



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

A close-up, high-angle photograph of a young girl with dark hair tied back, wearing a white shirt with a red sash. She is focused on writing in a notebook with a green pencil. Her left hand rests on the page. The notebook has some faint lines and a small drawing of a scalloped shape. The background is a light-colored wooden desk.

National Commissions for UNESCO

Annual Report

2013

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National Commissions for UNESCO

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2013



FOREWORD

It is a great pleasure to present the first *Annual Report of National Commissions for UNESCO*.

This new information tool embodies the joint efforts, activities and accomplishments of the vast network of National Commissions, established by Member States in accordance with the UNESCO Constitution. Present on all continents, they work in their respective countries as well as together, to advance the ideals and objectives of the Organization. For almost seventy years, these ideals have been the unifying common denominator for all National Commissions, regardless of their size and proximity to UNESCO Headquarters. This new publication presents an overview of activities carried out in 2013, including success stories, illustrated by photographs of memorable activities and events.

The contributions are different in scope, but each seeks to meet the objectives of the recent *Review of the Cooperation of UNESCO's Secretariat with National Commissions for UNESCO* – to clarify the role of National Commissions, to reinforce coordination, to strengthen partnerships with civil society and the private sector, to improve resource mobilization and the use of limited resources, to better manage the knowledge produced by the network, and to improve the overall approach to capacity-building in the National Commissions. In the context of the Organization's overall reform, I believe this work is more essential than ever.



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This Annual Report is a first step in the implementation of the Action Plan approved by the General Conference at its 37th session, to improve cooperation within the network of National Commissions. This Plan recommended that each National Commission produce an annual account of its activities for distribution to its Government, to members and partners, as well as with other interested National Commissions, Permanent

Delegations and the Secretariat.

I am confident that this overview will enable the National Commissions to better appreciate the remarkable work undertaken by their counterparts. This provides a strong foundation for sharing best practices and experiences, especially among National Commissions facing similar challenges, to strengthen cooperation. This is also as an excellent opportunity for the Secretariat to renew its commitment to the network of National Commissions in recognition of their unique efforts in advancing the shared values and common goals guiding UNESCO.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Irina Bokova". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Irina Bokova,
Director-general of UNESCO



INTRODUCTION

National Commissions for UNESCO are national entities established by Member State governments in accordance with UNESCO's Constitution (Article VII) and the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO. They serve as important bodies for liaison, advice, information and programme implementation. Through their direct links to government and close contacts with academia and civil society networks, National Commissions contribute to the achievement of UNESCO's objectives regarding programme delivery, partnerships with civil society and visibility at national, sub-regional and regional levels. They are considered to be constituent elements of the Organization.

The comprehensive review of UNESCO's cooperation with National Commissions conducted in 2011 and the follow-up action taken in 2012 and 2013 generated momentum and commitment to strengthen this longstanding cooperation. The Action Plan elaborated by the tripartite working group within the Executive Board, and adopted by the General Conference, provided the Member States and the Secretariat with new direction and guidance to further enhance cooperation with this network.

The Action Plan contained several findings. Notable among these were recommendations that UNESCO should better manage the knowledge generated by the National Commissions, that the National Commissions should regularly report on their concrete actions and major achievements, and that they should endeavour to share and promote best practices among themselves.

Indeed, many National Commissions regularly produce newsletters, annual reports, booklets and electronic materials via their websites and social networks. The UNESCO Secretariat also maintains and updates its websites and databases, and publishes monthly newsletters with the aim of improving communication, raising awareness and sharing information with this network. However, until now, the Organization has not produced an overall annual report summarizing the various efforts and achievements made by the National Commissions in their individual countries.

In response to Recommendation 7 of the Action Plan, and to address the above shortcoming, the Secretariat invited all National Commissions to provide an update of their activities in 2013 including one success story and a photographic illustration. Based on the contributions received between October 2013 and March 2014 from 120 out of 199 National Commissions around the world, the Secretariat was able to compile the relevant information and produce this first edition of the Annual Report of National Commissions for UNESCO. This new publication is intended to showcase the real value of our National Commissions and their active contribution to UNESCO's ideals and programmes at country level. It is hoped that the next edition of this Annual Report will reflect the activities of an even larger number of National Commissions.

Please note that the contents of this Annual Report were edited to fit a common format. However, every effort has been made to retain the essence of the information provided. The Secretariat wishes to apologize for any possible oversight or misunderstanding.

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Action Plan for enhancing the cooperation of UNESCO's Secretariat with National Commissions for UNESCO





Africa

BENIN

Beninese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Félicien Zacharie, Minister of Nursery and Primary Teaching

Secretary-General: Mr N'dah Marcel Oya

Update of activities in 2013

The Beninese National Commission for UNESCO organized a series of activities in 2013. In spite of their apparent success, the outcomes would have been more conclusive if the Commission had had steady funding and access to relevant material and human resources.

The first of these activities was the Ordinary Session of the General Assembly 2013. The statutory texts stipulate that, in the run-up to the UNESCO General Conference, each National Commission should hold a general assembly. Accordingly, in preparation for the 37th session of the General Conference, the members of the Beninese National Commission met to examine the preparatory documents and prepare draft resolutions for Benin to submit to the Director-General.

The second activity was a training seminar organized for Associated Schools coordinators in Benin and a seminar-workshop to give fresh impetus to UNESCO Clubs in Benin. Associated Schools and Clubs for UNESCO have been the pride of Benin in terms of implementation of UNESCO actions. In recent times, however, activities have dropped off. It was against this backdrop that the National Commission organized two activities to build the capacities of Associated Schools managers with regard to the preparation of projects for submission to UNESCO.

The third activity was an initiative to raise awareness among young people of the adverse effects of corruption in schools. The scale of the phenomenon, which is gaining ground, jeopardizes the future of young people and impedes the implementation of development projects. The Beninese Government has responded with the development of an anti-corruption policy to combat the problem. As part of its mission, the National Commission has organized tours to raise the awareness of stakeholders in schools (see below).

The fourth activity was the preparation of the National Commission's procedural handbook. Following the recommendation of the Council of Ministers (13 July 2011) and the finding that many Beninese remain unaware of UNESCO and the National Commission, it became apparent that there was a need for a procedural handbook. The handbook aims to inform the public about UNESCO's priorities, the procedure for submitting and implementing projects, and the advantages and opportunities offered by UNESCO.

These activities, funded by the national budget, have allowed the intellectual community to remain informed about UNESCO's priorities, and have been highly instrumental in spreading the Organization's ideals. They were carried out together with the National Commission's Executive Committee, the presidents of Clubs for UNESCO and UNESCO Associated Schools, and staff from other partner ministries.



Pupils at the UNESCO ASPnet school, CES Abomey-Calvi (Benin), beside their mural of the logo of the Transatlantic Slave Trade Education Project.

© UNESCO / Jean O'Sullivan

A success story

Corruption eats away at all areas of social, economic and political life, but its negative effects in schools are often obscured. The National Commission organized a tour to raise awareness of the adverse effects of corruption in the districts of Atacora-Donga and Borgou-Alibori in teacher-training colleges and universities. The tour examined manifestations of corruption in schools in terms of context, objectives and definitions; it explored factors, causes and consequences; and finally asked what could be done to promote healthy actors in a healthy education system.

The participants identified the pernicious effects of corruption on young people in schools and universities, focusing in particular on the destruction of values, before making a series of recommendations for education stakeholders at various levels.

BOTSWANA

Botswana National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Rahim Khan

Secretary-General: Ms Kgomotso Motlotle

Update of activities in 2013

UNESCO's commitment to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Botswana continued in 2013 with the beginning of the implementation phase of the Better Education for Africa Rise project. As Botswana continues to increase its own expertise in TVET systems, synergy with Korean experts is expected to result in education programmes that are not only relevant, but efficient, practicable and cost effective.

Botswana hosted the Southern Region Man and the Biosphere capacity-building workshop, supported by the German Agency of Nature Conservation in Gaborone (12–14 November). The aim of the workshop was to provide a clear understanding of UNESCO biosphere reserves, to examine Makgadikgadi Pan as a potential area for a biosphere reserve, and to ensure that the Madrid Action for Plan Biosphere Reserves (2008–2013) is implemented in 2014.

Botswana benefited for the first time from the UNESCO Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sport in 2013. The 'Clean Sport' national anti-doping awareness-raising and education programme for athletes and members of their entourage aimed to educate athletes at various stages in their careers. The target group included coaches, managers, National Federation administrators, teachers, parents and medical personnel.

In December, eight young people were able to participate in the UNESCO World Heritage Volunteers Programme at Tsodilo Hills, at the initiative of the Botswana Work Camp Association.

The office of UNESCO-HIV and AIDS in Botswana started operations on 1 July 2012 and its responsibility and scope has grown tremendously, as evidenced by the number of partners it has embraced, as well as the activities implemented. The office has also worked towards embedding the presence of UNESCO in Botswana and among UN agencies operating in the country. Its good working relationship and collaboration with the National Commission for UNESCO has enabled the Organization's work to be acknowledged, realized and recognized by many key stakeholders in the country.

The Botswana National Commission mobilized funding for a media campaign for the inscription of Okavango Delta to the World Heritage List. The Commission provided the media with information about the nominated site and the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

Following the inventorying of intangible cultural heritage in Kgatlang and Chobe Districts in 2011 and 2012 respectively, the North East District was inventoried in 2013 with the intention of submitting a fourth nomination file to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

Lastly, funding from the UNESCO Participation Programme assisted ratification by Botswana of the following UNESCO Conventions: the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the means of prohibiting and preventing the illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property; the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on stolen or illegally exported cultural objects; and the 1954 UNESCO protocol for the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict.



Secretaries-General of National Commissions in Southern Africa and Programme Officers.

© Botswana Ministry of Education and Skills Development

A success story

Over the years, UNESCO National Commissions of the Southern Africa region have organized activities to share and learn from each other's experiences. One such meeting, the 2013 Sub-Regional Capacity-Building Seminar for National Commissions for UNESCO, took place in Gaborone (22–26 July). The Botswana National Commission for UNESCO hosted the seminar with the support of the Namibian and German National Commissions for UNESCO. Twenty-four participants representing nine Southern African Development Community countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe) were present, including all staff members of the Botswana National Commission.

The capacity-building seminar gave participants the opportunity to share experiences and best practices, prioritize Southern African Sub Regional activities, and discuss recommendations from the recent Windhoek training session. The seminar also gave newly appointed Secretaries-General and Programme Officers of National Commissions a general induction on the structure, operations and responsibilities of the Commissions, and created a positive platform for sustainable networking. EFA goals 1 (Expand Early Childhood Care and Education) and 6 (Improvement of the Quality of Education) were identified as priorities. National Commissions were requested to share information with Education Programme Officers, who would devise initiatives to accelerate progress towards achievement of these goals by 2015 through the Sub-Regional Big Push Initiative.

BURUNDI

Burundi National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Joseph Butore, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Permanent Secretary: Mr Salvator Nyabenda

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Burundi National Commission for UNESCO participated in a number of events and implemented several activities in line with UNESCO's main objectives.

The National Commission implemented projects approved and funded by UNESCO under the Participation Programme for the 2012–2013 biennium. It also processed applications for fellowship grants co-sponsored by UNESCO and donor countries.

The Commission organized an information meeting on the role and organization of National Commissions for UNESCO in ensuring the Organization's visibility. It also implemented a project to train schoolteachers in learning assessment techniques (see below).

The National Commission contributed to a microscience workshop, held in Yaoundé (in March), and participated in a seminar of French-speaking African National Commissions for UNESCO, held in Dakar (in September).

The Commission also took part in the 8th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in Baku (2–7 December), and participated in the 37th session of UNESCO's General Conference.



A success story

For the Burundi National Commission for UNESCO, the most successful activity of 2013 was the implementation of a project to train municipal lower secondary school teachers in learning assessment techniques. Launched on the eve of the new school year 2013/14, this training course allowed the correction of shortcomings noted in teaching and methodological practices in test assessment.

The success of the activity was acknowledged by beneficiaries, who stated that the project revitalized the educational assessment system in the secondary schools where it was implemented. They further expressed the hope that the advanced training course could be rolled out on a broader scale to teachers in all disciplines.

© Burundi National Commission for UNESCO

CAMEROON

National Commission of the Republic of Cameroon for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Adjidja Youssef, Minister of Basic Education

Acting Secretary-General: Mr Owona Ada

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the National Commission of the Republic of Cameroon for UNESCO began an internal reorganization in line with changes within UNESCO and national institutions.

The National Commission also implemented a number of initiatives to strengthen Cameroon's cooperation with UNESCO. It extended an invitation for an official visit to the Director-General, it made applications to transform the Microscience Centre of Excellence and CIRCB medical research institute into Category II Centres, and it established the UNESCO Regional Office (see below).

The National Commission also undertook a series of activities to implement UNESCO programme.

In education, the Commission developed a reference framework and strategic management tools to combat illiteracy. It implemented a multi-year plan of action to monitor and evaluate progress towards Education for All. It also initiated a pilot programme to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS for 88,000 pupils and provided training for 1,000 teachers.

In culture, the National Commission established an interministerial coordinating committee for protected area management. It also participated in various meetings of the 4th session of the International Programme for the Development of Communication.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission attended international meetings of the UNESCO International Oceanographic Commission.

In the social and human sciences, the National Commission facilitated capacity-building for social actors and finalized the national gender policy.

In communication, the Commission established four community radio stations and supported capacity-building for the Graduate School of Science and Information and Communication Technology (ESSTIC), the International Council of French-Speaking Radio and Television (CIRTEF) and media professionals.

Lastly, the Commission cooperated with ISESCO to jointly organize five national and regional capacity-building seminars, and fund micro-projects for seventy-five disadvantaged women.



Headquarters of the UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office in Central Africa, Yaoundé.

© National Commission of the Republic of Cameroon for UNESCO

A success story

In 2012, the Yaoundé cluster office was transformed into a Regional Office as part of the Organization's ongoing decentralization process. This conversion was accompanied by an increase in staff, which had a corresponding impact on the premises made available by the Cameroonian Government. An analysis revealed the need for twenty-one extra office rooms for a total of at least fifty-four office rooms, as well as additional meeting rooms.

The short deadline given for establishing the Office ruled out new construction. An agreement was therefore signed for a building with over seventy-six office rooms, making the Regional Office the second largest UNESCO building in the field.

In December 2013, the Regional Office moved to the new premises, which are situated in the embassy district. They are due to be officially opened during the planned visit of the Director-General to Cameroon in 2014.

CAPE VERDE

Cape Verdean National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr António Leão Correia E Silva, Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation

Permanent Secretary: Ms Maria da Gloria Rendall Ribeiro Serrano Santos

Activities in 2013

The Cape Verdean National Commission acts as an interface between the government and UNESCO, developing activities in the Organization's fields of expertise and raising the profile of the National Commission and the Organization. In spite of a limited number of staff and small budget, the National Commission has developed a significant body of activities, relating in particular to educational projects on the environment and natural and cultural heritage.

In 2013, the National Commission launched a reading development project with participation by UNESCO Associated Schools, and funded by the Participation Programme, to provide for teacher training in partnership with the Book and Library Institute.

The Commission also introduced an environmental education pilot project concerning energy efficiency, with the participation of two UNESCO Associated Schools. The project was undertaken in cooperation with the National School of Business and Technology and the General Directorate of Energy, and with funding from the National Commission, the Portuguese cooperation agency and CVTelecom. Teachers

received the necessary training and are introducing this knowledge into the classroom.

UNESCO, HidroEX/Brazil and the National Commission jointly organized a two-week water quality-control and monitoring course, which was attended by thirty-five water resources professionals from the public and private sectors. The National Commission also organized a training course on heritage education and cultural tourism with Sphaera Mundi and ASPPEC associations. Teachers were given training in heritage education, and women in the World Heritage site of Cidade Velha received small-business training.

The National Commission provided support for a high-level ministerial meeting on a multi-sector approach to promoting youth employment within Africa's creative economy, held in Praia (27–29 November). Support was also provided for applications for UNESCO fellowships, two of which were awarded to candidates from Cape Verde.

The National Commission found co-funding for the first issue of the *Desafios* magazine from the Amílcar Cabral Chair at the University of Cape Verde, which has applied to become a UNESCO Chair.

During the year, the National Commission also built up relations with UNESCO sectors and divisions, assisted National Committees for the Man and the Biosphere programme and the International Hydrological Programme, and supported applications for UNESCO Chairs, to be submitted in 2014.

Lastly, the Cape Verdean National Commission met with other members of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries during the 37th session of the General Conference to sketch out a common strategy for cooperation.



Environmental education programme 'Sister Schools' conducted by hidroEX with the National Commission and the Ministry of Education of Cape Verde.

© UNESCO-HidroEX, Brazil

A success story

The 'Sister schools – my world through your world' programme allowed two Portuguese-speaking school communities in Cape Verde and Minas Gerais, Brazil, to exchange experience, good practice, knowledge and culture for a better understanding of environmental issues relating to water. The programme, set up and coordinated by UNESCO-HidroEX/Brazil and the Cape Verdean National Commission with support from the Ministry of Education and Sport, took the form of a competition. Entrants could submit letters or photos with text. Teams of experts shortlisted entries and awarded the prizes: a trip to Cape Verde for six Brazilian pupils and a trip to Brazil for six Cape Verdean pupils, accompanied by teachers and officials from each country.

This programme proved a success both as an example of good practice in South-South cooperation and communication of knowledge and experience relating to water and its sustainable management. Almost 1,000 pupils from twenty-four schools took part, and thousands more discovered the subject via online polls. Young participants aged 9–13 voiced their concerns about water wastage and pollution, as well as scarcity. They also called for improvements in government water policy.

CHAD

Chadian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Ahmat Khazali Açyl, Minister of Secondary Education and Vocational Training

Secretary-General: Mr Abdelkérîm Adoum Bahar

Update of activities in 2013

The Chadian National Commission works with thirteen ministries in UNESCO's fields of expertise, civil society organizations, and youth and women's associations. In 2013, the National Commission provided support for a number of activities in cooperation with experts from the ministries concerned.

The National Commission assisted the Ministries of Culture and the Environment to draft an international assistance request and a progress report on the proposed inscription of Zakouma National Park on the World Heritage List. The Commission also assisted in the preparation of a discussion report on the management and conservation of Lake Chad, in particular regarding the role to be played by fishing communities.

The National Commission collaborated with the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry for Tourism and Craft Industries to organize an awareness-raising day about craft industries. The event highlighted the major role they play in promoting and protecting culture and their importance as a source of employment for women and young people. The activity was funded by the UNESCO Office in Yaoundé and brought together officials from the two ministries, cultural entrepreneurs and organizations working in the sector.

The National Commission assisted the Ministry of Secondary Education and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy in the preparation of a project to introduce information and communication technologies (ICTs) into education and training. The project also received technical support from the UNESCO Office in Yaoundé.

The National Commission worked with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to set up a National Bioethics Committee. The establishment of this committee led to the signing of a memorandum of understanding between UNESCO and the Ministry as part of the Assisting Bioethics Committees project.

The National Commission provided support to the Ministry for Youth and Sports for the organization of a national workshop. Its purpose was to draw up an operational action plan for the National Youth Advisory Council on the use of ICTs for socio-economic integration. This meeting built on an earlier workshop, held in Yaoundé and attended by National Youth Advisory Councils from ten countries of the Economic Community of Central African States. This aimed to set up a monitoring centre for research, exchange and cooperation to improve the social and economic integration of young people in these countries.



Kotoko women are renowned for their pottery-making skills, which are handed down from mother to daughter. This art, which still survives despite competition from modern ironmongery, enables its practitioners to make a living.

© Chadian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The most popular activity among young people and cultural communities was the briefing day on the Regional Youth Forum for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in Brazzaville (19–23 November).

This briefing day was organized by the Chadian National Commission with funding from the UNESCO Office in Yaoundé, following a recommendation from the Brazzaville Forum. It brought together young people from Central African countries for the purpose of implementing the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Prior to the briefing day four young participants from the Brazzaville Forum carried out surveys in two regions of Chad to gather information on intangible cultural heritage in the region. The results of the surveys were shown during the briefing day. The event also brought together academics undertaking research into endangered languages, practises around child-raising and related fields.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Côte d'Ivoire National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Kandia Camara, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Lou Mathieu Bamba

Update of activities in 2013

The Director-General's consultation with Member States and National Commissions of the Africa region took place in Abidjan (June 2012). The success of this event set the standard for Côte d'Ivoire and its National Commission in terms of cooperation with UNESCO. Consequently, the Côte d'Ivoire National Commission planned and implemented a series of activities in 2013 aimed at strengthening cooperation between Côte d'Ivoire and UNESCO.

These activities included a workshop on the 1974 Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace, and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms (February). This was followed by a workshop on the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (March), and a workshop on the impact of environmental and climate change on migration in Côte d'Ivoire (March). Participants included national and local authorities, civil society, policy-makers and local communities. The above activities were funded mainly by UNESCO and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire.

In addition, the National Commission played an active part in Côte d'Ivoire's preparation for and participation in UNESCO's Executive Board sessions and the 37th session of the General Conference. The Commission was able to enlist and coordinate national experts to ensure more efficient and cost-effective participation in the work of the General Conference.



Weaving workshop in Alépé.

© Côte d'Ivoire National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2012, the Côte d'Ivoire National Commission for UNESCO organized an introductory workshop on natural dyeing techniques. The participants were fifty women and girls who were survivors of war. The course, held in Issia, allowed learners to acquire natural dyeing skills using traditional and organic dyeing techniques and to organize themselves into an income-generating cooperative.

Following the success of this first workshop, a follow-up workshop on general weaving and dyeing was organized in 2013. The one-month workshop, held from April to May, was attended by fifty women from Alépé. Participants were taught techniques for weaving and producing traditional kita loincloths by Ms Alice Yapo, 2009 winner of the UNESCO Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts. The women gained in confidence both socially and psychologically, as multicoloured productions of surpassing beauty emerged from the looms.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

National Commission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for UNESCO

President: Mr Maker Mwangu Famba, Minister of Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education

Permanent Secretary: Mr Liema Ibongo-Botie Lazare

Update of activities in 2013

The National Commission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for UNESCO had a particularly busy year in 2013.

In education, the National Commission welcomed the visit of the Assistant Director-General for Education. The ADG met in Kinshasa with the Prime Minister, Mr Augustin Matata Ponyo Mapon, and senior ministers and education officials, to discuss progress towards Education for All (EFA) within the framework of the 2nd Eastern Africa High-Level Forum on EFA, held in Kampala (8–14 July).

The Assistant Director-General applauded the government's decision to significantly raise the proportion of the national

budget allocated to education, which has generated a significant increase in the number of children and adolescents enrolled in school. He also praised the step taken by the government to pay teachers directly via electronic means. Remaining challenges include 7 million out-of-school children and adolescents, adult literacy, quality and increasing participation in technical and vocational education and training.

The National Commission also organized the 6th International Policy Dialogue Forum of the International Task Force on Teachers for EFA, held in Kinshasa (27–28 November). The International Task Force is a global alliance of EFA partners working together to address the 'teacher gap'. This edition of the forum examined the theme 'The management of teacher education – trends in policies and practice: what works, why and for whom?'

In culture, the National Commission organized a round table in Kinshasa (22–25 October) on the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see below).

Finally, in August the National Commission organized an open day to promote awareness about the programmes and goals of UNESCO and the activities of the National Commission.

All of these activities were conducted with considerable assistance from the UNESCO Office in Kinshasa.



Salonga National Park.
© Kim S. Gjerstad

A success story

The round table on the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on UNESCO's world heritage lists brought together experts representing a number of national institutions, including the Institute of National Museums of the Congo and the Permanent Secretariat. Its purpose was to build capacities among experts with a view to the preparation of lists forming part of World Heritage nomination files, submitted on behalf of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The round table was jointly organized by the Belgian French-speaking and German Commissions for UNESCO and the National Commission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for UNESCO, with the participation of the Université Libre de Bruxelles, the Brazzaville Heritage Department and the Porto-Novo Heritage School. It was therefore a perfect example of North-South and South-South cooperation.

GABON

Gabonese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Léon Nzouba, Minister of National and Vocational Education

Secretary-General: Mr Juste Joris Tindy-Poaty

Update of activities in 2013

For the Gabonese National Commission for UNESCO, 2013 was a year of rebirth. During the year the Commission progressed in accordance with its statutory and administrative obligations, but also began to open up and promote itself better to its partner institutions, civil society, the private sector and the general public.

In operational budget terms an increase from €14,799.75 to €155,052.82 enabled the National Commission to finance out of its own funds a number of activities as part of its annual programme.

One of these activities was the celebration of International Mother Language Day. In order to revitalize the national network of the UNESCO Associated Schools, celebrations for this day were held at the secondary school, Institution Immaculée Conception, a member of ASPnet Gabon.

To encourage civil society participation in UNESCO activities, the National Commission helped the Omar Bongo Ondimba Foundation for Peace, Science, Culture and the Environment to become a founding member of the Network of Foundations and Research Institutions for the Promotion of a Culture of Peace in Africa. The network was established on the initiative of the Félix Houphouët-Boigny International Foundation for Peace, with the support of UNESCO and the African Union (20 September).

The agreement between the National Commission and the Omar Bongo Ondimba Foundation was also an opportunity to plan the joint organization of a pan-African youth forum for the promotion of a culture of peace in Africa. The forum will take place in 2014, subject to the approval of the governmental authorities.

Other activities planned by the National Commission towards the end of 2013 included the organization of a training seminar for headteachers and focal points of ASPnet, the General Assembly of the National Federation of UNESCO Clubs, and the celebration of International Human Solidarity Day.



Presentation made on behalf of the National Commission for UNESCO by its Secretary-General.

© Gabonese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the Gabonese National Commission for UNESCO decided to organize an Open Day to help inform and raise awareness among its partners and the public of its statutory obligations and mission. The chosen theme was 'National Commission for UNESCO: linchpin of cooperation between Gabon and UNESCO'. An information brochure aimed at the general public was published for the event, explaining the importance of the National Commission for the implementation and monitoring of cooperation between Gabon and UNESCO.

Stands were manned throughout the day, providing information on UNESCO networks, fellowship programmes and the Participation Programme. The director and staff of the UNESCO Office in Libreville also maintained a stand and distributed books.

The Open Day also provided an opportunity for the official investiture of chairpersons and focal points for the national committees of UNESCO's international science programmes. These included the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme, the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme and the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).

GAMBIA

Gambia National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mrs Fatou L. Faye, Minister of Basic and Secondary Education

Acting Secretary-General: Mr Yahya Al-Matarr Jobe

Website: www.unesco.gm

Update of activities in 2013

The National Commission works to enhance UNESCO's visibility and programme priorities by ensuring outreach to non-governmental organizations and civil society partners, including relations with parliamentarians, municipalities, youth organizations, grassroots movements and other institutions and individuals working for the advancement of education, science, culture and information.

It also pursues collaboration with other National Commissions, the UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar and ISESCO in fostering sub-regional, cooperation through the joint execution of programmes.

In 2013, the staff of the Gambia National Commission worked closely with partners to successfully implement several key projects and programmes.

The first was a pilot study on Gender-Based Violence in Gambia. This two-day validation workshop, funded by UNESCO-BREDA and CODESRIA (20–21 February), was organized to validate the findings of case studies on 'Violence against women and gender based violence in the Gambia'

and 'Women's social movements in West Africa: Gambian women on the move'.

The National Commission also worked to organize several workshops, including the Sub-Regional Workshop on 'Revitalization of cross border languages to strengthen inter-regional dialogue and to promote access to universal knowledge' (7–9 March); the 'Workshop for training on the use of the ECOWAS Manual Reference' (22–26 April); and the 'Workshop to develop the Action Plan and validate the approach under the support for holistic functional literacy programmes in Gambia' (17–18 September).

The National Commission worked to implement a national open day symposium on a 'Knowledge-based economy in the Gambia' (14 May). It also implemented the project 'Capacity building and awareness creation on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) for sustainable development in support of the Gambia Government's programme for accelerated growth and employment (PAGE)'.

The National Commission worked closely on several projects made possible by the 2012–2013 UNESCO Participation Programme. These included 'Building capacity in bioethics in the Gambia: a multi-stakeholder collaborative approach model implemented by the Medical Research Council (MRC)'. The National Commission also cooperated with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education to implement two Participation Programme projects: 'Promoting creative and cultural industries in lower basic schools (primary schools) in the Gambia' and 'Research and foresight studies on emerging trends and challenges in science education: the case of the Gambia'.

Many of these activities were particularly challenging as implementation took place during a period of extreme financial constraints.



Sub-regional workshop on the revitalization of cross border languages to strengthen inter-regional dialogue and to promote access to universal knowledge'.

© Gambia National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The National Commissions of Gambia, Mali and Senegal for UNESCO signed a joint cooperation agreement to reinforce and strengthen regional cooperation at the grassroots level. The three countries share a common culture and use similar languages across their borders, facilitating communication and dialogue. A sub-regional workshop was organized in the Gambia (7–9 March) funded under the 2012–2013 Participation Programme. The workshop brought together fifty participants including experts in the Mandinka, Pulaar and Wolof languages from Guinea Bissau, Mali, Senegal and the Gambia. Among the participants were literacy service providers, linguists, writers, language lecturers from universities, educationists, members of civil society organizations and members of the Vehicular Cross Border Language Commissions of ACALAN (the African Academy of Languages).

The workshop aimed to reinforce regional cooperation and examine issues related to the infusion of emerging new concepts and terminologies into these languages, so as to better equip them for dynamic changes at the international level.

The workshop recommended achievable measures to foster the harmonization of cross-border orthography and dialect, and to provide a framework for peace-building and dialogue through the use of local languages.

GHANA

Ghana National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, Minister of Education

Chief Director: Mr Enoch H. Cobbinah

Website: <http://unescoghana.org>

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO focused its efforts on a series of actions to promote the delivery of quality education and peace-building, strengthening the National Commission and its Secretariat, and enhancing local and international relations. The Commission implemented a number of activities and programmes under challenging financial conditions.

The National Commission facilitated the distribution of programmable calculators and galileoscopes to deprived senior high schools in different regions of Ghana to help promote the learning and teaching of mathematics and science. The Commission also co-organized with the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education a 'Workshop to engage relevant sectors to review interventions aimed at boosting enrolment levels in education' (19–22 July). The workshop targeted Parliamentarians and was partly funded under the UNESCO Participation Programme.

The Ghana National Commission for UNESCO and Dyslexia International organized a three-day workshop on dyslexia, held at the University of Education, Winneba (9–11 October). The workshop was funded under the UNESCO Participation Programme with support from, Unibank Ghana Limited and the Australia High Commission in Ghana. It provided training for teachers and teacher trainers on the early detection of dyslexia, thereby facilitating appropriate interventions to allow learners with dyslexia to develop their full potential.

The Ghana National Commission collaborated with the UNESCO Office in Accra and UNESCO Headquarters to host the 'Conference on the Pedagogical Use of the General History of Africa in African Institutions of Higher Education', held in Accra (21–25 October). The Conference aimed to contribute to enhanced dialogue and peace-building among present and future generations.

The National Commission also facilitated Ghana's participation in the 191st and 192nd Sessions of the UNESCO Executive Board and the 37th General Conference of UNESCO.

Finally, the National Commission welcomed the Director-General of UNESCO, Mrs. Irina Bokova, on her visit to Ghana (7–9 July). The Director-General held discussions with the President of Ghana, the Speaker of Parliament, a number of parliamentarians and ministers of State, and the Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast. She emphasized the need to strengthen education in Ghana and reiterated UNESCO's readiness to provide technical assistance to develop human resources and capacity.



The Director-General of UNESCO, Mrs Irina Bokova, making a presentation to Mr Jörn Dramani Mahama.

© Ghana National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

As follow-up to an earlier workshop in October 2011, the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO co-hosted a workshop (19–22 July), to engage relevant sectors in discussing interventions aimed at boosting enrolment levels in education in Ghana.

The workshop sought to consolidate the various enrolment boosting policies being pursued by the Ministry of Education and to afford Parliamentarians an opportunity learn about challenges confronting the implementation of enrolment policies, enabling them to make informed contributions and statements on the floor of Parliament, in the bid to promote education for national development.

The workshop also afforded the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education an opportunity to interact with the various stakeholders in education (including ministers, development partners and non-governmental organizations), and further strengthen cooperation between Parliament and the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO.

The organization of the workshop was partly funded under the UNESCO Participation Programme.

GUINEA

Guinean National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Bailo Teliwel Diallo, Minister of Higher Education

Secretary-General: Mr Ibrahima Solo Conde

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Guinean National Commission for UNESCO carried out a number of important activities to promote UNESCO's objectives and tackle issues of national concern within the country. The National Commission also helped UNESCO to reach out to civil society and increase its visibility at the national level.

The National Commission began the year by participating in a national workshop held in Conakry (22–25 January) to train members of the National Commission, Associated Schools and Clubs on UNESCO structures in Guinea.

A second workshop, held at Kindia (27 February – 1 March), provided an opportunity to discuss violence in schools, understand its causes and consequences, and propose solutions to enable students to attend school in safety.

A training session held in Coyah (19–21 June), on the theme of developing sport and physical education at school focused on youth engagement through ball games. The training aimed to strengthen the bonds between young people regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or any other form of discrimination (more below).

On a similar note, the Commission participated in a brainstorming workshop on higher education, held in Conakry (4–6 July) at the Higher Institute of Educational Sciences. The workshop invited participants to develop a strategy for the training of trainers.

During the period under review, the National Commission also held a consultation and awareness-raising meeting with public institutions and national non-governmental organizations. During the meeting participants were asked to develop relevant and innovative projects taking into account national concerns for the sustainable development of Guinea. Five projects were identified in the fields of heritage, science and technology, literacy and governance. These were then submitted to UNESCO for support from extra-budgetary funds to permit implementation.



Training session held in Coyah to promote tolerance through sport.
© Guinean National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2012, the country unified behind the national football team as it competed in the African Cup of Nations.

This sense of solidarity should be supported and encouraged among young people in schools, universities and extra-curricular activities.

For this reason, in 2013 the Guinean National Commission for UNESCO explored the wealth of opportunities offered by sport and physical education. In particular, it undertook to promote sports and physical education at school and to strengthen solidarity, friendship and fraternity in schools and neighbourhoods. It also promoted negotiation skills on the sports field, training teams from different ethnic groups of Guinea to compete in a spirit of co-existence and peace.

KENYA

Kenya National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Jacob Kaimenyi

Secretary-General: Ms Evangeline Njoka

Update of activities in 2013

The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO became a State Corporation in January 2013. This established the Commission as a corporate body and streamlined its administration and functions. The Commission is now run by a Board led by a Chairman who is appointed by the President.

In education, the Commission organized a sensitization workshop for principals and teachers of science, mathematics and technology in Nairobi and an awareness-raising workshop at Kisii University on education for sustainable development. During World Teachers Day (5 October) celebrations were held in all eight regions of Kenya.

In the natural sciences, the Commission worked with stakeholders to establish a UNESCO Category II Water Research and Training Centre at the Kenya Water Institute. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between UNESCO and the Government of Kenya. The Commission also continued to support the Mt. Elgon Transboundary Biosphere Reserve and an MOU was drafted, which is pending signature by the Kenyan and Ugandan authorities.

A high-level meeting on water security was held in Kenya (11–13 September) with support from UNESCO. The Commission also took part in a regional workshop organized by the International Hydrological Programme in Nairobi (9–10 September). The objective of the workshop

was to discuss the impact of climate change on African mountain ecosystems.

In the social and human sciences, the Commission launched the Youth Social-Economic Empowerment project for Thika Road in Nairobi (6–8 August) with support from UNESCO. Key project issues included reducing motorcycle-related accidents, improving knowledge about HIV/AIDS, and establishing welfare associations.

The National Commission and the UNESCO Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific organized a 'Dialogue and workshop on peace and human security' (10 September) and an International Conference on Global Ethics for Peace and Security (12–14 September), both held in Nairobi. The workshop and conference aimed to build the capacities of teachers and researchers in the area of peace and human security.

The Commission in collaboration with Kenyatta University is implementing the Student Training Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP) project. STEP is designed to help change attitudes towards entrepreneurship and focuses on relevance and entrepreneurial autonomy.

In culture, the Commission pursued the enlargement of the Mount Kenya World Heritage Site to include the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy.

In communication and information, the Commission coordinated the 'UNESCO ICT competency framework for teachers' and the 'Harnessing of open education resources (OER) project'. The Commission organized a workshop (12–13 June) that culminated in the development of a National Implementation Strategy for OER for Kenya.



