award of Distinction to Mr. Saryazdi, Director General of Arg-e Saryazd Development, for the impressive restoration of the historical Saryazd Citadel. Mr. Saryazdi has undertaken the impressive restoration of the Saryazd citadel, which not only saved a disappearing style of architecture in rural Iran, but also benefitted local community members economically through job creation as a result the huge conservation effort.





**Capacity Building on Management of World Heritage Sites in Iran**

UTCO supported the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO) in strengthening the management of Cultural Heritage Sites through the organization of two capacity-building workshops in 2015 on management planning of UNESCO

World Heritage Sites in Iran, and the management of sites on the Tentative List. The workshop on Management Planning of World Heritage Sites was held in Golestan Palace in Tehran on 25 April 2015 and organized in partnership with II.TED International Institute on

Territorial and Environmental Dynamics and the Polish Embassy in Tehran. The capacity-building workshop was facilitated by 3 international experts and 2 national experts, who trained about 30 managers and experts of world heritage sites from all over Iran on sites definition and recognition, conservation and management principles, strategic planning, policies and management, decision making, and community engagement tools, and M&E processes. The workshop on the Management of Sites on Iran's Tentative List (30 October-2 November 2015) covered key topics such as public awareness raising, community participation in the management of the sites, benefits of and procedures for inscription in the World Heritage List, and the use of modern tools and methodologies in conservation work and the impact on World Heritage evaluation. One international and four local experts facilitated the discussions. Around 40 local managers and experts of sites on UNESCO's World Heritage Tentative List and Iranian National Sites were trained in this workshop, which was held in Masouleh, Iran, which is a site on the Tentative List.

### **Training Workshop on Updating and Harmonizing the National Tentative List of Cultural, Natural and Mixed Heritage Sites of Pakistan**

UTCO financially supported a 3-day Training Workshop in Islamabad, Pakistan (3-5 December 2015) to prepare and finalize the list of potential Cultural, Natural and Mixed Heritage Sites of Pakistan for inscription on the World Heritage List of UNESCO. The workshop focused on capacity building of the stakeholders in World Heritage protection and management. The workshop was organized by the UNESCO field office in Islamabad, in collaboration with the Pakistani Federal Directorate of Archaeology and Museums. 15 participants representing relevant institutions, including the Provincial Departments of Culture and Archaeology; Department of Forest, Wildlife, Pakistan Council of Research and Water Resources (PCRWR); International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Federal Directorate of Archaeology and Museums attended in the workshop.

## Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage

**MLA 2:** Supporting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions, the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and the development of cultural and creative industries

**ER 6:** National capacities strengthened and utilized to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage, including indigenous and endangered languages, through the effective implementation of the 2003 Convention

### Supporting regional symposium “Iran & the Silk Road: Context for Cultural Interaction and Common Values

On 22 October 2014, UNESCO supported the regional symposium entitled “Iran & the Silk Road: Context for Cultural Interaction and Common Values”. The symposium was organized by the Center for International Research and Education (CIRE) and the International Institute for Central Asian Studies (IICAS) and consisted of different panel discussions with expert speakers from different countries along

the Silk Road. Ms. Krista Pikkat from UNESCO’s office in Tashkent delivered the opening remarks of the conference. During the first panel discussion, UTCO Director Ms. Kuisch Laroche presented UNESCO’s programmes and initiatives related to the Silk Road including the “Integral Study of the Silk Roads, Roads of Dialogue” initiative, which did not only revive the historical Silk Roads but also promoted the present-day legacy of human interactions, shared values and common heritage. She encouraged UNESCO member states to nominate sites along the Silk Roads to be registered as World Heritage sites, and to also nominate intangible cultural heritage for inscription on UNESCO’s Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

### Capacity building on Community-Based Inventorying of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Turkmenistan

In June 2015, the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office organized a one-week capacity building workshop on Community-Based Inventorying of Intangible Cultural Heritage, in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.



The training workshop brought together a large number of cultural experts, ICH practitioners and national media, and the opening ceremony was attended by the Deputy Minister of Culture of Turkmenistan. Dr. Janet Blake, international expert on ICH, facilitated the workshop supported by the Secretary General of the Turkmen National Commission for UNESCO, Dr. Poladov. This first national capacity building workshop on ICH in Turkmenistan provided an introduction to the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural

Heritage and focused on the practical aspects of fieldwork for identification and inventorying of ICH with a special focus on engaging with the local communities.

### Participation in Week of Culture in Lebap, Turkmenistan

The Director of UTCO participated in the National Week of Culture in Turkmenistan and the International Art Exhibition in Lebap province from 22-27 June 2015. During the opening ceremony in Turkmenabad the message of H.E.



