




UNESCO TEHRAN CLUSTER OFFICE COVERING AFGHANISTAN, I.R. IRAN, PAKISTAN AND TURKMENISTAN



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

**Mar / Apr
2018**

IN THIS ISSUE

Dear readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter, which covers the months of April and May 2018.

In Afghanistan, Bamyan has been added to UNESCO's Learning Cities List, which was celebrated in early April. The Bamyan Cultural Centre also opened internship courses for Afghan female engineers to benefit from an on-site experience in a large and significant construction project in Afghanistan.

In Iran, members of the Asia-Pacific Geoparks Network and representatives of National Commissions for UNESCO from 17 countries gathered on Qeshm Island for the international meeting and workshop on UNESCO Global Geoparks. Mr. Patrick McKeever, Secretary of the International Geoscience and Geoparks Program of UNESCO and Mr. Nickolas Zouros, President of the Global Geoparks Network were the main speakers at the event. Qeshm Island become Iran's first UNESCO Global Geopark in May 2017.

In Pakistan, UNESCO hosted a roundtable on freedom of expression and safety of journalists. The multi-stakeholder discussion, focused on SDG 16 target 10: "Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with

national legislation and international agreements", and looked at practical steps for implementation in light of Pakistan's upcoming general elections.

Turkmenistan participated in the Istanbul Development Dialogues and shared its experiences in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNESCO led the national consultations on SDG 4 in Turkmenistan in 2016, and since then, the United Nations agencies have been actively cooperating with the Government on the implementation of the goals. At the end of last year, a Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) mission completed its work, which provided practical recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the country. Turkmenistan was one of the first five countries in Europe and CIS to host a MAPS mission.

Learn more about our activities and events in this new edition of the newsletter. Enjoy the read!

With best regards,

Esther Kuisch Laroche
Director & Representative
UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office



Plan of Operation for KOICA funds of \$ 3.4 million signed by UNESCO and Government of Pakistan for promotion of Girls Education



UNESCO Tehran Celebrates International Day of Sport for Development and Peace

Feature Stories

UNESCO Islamabad Office signs USD 2.8 Million project with Government of Punjab for Promoting Sustainable Tourism and Economic Growth



From A project agreement was signed by UNESCO and the Government of Punjab and UNESCO on the 19th of February, 2018 at an event in front of Wazir Khan Mosque in Lahore. With the financial support of the World Bank, under the Punjab Tourism for Economic Growth Project (PTEGP), UNESCO has signed the component of the "Protection and Promotion of Cultural Heritage of Punjab for Sustainable Tourism and Economic Growth."

This is an opportunity to promote Pakistan as a region where people of various religions and cultures can congregate to reminisce and relive their shared history. Sikhism, Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism all have spiritual significance that is grounded in Pakistan. According to a recent study conducted by the World Bank, it is estimated that Sikh and Buddhist tourism alone could generate PKR 20 billion per annum and have the ability to generate 40,000 jobs every year.

In line with UNESCO's mandate, the project aims at promoting the effective management of tourism to heritage of religious interests. The overall goal is to foster tolerance and peace by raising awareness and cultural respect for diversity, while implementing effective cultural heritage and tourism management policies and plans through institutional reform.

The project will focus on several sites of religious importance, including the Hindu temple of Katas Raj, Mankiala stupa four Gurdwaras- Rohri Sahib and Sacha Sauda, Janam Ashtan, Kartarpur and finally, the Sufi shrines in Uch Sharif. In addition, Lahore and Taxila Museum will also be supported through the development of management plans.

In addition to creating site management plans, the project takes a community-centered approach within the framework of this project, through capacity-building of communities surrounding the sites, promoting respect for cultural diversity through education, and providing support to the current custodians of the sites through training- all the while, maintaining the sanctity and religious value of the sites through consultation with key stakeholders in the religious communities.

The chief guest Malik Nadeem Kamran, Minister for Planning & Development, expressed the government's commitment to strategically reform the tourism sector of Punjab, providing state-of-the-art tourism services across the province in conjunction with the World Bank and UNESCO, while also mobilizing private investment in the tourism sector, specifically targeting heritage tourism to promote a pluralistic image of the country.

Ms. Vibeke Jensen, Representative/Director of UNESCO Pakistan said in her speech at the event, "For UNESCO the beauty of this project is the holistic approach it has adopted by bringing together the economic and livelihood dimensions with social cohesion objectives and the fostering of respect for cultural and religious diversity. We firmly believe that it is high time for Pakistan to use its incredible cultural heritage to promote sustainable development in all its dimensions: be it: economic, social, environmental or peace. This project is exactly about that and as such a very good example of an initiative to translate the sustainable development goals into reality."

Feature Stories

20,000 Afghan Learners Ready to Learn to Read and Write



UNESCO trained teachers for new literacy course in Afghanistan.

During the course 32 top-notch trainers, who will be employed in the roll out of the new literacy course.

The new course is a direct follow up of the basic literacy courses in Afghanistan, supported by UNESCO, in which over 2 million students were enrolled.

The trainers will train over 1500 trainers, who will teach over 20,000 new students in 30 provinces, not only with reading and writing, but also with specific skills like beekeeping, poultry farming, dairy products, and tailoring to start with.

Course books, learning materials, as well as for example kits with bees, cloth, sewing machines, churning machines and even chicken.

This powerful concept is developed by the Deputy Ministry of Education for Literacy, with the support of UNESCO, and will deliver men and women able to read and write and start their own business. The economy of Afghanistan is growing with 3-4% annually, and literate and well-skilled employees are increasingly demanded to keep up with the economic growth.