Dr Evangeline Njoka (with white notebook) participating in an inter-community dialogue and peace enhancement workshop in Tana River County.

© Kenya National Commission for UNESCO.

A success story

The Secretary-General of the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO participated in an inter-community dialogue and peace enhancement workshop supported by UNESCO in Tana River County. The workshop was undertaken following inter-community clashes and violence which affected children's education and led to loss of lives and property. Since the successful implementation of the UNESCO emergency project there has been peace in the county and children are now back in school after receiving psycho-social support from experts from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology. However, there is still a need to scale-up conflict resolution initiatives to reach more leaders and children in the county.

MADAGASCAR

Malagasy National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Régis Manoro, Minister of National Education

Secretary-General: Mr Cyrille Mihamitsy

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Malagasy National Commission for UNESCO undertook a series of activities in UNESCO's main areas of expertise.

A series of training seminars for secondary schools focused on education for sustainable development (ESD), and were organized in collaboration with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Seminars for students focused on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (Millennium Development Goal No. 3), and were organized in collaboration with the International Movement of Catholic Students (Africa region). The National Commission organized a workshop in association with Education International to raise awareness among teachers of UNESCO's Recommendations concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997). A National Committee for ESD in formal learning environments was also established with the cooperation of all partners, including WWF.

Activities in the natural sciences included the establishment of the National Committee for the International Hydrological Programme. The National Commission also celebrated World Water Day coupled with the International Year of Water Cooperation in collaboration with the Ministry of Water, Water Aid and other partners. World Environment Day was also celebrated at Antsirabe (June).

The social and human sciences saw the establishment of the National Committee for the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme in Madagascar. The National Commission also celebrated International Youth Day in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Leisure, and organized a series of conferences and workshops for World Philosophy Day in partnership with the University of Antananarivo and the Malagasy Academy.

Concerning culture and communication and information, the National Commission organized events in celebration of days and years proclaimed by the United Nations and UNESCO. These were promoted through books and posters, film screenings and the dissemination of CDs and DVDs, in particular to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding world heritage.



Tsingy de Bemaraha Strict Nature Reserve.
© Evergreen

A success story

The Malagasy National Commission's flagship activity in 2013 was the computerization of the documentation centre and library for education, science and culture. The centre was equipped with efficient state-of-the-art IT equipment thanks to funding received under the Participation Programme.

Although some might consider documentation centres and libraries irrelevant at a time when new information and communication technologies (ICTs) have become dominant in our society, it is nonetheless generally accepted that the written word contributes to building and maintaining the educational, cultural and economic fabric of our societies and continues to play irreplaceable fundamental and multiple roles. Moreover, no one can deny that these two sources are linked. ICTs strengthen the capacities of documentation centres and libraries and the computerization of the document management system of the Malagasy National Commission for UNESCO demonstrates this. Furthermore, the capacity-building of librarians was also provided in this framework. This is a considerable achievement, which is highly beneficial both for staff working in the centre and for users, enabling them to access information more easily. Furthermore, it has inspired the Malagasy National Commission for UNESCO to further develop its operations in this area.

MALAWI

Malawi National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Macphail Magwira

Executive Secretary: Mr Francis R. Mkandawire

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Malawi National Commission for UNESCO continued to receive government support for the day-to-day running of its office. This support has enabled the Commission to successfully implement a number of projects funded by UNESCO and other partners.

In education, implementation of the Better Education for Africa's Rise (BEAR) project continued. The objective of this project is to contribute to the development of the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system in Malawi. The project focuses on developing two pilot sectors, namely agro-food processing and construction. It expects to achieve a replicable model of matching demand and supply of skills, and to advance the empowerment of individuals.

In culture, the Museums of Malawi have documented thirty elements of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) from Chitipa and Karonga in Northern Malawi. These elements form part of the National Inventory of ICH of Malawi.

In science, the Department of Alternative and Renewable Energy programme at the Division of Basic and Engineering Sciences of UNESCO supported a project to implement solar

electrification at Mchisi primary school on Chisi Island. The project uses solar energy to provide the school and nearby health centre clinic with a reliable and sustainable solar-powered source of water and lighting, thereby promoting learning, health, hygiene and proper wetland management. Chisi Island is located on Lake Chilwa, a wetland designated a Ramsar site (No. 869) in 1997 and a UNESCO biosphere reserve in 2011. The island covers an area of about 21 km² and is surrounded by marshes to its west and open waters to the east.

In communication and information, the office collaborated successfully with the UNESCO Office in Harare on the implementation of training for gender-sensitive reporting, which was funded under the One-UN programme. Over thirty-five journalists were trained. Two newly approved community radio stations received equipment purchased through support from the International Programme for the Development of Communication. The radio stations in question are Usisya Community Radio Station in Northern Malawi and Nyanthepa Community Radio Station in Southern Malawi.



Director General Mrs Irina Bokova visiting Lilongwe Technical College in Malawi at the launch of the Phase IV of CapEFA Project.

© Malawi National Commission for UNESCO.

A success story

The Documentation of Folktales Project aims to support national efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. It involves the documentation and audiovisual recording of traditional folktales and storytelling for the benefit of future generations. It also includes efforts to improve technical capacity and knowledge among local technical staff involved in audiovisual recording and media work. The project is contributing to the development of the National Inventory of ICH in Malawi, which in turn contributes to the implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The technical team consists of youth selected through a competitive process. To date, 120 folktales out of the targeted 240 have been documented on CDs and DVDs.

The project is coordinated by the Malawi National Commission for UNESCO and implemented by National Library Services with funding from the Global Future Charitable Trust of New Zealand and donations of audiovisual equipment from the Sony Corporation of Japan. GFCT and Sony Corporation have proven to be valued partners and the National Commission will continue to cultivate such partnerships for further projects. The project is expected to run up to the end of 2014.

MAURITIUS

Mauritius National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Vasant Kumar Bunwaree

Assistant Secretary-General: Mrs Aneeta Ghoorah

Update of activities in 2013

The Mauritius National Commission hosted the UNESCO Expert Meeting on Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development (CCESD) in Africa (20–22 March) at the Intercontinental Mauritius Resort, Balaclava. The purpose of the meeting was to enable UNESCO and its African Member States to further advance the objectives of the UNESCO Programme on CCESD and build upon the recommendations from the Expert Meeting on CCESD in Small Island Developing States, held in 2011.

The objectives of the Expert Meeting were, among others, to promote the important contribution education can make to climate change adaptation and mitigation in African countries; and to identify climate change adaptation and mitigation needs and responses for education systems and education institutions, including infrastructure, management and resourcing. Some sixty foreign delegates from the African region and forty Mauritians participated in the Expert Meeting.

The recommendations of the Expert Meeting will serve as a contribution to the upcoming 18th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Qatar, as well as the UNESCO World Conference Education for Sustainable Development in 2014, to be held in Nagoya, Japan.

In June, the Regional Director of the UNESCO Nairobi Office visited Mauritius. At his request, a working session was organized at the Ministry of Education and Human Resources with the Assistant Secretary-General of the Mauritius National Commission, and directors and heads of parastatal bodies under the Ministry's purview, to discuss projects of mutual concern. The Regional Director invited proposals for assistance by UNESCO through the Mauritius National Commission for UNESCO. These proposals have been transmitted to the UNESCO Nairobi Office by the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology.



A success story

In 2013, a decision was taken to revive the Mauritius Federation of UNESCO clubs. A one-day workshop for UNESCO Clubs Leaders took place on December 2013 to provide training in the planning and organization of activities in UNESCO's fields of expertise. Some eighty UNESCO Club leaders, Federation Executive Members and National Commission officials attended.

© UNESCO

NAMIBIA

Namibia National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr David Namwandi, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Marius Kudumo

Update of activities in 2013

The Secretariat of the National Commission consists of five professional staff members, including one attached to the establishment and two support staff. Three vacant posts currently exist. During 2013, the Namibia National Commission for UNESCO conducted the following activities within the broad strategic objectives of UNESCO.

The Commission ensured the convening and holding of statutory meetings of the Executive Committee of the National Commission, including the Annual General Assembly. It prepared and participated in the 192nd and 193rd sessions of the UNESCO Executive Board and the 37th session of the UNESCO General Conference, and it facilitated Namibian participation in UNESCO conferences, workshops and meetings.

The Commission coordinated the implementation of four Participation Programme contracts signed with UNESCO; it coordinated activities leading to the inscription of the Namib Sand Sea on the World Heritage List in June; and it facilitated the coordination of the official visit of the UNESCO Director-General to Namibia (6–7 June).

The Commission coordinated the activities of the UNESCO ASPnet in Namibia, and continued the exchange partnership between Graff Adolf Gymnasium School in Tecklenburg, Germany and Concordia College, Windhoek. An ASPnet consultative workshop for all principals and coordinators of the twenty-eight ASPnet schools was held, and thirteen of the ASPnet schools were visited.

The Commission facilitated the organization of the sub-regional seminar for National Commissions of the Southern Africa Region in partnership with the Botswana National Commission for UNESCO and the German Commission for UNESCO. The seminar took place in Gaborone. The Commission also facilitated an induction and orientation training workshop for the Commissioners of the Botswana National Commission for UNESCO in Gaborone (5–8 February).

The Commission ensured adequate media coverage of all the above activities, many of which were carried out in a context of insufficient financial and human resources.



ASPnet activities.

© Namibia National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the National Commission continued to convene statutory meetings, including the Annual General Assembly of the National Commission (27 November). The main functions of the Annual General Assembly are to approve the budget estimates and audited financial reports of the National Commission and its related organs, and to make recommendations and take measures for the further development of programmes, projects and activities of the National Commission. The Annual General Assembly also provides a space for intellectual debates and reflection in line with one of the main functions of UNESCO – to act as a laboratory of ideas and foresight.

The main theme of the 2013 Annual General Assembly was ‘the contribution of culture to sustainable development’. The six participants on the panel were drawn from diverse groups, including representatives from the National Heritage Council, the Council of Churches, and youth, as well as the Culture Programme Specialist from the UNESCO Windhoek Cluster Office. A very informative and intellectual discussion took place with the participants resolving that culture should be recognized as a tool and an enabler of sustainable development, and that this advocacy should be reflected in the post-2015 global development agenda to be approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

NIGER

Niger National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Ali Mariama Elhadj Ibrahim, Minister of Primary Education, Alphabetization, Promotion of National Languages and Civil Education

Executive Secretary: Mr Namata Issa

Update of activities in 2013

The Niger National Commission for UNESCO and ISESCO undertook a number of activities to implement its programme for 2013.

In January, the Commission organized a workshop on UNESCO's microscience programme in conjunction with the Ministry of Secondary and Higher Education and the *Guri Vie Meilleure Foundation*. The workshop was chaired by the First Lady, Ms Aïssata Issoufou. Its main objective was to encourage enthusiasm for science among young people. This practical science education project gave primary and secondary school pupils the opportunity to carry out practical work in physics, chemistry and biology. Kits were distributed that included a textbook illustrating the various experiments.

Teachers from general education secondary schools representing the eight regions of the country were selected for a three-day training course to receive instruction in operating the laboratory equipment used in the experiments. At the end of the workshop, each participant received a kit.



A success story

The 12th West Africa UNESCO Clubs Science Festival (FESCUAO 2013) took place in Niamey (12–23 August) and brought together participants from Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Niger. The main theme of FESCUAO 2013, 'Youth, employment and culture of peace: the case of West Africa', was selected as a catalyst for individual and collective awareness of development in Africa. It is also relevant to the current context and challenges facing Africa.

A UNESCO expert at the Ministry of Higher Education and Research handing over a kit.

© Niger National Commission for UNESCO

NIGERIA

Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Ruqayyatu Ahmed Refa'i Oon, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Magdalene Anene-Maidoh

Update of activities in 2013

During 2013, the Nigerian National Commission worked in close cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters, line ministries and agencies, UNESCO Office Abuja and civil society organizations to successfully implement programmes and give visibility to UNESCO activities in the country. Several of the key implemented activities were as follows.

In September, Nigeria hosted the UNESCO Director-General, Mrs Irina Bokova, during a three-day official visit. The visit strengthened Nigeria-UNESCO cooperation and a high point was the creation of the UNESCO Multi-sectoral Regional Office in Abuja, which will oversee eight countries in West Africa.

The year also saw the implementation of the 'Revitalizing adult and youth literacy in Nigeria' programme. This three-year partnership between Nigeria and UNESCO aims to improve literacy delivery in Nigeria with a goal of increasing levels of adult literacy by 2015. Implementation of the programme has commenced in earnest with a series of activities carried out in 2013 (see below).

Another key activity was the regional summit Women and Youth in the Promotion of Cultural Security and Development in Africa, held at the UNESCO Category II Institute for African Culture and International Understanding in Abeokuta, Ogun State (4–5 March). Around 250 participants attended the summit from Benin, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda and Denmark.

Nigeria hosted a three-day Global Forum for Partnership on Media and Information Literacy, incorporating the Pan-African Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue Conference, which took place in Abuja (26–28 June). Over 250 participants from over forty countries attended.

Nigeria also hosted the African Regional Conference on Advancing TVET for Youth Employability and Sustainable Development in collaboration with the UNESCO-UNEVOC network in September.

The Nigerian National Commission collaborates with UNESCO, as well as government agencies and civil society, to observe international days. In 2013, activities were carried out to mark World Radio Day, World Press Freedom Day, World Culture Day, International Literacy Day and World Teachers Day.

Lastly, the National Commission supported the presentation of UNESCO awards and fellowships including the UNESCO-L'Oréal Prize for Women in Science for Africa and Arab regions, the L'Oréal Fellowship for Young Women in Life Sciences, the UNESCO-Poland Co-Sponsored Fellowship in Engineering, and the UNESCO/China (Great Wall) Co-Sponsored Fellowship.



© Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, Nigeria, working in partnership with UNESCO, dedicated US\$6,468,233 (Nigeria's funds-in-trust at UNESCO) to the 'Revitalizing adult and youth literacy in Nigeria' programme. This three-year programme aims to accelerate national efforts to improve levels of adult literacy by 2015, with an emphasis on skills development for empowerment and wealth creation.

Programme implementation is ongoing with the development and launch of the Strategic Framework for Adult and Youth Literacy in Nigeria – a collaborative process involving all stakeholders. Workshops were organized in 2013 for capacity-building of facilitators and trainers, and ten fellowships for research at the UNESCO Institute for Literacy in Hamburg, Germany, were secured to reinforce programme implementation.

Since the commencement of the programme, discourse and action on adult and youth literacy have been brought to the fore. The sensitization of non-governmental organizations and the private sector on their role in non-formal education has increased, as has civil society engagement in literacy delivery.

Once concluded, the programme will have empowered millions of young people and adults who have suffered from decades of marginalization and exclusion from education.

RWANDA

Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Fidèle Ndahayo

Permanent Secretary: Mr Eliphaz Bahizi

Website: www.unesco-rwanda.org

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO undertook a variety of activities to increase awareness of UNESCO and its main objectives. It began by making publishing and disseminating the National Commission's Service Charter in English and Kinyarwanda via its website, local newspapers and printed hardcopies. This was followed by television and radio broadcasts and newspaper articles on the activities of UNESCO and the National Commission.

Activities were organized in celebration of UNESCO international days, including World Science Day, World Water Day, World Philosophy Day, World Information Day and International Mother Tongue Day. Statutory meetings of the National Commission were also organized (two General Assembly sessions and two technical subcommissions sessions). The National Commission organized workshops on UNESCO intergovernmental programmes, including the International Hydrological Programme and the Regional Centre of Excellency in Biodiversity.

Training was organized for thirty-six coordinators of Associated Schools and thirty district Education Directors, and computer equipment was supplied to thirty UNESCO Clubs.

The UNESCO Participation Programme 2012–2013 provided technical and financial assistance to seven out of ten proposed projects, while the ONE UN programme provided financial support to Rwanda projects.

Support was also provided to Nyamasheke district in the western province to prepare a number of cultural projects (Inzu ya Kandt, Umwaro wa Rwabugiri, Ibigabiro bya Rwabugiri, Akarwa k'abakobwa, Kambi y'i Shangji). Sixteen staff members were trained to prepare proposals.

The National Commission also strengthened cooperation with other National Commissions for UNESCO, especially in the East African Community (EAC). The Commission entered into ongoing negotiations with the German Commission to twin German and Rwandan schools through the ASPnet programme. The Commission also participated in an EAC National Commission capacity-building workshop held in Bujumbura.



© Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO organized a series of events in celebration of World Science Day (31 January).

The main ceremony took place in Bugesera district in the eastern province. The chosen theme was 'Renewable energy, the key for community sustainable development', a variation on the theme 'Sustainable energy for all' proposed by UNESCO.

Two groups of four women demonstrated skills acquired during a six-month training course for solar energy engineers. The course was held in India through the support of SAFER Rwanda, Rwanda-UK Goodwill Organization and the Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO.

Another group of four women trainees from the Musanze district participated in the event to learn how to install solar energy panels. After a short demonstration and testimonies from their colleagues, the participants were able to visit houses with solar energy facilities to see for themselves the impact on community life.

SENEGAL

Senegalese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Serigne Mbaye Thiam, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Aliou Ly

Website: www.unesco.sn

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Senegalese National Commission for UNESCO designed and implemented, with UNESCO's support, a variety of activities relating to the Organization's fields of expertise. In particular, the following activities warrant mention.

In education, the National Commission organized a regional forum on the integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the African education system. Held in Dakar (May), the forum was chaired by the Executive Assistant to the Minister of Education and attended by representatives of the education systems of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gabon, Nigeria, Mali and Senegal, all of whom are involved in ICTs in education (more below).

In communication and information, the National Commission organized a subregional seminar on the media and the challenges of digital technologies. Held in Dakar (July), the seminar was chaired by the Minister of Communication and brought together delegates from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Mali and Niger, and some forty Senegalese experts from the media, regulatory and ICT sectors.



The regional forum on the integration of ICTs in African education systems.
© Senegalese National Commission for UNESCO.

A success story

The regional forum on the integration of ICTs in African education systems brought together experts from various countries involved in ICTs in education. Its purpose was to raise awareness among education stakeholders in the region's countries of the importance of integrating ICTs into African education systems.

The forum assessed the current situation, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, and then conducted an evaluation establishing future prospects for teaching and learning. As regards teaching and learning it recommended the adoption of a national and subregional sectoral policy on ICTs in education and the pooling of good practices in ICTs in education. In the field of classroom training and distance training for teachers, it emphasized the need to pilot mobile learning, alpha mobile and digital television. Finally, concerning education system management, the forum recommended the use of ICTs in a federative framework to improve school governance, quality of teaching and learning, and the promotion of open educational resources .

SEYCHELLES

Seychelles National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Macsuzu Mondon, Minister of Education, Employment and Human Resources

Secretary-General: Mrs Hoareau Marie-Reine Louise

Update of activities in 2013

The Secretariat of the Seychelles National Commission for UNESCO is based at the Ministry of Education. It enjoys efficient collaborative links with UNESCO Headquarters and the Permanent Delegation in Paris. Its annual meeting took place on 25 April during which the Commission provided information on UNESCO activities for 2012 and proposed activities for 2013.

Throughout 2013, the Seychelles National Commission celebrated most UN international days, including Earth Day, Environment Day, HIV Aids Day, Literacy Day, Teachers' Day, World Habitat Day and World Ocean Day in collaboration with other stakeholders. In most cases, public events organized for these international days received extensive media coverage.

In education, the National Commission managed to establish strong partnerships with stakeholders from other institutions. This was well illustrated during the preparation of the Education Sector Medium-Term Strategy 2013–2017,

which brought together education partners from finance, employment, health and social institutions. Another example of collaborative engagement was the national dialogue on 'Equity of education quality and learning' (May).

Following this activity a UNESCO national workshop on the General Education Quality Analysis Framework (GEQAF) (July) invited more than fifty education officials and stakeholders from other partner organizations to adapt, use and analyse fifteen analytical tools covering key aspects of education. The workshop allowed participants to identify major constraints in the education system of Seychelles and priority areas in need of specific policies and interventions in the context of the Medium Term Strategy.

The Seychelles National Commission attended the 2nd Eastern Africa high-level forum on Education for All (EFA), held in Kampala (8–10 July). Following this meeting the Regional Programme Coordinator and Programme Specialist for Education from Nairobi Regional Office visited Seychelles on a mission to provide more information on the EFA 2015 Review. Consequently, a delegation of three technical education officers participated in the Regional EFA National Review Technical Meeting, held in Nairobi (9–11 December).

The Secretary-General for the Seychelles National Commission was present at the meeting of the National Commissions for UNESCO of African French-speaking countries, held in Dakar, in preparation for the 37th General Conference. A Seychelles delegation led by the Minister for Education and the President of the Seychelles National Commission attended the 37th General Conference.



Students on an orientation visit at the Agricultural and Horticultural Training Centre.

© Seychelles Ministry of Education

A success story

The Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme, a priority area of the 2009/2010 Seychelles Education Reform, aims to diversify the Secondary School Curriculum to cater for the diverse needs of learners. During implementation of Phase 1 of the programme (2011), the Ministry of Education offered a multi-modal programme targeting Secondary 4 and 5 students unable to sit the IGCSE examinations. Students studied basic literacy (English and French) and numeracy for three and two days, respectively, as well as subjects such as technology and enterprise, and personal, social and citizenship education. The remainder of the week was spent at vocational institutions and work places.

The two-year programme commenced in 2011 with 137 students. By 2012, 98 students had completed the programme and graduated with a certificate. In January 2013, all but one student had been accepted into professional training programmes or had followed an apprenticeship scheme in an area of their choice. The third cohort of 152 will complete in 2014.

The TVET programme has developed strong partnerships with industry and the Ministry of Education, providing students with better exposure to the fields of their choice. It has also established literacy and numeracy programmes to meet student needs, the result of which has been a significant decrease in the dropout rate at upper secondary level.

SWAZILAND

Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson, Principal Secretary: Mr Patrick Muir

Secretary-General: Mrs Hazel Zungu

Update of activities in 2013

The mandate and role of the Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO is acknowledged and supported by the Ministry of Education and Training. The National Commission continues to work with the United Nations Country Team, which has resulted in collaboration on a range of activities, especially in the fields of education and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE).

Overall, the National Commission is seriously short-staffed and lacks a clear budget allocation to conduct its mandate efficiently. However, activities conducted with support from UNESCO have positively impacted the people of Swaziland and raised UNESCO's visibility in the country.

The UNESCO Office in Windhoek has provided both financial and technical support to the National Commission to ensure efficient implementation and reporting of activities. In turn, the National Commission has provided leadership and guidance to the Ministry of Education and Training regarding its active participation in the pilot phase of the Education for All (EFA) 'Big Push' Acceleration Initiative. The successful implementation of this phase and its constituent steps, designed by UNESCO and partners, has included a political commitment by the Prime Minister to prioritizing early

childhood care and education (ECCE) as an essential part of education – a major breakthrough.

Media personnel in Swaziland were trained on Education for Sustainable Development in a bid to ensure that the media recognize the importance of environmental issues and reporting appropriately, in their role as educators and change agents for the masses.

The National Commission also provided necessary technical support to activities for the 'Parenting and development of Cultural Ceremonies Facilities project', funded by Japan in cooperation with UNESCO. The outputs were a culturally sensitive parenting manual and a business plan for the development of cultural facilities. These activities enhanced the visibility of UNESCO among the Highest Royal authorities in the country.

A draft Science Mathematics and Technology Education policy was completed (a Participation Programme project) and now awaits endorsement. Activities to encourage girls in science have also been conducted. Activities to popularize the Swati language are ongoing.

Through the EDUCAIDS programme, the Commission assisted the Guidance and Counselling unit of the Ministry in drafting a series of Teacher's Handbooks that include age-specific CSE materials for HIV prevention within schools. These are currently being piloted. The Ministry also received support to launch a personnel wellness programme, which has proved very successful.

Lastly, in culture, the Commission conducted and finalized the Culture for Development Indicator and shared the results with stakeholders, facilitating deliberations on how culture can contribute to the economy.



The Steering Committee developing the Implementation Framework.

© National EFA 'Big Push' Steering Committee for Swaziland

A success story

In 2013, the National Commission provided key technical support to the Ministry of Education and Training for the implementation of activities as part of the 'Big Push' initiative. As a result of this initiative the Ministry engaged in close collaboration with education stakeholders for the first time. Stakeholders were involved from early on in process, up to the formation of the steering committee and the development of the implementation framework, thereby ensuring a holistic approach to interventions.

The activity has opened up new partnerships and received recognition from the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA). The National Commission assisted the Ministry in writing a proposal to OSISA for support on ECCE activities, within the framework of the Big Push, which has since been approved. OSISA then invited the National Commission to attend a Regional ECCE Conference.

As a result of this activity, the Ministry introduced a Diploma course on ECCE to ensure quality provision. The political will and commitment expressed by the Prime Minister in prioritizing ECCE as a critical component of education also illustrates the impact of this activity.

The support of the National Commission has been made possible by financial commitments from UNESCO. As a result, this activity has greatly increased the visibility of UNESCO and a better understanding of the Organization mandate.

TOGO

Togolese National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Nicoué Octave Broohm, Minister for Higher Education and Research

Secretary-General: Mr Akoété A. Kougblenou

Website: www.unesco.tg.refer.org/en

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Togolese National Commission for UNESCO celebrated its golden jubilee. To mark the occasion, the Commission published an information leaflet and a bulletin providing an overview of the National Commission's main activities over the past fifty years.

The Commission also undertook a variety of activities throughout the year. It began by organizing a national training seminar for heads of UNESCO Associated Schools (see below) and an inter-school theatre cup tournament, held in Lomé (23 March). The tournament brought together four secondary schools from the UNESCO ASPnet around the theme of 'Associated Schools and the issues of sustainable development'.

The National Commission initiated a regional discussion for an exchange of experiences between the West African Network of UNESCO Associated Schools and the Central African Network of UNESCO Associated Schools. The meeting, held in Lomé, brought together the Secretaries-General of the National Commission for UNESCO and the national network coordinators from seven countries from the West African network (Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali,

Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo) and three countries from the Central African Network (Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Gabon). The aim of the discussion was to use communication to share innovative experiences from the two networks.

In addition, 2013 saw the implementation of two intergovernmental UNESCO programmes under the aegis of the Togolese National Commission. The National Committees for the International Hydrological Programme and the Memory of the World programme were established by decree. The latter had its members sworn in by the Minister for Higher Education and Research, also Chairperson of the UNESCO National Commission.



Photographs of participants with officials after the opening ceremony.
© Togolese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

A national seminar to inform and raise awareness of education for sustainable development among heads of UNESCO Associated School was held in Lomé. It brought together sixty-nine head teachers, heads of Associated School projects, and national education inspectors and advisers. The seminar, which was organized by the Togolese National Commission for UNESCO with the Organization's financial support, formed part of events to mark the 60th anniversary of the ASPnet at the international level, as well as the 50th anniversary of the National Commission.

The objective of the seminar was to encourage head teachers of Togo's Associated Schools to consolidate their efforts regarding education for sustainable development, tolerance and democratic culture. The seminar discussed a variety of topics, including the ASPnet and its mission, Togolese schools and the culture of peace, the environment and the impact of climate change on humankind, and schooling and sustainable development. The representatives of the Associated Schools also shared their different experiences. The participants left with a greater awareness of their potential role and contribution to sustainable development.

UGANDA

Uganda National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mrs Jessica Alupo Epel, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Augustine Omare-Okurut

Website: www.unesco-uganda.ug

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the National Commission implemented a number of successful projects.

The National Commission produced a model for schools and communities to address water issues within a River Basin context. A total of thirty schools in the Lake Kyoga Basin are implementing this project.

A total of 600 students have benefitted from the Student Training Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP) programme at Uganda Martyrs University, Nzozi. This programme gives them the theoretical and practical business knowledge to cope with the world of work. The programme was organized with the support of the German National Commission for UNESCO and Leuphana University of Lunnenburg. Other local partners include Makerere University Business school, Kampala (see below).

With UNESCO's support the National Commission hosted the High-Level Forum on Education for All (EFA) for Ministers of Education. The meeting produced the Kampala Commitment on the post-2015 EFA agenda.

As the Secretariat of the East Africa Capacity Building Programme, the Commission coordinated the first phase of training and shared experiences with other countries during the High-Level Forum on EFA for Ministers of the Eastern Africa region, and during a side meeting at the 37th General Conference. The German National Commission for UNESCO is funding this programme. The Uganda National Commission has produced a proposal for the second phase, which has been partly funded.

In collaboration with the Regional Office of UNESCO in Nairobi, the Commission helped to launch the *Global Monitoring Report* in Uganda. The event drew participants from all levels of education and resulted in recommendations received by the High-Level Forum of Ministers of Education of Eastern Africa.

In conducting all the above activities, the National Commission had to confront a number of challenges. These related, in particular, to the modest budget afforded the Commission and its consequent level of activities, and low levels of stakeholder participation.



A student of the STEP business venture programme standing next to one of his fish ponds.

© Uganda National Commission for UNESCO.

A success story

The STEP Programme is an example of a good practice and a successfully conducted activity. The programme sets out to provide business skills to young people. In particular, the programme targets university students in the final year of study and aims to equip them with theoretical and practical skills in entrepreneurship. The STEP concept is also meant to contribute to advancing the objectives of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, especially the creation of opportunities for all to develop the knowledge, skills and values necessary to act sustainably in the twenty-first century.

The Uganda National Commission for UNESCO agreed to oversee the implementation of the STEP programme at the request of Leuphana University in consultation with the German National Commission of UNESCO, which funded the project. The first phase took place during 2012 at Uganda Martyrs University and, following its success, a second phase was conducted in 2013.

The STEP programme has a number of key attributes. Its practical business ventures are carried out by the students. The programme also helps its students to identify business ventures, and teaches them how to network, raise start-up capital and enlarge their client base.

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

UNESCO National Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania

Chairperson: Mr Jumanne Maghembe, Minister of Water and Irrigation

Secretary-General: Ms Elizabeth Kiondo

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the UNESCO National Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania jointly organized the 1st International Day in ICT for Girls – an initiative backed by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The objective was to help empower and encourage girls and young women from different secondary schools to learn about issues related to information and communication technologies (ICT) and to encourage them to consider careers in the growing field of ICT. The event enabled girls to visit ICT-based companies and learn from ICT different professionals. The Secretary-General of the National Commission of Tanzania spoke at the event, reiterating UNESCO's role in promoting both ICTs and science for girls. She insisted that girls should not only choose ICT careers, but strive to excel in the field.

The UNESCO ASPnet includes 163 schools and seven teachers' colleges and Clubs for UNESCO, covering twenty-one regions in Tanzania. ASPnet activities cover the areas of international understanding, human rights and peace, education for sustainable development, intercultural dialogue, the environment, and natural and cultural heritage. ASPnet schools collaborate with the National Commission through their involvement in the network. In recognition of the role these schools play in implementing UNESCO's core values of peace through education, the National Commission organized a meeting of selected Associated Schools in Dar es Salaam (June). The main objective was to mobilize teachers and students to make effective use of the ASPnet blog to encourage greater active participation in ASPnet activities and to expand the network within the country. The meeting also raised awareness of the vital role played by ICTs in building students' knowledge base and disseminating and sharing information.

Youth involvement in UNESCO issues is made possible through bi-monthly Youth Forums organized by the National Commission. These meetings mobilize youth from different backgrounds to discuss important issues affecting them and their future, usually based on UNESCO's areas of expertise. Associated training workshops focus on the impact of social media, sexuality education, skills development on management issues, education for sustainable sustainability, entrepreneurship and leadership skills. The Youth Forums work to boost skills among young people in Tanzania and raise awareness of critical issues. This is done by equipping them with practical knowledge to cope with challenges, such as poverty and HIV/AIDS.



Participants listening to a presentation at the 'Learning for sustainability' workshop.

© UNESCO National Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania

A success story

The Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) East Africa Programme works in four countries (Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda) to promote conservation and sustainable livelihoods using ESD as a strategy. The programme is implemented by the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) in the Eastern Southern Regional Programme through the Lake Victoria catchment Environmental Education Programme.

In 2013, WWF joined forces with the National Commission to develop a Pan-African Youth Strategy. A planning workshop for Pan-African Youth Strategy on Learning for Sustainability was held in Dar es Salaam (18–19 January) and attended by thirty-five young people from Tanzania and Zanzibar. The overall objective was to gather concrete inputs for the development of a Youth Strategy.

During the planning workshop the participants identified strategic objectives such as enacting laws to enhance sustainable development, establishment of a National Youth Council, and youth involvement in policy-making. This led to the development of an action-oriented strategy with four strategic objectives and associated activities to address key challenges. The participants also established a steering committee to examine ways to implement the strategy in Tanzania.

ZAMBIA

Zambia National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr John Phiri, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Brenda Muntemba

Update of activities in 2013

The Ministry of Education has provided an enabling environment for the Zambia National Commission for UNESCO and fully supported its activities. In fulfilling its mandate, the National Commission carried out various activities within UNESCO's areas of expertise in line with the areas of focus for the biennium.

In education, the Zambia National Commission in conjunction with the University of Zambia carried out awareness-raising sessions on education for sustainable development (ESD) in colleges. The sessions covered about 2,000 students and lecturers in the respective institutions. The Commission also organized and hosted a one-day ESD best practices-sharing workshop. This allowed participants from various colleges and public universities to share information on current ESD activities in each institution. The sessions also discussed the 'eco-schools' concept.

In culture, an awareness-raising workshop on the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions was held with a view to enabling Zambia to move towards ratification of the Convention.

Capacity-building and awareness-raising programmes were also held on the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Protection and Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Between March 2012 and January 2013 workshops were organized and publicized via a variety of media including newspaper articles, radio and television programmes to reach a wide range of stakeholders.

To increase the number of sites on the World Heritage List, Zambia updated its Tentative List with support from UNESCO. A nomination dossier for the Barotse Cultural landscape was then developed and submitted to UNESCO for consideration. In September, UNESCO fielded a verification mission to the site. The submission will be discussed during the 38th Session of the World Heritage Committee in June 2014.



© Zambia National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The National Commission organized a fourteen-day residential Science Camps for rural, poor girls with a view to promoting science education among female secondary school learners. This camp took a multi-sectoral approach, giving girls an opportunity to expand their knowledge in science education and interact with information and communication technologies (ICTs). Innovation was encouraged through experiments and the use of local materials to substitute for conventional chemicals.

Learners took field trips to the largest sugar plantation and copper mine in the country, where they were able to experience the application of biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. More importantly, they interacted with female professionals such as chemical engineers, medical doctors, metallurgists, physics and chemistry teachers, and geologists.

The National Commission programme officers and female teachers also engaged girls in discussions on issues relating to sexuality and HIV/AIDS within the confines of the social and human sciences. Furthermore, girls had an opportunity to engage in activities including storytelling, games and dancing, so as to learn about each other's cultures.

The Science Camp provided teaching and learning materials for learners, teachers and the host school. It also encouraged continuous professional development for the teachers involved through the lesson study approach. The camp helped to motivate students around science and helped learners to acquire basic ICT skills.

ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mrs Olivia Muchena, Minister for Higher and Tertiary Education

Secretary-General: Mr Temba Petros Ndlovu

Update of activities in 2013

The Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO participated in a great many activities in 2013 in all areas of the Organization's expertise. UNESCO supported Zimbabwe through its Regular Programme, Participation Programme and IPDC funds. Despite the financial challenges that characterized the year, there was increased cooperation between the National Commission, the Cluster Office, government and civil society.

In culture, the National Commission mobilized funds for the implementation of UNESCO Conventions, notably the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and the 1972 World Heritage Convention. The National Commission and the UNESCO Office in Harare worked with the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe for the restoration of the Khami Ruins World Heritage Site, and to develop management plans for Khami and Great Zimbabwe Monuments. The Commission also participated in visits to the World Heritage sites of Mana Pools, Sapi and Chewore, and Matobo Hills to assess their state of conservation.

The National Art Gallery received funding to mount an art exhibition to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the African Union in Harare. The National Commission also established partnerships with civil society organizations to promote the diversity of cultural expressions. Lastly, Zimbabwe submitted proposals for the UNESCO International Fund for Cultural Diversity.

In education, the National Commission coordinated the participation of Zimbabwe in the 5th consultation of the Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation, Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974). It also took part in the drafting of the Education for Sustainable Development National Strategy and Action Plan for 2014 and beyond. Capacity-building workshops were held on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and literacy activities. The Commission also participated in a project on a culture approach to HIV/AIDS, which was implemented by the UNESCO Office in Harare, in partnership with the Swiss Embassy, across ten schools in Harare.