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President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov was read out, which emphasized Turkmenistan's adoption of new national legislation regarding the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. During the week there were several art exhibitions, documentary films, poetry recitations, concerts, opera and theatre performances. On 24 June, an international scientific conference entitled "Spiritual and Cultural Values of the Turkic People" took place, where the Director of UTCO, Ms. Kuisch Laroche delivered an opening speech on the importance of

culture for peace building and sustainable development.

### Participation in Workshop on "Practices of Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding" in China

The UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office, represented by Ms. Mahta Mohegh, participated in the Workshop on "Practices of Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding" held in Fujian province, China on 12-18 June 2015. The focus of the workshop was on experience exchange and discussions about programmes which best reflect the principles and objectives of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The workshop, which brought together participants from several countries in Asia, was hosted by CRIHAP, ICHCAP and Fujian Provincial Department of Culture. During the workshop, Ms. Mohegh gave a presentation about intangible cultural heritage safeguarding practices in the UTCO Cluster countries Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and I.R. Iran.

### Promoting Intangible Cultural Heritage through Celebration of International Days

In 2014 and 2015, UTCO organized several cultural events in Iran with the support of the Iranian NatCom and ICHHTO to celebrate cultural diversity and promote the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. UTCO marked World Peace Day, International Day of Tolerance, World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, and local events, such as Nowruz, Mehregan, and Iranian Women's Day. During all of these events, UNESCO invited cultural groups from different parts of the country to perform traditional music and dances, and in the speeches the speakers talked about the importance of ICH, the important role of women in the creation, transmission and safeguarding of ICH, the importance of respect for cultural

diversity, and the role of culture for peace and sustainable development. The events were well attended by government officials, NGOs, civil society members, representatives of cultural organizations, UN agencies and the diplomatic corps in Tehran. In addition, the UNESCO representative also attended several cultural/religious ceremonies such as ceremonies from the Armenian Orthodox Church, Zoroastrian celebrations, Ashura rituals, and the annual Qālišuyān rituals of Mašhad-e Ardehāl in order to promote respect for cultural diversity and religious tolerance.



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## Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property

**MLA 1:** Protecting, conserving, promoting and transmitting culture, heritage and history for dialogue and development,

**ER 2:** Policy dialogue promoted to combat illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property through enhanced, strengthened and more efficient international cooperation, including the implementation of the 1970 Convention and enhanced capacities of museums

### Promoting role of civil society in fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property

UTCO and UNODC in Iran jointly organized a workshop in Tehran on 9 September 2014 on the role of civil society in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property. The workshop was attended by 80 representatives of NGOs and civil society, ICHHTO experts, law enforcement officials and government representatives.

UNODC Iran Representative, Mr. Leik Boonwaat, underlined UNODC's efforts to harness the potential of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime by piloting an innovative initiative in Iran with the objective of enhancing national capacity in countering trafficking in cultural property, art and antiquities. UTCO Director Ms. Esther Kuisch Laroche highlighted the importance of prioritizing prevention, awareness and preparedness of local professionals and communities as the best guarantee to keep cultural heritage safe. The speeches were followed by three panel discussions about the role of NGOs and civil society as the watchmen of historical sites; consequences of trafficking in cultural property; and the role of ICHHTO in protecting cultural heritage of the Islamic Republic of Iran.



Convention for the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property

## Capacity building on UNESCO Culture Conventions

UTCO organized a one-day training workshop in Tehran on 3 May 2015 on UNESCO's Cultural Conventions for government officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. UNESCO's regional cultural expert, Mr. Tim Curtis facilitated the workshop. Mr. Curtis provided an extensive overview of the six UNESCO Cultural Conventions related to the protection of heritage and fostering creativity. To date, I.R. Iran has signed five out of the six cultural conventions (all except the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions). The Director of UTCO presented UNESCO's cultural activities in Iran, which are centred on capacity building, awareness raising and events to promote a culture of peace.

### Building Knowledge Societies & Fostering Freedom of Expression

**C**ommunication, information and knowledge are driving forces of sustainable development. UNESCO believes they must also become the basic tools for disadvantaged people to improve their own lives. To build inclusive knowledge societies, UNESCO focuses on the human dimensions of the digital divide – cultural and linguistic diversity of contents, access and empowerment of civil society.

UNESCO's Communication and Information programme in Iran promotes equitable access to information and knowledge including for persons with disabilities, capacity building of media professionals with a focus on environmental issues and science journalism for sustainable development, and strengthening Media and Information Literacy competencies. Particular attention is given to cross-cutting issues and the role of media and ICT for education, science and culture. Through the Memory of the World Programme, UNESCO supports preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage in Iran.