Said Hassan (in the center) is one of the 32 skills based literacy course trainers UNESCO trained this week. He will train

the facilitators in Jalalabad city of Nengrahar, he says: "I am a former staff of the Ministry of Education, and when my contract ended, I started my own tailoring workshop, and by the grace of the Almighty Allah it is going well, the new literacy course will help a large number of people to increase their family income."

All these 32 trainers are very well experienced, some of them even have University degrees, and are committed to help achieve the SDG4 goals to which the Government of Afghanistan has signed up.

Feature Stories

Turkmenistan tells the world how to partner on SDGs acceleration at Istanbul Development Dialogues

Istanbul. April 3-4, 2018. Turkmenistan shared its experience of implementing the Agenda 2030 at the 2018 edition of the Istanbul Development Dialogues organized by the United Nations Development Programme in Turkey at the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub. This year's event discussed the reality of global development and brought more than 80 participants among which senior policy-makers, business leaders, civil society and experts, who discussed what works and what doesn't for a successful path to 2030.

The delegation from Turkmenistan was led by Mr. Orazmuhammet Ashirov, the Director of the Institute of Strategy and Sustainable Development of Turkmenistan who shared during the Conference's partners forum the efforts made by Turkmenistan to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The other participants of the session made of representatives from the Governments of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as a number of United Nations agencies, discussed the socio-economic, governance, and innovation-related challenges of sustainable development in their work.

The IDD2018 and the partners' forum gave the opportunity for exchanges among



policy makers and non-government partners on experiences of more than 15 countries from the region in progressing towards SDGs. Businesses, development and commercial banks, and civil society organizations shared also their involvement in the agenda 2030.

During his speech Mr. Ashirov noted that Turkmenistan and the United Nations have been actively cooperating on SDG implementation since the goals have been nationalized in Turkmenistan in 2016. At the end of last year, led by UNDP, a Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) mission completed its work and made recommendations about acceleration of SDGs in Turkmenistan.

In 2017, Turkmenistan was one of the first five countries in Europe and CIS to host the MAPS mission which provided practical solutions to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2030 in the country.

Feature Stories

Qeshm Island of Iran Hosts International Meeting and Workshop on UNESCO Global Geoparks

Qeshm Island, 28 April 2018 - Members of the Asia-Pacific Geoparks Network and representatives of National Commissions for UNESCO from 17 countries gathered in Qeshm Island of Iran to attend an international meeting and workshop on UNESCO Global Geoparks. The meeting that was organized by UNESCO Cluster Office in Tehran through collaboration with the Organization of the Geological Survey & Mineral Explorations of Iran, Qeshm Free Zone Organization and the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO in the Qeshm Island as the only UNESCO Geopark in the middle east provided a neutral platform for discussions and exchange of ideas between Geopark experts and also with hundreds of Iranian participants who were interested in adopting new policies for development of Geoparks in their country.

Ms. Esther Kuisch-Laroche, Director and Representative of UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office in her opening remarks by highlighting the fact that UNESCO Global Geoparks give local people a sense of pride in their region and strengthen their identification with the area, said: "The creation of innovative local enterprises, new jobs and high-quality training courses are stimulated, as new sources of revenue that are generated through ecotourism". "UNESCO Global Geoparks are all about partnership and cooperation, not only between local stakeholders, but also internationally, through regional and global networks where knowledge, ideas and best practices are shared" she added.

Mr. Patrick Mc Keever, Secretary of the International Geoscience and Geoparks Program of UNESCO and Mr. Nickolas Zouros, President of Global Geoparks Network as the main lecturers of the event also in their presentations underscored the role of local communities in sustainable management of Geoparks. Currently there are 140 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 38 countries around the world that are mainly concentrated in Europe and East Asia. Qeshm Geopark, represents important ecological and cultural heritage of Iran due to its unique geological, geographic, archaeological and ecological features such as unique methods of fresh water keeping and collecting that is manifested in the architecture of the island. The island is famous due to its tangible and intangible cultural heritage, wildlife, the mangrove forests on the coastline, and the many flora and fauna species that can be found there.

In May 2017, Qeshm Island received the UNESCO Global Geopark label due to its exposed geological formations that have been shaped by erosion generating a range of spectacular landscapes and beautiful rock deserts. Currently Iran enjoys the privilege of having 22 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, 12 UNESCO biosphere reserves and 1 UNESCO Global Geopark (Qeshm Island).



Education

Plan of Operation for KOICA funds of \$ 3.4 million signed by UNESCO and Government of Pakistan for promotion of Girls Education

UNESCO Islamabad and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan, signed a plan of operation for a Korean funded project to support Girls' Right to Education in districts Bahawalpur and Muzaffargarh in South Punjab and Astore and Ganche in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The \$ 3.4 million project with the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) will support national capacity building to realize girls' right to education in Pakistan's Punjab province and Gilgit-Baltistan, through interventions targeting education officials, community leaders, teachers and parents.

"The Republic of Korea's support to UNESCO, especially to education, is extremely valuable in expanding the Malala Girls Right to Education Programme in four new districts for promotion of access and quality of girls' education. It is encouraging that donors are showing interest in education sector in Pakistan, which is a testimony of their confidence in the present Government's efforts for promotion of education in the country". The Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Muhammad Baligh-Ur-Rehman, highlighted.

Ms. Vibeke Jensen, Representative UNESCO in Pakistan expressed her gratitude to the people of the Republic of Korea for supporting girls' education in Pakistan. This support will enable UNESCO to expand the outreach of its exiting Girls Right to Education Programme in additional districts in Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan where the indicators for girls' education are very low. She appreciated the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training for its unwavering support and ownership of the Girls Right to Education Programme in Pakistan.