In communication, the National Commission successfully coordinated activities in celebration of World Radio Day and World Press Freedom Day, which brought together national and private broadcasters. One polytechnic benefitted from UNESCO funds and conducted a workshop to review their mass communication and journalism curricula.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission spearheaded the inscription of seven wetlands on the Ramsar Convention. In the human and social sciences, the year witnessed the continued rise in popularity of the ASPnet programme among schools in Zimbabwe.



UNESCO advocacy workshop.

© Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the most notable achievement was a series of UNESCO advocacy workshops held in the provinces of Matebeleland, Manicaland and Masvingo and funded under the Participation Programme. The workshops were an attempt to publicize UNESCO, its mandate and activities in provinces outside Harare.

Interaction between the National Commission and the workshop participants brought forth numerous suggestions and comments on ways to improve and implement UNESCO activities and relations. The Commission also identified potential areas for partnership and cooperation that were potentially eligible for funding. To express their commitment, one of the provinces created a Facebook page to help ensure continued communication and future collaborations.





Arab States

ALGERIA

Algerian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture

President: Mr Abdelatif Baba Ahmed, Minister of National Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Dalila Nedjraoui

Website: www.unesco.dz

Update of activities in 2013

The National Commission for Education, Science and Culture acts as a relay transmitting information from UNESCO, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) to various government institutions.

In 2013, the National Commission undertook a variety of activities, including the establishment of ASPnet and Clubs for UNESCO (and youth associations working in the field of environment).

It managed and monitored three UNESCO Participation Programme projects. As part of one project, the National Commission organized a training course on human rights, entitled the 'Rights of women and religious minorities in the Muslim world'. The course, held at the office of the Commission in Alger (October – December), targeted educators and researchers in various fields of the social sciences (see below).

In 2013, the National Commission submitted proposals for three new biosphere reserves under the Man and the Biosphere programme for the national parks of Belezma, Theniet El Hed and Tlemcen.

The National Commission also participated in numerous meetings and workshops organized by UNESCO, ISESCO and ALECSO. These included the conference on Euro-Arab dialogue organized by UNESCO and the Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber Foundation, held in the Algarve, Portugal (25–26 November). The Commission also attended UNESCO's 37th General Conference and played an active role in the participation of the Algerian delegation.

To increase dissemination of information about UNESCO's programmes and objectives, the National Commission developed and launched a website in December. The same month also saw the publication of the second edition of the journal *Passerelles* on the theme of education.

The National Commission joined ISESCO and the National Adult Literacy and Education Office in organizing a regional workshop, held in Algiers (21–24 October), on appropriate methods and techniques in literacy and non-formal education for girls and women.

The Commission also organized an academic meeting on Muslim women throughout history (25 November). The lectures and debates focused on two themes, 'Women in the legal and social tradition of Islam' and 'The feminine in Islam between tradition and modernity'.



The National Commission ISESCO Workshop.
© Algerian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture

A success story

The themes of human rights and the place of women and religious minorities in the Muslim world constitute one of the most controversial issues in both Western countries and Arab states. Some discriminatory provisions to which religious minorities are generally subject in many Muslim countries are tantamount to a genuine violation of human rights. Accordingly, as a matter of urgency, the principle of human rights should be promulgated wherever possible, in particular in the Arab and African world, as a general principle and global priority of UNESCO.

As part of its cooperation with UNESCO and within the framework of a Participation Programme project, the Algerian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture initiated a training course on human rights, entitled 'Rights of women and religious minorities in the Muslim world'. The purpose of the training course was to promote the image of Islam as a religion of peace and progress and of Muslim society as a culture that respects the universal principles of human rights, gender equality and religious diversity.

BAHRAIN

Bahrain National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Majed Ali Al Noaimi, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Ghazi Isa Almarzoog

Website: www.education.gov.bh

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Bahrain National Commission for UNESCO organized a number of workshops and training sessions focusing on education and statistics.

A first workshop was held to identify international requirements in relation to statistics on education funding, research, development and innovation, as well as funding sources and mechanisms for mobilization. The objective was to build partnerships to help bridge the gap in data provision, so as to meet international obligations.

A training session on education statistics was organized for a number of civil servants in the department of educational planning, and higher education statisticians and education statisticians in the Central Office of Statistics and Information. Detailed presentations were given on educational indicators used by UNESCO and ways of analysing education statistics for the purposes of educational planning. The training session explored ways to facilitate the presentation of statistics for ministry planners and decision-makers to ensure their effective use in education planning and policy-making. This training session supplemented the guidelines given in the International

Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011), adopted by the UNESCO General Conference.

The workshop 'Improving the National Curriculum: trends, challenges and strategies', held in Geneva, highlighted the efforts of Bahrain's Ministry of Education to modernize teaching methods and improve the national curriculum. A Programme Specialist from the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE) led the workshop, and emphasized the importance of the curriculum in reflecting social trends and aspirations for the future. He also drew attention to the importance of teacher training, the establishment of a suitable school environment, the encouragement of good ideas, and the exchange of experiences to improve teaching and results. He commended the successful cooperation between the Ministry and IBE, noting that Bahrain's experience in education reform could be used as a model worldwide.

The National Commission also undertook activities in celebration of international days, such as World Teachers' Day, Arabic Language Day and so on. It continued to follow up and develop the UNESCO ASPnet and disseminate its ideals to young people. One of the year's most successful Associated Schools activities was Free Walk Day, designed to raise awareness of the importance of recycling among school pupils. The activity was implemented under the slogan, 'Protecting our world', as a collaboration with the Supreme Council for the Environment and the private communications company ZINE.



A success story

In 2013, the Bahrain Central Office of Statistics and Information identified the need for stronger data and information to support decision-making and access to the knowledge economy. In response, the Bahrain National Commission for UNESCO organized a development and innovation training workshop to build capacity in the field of social, environmental and economic statistics. The workshop aimed to introduce national and local skills into the field of statistics, and encourage innovation in performance and improvement in government working methods, regarding application of the principles set out in Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030.

National coordinator for ASPnet during a visit to Al-Hman School.

© Bahrain National Commission for UNESCO

JORDAN

Jordan National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

Chairperson: Mr Mohammad M. Thneibat, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Intisar Aleghawe

Website: www.moe.gov.jo/junesco/index.htm

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Jordan National Commission for Education, Culture and Science established the 'Best practices of sustainable development prize' for ASP schools. This award aims to raise awareness of the importance of achieving sustainable development and alleviation of poverty among students of ASP schools, through the implementation of various activities targeting different sectors of Jordanian society.

UNESCO implemented the project, 'Strengthening international cooperation on water at the school level', which is listed as a contribution to the 2013 International Year of Water Cooperation. The main aim of the project is to enhance understanding of freshwater issues among school students, as well as to encourage cooperation between schools regarding the organization of activities around water-related themes.

A school from Jordan participated in a video conference to inform schools from other participating countries about the project and its aims, while at the national level, students participated by working on themes such as water education, making use of water and water-harvesting. They also prepared thematic videos to be uploaded to a dedicated website.

In 2013, the UNESCO-L'Oreal Fellowship for Women in Science was awarded to a scientist at the University of Jordan who will participate in the programme during 2014.

Three delegates from Jordan also participated in the 8th UNESCO Youth Forum, presenting a collaborative project with eight Arab countries from the Middle East, within the framework of the Generations for Peace programme.



Integrating media and information literacy in Jordanian Schools.
© Jordan National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

A success story

In 2013, the Jordan National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Amman and the Arab Journalists Centre, implemented the pilot project, 'Integrating media and information literacy in Jordanian schools'. This project, which was financed by the Sweden government to the amount of US\$32,000, aimed to develop freedom of expression in schools by teaching youth to collect, assess and use information through new media, and provide them with the skills required to express themselves in a professional manner.

The project was executed through the organization of a training workshop for teachers. The teachers then trained students on using media concepts, the art of debate, community media, use of the internet to search for news and the creation of an electronic newspaper.

The final ceremony was held at the Al-Hussein Cultural Centre (13 May) in the presence of the Minister of Education/Chairman of the Jordan National Commission, educational directors and the principals of the four ASP schools participating in the project. The teachers and students involved in the project also attended. The ceremony included songs, dance performances by the students, a debate, and an exhibition displaying the four electronic newspapers prepared by the schools.

LEBANON

Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Henri Awit

Secretary-General: Mrs Zahida Darwiche Jabbour

Website: www.lncu.org

Update of activities in 2013

During 2013, the Lebanese National Commission organized several activities related to UNESCO's main areas of expertise.

In communication, the National Commission organized a seminar on youth and contemporary language on the occasion of International Mother Language Day (21 February). The seminar highlighted the use of the Arabic language in universities, modern means of communication, and the ability of Arabic to cope with changing times. The National Commission also organized a seminar on 'The role of media in strengthening or weakening the Arabic language' on the occasion of World Arabic Language Day (18 December). Finally, in celebration of International Francophonie Day, the National Commission organized an exhibition entitled 'Le français par les jeux', presenting new and experimental ways of teaching French (21 March). All these activities were organized in collaboration with the Lebanese University in Beirut.

In education, the National Commission organized a workshop for UNESCO ASPnet schools, presenting the 'whole-school approach' concept to teaching, including its methods and applications (2–6 April). The Commission also organized a seminar within the framework of Global Action Week for

Education for All (EFA) (21–27 April) highlighting the goals elaborated by the EFA plan, and approved by the World Education Forum in Dakar. Both activities were organized in cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Office in Beirut.

In culture, the National Commission hosted a musical and poetic event entitled 'Crossing' on the occasion of World Poetry Day (24 March). The artist and poet Jihad Al-Andary read selections of poems by Lebanese and Arab poets. The Commission also undertook activities during October and November to highlight growing threats to the integrity of the UNESCO World Heritage sites of Qadisha Valley and Tyr.

Lastly, 2013 saw the addition of Zahle to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a City of Gastronomy. To mark the occasion, the National Commission organized a meeting to promote UNESCO's values and objectives, especially among youth (27 November).

In the natural sciences, the National Commission launched and distributed a Water Education Package on the occasion of World Water Day (22 March). The package included a number of brochures and detailed information on managing water consumption. The project constituted a joint venture with the Lebanese Centre for Water Management and Conservation – UNDP.

Finally, in the social and human sciences, the National Commission organized a seminar on 'Philosophy as a necessity in the contemporary Arab World' on the occasion of World Philosophy Day (21 November).



Students from Bab el Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen who participated in the pilot project.

© Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the Lebanese National Commission and the UNESCO Regional Office in Beirut co-organized a pilot project to promote a culture of tolerance among the youth of the Bab el Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen regions, located in Tripoli. Forty students from three public schools participated in two thematic workshops. The first focused on a culture of dialogue, mutual respect and acceptance of difference, and the second on heritage and common values and their role in promoting civil peace. The Commission also organized two workshops on theatre and the plastic arts.

This pilot project succeeded in gathering students from two different religious regions (Sunni and Alawite) during a period of intermittent armed conflict. In spite of the great difficulties encountered, the students succeeded in mounting a plastic arts exhibition entitled 'You and I, Us' featuring drawings illustrating their dreams for a better future.

The students also performed their interpretation of the play *Story of Youth*, which describes the experience of living under difficult circumstances amid violence and social and personal insecurity. A large number of personalities, educators, students and parents visited the closing ceremony and expressed their great appreciation of the project.

MAURITANIA

Mauritanian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

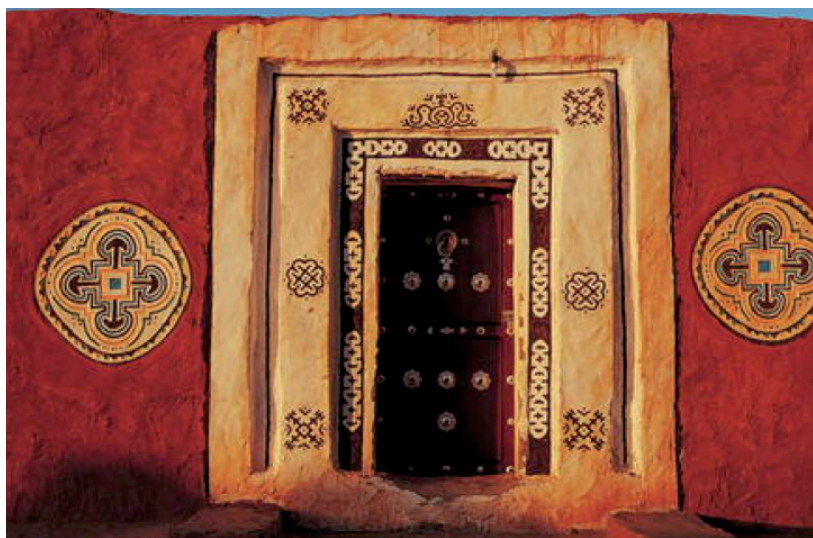
Chairperson: Ms Lalla Mint Chérif, Minister for Culture, Youth and Sport

Secretary-General: Mr Ismail Ould Chouaib

Update of activities in 2013

The Mauritanian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science is a public institution working to promote education, culture and science according to the vision put forward by UNESCO, for which it acts as a focal point. It collaborates with other international organizations such as Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – with which it implements certain programmes at the national level – and occasionally with the International Organization of La Francophonie.

The Mauritanian Commission also cooperates with other National Commissions in the Arab States region as well as a number of African Commissions and the French National Commission. This cooperation mainly concerns exchange of experience and guidance to ensure the smoother working of the National Commission.



Ancient Ksour of Ouadane, Chinguetti, Tichitt and Oualata.
© Editions Gelbart

A success story

In 2013, in collaboration with the seven presidents of Clubs for UNESCO in Mauritania, the Mauritanian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science initiated a project designed to promote the ideals of peace and intercultural dialogue among primary and secondary school pupils and students. The project aimed to reach the maximum number of young participants with a view to sensitizing them to their responsibilities and future potential as advocates for peace and change in Mauritania, the region and the world.

In this context, the National Commission spoke for UNESCO, helping to popularize its ideals of cultural and religious diversity and mutual understanding, as well as solidarity and support for genuine global development. The initial project was deemed a success, reaching a wide audience and laying the groundwork for similar projects in the future, which will enable Mauritania to play a key role as a catalyst for peace in the region.

MOROCCO

Moroccan National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

Chairperson: Mr Salaheddine Mezouar, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Secretary-General: Ms Touriya Majdouline

Website: www.comnatmaroc.org

Update of activities in 2013

The Moroccan National Commission for Education, Culture and Science has undertaken a number of activities in the past year related to UNESCO's areas of competence, some of which are detailed here.

In education, the Commission presented a seminar on capacity-building for educational planning and management in the Arab Region (22–24 January), organized in cooperation with the UNESCO Cluster Office in Rabat.

In communication, the National Commission organized a study day on advanced regionalization and the media, in partnership with the Ministry of Communication and held at the Higher Institute of Information and Communication (22 May).

Lastly, the National Commission set up regular weekly meetings to promote an ideas-based and creative approach to specific UNESCO issues (e.g. gender equality, press freedom, regionalization, etc.).



Medina Rabat.
© UNESCO

A success story

One of the key successes of 2013 was the international conference on 'Intercultural dialogue and African identity', held at the Institute of African Studies in Rabat (26 June). The Moroccan National Commission for UNESCO organized this conference to raise awareness of the importance of productive dialogue between African cultures in creating a culture of peace, respect and tolerance. The Conference also aimed to rediscover and make use of African cultures and history as a basis for constructing an African identity.

This project could not have succeeded without the involvement of the UNESCO Office in Rabat and the support of partners, including the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Culture and the Institute of African Studies in Rabat.

OMAN

Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

Chairperson: Mrs Madiha bint Ahmed bin Nasser Al Shaibaniya

Secretary-General: Mr Mohammed Saleem Al Yaqoubi

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Oman National Commission organized the Regional Certified Trainers Course in Cultural Skills, in collaboration with the Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science, the UNESCO Regional Office in Beirut and the King Abdul Aziz Centre for National Dialogue. Thirty-six trainees from the Sultanate, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen attended the course. The session aimed to provide the participants with skills to enhance dialogue and effective communication, and to promote co-existence via the establishment of a network of qualified Arab trainers, prepared to train others on issues related to promoting a culture of dialogue and peace.

In the same year, a National Consultation was organized on the National Implementation Strategy for the professional development of teachers in the field of information and communication technology (ICT), and held in cooperation with UNESCO. The objectives were to develop a national plan to deploy ICT in education, increase technological efficiency, integrate technology into curricula, train teachers, make open educational resources available in schools and

equip students with twenty-first century skills. The workshop targeted a group of school headmasters, teachers, students, educational IT supervisors and a number of specialists.

In celebration of the 60th anniversary of the UNESCO ASPnet, the Omani Associated Schools Project received two delegations of students and teachers from Denmark and Kuwait. These visits were designed to exchange experiences and learn about the activities of the different schools, and to promote cooperation towards the creation of new twinning programmes.

In collaboration with UNESCO, a national workshop on the General Education System Quality Analysis/Diagnosis Framework (GEQAF) was also held. The workshop sought to improve the quality of public education through the application of fifteen analytical tools. These tools are designed to help develop the qualitative and quantitative indicators needed to monitor and improve the quality of education. The Sultanate of Oman is the first Arab country to apply this analytical framework as part of its ongoing efforts to improve education.

In celebration of the International Year of Water Cooperation, the National Commission implemented a number of joint programmes and activities. A variety of events targeted around 13,500 school students, including mass events to celebrate World Water Day, seminars and scientific trips.



Al Zubarah Archaeological Site
© Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

A success story

Connecting Cultures' (CC) is a unique educational initiative, based in Oman since 2007, that focuses on youth aged 18–24. The project aims to give young people from different countries of the world a chance to meet face to face, and to engage in intercultural dialogue. The initiative organizes five-day trips through the sands or mountains of Oman for small groups. The situation and the lack of mobile phone coverage provide the perfect environment for undisturbed discussion. Since its inception, sixteen journeys have taken place in Oman. Each trip consists of eighteen young people from the Arab states and Europe. The participants are selected on the basis of commitment and potential to make a real difference in society and to influence others.

In January, a special CC trip for ASP students from Oman and nine countries in Europe was organized to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the UNESCO ASPnet. Each day of the journey required the participants to work as a team to overcome challenges and travel on foot or by camels through the desert. The lunch breaks and evenings provided opportunities for debates on topics such as identifying shared values, thinking about how one's own culture might be perceived by others, recognizing the causes of and possible solutions to cultural misunderstanding and, most importantly, emphasizing the personal responsibilities of young people in society for when they return home.

QATAR

Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

President: Mr Mohammed Abdul Wahed Al Hammadi, Minister of Education and Higher Education

Secretary-General: Mr Abdul-Aziz Hassan Al-Tamimi

Update of activities in 2013

The Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science participated in a number of important international meetings in 2013.

In education, the National Commission attended regional and sub-regional meetings on Education for All (EFA) and the International Global EFA Meeting held in Paris.

In culture, it participated in the 4th Session on the Convention of Protection for Cultural Heritage, held in Paris; the International Conference on Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in Chengdu, China (14–16 June); and the 37th Session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Phnom Penh (16–27 June). The National Commission also celebrated the inscription of the Al-Zubarah Archaeological Site of Qatar on the UNESCO List of World Heritage Sites (June).

In communication and information, the Commission participated in the 5th International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS V), held in Berlin (28–30 May).

The National Commission also took part in the Forum of the Arabic National Commission held in Rabat (12–13 June), and undertook preparations for its participation in the 37th General Conference of UNESCO.

Lastly, the Qatar National Commission fully participated in celebrations of all UNESCO International Days for 2013.



Al Zubarah Archaeological Site.
© Qatar Museums Authority

A success story

ASPnet schools function as good channels for the transmission of knowledge and information in UNESCO's fields of expertise. Students acquire the life skills necessary to communicate with people from different nations and countries, and the schools receive copies of all UNESCO printed and media documentation and periodicals, as well as financial and technical support to implement activities. As of last year, there were thirty-two ASP schools in Qatar including twenty-eight Qatari schools and four non-Qatari schools.

The Qatar National Commission prepares an annual plan for ASP schools activities, which covers all stages from primary to secondary education for both male and female students. The plan includes activities based around education, natural science, human and social science, culture, and communication and information.

The planned activities aim to implement key objectives of UNESCO such as cooperation and dialogue among civilizations, sustainable development, preservation of the environment and its natural resources, and a culture of peace. They also aim to involve youth in the comprehensive development of their society and their country.

A large number of students participate in implementing the activities. At the end of each school year the best practices are recognized and awarded prizes and certificates in a ceremony organized by the National Commission.

TUNISIA

Tunisian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture

Chairperson: Mr Fathy Jarray, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Mohamed Khlifi

Website: www.edutic.edunet.tn/comnattn

Update of activities in 2013

The Tunisian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture has continued to work towards implementing UNESCO programmes, in spite of the recent upheavals in the country. For its part, UNESCO has spared no effort in providing Tunisia with financial and technical support in the implementation of projects within the Organization's fields of expertise.

The Tunisian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture has also enjoyed ongoing cooperation with the UNESCO Cluster Office in Rabat, which has resulted in numerous missions for the various national agencies involved in the activities of UNESCO.

Among other activities, in 2013 the Tunisian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture produced a leaflet explaining its establishment, mission, organization chart and modes of operation. It also produced a catalogue detailing the contents of the Commission's library, which currently comprises 10,000 books in Arabic, French and English.

The National Commission established a unit dedicated to the logistical organization of events and receptions, and organized several activities in UNESCO's fields of expertise, in particular weekly meetings of the Education for All Forum, for which it prepared a national report.

The National Commission was responsible for the drafting of financial reports and activity reports relating to the Participation Programme and the International Fund for Cultural Diversity. In addition, it drafted a report on Tunisia's participation at the General Conference of UNESCO, and a report on the Conference on Euro-Arab Dialogue (Portugal).

The National Commission prepared a file on Tunisia's participation at the 194th session of the Executive Board, and maintained files on cooperation with ministries and civil society, in particular associations, student fellowships and so forth.

In 2013, the Commission also reactivated the role of the interministerial commission, establishing the list of representatives from various departments. It also monitored the activities of Clubs for UNESCO and Associated Schools.



© Tunisian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture.

A success story

In the context of the recent political upheaval in Tunisia, the National Commission organized initiatives to support the democratic transition. One successful example was a programme on citizenship education for young people, established on the basis of an agreement signed between UNESCO and the Ministry of Education. An educational training manual on democracy was produced for youth in Tunisia and translated into Arabic. The manual was divided into twenty worksheets and was issued with an accompanying guide for trainers.

Training sessions were organized in a number of remote areas of Tunisia, such as Tozeur, Gafsa, Kasserine and Le Kef, to help young people learn about democratic transition, citizenship and human rights through constructive dialogue. The training sessions were rounded off with theatrical and video productions, which allowed the participants to voice their concerns and expectations.

In conjunction with the various United Nations agencies, the Ministry of Education and the Arab Institute for Human Rights, the National Commission also established seven citizenship and human rights clubs in deprived areas. Other clubs will be set up in 2014–15.

YEMEN

Yemeni National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Hisham Sharf, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Secretary-General: Mr Ahmed Ali Hasan Al-Maamari

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Yemeni National Commission cooperated with UNESCO and its Regional Offices to implement and supervise several activities and projects in collaboration with civil society organizations.

Among these, the Yemeni National Commission supported numerous national projects under the UNESCO Participation Programme for 2012–2013. Projects in the field of education included a workshop on national capacity-building for early childhood care and education; training and qualification of female educators and teachers for autistic children; and a programmed intervention to improve educational opportunities for children with reading disorders and learning disabilities in Yemen.

In culture, the Commission supported Participation Programme projects on the role of youth in promoting the concepts of cultural tolerance and dialogue with local communities, and on enhancing the infrastructure of the Yemeni National Commission Library.

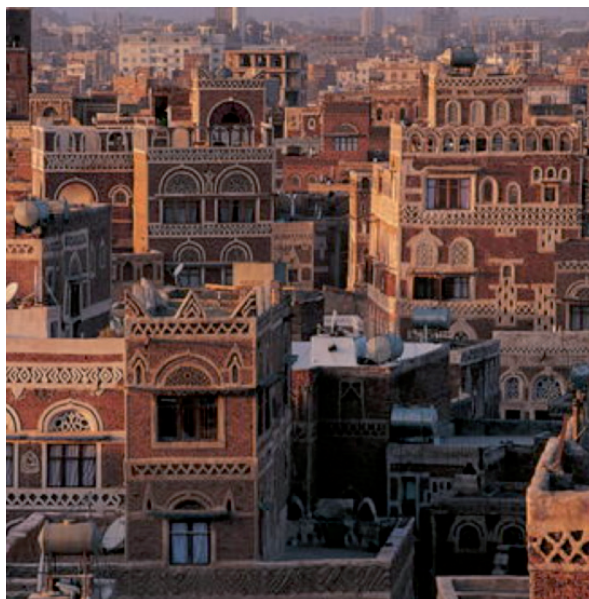
The National Commission and representatives from government participated in many regional and international conferences and symposiums related to UNESCO's mandate.

In education, the Secretary-General of the Yemeni National Commission participated in the National Regional Conference on Mandatory Education of Girls and Gender, organized by the Yemen Women's Union in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Arabic Women's Union, and held in Yemen (4–6 March). The Secretary-General and two representatives from the Ministry of Education participated as part of a high-level delegation in the 1st Regional Forum for Teachers Policies, held in Jordan (20–21 March).

The Ministry of Education participated in a workshop on the preparation of good textbooks, held in Rabat (6–9 May). The Ministry of Technical Education and Vocation Training participated in the International Conference on World Innovators, held in Qatar (5–7 April).

The Yemeni National Commission in collaboration with the Czech Government and UNESCO sponsored a BA fellowship in Environmental Engineering. The Commission also disseminated CD copies of the final report of the Regional workshop on entrepreneurship education in Arab States, held in Bahrain during 2012.

Finally, at the invitation of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), UNESCO and the Moroccan National Commission, the Secretary-General of the Yemeni National Commission and the Director of UNESCO Administration participated in the Forum of the National Commissions for Education, Science and Culture of the Arab Region, held at ISESCO Headquarters in Rabat (12–13 June).



© Editions Gelbart

A success story

The Yemeni National Commission participated as part of a High-Level Delegation representing the Ministry of Culture and eminent personalities from concerned bodies at the 37th Session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Phnom Penh (16–27 June). The World Heritage Committee reached a decision concerning the historical Yemeni sites, Old Sana'a City and Zabid, and provided instructions to ensure their future conservation and continuing inscription on the World Heritage List. The delegation also submitted additional Yemeni archaeological sites to the Conference for inclusion on the World Heritage List. The submissions are currently under consideration.

The General Organization for the Preservation of the Historic Cities of Yemen aims to develop the Conservation Plan in the next few years. It also proposed to establish a Conservation Unit to involve all stakeholders, who will be encouraged to participate in the preparation of the city Management Plan process.

In its decision concerning inscription, the World Heritage Committee 'recommended that an adequate buffer zone should be established around the old city'. This recommendation should be implemented to improve the protection of the property which also needs clearly defined boundaries.

The long-term plan is to adopt a clear strategy for sustainable preservation and development of the Old City and to ensure better control of the setting, as well as ensuring a balance between commercial and residential activities.



A close-up photograph of a field of tall, thin grasses. The grasses are a mix of vibrant green and golden-yellow, suggesting a late summer or autumn setting. In the bottom-left corner, a portion of a bright yellow fabric, possibly a shirt or a bag, is visible. The overall composition is textured and natural.

Asia and the Pacific

AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Ghulam Farooq Wardak, Minister of Education

Acting Secretary-General: Mr Mohammad Usman Kamran

Update of activities in 2013

The Afghanistan National Commission works to advance the priorities and interests of Afghanistan within UNESCO. The Commission is based within the Ministry of Education.

In 2012, the Afghanistan National Commission with the help of its experts worked to develop a three-year (2012–2014) strategic plan – a first in the history of the National Commission.

The National Commission attended the Asia-Pacific National Regional Consultations on the Preparation of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2014–21 and its Programme and Budget for 2014–17, held in Thanh Hoa, Viet Nam (16–18 June 2012). This marked the first time that the Afghanistan National Commission attended such a session and this experience helped it to obtain a better understanding of UNESCO's priorities.

In the same year, the National Commission in association with the UNESCO Kabul Office launched the Education for All *Global Monitoring Report* in Kabul. The launch was attended by representatives of the Ministries of Education, Higher

Education, Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, and Information and Culture, along with representatives from youth and civil society, and media and development partners. The event highlighted the need for joint collaboration to address the key issues of youth education and skills training in Afghanistan.

During 2012–13, the National Commission received support from UNESCO for projects funded under the Participation Programme. Seven projects were approved including: (i) an impact evaluation of climate change on water resources in the Kabul river basin; (ii) an equipment upgrade of the National Commission; (iii) capacity-building, gender equity and computer management programmes, (iv) the attendance of specialized courses at the International Institute of Educational Planning in Paris; (v) purchasing of material and equipment for the National Museum; (vi) the organization of workshops and campaign for increasing female enrolment in schools; and (vii) the promotion of girls' and child education in Afghanistan.

In May, UNESCO Director-General, Mrs Irina Bokova, paid a visit to Afghanistan, where she pledged UNESCO's support to the country's peace-building and development process. During her visit she met with high-level officials of Afghanistan, the staff of the National Commission, journalists, educators and students.



Children reading news about UNESCO activities in Afghanistan.
© Afghanistan National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The Afghanistan National Commission for UNESCO has faced huge challenges, including the recruitment of professional staff. A key success has been the hosting of a one-week seminar on capacity-building for training programmes on management communication and gender equity. The seminar was organized with the approval and financial support of UNESCO.

During one week, two specialists and four speakers delivered presentations on several subjects and shared their experiences with the participants. Among the key topics discussed were: (i) the development of a mechanism for capacity-building and its role in strengthening the current system of education and management of state offices; (ii) management and communication; (iii) gender parity and a short history of gender equity; (iv) institutional behaviour towards women; (iv) and a presentation regarding UNESCO activities and programmes.

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Nurul Islam Nahid, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Muhammed Sadique

Website: www.bncu.gov.bd

Update of activities in 2013

The Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO has positioned itself as one of the most active National Commissions in the Asia-Pacific region. It is very much involved in all the activities of UNESCO and has undertaken numerous activities in the Organization's fields of competence.

The year began with preparation for the Regional Training Workshop for the Officials of National Commissions of the Asia-Pacific Region, held in Dhaka (30 March – 2 April). The National Commissions of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam as well as Germany participated in the workshop. Representatives from UNESCO Headquarters and the UNESCO Office in Dhaka were also present.

Following the Regional Workshop, the National Commission organized the launching ceremony of the latest edition of the Education for All *Global Monitoring Report* at the National

Commission Conference Hall (16 May) in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Dhaka and Save the Children Fund.

The Commission also organized the Regional Meeting on Successful Experiences and Best Practices in Literacy and Non-Formal Education in cooperation with ISESCO (14–17 July), which was attended by participants from Bangladesh, Brunei, Iran and Malaysia.

The National Commission supported the successful nomination of a non-governmental organization, the Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), for the 2013 International Literacy Prize. In addition, during 2013 candidates from Bangladesh were accepted into the UNESCO-Poland Co-Sponsored Fellowships Programme in Engineering, the UNESCO/ISED (Russian Federation) Co-Sponsored Fellowships Programme and the UNESCO-Republic of Korea Co-Sponsored Fellowships Programme. The Commission also campaigned successfully for Bangladesh to be re-elected as a member of the UNESCO Executive Board for the sixth term.

The National Commission monitored all projects implemented under the 2012–2013 UNESCO Participation Programme.

The Commission ended the year on a high note with the inscription of the 'Traditional Art of Jamdani Weaving' on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage at the 8th Session of the IGC for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in Baku (2–7 December). The National Commission played a pivotal role during the entire process, raising awareness among the relevant government organizations and providing technical support.



Mr. Nurul Islam Nahid, Minister of Education, delivers his inaugural speech at the Regional Workshop.

© Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

During the year, the Bangladesh National Commission of UNESCO organized a Regional Training Workshop for the Officials of National Commissions of the Asia-Pacific Region, held in Dhaka (30 March – 2 April). The workshop was implemented under the 2012–2013 UNESCO Participation Programme. Six other countries of the Asia-Pacific region (Bhutan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka) supported the initial project proposal.

The workshop was, by far, the most important event undertaken by the National Commission during the last decade, and the experience was extremely rewarding. The Commission tried its best to make the event a great success in terms of intellectual content and management. Due to the active contributions of the participants, the programme produced positive outcomes and excellent recommendations. It is now up to Member States, National Commissions and UNESCO to take these into consideration when exploring ways to invigorate the role of National Commissions, as a means to helping achieve UNESCO ideals and objectives, and fulfil national needs and priorities. The workshop was also a good example of effective collaboration among National Commissions on a regional basis. It created an opportunity for network building, which will be of significant benefit in the future.

BHUTAN

Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Lyonpo Mingbo Drukpa, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Sangay Zam

Update of activities in 2013

The Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO undertook numerous activities during 2013, the Year of the Water Snake. It organized the participation in thirty-three workshops, study tours and training seminars of various national departments and ministries, and facilitated five missions to Bhutan by UNESCO field offices in the region.

A new Minister for Education and Chairperson of the National Commission was appointed in July. Seven new executive members were also appointed to the National Commission for a period of five years. The newly appointed Chairman led the Bhutanese delegation at the 37th UNESCO General Conference in Paris.

2013 also saw thirteen new schools join the ASPnet. Both ASPnet schools and schools with Clubs for UNESCO participated in many diverse activities. Moreover, 148 students across the country received merit certificates for their distinctive contributions in support of UNESCO's principles.

The Bhutan and Korean National Commissions jointly conducted a national workshop for Clubs for UNESCO and ASPnet coordinators on the theme, 'Global education towards a culture of peace and a sustainable future' (3–5 July). The objective was to train newly appointed coordinators on the pedagogical concepts and principles of education for international understanding. The workshop aimed to raise awareness among participants of the causes of wars and conflicts, and the related topics of conflict prevention, transformation and resolution. It also explored the interconnections between environmental, economic and cultural issues at the global and local level (more below).



Participants undertaking activities to learn about the rights of children and human rights.

© Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO organized a three-day workshop on 'Global education towards a culture of peace and a sustainable future'. Major topics of debate and discussion during the workshop included cultural diversity, intercultural understanding and inclusive education. The workshop, which was funded by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, was conducted in two phases to derive maximum output from the programme.

Phase I took the form of a national capacity-building workshop for Clubs for UNESCO and ASPnet coordinators (schoolteachers), and was conducted at Babesa Middle Secondary School, Thimphu (3–5 July). The participants were thirty teachers from sixteen districts representing twenty-nine schools across the country. For Phase II the same participants duplicated the programme at their respective schools as part of a School Based In-service Programme (SBIP) to further promote a culture of peace in different school communities.

The National Commission received SBIP reports from twenty-five schools across the country. The feedback was highly encouraging and clearly demonstrated the success and multiplier effect of the programme. To date, 987 teachers and support staff of 25 different schools in 16 districts of the country have benefited from the programme. In 2014, the teachers who received training are expected to integrate the new information into classroom teachings.

CAMBODIA

Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia

Secretary-General: Ms Tan Theany

Update of activities in 2013

In the context of education, the National Commission cooperated with departments of the Ministry of Education to implement national and international obligations, including the drafting of reports on Education for All, gender equality, preventive education on AIDS and other infectious diseases, early-childhood education and non-formal education. The Commission coordinated training programme missions for education managers in the framework of grants awarded by UNESCO, and sent delegates on missions to technical seminars and meetings organized by UNESCO field offices and other national commissions and organizations.

In the cultural sphere, the National Commission worked in close collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts to implement cultural Conventions concluded under the auspices of UNESCO. The Commission was also involved in organizing the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee, which took place in Phnom Penh (16–27 June).

The Commission is working with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts for the appropriate management of 'Tuol Sleng', a genocide centre included on the Memory of the World Register. It is also working to establish a national committee

for the Memory of the World, with a view to carrying out research to preserve national identity and memory, in the light of the genocide that occurred under Khmer Rouge rule.

Possibilities of inscribing new biosphere reserves are being jointly explored by the team from the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh, the National Commission, the Ministries for the Environment and Tourism, and non-governmental organizations active in the regions concerned, with a view to diversifying the range of tourist attractions.

The Participation Programme has played a significant role in helping Agence Kampuchea Presse to improve its work, and in assisting the National Archives to preserve national memory within national institutions and ministries, as well as at the provincial and district levels.

The National Commission is also cooperating closely with national institutions managing world heritage sites for their conservation and sustainable development. The Commission is working to revitalize the National Committees for the International Council on Monuments and Sites and the International Council of Museum, and is coordinating the attendance of administrators and experts at relevant meetings and seminars.