#### Access to Information through ICT Accessibility

**MLA 2 :** Enabling Universal Access and Preservation of Information and Knowledge,

**ER 6:** Member States' capacities for the use of ICT for a sustainable, knowledge-based development enhanced through the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes and of the Information for All Programme (IFAP) priorities towards inclusive and pluralistic knowledge societies of UNESCO activities in Communication and Information Programme

#### Promoting the Role of ICTs for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

UTCO organized a two-day "National Consultative Meeting on the Role of ICTs for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities" in Tehran on 5-6 December 2015, in cooperation with the Iranian NatCom. The meeting brought





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at examining practical means of implementing the recommendations of the New Delhi Outcome Document in the context of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office had supported (through a Travel Grant) the participation of one Iranian representative, in the New Delhi conference.

The discussions were enriched

together key stakeholders related to the empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and ICTs, in order to lay the foundations for the development of a National Plan of Action that would include practical recommendations on specific actions for enhancing the role of ICTs in increasing access to education, public information, social services, and job opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. The Consultative Meeting was a national follow-up to UNESCO's international conference entitled "From Exclusion to Empowerment: The Role of Information and Communication Technologies for Persons with Disabilities" held earlier in 2014 in New Delhi, India, and aimed

by contributions from two resource persons from UNESCO HQ in Paris who shared some of UNESCO's guidelines and provided a global perspective to the discussions. Dr. Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg, Programme Specialist in the Communication and Information Sector in UNESCO Paris, introduced UNESCO's "Guidelines for Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Open and Distance Learning using Open Solutions"; while Dr. Kenneth Eklindh, former Head of the Section for Inclusion and Quality Learning Enhancement in the Education Sector, presented UNESCO's "Model Policy for Inclusive ICTs and Assistive Technologies in Support of Inclusive Education.

## Media Development & Journalism Education

**MLA 1:** Promoting an enabling environment for freedom of expression, press freedom and journalistic safety, facilitating pluralism and participation in media, and supporting sustainable and independent media institutions

**ER 2:** Pluralistic media institutions are facilitated, including by adoption of gender-sensitive policies and through support for strengthened community media policy and practice, while citizens, and particularly youth, are empowered through enhanced media and information literacy (MIL) competencies

37 journalists were introduced to basic science literacy and had the opportunity to gain new skills of reporting scientific findings and developments in a way that is easy to understand for the public. They also learned about key bio-ethical questions to consider when reporting, and discussed a wide variety of topics ranging from biotechnology to medicine to environmental issues, such as climate change. The training was facilitated by Professor Fackson Banda, Programme Specialist for Media and Civic Participation at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. His co-facilitator was Dr. Zarrin Zardar who worked as a researcher at the Iranian state broadcasting organization (IRIB).

## Training of Iranian Journalists on Science Journalism

UTCO organized a Science Journalism Workshop on 26-27 November 2014 in cooperation with the Iranian Association for the Popularization of Sciences and the Iranian NatCom. During the two-day workshop, which was part of a series of activities to mark the World Science Day for Peace and Development, a group of



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## Training of Young Journalists in Turkmenistan on Science Journalism

Given the success of the Tehran workshop, UTCO organized a similar training in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan on Science Journalism. The two-day national workshop held at the Institute of International Relations of Ashgabat, training a group of about 85 students of journalism from two different universities on basic science literacy and new skills of reporting scientific findings and developments in an easily comprehensible manner for the public. The workshop was again facilitated by Professor Fackson Banda, who covered basic concepts of science journalism, bio-ethics and climate literacy. The students also worked on practical case studies around climate change in the national context of Turkmenistan.



## Translating UNESCO's "Teaching Journalism for Sustainable Development"

In a continued effort to build the capacity of Iranian journalists on reporting for sustainable development, UTCO translated and published electronically the UNESCO publication "Teaching Journalism for Sustainable Development - New Syllabi" edited and introduced by Fackson Banda<sup>1</sup>. This work aims to extend the UNESCO Model Curricula for Journalism Education to include new syllabi covering emerging or particularly relevant themes in journalism education globally. As such, it builds on the model curricula – as well as the supplementary UNESCO publication titled A Compendium of New Syllabi – to effectively respond to new issues facing journalism professionals and teachers.

### Celebrating World Radio Day 2015

Radio is a powerful communication tool which offers a platform to facilitate debate on a range of issues of concern to the public. Radio holds a strong and

special role in emergency communication and disaster relief, and is essential in furthering UNESCO's commitment to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. In recognition of the importance of radio, UNESCO declared 13 February World Radio Day, and leads celebrations worldwide each year.

**MLA 1:** Promoting an enabling environment for freedom of expression, press freedom and journalistic safety, facilitating pluralism and participation in media, and supporting sustainable and independent media institutions

**ER 2:** Member States have enhanced pluralistic media and empowered audiences

UTCO, UNIC and IRIB University jointly celebrated the World Radio Day 2015 in Tehran on 15 February 2015, which focused on the theme of "Youth and Radio". The celebration was attended by UN officials, academics, journalists and media professionals as well as students of journalism.