Mr. Chung Jong Hyon, Country Head KOICA, Islamabad expressed his pleasure on collaboration with the Government of Pakistan and UNESCO for promotion of girls education in most needy areas of the country. He assured his continued cooperation for furthering the cause of Education in Pakistan.

The Government of Pakistan contributed \$ 10 million to the Malala Funds in Trust for Girls Right to Education established in 2012, of which \$ 7 million are earmarked for the Girls' Right to Education programme in Pakistan. It was launched in 2015 to increase and improve the quality of girls' education at primary level in four provinces and four federal areas.



Education

Afghanistan Boosts Literacy Programs by Receiving Assistance from UNESCO



A large conference organized by the Deputy Ministry of Education for Literacy with the help of UNESCO office in Kabul brought together hundreds of participants from civil society, sports, arts and culture, and the media in Kabul this week, including H. E. Sarwar Danish, the 2nd Vice-President of Afghanistan and Head of the National Literacy Committee, H. E. Mohammad Ibarahim Shinwarai the Minister of Education, and Dr. Sardar Mohammad Rahimi the Deputy Minister of Education for Literacy.

The Vice-President highlighted the crucial importance of literacy: 'I would like to request all participants to organize programs and round-table meetings to help our country teach our people read and write, and make our people aware that literacy will bring social and economic development.'

On behalf of UNESCO Mr. Danilo Padilla Head of Education, and Officer in Charge, showed his concern about persisting high levels of illiteracy in the country, and appreciated the Governments of Japan, Sweden, Finland and South Korea for their unwavering support for

UNESCO's adult literacy and non-formal education programs in Afghanistan. He pointed out the significant achievements of the Government of Afghanistan, adding 'UNESCO supports advocacy, social mobilization, literacy and skills development for Afghanistan's most vulnerable and excluded youth and adults.' H. E. Mohammad Ibarahim Shinwari, Afghanistan's Minister of Education said that making people literate is everyone's job, and he asked the Nation to rally together for #Education4All.

Throughout the afternoon's meeting, representatives of civil society, art, sports, culture and media made their commitment to promote literacy in Afghanistan. All representatives signed a commitment letter at the end of the conference. The letter was read by the Deputy Minister of Education for Literacy, Dr. Sardar Mohammad Rahimi.

Afghanistan is among those countries that have the lowest literacy rates in world, due to decades of ongoing conflict and fragility.

Education

Women's Rights on Literacy Discussed at Celebration of International Women's Day in Afghanistan

Kabul, Afghanistan | The second week in March, men and women gathered in celebration of International Women's Day, and pressed for more progress towards the achievement of the rights of women in the Afghan society. Many representatives of national and international NGOs, together with staff of the Deputy Ministry of Education for Literacy (DMoEL), attended the International Women's Day Celebrations, organized by the Deputy Ministry of Education for Literacy, with financial and technical support of UNESCO. The key speech was delivered by Ms. Huma Noorestani, part of the senior management in the DMoEL in Kabul.

More than 70 International Women's Day participants listened to Ms Noorestani's

passionate pledge for sustaining the achievements of the past decade or so. Ms Hakima Karimi, one of the participants, stated, 'we should not just focus on the celebration of women's day', adding 'we should instead advocate more broadly for public awareness of our struggle with the oppression of women in Afghanistan and around the world, we need more to change the lives of women.' she said.

The celebration in Kabul also drew attention to the Darakht-e-danesh online library with content and resources ranging from literacy to higher education. The library is a large online source with published materials in Pashto, Dari and English. The participants were encouraged to help the library with translations and

instructional materials, to share with fellow Afghan women and women around the world. The meeting also included a drama show, with a celebration of Afghan culture, as well as a musical performance.

The lively discussions discussed the differences between 'gender' and 'sex', providing knowledge and tools in the peace and reconstruction agenda of the current Government. More group work and paying respect to the theme of the day ('Pressing for Progress'), took place discussing women's rights in a more international context, expressing commitment to achieving even more bolder women's rights in Afghanistan.



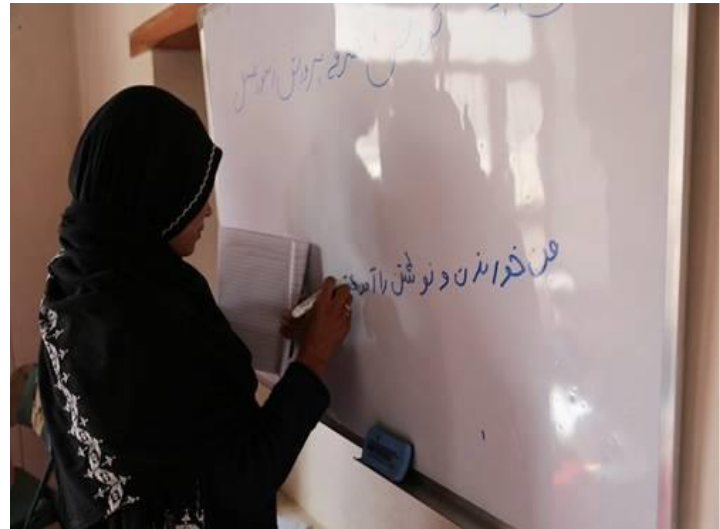
Education

Afghan Woman Learns to Read, Write and Earn a Living through the Ministry of Education Literacy Department and UNESCO Support

South-East of Bamyan, there is a beautiful village called Qazan. It is located in Foladi valley, a fertile land where rain falls, rivers flow in all seasons and the valley becomes full of radiant flowers in the summer.