The National Commission keenly monitors the implementation of activities under the Participation Programme in close cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh. UNESCO therefore enjoys strong visibility in the country as a result of these activities, as well as those of the education programmes spearheaded by the UNESCO Office, and the activities of the International Coordinating Committee for Angkor and the Preah Vihear Temple carried out by the Office's Culture Unit.



A success story

Inventory work on museum artefacts and monuments funded under the UNESCO Participation Programme has made good progress. A notable result has been the decrease in trafficking of Cambodian heritage artefacts at the national and international levels. These efforts have also resulted in the return of two Nakula and Sahadeva statues from the Metropolitan Museum in the United States, and the forthcoming return from Sotheby's of another statue taken from a Duryodhana monument.

Through the Participation Programme, the Ministry of Culture continues to publicize the activities of looters in provinces with monuments and ancient pagodas, and in provinces used as illegal transit points.

Angkor
© Aurélia Mazoyer

CHINA

National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Hao Ping, Vice-Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Du Yue

Website: www.unesco.org.cn/index.jsp (in Chinese only)

Update of activities in 2013

The year 2013 was characterized by increased visibility for UNESCO in China with a number of significant events held as a result of the efforts of the Chinese National Commission.

Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a video message on the occasion of the one-year anniversary of the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI), held in New York in the presence of the UN Secretary-General and Mrs Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO. UNESCO has played the lead role in shaping GEFI since the outset, with the strong support of China.

Mrs Bokova visited China on the occasion of the International Congress on Culture, held at Hangzhou (May), the International Conference on Intangible Cultural Heritage, held at Chengdu (June), the 1st International Conference on Learning Cities, held at Beijing (October) and the Creative Cities Summit, held at Beijing (October). Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and Vice-premier Liu Yandong met with the Director-General to discuss cooperation between China and UNESCO.

Mr. Hao Ping, Chairperson of the Chinese National Commission and Vice-minister of Education of China, was elected president of the 37th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

Exchange programmes continued to enhance friendship and cooperative partnerships between National Commissions. In February, Secretaries-General from the National Commissions of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, including the Director of the International Institute for Central Asian Studies, gathered at Sanya, Hainan Province, to participate in the exchange programme. In December, the regular exchange programme between the National Commissions of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Thailand was held in China. Young staff members from these National Commissions shared their experiences and views on the activities of UNESCO and visited Category II Centres, Education for Sustainable Development schools and World Heritage Sites in China.

China also continued its support to UNESCO in 2013. In addition to voluntary donations to education, the World Heritage Centre, the Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission, the International Geoscience Programme and cultural diversity, the first Funds-in-Trust at UNESCO, established in 2012, was extended to eight African countries in 2013. Funds-in-Trust aim to enhance teacher education systems in African countries through the training of sufficient qualified teachers to achieve Education for All objectives. Tian Shan was inscribed on the World Heritage List during the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Cambodia (June). China now hosts forty-five World Heritage Sites.



© Wang Xiaochuan/Xinhua News Agency

A success story

The international congress 'Culture: Key to Sustainable Development' was hosted by the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO and the local government in Hangzhou, China (15–17 May). This was the first such gathering to focus specifically on linkages between culture and sustainable development since the Stockholm Conference in 1998. The congress provided a global forum to discuss the role of culture in view of the post-2015 development framework. More than 400 delegates from 81 countries and 20 international organizations attended.

The Hangzhou Declaration, issued as a positive outcome of the Congress, calls upon the world to integrate culture into all development policies and plans; facilitate cultural development, mutual cultural understanding and cultural reconciliation; safeguard the cultural rights of all to promote inclusive social development; and boost the role of culture in poverty reduction and inclusive development. It also advocates the use of culture to advance environmental sustainability and improve the capacity of people to handle disasters and adapt to climate change. The Declaration states that culture must be cherished and protected for future generations, and utilized to improve sustainability and resource management in cities, and foster new cooperation models.

INDONESIA

Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Muhammad Nuh, Minister of Education

Executive Chairperson: Mr Arief Rachman

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Indonesian National Commission was actively involved in number of UNESCO programmes related to education, culture, the sciences, and communication and information. The National Commission also organized several national activities in support of the Man and the Biosphere programme, the Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission, Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Memory of the World programme.

In education, the National Commission supported a national training session on 'Multiple intelligence for tutors and teachers', held at the Ministry of Education and Culture, Jakarta (26–27 June). Another training session on human rights, designed for ASPnet teachers, was held in Sentul Sirkuit, West Java (19–22 September). The Commission also organized an international seminar entitled 'Improving literacy based on mother tongue and ICTs', held in Jakarta (31 October – 3 November).

In communication and information, the Commission organized a workshop on youth and internet addiction, entitled 'How to use the internet wisely'. The workshop was organized in

cooperation with the Seoul Youth Centre for Cultural Exchange and the Daesan Foundation, and took place in Jakarta (January). The 8th Internet Governance Forum 2013 took place in Bali (22–25 October), and was organized through the Ministry of Communication and Information.

In the social and human sciences, the National Commission supported a national training workshop on the promotion of religious and cultural tolerance through understanding and practising universal shared values. The workshop was organized in cooperation with the Tony Blair Foundation and held in Sentul Sirkuit, West Java (22–25 May).

In the natural sciences, the Commission organized a workshop exploring multiple perspectives on biodiversity, held in Jakarta (26–28 August).

Finally, the World Culture Forum was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Education under the theme 'The power of culture in sustainable development' (24–27 November).



Participants from Indonesia at a regional workshop on educational planning organized by UNESCO-IIEP and sponsored by JP Morgan at the University of Hong Kong.

© Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO/Ministry of Education and Culture

A success story

From 2012 to 2013, the Indonesian National Commission participated in a one-year distance training programme on educational planning, organized by the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). The training sessions took place from 1 June 2012 to 11 May 2013 and were carried out through online and weekly face-to-face meetings sponsored by JP Morgan. The face-to-face meetings were organized by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

In 2013, a teacher exchange programme was initiated between Indonesia and South Korea, supported by the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding.

IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)

Iranian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Reza Farazi Dana, Minister of Science, Research and Technology

Secretary-General: Mr Mohammad Reza Saeidabadi

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO contributed to activities aimed at advancing knowledge and understanding of UNESCO's activities, programmes and objectives. It worked to advance peace through translations of UNESCO publications and the organization of informative workshops, meetings and conferences at national, regional and international levels in the five fields of UNESCO's competence. In this way, it gave fresh impetus to these areas through the preservation, increase and diffusion of knowledge.

The National Commission also contributed to the implementation of UNESCO programmes and activities at the national level in cooperation with governmental and non-governmental actors concerned with issues within UNESCO's mandate.

The Commission participated in the search for eligible candidates for UNESCO prizes, fellowships, conferences, events and so on. It also organized celebrations to highlight UNESCO and UN international days.

The National Commission undertook, on its own initiative and in cooperation with other National Commissions, activities to promote the general objectives of UNESCO at national, regional and sub-regional levels, with special emphasis on the intersectoral, intergovernmental, international and cross-cutting priority programmes of the Organization.

The Commission also participated in the establishment of UNESCO Chairs and Category II Centres in Iran.

Finally, the National Commission strove to promote lifelong learning in Iran – as a UNESCO priority and the basis of every individual's right to education – through the organization of various workshops in cooperation with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office, and governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations (see below).



Promoting lifelong learning in 2013.
© Iranian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, Iran organized two national workshops on lifelong learning. The first was held in Tehran (11–14 February) and focused on innovative concepts and systems of lifelong learning. It was the result of a tripartite collaboration between the Iranian Ministry of Education, the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO and the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office. The workshop received the technical support of UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning. The second workshop (13 October) analysed the challenges, achievements and future prospects of lifelong learning in Iran. The participants explored the country's capacity to promote evidence-based policy-making and research as a means to promote and strengthen lifelong learning in Iran.

The outcomes of these workshops will form the basis of a National Committee for Lifelong Learning based in the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO and a Permanent Secretariat for Lifelong Learning in Iran. These activities can afterwards be replicated in the countries of the Tehran Cluster in cooperation with the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office.

JAPAN

Japanese National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Yuichiro Anzai

Secretary-General: Mr Shigeharu Kato

Website: www.mext.go.jp/english/unesco/

Update of activities in 2013

The Japanese Government and UNESCO are in the process of organizing the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), to be held during November 2014 in Aichi-Nagoya and Okayama, Japan. The conference will be attended by people from 195 UNESCO Member States, including government ministers. To this end, the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO is working closely with UNESCO, Japanese government ministries and the relevant local governments to ensure its success. A working group has been established within the National Commission to ascertain the desired objectives and outcomes from the conference.

The National Commission has also devised an slogan – *Anata no Mainichi ga Mirai ni Naru* (your everyday shapes the future) – and a picture-based storybook and poster to help promote ESD in Japan. The Commission will continue to raise awareness of ESD and has undertaken proactive efforts to maintain and improve the quality of UNESCO ASPnet activities, which constitute the main bastion of efforts to promote ESD. As of October 2013 there were 647 participating schools representing an increase of 97 over the previous year.

In addition, to invigorate UNESCO activities in Japan, the National Commission has taken part in intensive discussions to set out a broad policy outline for March 2014. The main areas of focus are the advancement of UNESCO activities through the participation of youth and industry, and further promotion of ESD through formal and non-formal education.



A success story

In 2013, the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO worked hard to increase the number of schools participating in ASPnet, considered key to the promotion of ESD in Japan. The Commission also sought to raise the qualities of member schools' activities by developing ASPnet school guidelines to maintain and enrich their activities.

To this end, it began implementing the Japan-UNESCO Partnership Project. This has focused on supporting the Interuniversity Network Supporting the UNESCO Associated School Project Network (ASPUnivNet). This organization comprises seventeen universities across the country that aim to assist schools in joining the network and their activities. The project also manages the ASPnet website, which provides good practices, teaching materials and information on events related to ESD. Lastly, in 2013 it organized the national meeting of ASPnet to encourage networking and sharing of information among ASPnet schools and industry.

ESD QUEST, a picture story book intended for children aged 10 or older, published in October 2013.

© Japanese National Commission for UNESCO



KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhstan National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Imangali Tasmagambetov, Secretary of State of Kazakhstan

Secretary-General: Ms Assel Utegenova

Website: www.natcom.unesco.kz

Update of activities in 2013

The Kazakhstan National Commission for UNESCO and ISESCO conducts its activities in UNESCO priority areas according to the National Action Plan. The Commission delivers its mission through the promotion of UNESCO ideals in Kazakhstan and the region of Central Asia, and participation in Executive Board sessions and other key UNESCO events. The National Commission works closely with the UNESCO Cluster office in Almaty, UNESCO Headquarters, and UNESCO advisory bodies and other representatives of the UNESCO family.

In 2013, the National Commission contributed to the implementation of UNESCO priorities in the fields of education, science, culture, communication and information.

The UNESCO Director-General, Mrs Irina Bokova, paid an official visit to Kazakhstan on the occasion of the International Forum devoted to the official launch of the International Decade for Rapprochement of Cultures (22–24 August). She delivered a keynote speech at the Plenary Session, entitled 'Rapprochement and dialogue as the major source for building peace and attaining a sustainable future'. This event, hosted

by the National Commission with the support of UNESCO Headquarters, created a platform for further development of regional and global cooperation in the field of promotion of intercultural dialogue and understanding.

During her visit, the Director-General presented a UNESCO diploma to the Alakol Biosphere Reserve in Kazakhstan, certifying its recent inscription on the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves. She also signed an agreement for the establishment of the UNESCO Chair on Ethnic and Religious Tolerance, which aims to develop an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation in the field of ethnic and religious tolerance, so as to build regional and international networks for training and research. In addition, the Director-General designated the famous Kazakh boxer Serik Sapiyev a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Sport.

The President and Secretary-General of the National Commission actively participated in the work of the UNESCO Executive Board during 2013. The Secretary-General also successfully implemented her mandate as Chair of the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations for 2012–13.

The National Commission in cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters organized the International Forum on the Great Silk Roads (14–16 October). The event brought together representatives of nearly twenty countries, local experts and representatives of UNESCO Headquarters to discuss aspects of Silk Road heritage and perspectives for further joint activities. The forum also inaugurated the UNESCO online Silk Road platform, funded by extra-budgetary contributions from Germany and Kazakhstan.

Finally, 2013 saw the establishment of the UNESCO Chair on Peace and Conflict Studies at the Caspian State University in Aktau.



UNESCO Director-General, Mrs Irina Bokova, at the launch of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures, Kazakhstan, August 2013.

© UNESCO

A success story

Within the framework of the International Decade for Rapprochement of Cultures, the Kazakhstan National Commission for UNESCO and ISESCO organized a forum on 'Strengthening the potential of UNESCO Chairs, ASPNet schools and clubs in Kazakhstan', held in Almaty in April. The event, funded through the UNESCO Participation Programme (2012–2013), made a significant contribution towards the development of cooperation among the UNESCO family at the national level.

The forum was attended by representatives of UNESCO communities in Kazakhstan, namely Associated Schools, Chairs and Clubs for UNESCO, as well as specialists from the UNESCO Cluster Office in Almaty and the Kazakhstan National Commission. Moreover, the International ASPNet Coordinator from UNESCO Headquarters and the National ASPNet Coordinator from the Republic of Korea were invited to share best practices and enhance the activities of UNESCO communities in Kazakhstan.

During the two-day forum, participants were able to present their experiences regarding implementation of UNESCO programmes, discuss best practices and identify main areas of possible cooperation. The forum provided a strong impetus for further development of UNESCO communities and created strong links for further cooperation among the members of the UNESCO family in Kazakhstan.

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Lao National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Phankham Viphavanh, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Somboun Masouvanh

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Lao National Commission for UNESCO implemented a series of workshops, notably on education for sustainable development (ESD) and disaster risk reduction.

Education for sustainable development is a topic new to Laos and few people clearly understand its meaning. In order to disseminate the ESD concept, in particular among education policy-makers, educators and curriculum developers, the Lao National Commission for UNESCO organized workshops on ESD at both central and local levels, with financial and technical support from the UNESCO Office in Bangkok.

The Commission organized workshops for thirty-five policy-makers; fifty-five directors, heads, deputy heads and curriculum developers from the Ministry of Education and Sports; and forty-five directors, deputy directors and teachers from teacher training institutions. The Commission also organized workshops for fifty secondary school principals and teachers from five provinces, and teachers working in

non-formal education (e.g. community learning centres). Finally, they organized workshops for eighty principals and teachers from ASPnet schools.

The workshops encouraged participants to exchange information and experiences, and thereafter disseminate the ESD concept to colleagues and people in their communities, leading to changes in daily behaviour. After attending a workshop many participants removed non-biodegradable waste from their school environments. They also established a classroom fund by selling used plastic bottles and their own products made from recycled and local materials, generating income for students who live in the school dormitory.

The Commission continues to conduct ESD workshops to broaden its coverage of participants, with financial support from the government and development partners.

The National Commission also organized disaster risk reduction workshops with the support of the UNESCO Office in Bangkok and the Korean National Commission. Colleagues from Bangkok and the Thai National Commission for UNESCO were invited to give presentations and share their experiences with Lao teachers.

The Commission organized workshops for a hundred teachers and students of secondary schools from Oudomsay and Xiengkhoung provinces; eighty principals and teachers of secondary schools from Luang Prabang, Oudomsay and Sayaboury provinces; and fifty-five principals and teachers of Vientiane province.

Finally, the Lao National Commission undertook a joint capacity-building project with the Korean National Commission to strengthen teaching skills for primary teachers from educationally disadvantaged districts. The project aimed to develop a toolkit containing practical tips for teaching multi-grade classes.



Discussion on the implementation of the Participation Programme projects.

© Lao National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

Under the UNESCO Participation Programme for 2012–2013, Lao PDR received the budget to implement six projects. Among these were ASPnet school projects carried out through the Regional Initiative for Cooperation for ESD Promotion Through Rice (RICE project), in which four ASPnet schools participated.

An environment education project was initiated in Vanvieng District Vientiane Province; a climate change integrated model was implemented at Vientiane high school; garbage recycling activities began at an orphanage school in Luang Prabang; and a project entitled 'Friend-to-friend volunteers' was implemented at Pasathipatai school, Luang Prabang province.

As part of these projects, students collected used textbooks, learning materials and clothes, and donated them to students in remote area. They also produced simple products from recycled materials.

Such good practice sharing remains a challenge for Lao schools because of English speaking limitations and poor communication systems at the district level. Some schools lack telephones or faxes and many have poor mobile phone reception.

As part of this programme, the Lao National Commission visited the Viet Nam and Thai National Commissions to learn from and exchange experiences and best practices.

MONGOLIA

Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Bold Luvsanvandan, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Gundegmaa Jargalsaikhan

Website: www.natcom-unesco.mn

Update of activities in 2013

The Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO undertook a number of activities in 2013.

Four out of ten projects submitted for the 2012–2013 Participation Programme were approved. Two projects, 'Increase the visibility of UNESCO in Mongolia' and 'The perspectives of science and innovation policy development', have so far been completed successfully. Two Mongolian nominations for the UNESCO-ISED Co-sponsored Fellowships Programme 2013 were also successful.

In culture, 'Mongolian calligraphy' was inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and 'Traditional craftsmanship of the Mongol Ger and its associated customs' was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with Gandan Tegchenling Monastery implemented a project entitled, 'Methodology of paper conservation and paper-making traditions in East Asia'. The project aims to enhance protection of moveable cultural heritage and safeguard the sutras and manuscripts stored in the monastery library.

In 2013, the documentary heritage, 'Kanjur written with nine precious stones', was successfully registered on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

In the natural sciences, the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO in collaboration with the Mongolian Ministry of Education and Science organized a national forum on 'The Reform of the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy', held in Ulaanbaatar (5–7 September). The forum was attended by the Director of the UNESCO Regional Science Bureau for the Asia and the Pacific region, and programme specialists for the Natural Sciences from the UNESCO Office in Beijing and UNESCO Headquarters.

In the social and human sciences, UNESCO is supporting the development of a national policy to promote youth participation in Mongolia. The Organization has also supported a recent situational analysis on Mongolia's National Policy Framework for children and young people conducted by World Vision.

In the field of communication and information, the National Commission organized a series of conferences, including on internet journalism and social changes, press freedom and the right of journalists to work, as well as open discussions, seminars and audiovisual screenings on relevant topics. The purpose of these events is to broaden and strengthen the significance of World Radio Day, World Day for Audiovisual Heritage and World Press Freedom Day, and to stimulate public discussion about key issues facing the press.



A success story

The Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO organized the 13th East Asian Biosphere Reserves Network (EABRN) meeting in Ulaanbaatar (21–25 October) in cooperation with the Mongolian National Man and the Biosphere Committee and the EABRN Secretariat. Representatives from seven EABRN member states (China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation) and key governmental agencies and local communities in Mongolia attended the meeting, as well as participants from relevant organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund, the Nature Conservancy and the United Nations Development Programme.

The 13th East Asian Biosphere Reserves Network (EABRN) meeting.
© Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO

NAURU

Nauru National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Roland Kun, Minister for Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Jerielyn Teleni

Update of activities in 2013

The Strategic Plan of Nauru outlines three educational principles: learning to know, learning to do and learning to live together. Nauru upholds a policy on compulsory education of students up to the age of 16, and stresses the importance of quality and relevant education. The strategic plan also focuses on technical and vocational education and training.

Nauru is also working on revitalizing its indigenous languages through the school system, as a way of maintaining its unique cultural identity and diversity. It is vital that UNESCO pay special attention to small, vulnerable cultures and ethnic groups, such as those of Nauru.

In 2004, the Nauru Government developed and is now steadily implementing the Nauru Sustainable Development Strategy 2005–2025. Forms of renewable energy, such as solar, wind and ocean currents, are being investigated.

Nauru is very concerned by the impacts of climate change. Low-lying islands such as those found in the Caribbean, Indian and Pacific, and other great oceans of the world are highly vulnerable to this phenomenon. UNESCO is well positioned to join others in addressing this global problem.

Nauru remains committed to the principles of democracy, in particular stability and good governance. The country also pledges its support as a mediator to countries in difficult circumstances, especially with regard to war-torn areas.



A success story

A small Pacific country, Nauru faces somewhat fewer challenges with respect to education and information and communication technologies (ICT) because of its relative compactness. An ICT in education policy is being implemented that aims to make use of ICT as a learning tool. Although teachers have limited access to ICT, most have received training overseas in this field. However, the majority of computers in schools no longer function and there is a lack of expertise to diagnose the problems. In the absence of working computers, radio, television and video play a frequent role in schools and education.

In spite of low telephony and internet penetration and other infrastructural challenges, Nauru is well-placed to increase the use of ICTs in education.

Celebration of International Literacy Day in Nauru.

© Nauru National Commission for UNESCO

NEPAL

Nepal National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Chitra Lekha Yadav, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Narayan Gopal Malego

Website: <http://nncu.org.np>

Update of activities in 2013

The Nepal National Commission for UNESCO works actively to implement the ideals of UNESCO through collaborations with government agencies, ASPnet schools, Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO, and non-governmental organizations working in the fields of UNESCO. During 2013, the Commission worked on a number of major activities.

In 2013, the Nepal National Commission worked to implement nine projects under UNESCO's Participation Programme. These focused on the following topics: sustainable development, quality education, accountability and transparency of government service delivery, computer literacy for rural women, tourism development through protection, promotion and development of culture and customs, climate change education, preservation of the intangible cultural of Kathmandu and women's empowerment. All these projects are nearing completion and the set objectives are likely to be achieved.

During 2013, the Nepal National Commission for UNESCO, with the technical support of the UNESCO Offices in Kathmandu and Bangkok, also developed a National Framework of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The major objective of the ESD National Framework is to re-orient the education system in line with the values and principles of ESD. Based on this framework, school education curricula, teacher training, non-formal education, and technical education and vocational training will be revised, and the capacity of key education stakeholders increased to focus on ESD. The National Commission also developed, with the support of the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu, the ICT in Education Master Plan, which aims to mainstream information and communication technology (ICT) in school education.

The ESD National Framework and the ICT in Education Master Plan were both launched by the Secretary of the Ministry of Education, the Secretary-General of the National Commission and the UNESCO Office in Bangkok (3 July).

Finally, in 2013 the Nepal National Commission for UNESCO, with the financial support of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, worked to promote sustainability through a capacity-building project focused on community learning centres (CLCs). The programme aims to use CLCs not just as local centres for literacy, but also as local hubs for climate change education and local sustainability. At present, there are eleven CLCs, representing different geographical regions, implementing sustainability and climate change education projects.



A success story

Based on lessons learned from the Asian Rice Project (initiated by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO), the Nepal National Commission for UNESCO is implementing a project for promoting climate change education and ESD at local level. The Commission is working to empower ASPnet schools and local communities to implement the project. At present, thirty schools and their local communities are deeply involved in project implementation.

The Director of the UNESCO Office in Bangkok and the Secretary-General of the Nepal National Commission for UNESCO launching the ESD National Framework of Education for Sustainable Development.

© Nepal National Commission for UNESCO

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Ian McKinnon

Secretary-General: Ms Elizabeth L. Rose

Website: www.unesco.org.nz

Update of activities in 2013

The New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO undertook five major activities in 2013.

As a first for New Zealand, the Commission co-hosted an event with UNESCO's Climate Frontlines programme, 'Te hurihuri o te Ao: cycles of change'. This brought together thirty-eight experts in climate science and indigenous knowledge to discuss ways in which traditional calendars can inform policies and scientific perspectives on climate change. Traditional knowledge – including seasonal and astronomical calendars – is built up through generations. It provides layers of observations on local shifts in the environment relevant to climate change issues today. An ongoing network has been formed among participants to further collaborate and share best practice on this topic. A publication is also planned.

The National Commission also worked to re-energize ASPnet. New Zealand's ASPnet comprises sixteen members from primary to tertiary education, including indigenous Māori, New Zealand European, Pasifika and many migrant groups. This year, a workshop of teachers and students was

organized to unpack the meaning of UNESCO and discuss the Declaration of Human Rights. Even the youngest learners were encouraged to google, discuss and examine their identity in relation to these principles. Every participating school now has a plan specific to their particular needs and the priorities of their students.

For the third year running, the National Commission supported 'Outlook for Someday', a sustainability film challenge for youth. As a project partner, the Commission takes part in the jury and awards a special prize – the UNESCO Sustainable Future Award. This year the film *Someday Everyone Will Scooter* by students aged 10 and 11 was selected. The film dreams of a future with no bullying, no poverty and where people respect one other. In 2010, the competition was given permission to use the logo of the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development.

The National Commission also supported 'Teaspoon of light', a project developed in response to the Christchurch earthquakes. The project has worked with thousands of learners across Christchurch, using arts as a way to allow people to visualize themselves as survivors, capable of building and repairing their dreams, rather than as victims of the quakes. The next stage in the project is to support a team of arts teachers and artists to design a web-based resource for teachers to use following disasters. The resource will help teachers to plan their work and incorporate examples of artwork created in schools following the quake.



Members of the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO Youth Reference group.

© New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the National Commission for UNESCO created its first Youth Reference Group. Twelve young people from across New Zealand provide perspectives on the work of the Commission to promote peace and social justice in New Zealand and the Pacific.

The group draws experience from broad areas of expertise, including gender studies, environment issues, health, Māori and Pasifika, disaster relief, media and communications, development and youth engagement. Each member is active in his or her own communities and beyond, and their collective ideas and skills are a vital resource for the National Commission.

A Special Advisor Youth role was established to ensure the voice of youth covered all areas of the Commission's work. The group supports this role by gathering the diverse views of New Zealand youth.

To date, the group has represented youth at events including a Human Rights Youth Forum on Diversity, an International Peace Day event and the 'Looking beyond disaster' forums. The group has also provided strategic advice ahead of the UNESCO General Conference and established an 'interests' register' to support projects of the Commission.

Young people are critical stakeholders in all aspects of the National Commission's work, and their energy, motivation and vision are essential assets for positive social change.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Korean National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Nam-soo Seo, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Dong-seok Min

Website: www.unesco.or.kr/eng

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO continued to increase its domestic and international projects, striving to become one of the most active and dynamic National Commissions.

In education, the Commission has been actively preparing for and promoting the 2015 World Conference on Education, to be held in Seoul. It also continually organizes domestic education for sustainable development (ESD) projects through the Korean National Committee on ESD, and serves as National Coordinator of domestic ASPnet activities. With a strong focus on youth, the Commission hosted the 2nd International Youth Forum on Historical Reconciliation in East Asia, reinforcing peace-building among sixty Asian youths. It also hosted the 1st KIDS Global Leadership Programme, a capacity-building summer camp on UNESCO-related topics for students aged 10–12.

In the sciences, the Asian Regional Initiative for Climate Change Education (RICE) supported twenty-three school-

community partnership projects in five countries (Bangladesh, Laos, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand), promoting localized adaptation to climate change in Asia. In addition, the Commission published four issues of the *Korea Journal*, an English-language academic quarterly, founded in 1961, which fosters research in Korean studies and introduces Korean culture and society to the world (see www.ekoreajournal.net).

In culture, the Commission promoted UNESCO's heritage conventions and the Memory of the World (MOW) programme, including the MOW Training Workshop to help Asia-Pacific countries nominate examples of their documentary heritage. The Commission also organized the International Forum on Culture and Development to support UNESCO's efforts to include culture in the post-2015 agenda.

Finally, as part of the Republic of Korea's efforts to return the support it received from the international community following the Korean War, the Commission carried out the Africa Hope BRIDGE programme, which takes a grassroots approach to promoting education and development within local communities in six sub-Saharan African countries. Through this programme, the Commission has established several community learning centres where children can go to school and adults can attend various literacy and training programmes. In addition to accelerating progress towards Education for All goals, the programme also enables community members to become more involved with local development projects.

Moving forward, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO is taking steps to improve its financial situation by initiating partnership development with the private sector and individual donors.



IcoN Website Development Project.
© Korean National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

Since 2011, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO has supported fellow National Commissions in the Asia-Pacific region through the Increasing Capacities of National Commissions (IcoN) programme. In 2013, the Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan National Commissions were selected to participate in the programme. The Commission invited one staff member from each participating National Commission for a two-week study visit in March. During their stay, the participants experienced the daily workings of the Commission and learned its operations, while also developing a joint project with the Commission, which they then implemented upon their return. The Commission provided technical assistance and financial support, allowing the fellow National Commissions to successfully implement the projects themselves.

In 2013, the Commission expanded the ICoN Programme by introducing the Website Development Project, addressing another major challenge faced by many National Commissions. The Commission assisted six National Commissions in creating and managing their own websites, thereby enhancing their ability to share their experiences and knowledge. This collaborative endeavour met with overwhelmingly positive results, although it was sometimes hindered by lack of communication with other National Commissions.

SINGAPORE

Singapore National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Lawrence Wong, Acting Minister, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth

Secretary-General: Mrs Rosa Daniel

Update of activities in 2013

The Singapore National Commission for UNESCO had an eventful and rewarding year during which it actively promoted and supported UNESCO activities.

In education, representatives from the Singapore Ministry of Education participated at two key platforms to discuss and learn about the use of information communication technologies (ICT) in education. The first, organized by the UNESCO Office in Bangkok, focused on ICTs in relationship to education policy, infrastructure and official development assistance status in selected ASEAN countries. The second was the Asia Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education, held in Shenzhen.

The National Commission also strengthened its partnership with UNESCO via people-to-people exchanges in the areas of education and culture. The Commission supported the secondment of its education officer to the UNESCO Office

in Bangkok and hosted UNESCO delegates from Cambodia, Ethiopia, Germany, Switzerland and Thailand during a cultural visit to Singapore.

Empowering women and youth remained a key focus. In the area of science research, the Commission was privileged to nominate two outstanding candidates for the 2012 L’Oreal For Women in Science National Fellowship Awards for their work in the life sciences and material sciences. The Commission was also happy to nominate a student from Nanyang Technological University as a representative to the 8th UNESCO Youth Forum.

Finally, the National Commission’s commitment to heritage conservation was renewed through the participation of representatives from the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, the National Heritage Board and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the 37th World Heritage Committee Session, held in Phnom Penh (16–27 June).



© Singapore National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In December 2012, an application was made for the Singapore Botanic Gardens to be placed on the Tentative List of Sites for nomination to the World Heritage List, on account of its significant contribution to the growth of the rubber industry in Southeast Asia and the rest of the world, and its well-preserved landscape as a British tropical colonial garden. On the occasion of the 37th World Heritage Committee Session, held in Phnom Penh (16–27 June), the Singapore National Commission for UNESCO organized a photographic exhibition and reception to showcase the beauty and outstanding qualities of the Botanic Gardens to UNESCO delegates.

The exhibition demonstrated Singapore’s efforts to identify and protect heritage on its shores. It also provided an opportunity to share some of Singapore’s good practices and contribute to continuing dialogue in the field of heritage conservation, especially given the context of a land-scarce and highly developed city.

The event was attended by 300 guests including the Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia, H.E. Sok An, the Director of the World Heritage Centre Director, the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture and staff members from UNESCO Headquarters.

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO

Chairman: Mr Bandula Gunawardhana, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Dhammika Wijayasinghe

Website: http://sri_lanka.comnat.unesco.org

Update of activities in 2013

The Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO appointed a new Vice Chairman and Secretary-General in 2013. The year also brought challenges, as the decision to hold the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Sri Lanka forced the Commission to postpone activities scheduled for October and November. Nevertheless, the Commission had an active year, during which it participated in a number of meetings and organized numerous workshops.

In education, the Sri Lanka National Commission participated in a regional policy seminar on Education Development and Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region, held in Bangkok (5–7 August); it attended the Asia Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Child Care and Education, held in Seoul (10–12 September); and took part in the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education, held in Shenzhen, China (26–28 November). It also organized the activity 'Empowering women through education for health equality and sustainable development', funded through the UNESCO Participation Programme.

In culture, the National Commission organized the 2nd UNESCO capacity-building workshop on community-based

inventorying, and attended a one-month training course on the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage in the Asia-Pacific region, in Nara, Japan (2 September – 3 October). It participated in an international congress on culture and sustainable development, held in Hangzhou, China (15–17 May), and a statistics training workshop, held in New Delhi (22–25 October). The Commission also promoted the International Vesak Buddhist Film Festival and Exhibition.

In the sciences, the National Commission worked to support scientific methodology and novel teaching techniques at the level of junior secondary education. It also attended workshops on disaster risk reduction and education for sustainable development; the Asian Regional Initiative for Climate Change Education (RICE); and the South Asian Symposium on Gender, ICT and Education, held in New Delhi (27–27 September).

Lastly, the National Commission was actively involved in the awarding of several fellowships, including the UNESCO L'Oréal Co-sponsored Fellowships for Young Woman in Life Sciences, the UNESCO-Poland Co-sponsored Fellowships Programme in Engineering, the UNESCO-People's Republic of China Great Wall Co-Sponsored Fellowships Programme 2013–2014, the UNESCO-Israel Co-sponsored Fellowships Programme (MASHAV), and the Sujatha Diyani Scholarship Fund of the Lee Young Ae Scholarships Foundation.



Participants of the project 'Young Energy for Economic Development through Cultural Heritage'.

© Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

Sri Lanka has six cities designated as World Heritage Sites. Within these properties are palaces, temples, hospitals, schools, ponds and drainage systems. However, lack of proper knowledge about this invaluable heritage and its national importance is leading to damage at the hands of treasure hunters and common vandals. The Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO has recognized the gravity of the situation and is working closely with the Ministries of Culture, the Arts and National Heritage to propose a sustainable solution.

The Young Energy for Economic Development Project targets young people aged 18–28 with the aim of harnessing their potential and energy to preserve and promote national cultural heritage. The project is designed to combat social problems and frustration arising from the high unemployment rate among youth aged 15–29 by promoting civic engagement in heritage, economic development and intercultural understanding.

The project aims to promote economic development through heritage tourism, reduce vandalism of cultural heritage properties, and preserve Sri Lankan cultural heritage for future generations.

TAJIKISTAN

National Commission of the Republic of Tajikistan for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Mirzoshohruxh Asrori, Minister of Culture

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Republic of Tajikistan celebrated the 20th anniversary of its membership of UNESCO.

For the National Commission of the Republic of Tajikistan, a highlight of the year was the first official visit of the Director-General of UNESCO, Mrs Irina Bokova, to Tajikistan on the occasion of an International High-Level Conference on Water Cooperation (see below).

In April, the Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO organized training sessions on international mechanisms for implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. More than fifty experts from different regions participated in the training, a result of which was the translation and publication of the 2003 Convention in the Tajik language.

Shortly afterwards, the nomination of 'Tajikistan National Park' to the World Heritage List was accepted during the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Phnom Penh (16–27 June).

In September, with the support of the UNESCO Cluster Bureau in Almaty, the Tajikistan National Commission organized a round table on the 2005 Convention on the Protection and

Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, entitled 'The modern cultural situation in Tajikistan'.

In October, the Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO organized a workshop on information and communication technology and open access to scientific knowledge, held in Dushanbe City.

During the year, the National Commission in cooperation with other government agencies also prepared and submitted four nominations to UNESCO for inscription on the list of memorable cultural anniversaries. The nominations celebrated the 3,000th anniversary of Hisor, an ancient town; the 700th anniversary of Mirsaid Alii Hamadani, a great philosopher; the 100th anniversary of Ziyodullo Shahidi, a renowned composer; and the 600th anniversary of Abdurahman Jomi, a great poet.

Lastly, 2013 was the Year of Water Cooperation. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan attended the launch in Paris where he presented a book entitled *The Tajik Golden Heritage*, which includes unique examples of Tajik arts and crafts. The publication was well received and the Director-General conferred a medal upon the author.



Inauguration of the UNESCO Corner in the new National Library in Dushanbe.
© National Commission of the Republic of Tajikistan for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mrs Irina Bokova, paid her first official visit to the Republic of Tajikistan (20–22 August). This visit demonstrated the strengthening of ties between UNESCO and Tajikistan. Mrs Bokova met and held bilateral talks with the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Culture. The Director-General also thanked Tajikistan for its leadership in organizing the International High-Level Conference on Water Cooperation.

During her stay in Tajikistan, the Director-General was invited to visit the new National Library in Dushanbe, where she inaugurated the UNESCO Corner where exhibits from the National Museum of Antiquities and handicrafts awarded the UNESCO seal of excellence are displayed. She also visited the Tajikistan National Park, which was inscribed on the World Heritage List on 21 June, and Hisor where she was acquainted with the measures taken to safeguard the history and historical objects of this ancient town.