1 - UNESCO Series on Journalism Education: "Teaching Journalism for Sustainable Development - New Syllabi", 2016. Available: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/publications-and-communication-materials/publications/full-list/teaching-journalism-for-sustainable-development/>

## Regional training on ICTs for Climate Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction

In collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), UN-Habitat and IRIB University, UTCO organized a four-day regional consultation meeting and training entitled "Saving Lives: Preparing for Disasters – Media and ICT Solutions for Climate Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction" in Tehran on 26-29 July 2015. The four-day interaction was an effort to bring together different stakeholders in the process of gathering and disseminating information about natural hazards, preparedness and DRR, including media professionals and disaster management organisations from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Iran. It included two practical training days by ABU experts Ms. Natalia Ilieva and Mr. Russell Issac for 65 journalists in early warning, disaster coverage and disaster preparedness. Day three included a view of Tehran Disaster Management Organization's latest monitoring technologies and the city's infrastructure for early warnings and rescue operations, as well as a visit to the Red Crescent Relief and Rescue Organization where an array

of communication systems, response vehicles and helicopter rescue measures were exhibited. On day four, the participating journalists edited and presented one radio and five TV features based on their experiences on day three. This exercise offered very different approaches and formats and raised a variety of thought-provoking discussions. The event marked a starting point for regional cooperation between the four Cluster countries to integrate media in national disaster management systems.



## Preserving Documentary Heritage

**MLA 2:** Enabling Universal Access and Preservation of Information and Knowledge

**ER 5:** Member States have preserved documentary heritage through the Memory of the World Programme

### Celebration of World Day for Audio-visual Heritage 2014

On 27 October 2014, UTCO participated in an event to mark World Day for Audio-visual Heritage, hosted by the National Library of Iran.

This theme was "Archives at Risk – Much More to Do" and Ms. Bokova's message focused on the fact that all audio-visual heritage was endangered due to monumental changes in the way that information and resources were generated, accessed and managed.

During the ceremony, the National Library unveiled the 7 items that Iran has on the Memory of the World Register:

- A collection of selected maps of Iran in the Qajar Era (1193 - 1344 Lunar Calendar / 1926-1779 Gregorian Calendar).
- Administrative Documents of Astan-e Quds Razavi in the Safavid Era.
- Al-Tafhim li Awa'il Sana'at al-Tanjim - the oldest Persian text on Mathematics and Astrology by the renowned Iranian scientist, Abu-Rayhan al-Biruni (440-362 HD/ 1048-973 AD).



- “Bayasanghori Shâhnâme” (Prince Bayasanghor’s Book of the Kings) - This is one of the classics of the Persian-speaking world and is on a par with the ‘Iliad’ and the ‘Aeniad’ of the Greco-Romano cultural communities. An important feature of this work is that although during the period of its creation, Arabic was the main language of science and literature, Ferdowsi used only Persian and therefore helped to revive and maintain this important world language.

- Collection of Nezami’s Panj Ganj or Khamseh – a collection of long poems with rhymed couplets, recounting the most celebrated, delicate and eldest romantic stories of the Persian language.

- Dhakhīra-yi Khārazmshāhī - The first and most important medical treatise in Persian. It has served as the basis of many books on Medicine.

- The Deed for Endowment (Rab’ I-Rashidi Endowment): 13th Century manuscript.



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## Information Literacy

**MLA 2:** Enabling Universal Access and Preservation of Information and Knowledge

**ER 6:** Member States’ capacities for the use of ICT for a sustainable, knowledge-based development enhanced through the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes and of the Information for All Programme (IFAP) priorities towards inclusive and pluralistic knowledge societies

### UNESCO supports Information Literacy Workshop in Tehran

On 23-24 May 2015, UNESCO in partnership with the ICT Organization, ICT Research Centre, the Ministry of Education and the Iranian NatCom, held a workshop on Information Literacy for Teachers. The workshop, which took place at the ICT Research Centre, provided an introduction to information literacy in knowledge societies and looked at issues such as: key principles and functions of information

literacy; teacher competencies; developing strategies for information literacy; and national policy-making for implementing information literacy programmes. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg, Programme Specialist in UNESCO’s Knowledge Societies Division in Paris.

During the opening session, Dr. Indrajit Banerjee, Director of the Knowledge Societies Division at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris referred to Information literacy and lifelong learning as a force to empower people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. He further mentioned the priorities of the 2003 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) including the role of ICTs in development; the relationship between ICTs, human rights and culture; and the new challenges posed by ICTs and the Internet for international governance. The workshop in Tehran brought together officials and experts from different organizations, including teacher training planners.





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