This is where Ms. Nikbakhta lives, with her three brothers and two sisters. An ambitious young woman, she has already completed the 9-month Basic General Literacy (BGL) programme, which is supported by UNESCO. After her graduation, Nikbakhta decided to take the entrance exam for the Skills Based Literacy (SBL) course. She was successful, and is now studying in a SBL class.

Nikbakhta is the first in her family who can read and write, and her three brothers and two sisters look up to her example. Her name has a special significance for them: it means 'fortunate'. Considering the natural environment and the high price of honey, Nikbakhta selected the bee-keeping course. Soon she hopes to contribute towards the family income, supporting the economic development of her family and the society in general. Apart from Nikbakhta, there are 1,000 other learners in Bamyan province who are learning to earn a living through UNESCO's SBL programme.



First Visit of Afghan MoE official to Saighan District Results in Major Commitment to Improve Literacy



The Saighan district of Bamyan province has recorded the first visit of high-ranking officials from the Ministry of Education. This brought together dozens of religious scholars, tribal leaders, local government officials and youths, who attended a welcome ceremony for the Deputy Minister of Education for Literacy (DMoEL), Dr. Sardar Mohammad Rahimi. He was accompanied by his team and UNESCO representatives.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mullah Mohammad Yonas Khatibi, Chief of Saighan district's shura (Islamic scholars), expressed his support to UNESCO and the DMoEL to increase the literacy rate in his district. He advocated a target of launching one literacy course in every Masjed within this year to make more people read and write. The mullah also asked for more books and instructional materials, as he promised to spread public awareness through campaigns and Masjed gatherings.

Dr. Sardar Mohammad Rahimi expressed his commitment to the people of Saighan district. He added that although UNESCO supports the DMoEL technically and financially, more people should also volunteer to support the literacy programme, to help Afghanistan achieve SDG4, the global goal on education. He advised all the literacy officers in the district to take advantage of UNESCO's Skills Based Literacy (SBL) programme, and share their suggestions regarding SBL with DMoEL for future implementation.

Dr. Rahimi is the highest-ranking official of the MoE to visit the Saighan district in the last 15 years, and this is a good step for Afghanistan's development in education.

Education

Bibi Gul Adult Literacy Contest 2018 Winners Announced in Kabul



Kabul – 26 MARCH – A top submission of the Ministry of Defense was announced as the first place winner of the Bibi Gul Literacy Contest 2018, in an award ceremony with the First Lady of Afghanistan, H.E. Madam Rula Ghani.

As the Goodwill Ambassador for Youth and Adult Literacy in Afghanistan, First Lady Ghani acknowledged the achievements in the field of literacy, and expressed her enthusiasm for the skills based literacy initiative, which, she said, 'is the key step towards the development of our nation'.

Madam Ghani especially lauded the workbooks and training program developed in collaboration with UNESCO, and the skills training offered for beekeeping, dairy products, tailoring, and poultry farming, noting that these opportunities bring positive change in the lives of many. Together with the Ministry of Education Literacy Department, UNESCO developed this unique approach, which brings hundreds of thousands of men, women and youth to learn to read and write, and at the same time, learn basic skills for economic advancement.

The literacy award ceremony was held in the Government Media Information Center in Kabul. Ms. Patricia McPhillips, the Director and Representative of UNESCO in Afghanistan, Niclas Thalén the First Secretary, Development Cooperation Embassy of Sweden in Kabul, Dr. Sardar Mohammad Rahimi, Deputy Minister of Education for

Literacy (DMoEL), other government officials, and media reporters also attended the event.

Dr. Rahimi noted his appreciation for all stakeholders' support in literacy, in particular UNESCO, for the longtime partnership. He thanked the programme donors - Japan, Finland, Sweden and South Korea, and highlighted the importance of continuing to support literacy programs in Afghanistan.

Ms. Patricia McPhillips expressed UNESCO's commitment to literacy, saying, 'UNESCO firmly supports the Government and the people of Afghanistan in working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (#Literacy4All).' She also stated that with support from key partners such as Japan,

Sweden, Finland and the Republic of Korea, many Afghans who have not received the opportunity of an education now have access to basic literacy and education at all levels, particularly for more women and girls.

The Bibi Gul Youth and Adult Literacy Contest 2018, under the theme 'Literacy for Social Change and Sustainable Development', was organized by the Deputy Ministry of Education for Literacy and the Office of the First Lady, with the support of UNESCO. A total of 24 nominations were received which were evaluated by an independent jury committee. The Literacy Development Management project of the Ministry of Defense was the first place winner, with the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan NFAJ-Kabul office as the second place winner, and the Patriots' Occupational Organization as the third place winner. The winners received 2,000 USD, 1,500 USD and third winner 1,000 USD respectively.

Afghanistan has some of the lowest literacy rates in the world, where due to conflict, many people in the country were unable to access any form of education. Unconfirmed numbers say that from all 34 million citizens in Afghanistan, one third or over 10 million are currently illiterate.

Education

Islamabad Hosts Education Sub-Sector consultation on SDG-4

Education Sub-Sector consultation on SDG-4 was held in Islamabad to discuss findings of the national SDG-4 synthesis report with the sub-sector representatives of education and seek their inputs to finalize it.

The event was attended by over seventy education officials and representatives from Higher Education, Literacy and Non-formal Education, Special Education and TVET from provinces and areas, civil society organizations and academia who took part in the day-long deliberations and group work and provided inputs for inclusion of sub-sector priorities in the national SDG-4 synthesis report.



In her opening remark, Ms.