UZBEKISTAN

National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Adkham Ikramov, Deputy Prime Minister

Secretary-General: Mr Alisher Ikramov

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO provided support for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of projects within UNESCO fields of competence.

In education, the National Commission carried out core activities in partnership with the Ministry of Public Education, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, and the State Testing Centre. The project 'Quality management and enhancement in higher education of Uzbekistan', funded under the 2012–2013 Participation Programme, was a follow-up to the outcomes of the 2011 UNESCO Global forum on rankings and accountability in higher education. The 'Capacity-building training workshop for ASPnet schools on ESD', funded as part of a cooperation programme with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, was devoted to the final phase of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

The natural sciences witnessed the establishment of an information centre under the State Committee for Coordination of Science and Technologies Development. This activity was supported by the Participation Programme project 'Development of national science policy: management of technology innovations in Uzbekistan'. The National Commission in cooperation with the Man and the Biosphere National Committee also provided support for research activities on the preservation of biodiversity in the natural

reserves and parks of Uzbekistan. The project was a contribution to the UN Decade on Biodiversity 2011–2020.

In the social and human sciences, projects focused on strengthening cooperation with the National Committees for Management of Social Transformations (MOST) and Bioethics.

In culture, the National Commission implemented projects for capacity-building on museum management in Uzbekistan and the use of ICTs for inventory-making and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in Central Asia – the latter with the support of the UNESCO Category II Centre in the Republic of Korea. The Commission also organized a cycle of conferences and expert meetings on Silk Road cultural heritage in close collaboration with the International Institute for Central Asian Studies, also a UNESCO Category II Institute.

Finally, the Commission initiated the project, 'Preservation of digital information in the libraries of Uzbekistan', co-funded under the Participation Programme. The project was implemented in close collaboration with the National Committees of the Information for All Programme, the Memory of the World programme and the Navoi National Library of Uzbekistan.

All of these projects were realized in close cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Tashkent and local stakeholders, including governmental and non-governmental organizations.



International Music Festival Sharq Taronalari in Samarkand (August 2013).

© National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the Government of Uzbekistan organized the 9th edition of the International Music Festival Sharq Taronalari (25–31 August) with the support of UNESCO. The biennial festival takes place at the World Heritage Site of Registan Square, Samarkand. The objective of the festival is the promotion of a culture of peace through the manifestation of cultural diversity. For this edition, around 400 artists representing 53 countries from various continents presented examples of traditional music and performing arts. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Mr Islam Karimov, and the Director-General of UNESCO, Mrs Irina Bokova, attended the opening ceremony.

An international conference on musical traditions of the Orient in the context of contemporary culture, was organized within the framework of the festival, and funded under a UNESCO Participation Programme. The conference provided a platform for scholars and practitioners to share experiences and knowledge on the preservation and development of traditional music culture and to help promote its transmission to future generations.

VIET NAM

Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Nguyen Thanh Son, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Pham Cao Phong

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO worked to evaluate and consolidate its structure, so as to strengthen management systems and coordination of professional activities. The objective is to improve the capacity of the Commission to respond efficiently to the current social situation in the country.

In this context, the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO welcomed the Director-General, Mrs Irina Bokova (19–23 June), whose official visit was organized at the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. The Director-General met with Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to discuss the role of UNESCO in Viet Nam (see below).

During the year, the National Commission established terms of reference for National Committees for the Man and the Biosphere programme, the Memory of the World programme, the International Geoscience Programme and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. It established an action plan for 2013–2018 and appointed committee members.



Official visit of the Director-General Irina Bokova to Viet Nam, June 2013.

© Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO

The National Commission actively participated in the 192th Session of the Executive Board (24 September – 10 November), providing inputs and adopting the Draft Medium-term Strategy for 2014–2021 and the Draft Programme and Budget for 2014–2017, as well as voting for the new Director-General for the 2014–2018 term. This demonstrates that Viet Nam has become actively involved in policy development, and the direction and operational activities of the Organization.

Finally, the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO signed a 2013–2018 cooperation agreement with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO. The goal of the agreement, signed according to Article VII of the UNESCO charter, is to create opportunities for cooperation between the two countries in the areas of culture, education, the sciences, and information and communication. It is the first such agreement between the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO and another National Commission, and lays the groundwork for future collaboration with other countries.

A success story

In 2013, the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO organized the official visit of the Director-General, Mrs Irina Bokova, to Viet Nam (19–23 June). The Director-General met with Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to discuss the role of UNESCO in Viet Nam in the context of national and global development. They discussed issues of human resources and capacity-building, and potential areas of cooperation between UNESCO and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

During the visit the National Commission also organized a Viet Nam-UNESCO workshop to evaluate the outcomes of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Viet Nam and UNESCO.

The Director-General was awarded a Doctorate Honoris Causa at the Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam and presented a lecture to students on the theme of culture for peace and development. She also attended the opening ceremony of the Quang Nam Heritage Festival and took part in celebrations to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.





Europe and North America

ALBANIA

Albanian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Lindita Nikolla, Minister of Education and Sports

Secretary-General: Mrs Venera Domi

Website: www.unesco.al

Update of activities in 2013

The Secretariat of the National Commission is located in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Secretary-General is a senior diplomat. The members of the National Commission are drawn from the relevant institutions (namely, the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Environment) responsible for cooperation with UNESCO and its programmes, in addition to representatives from academia and civil society.

The Secretariat of the Albanian National Commission for UNESCO is small and has limited human and financial resources. Nevertheless, its activities cover a wide range of thematic sectors.

During 2013, the Albanian National Commission successfully fulfilled its mandate – to expand and strengthen its cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters and the Regional Bureau for Education, Science and Culture in Europe in Venice.

Among its most successful activities was the preparation of nomination files for the designation of specific sites as Transboundary Biosphere Reserves under UNESCO's Man

and the Biosphere (MAB) programme. The first of these was the Prespa-Ohrid Watershed, jointly prepared with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). The nomination file for Lake Shkodra was also jointly prepared with Montenegro for submission in September 2014, in a partnership with the Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania (INCA).

The National Commission also played a leading role in the preparation and presentation of two projects for the Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, one of which was the creation of a national inventory of elements of intangible cultural heritage.

The Commission successfully prepared and presented a project proposal to the Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sports, which was selected for implementation during 2014, in partnership with the Albanian National Commission for Anti Doping.

The Commission was also involved in the process for the preparation and presentation of four projects under the call for proposals for the International Fund for Cultural Diversity, one of which was selected and is currently under evaluation.

Lastly, the Commission was responsible for updating the Albanian Tentative List of the World Heritage Sites and coordinating the presentation of two projects for the World Heritage Fund, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and the Institute for Monuments of Culture.



Prespa National Park in Albania.
© Wolfgang Fremuth

A success story

In 2013, the National Commission collaborated with FYROM to prepare a nomination file for submission of the Prespa-Ohrid Watershed as a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (TBR) under UNESCO's MAB programme. Biosphere reserves function as laboratories of excellence and innovation in the field of the sustainable development and environmental protection. The Prespa-Ohrid Watershed would constitute Albania's first TBR.

The National Commission worked in close cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, the team of Prespa-Ohrid Watershed and its counterparts from FYROM throughout the nomination process. The KfW Bank Group funded the project within the framework of a project for rehabilitation of the area.

The first step was the establishment of the National Committee for MAB and its endorsement of the process, which took place at the inaugural meeting. The meeting also served as an inter-institutional examination and approval platform for the nomination file.

ANDORRA

Andorran National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Elisenda Vives

Secretary-General: Mr Jean-Michel Armengol

Website: www.unesco.ad

Update of activities in 2013

The Andorran National Commission for UNESCO undertook a number of activities in 2013, many of which were achieved through synergies with other United Nations bodies, such as the World Tourism Organization's Themis Foundation, UNESCO Headquarters and the Andorra UNESCO Chair.

In celebration of the 60th anniversary of the UNESCO ASPnet the National Commission launched a poetry project entitled 'Poems of the World', released a commemorative stamp, organized an exhibition of GoodPlanet Foundation posters, and presented UNESCO teaching materials to the libraries of UNESCO Associated Schools.

The Commission translated into Catalan the virtual exhibition 'Experiencing mathematics' in conjunction with the Department of Mathematics of the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the Science Centre. It also participated in events to celebrate 2013 as a special year for the 'Mathematics of Planet Earth'.

In culture, the National Commission proposed the nomination of an element for the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and helped develop a management plan for the Madriu-Perafita-Claror Valley world heritage site. The Commission also supported the travelling exhibition 'Art Camp 2012', which was displayed at UNESCO Headquarters, the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and the UNESCO Office in Venice (see below).

Two young Andorrans participated in the UNESCO-supported initiative 'Connecting Cultures'. The initiative takes groups of young people from the Western and Arab world on intensive, five-day journeys into the deserts and mountains of Oman, where they engage in undisturbed face-to-face dialogue to identify shared values, explore cultural differences and discuss issues related to peace.

Young Andorrans participated in activities at the Artek educational camp for children in Ukraine (20 July – 1 August). The camp was officially recognized by UNESCO in 2004 as a site for the implementation of international projects.

The National Commission also supported the Ull-Nu Festival in the Pyrenees. The annual festival attracts young audiovisual creators aged 16–35 from Andorra, Spain and France, who submit short films in categories including animation, documentary, experimental and fiction. The entries were screened at the Congress Centre of Andorra in November.

The National Commission finished the year by celebrating International Mountain Day (11 December) in the presence of Carlos Soria Fontán, the Spanish mountain climber. Aged over 70, he is endeavouring to reach the summit of the fourteen highest mountains in the world.



A success story

Since 2008, the National Commission has organized a biennial meeting for painters from across the world. The last meeting, in 2012, brought together thirty-seven artists from over twenty countries. Each artist gave three works to form part of a travelling exhibition. The works were displayed throughout 2013 at UNESCO Headquarters, the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and the UNESCO Office in Venice. This initiative was an opportunity for the National Commission to work with UNESCO Headquarters and the UNESCO Office in Venice, and to establish partnerships with sponsors and the private sector. The resulting exhibition raised the profile of both UNESCO and the National Commissions.

Art Camp 2012 'Colours for the Planet'.

© Dorte Passer

ARMENIA

Armenian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Edward Nalbandyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Vahram Kazhoyan

Website: www.unesco.am

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Armenian National Commission for UNESCO undertook numerous activities to promote the values of UNESCO.

Within the framework of the 2012–2013 UNESCO Participation Programme the National Commission coordinated the implementation of five projects in Armenia in the fields of education, communication and information, culture and science. These included the development of a ranking and classification system for Higher Education Institutions in Armenia; the establishment of a national scheme for monitoring ICT use in Armenian general education and the development of a new public policy document to increase its effectiveness; a national workshop on the introduction of contemporary technologies for monitoring and preservation of freshwater in Armenia; a summer school for young astronomers (see below); and an international festival celebrating the 300th anniversary of the poet and musician, Sayat-Nova.

The National Commission presented three candidatures for the UNESCO-Israel (MASHAV) Co-Sponsored Fellowships 2013. Two were awarded fellowships facilitating their participation

in a postgraduate training course, 'Integrated approach to upgrading poor urban areas', held at the Weitz Centre for Development Studies in Rehovot, Israel.

In cooperation with the Greek Embassy, the Commission organized a ceremony at Yerevan State Linguistic University to commemorate the anniversary of the Greek poet Constantine Cavafy, and a seminar at the State Medical University in honour of the renowned Greek doctor and researcher George Papanikolaou.

Schools belonging to the Armenian ASPnet participated widely in events held on 30 April to celebrate International Jazz Day. Activities included an introduction to the history of jazz highlighting its important role as means of communication, presentations by students on the art of jazz, live performances by students and Armenian jazz musicians, talks by renowned Armenian jazz musicians at ASPnet schools, and screenings of documentaries. An open-air concert organized by the Municipality of Yerevan featured local and visiting jazz musicians.

On the occasion of the International Day of Peace, the National Commission cooperated with the Armenian Federation of UNESCO Clubs and Associations to engage young people in the 'Pathways to a culture of peace' initiative. An Armenian participant was recognized for his video short entitled 'My Fairy Tale'.

The Armenian National Commission organized a number of conferences, seminars and thematic training sessions in cooperation with the UNESCO Moscow Office.

Finally, in 2013 Armenia officially joined the UNESCO Regional Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage of South-Eastern Europe in Sofia and a representative of the National Commission participated in the General Assembly (5 March).



Model UNESCO Awards Ceremony, honouring the most active participants.

© Armenian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The International Summer School for Young Astronomers took place in Byurakan (23–27 September). The school was a joint initiative of the International Astronomical Union, the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory (BAO) and the Armenian Astronomical Society, and received financial support under the UNESCO Participation Programme for 2012–2013.

Altogether, forty-eight students from seventeen countries participated in the summer school. The programme consisted of lectures on various aspects of modern astrophysics by renowned scientists and scientific presentations by students on their research topics. Specialists attended from Canada, China, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States and other countries. All lectures and talks were recorded onto DVDs and distributed to the students.

The programme also included practical exercises using optical, infrared and radio reduction software and small BAO telescopes, and social exercises including sightseeing, games and competitions, banquets and other events. Special emphasis was placed on the multi-wavelength study of active galaxies and the development of virtual observatories.

AUSTRIA

Austrian Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Eva Nowotny

Secretary-General: Ms Gabriele Eschig

Update of activities in 2013

According to its statutes, the main functions of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO are to advise the federal and state governments and non-governmental organizations with a view to implementing UNESCO's objectives, instituting and maintaining contacts between UNESCO and national partner institutions, and informing the public of UNESCO's goals and programmes. The President of the Commission promotes UNESCO's work at diverse occasions including events under the patronage of UNESCO or the Commission and international days. The Austrian Commission carried out numerous activities in 2013, including the following.

Within the framework of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Commission drew up the Austrian Inventory comprising thirteen inscriptions. It held a thematic sub-regional workshop on multinational nominations and participated in relevant national and international meetings. The Commission was also the focal point for the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and worked to coordinate information-sharing, cooperation and lobbying activities among a network of fifty stakeholders.

The Commission coordinated an international seminar on implementation of the 1954 The Hague Convention for the

Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two (1954 and 1999) Protocols for Sub-Saharan African Countries' (2–6 December) with the support of the UNESCO Participation Programme.

It also participated in the annual meeting of the nine Austrian World Heritage Sites, and assisted with the publication of new and online editions of *Austrian World Heritage in Young Hands*.

The Commission provided contributions to the 'Mobility guide for artists' issued by the Federal Ministries. It organized discussion events on the impact of free trade agreements on culture, prepared an online information dossier on culture and development, and provided a continuous information service for the media and general public.

The Commission undertook diverse activities on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of ASPnet, including the organization of a ceremony at the annual meeting, the publication of a special edition of the network's magazine, and the creation of the category 'learning to live together' for the annual Media Literacy Award.

The National Commission was involved in 32 projects (163 projects in total) to promote the concept of education for sustainable development (ESD) at a local level.

Finally, the Commission awarded four national fellowships 'For Women in Science' in cooperation with L'Oreal Austria and the Austrian Academy of Science with the financial support of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research.



Special issue of the newspaper *Der Standard* on cultural diversity, Vienna.
© Austrian Commission for UNESCO

A success story

At the initiative of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, a media campaign was launched on the occasion of UNESCO's World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (21 May) to raise public awareness about the importance of protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions.

The campaign involved the daily newspaper *Der Standard*, which has an average readership of over 400,000 for its weekend edition, the national radio station Ö1, and the main culture and news channel, ORF, the Austrian public service broadcaster. *Der Standard* dedicated its weekend issue (18–20 May) to the theme of cultural diversity, exploring the topic from a range of angles, including international and national politics, economy, culture, education and sports. Likewise, the radio channel Ö1 broadcast a series of features on different aspects of cultural diversity and the diversity of cultural expressions in two of its flagship culture programmes. These included the UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and international trade negotiations (featured in *Kultur aktuell*, 17 May) or cultural rights and development (featured in *Kulturjournal*, 21 May).

AZERBAIJAN

National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mrs Gunay Efendiyeva

Update of activities in 2013

A number of events took place in 2013 within the framework of Azerbaijan-UNESCO cooperation with the active participation of the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO.

Azerbaijan hosted a series of events in Baku including an Extraordinary Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (13–15 March), a Meeting of National Focal Points of Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe (29–31 October), and the 8th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2–7 December).

Issues of multiculturalism, tolerance and humanism were discussed during the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, held in Baku (29 May – 1 June) with the participation of the UNESCO Director-General, Mrs Irina Bokova. The Baku International Humanitarian Forum (31 October – 1 November) also presented a unique platform for the broad discussion of humanitarian problems.

A series of events took place, both at UNESCO Headquarters and in Azerbaijan, dedicated to the 900th anniversary of

the achievements of the poetess Mahsati Ganjavi, the 550th anniversary of the death of the philosopher Seyid Yahya Bakuvi, and the 100th anniversary of *Arshin mal alan*, a musical comedy of the Azerbaijani composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov. The events formed part of the Anniversaries Programme of UNESCO.

The National Commission also organized a number of events in cooperation with state bodies. These included the 11th Baku International Conference of Ombudsmen on 'The key role of the new mechanisms in protection and promotion of human rights' (18–20 June), the 3rd International Conference on Culture of Sustainable Development, and the World Book and Copyright Day international symposium (23 April).

On 18 July, the President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Mrs Mehriban Aliyeva, participated in the signing ceremony of the Framework Agreement between UNESCO and the Republic of Azerbaijan at UNESCO Headquarters. A financial contribution of US\$5 million will be allocated by Azerbaijan and used to strengthen the activities of UNESCO in priority areas.

Four projects were also accepted and implemented within the framework of the Participation Programme. The National Commission in collaboration with the Science Development Foundation also organized the 'Shusha Grant' competition.

The National Commission in cooperation with the National Man and the Biosphere Committee of Azerbaijan also supported research, prepared and published publications, and implemented projects in collaboration with the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY) and National Commissions from another countries. In particular, the National Commission continued to develop cooperation with the UNESCO Moscow Office through events such as the UNESCO/IFESCO Regional Training for Museum Specialists (30 October – 3 November).



Chovqan, a traditional Karabakh horse-riding game.
© Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan

A success story

The 8th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was held in Baku (2–7 December). The nomination of Azerbaijan 'Chovqan, a traditional Karabakh horse-riding game in the Republic of Azerbaijan' was inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

Chovqan is a traditional horse-riding game played since ancient times, and is described in the poems of the great writer, Nizami Ganjavi. Chovqan has evolved and developed in close connection with Karabakh horse-breeding culture as these horses, notable for having a compact body and medium height, are considered physically best adapted for the game. Chovqan is played by two competing teams of five players who use wooden mallets. During the game players try to drive a ball into the opponent's goal. Historically, Chovqan was played on the Jidir plain to the accompaniment of 'Jangi', a music associated with heroic exploits.

Nowadays, horse-breeding difficulties, decrease in the number of trainers, neglect of Chovqan as a traditional cultural practice, and urbanization processes are causing the game to fall into gradual oblivion.

BELARUS

National Commission of the Republic of Belarus for UNESCO

President: Mr Vladimir Makei, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Yury Ambrazevich

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the National Commission played an active role in furthering UNESCO objectives in the areas of education, science, culture, and communication and information in Belarus.

Following the recommendations of the Tripartite Working Group the status and structure of the National Commission was reviewed and a new structure introduced. In its current composition civil society is more widely represented.

Under the aegis of the National Commission the International Conference on Vocational Education in the Context of Global Challenges was held in Minsk (3–4 April). The conference aimed to discuss means of ensuring sustainable development and the efficiency of vocational education in the context of the global economic crisis, the depletion of natural resources, depopulation and the ageing of the global population.

In close cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Moscow the National Commission also promoted the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in education. The participation of Belarusian schools in training workshops organized by the UNESCO Institute for Information

Technologies in Education provided a good opportunity to promote the sharing of modalities for integrating ICTs into curriculum development.

The National Commission also encouraged the Institute of Information Technologies of the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics to apply for the establishment of a new UNESCO Chair of 'Vocational Education in the Sphere of Information and Communication Technologies of Persons with Special Needs'.

In addition, the National Commission supported a project by the Belarusian Association of UNESCO Clubs to train volunteers to support extracurricular and leisure activities for children with special needs including long-term hospitalization.

Strengthening national capacities for protection, management and use of cultural heritage is a primary concern of the National Commission. With the support of the UNESCO Culture Sector and the UNESCO Office in Moscow, the National Commission has contributed to the organization of a range of workshops devoted to the safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Finally, the National Commission promoted the use of ICT for preservation, sharing and common use of documentary heritage. One good example of this activity was the virtual reconstruction of the legacy of the writer, historian and artist, J.I. Kraszewski, conducted jointly by Belarusian, Polish and Ukrainian libraries, archives and museums.



Group of volunteers at the International volunteer camp, Nesvizh.
© National Commission of the Republic of Belarus for UNESCO

A success story

The National Commission attaches great importance to the involvement of youth in social affairs, and activities related to the UNESCO mandate. In 2013, the National Commission supported the Belarusian Clubs for UNESCO initiative to organize an international volunteer camp at the World Heritage Site of the Architectural, Residential and Cultural Complex of the Radziwill Family at Nesvizh.

This volunteer camp lasted for ten days (10–19 June) and gathered together Belarusian and international volunteers who helped to maintain the parks that surround Nesvizh Castle. The volunteers also cooperated with the castle marketing team to develop ideas for more attractive activities. The volunteers also produced a plan for future cooperation projects with Nesvizh Castle.

The international volunteer camp represents a good example of cooperation between civil society, state museums and local authorities. It is also significant that this youth project united different actors around the aim of world heritage preservation and popularization.

BELGIUM

Flemish Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Marc Vervenne

Secretary-General: Mr Tijs D'Hoest

Update of activities in 2013

The Flemish Commission for UNESCO undertook a number of activities in 2013. Starting in February, the Secretary-General attended the second session of the Tripartite Working Group. Then in March, the Commission organized an ASP meeting with representatives of Flemish ASP Schools. The ASP Coordinator of the Netherlands presented an overview of the ASP network in her country.

The Commission provided input to Belgian membership of the Executive Board focusing, among other issues, on the Memory of the World programme, Geoparks, cooperation between UNESCO and non-governmental organizations, and UNESCO consultations. The Commission organized a number of events during these boards.

In May, the Commission created the Memory of the World Committee in Flanders. This expert Committee fosters the preservation of and access to documentary heritage.

September saw the Commission organize an event for the 10th anniversary of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The event focused on the

role and added value of UNESCO in the field of cultural heritage. The festivities were attended by representatives of the inscribed elements on both the international list and the national indicative list.

In October, the Flemish Commission for UNESCO and the French and German Speaking Commissions for UNESCO reactivated the Belgian Committee for the International Hydrological Programme.

In November, on the occasion of the UNESCO General Conference, the Commission organized an informal meeting between UNESCO experts and the National Commissions of Electoral Group 1 (Western Europe and North America).

During the year, the Commission played an active role in the creation of the UNESCO Chair on Critical Heritage Studies and Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Commission also selected a Youth Representative who participated in the Youth Forum in Paris and the preparatory meeting in Stockholm.

The Commission encouraged universities and research centres to nominate top researchers for both the national and the international L'Oreal Awards and Fellowships. For the international fellowships, the Commission received seven excellent candidates, four of which were submitted to UNESCO. The President of the Commission was actively involved in the selection of the National Fellowships.

Lastly, together with a number of Belgian partners, the Commission prepared a publication to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention.



The meeting of ten European National Commissions in Leuven.
© Flemish Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the Commission organized a meeting of National Commissions in cooperation with the Netherlands and the German National Commissions. The meeting was attended by the Secretaries-General of ten European Member States: Austria, Croatia, Finland, Flanders-Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Switzerland and the Netherlands. The Presidents of the Netherlands and the Flemish Commissions also participated.

The meeting focused on the question: Can the National Commissions for UNESCO in Europe contribute to strengthening its intellectual role? To achieve this objective, it appears to be necessary to make better use of the National Commissions' unique feature as flexible agencies and their force as coordinators of strong expert networks. Structured cooperation of National Commissions in Europe could be an important strategic step to significantly increasing the relevance, impact and visibility of the Commissions and of UNESCO in Europe. This cooperation should not be limited to current members of the European Union.

The participants were asked to reflect on a concrete structure for such a network, which could comprise an annual plenary meeting, the election of a small group of contributors, and procedures to identify relevant issues to be dealt with by transnational expert teams.

The meeting created a framework for closer European cooperation between the National Commissions, which will be realized in 2014.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

State Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina for UNESCO

President: Mr Sredoje Novic, Minister of Civil Affairs

Secretary-General: Ms Biljana Camur

Website: www.mcp.gov.ba

Update of activities in 2013

The State Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina for UNESCO was established as an advisory body to the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Ministry of Civil Affairs carries out administrative and technical duties for the Commission.

Ministers of Culture of Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina agreed in 2009 to jointly nominate medieval monolithic tombstones known as *stećaks* for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The nomination file is now in the final stages of preparation and contains nominations for thirty sites, twenty-two of which are located in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

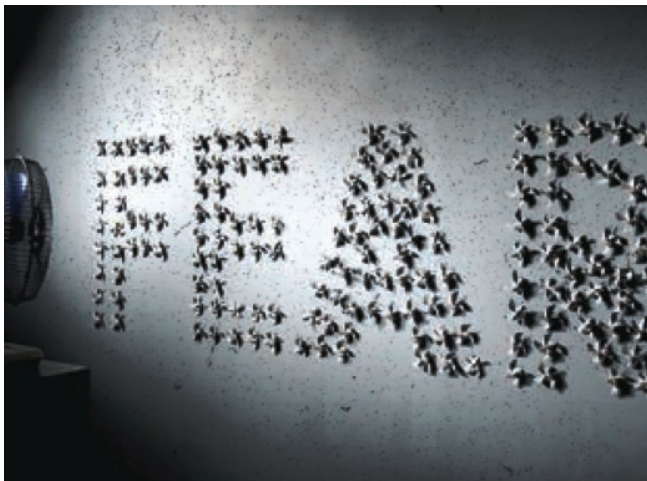
The State Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina for UNESCO nominated their first element for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of

Humanity. The nominated element is 'Zmijanje embroidery', a regional handicraft notable for its complex ornamentation and highly distinctive production techniques and colours. The nomination constitutes the first step in the implementation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Technical Report on Culture for Bosnia and Herzegovina was completed in 2013 based on Culture for Development Indicators developed by UNESCO. This document will aid competent institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the development of culture policies and the gathering of statistics.

The State Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina for UNESCO also organized a round table on the topic of international standard classification of education (ISCED). Representatives from relevant ministries, statistical institutions and academia attended and produced a series of recommendations and guidelines regarding the use of ISCED classifications.

Finally, the Commission participated in celebrations for the UNESCO International Year of Water. The main ceremony took place in Bijeljina (22 March) with events held in different cities throughout the year.



'Fear' Installation at the Biennale of Contemporary Art.
© 2011 Nebojša Šerić Shoba

A success story

The Biennial of Contemporary Art in Konjic represents an excellent platform for the promotion of regional contemporary art. The exhibition space chosen for the Biennial is Tito's atomic bunker, which provides an important context for this project, underlining the potential of non-traditional approaches for the promotion of culture and contemporary art.

The 1st Biennial of Contemporary Art in Konjic took place in 2011 in partnership with Serbia and Montenegro. It gathered together artists from eighteen countries and exceeded all expectations. The partner countries for the 2nd Biennial were Croatia and Turkey.

In 2013, artworks created for the Biennial of Contemporary Art in Konjic were exhibited at the Palazzo Zorzi, UNESCO Office in Venice, under the patronage of UNESCO and the State Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina for UNESCO (31 May).

The Biennial of Contemporary Art in Konjic promotes a clear message of tolerance, understanding and regional cooperation, and receives the full support of the Commission.

BULGARIA

Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Todor Churov, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mrs Roumiana Mitreva

Website: www.unesco-bg.org

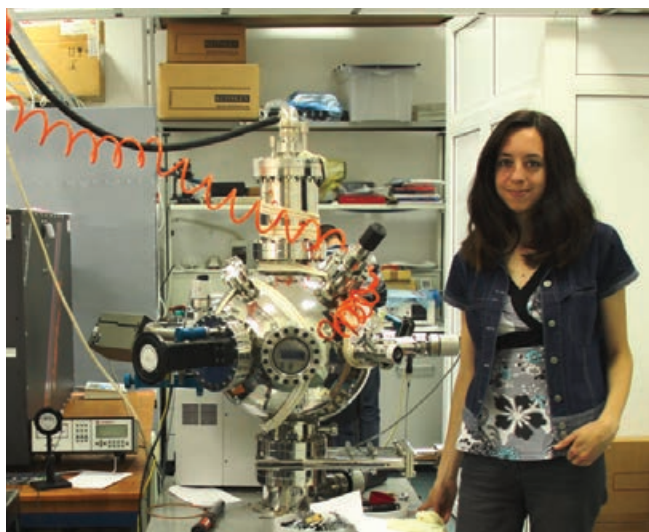
Update of activities in 2013

The Secretariat of the Bulgarian National Commission is a unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As stipulated in the Statute of the National Commission, its governing body (the Bureau) comprises high-level representatives of the ministries, acting in the domain of UNESCO's core activities, as well as eminent scientists, intellectuals and public figures.

In 2013, the Secretariat of the National Commission devoted substantial energies to preparations for the lead-up to the 37th Session of the General Conference. Its efforts were, to a great extent, facilitated by good coordination and interaction with the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria to UNESCO, as well as with the national committees of the intergovernmental programmes of UNESCO. These include the committees for the Man and the Biosphere programme, the International Oceanographic Commission and the National Council for Intangible Cultural Heritage, as well as the International Council on Monuments and Sites. The establishment in 2011 of the National Committee for the Memory of the World (MOW) programme was the initiative of the Bulgarian National Commission. The Committee is already working efficiently and jointly with the Vatican

library to prepare a nomination for the MOW register, to be presented in March 2014.

The National Commission maintained active and fruitful cooperation with the Regional Centre in South-Eastern Europe for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. In collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, the Regional Centre successfully carried out the 7th annual regional meeting of experts on intangible cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe, held in Sofia (May), as well as the first world meeting of Category II Regional Centres of UNESCO for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage held in Sozopol, Bulgaria (July). This event represents the first gathering of representatives of the Secretariat of the Convention, the regional offices of UNESCO and the six Category II Centres worldwide (Bulgaria, China, Iran, Japan, Peru and the Republic of Korea) within the framework and scope of intangible cultural heritage.



A success story

Over the last three years, the annual national edition of the UNESCO-L'Oréal competition for young women scientists has attracted growing attention. Every year increases the number of applicants for fellowships. Fifty-six applicants have applied since the start of 2014. The competition is carried out in cooperation with the Office of L'Oréal for the Balkans in Belgrade, the Bulgarian National Commission and the Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski.

Ms Silvia Bakalova, (Institute of Solid State Physics with Bulgarian Academy of Science), fellowship beneficiary of the L'Oréal-Bulgaria for Women in Science for 2013.

© Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO

CANADA

Canadian Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Axel Meisen

Website: www.unesco.ca

Update of activities in 2013

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO operates under the aegis of the Canada Council for the Arts. It acts as a forum for governments and civil society, while encouraging Canadian organizations and individuals to participate in UNESCO's work in its mandated fields, namely education, the natural and social and human sciences, culture, and communication and information. It is also the Commission's function to consult with civil society and the various levels of government to prepare Canada's contribution to UNESCO. The Commission's role also includes implementing UNESCO programmes and activities in Canada. A few examples of its work are given here.

Following successful ASPnet workshops in Germany and Israel, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO hosted the third and final stage of a project to promote human rights education and education for democratic citizenship. This took the form of an international student conference entitled 'Learning to change our world together', held at the University of Winnipeg (10–13 December 2012). The conference brought together over 300 students and teachers from Canada, Germany and the United States to engage in transformative intercultural dialogue.

The Commission has a mandate to coordinate the UNESCO Chairs programme in Canada. Every year it organizes a meeting of Chair representatives to review the state of the network and establish links between its members to promote better synergy. The 2013 meeting took place in Ottawa (10 June) with UNESCO Chair coordinators in Paris joining the conversation via video conference. The meeting helped to clarify current challenges and opportunities, and in particular agenda issues for the next General Conference, such as post-2015 education, open educational resources and the creative economy. Two out of the three candidates for a Chair in 2013 were able to attend the meeting. All three applications have been accepted by UNESCO on the Commission's recommendation.

In 2013, the Commission issued a joint press release with the University of Toronto announcing the inscription on the Memory of the World Register of manuscripts relating to the discovery of insulin. The manuscripts include original notes on early experiments conducted by the team of scientists consisting of Frederick Grant Banting, Charles Herbert Best, James Bertram Collip and John James Rickard Macleod. With the addition of the insulin collection, Canada now has four items on the Memory of the World Register: the Hudson Bay Company archival records and the Quebec Seminary Collection (2007), and Norman McLaren's short film *Neighbours* (2009), on account of its remarkable contribution to the growth of animated film.



Waterton Biosphere Reserve.
© Kim Pearson/NCC

A success story

To strengthen networking and social-learning strategies in the Canadian Biosphere Reserves network, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO has produced a compilation of good practices for land management, ecosystem services, sustainable tourism and education. The publication is the result of a community-based research partnership involving researchers and students from across Canada, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and its advisory Man and the Biosphere Committee. The Commission then turned the research report into a guide offering concrete examples of biosphere reserve projects that have a strong potential to inspire other regions interested in transforming sustainability ideals into real-world initiatives.

The publication content was developed thanks to a partnership development grant awarded in 2011 by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association and the School of Environment and Sustainability at the University of Saskatchewan.

CYPRUS

Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Loukia Hadjigavriel

Secretary-General: Mr Pavlos Paraskevas

Website: www.unesco.org.cy/english/index.htm

Update of activities in 2013

Established in 1962, the Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus. It works to promote the full and effective implementation of UNESCO programmes in Cyprus, in cooperation with government departments and non-governmental organizations. In addition, it collaborates with other National Commissions and UNESCO Regional Offices to foster cooperation in education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information.

In a period of significant social, economic and environmental changes and challenges, the Commission's efforts to promote the ideals and aims of UNESCO, were mainly aimed at enhancing the involvement of the educational, scientific and cultural communities of the country in the planning, implementation, communication and evaluation of the various programmes of the Organization.

In 2013, the Commission organized or participated in a series of activities to support the effective implementation of UNESCO's Conventions on Culture. These included celebrations organized by the Department of Antiquities for the International Day for Monuments and Sites, cultural events

organized by the Cyprus Folk Art Museum for the celebration of International Museum Day, and the implementation of a programme by the Commission for the safeguarding of the tradition of Lefkara lace-making.

In the areas of education and youth, the Commission collaborated with the Ministry of Education and Culture for the implementation of the South-Eastern Mediterranean Environmental Project (SEMPEP) under the ASPnet programme. Member schools of SEMPEP implemented projects around the topic 'Cooperation for water sustainability through science and culture'. ASPnet schools participated in activities relating to the topic 'Action for a culture of peace and non-violence'. Moreover, students and teachers of ASPnet Cyprus participated in the 2nd South East European World Heritage Youth Forum (Serbia). In addition, the Commission coordinated the selection and participation of a youth delegate in the 8th UNESCO Youth Forum.

In 2013, the Commission participated in a series of meetings, conferences and other international events organized by UNESCO and other National Commissions. These included the 7th Annual Regional meeting on Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe (Sofia), the international conference 'Global Ethics: Save the Planet Earth' and the official launch of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (Kazakhstan). A team of delegates and experts in the fields of education, science and culture attended the 37th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

Finally, in October 2013, the Commission produced and circulated, the first issue of its quarterly electronic newsletter with the aim of enhancing awareness and information in relation to the aims, programmes and activities of UNESCO.



The Studying Lefkaritiko Lace Making Apprenticeship Programme of the Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO.

© Leontios Toumpouris

A success story

Inscribed in 2009 on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Lefkaritika is both an art and social practice, and an example of the ability of people and societies to combine local knowledge and traditions in meaningful and creative ways with foreign and contemporary influences.

Reiterating its commitment to safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage and diversity for the benefit of future generations, the Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO launched in September 2013 the Studying Lefkaritiko Lace Making Apprenticeship Programme. Considering the importance of intangible cultural heritage as a mainspring of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, as well as a guarantee of sustainable development, the programme provided to Cypriot artists, educators, archaeologists and fashion designers, the opportunity to live and study for a week with renowned lace-makers in Lefkara village (Larnaca district). The various aims of the project included the creation of favourable conditions and environments for the participation of renowned bearers of intangible heritage in the transmission of their knowledge and skills, the promotion and empowerment of women lace-makers, and the renewal of contemporary forms of cultural expression.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Czech Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Petr Gazdík

Secretary-General: Mr Karel Komárek

Website: www.mzv.cz/unesco

Update of activities in 2013

The Czech Commission for UNESCO consists of representatives of respective ministries, important institutions and individual experts in the fields of UNESCO expertise. The Commission submits an annual report on its activities to the Government.