Vibeke Jensen, UNESCO Representative appreciated the role of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training in spearheading the SDG-4 consultations in Pakistan and in finalizing the draft national synthesis report on the SDG-4. She highlighted that education is at the heart of 2030 agenda for sustainable development and essential for achieving all other 16 SDGs.

She said that in the previous SDG-4 consultations the sub-sector representation remained modest and for the reason the need was felt to have a dedicated session with them in order to integrate their feedback in the finalization of the report. She emphasized the importance of target 4.7 of the SDG-4 which relates to the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that the education system needs to promote. She highlighted the need for its inclusion in sub-sector policies and plans.

Addressing the audience, Mr. Akbar Hussain Durrani, Secretary Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training shared that the SDG-4 agenda is fully in sync with Pakistan's national development agenda. He acknowledged the importance of education sub-sectors in contributing to the achievement of SDG-4 targets and stressed the need for making sub-sector policies and plans fully reflective of the SDG-4 imperatives.

He encouraged the participants to review the national synthesis report and provide maximum feedback for its finalization from the sub-sectors perspective. Highlighting the role of civil society organizations in Pakistan, the secretary proposed to transmit the SDG-4 agenda as part of their visions, plan and strategy. Concluding his remarks, the secretary expressed the importance for financing SDG-4 and defining timeline for achieving its each of the seven targets.

Muhammad Rafique Tahir, Joint Educational Advisor, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training presented the national perspective on SDG-4 and provided a holistic view of the process adopted for integrating SDG-4 in provincial and area specific education sector plans.

He shared that after integrating feedback from the education sub-sector, the synthesis report will be presented to the Inter Provincial Education Ministers Conference (IPEMC) for review and endorsement. The report will guide implementation of the SDG-4 agenda at provincial and area levels.

Communication and Information

Pakistan Hosts UNESCO Roundtable on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists



A multi-stakeholder roundtable discussion aimed at sharpening SDG 16.10 recommendations put forward during the 2017 International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI), was organized by UNESCO on April 12, 2018.

As the specialized UN agency with a mandate to promote freedom of expression and the safety of journalists, UNESCO has been assigned to monitor and report on SDG 16 target 10: "Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements".

The roundtable reviewed recommendations made on IDEI which strongly resonated with the UN Plan of Action and SDG 16.10, and deliberated on their prioritization and implementation.

The participants further reflected on the special importance of taking practical steps for SDG.16.10 in the light of Pakistan's upcoming general elections.

The meeting was attended by Director UNESCO, Ms. Vibeke Jensen and government counterparts from Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Right to Information (RTI) Commission, National Commission on Human Rights, Ministry of Human Rights, development partners, leading CSOs and Journalists.

Ms. Jensen lauded the presence of female representatives and specially thanked government officials who attended the meeting and said: "UNESCO celebrates International Day on Universal Access to Information, International Day to end impunity for the Crimes against Journalists and World Press Freedom day every year.

The purpose of commemorating these is to link them, and keep the dialogue going among government, CSOs, journalists, and international community, which is crucial for developing democracies. With the upcoming elections, the role of media is even more relevant for achieving SDG.16.10 as journalists can be instruments of inclusive political discussion."

Challenges to access to information and safety of journalists covering the elections, prevention and protection mechanisms to promote safety of media workers and monitoring and documentation to promote safety of journalists were discussed at length at the roundtable.

The event concluded with exploring future mechanisms of action.

Natural and Social & Human Sciences

Development Partners in Turkmenistan Get Acquainted with National Policies and Priorities in Environment Protection and Climate Change

Ashgabat, 20 April 2018 – Today, the UN has hosted a regular meeting of the Development Partners Coordination Group. Twenty-five representatives of the donor and development community, including multilateral and bilateral international organizations and diplomatic missions, operating in the country attended the meeting.

The main goal of the first meeting in 2018 was to introduce to the development community the national policies and priorities in environment protection and addressing climate change impacts, as well as steps in enhancing cooperation with international organizations in this area.

This topic raised a lot of interest among the development partners and Mr. Batyr Ballyev, Head of Department of the State Commission for Environment Protection and Land Resources (SCEPLR), stressed that Government of Turkmenistan is aligning all the processes with international standards and reflects them in the national legislation on environment protection. In this regard, the international partnership and support in this area are welcome.

During the meeting, the development partners also shared information on the upcoming major conferences in the country and region, such as OSCE Regional Ministerial Conference on good governance and economic connectivity – best practices within OSCE region to be held in Ashgabat on May 30-31, 2018;



Partnership for Development Financing organized by UNDP and the Government of Turkmenistan scheduled for 20 June 2018 in Ashgabat, USAID's Central Asia Trade Forum to be held in Tashkent in October 2018, EU's regional event on NGOs in Almaty, and Ashgabat Ministerial Conference under the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program scheduled for October 2018 in Ashgabat.

The UN presented the mission and objectives of the national Training and Methodology Center on SDGs, launched in September 2017, with UNESCO support, in the Institute of International Relations of the MFA of Turkmenistan and invited the development community to join efforts in

sustainable development and expand help to the Government of Turkmenistan in enriching the Center, as a knowledge hub for testing and scaling up innovative ideas and research.

Natural and Social & Human Sciences

UNESCO Tehran Celebrates International Day of Sport for Development and Peace



Tehran – 23 April 2018: UNESCO and the University of Tehran celebrated the 5th International Day of Sport for Development and Peace to highlight the importance of investment in physical activities for the present and future of the country.

At a ceremony that was hosted by the Faculty of Sports and Physical Education of the University of Tehran, Alexander Schischlik, Chief of the Youth and Sports Section at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris underscored Iran's impressive achievements in the fields of sports and physical education –particularly for persons with disabilities. He stated that Iran could share its experiences and best practices with other countries around the world.

"Iran benefits from a very rich sporting history not only in the main international disciplines, but also has an invaluable heritage of traditional sports" he added.

Ms. Esther Kuisch-Laroche, Director of the UNESCO Cluster Office in Tehran, as one of the key note speakers of the event said that sport is a very powerful tool to strengthen social ties and networks, and to promote the ideals of fraternity, solidarity, non-violence, and justice.

"Sports also play a significant role as a promoter of social integration and economic development in different cultural and political contexts" she added.

UNESCO as the United Nations' lead agency for Physical Education and Sport provides assistance and guidance services for governments, NGOs, and experts to debate the evolving challenges of physical education and sport.

The Organization also offers expertise in the design and implementation of development programmes in the domain of sport and plays the secretariat role for the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS).

Since 1952, UNESCO has been working actively to promote the power and cross-cutting potential of sports and to facilitate access to physical education in both formal and non-formal settings.

In 2013, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 6 April as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, to celebrate the contribution of sports and physical activity to education, human development, healthy lifestyles and a peaceful world.

UNESCO Pakistan Project on Ecotourism Starts in Kalash Valleys

UNESCO recently held a two-day inception workshop in Islamabad and Peshawar on the 18th and 19th of April on a project centered on Ecotourism in the Kalash Valleys. The project, funded by the Swiss Agency of Development and Cooperation (SDC), focuses on not only promoting responsible and sustainable ecotourism, but also aims to put measures in place to strengthen the resilience of Kalash communities by safeguarding their cultural heritage.

During the first day of the workshop, development partners, civil society representatives, private business owners, and government representatives participated in a lively debate on tourism

issues in the region. Infrastructure concerns in the region were discussed with the possibility of collaboration between organizations such as the World Bank and UNESCO. Global best practices were shared, and the indigenous rights of the Kalash community were discussed. Particularly, the issue of the Kalash community's vulnerability to the negative aspects of tourism were expressed as a matter of serious concern by several participants.

On the second day, several key stakeholders from the Kalash community attended, along with civil society representatives, members for the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and

Chitral. Group discussions were conducted, followed by presentations and recommendations. Several participants expressed tourism management concerns, particularly during the festival seasons. The socioeconomic pressures felt by the Kalash community were iterated over the course of the workshop, and the need for tourism economic gains to be funneled back into the community was expressed as a major priority. Establishing a tourist center was also proposed and widely acknowledged as a positive and much needed change. The workshop concluded on a positive note with several important ideas for implementation proposed, and most importantly, valuable input from the Kalash community.



Beautiful Bamyan Included in UNESCO's Learning Cities List



Celebrating Bamyan, a New Learning City Bamyan's addition to the list of UNESCO's Learning Cities was celebrated in early April with a festival of singing songs and poems. The large gathering included the Bamyan Governor Mr. Taher Zohair, the Deputy Minister of Education Dr. Sardar Mohammad Rahimi, UNESCO's representatives, religious scholars, tribal leaders and literacy learners.

Mr. Taher Zohair, the Governor of Bamyan Province, congratulated the participants for this achievement, noting, 'Now that Bamyan is on the list of 'Learning Cities', our responsibility has doubled. We should work to add quality to our quantity.'

Also speaking, Dr. Sardar Mohammad Rahimi, promised to keep up his attempts, making sure other provinces are added to the list of Learning Cities 'as this will help us to learn from the experience of others and also share our experience with them.'" Dr Rahimi thanked UNESCO for its support towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to "ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning".

Najiba, who is a woman from Bamyan, and one of the graduated learners, came up to the stage, adding, "Bamyan to the list of Learning Cities will help encourage more mothers to learn to read and write."

The addition to the list of Learning Cities is the latest in many honors for Bamyan.

In 2015, Bamyan was also named as a cultural capital of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation or SAARC, and included the list of UNESCO's 'Innovative Cities'. Bamyan's strategic historical and geographical location, and the hard work of its residents makes it an attractive choice.

The celebration continued with a range of cultural activities and ended with the distribution of the traditional chapan coat and cap, to some of the invited guests.

Old Challenges, New Opportunities

The majority of Bamyan province residents are eager to improve their economic opportunities and thus, acknowledge the importance of education. This is why UNESCO has been working on literacy programs in Bamyan since 2004.

Last year 20,000 learners graduated from the UNESCO supported literacy course, with 85% being women. Young girls who have been educated, are now volunteer teachers: they teach other people from Bamyan in the caves and mountains near Constitution Road. These brave female teachers are being assisted with books and instructional materials.

The Government and UNESCO encourage equal literacy opportunities and rights of both women and men. Educated men and women play active civic roles, for example supporting the local administration during the elections.

Their transparency, hard work and volunteerism have been appreciated. This is one of the reasons why Bamyan is now on the list of UNESCO's learning cities.

UNESCO Kabul joins Workshop on Emergency Protection of Intangible Heritage in Tokyo from 7 to 9 March, 2018

A three-day workshop entitled, 'Study of Emergency Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Conflict-Affected Countries in Asia' was organized by the International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI) at the National Museum in Tokyo from 7 to 9 March, 2018.

Participants of the workshop were national officials from the Afghanistan Ministry of Information and Culture of Afghanistan (directors of department of Archaeology, Folklore and Music), staff of IRCI, community members of ICH practitioners and local government officials in Nikko city in Japan, and staff of the Tokyo National Museum. Masanori Nagaoka, Chief of Culture unit of the UNESCO Office in Afghanistan joined the workshop as a facilitator.