In 2013, the Czech Commission for UNESCO granted patronage to twenty-five projects organized by national institutions and non-governmental organizations, and directly related to UNESCO's programmes. It also coordinated three long-term fellowships for graduate studies placed at the disposal of UNESCO by the Government of the Czech Republic for the benefit of certain developing countries.

In September, the National Commission organized the annual ASPnet meeting in Valašské Meziříčí. To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Associated Schools Project, the

Commission published a brochure describing the activities of all ASP schools in the Czech Republic.

The National Commission has a long-standing cooperation with the Club of Environmental Education, which comprises 250 member schools. In this context, the National Commission co-organized an artistic and literary competition entitled 'Water for life' to draw attention to key water-related issues. The Commission also organized the awards ceremony, which was held in the historic surroundings of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In October, the Commission co-organized an international seminar in Prague on the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The two-day meeting focused on selected Central and East European countries with the main aim of presenting and comparing methods and systems for implementation of the Convention.

The Commission also collaborated on the long-term MEDIA IN project, 'Meet UNESCO World Heritage'. The project presents photographs and information on exceptional cultural and natural monuments from Austria, China, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Switzerland and countries of Southeast Asia. The project, which aims to increase awareness of outstanding world heritage, was exhibited in seven Czech cities throughout the year.

Finally, 2013 saw the National Commission recommence publication of monthly online information bulletins providing information on UNESCO programmes and National Commission activities. The bulletins are distributed among a broad range of governmental and non-governmental institutions.



International seminar on the implementation of the Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions for selected Central and East European countries.

© Czech Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic is implementing a two-year project in Kenya, entitled 'Bridging the digital divide in Africa', funded under the UNESCO Participation Programme. Structured as two one-week courses, the project is designed to train participants in basic computer skills, including word processing, internet fundamentals, webpage creation and social media. At least 50 per cent of the participants are female. This project meets UNESCO global priorities on Africa, gender equality and women's empowerment, and is designed to help achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Project implementation is taking place throughout 2013–14, and builds on an eight-year history of successful projects organized through the National Commissions of Kenya, Uganda and Zambia. The Ministry of Interior is meeting all travel and boarding costs for two lecturers, textbooks, USB flash disks for students, as well as any additional expenses.

DENMARK

Danish National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Linda Nielsen

Secretary-General: Mr Jens Dalsgaard

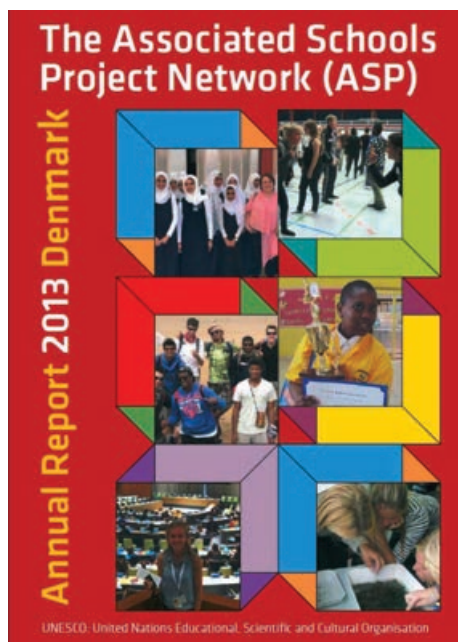
Website: www.unesco.dk

Update of activities in 2013

The National Commission comprises up to eighteen members nominated for a four-year period. Current membership expires on 30 April and new members assume their positions on 1 May. The Minister of Education is directly responsible for UNESCO matters with the involvement of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education and the Government of Greenland. The National Commission also has an advisory body of up to sixteen members representing expertise within UNESCO's fields of expertise. The National Commission meets in plenary at least four times a year and holds at least one meeting a year with the advisory body. The Danish National Commission collaborates with European National Commissions and maintains quasi-statutory working relations with the National Commissions of Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

HRH Princess Marie of Denmark was invited to speak at the opening of the 37th General Conference in her capacity as patron of the Danish National Commission for UNESCO. She met with the Director-General of UNESCO, Mrs Irina Bokova, to discuss future areas of cooperation between the Danish National Commission for UNESCO and UNESCO Headquarters.

In education, the National Commission worked to promote Education for All, the ASPnet programme and the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development. In science, the Commission collaborated with the International Bioethics Committee, the International Basic Sciences Programme and the Man and the Biosphere programme. In culture, the Commission undertook activities in the fields of intangible cultural heritage, cultural diversity and arts education. In communication, the Commission worked to promote the World Summit on the Information Society, the International Programme for the Development of Communication, and the programme on the Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists.



A success story

In recent years, the Danish National Commission has devoted considerable attention to links between culture and sustainable development, in particular in relation to cultural heritage. Discussions have centred on the role of tangible and intangible heritage in the construction of people's identity.

Discussions at the National Commission resulted in an expert seminar on the topic 'Safeguarding is development' (20 June). The seminar was attended by experts and government officials, and recognized the potential for further strengthening of UNESCO's Conventions on culture. The participants aim to exploit the potential for development to the fullest, not least by making better use of a *transversal approach* to the potential of the Conventions.

© Danish National Commission for UNESCO

ESTONIA

Estonian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Kristin Kuutma

Secretary-General: Ms Kerli Gutman

Website: www.unesco.ee

Update of activities in 2013

2013 marked the end of Estonia's term of office on the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. It was also the year in which Estonia presented its candidature for the first time to the Executive Board of UNESCO. The Estonian National Commission for UNESCO plays an important role in representing Estonia in UNESCO's different bodies.

In education, the National Commission has been working actively with UNESCO ASPnet. There are now two annual events for ASP schools – a UN General Assembly simulation game and a science conference for students. The schools have also become more active and several schools now organize their own activities.

The National Commission has also established a strong partnership with the leading global education non-governmental organization in Estonia. In November, it co-hosted a local seminar on global education and education for sustainable development.

In science, Estonia currently holds the presidency of the Baltic Sea Project and is working towards making better use of digital devices in this environmental education project.

In culture, the National Commission organized a travelling student art exhibition, entitled 'Living, exciting and diverse Intangible Cultural Heritage' to promote intangible cultural heritage and celebrate the 10th anniversary of the 2003 Convention (see below).



© Estonian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the Estonian National Commission for UNESCO organized the student art exhibition, 'Living, exciting and diverse Intangible Cultural Heritage'. The project celebrates the 10th anniversary of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). It took place within the framework of Arts Education Week in May.

Preparatory work began in December 2012 with the organization of an information day and practical training session for art teachers. Thirty-seven schools from all over Estonia participated. Teachers received information about ICH, tips on teaching ICH to children, and practical training about using contemporary art tools in the classroom.

The exhibition was opened to pupils aged 14–19 to undertake research into the ICH of their home region. Their findings were presented in class along with a proposal for an artwork. Each school organized a local exhibition to showcase all the works and submitted one piece of art for the national exhibition.

The exhibition opened at Viljandi Art Gallery in Viljandi (24 May), then travelled to Tallinn and is currently exhibiting in Paide. It can also be viewed online at www.unesco.ee/galerii. The students and teachers participated in ICH workshops and concerts, and enjoyed the opening celebrations.

FAROES

Faroese National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Sigurd i Jakupsstovu

Secretary-General: Mr Martin Naes

Website: www.unesco.fo

Update of activities in 2013

The Faroes Islands obtained associated membership of UNESCO in 2009 and the Faroese National Commission for UNESCO was inaugurated in 2012. The National Commission has six members representing key areas of UNESCO's expertise. The Faroese National Commission is situated at and funded by the Ministry of Education, Research and Culture, but does not have its own budget.

Since its establishment the main challenge of the Faroese National Commission has been to acquaint itself with UNESCO and its fields of action.

The Faroese National Commission has benefited greatly from the Nordic network on UNESCO and has participated in joint Nordic UNESCO meetings. The National Commission was represented at the Director-General's Consultation with Member States and National Commissions of the Europe and North America Region, and the 16th Quadrennial Statutory Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO of Europe and North America, held in Bratislava (September 2012).

Finally, the Faroese National Commission successfully cooperated with the University of the Faroe Islands, the Faroe Islands Natural History Museum and the Agricultural Agency, in the organization of a Conference on Biodiversity and Land Use, held at Torshavn (16 May). The conference featured a presentation from the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme.



The landscape of Sandoy in the Faroe Islands.
© Helgi Dal Michelsen

A success story

The Faroese National Commission was pleased to cooperate with the University of the Faroe Islands, the Faroe Islands Natural History Museum and the Agricultural Agency, in the organization of a Conference on Biodiversity and Land Use, which was held at the Nordic House in Torshavn (16 May). The National Commission invited a programme specialist from MAB as a distinguished speaker.

The purpose of the conference was to highlight the important topics of biodiversity, nature protection and land use, and to bring together the relevant actors in society to present and discuss these issues. The main objective of the conference was to encourage and support policy advice on monitoring, research and legislation.

The outcomes of the conference were to be published in a special issue of the periodical *Fróðskaparrit*, published by the Faroese University Press in November.

FINLAND

Finnish National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Tapio Markkanen

Secretary-General: Ms Zabrina Holmström

Website: www.unesco.fi

Update of activities in 2013

The Finnish National Commission for UNESCO consists of a President and eleven members representing high-level expertise in the fields of UNESCO's competence. The government nominates members for a four-year term. The Commission advises and issues opinions mainly to the Ministry of Education and Culture and contributes to the work and visibility of UNESCO, both nationally and internationally. The Commission meets approximately six times per year.

In 2013, the Commission contributed to the national discussion on the post-2015 development agenda by organizing an open event for a number of stakeholders. Throughout the year, the agenda remained at the centre of the Commission's discussions. The Commission was also closely involved and engaged in national preparation for the 37th session of UNESCO's General Conference.

In science, the Commission's network was extended with a new UNESCO Chair in Sustainable Water Services at the Tampere University of Technology.

In education, the Commission endorsed the application of OMNIA (the Joint Authority of Education in the Espoo Region) to become a member of the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training. OMNIA is one of Finland's largest vocational institutes with approximately 10,000 students.

In the social and human sciences, the National Commission organized a Baltic Sea Philosophical Essay competition to celebrate the International Day of Philosophy. The contest was organized through ASPnet schools in cooperation with the University of Helsinki and the Association of Philosophy Teachers, and received hundreds of entries from young writers across the Baltic countries. The winners were recognized at an awards ceremony held in Helsinki.

Finally, 2013 marked the 60th anniversary of the UNESCO ASPnet programme. The Finnish National Board of Education participated in the international ASPnet forum, held in Suwon, Republic of Korea, to discuss the global strategy and plan of action for 2014–2021. The Finnish ASPnet also participated in the International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, held in Khanty-Mansiysk (22–24 May).



Seminar entitled 'Speaking is silver – right to know day' in December 2013.

© Henrik Hulden

A success story

In 2013, an International Freedom of Expression Day was organized in Espoo and Hanasaari. The event was a joint collaboration of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Finnish and Swedish National Commissions for UNESCO and other stakeholders.

A seminar entitled 'Speaking is silver – right to know day' celebrated the 247th Anniversary of the world's first Freedom of Information Act, adopted by the Swedish Parliament on 2 December 1766. The law's key provisions included the abolition of political censorship and the granting of public access to government documents. The seminar featured participants from International Media Support, the Anders Chydenius Foundation, the Nordic Information Centre for Media And Communication Research, the Finnish Foundation for Media, Communication and Development and Reporters Without Borders.

The event is part of a broader continuum including a seminar series on the freedom of expression, launched in 2012 with the support of the Ministry of Education and Culture, and organized in cooperation with the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO and numerous other stakeholders.

GEORGIA

Georgian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Maia Panjikidze, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Ms Ketevan Kandelaki

Website: <http://georgia.comnat.unesco.org>

Update of activities in 2013

The year 2013 was marked by changes in the composition of the Georgian National Commission. A new President, Vice-President and members were appointed. In addition, the Commission established a number of effective partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The Georgian International Council on Monuments and Sites initiated the project 'Regional cooperation for the development of cultural heritage'. This project consisted of seminars on the importance and protection of cultural and natural heritage with a particular focus on the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta, and on two UNESCO Conventions: Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. Students from the public schools of Mtskheta participated in the project, which was funded by the European Union and implemented in cooperation with RCCHD (Regional Co-operation for Cultural Heritage Development) and the Mtskheta Municipality. The organizers and the Representative of the Georgian National Commission for UNESCO presented participants with souvenirs and booklets at the end of the project.

As a result of effective cooperation between the National Commission and the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia, an anniversary edition of the Georgian medieval epic poem *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* was issued. The publication was dedicated to the 300th anniversary of the first printed edition and was funded under the UNESCO Participation Programme. The commemorative edition was presented at a ceremony held in the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia with the participation of the Secretary-General of the National Commission.

The project 'Nutritional supplements, related doping and health risks, and benefits of a healthy diet' was implemented with the financial support of the UNESCO Fund for Elimination of Doping in Sport. During five months, in different regions of Georgia, twenty informational seminars about nutritional supplements were conducted for young athletes, sport medicine and sport journalism representatives, and support personnel. A booklet 'Nutritional supplements, related doping and health risks, and benefits of a healthy diet' was also published.



Awards ceremony of the school contest 'Learn more about the intangible cultural heritage of your region'.

© Georgian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the project 'Learn more about your intangible cultural heritage' was implemented under the patronage of the Georgian National Commission of UNESCO. This project was developed by the National Agency for Cultural Preservation of Georgia in cooperation with the newspaper *New Education* of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. The newspaper, which is available in all Georgian schools, published relevant information about the project for high schools, as well as supplementary material about intangible cultural heritage (ICH). More than 100 schools from different regions of Georgia participated, submitting various materials documenting the different types of ICH (oral traditions, rituals, folk medicine, etc.) present in the country. The information provided by the students constituted a significant input to the ongoing creation of the National Registry of ICH in Georgia. The campaign proved highly successful in raising awareness of the Convention among communities and young people in particular. Finally, the best projects and the most active students and teachers were awarded diplomas and received the title 'Supporter of intangible cultural heritage'.

GERMANY

German Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Walter Hirche

Secretary-General: Mr Roland Bernecker

Website: www.unesco.de

Update of activities in 2013

The international cultural voluntary service *kulturweit* is an outstanding project of the German Commission for UNESCO, funded by the Federal Foreign Office. In 2013, about 350 young Germans aged 18–26 were sent to fifty-four countries to volunteer for six or twelve months. Several National Commissions for UNESCO are important partners in this project.

In the natural sciences, the German Commission for UNESCO has set up effective committees for the International Hydrological Programme, the Man and the Biosphere programme, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the International Geoscience Programme. The Commission supports science policy cooperation with Africa and coordinates an innovative contribution to the UNESCO Engineering Initiative. The Commission is also coordinating the drafting of a manual for biosphere reserve managers in Africa.

A core activity for national implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Germany

is the highlighting of innovative education projects on ESD. The aim is to give visibility to local stakeholders and to create a network of best practices. More than 1,700 projects have been recognized as Official Projects of the UN Decade.

In culture, the German Commission for UNESCO offers a generic platform for all active World Heritage stakeholders in Germany. A central concern is the initiation of best practice projects, such as a national UNESCO World Heritage Day, celebrated every year on the first Sunday in June. This day provides an opportunity to experience World Heritage sites as 'living' heritage. This year, German World Heritage sites invited the public to participate in a wide range of cultural activities from music and theatre to handicrafts.

In education, the German Commission issued two publications to encourage the debate on open educational resources (OER). The first provides answers to frequently asked questions and the second provides guidelines on OER in higher education. In September, the first major conference on OER in Germany took place under the auspices of the German Commission.

In communication and information, the German Commission for UNESCO organized publications and events to highlight and advance issues including freedom of expression on the internet, open access, information and media literacy, and preparations for the WSIS+10 review process.



Education for sustainable development.

© Centre for Education Development in Licherode

A success story

In 2008, the German National Commission together with National Commissions from sub-Saharan Africa developed a partnership programme to reinforce the competencies of the African National Commissions with capacity-building measures and bilateral and multilateral projects. One of the mainstays of the partnership programme is a series of capacity-building workshops. In 2012, National Commissions from southern Africa developed a training programme tailored specifically to their needs. A first training workshop on the subject of Education for All took place in Botswana in 2013. Another current activity is the implementation of entrepreneurship training for students in Kenya, Liberia and Uganda to reduce high unemployment rates.

Similarly, the CONNEXIONS project has aimed since 2012 to empower civil society and cultural actors in the Arab region via capacity-building and knowledge partnerships in the spirit of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Activities in 2013 included the first Forum of Cultural Associations in Tunisia, held in Hammamet (20–23 June), in which 120 Tunisian cultural actors, artists and activists as well as international experts participated. Further training measures were implemented in late 2013. CONNEXIONS is part of the German-Tunisian and the German-Egyptian Transformation Partnership.

GREECE

Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Maria Ekaterini Papachristopoulou-Tzitzikosta

Assistant Secretary-General: Ms Christina Boulakaki

Website: www.unesco-hellas.gr

Update of activities in 2013

Throughout 2013, the Hellenic National Commission focused on UNESCO's priorities and cooperated with government ministries and various partners to promote and diffuse UNESCO's programmes and the Millennium Development Goals.

Six committees provided expertise and consultancy in relation to the following programmes: Memory of the World, the Tsunami Early Warning and Mitigation System, Man and the Biosphere, the International Hydrological Programme, Managing of Social Transformations and the Youth Committee.

The total number of UNESCO Chairs grew to twelve and the number of ASPnet schools to 100. The 13th symposium of ASPnet schools was held under the title 'Citizens of Europe, citizens of the world' and the National Commission undertook preparations for the 2014 symposium. In addition, the Commission cooperated with the National Commissions of Cyprus, Jordan, Romania and Turkey to reinforce the South-Eastern Mediterranean Environmental Project (SEMPEP) on environmental education.

The Commission organized a conference to celebrate World Environment Day, attended by scientific committees and partners. Furthermore, it organized the 8th edition of L'Oreal Hellas – the Hellenic National Commission for

UNESCO Awards for Women in Science. The Commission also coordinated the establishment of a UNESCO Category II Centre for Water at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and cooperated with other National Commissions to celebrate the anniversary of renowned medical researcher Georgios Papanikolaou.

The Commission helped to activate the UNESCO Observatory on Women, Sport and Physical Education and supported the organization of the 23rd World Congress of Philosophy, held in Athens and partially funded by the UNESCO Participation Programme for 2012–2013. Furthermore, the Commission translated various UNESCO publications into Greek, including *Human Rights: Questions and Answers*.

The Commission joined other National Commissions in celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of the poet K. Cavafy, and prepared celebrations for the forthcoming 400th anniversary of the painter El Greco. The Commission also organized a Conference on the Mediterranean Diet, following its inscription on UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Commission capitalized on its partnership with the Laboratory of New Technologies in Communication, Education and the Mass Media, regarding the trans-generational communication project. It also assisted twenty-five UNESCO clubs, centres and associations in Greece in their efforts and supported eighty activities implemented by educational, scientific and cultural institutes and associations that promote UNESCO's mandate and vision.

Finally, the Commission cooperated closely with the UNESCO Office in Venice and a great number of National Commissions. Despite the financial adversities currently affecting Greece, which limited personnel and budget, it managed to successfully attain its goals by fostering synergies with the private sector and seeking European Union funding for 2014.



The GEO-Routes Cultural Heritage Journeys Institute.
© Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO provided support to the Geo Routes Cultural Heritage Journeys Institute. The Institute organizes thematic and cultural itineraries to help promote Greek cultural, natural and intangible heritage sites inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List. The Geo Routes itineraries is designed to familiarize Greek and foreigner travellers with less explored routes and destinations in the country, and to strengthen local mainland and island communities.

Travellers following the Geo Routes have the opportunity to meet the inhabitants of Greek communities and experience their customs and ways of life, many of which constitute an important part of UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage. Moreover, the itineraries promote cultural diversity and multicultural dialogue and help to diffuse UNESCO's 'Culture Tourism Development' programme, which aims to strengthen the creation of a new tourism culture based on volunteerism, corporate social responsibility programmes and rational management of environmental resources.

HUNGARY

Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Miklós Réthelyi

Secretary-General: Ms Katalin Csillag

Website: www.unesco.hu

Update of activities in 2013

The Secretariat of the Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO is based within the Ministry of Human Resources. It consists of one Secretary-General and two programme officers. Voluntary members of the Commission are representatives of ministries, background institutions and civil society. To fulfil its roles and remain cost-efficient, the Secretariat makes ample use of digital technologies and prepares its own press and public relations material.

In 2012, the National Commission was restructured to increase the involvement of the relevant ministries and experts in the work of the Commission. During 2013, the National Commission's main activities focused on the promotion of international days and years celebrated by UNESCO.

On the occasion of International Mother Language Day (21 February), the National Commission organized a conference at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and a round table discussion at Europa Point. For the International Year of Water Cooperation and World Water Day a round table discussion and a film screening were organized in Budapest (22 March). To celebrate International Jazz Day (30 April), a round table discussion and various concerts were organized

in cooperation with the Ars Omnis Cultural Association. On the occasion of World Literacy Day an all-day event was organized and held at the Marczibányi Community Space (8 September) in cooperation with the Alternative Secondary School of Economics Foundation and the Reading Clinic.

The year 2013 also marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of the world-renowned photographer, Robert Capa, which was celebrated under the patronage of UNESCO. The Hungarian National Museum mounted an international exhibition entitled 'Robert Capa the Gambler', the Central Bank of Hungary issued a gold commemorative coin, and the Hungarian Post Office published a commemorative stamp.

The National Commission has several ongoing partnerships. These include the Hungarian L'Oreal Prize for Women in Sciences, monthly and annual photography competitions in cooperation with Varázslatos Magyarország Photo Ltd, and a contest organized in collaboration with the Hungarian Model UN Student Association.



A success story

In 2013, the National Commission provided extensive support to the Budapest Water Summit – one of the main events of the International Year of Water Cooperation. The summit was attended by Director-General, Mrs Irina Bokova and the UN Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon.

The principal objective of the summit was to take stock of various developments, inside and outside the UN system, with regard to the preparation of water-related goals for the post Rio+20 development agenda. The Budapest Water Summit climaxed on 11 October with the adoption of the Budapest Statement.

Chairperson Mr Miklós Réthelyi presenting last year's L'Oreal award For Women in Science.

© L'Oreal Hungary

ICELAND

Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Jón Torfi Jónasson

Secretary-General: Ms Áslaug Dóra Eyjólfsdóttir

Website: www.unesco.is

Update of activities in 2013

The Statutes of the Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO, which exist only in Icelandic, were approved by the Minister for Education, Science and Culture in 2003. There are seven members of the National Commission each of which is nominated for a four-year period by the Minister. Four members represent the fields of education, science, culture and communication; one is appointed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and one member represents youth. The National Commission meets eight to ten times a year.

The Icelandic National Commission cooperates with the other UNESCO committees in Iceland – the Icelandic World Heritage Committee, the Memory of the World Committee and the Icelandic Oceanographic Commission – and maintains quasi-statutory working relations with the Nordic Commissions in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

The International Language Centre of the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute in Iceland recently became a UNESCO Category II Institute. The institute will contribute significantly to UNESCO's

role in the safeguarding of linguistic heritage and to supporting linguistic diversity and multilingualism in education.

In 2013, the National Commission established in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture an Icelandic Memory of the World Committee, which has been active in working with the Memory of the World programme and is planning a national Memory of the World register. This year, the 1703 Census of Iceland was inscribed on the international Memory of the World Register.

The National Commission for UNESCO also decided to organize events in celebration of the 2nd International Jazz Day (30 April). The main event was a symposium and concert organized in close collaboration with musicians, the University of Iceland, music schools and the National Broadcasting Service. The concert was directed by the Chairman of the National Commission and broadcast live from the newly opened Harpa Music Hall. At the symposium scholars, musicians and media personalities gave talks about the history and meaning of jazz for culture in Iceland and around the world (see below).

The National Commission has formally supported the establishment of the Reykjanes Geopark and its application to join the European Geopark Network.

The National Commission also hosts a website and has organized numerous smaller meetings and events throughout the year.



© Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The National Commission organized events for the 2nd International Jazz Day to raise awareness among the international community of jazz's virtues as an educational tool; as a vehicle for peace, unity and dialogue; and as a means for enhanced cooperation between peoples. The National Commission wanted to celebrate jazz music not only as a global language of humanity, but as a music of more inclusive societies, enhancing both culture and UNESCO's ideals.

Jazz was celebrated, studied and performed throughout International Jazz Day in Iceland on radio and television, through newspaper articles, and in concerts at various venues in Reykjavík. The goals and ideals of UNESCO were discussed in the media throughout the celebrations.

The main event was a concert and symposium organized by the National Commission. The concert took place at the newly opened Harpa Music Hall and was attended by a large number of people. The symposium explored the history and meaning of jazz, music education, and the prejudices against jazz and jazz musicians common in the 1940s and 1950s in Iceland.

A number of partnerships developed as a result of the celebrations. The National Commission collaborated with the School of Jazz Music, the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service and a number of venues and jazz organizations, among them the Reykjavík Jazz Festival.

IRELAND

Irish National Commission for UNESCO

Secretary: Mr Des O'Loughlin

Website: www.education.ie

Update of activities in 2013

The 37th UNESCO General Conference was attended by the Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills, Dublin, on behalf of the Irish delegation. Prior to the Conference, the Irish National Commission for UNESCO brought together key stakeholders to highlight activities in their areas relevant to UNESCO.

In adult education, the Department of Education and Skills has supported the National Adult Literacy Agency in developing distance-learning initiatives involving television, radio, online learning and so on. This includes a very successful primetime television series with average annual viewing numbers of about 150,000. Ranked highly in a European Commission analysis of strategies for improving adult participation, it is proving of interest to numerous countries in the process of developing their own adult literacy policies.

Ireland strongly supports the Global Geoparks Network. UNESCO is the only international organization to have a section dedicated to this important subject. Earth Sciences lie at the heart of solving the great societal issues of today, including climate change, the rise of populations and the associated rise in demand for natural resources. There is also

the allied challenge of encouraging more sustainable use of resources and improved environmental best practice for their exploitation.

The Tralee Institute of Technology in Ireland has become the first institution worldwide to have been awarded a UNESCO Chair in the field of Inclusive Physical Education, Sport, Recreation and Fitness. Together with their international partners, the Tralee Institute will work towards transforming the lives of people with disabilities, irrespective of age, through participation in sport and physical exercise. Access to this activity is a basic human right and a pillar of social justice.

Ireland also supports the work of ECO-UNESCO. In this framework, a number of young Irish people participated in the 8th UNESCO Youth Forum on the theme of 'Youth and social inclusion: civic engagement, dialogue and skills development', held at UNESCO Headquarters (29–31 October).

Gender support and protection of minority groups are an essential element of UNESCO's role, be it in working to enhance protection from bullying in schools or protecting minority cultural expression. An Irish Youth Group, 'Belong TO', made a strong contribution to the development of the first UN toolkit providing guidelines on preventing and addressing homophobic bullying in educational institutions, thereby upholding the human rights of LGBTI young people.



© Irish National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2010, Dublin was formerly designated a UNESCO City of Literature and a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. Ireland now looks forward to becoming part of an expanding worldwide network of creative cities working together to share knowledge and expertise. The UNESCO designation acted as a catalyst enabling the city to access funding opportunities to expand its cultural infrastructure.

Imaginative local, national and international literary programmes are a feature of Dublin's usage of the UNESCO designation, including the 'One City One Book' initiative, which encourages people to read a particular book connected with Dublin each April.

In 2013, the choice of the novel *Strumpet City* by James Plunkett, which recounts the dramatic events of Dublin's 1913 Lockout, caught the public imagination. The book became the No. 1 bestselling fiction title in Ireland during April with a new generation of readers discovering Plunkett's epic work. This truly illustrates the benefits that can be derived from a UNESCO designation by imaginative public officials.

LATVIA

Latvian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Dace Melbārde, Minister of Culture

Secretary-General: Ms Dagnija Baltina

Website: www.unesco.lv

Update of activities in 2013

The Riga Global Meeting of Experts on the Ethical Aspects of the Information Society (16–17 October) gathered participants from sixteen different countries. The meeting was organized by the UNESCO Information for All Programme and the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with the UNESCO Communication and Information Sector, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia.

The Riga meeting served as a platform to discuss different aspects of current and emerging ethical challenges of the information society; to promote awareness of these issues among policy-makers; to build multi-stakeholder partnerships; and to work on consensus building with regard to the basic ethical principles of the information society. The main goals of the meeting were to reflect upon the conclusions of previous debates and devise proposals to address the most pressing ethical issues posed by the increasing use of information technologies.

An activity was organized to encourage local communities, schools, municipalities and non-governmental organizations to undertake research into their local tangible, intangible and documentary heritage. The activity encouraged participants to discuss and learn how to use intangible cultural heritage in a sustainable and profitable manner. This activity was organized within the framework of 'Creativity Week radi!2013' and Global Action Week 2013 on Education for All (22–28 April).

The Latvian National Commission for UNESCO, in collaboration with its partners, organized discussions on the topic of linking traditional heritage to innovation (e.g. information and communication technologies, entrepreneurship). The discussions took place in Latvian municipalities and schools, among others, and aimed to promote sustainable development and the welfare of community members.

Each year, UNESCO-L'Oréal 'For Women in Science' fellowships are awarded to three Latvian women scientists: one to a candidate aged under 40 possessing a PhD degree in scientific research and two to candidates aged under 33 currently pursuing PhD research. The fellowships are designed to support women's involvement in science and encourage their achievements in different scientific fields. The 2013 fellowship programme was supported by the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO and the Latvian Academy of Sciences.



© Latvian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO organized the third UNESCO Latvian week in collaboration with its partners. During the week the general public are invited to participate in events linked to UNESCO's goals, activities, programmes and projects. The week encourages cultivation of UNESCO values and offers a platform for exchange of opinions and ideas and new initiatives.

The third UNESCO week (14–18 October) was dedicated to intangible cultural heritage. The events commemorated the 10th anniversary of the proclamation of 'Baltic song and dance celebrations in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania' as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity under the 2005 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Everyone was invited to explore intangible cultural heritage and to take part in a variety of events based around local traditions and tradition bearers. The activities emphasized the importance of the individual's contribution to maintaining and transmitting heritage. More than 100 events took place in Latvian municipalities, schools and libraries, many of which featured the active involvement of ASP schools and the Latvian National Commission's storytelling library network.

LITHUANIA

Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Romas Pakalnis

Secretary-General: Ms Marija Drėmaitė

Website: www.unesco.lt

Update of activities in 2013

During 2013, the Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO organized monthly exhibitions at the Commission's gallery space, and supplemented these with specially developed educational events, such as lectures, educational seminars, films and so on. These public events helped to increase the visibility of the National Commission and promote UNESCO's values to a wider audience. The Commission also participated in the 2013 Vilnius cultural programme, 'Cultural Night', for which it organized an event entitled, 'Lithuania in Israel' highlighting Jewish cultural heritage in Vilnius. In addition, the Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO signed a cooperation and sponsorship agreement with a private company, Orlen Lithuania, to support the gallery's activities. Orlen Lithuania agreed to act as patron of the gallery and contribute to the events and publications of the National Commission.

The Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO also gave its patronage to several cultural and social projects during 2013. These included artistic and literary projects such as a

reading contest for youth held during national library week, and the publication of an educational and artistic storybook about mythological personalities and heritage. Other projects included the event 'My dream', which highlighted social responsibility, and the national youth project 'Mission Siberia'.

A traineeship programme was revised and improved to highlight specific areas of work. Young Lithuanians from different university backgrounds were invited to undertake traineeships at the National Commission and contribute to its daily work.

At the request and with the coordination of the National Commission, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania actively explored ratification of the 1960 UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education. This Convention serves as a basis for general rights in education and will contribute to ensuring equal access and opportunities. The national approval procedures were scheduled for the end of 2013 and early 2014.

During the second half of 2013, the National Commission reformed the national ASPnet in line with UNESCO guidelines. The goal was to encourage the focus of schools on one or two main priority areas associated with UNESCO, and foster their cooperation, thus making the network more efficient and goal-oriented. At present, twenty-seven schools are members of ASPnet in Lithuania. Thirteen had their membership renewed and fourteen joined the network as new members. Their contribution and the help and cooperation of the UNESCO Secretariat is greatly appreciated.



Opening of a travelling exhibition featuring UNESCO World Heritage sites and examples of intangible heritage and heritage designated part of the Memory of the World.

© Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In July 2013, Lithuania took over the Presidency of the EU Council. On this occasion the Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania coordinated the preparation of an exhibition presenting UNESCO heritage in Lithuania. The exhibition adopted the idea of travelling 'wonder' chambers. Veneer mail containers presented ten wonders of Lithuania's natural and cultural heritage presently inscribed on the registers and lists of UNESCO. Three full sets of this exhibition were manufactured and exhibited in North America, Europe (southern, central) including UNESCO Headquarters, and Northern Europe (with a focus on the institutions of the European Union). The exhibition enjoyed several official openings and included short educational programmes for interested people and partners. The exhibition will be presented more widely to the general public in Lithuania in 2014.

LUXEMBOURG

National Commission of Luxembourg for Cooperation with UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Jean-Pierre Kraemer

Secretary-General: Mr Alex Langini

Update of activities in 2013

The Commission is currently being reorganized. Until recently it operated on the basis of a ministerial regulation. Because of new statutory provisions the National Commission now has to be appointed on the basis of a grand-ducal regulation, which is in the process of being drafted.

The Commission has devoted the majority of its energies to monitoring and supervising the activities of the UNESCO ASPnet. In 2013, three new schools joined the network.

The Commission also helped to prepare periodic reports on world cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage, as well as publishing articles on UNESCO's work.



Celebrating the 60th anniversary of UNESCO Associated Schools.
© André Feyereisen, Luxemburger Wort

A success story

The event that did most to raise UNESCO's profile in Luxembourg was undoubtedly the celebration of ASPnet's 60th anniversary. All the schools concerned took an active part.

Founded in 1953, the UNESCO ASPnet, commonly known as the UNESCO Associated Schools, consists of a global network of 9,900 educational institutions in 180 countries. Member institutions, comprising pre-schools, primary, secondary and vocational schools, and teacher-training colleges, work to support international understanding, peace, intercultural dialogue, sustainable development and high-quality education.

MONACO

Monegasque National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Geneviève Vatrican

Secretary-General: Mr Jean-Charles Curau

Update of activities in 2013

The Monegasque National Commission for UNESCO supported a number of activities in 2013, in particular in the domains of culture and the natural sciences.

The 7th International Monaco and the Mediterranean Symposium was held at the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco (21–22 March), under the auspices of UNESCO. The central theme of this multidisciplinary symposium was 'The power of fire: from the myth of Prometheus to future challenges in the Mediterranean', which acted as a counterpoint to the 2009 programme focused on water. The choice of theme also complemented 'The conquest of fire', an exhibition inaugurated in 2013 at Monaco's Museum of Prehistoric Anthropology.

For the celebration of World Theatre Day (27 March) the National Commission assembled six theatre companies from the Principality of Monaco at the Princess Grace Theatre for an evening dedicated to the performing arts (see below).

Monaco also hosted the 15th World Festival of Amateur Theatre (19–28 August), which brought together troupes from twenty-five countries. Alongside theatrical performances, the festival included a number of meetings organized between the participants and the public to discuss issues relating to the performing arts in the represented countries. Workshops were organized and led by specialists who spoke on various forms of theatrical expression. Amateur theatre was also the focus of the 31st World Congress of the International Amateur Theatre Association, held in Monaco (23–24 August).



A success story

As part of World Theatre Day, the Monegasque National Commission for UNESCO organized an evening event at the Princess Grace Theatre. Six amateur theatre companies from the Principality were invited to perform a short play or an extract from a play, thereby transforming the Princess Grace Theatre into an open stage.

To respect the spirit of World Theatre Day and the principles set out by the International Theatre Institute, entry to the event was free of charge. Almost 200 spectators attended the performances and enjoyed more than three hours of drama. The various plays and the companies that appeared on stage provided an opportunity for the public to discover the many and diverse forms of amateur theatre on offer in the Principality. The celebration will take place again in 2014.