This workshop was aimed at supporting the Afghan government's efforts and the initiative of IRCI and UNESCO for the safeguarding of ICH in Afghanistan, and for the effective implementation of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The following activities were conducted during the workshop:

a) Lectures and presentations on

- UNESCO's focus on post conflict countries and ICH: Agenda 15 of the 12th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the safeguarding of ICH;

- Introduction of the IRCI's project 'A Study of Emergency Protection for Intangible Cultural Heritage in conflict-affected countries in Asia; and

- Current ICH safeguarding status and efforts in Afghanistan;

b) Discussions between Afghan officials, IRCI and UNESCO to identify a research survey outline, timeframe, questionnaire, local partners, survey methods and provisional operational budget in Afghanistan;

c) A field visit and interaction with ICH practitioners in Nikko city in Japan

During the workshop, the Afghan participants shared the current issues and challenges in the field of ICH such as: unstable security



status; lack of awareness of ICH; no ICH inventory; insufficient of financial, technical and human resources and capacities for the safeguarding of ICH; no effective coordination in the country; and lack of women participation in ICH.

While the IRCI introduced its research activity plan on the study of emergency protection of ICH in Afghanistan, Mr. Nagaoka also shared the UNESCO's work plan in Afghanistan in 2018-2019. In order to commence UNESCO's support to the Afghan authorities in this area, the UNESCO Kabul office, with the Ministry of Information and Culture, plans to organize a series of capacity building workshops in Afghanistan from April 2018 concerning the 2003 ICH Convention and community-based inventorying of ICH. These will be conducted through the UNESCO's regular budget and the international community's financial assistance, especially from the Government of Italy and EU. A set of pedagogic materials which UNESCO developed will be used. These materials will provide an overview of the objectives and key safeguarding concepts of the Convention, as well as the national obligations of States Parties and the mechanisms for international cooperation. They also offer a platform where participants will reflect collectively on experiences and challenges in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage within the broader context of sustainable development.

During their stay in Japan in March 2018, the workshop participants visited Nikko city, one of the World Heritage sites in Japan. And they learned from ICH practitioners and municipality in Nikko city how the local community can be involved in safeguarding ICH with practical measures while protecting the World Heritage site in Nikko city, Japan.

UNESCO Tehran Joins Celebration of Tabriz as Capital of Islamic Tourism 2018



Tabriz, 25 April 2018: UNESCO joined the festive ceremony attended by President Hassan Rouhani and representatives of the international community to celebrate the designation of Tabriz as Capital of Islamic Tourism in 2018 by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

President Rouhani in his opening remarks highlighted the development of tourism as one of the means of fostering inter-cultural dialogue and constructive interactions in the world: "Tourism will make the nations truly understand the world and the history of the past, and in fact, provide better understanding of human connections in the past and make it possible to understand the present and future of the world".

Ms. Esther Kuisch-Laroche, Director and Representative of the UNESCO Cluster Office in Tehran attended the ceremony and expressed her support by saying: "At UNESCO we are delighted that Tabriz is the capital of Islamic tourism for 2018.

Tabriz has always been a place of cultural exchange since antiquity. Its historic bazaar complex, which became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2010, was one of the most important commercial centres on the Silk Road. In addition, the city hosts many other cultural and historical treasures. It is my hope that many tourists will come to Tabriz this year to discover the beauty of the city and the region."

The historic bazaar complex of Tabriz consists of a series of interconnected, covered, brick structures, buildings, and enclosed spaces for different functions. Tabriz and its Bazaar were already prosperous and famous in the 13th century, when the town, in the province of Eastern Azerbaijan, became the capital city of the Safavid kingdom.

The city lost its status as capital in the 16th century, but remained important as a commercial hub until the end of the 18th century, with the expansion of Ottoman power. It is one of the most complete examples of the traditional commercial and cultural system of Iran.

On December 23, 2015, the final day of the three-day 9th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers in Niamey, Niger, OIC ministers of tourism approved the selection of Tabriz as the capital of Islamic tourism in 2018.

In September 2016, Tabriz was declared a World Craft City by the World Craft Council, which, along with Isfahan, makes it one of Iran's only two cities to boast the title.

Bamiyan Cultural Centre Trains Afghan Female Engineers

UNESCO Kabul, 26 April 2018—As part of the activities of its thematic area two, “Better Higher Education for Culture and Creative Industries” under the National Program for Culture and Creative Economy (NPCE), and the second phase of the Bamiyan Cultural Centre project, UNESCO opened spring and autumn internship courses for female engineering students to benefit from an on-site experience in a large and significant construction project in Afghanistan.

The training will provide the interns with a general overview of construction issues and practical experience of construction practices. To this end, the internship combines classroom training with specific assigned roles on the work site that will require the interns to spend a large part of their work day involved in activities directly related to the construction project.

The primary goal of the courses is to help students develop a comprehensive, real-world perspective of construction operations and construction management. Students who successfully complete the course requirements will be able to apply the skills and techniques learned to actual operational situations.

The internship is organized by UNESCO, takes place under the responsibility of the contractor of the Bamiyan Cultural Centre, Khaliq Kabir Construction Company, and is funded by the Government of Korea.



The spring training period started on the 8th of April 2018, and will end on the 8th of July. The autumn course will take place between September to November 2018.

With the financial supports of the Governments of Korea and Afghanistan, the Bamiyan Cultural Centre project endeavors to establish a model for creative hubs and community involvement in the Afghan context.

The result of an international design competition, the design, “Descriptive Memory: The Eternal Presence of Absence,” was selected and is now being built on Chawni Hill.

The program of the building comprises two exhibition halls, an auditorium, a tea-room, a shop open to the public, and a series of

workshops and classrooms destined for community use.

The “Better Higher Education for Culture and Creative Economy” thematic area of the NPCE aims to enhance the knowledge of Afghan university students in culture-oriented studies including architecture.

Culture

UNESCO joined a Lecture on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Afghanistan at the Austrian Academic of Sciences in Vienna on 4 April, 2018

A public lecture entitled, 'the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Afghanistan' was organized by the University of Vienna, Austrian Academic of Sciences and Austrian ICOM (International Council of Museums) at the Academy of Sciences in Vienna on 4 April, 2018.

Some 100 people attended the gathering, including members of the Science Academy, professors and students of the University of Vienna, national officials from the Afghanistan Embassy to Austria, local government officials in Vienna city, local media and general public. Masanori Nagaoka, Chief of Culture unit of the UNESCO Office in Afghanistan gave a lecture on the 'Safeguarding Project for the Bamiyan World Heritage site'.

During the lecture, Emeritus Professor Deborah Klimburg-Salter of Vienna University, explained her working experience in Afghanistan from 2004 to 2011, and the achievements at the National Museum in Afghanistan in Kabul. She introduced to the audience the challenges of plunder and illicit trafficking of museum collections. Professor Klimburg-Salter said that the Kabul Museum had been looted during the unrest in the late 20th century and a great part of its unique historical collection was heavily pillaged from the museum, much of which has found its way into the art market. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Afghan authorities, UNESCO, ICOM and Interpol, the Red List of Afghanistan Antiquities at Risk was created in 2005, this has helped in the recovery and restitution of a number of the museum collections from around the world. She stressed that the crucial first step to ensuring the speedy and rightful recovery of the objects is to create and update periodically the museum's documentation system, with a view to ensuring the safety of museum objects and identifying what was stolen. Professor Klimburg-Salter went on to say that it is the duty of the international community to unite in protecting this unique cultural heritage for future generations.

Mr. Nagaoka also gave a lecture on the Afghan government's efforts and the initiative of UNESCO for the safeguarding of the Bamiyan World Heritage in Afghanistan. He explained that UNESCO and the Government of Afghanistan have been conducting a major five-phase project for the Safeguarding of the Cultural Landscape and



Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley, from 2003 to the present with financial support from the Government of Japan. While the Phases I to IV project focused on emergency interventions to conserve and rehabilitate the fragile archaeological and geological context of the site, Mr. Nagaoka mentioned that the on-going phase V project commencing from 2016 is addressing the benchmarks to lay the foundations to remove the site from the List of Heritage in Danger in the coming years. Referring to the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues in 2001, he also introduced outcomes of the International Scientific Technical Meeting on the Future Treatment of the Bamiyan Buddha statues, which was organized in Tokyo in September, 2017.

He explained that reconstruction of cultural heritage due to acts of deliberate destruction is currently discussed within the context of holistic strategies for the protection of human rights and the promotion of peace building. Mr. Nagaoka also clarified that the World Heritage Committee has recently made a paradigm shift towards supporting reconstructions when it considered the Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina; this bridge was destroyed after the breakup of former Yugoslavia. He outlined the importance of raising awareness of the greater role that culture can play in peace and development.

Kabul Photo Biennale Invited to Seoul to Show the Beauty of Afghan Culture



UNESCO Kabul, 5 April 2018 - The UNESCO Kabul Office together with the Afghan Embassy and the Afghan Student's Association in Korea, with the international NGO, World Culture Open, have co-organised a cultural event, "Hello, Afghanistan!" to introduce the Nawruz celebration to Koreans, by featuring photographs from Afghanistan—where Nawruz is widely celebrated.

The first and second editions of the Kabul Photo Biennale—"The Afghanistan We Are Proud Of" and "Rebirth", respectively, were displayed at the event.

The opening was held on the 18th of March, in the premises of World Culture Open in Seoul, Korea. The Kabul Photo Biennale exhibition sought to present to the Korean and international public aspects of Afghanistan through the beauty of its traditional dresses, dances, and food. The photo exhibition focused on revealing the different regional strands of the country's cultural heritage, and on representing the rebirth of the country after decades of turbulence.

The H.E. Ambassador Mohammad Saleem Sayeb, the Afghan Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, noted the importance of culture to leverage peace in Afghanistan in these terms:

"Culture is the expression and reflection of people's dreams and wishes, traditions and customs. I believe cultural exchanges promote co-existing amongst societies, improve interpersonal dealings, and strengthen peace and stability. The photos here represent the best face of Afghanistan."

Mr. Abdullah Bikzad, the President of the Afghan Student's Association in Korea also stressed the importance of this cultural exchange. "The motivation for organising the event "Hello, Afghanistan!" was to bring awareness, understanding and appreciation of Afghan culture and values."

The Kabul Photo Biennale is a bi-annual photo festival organized by the Afghan Government and UNESCO in Afghanistan to promote the sense of national identity. The first and second editions of the Biennale were held in 2015 and 2017, and the next edition of the Kabul Photo Biennale will be held in 2019.

Contact Us



UNESCO Kabul Field Office

Address: House No. KB 64,7

Behind Esmat Muslim Street,

PD 10, Shar-e-Naw, Kabul, Afghanistan

Website: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/kabul/home/>

UNESCO Islamabad Field Office

Address: 7th Floor, Serena Business Complex,

G-5/1 Islamabad Pakistan

Website: <http://unesco.org.pk/>

UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office

Address: Sa'adabad Complex,

Zaferanieh, Tehran, Islamic Republic of IRAN

Website: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/tehran/home/>