Poster of World Theatre Day

© Monegasque National Commission for UNESCO

MONTENEGRO

National Commission of Montenegro for UNESCO

President: Mr Branislav Micunovic

Secretary-General: Ms Marija Raznatovic

Website: www.unescomontenegro.com/

Update of activities in 2013

In addition to the advancement of several recent initiatives, the National Commission for UNESCO of Montenegro launched many new activities in 2013 to engage with current issues of importance to UNESCO and Montenegro, and to ensure compliance with long-term strategies and specific recommendations of the Organization.

Concerning implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the Commission coordinated in March a UNESCO/ICOMOS Advisory Mission to the World Heritage Site of Kotor, with the aim of reconciling development and conservation needs in the area. The Commission also took an active role in the nomination of new properties, and has confirmed two new transnational nomination initiatives: the Venetian fortifications and the anti-fascist monuments of ex-Yugoslavia. The Commission has organized a further ICOMOS Advisory Mission to provide assistance with the preparation of nomination dossiers.

In November, the official celebration of the 10th anniversary of the 2003 Convention was held in light of the first designated intangible cultural properties in Montenegro.

Despite its own limited access to funds, the Commission facilitates access to UNESCO funding for civil society projects. Three Montenegrin projects have been approved under the Participation Programme 2012–2013, while the International Fund for Cultural Diversity has funded a project of the Association of the Visual Artists of Montenegro.

In collaboration with the relevant institutions, the Commission organizes events in celebration of different UNESCO international days including International Jazz Day, the International Day of Peace, World Teacher's Day and World Science Day. The latter was celebrated for the first time in Montenegro in 2013. Furthermore, following an initiative of the Commission, UNESCO will be associated with two historic anniversaries celebrated in Montenegro in 2014–2015.

Raising awareness about UNESCO among young people has been one of the priorities of the Commission. It has supported the participation of representatives from Montenegrin schools in international youth forums and conferences (e.g. the 2nd South East European World Heritage Youth Forum in April and the 6th Associated School Project Network International Conference). Together with the Ministry of Science, the Commission has keenly promoted all UNESCO science-related programmes and activities, especially through World Science Days.

Finally, it is important to mention some examples of successful cooperation with National Commissions from the region supported by the UNESCO Office in Venice. These include joint World Heritage nominations, the renewal of the ex-Yugoslav pavilion in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, the exhibition 'Imagining the Balkans' and various expert meetings, among others.



A performance of Don Branko's *Music Days* at the International Festival KotorArt.

© Kotor Art International Festival

A success story

In 2013, the Director-General of UNESCO confirmed the Organization's patronage of the International Festival KotorArt, held in the World Heritage Site of Kotor. This summer event contributed significantly to reviving the historic role of Kotor as a stronghold of intercultural dialogue and as an excellent example of the representative values of UNESCO.

At the crossroads of artistic, scientific and academic thinking, KotorArt creates an enabling environment for the affirmation of cultural expressions in all their creative diversity, renewed through exchanges and partnerships and accessible to all.

This year's programme included Don Branko's *Music Days* featuring performances by world-class musicians, theatre performances and creative workshops, the Kotor Architectural Prison Summer School and the project 'KotorArt town writing', which enabled art students to implement creative platforms for the promotion and presentation of the festival.

With high media coverage and a broad targeted audience, the festival is a valuable means for promoting the visibility of UNESCO in Montenegro and the region, and for integrating strategies to enhance cultural diversity via shared best practices in the fields of culture, science and education.

NETHERLANDS

Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mrs Greetje van den Bergh

Secretary-General: Mr Robert J. Quarles van Ufford

Website: www.unesco.nl

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO undertook numerous activities in line with UNESCO's main fields of expertise.

In education, the National Commission expanded the Netherlands ASPnet from twenty to twenty-four schools. It organized an international policy event for ASP students from Belgium and the Netherlands, and participated in ASPnet day (24 April) to promote sharing of good practices between schools. The Commission helped launch an ASPnet project to make available open educational resources on UNESCO-related topics, and promoted an online tool for school coordinators in ASP schools.

The Commission undertook a research project on curricular capacity-building in cooperation with the International Bureau of Education, the International Institute of Educational Planning and the Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development. It also opened the UNESCO Council during the European International Model United Nations.

In science, the National Commission co-organized the European Groundwater governance regional consultation, as part of the project 'Groundwater governance: a global

framework for country action'. It hosted the UNESCO Chairs debate on sustainability, education, media and governance. It also organized the 2nd awards ceremony for the Dutch 'L'Oreal Women in Science' Fellowships.

In culture, the Commission partnered with the Anna Lindh Foundation to organize a conference on cultural diversity in the European-Mediterranean region, entitled 'Recipe for dialogue: shaping diverse societies through culture, youth and education'. The Netherlands National Commission also produced a Dutch adaptation of the educational kit *World Heritage in Young Hands*.

The Commission undertook projects on the relationship between heritage and water. It developed a toolkit and educational material on the protection of underwater heritage and supported the organization of the international ICOMOS conference 'Protecting Deltas: Heritage Helps!'

In the area of culture and conflict, the Commission collaborated with the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) to develop an online toolkit for the protection of cultural heritage in times of armed conflict. It also organized the Peace Palace Library Lecture on the protection of heritage in conflict and crisis areas.

The Commission organized the international expert meeting on UNESCO's role in Post-Conflict and Post-Disaster situations, which resulted in the 'Leiden Recommendation'.

In communication and information, the Commission cooperated with the German National Commission and UNESCO Headquarters to organize a Regional Open Access Consultation in Berlin. It also liaised with the International Federation of Library Associations, the International Council on Archives and the European Union regarding the Digital Roadmap project on digital preservation.



The Minister for Education, Culture and Science opens the World Heritage Podium in Amsterdam.

© BAM

A success story

In 2013, the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO together with the Dutch World Heritage foundation, Amsterdam City Archives and the Office for Monuments and Archaeology took the initiative to open a visitor centre for all nine Dutch World Heritage Sites in the Netherlands.

The Podium, which is located at the heart of the Amsterdam Canal District, includes a permanent exhibition where visitors can hear, read and ask questions about the UNESCO World Heritage sites located in the Netherlands, and what makes them so exceptional.

The Podium also offers information about the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and the approximately 1,000 sites worldwide inscribed on the World Heritage List. A free fold-out brochure has been produced for each Dutch site, providing detailed background information for visitors.

The Podium aims to raise public awareness about the importance of cultural heritage, but also pays attention to specific themes such as conservation and sustainable tourism. It acts as the starting point for regular tours to the different sites and hosts lectures and other targeted outreach activities for specific audiences and professionals.

NORWAY

Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Tora Aasland

Secretary-General: Ms Tanja Kristine Hegge

Website: www.unesco.no

Update of activities in 2013

The activities of the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO are funded by the Ministry of Education and Research, which also hosts the Secretariat. The Commission has a highly dedicated staff who are active and engaged in UNESCO's work and mandate, and draw effectively upon the Commission's network.

The work of UNESCO is respected in Norway with particular interest expressed among the Norwegian public in the Organization's work in the fields of culture and education.

Norway also hosts several UN organizations, and this 'UN family' has cooperated closely to facilitate public meetings and discussion around the current 'Post 2015 – the world we want' debate. The result of these inputs was a report presented to the Norwegian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs on 24 October.

The National Commission has also undertaken a number of activities in the past year. In January, it launched its newly designed website, which met with positive feedback. In March, the National Commission held a seminar on the post-2015 agenda for education together with other UN organizations based in Norway (see below).

The National Commission, through its Expert Group on Press Freedom and Freedom of Speech, also organized a seminar on Press Freedom Day (3 May). This was undertaken in cooperation with other organizations working on press freedom both in Norway and internationally.

In December, a seminar held on the topic of open access attracted many students, as well as institutions working on this issue. The debate was also timely with regard to the publication of a government White Paper on research.

The launch of the 2013 *Global Monitoring Report* in October was a much sought-after event. The report is well regarded and the launch was very well attended. The event managed to highlight the situation of young people and the need for increased attention to secondary education and vocational skills, as well as development assistance cooperation.



Seminar on World Press Freedom Day 2013.

© Hedvig Idås/ Fritt Ord

A success story

One successful event in 2013 was the seminar on the post-2015 agenda entitled 'Education for what? – youth, skills and work'. The seminar was held in the Ministry of Education and Research and was opened by the Minister and the President of the Commission. It was one of a series of seminars that form part of a national consultation process on new Millennium Development Goals (post-2015). The seminar included international speakers and representatives from the private sector and the teacher's union. Key questions debated included: What can the international community do to improve education and work opportunities for young people in a world with high unemployment, financial crises and, in some cases, social unrest? What should the role of NGOs be and how can the private sector contribute? Can international actors do more?

The seminar generated a Twitter debate that fed into the national UN consultation process and produced some clear messages – the need for greater focus on education internationally and the need for the Norwegian Government to accord education a higher priority both in its work on the new Millennium Development Goals, and in its development cooperation assistance.

POLAND

Polish National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Andrzej Rottermund

Secretary-General: Mr Slawomir Ratajski

Website: www.unesco.pl

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Polish National Commission fulfilled its mandate through various initiatives responding to challenges and existing needs in Poland related to UNESCO's fields of expertise. Main activities focused on the implementation of UNESCO's Conventions regarding cultural heritage, strengthening the UNESCO ASPnet in Poland, expanding fellowship programmes, establishing intercultural dialogue projects, and promoting cooperation with the Memory of the World programme and the Information for All Programme (IFAP).

The National Commission participated at the conference 'Why and how to protect the cultural heritage in a modern way?', held at the seat of the Polish Parliament. The conference was attended by 250 participants, including government representatives. It focused on legislative aspects of protection and management of cultural heritage based on UNESCO's Conventions and recommendations. The National Commission translated and disseminated UNESCO's 'Recommendation on the historic urban landscape' specifically for the event.

The Commission was also responsible for the Polish contribution to the 'Subregional workshop for restorers' held at

Nieśwież, Belarus, in cooperation with the National Commission of Belarus and the Arts Academies of Minsk and Warsaw. The Commission also actively cooperated in promoting the candidacy of Krakow as a City of Literature to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

In education, the Commission cooperated with the Ministry of National Education and the Warsaw and Jagiellonian Universities to develop a Euro-Arab Dialogue project comprising multicultural educational workshops for Polish teachers under the heading 'In the world of Islam'. Two regional workshops were organized for teachers at all levels, gathering together over 140 participants.

In science, the Polish National Commission for UNESCO, through the fellowships programme, enabled sixty-one young scientists from developing countries to undertake research studies at Polish higher education institutions. The Commission also supported the UNESCO-Poland Co-sponsored Fellowship Programme, which provided fellowships for fifty African researchers in the fields of technology and engineering.

In communication and information, the Commission, in cooperation with the Polish NGO Free Word Association, organized a twelve-day workshop on media development, and a study visit to newspaper offices, and radio and TV stations for a group of journalists from Libya.

The Commission also organized an expert seminar on 'The processes of digitization of audiovisual resources (films and TV production)' in Warsaw, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Polish IFAP Committee and the Head Office of State Archives. Over seventy decision-makers and professionals from public and private sectors attended the meeting.



Workshop activities during the Conference of the Polish ASPnet 'Educating in dialogue with the environment'.

© Ilona Morzol / Polish National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The conference 'Educating in dialogue with the environment' took place in Warsaw (25–26 October) on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the UNESCO ASPnet. It was organized by the Polish National Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with the Polish Ministry of the Environment and the European Commission, and gathered together over 110 teachers from Polish ASPnet and Forestry schools.

The main discussion started with lectures on the history of sustainable development, outcomes of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, and modern methods of teaching, followed by presentations of best practices and projects by representatives from the Polish ASPnet schools and Forestry Schools. The second day of the conference, entitled 'Methods used in teaching sustainable development', was devoted to interactive workshops that focused on three important aspects of sustainable development: economic growth and equitable distribution of benefits, protection of natural resources and the environment, and social development.

The conference gave the teachers an opportunity to become acquainted with indispensable knowledge, participatory teaching and learning methods that motivate and empower learners to change their behaviour and take action for sustainable development, and a chance to strengthen ties within the ASPnet.

PORTUGAL

Portuguese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Ana Martinho

Secretary-General: Ms Rita Brasil de Brito

Update of activities in 2013

The Portuguese National Commission for UNESCO is fully integrated into the structure of the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and is currently under new management. Since the beginning of the year, the Commission has developed a large number of activities in the main areas of UNESCO's mandate, most of which are undertaken in cooperation with UNESCO's Secretariat, Portuguese institutions working in the areas of activity of the Organization, and Portuguese-speaking countries.

In 2013, the National Commission developed an education kit on the theme of underwater cultural heritage comprising a training manual for teachers, and organized training seminars in Portugal and Cape Verde. A Portuguese version of the UNESCO Kit, *World Heritage in Young Hands*, was also launched. In addition, the Commission produced a large number of information flyers on various UNESCO projects and programmes during the year.

The Portuguese National Commission has developed the 'Tour-WHPO' project in partnership with UNESCO's Secretariat and Turismo de Portugal, and organized the official closing ceremony of the International Year of Planet Earth. The

Commission played an important role in the implementation of the International Geoparks project and integrated the working group established by the Director-General. In the area of communication, and in partnership with several Portuguese institutions, the National Commission hosted the International Conference on Literacy, Media and Citizenship in Lisbon with the participation of a representative of the Secretariat of UNESCO.

The National Commission launched the 8th edition of the Humans Rights and Integration Prize, intended to encourage and recognize the work of journalists from Portuguese media in this area. It also launched the 5th edition of the Creativity and Innovation Prize on the theme of water and heritage, within the Portuguese network of UNESCO's Associated Schools. Lastly, the Commission launched the 2nd edition of the initiative '7 days with the media' to celebrate World Press Freedom Day.

The Conference on Euro-Arab Dialogue: Our Commonly Shared Values, held in the Algarve (25–26 November), was organized in cooperation with UNESCO and the MBI Al Jaber Foundation. It focused on the importance of cultural diversity and education in combating ignorance and prejudice, and underlined the need for an educational toolkit to promote tolerance and understanding in schools.

The Commission attaches great importance to UNESCO networks and carries out a large number of projects and activities in the areas of Clubs for UNESCO, associated schools, associated libraries and UNESCO chairs, as well as biosphere reserves, Geoparks, international Category II Centres, national committees and forums of scientific programmes.



A success story

Launched in 1994 as an initiative of the World Heritage Centre and the UNESCO ASPnet, the *World Heritage in Young Hands* Educational Kit intends to develop innovative teaching methods in support of World Heritage conservation. This electronic kit allows students to better understand the outstanding universal value of cultural and natural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. It also helps them to acquire the skills needed to promote the conservation of properties protected by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

Schools have been using the kit in English and French for several years. The Portuguese version published by the National Commission in 2013 deepened the work already started and contributed to its dissemination among those directly or indirectly responsible for the preservation of World Heritage sites.

The Portuguese version of the kit is intended for all Portuguese-speaking countries, which may use it in teaching actions related to citizenship and world heritage. It will also facilitate the dissemination of Portuguese and Portuguese-influenced heritage that exists around the world.

The Portuguese National Commission for UNESCO fosters young people's education concerning UNESCO themes and programmes through the ASPnet. Cooperation with other Portuguese schools in Portuguese-speaking countries has allowed the development of projects focusing on areas such as human rights, citizenship heritage, the environment and sustainable development.

© IGCP Portuguese Committee / Jon Kohl

ROMANIA

Romanian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Remus Pricopie, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Ani Matei

Website: www.cnr-unesco.ro

Update of activities in 2013

Over the last year, the Romanian National Commission has focused on UNESCO programmes relating to best practice for sustainable social and economic development. It has also worked to utilize Romanian expertise in the fields of science and education for global UNESCO activities, and to draw on and promote the richness and diversity of Romanian culture. Good communication, dialogue, and exchange of ideas and experiences among experts and authorities proved central to work in these two main areas.

The National Commission focused on its role as a liaison agency offering specialized advice about UNESCO and its programmes to both government and non-government bodies. It continued its work on existing international projects and established links and partnerships for their further development. It also marked, nationally and internationally, the anniversaries of Romanian personalities celebrated in association with UNESCO.

The Commission also successfully promoted national, cultural values linked to UNESCO's mandate, and monitored the

application of national legislation for the protection of national cultural and natural heritage. The following four projects were among those the Commission supported.

The Blue Danube River Project, launched in 1993, this year saw the launching of a collective work entitled, 'Bridge over water/Arch over time'. This united contributions of ASPnet schools from Danube countries and comprised architectural data, facts, legends and myths about the bridges over the Danube, illustrated by archival footage, current graphics, videos and artwork made by the students.

The UNESCO-L'Oréal National Fellowship Programme for Women in Science continued to provide scholarships to women scientists, and to share inspirational stories about new and young researchers worldwide. The programme works to identify and support eminent women in science, to assist young female researchers at key moments, and to help launch young women in their scientific careers.

The National Commission also launched the Passport for Global Ethics, an innovative document created for young people around the world. This efficient tool symbolizes the values that UNESCO seeks to provide to young people through various programmes and platforms that support intercultural dialogue. The Passport was presented at the 37th session of the General Conference.

At the IT Summer Academy Forum, industry experts presented models and case studies to participants as part of a gathering designed to foster scientific and technical creativity. The forum aimed to develop a national network of information on trends and opportunities in education and the labour market, and enable young people to explore the environment in which they hope to develop a career.



A success story

One example of a successful activity undertaken by the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO is the 7th edition of the International Festival of Art. The festival combined different artists and original works of art reflecting unique national traditions, and current trends and directions of modern culture. It aimed to introduce young and gifted artists to large audiences, establish and strengthen international contacts and cooperation through creative work, and develop cultural tourism.

© Constantin Brailoiu Ethnography and Folklore Institute

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO

President: Mr Sergei Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Grigory Ordzhonikidze

Website: www.unesco.ru

Update of activities in 2013

The Russian Federation is deeply committed to the aims and objectives of UNESCO. In 2013, the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO organized numerous events in all areas of UNESCO's expertise.

In education, the National Commission organized an international conference in Kazan (13–14 May) to improve mechanisms of cooperation between UNESCO ASPnet, UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs and UNEVOC Centres for Sustainable Development. Two conferences took place in Khanty-Mansiysk: the 6th International Conference of UNESCO Associated Schools (21–25 May) and an international meeting on Education for Sustainable Development (22–25 May).

In culture, the 1st International Congress of Restorers was held in Moscow (25–26 September) under the auspices of the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO. The Commission also collaborated with the Ministry of Culture of Russia, the Russian Committee of the International Council of Museums, the Union of Architects of Russia and the Russian

Association of Restorers, to jointly organize the 2nd edition of 'Denkmal Moscow' – the International Trade Fair of Heritage Preservation, Restoration and Museum Technology (3–5 October).

A series of concerts took place in Tambov and Moscow (26–29 September and 3 October) under the auspices of the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO, with the assistance of the Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory and the Department of Culture and Archives of the Tambov region. Winners of the M. Nemtsovoy and V. Vatuli international competitions participated within the framework of the international charity project 'Music for peace'.

In culture, the Commission organized a conference on the conservation, development and management of the intangible cultural heritage of CIS countries and the Baltic states. It took place in Ulyanovsk (25–28 September) in parallel with the 3rd International Cultural Forum, entitled 'The Culture of the New Generation'.

In science, the Commissions for UNESCO of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Moldova and Romania joined efforts to restore and protect the Great Bustard population in Eastern and Central Europe. The project was carried out within the framework of the Man and Biosphere programme.

In communication and information, the Commission organized a conference on media and information literacy in the information society. The conference, held in Moscow (24–27 April), took place with the support of the Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications within the framework of the Russian chairmanship of the UNESCO Information for All Programme. It brought together for the first time representatives of the developing field of information literacy and media education.



Participants at the international conference Internet and Socio-Cultural Transformations in Information Society, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.

© Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO

A success story

The UNESCO international conference, The Internet and Socio-cultural Transformation in the Information Society, was held in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk (8–11 September) within the framework of the Russian chairmanship of the UNESCO Information for All Programme. This first international forum was an attempt to develop a comprehensive understanding of the direction, dynamics, character, scope, driving forces, content and results of socio-cultural changes under the impact of the internet and other information and communication technologies.

The conference took an interdisciplinary approach inviting theoretical and applied experts on information and communication, and researchers in the social sciences and humanities (including philosophers, sociologists, cultural anthropologists, historians and political scientists), as well as political and community activists, executives, creative writers, journalists and representatives of libraries, museums, archives and universities, civil society and the private sector from forty-six different countries.

The conference promoted the importance of media and information literacy to help ensure responsible, safe and critical use of networks for free access, production and exchange of information and knowledge within all linguistic, cultural and social groups.

It recommended updating traditional copyright institutions and legislation in the context of digital environment to allow free access to information necessary for daily life, quality education and scientific progress.

SERBIA

National Commission of the Republic of Serbia for UNESCO

Secretary-General: Mrs Jasna Zrnovic

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Serbian National Commission for UNESCO undertook a number of activities in line with the Organization's mandate.

In the natural sciences, representatives from the National Commission met with five local communities at a workshop organized by the municipality of Alibunar to discuss the creation of a potential biosphere reserve. The proposed reserve, 'Deliblatska pescara', would encompass the Deliblato Sands, the largest oasis of sands in Europe. The biosphere reserve concept was also presented at the 46th International Lorient fair, held in Novi Sad (2–6 October), along with Serbia's nomination for the creation of the Mura Drava Danube, a five-country biosphere reserve following the Danube through Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia.

The National Commission also contributed to the finalization of an agreement, signed in Paris (26 April) between the Government of Serbia and UNESCO, to create the Category II Centre for Water for Sustainable Development and Adaptation to Climate Change in Belgrade – the Jaroslav Cerni Institute.

The National Commission cooperated with UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme to organize two conferences at the new centre: the first on emerging pollutants in water (9–11 July) and the second on climate change impacts on water resources (17–18 October).

In culture, the United Nations Association of Serbia organized a workshop on world heritage education, held in Zajecar (13–15 September). The workshop targeted schoolteachers and was organized under the patronage of the National Commission and supported by the World Heritage Centre.

The National Commission supported the submission of 'Spring Celebration Hidrelez/Durdjevdan' to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This spring festival is celebrated widely throughout the Balkans and was jointly submitted by Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Turkey.

Representatives of the National Commission also participated in a workshop on the development integrative protection project 'Centuries of Bač', which focuses on safeguarding the medieval fortress, Franciscan monastery and Bodjani Orthodox Church that constitute, among others, the historical place of Bač and its surroundings.

The National Commission in collaboration with the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts also prepared four nominations for the list of anniversaries for UNESCO: the composer Stevan Mokranjac, the scientists Jovan Cvijic and Mihajlo Pupin, and the biologist Josif Pancic. The nominations were approved at the 37th General Conference.

Finally, the International Etno Centre Babka in Kovacica celebrated International Mother Language Day (21 February) within the multicultural community of Slovaks, Hungarians, Roma, Romanians, Ruthenians, Croats and Serbs under the patronage of UNESCO and the National Commission.



A success story

The Centre for Promotion of Science, a government project, organized the 1st South East Europe Science Promotion Conference under the patronage of UNESCO and the National Commission. Together with the UNESCO Office in Venice, they launched the South East European Science Journalism School, held in Belgrade (2–3 October). The conclusions of the Conference encompass not only science promotion and intergovernmental cooperation, but also gender equality.

UNESCO International Camp in ASP School 'Mica Stojkovic', Umcari
© National Commission of the Republic of Serbia for UNESCO

SLOVAKIA

Slovak Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Ľudovít Molnár

Secretary-General: Mrs Aurélia Füle

Website: www.unesco.sk

Update of activities in 2013

The year 2013 marked the 20th anniversary of Slovakia's membership of UNESCO and the creation of the Slovak Commission for UNESCO. Slovakia as a part of the former Czechoslovakia was one of the co-founders of UNESCO. Following the split of Czechoslovakia it became a Member State of UNESCO by succession in 1993.

The goal of the Slovak Commission in 2013 was to promote the work of UNESCO, the Commission and the Slovak Republic to the widest public possible. This year also witnessed the 20th anniversary of the inscription of three sites on the World Heritage List: Vlkolínec, the Historic Town of Banská Štiavnica and the Technical Monuments in its Vicinity, and Levoča, Spišský Hrad and the Associated Cultural Monuments. A number of workshops, exhibitions, and public and media presentations were held across Slovakia to commemorate this anniversary and raise awareness of world heritage.

In May, the Slovak Commission for UNESCO hosted the 8th Ordinary Session of the World Commission on the Ethics of

Scientific Knowledge and Technology in Bratislava. Following its success, the Commission organized in conjunction with UNESCO a follow-up conference on the ethical challenges facing science and technology.

The National Commission also supports a variety of projects focused on youth. Notable examples in 2013 included the 15th Edition of the Olympiad of Human Rights, the 19th Edition of ENVIROFILM, the 14th Edition of Ex Libris Hlohovec (an international creative arts competition for children aged 6–15), and the 10th Edition of ProFIIT (a competition for secondary schools based around programming and related areas).

In December, the annual meeting of ASP schools in Slovakia took place. This year marked the 60th anniversary of the UNESCO network.

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Slovakia prepared a presentation on SL'UK (a Slovak folk art tradition) together with an exhibition on the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The National Commission also highlighted Millennium Development Goal and UNESCO priorities areas, including education, gender equality and Africa, in particular through the Participation Programme project 'Assistance in overcoming the digital divide in Africa'. Implemented in Uganda, the project aims to develop a regional ICT Centre to provide interactive training on computer and digital literacy for students. Key aims include 50 per cent participation by young girls and teacher training.



Roma schoolgirl
© Slovak Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the Slovak Commission for UNESCO presented and co-financed the Participation Programme project 'Through teachers and mothers to Roma and other disadvantaged children: focus on quality pre-school education'. This training course for teachers from Central, Eastern and Southern Europe develops teaching skills to address and encourage Roma mothers and other disadvantaged families to become more involved in the education process of their children.

The main aim is to help prepare children for school and motivate them during the learning process, thus helping to prevent failure in their first year of school attendance. The project was a success, sharing experiences and resources not just with participants, but also with interested countries through the distribution of a training resource book.

SLOVENIA

Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Radovan Stanislav Pejovnik

Secretary-General: Ms Marjotka Hafner

Website: www.unesco.si

Update of activities in 2013

The Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO organizes and coordinates the implementation of UNESCO activities, resolutions and recommendations in Slovenia. It cooperates with UNESCO Headquarters, the UNESCO Office in Venice, National Commissions and other organizations.

The National Commission was involved in several activities throughout the year within the framework of the International Year of Water Cooperation. These were organized in cooperation with the Slovenian UNESCO Youth Network, the Slovenian International Hydrological Programme and Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission Committees, the United Nations Association of Slovenia and the Slovenian ASPNet.

A range of activities and celebrations were organized to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of ASPNet and the 60th anniversary of the Slovenian ASPNet. Among these were the publication of a booklet on the 20th anniversary and the launch of a new website (www.unesco-sole.si).

In April, the Director-General, Mrs Irina Bokova visited Slovenia within the framework of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe and the Ministerial Meeting of

the Forum of Slavic Cultures. Bilateral meetings were held between the Director-General and Slovenian ministers and representatives of the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO.

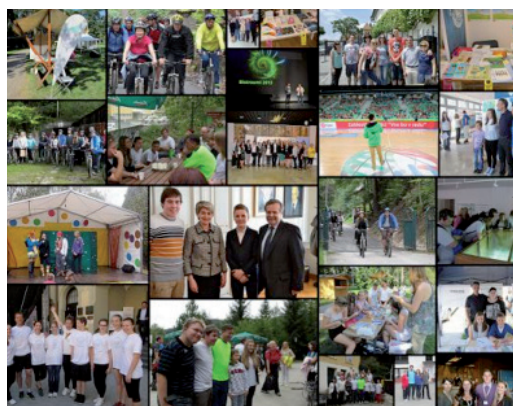
In the field of World Heritage, the Škocjan Caves Park received assistance from the UNESCO Participation Programme for the project 'Monitoring of World Heritage'. The National Commission was actively involved in the transnational serial nomination of the property 'Dinaric Karst' to the World Heritage List. It also undertook a range of activities within the framework of the 10th anniversary of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The National Commission also participated in the 25th Folklore Festival 'Folkart', held in Maribor (25–29 June); the 4th International Symposium of Miklavž Očepek in honour of the bicentennial of the birth of Søren Kierkegaard, held in Ljubljana (12–18 June); and the Internet of Education Conference, held in Ljubljana (11–12 November).

The Commission supported the creation of two new geoparks within the European Geoparks Network – the transboundary Geopark 'Karavanke/Karawanken' and the Geopark 'Idrija'.

The Commission initiated the work of UNESCO's Category II Centre on Librarian Information Systems in Maribor. It also submitted two nominations for the UNESCO Chairs Network, currently under evaluation.

The National Commission also participated in the Working Group for Euro-Arab dialogue; the Tripartite Working Group on the follow-up to the review of the cooperation of the UNESCO Secretariat with National Commissions for UNESCO; and an informal working group of National Commissions for cooperation between UNESCO and the European Commission.



Activities of the Slovenian UNESCO Youth Network.

© Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The UNESCO Youth Platform in Slovenia is an informal network of young people. Its goal is the promotion of youth cooperation through different projects, and the sharing of knowledge and experiences in the field of youth and UNESCO.

The platform was established in November 2012 by the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO. Twelve UNESCO Heralds, youngsters aged 12–23, share and spread UNESCO's ideas, topics and goals among themselves, their schools and other interested audiences.

As advocates for UNESCO, the heralds present lectures, help to organize events on UNESCO issues, and participate in conferences at local, national and international levels. This year, the youth network organized events within the framework of the International Year of Water Cooperation, the Cultural Bazaar in Ljubljana, the Art Camp in Maribor, the Athletic Meeting in Velenje, the European Basketball Championships in Slovenia and World Oceans Day in Piran among others. News and presentations are published and shared on a dedicated website (www.unesco-mladi.si) and Facebook page.

In 2013, two UNESCO Heralds met with the Director-General during her visit. All the Heralds met with the Slovenian President during a bicycling trip in the Karavanke/Karawanken Geopark, and two of the Heralds represented the Slovenian UNESCO Youth Platform during the UNESCO Youth Forum, held in Paris in October.

SPAIN

Spanish National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Mr Luís Ramallo Massanet

Deputy Secretary-General: Ms Carmen Pinar

Update of activities in 2013

The primary aim of the Spanish National Commission in 2013 was to improve visibility and dialogue with different Administrative Departments and civil society partners. In the wake of the present economic crisis the Commission is undertaking a review and assessment of its associations, centres and Clubs for UNESCO, many of which have been deeply affected by the current situation.

The National Commission undertook many activities during the year. It collaborated in the creation of the new UNESCO Centre FUNDIPAX. It also endorsed the creation of UNESCO Chairs in Culture, Tourism and Development at Rey Juan Carlos University in Madrid; in 'University and Heritage' at the Polytechnic College of Valencia; in 'E-Learning' at the International University of La Rioja; in 'Scalable Digital Education for All' at the Carlos III University in Madrid; and in 'Territory, Landscape and Heritage' at the University of the Basque Country.

In addition, the Commission supported and collaborated in the establishment of four UNESCO ASP schools in primary and secondary education and music.

The Commission participated in the selection of experts for the International Youth Summer Camp on Chinese World Heritage and the UNESCO World Heritage work camp in the Republic of Korea. It assisted at the international conference on Internet and Socio-Cultural Transformations in Information Society, held on Sakhalin Island, Russian Federation (8–12 September), and the regional consultation on Open-Access to Scientific Information and Research, held in Berlin (20–21 November). Finally, the National Commission participated in the 2nd South-East Europe World Heritage Youth Forum for Peace and Sustainable Development, held in Zajecar, Serbia (6–11 April).

The National Commission authorized the use of UNESCO's name, acronym and logo for six events and endorsed thirteen other events sponsored by the UNESCO Secretariat.

Lastly, the National Commission sponsored the following UNESCO Awards and Prizes and assisted with the selection of candidates, where appropriate: the L'Oreal Prize and L'Oreal Fellowship for Women in Science, the UNESCO Kalinga Prize, the Sultan Qabus Prize for Environment Preservation, the International Literacy Prize, the Hadan bin Rashid-A-Maktoum Award, the Man and the Biosphere Young Artists Award Scheme, the Michel Bâtisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management, the Sharjah Prize, the Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize 2014 and L'Oreal España.



A lesson in Fusioart, Miquel Duran y Saurina school, Majorca.

© Public School Miquel Duran i Saurina, in Inca, Mallorca

A success story

The Spanish National Commission was proud to sponsor and participate as a member of the jury in the 9th edition of Accion Magistral. This annual initiative is organized by FAD (the Association Against Drug Addiction), the Spanish National Commission of Cooperation with UNESCO and BBVA (Banco Bilbao-Vizcaya). It recognizes the best educational projects in primary, secondary and special education. In particular, it focuses on projects that work to establish social values among students (e.g. solidarity, tolerance, respect and gender equality) that contribute to preventing social risk behaviours, such as drug use, classroom violence or racism, and which establish frameworks of cooperation and interaction between schools and families.

There were two winners of the 9th edition: an educational project created by Miquel Duran y Saurina school in Majorca and a project involving students at risk of social exclusion devised by Blas de Otero school in Madrid. H.M. Queen Sofia of Spain presented the awards at a ceremony attended by the Secretary of State for Education, and representatives of educational organizations and parent and teacher associations.

The jury also awarded a prize to San Xoan de Filgueira School in Galicia for a project on education through cinema, and awarded two honourable mentions in the category 'Adelante Familias'.

SWEDEN

Swedish National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mrs Inger Davidson

Secretary-General: Mr Mats Djurberg

Website: www.unesco.se

Update of activities in 2013

The Swedish National Commission functions as a Secretariat for the coordination of all Swedish work with UNESCO. It presents advice to the government on matters relating to UNESCO's mandate and works to raise awareness about UNESCO and its work in Sweden.

The twelve members of the National Commission represent UNESCO's fields of expertise and meet around six times per year. Numerous experts in UNESCO networks and state agencies collaborate with UNESCO on normative instruments, and many international and national non-governmental organizations cooperate with the National Commission to implement UNESCO's programmes in Sweden.

In 2013, the National Commission drafted a new strategy for Swedish cooperation with UNESCO for the period 2014–17. The strategy sets Swedish priorities for UNESCO's core fields of expertise and is further divided into four annual plans.

The Commission also established a new support network entitled 'Special advisors to the Swedish National Commission

for UNESCO'. The network provides the Commission with expert policy advice and undertakes information-related tasks. Six senior experts are appointed for a one-year period, with a possible maximum of four years, and may speak on the Commission's behalf at conferences and produce articles for the media.

The Commission maintains a website, and Facebook and Twitter accounts, and distributes a digital newsletter ten times a year containing news on key initiatives of UNESCO and the Swedish National Commission.

The National Commission has produced and launched a Swedish language version of UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for teachers. It has also published a Swedish-language, digital version of the 2011 'Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape', available on the National Commission website.

In September, the Commission invited Youth Forum participants from twelve neighbouring countries to attend a two-day meeting in Stockholm in preparation for the Youth Forum in October, the week before the 37th UNESCO General Conference.

Finally, on 31 December the mandate of the current members of the National Commission expired. New members were appointed for the period 2014–17 and took up their positions on 1 January 2014.



Representatives from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Faroes, Norway and Sweden gathered in Sigtuna, Sweden, to discuss Nordic issues prior to the 37th General Conference.

© Swedish National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In June 2013, the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO hosted the annual meeting for Nordic National Commissions for UNESCO. The two-day meeting gathered together some sixty participants, including staff and members from National Commissions, experts from Ministries for Education and Foreign Affairs, and the Nordic countries' Permanent Delegations to UNESCO. As preparation for the meeting the National Commissions presented examples of best practice in their national work.

Denmark shared experiences from its period on the Executive Board of UNESCO and Sweden introduced the Swedish candidate to the Executive Board for the coming four-year period. The discussions in plenary dealt with ways to encourage cooperation among Nordic countries and UNESCO, and thematic group discussions explored avenues of cooperation between the Nordic delegations to the General Conference. Recommendations included regular morning meetings throughout the General Conference, specific preparatory meetings and mutual support for draft resolutions. These discussions allowed the Nordic countries to coordinate work and maximize time and resources spent at the General Conference.

SWITZERLAND

Swiss National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Jean-Bernard Münch

Secretary-General: Mr Nicolas Mathieu

Website: www.unesco.ch

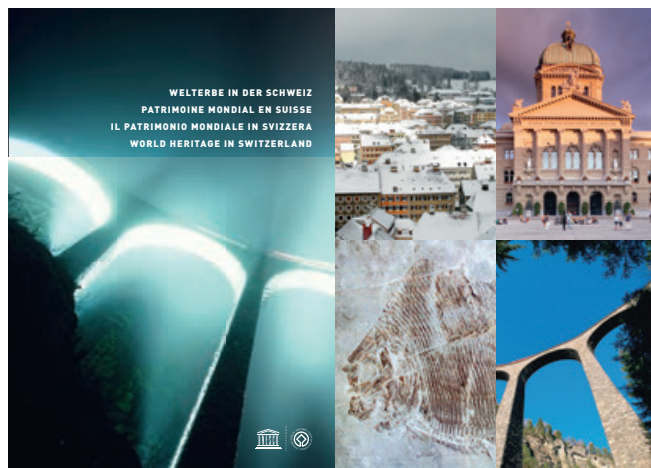
Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Swiss National Commission for UNESCO launched a series of initiatives focused on bringing together the various stakeholders operating under UNESCO's name in Switzerland. The aim was to reflect on ways in which cooperation among these different stakeholders – whether participants in institutionalized networks or ad hoc partners – could be developed to strengthen their contributions and expertise around a common foundation. This initiative was found to be essential because of the specific environments and particular contexts of the stakeholders involved.

Sustaining such a common foundation requires constant effort involving a variety of skills to build, maintain and develop awareness and trust around a shared commitment, not least in terms of communication. This effort also comes up against practical considerations, including immediate limitations on human resources and the availability of volunteers, not to mention financial resources. This means setting clear guidelines and making choices.

One example of such an initiative is the Lugano meetings, organized regularly by the Swiss National Commission for UNESCO. These act as a framework for informal exchange among National Commissions on cooperation and the common challenges that are a feature of their work with and for UNESCO. The theme of the 6th Lugano meeting (2–4 May) was cooperation with existing networks, in particular with the UNESCO Chairs network, some members of which attended the meeting.

Another example focused on the Swiss ASPnet. In December, the National Commission celebrated the 60th anniversary of ASPnet. The occasion proved an opportunity for activities, meetings and sharing experiences. During the anniversary the Commission launched the new plans for the Swiss ASPnet, designed to increase the relevance of the network and to reflect more closely the mission and priorities of UNESCO.



A success story

The Swiss National Commission for UNESCO conducts activities that are designed to last. As part of its commitment to cultural and natural sites on the World Heritage List, it endeavours to inform the general public about the universal value of the sites and their need for protection to ensure their continuing existence for future generations. To this end, it has published a book on world heritage in the three national languages of Switzerland (French, German and Italian), as well as English.

This publication presents for the first time all the world heritage sites in Switzerland and describes, in an accessible way, the individual features that justify their classification as world heritage. This initiative created an opportunity for all the sites concerned to participate in a groundbreaking, joint endeavour aimed at enhancing public awareness of the importance of safeguarding world heritage.

© Swiss National Commission for UNESCO

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

National Commission for UNESCO of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

President: Ms Elizabeta Kancheska-Milevska, Minister of Culture

Secretary-General: Ms Lidija Topuzovska

Website: www.kultura.gov.mk

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the National Commission for UNESCO of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia collaborated with ministries, non-governmental organizations and institutions to implement the mission of UNESCO, through the creation of series of projects, initiatives and relationships that intensify real tolerance, a culture of peace, dialogue between civilizations and religions, and respect for cultural difference. The National Commission continues to place great importance on cooperation with the Organization and actively promotes and participates in activities and initiatives in all UNESCO's areas of expertise.

The National Commission took part in several activities, meetings and conferences during the year. Among these was the 3rd World Conference on Dialogue among Religions and Civilizations, held in Skopje (10–12 May). The conference was realized within the Global Agenda of the UN and

UNESCO for Dialogue among Civilizations, and aimed to provide participants with a forum to share independent policy advice with government in UNESCO's areas of expertise.

The National Commission also worked to promote the travelling exhibition, 'Imagining the Balkans – identities, dialogue in the long 19th century', initiated by UNESCO, and helped to realize the project, 'Creation of a favourable environment for diverse cultural expression in the Macedonian audiovisual media sector', in cooperation with the UNESCO Chair of Media and the International Fund for Cultural Diversity.

The National Commission provided support to teachers and students from ASPnet schools, who contributed presentations to the '2nd South-East Europe World Heritage Youth Forum on Cultural Heritage', held in Zajecar, Serbia (6–11 April).

In collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, the National Commission also organized a Concert of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Elements of Southeastern Europe inscribed on the UNESCO ICH List, which took place in Skopje (25 October). The event formed part of celebrations marking the 10th anniversary of the 2003 UNESCO ICH Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage.

Within the framework of the 2003 UNESCO Convention the FYROM submitted three applications for inscription on the Representative Lists, and participated in the preparation of three multinational applications.

Finally, last year witnessed the establishment of the FYROM Man and the Biosphere (MAB) National Committee. In collaboration with the Government of Albania, the Committee submitted a nomination to the MAB Secretariat to declare the 'Prespa and Ohrid Watershed' a transboundary biosphere reserve nomination.



A success story

In 2013, the Government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia supported the organization of the 3rd World Conference on Dialogue among Religions and Civilizations, held in Skopje (10–12 May). The conference takes place every three years to promote the role and importance of freedom and dignity as universal human rights and fundamental values in inter-human, inter-religious and inter-cultural relations.

The conference focused on the following topics: 'Pluralistic societies and religious tolerance', 'Living together by respecting diversity', and 'Contribution of the media to inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue'. The National Commission for UNESCO contributed to the conference through the theme 'Freedom and dignity – fundamental values in inter-human, inter-religious and inter-cultural relations'.

© National Commission for UNESCO of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

TURKEY

Turkish National Commission for UNESCO

Chairman: Mr Öcal Oğuz

Secretary-general: Ms Sema Dinçer

Website: www.unesco.org.tr

Update of activities in 2013

The Turkish National Commission for UNESCO has a number of core programmes, which are implemented by Committees comprising experts from the fields of education, science, culture, and communication and information. The Executive Board, whose members include representatives from the Ministries of Education, Culture and Foreign Affairs, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions, coordinates the work of these Committees.

A programme of structural improvement began in 2011 and continued throughout 2013, alongside improvements to infrastructure. Increased capacity among the permanent staff allowed the National Commission to take on more projects through the Committees.

The overarching priority of the Commission is to enhance the visibility of UNESCO's programmes at the national level and to increase collaboration at the regional level. As Turkey is a country with a rich culture, the Turkish National Commission, from the very start of its activities, has focused on cultural programmes. Throughout 2013, the Turkish National

Commission was particularly engaged in the promotion of the 1972 World Heritage Convention at various levels.

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the city of Eskisehir was proclaimed the Intangible Cultural Heritage Capital of Turkey, as well as the 2013 Cultural Capital of the Turkic World. Eskisehir has a unique character as a cultural 'youth' city with two large universities that together enrol more than 50,000 students. The city was therefore chosen to host the 4th Meeting of UNESCO National Commissions of Member Countries of the International Organization of TURKSOY (International Organization of Turkic Culture). About 150 representatives participated in the meeting (2–3 September).

The National Commission also organized the South-East Europe Regional Forum of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks in coordination with the UNESCO Office in Venice. The outcome was the Istanbul Conclusions, which promote the formation of new networks and ongoing and increased collaboration among scientific networks.

The National Commission also disseminated information on new initiatives including celebrations (international days, weeks, years, decades and anniversaries celebrated by Member States) through its website and network, and via relevant stakeholders. It authorized the use of logos for twenty-nine events carried out by NGOs, academic and art institutions, relevant ministries and municipalities.

All these activities received good coverage in the Turkish media.



A success story

The Turkish National Commission invited sixty-five NGOs to a workshop held in Ankara (31 May). This occasion created an opportunity for exchange of information, the establishment of cooperation and future collaborations, and the formation of networks among participating NGOs.

One of the participating NGOs was the Young Peace Initiative, which creates projects to foster the involvement of youth in activities against discrimination and violence. The National Commission supported the participation of Mr. Emre Akkas, President of this NGO, in the 8th UNESCO Youth Forum in line with its goal to increase the involvement of youth in UNESCO activities.

National Workshop on Cooperation with NGOs in Ankara (31 May).

© Turkish National Commission for UNESCO

UKRAINE

National Commission of Ukraine for UNESCO

Deputy Chairperson: Mr Volodymyr Yatsenkivsky

Secretary-General: Ms Roksolana Ivanchenko

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

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the National Commission of Ukraine for UNESCO contributed to the implementation of UNESCO's key priorities in the fields of education, natural sciences, culture, social and human sciences, and communication and information through the following activities.

The National Commission suggested amendments to UNESCO's Resolutions on culture (Major Programme IV), education (Major Programme I) and communication and information (Major Programme V) adopted by the 37th session of the General Conference.

The National Commission assisted Ukrainian institutions in protecting and popularizing Ukrainian cultural heritage through the nominations of two properties to UNESCO's World Heritage List: the 'Ancient City of Tauric Chersonese and its Chora' and 'Wooden Tserkvas' of the Carpathian Region in Poland and Ukraine. The National Commission also sought to enlarge the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural

Heritage of Humanity with the addition of the first Ukrainian element: 'Petrykivka Decorative Painting as a Phenomenon of the Ukrainian Ornamental Folk Art'.

The National Commission organized a regional seminar on the implementation of UNESCO's 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, held in Lviv (23–25 October).

The National Commission of Ukraine also participated in the UNESCO project 'Calendar of Celebration of Anniversaries' by commemorating the 150th anniversary of the birth of the Ukrainian academician Volodymyr Vernadsky. The celebrations took place within the framework of an international conference organized by Tavryisky National University, held in Simferopol, Crimea (23–25 April), and an international round table initiated by the Permanent Delegation of the Russian Federation to UNESCO, held in Paris (15 May). In addition, the Commission nominated four famous Ukrainians – Pavlo Grabovsky, Mykhailo Kotsyubynsky, Taras Shevchenko and Mykhailo Verbytsky – to the UNESCO Calendar for 2014–2015.

Lastly, as part of UNESCO's Participation Programme for 2012–2013, the National Commission implemented three national projects reflecting the Organization's strategic goals for protection of the environment, safeguarding of its sustainable development, and advancing the use of information and communication technologies in education and lifelong learning.



© National Commission of Ukraine for UNESCO

A success story

One successful event for Ukraine was the inscription of the Ukrainian element 'Petrykivka Decorative Painting as a Phenomenon of the Ukrainian Ornamental Folk Art' on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The country has proved its full adherence to the principles of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and has shown a strong desire to join the international community's sustainable efforts to protect oral traditions, performing arts, social practices and festive events.

Although the preparation of the Petrykivka element proved at times quite complicated, the process provided a wealth of meaningful knowledge and experience, which will be highly useful in the preparation of future nominations.

The National Commission also appreciates the strong professional support provided by the UNESCO Secretariat and the National Commissions of Albania, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Brazil, China, Egypt, Greece, Grenada, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Madagascar, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Peru, Tunisia, Uganda and Uruguay, all of whom helped to formulate well-balanced solutions to sensitive issues related to the Petrykivka nomination.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Tim Williams

Chief Executive: Mr James Bridge

Website: www.unesco.org.uk

Update of activities in 2013

The United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO is an independent organization uniting a network of voluntary UK experts in UNESCO's fields of expertise. It has a small secretariat and is funded primarily by the UK Department for International Development.

The mandate of the Commission is to work in partnership with the UK Government and civil society to provide independent policy advice to government in the fields of UNESCO's expertise, support the government's reform and effectiveness agenda at UNESCO, and provide advice and support to UK individuals and institutions seeking UNESCO accreditation and nominations.

Last year saw the continued publication and dissemination of policy briefs by the Commission offering advice to government on how UNESCO's work can be improved or developed, on

topics such as: UNESCO's Goodwill Ambassador Programme, the 2013 *Global Monitoring Report*, the potential contribution of the UNESCO Social and Human Sciences sector, and the development of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN networks. A major report, *Wider Value of UNESCO to the UK 2012-13*, was published in September (see below).

The National Commission also supported the UK government with briefings ahead of UNESCO governing meetings, and directors and staff formed part of UK delegations.

A second priority was the briefing of UK experts to support improved effectiveness at UNESCO and the collection of feedback after missions to examine UNESCO's performance. Experts have also been encouraged to reflect upon UNESCO's effectiveness at colloquia, such as the National Commission's inaugural Wales Colloquium, held in Aberystwyth (June). The participants discussed the theme, 'Supporting UNESCO's effectiveness and reform: how can Wales contribute?' The colloquium welcomed the First Minister of Wales, the Rt. Hon. Carwyn Jones, and the Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, Ms Gretchen Kalonji, as keynote speakers.

A third priority was ongoing support for accreditation and nomination processes for UNESCO designations in the United Kingdom. These processes relate to designations such as the 2013 L'Oreal-UNESCO UK and Ireland Fellowships 'For Women In Science', new UK inscriptions for the Memory of the World Register, and the withdrawal of designations from biosphere reserves that no longer meet UNESCO standards.

A challenge and priority for 2014 is to deepen the existing expert network to enable the National Commission to continue to provide high-quality advice related to UNESCO in all its areas of competence.



Dyfi Biosphere.
© Robin Farrar of the Dyfi Biosphere

A success story

The publication and dissemination of the report *Wider Value of UNESCO to the UK 2012-13* was a key achievement. It estimated that UK organizations benefit from UK membership of UNESCO to the amount of £90 million (US\$140 million) each year.

This report was the first to study in depth the value of UNESCO-associated work in the United Kingdom and Overseas Territories, where there are more than 180 UNESCO designations, ranging from local archives to cities. Conservative analysis demonstrated that financial benefits can be a direct by-product of designation.

The report emphasizes, however, that the primary benefit is not financial, but lies in contributing to other priorities such as international security and respect for human rights.

The Commission shared the report as a case study for other National Commissions to consider at their inter-regional meeting on the occasion of the 37th General Conference, where a follow-up recommendation was adopted. It was also presented at the UK Parliament (5 December) at a meeting with speakers including UNESCO Director-General, Mrs Irina Bokova.

A follow up report is planned for 2015. It is hoped that other Member States and National Commissions might conduct their own research to identify how they are benefitting from UNESCO membership.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

US National Commission for UNESCO

Executive Director: Ms Allison Wright

Update of activities in 2013

The US National Commission for UNESCO comprises a diverse membership of 100 individuals from across the United States, at least seventy-five of which are drawn from civil society. The Commission also includes individuals representing sixty non-governmental organizations that mirror the pillars of UNESCO. Their vast expertise serves as a valuable resource. The US National Commission thus provides a strong network to promote and raise awareness of the key programmes of UNESCO. The Commission also serves in an advisory role to the Secretary of State with regard to its relationship with UNESCO. The US National Commission values US membership in UNESCO and strongly supports participation by individuals across the country.

The staff of the Commission use effective communication tools such as a regular newsletter and social media. They also conduct meetings and conference calls with working groups and subcommittees, and remain in close contact with the UNESCO Office in New York and other Regional Offices. The Commission is working to continue and broaden its engagement with other National Commissions.

Commission staff will continue to open and broaden lines of communication with current networks including the Category II Centres, Chairs, the ASPnet and Creative Cities. The Commission along with its staff looks forward to integrating additions to these networks. The Commission is particular excited to support the growth of the International Coalition of Cities Against Racism in the United States (see below).



16th Street Baptist Church, Birmingham (USA).


© U.S. Department of State / J. Eldridge

A success story

In September, the US network of the International Coalition of Cities Against Racism was launched in Birmingham, Alabama, during a week of activities commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Birmingham church bombings, a key event in the United States' civil rights movement. The launch was attended by numerous US mayors, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and a Programme Specialist from UNESCO Headquarters.

The United States Conference of Mayors is the main implementing partner for the US Network, and as CEO Tom Cochran explained, 'will join with our colleagues in other nations to eliminate racism and discrimination of all forms'. To join the international network, US cities must develop and adopt a ten-point action plan, which specifies commitments that cities might develop or complete. To date, sixty-two mayors have signed on behalf of their cities, and the US has become the fastest growing group of the coalition.





Latin America and the Caribbean

BELIZE

Belize National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Patrick Faber, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Rudolf Anthony Jr.

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Belize National Commission for UNESCO appointed a new Secretary-General, who immediately started to liaise with government ministries, non-governmental and private organizations. Communication was re-established with numerous stakeholders including the Permanent Delegation at UNESCO Headquarters, the UNESCO Office in Kingston, and the focal point for the Belize Barrier Reef, a World Heritage site. Meetings were held with representatives from the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission, and communication was established with the Audubon Society. The National Commission has also benefited from the Participation Programme with five projects approved.

The Commission met several times with representatives of the UNESCO Office in Kingston, first in Belize at the closing ceremony of a Japanese Funds-in-Trust (JFIT) sponsorship

programme on Education (Training of Teachers), and twice in Kingston, while participating in a Secretaries-General training programme and a workshop on Education for Sustainable Development.

The National Commission participated in an eight-day training workshop on community-based inventorying of intangible cultural heritage, held in Belize (1–9 October), and an underwater cultural heritage workshop held in Lima. The Commission responded to enquiries pertaining to the destruction of the Nuh Mul archeological site in Belize, and the building of a tourist destination site/village at Crawl Caye.

The Belize National Commission has facilitated the participation of experts in workshops in various countries, including on nomination dossiers in Antigua, tsunami training in Brazil, open access training in Jamaica, an arts and craft workshop in Bahamas, IOCARIBE training in Panama, World Press Freedom Day in Curacao and the Youth Forum in Paris.

As a result of the progressive work of the National Commission, the Belizean public has a stronger awareness of UNESCO's actions and its aims. The Commission has also been actively involved in a number of applications for the 2014–2015 Participation Programme.



National Workshop on Community-based Inventorying of Belize's Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2013 Belize.

© Belize National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the Secretary-General of the Belize National Commission and Programme Specialists for Culture in the UNESCO Office in Kingston met with the Belize Minister of Education and the Minister of Tourism and Culture. The objective of the meeting was to make the case to endorse the UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

The two ministers promised to submit a paper recommending the approval of both Conventions at Cabinet with a view to ratification. The Minister of Tourism and Culture also agreed to attend the Underwater Cultural Heritage meeting in Lima, Peru, with a government archaeologist.

This high-level meeting addressed current issues regarding the protection and research of submerged heritage, but also evaluated its potential for development, education and tourism in the Latin American and the Caribbean region. The meeting also encouraged the ratification and implementation of the 2001 Convention among other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

British Virgin Islands National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Myron Walwyn, Minister of Education and Culture

Secretary-General: Ms Allison Flax-Archer

Update of activities in 2013

The British Virgin Islands (BVI) National Commission for UNESCO was established in 1983 as a programme and advocacy agency in all UNESCO fields of competence, namely education, culture, communication and information, and the sciences. The profile of the Commission has grown through an increasing number of local contacts and the development of effective working partnerships. Regional networks have expanded, enabling interaction with National Commissions worldwide. Recent partnerships and initiatives include the following examples.

Students of the Eslyn Henley Richiez Learning Centre, a school for differently abled students, now have access to more technology following a generous donation from UNESCO. The Secretary-General of the BVI National Commission for UNESCO presented fourteen laptops and six iPads during an event held at the school. The donation is expected to enhance the students' learning experience.

On Jost Van Dyke, the smallest BVI island, youth are once more paddling small, roughly constructed boats, better known as 'bateaux'. The BVI National Commission for UNESCO organized this activity in cooperation with the Jost Van Dyke Preservation Society, as a means of reviving threatened cultural traditions with the active participation of young islanders.

The BVI National Commission for UNESCO has partnered with Green VI, a non-profit organization, and other institutions, to promote sustainable development within the home, school, church and workplaces of the inhabitants of the Virgin Islands. Key activities include seminars on ways to promote social development in everyday life.

Renewable energy was the focus of projects at the BVI National Commission for UNESCO's World Science Day for Peace and Development competition. High-school students from around the territory were invited to submit a project on the theme of sustainability.



The World Poetry Day competition winners pose with the competition coordinators from the BVI National Commission for UNESCO and representatives of the Ministry of Education and Culture at the prize-giving ceremony.

© www.virginislandsnews.com/en/news/cedar-intl-agape-total-life-top-schools-poetry-competition

A success story

Since 2000, UNESCO has celebrated World Poetry Day (21 March) to recognize the important role of poetry in the arts and in different cultures.

In 2013, to honour World Poetry Day, the BVI National Commission for UNESCO sponsored a competition and invited students from across the Territory's schools to submit poems from among the following topics: 'Going Green', 'How Can I keep the BVI Beautiful?' and 'Climate Change'. Over 100 students submitted poems.

The winning poems were honoured at a presentation ceremony held at the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports. Winning students recited their works to an audience of fellow classmates, family members, well-wishers and government officials.

In her remarks, the Secretary-General for the BVI National Commission for UNESCO explained that the poetry competition was established as part of UNESCO's mandate to encourage the creation, translation and dissemination of poetry. She continued, 'Poetry has accompanied humankind since the beginning of time. It is practised and appreciated by people of all ages and all cultures'.

CHILE

Chilean National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Mr Nicolas Eyzaguirre Guzman, Minister of Education

Executive Secretary: Mr José Patricio Brickle Cuevas

Update of activities in 2013

The Chilean National Commission is involved in continuous collaboration with ministerial counterparts and other stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, universities, community associations and civil society, in support of UNESCO programmes or projects that promote UNESCO's values. Various activities were undertaken in 2013.

In communication and information, the National Commission supported the first regional workshop of the Memory of the World programme. The workshop, entitled 'Identity and memory experiences', focused on preservation of documentary heritage and resulted in the publication of *Archives in Chile: Perspectives, Experiences and Challenges*.

In the social and human sciences, the Chilean National Commission organized the symposium, 'Philosophy: 13th international meeting of classical studies', in cooperation with the Metropolitan University of Educational Sciences and the University of Naples Federico II.

In culture, the National Commission provided financial support for a mission to evaluate the status of Qhapaq Ñan, the Inca trail located in the North of Chile.

In education, the National Commission cooperated with the Cultural Council and the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in the organization of school-based activities at national level in celebration of International Arts Education Week (24–31 May). The activities included seminars, museum trips and community-based artistic interventions, among others.

The National Commission also awarded two UNESCO fellowships to young Chilean researchers. The grants were funded by the UNESCO-Keizo Obuchi Research Fellowship Programme and the UNESCO-L'Oreal USA Fellowships for Young Women in Science.

Finally, Chile actively participated in the 37th UNESCO General Conference (5–20 November).



Man and the Biosphere seminar held for the coordinators of the ten biosphere reserves in Chile.
© Stefanie Butendieck Hijerra

A success story

In 2013 the Chilean National Commission organized and sponsored the seminar, 'Biosphere reserves in Chile', held at Olmué in the Valparaíso region (4–6 December). The coordinators of Chile's ten biosphere reserves met to discuss the current status of each reserve, the possibilities of financial cooperation and the future prospects of the reserves.

One of the central objectives of the seminar was facilitating communication among focal points or coordinators of the biosphere reserves. The seminar generated a space for dialogue and exchange of experiences on key issues such as park management, national challenges, ministerial coordination, social participation and sustainability.

COLOMBIA

Colombian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Ms María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Luis Armando Soto Boutin

Website: www.comisionunesco.gov.co

Update of activities in 2013

The Colombian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO is located in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and undertakes activities and participates in events in the main fields of UNESCO's competence.

In 2013, Colombia ratified the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and implemented, by means of the National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, the International Fund Call for Cultural Diversity to which it contributed with three projects.

The National Commission also ensures the implementation of two projects funded under the UNESCO Participation Programme 2012–2013. The projects are aimed at children who study music in the towns of Buenaventura and Codazzi and were submitted by the Batuta Foundation.

The National Commission implemented a Call for Recognition of Craftsmanship Excellence in relation to cultural practices of the Andean Region. The call was issued through the National Committee, whose members include representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, the Colombia Agency of International Cooperation and Artesanías de Colombia.

The National Commission is currently conducting an assessment of UNESCO ASPnet schools and UNESCO Chairs and Networks. The aim is to revive activities related to the social and human sciences and implement strategic plans for 2014.

The National Commission has also undertaken activities in celebration of UNESCO international days and years. All activities are covered by press releases published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Finally, the National Commission accompanied the visits of UNESCO international experts to Colombia throughout 2013.



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A success story

The Colombian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO organized a workshop entitled 'Perspectives from Colombia at UNESCO' (9–10 September). The workshop aimed to ensure the active participation of member institutions of the National Commission in activities related to UNESCO's mandate, in particular within the framework of the 37th General Conference.

The workshop studied all aspects of UNESCO and its operation, from the nature of the Organization, its thematic programmes and its regional representation, to the role of the National Commission and possibilities for action in terms of management and implementation of regulations and technical cooperation.

The didactic format offered by the workshop, the clear and strategic information and the active participation of all member institutions of the National Commission ensured the success of the activity. The support of the UNESCO's Regional Office in Quito was key to the successful outcomes of the workshop.

COSTA RICA

Costa Rican Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Mr Leonardo Garnier Rímolo

Website: www.unesco.or.cr

Update of activities in 2013

The Costa Rican Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO undertook a series of activities in 2013 in line with UNESCO's programmes and objectives.

In the social and human sciences, the Commission organized a national Youth Committee meeting under the theme, 'All for inclusion'. The forum allowed participants to exchange experiences and it provided opportunities to discuss and reach agreement on the meaning of social inclusion from the perspective of Costa Rican youth.

Several activities were organized in connection with the Memory of the World Committee. These included the conference, 'Take preventative action to preserve the historical memory of peoples'; the workshop 'Preservation of digital documents'; and the workshop 'Initiatives at national level in National Information Policies'.

In communication, two members of the UNESCO Sub-Committee on Digital Heritage participated at the international conference, 'Open access, digital preservation, scientific data: Guidelines for the construction of a digital preservation of documentary heritage policy'.

In education, a Regional Action Plan was developed for the UNESCO ASPnet and Costa Rica was selected to host the first ASPnet *pro tempore* Secretariat of Mexico and Central America.

In addition, a series of training seminars was organized for teachers and principals of UNESCO Associated Schools in Costa Rica on the themes: 'Education, from and for human rights', 'Education for sustainable development with the Earth Charter' and 'Crystallography and family farming'.

The Commission issued a total of thirty-four information bulletins in 2013 containing news related to training opportunities offered to the ASPnet. In addition, the ASPnet programme was featured on the radio programme 'Amazing World'. The Commission also undertook an analysis of the state of UNESCO Associated Schools in Costa Rica.



A success story

In 2013, the Costa Rican Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO created a travelling library for twelve schools in the central region of San Jose to promote and encourage reading. The project was made possible through the cooperation of the Department of School Libraries and Learning Resource Centres and the Department of Information Technology. The travelling library focused on environmental publications that highlight care for the environment. It also promoted reading and the development of potential through literacy. Librarians and teachers of the selected schools were trained to develop workshop strategies to promote reading among their student populations.

School Concepción de Alajuelita, Costa Rica.

© Oscar Rodríguez / Costa Rican Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

CUBA

Cuban National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Juan Antonio Fernandez Palacios

Permanent Secretary: Ms Alicia Gonzalez Gutiérrez

Update of activities in 2013

Last year saw the Cuban National Commission for UNESCO celebrate its 66th anniversary in a year marked by intense work.

In education, the highlight was the Congress 'Pedagogía 2013' for which the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education was invited as a keynote speaker.

In addition, the 21st National Annual Workshop of ASPnet was held in the city of Santa Clara. The year 2013 marks the 30th Anniversary of ASPnet in Cuba. Meanwhile, in Havana (5–7 November), the National Workshop of Good Practices for the promotion of a Culture of Peace brought together representatives from seventy-six UNESCO Associated Schools from all provinces.

The National Commission also commemorated the 20th anniversary of the Network of UNESCO Chairs in Cuba, in the presence of the Chief of the UNESCO Division of Higher Education.

In culture, the project 'Quisicuba for Diversity', funded by the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD), aimed to promote Afro-Cuban Cultural Expressions among youth in this

community. This programme forms part of the substantial work being carried out under the Slave Route Project in Cuba.

In communication and information, two new collections were added to the National Register of the Memory of the World programme – the papers of Celia Sánchez and the newspaper *La Aurora del Yumurí*.

The documentary, *The Life and Works of Ernesto Che Guevara: from the original manuscripts of his adolescence and youth to his diary of the Bolivia campaign*, was also inscribed on the Memory of the World International Register.

In the sciences, six scholarships were awarded in different areas, including the UNESCO-L'Oréal Award for Young Women Scientists. The National Commission participated in the organization of various meetings, including for the Man and the Biosphere programme and the International Hydrological Programme. Cuba also presented the National Report related to the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme, and attended a meeting on this issue held in Buenos Aires.

January 2013 also saw the Brazilian Dominican friar and theologian, Frei Betto, receive the José Martí UNESCO Prize, awarded at the 3rd International Conference on World Balance in Havana.

Four anniversaries suggested by the National Commission were approved at the 37th General Conference for the 2014–2015 biennium.

Lastly, Ms Ena Elsa Velázquez, Minister of Education, headed the Cuban delegation to the UNESCO 37th General Conference, while a young member of the Cuban Parliament attended the UNESCO Youth Conference.



The 7th National Workshop of Cuban UNESCO Chairs, Hotel Nacional de Cuba.

© Cuba National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013 it is important to emphasize the great opportunity and visibility provided to the National Commissions by the Participation Programmes, as a means of implementing activities that contribute to the fulfilment of UNESCO programmes.

Cuba has benefited from the Participation Programmes with four projects approved for the biennium 2012–2013. These programmes made possible the celebration of the centenary of the Fine Arts Museum (Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes), in 2013, with different workshops organized and publications related to its history.

The Participation Programme also enabled the Network of UNESCO Chairs in Cuba to widen and strengthen its work.

It allowed the promotion of social participation among adolescents and young people in different locations and provinces, with an emphasis on gender equality.

Finally, the Participation Programme allowed special equipment to be acquired for the conservation and restoration of valuable phonographic archives of Cuban music via Special Documentary and Phonographic Registry Funds. The Centre of Information and Conservation keeps all music professionally recorded in the 1940s up to the present, including voices and performances of great artists from Cuba and other countries.

CURAÇAO

Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Irene Dick, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Marva Browne

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, Curaçao was selected to pilot the implementation of media development indicators in the English and Dutch-Speaking Caribbean. The objective of the study was to understand the current status of media development in Curaçao, identify gaps in media development in terms of policy and capacity-building, and provide proposals for policy interventions. Implementation proved challenging for the National Commission due to lack of sufficient funding. However, this difficulty was resolved through collaboration with the University of Curaçao, which donated the time of the lead researcher and provided student volunteers.

During the year, the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Committee continued working to identify ICH in Curaçao for nomination to the UNESCO Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage under Article 33 of the 2003 Convention. The National Commission also organized a kick-off meeting with local artists for the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts, which will be organized by Curaçao in 2014. The project is a joint venture with the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport.

To increase the visibility of UNESCO activities the National Commission created a Facebook account and posted information on activities. Preparations are underway for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2014 with an afterschool activity organization.

To celebrate International Mother Language Day, held annually on 21 February, the National Commission published a book in Papiamentu, the most widely spoken language on the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao. Particular attention was paid to the use of lyrics in Papiamentu songs. The book was launched at the University of Curaçao on Mother Language Day.

In 2013, the Man and the Biosphere Committee made a public presentation on the proposed Middle Curaçao Biosphere Reserve. The Committee continued its work on the nomination throughout the year.

The National Commission worked in close collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Kingston, UNESCO Headquarters and other National Commissions, as well as with civil society. Working groups were established to help carry out the UNESCO mandate in the various fields of the UNESCO programme.

Four projects under the Participation Programme were implemented in 2013. These focused on training courses for teachers on climate change; a seminar on free software for education best practices; the publication of poems by youngsters in Papiamentu; and the provision of equipment to the Marine Centre to allow schoolchildren to attend presentations and screenings on underwater nature research.



Caribbean Media Summit: Workshop on Reporting Disaster.
© Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

2013 marked the 20th anniversary of World Press Freedom Day (WPF). UNESCO in collaboration with the Curaçao National Commission, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, the Association of Caribbean Media Workers, the Caribbean Broadcasting Union, the Caribbean Media and Communication Institute and the Curaçao Media Organization celebrated WPF and organized the Caribbean Media Summit, held in Curacao (3–5 May).

This year's theme was 'Safe to speak: securing freedom of expression in all media'. Consequently, the Caribbean WPF revolved around topics including the safety of journalists and the decriminalization of defamation laws. The Executive Director of the International Press Institute gave the keynote speech: 'Safety of journalists and criminal defamation'.

The WPF was followed by the Caribbean Media Summit, a two-day media and communication conference. This included three capacity-building workshops targeting journalists on issues relating to reporting on elections, disasters, science and sustainable development.

The WPF events in Curacao increased the visibility of UNESCO in the country and enhanced collaboration with local and international organizations active in the media. Thirty-five journalists locally and from the Caribbean Cluster participated in the activities.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Dominican National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr José Antonio Rodríguez, Minister of Culture

Secretary-General: Ms Nikauly Vargas

Website: www.cndu.gob.do

Update of activities in 2013

The Dominican National Commission for UNESCO began the year by launching a restructuration process. The aim was to better publicize the actions carried out by the National Commission subcommittees and strengthen the work done in their respective sectors. The process also updated membership, renewed statutes, and boosted and optimized programme activities.

As part of this process, the Memory of the World Committee for the Dominican Republic was reactivated and the expertise of its members was strengthened. Institutions were encouraged to submit proposals to the International Memory of the World List.

A training workshop on implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was held in Santo Domingo (11–15 March).

Sponsored by the Intangible Heritage Fund, the UNESCO Havana Office and the Ministry of Culture of the Dominican Republic, the workshop promoted the strengthening of national capacities for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in Aruba, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. More than twenty-five specialists from the Dominican Republic attended the workshop.

A number of projects were approved under the UNESCO Participation Programme. These covered cultural heritage management and new technologies for the education, protection and promotion of cultural resources; the contribution of ICTs to eradicating violence against women; and the use of multimedia educational tools for remedial learning and orientation of at-risk children.

The National Commission and UNESCO Havana jointly organized a national training workshop for ASPnet teachers in Santo Domingo (8–12 April). The workshop covered 'Risk management for natural disasters', 'School newsletters', and a 'Culture of peace and conflict transformation'. Teachers from twenty-five partner schools participated.

The National Commissions of the Dominican Republic and Mexico jointly organized the 8th Educational Exchange between ASPnet schools (April – May 2013). The exchange aimed to enhance learning about intangible and natural cultural heritage among countries, and promote cooperation, understanding and solidarity for international peace. Nineteen students, two teachers, three technicians and a representative of the National Commission of each country participated.



© Dominican National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the National Commission organized a workshop entitled 'Adapt to climate change and teach for sustainable development' (26–27 September), funded under the Participation Programme with support from the Ministry of Culture. The objective of the workshop was to empower twelve ASPnet schools to study issues related to sustainable development. The workshop provided pedagogical tools for the development of classroom activities focusing on climate change, and reinforced the UNESCO Sandwatch project dedicated to monitoring beach environments. Technical support was provided by the National Aquarium, the National Council for Climate Change, and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.

GUATEMALA

Guatemalan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Ms Cynthia Del Águila, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Sara Peralta de Rodríguez

Website: www.mineduc.gov.gt

Update of activities in 2013

During 2013 the Guatemalan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, achieved a number of important goals in coordination with the Field Office of San José.

In the social and human sciences, the National Commission participated in the establishment of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme for Guatemala. The members of the MOST Committee include representatives of the Secretariat of Planning and Programming of the Presidency of the Republic, the Ministry of Culture and Sports, the National Youth Council, the Central American Institute for Fiscal Studies, the Indigenous Development Fund for Guatemala, the National Network of Mayan Youth Organizations and the Economic Research Institute, Institute of National Problems and School of History, all of which belong to the San Carlos University of Guatemala. The Committee met each month and in 2013 elected its board of directors and planned activities for the following year.

The National Commission also provided support for the implementation of four UNESCO Participation Programme projects and one Emergency Assistance project. The four Participation Programmes focused on: inclusive education, reading skills for elementary level teachers, forms of cultural expression of the Garifunas and Mayas, and the creation of a television programme on the theme of inclusion. The Emergency Assistance project was a response to the recent earthquake in Guatemala (November 2012), which affected predominantly the territory around San Marcos (see below).

The National Commission also participated in the pilot project 'Teaching respect for all', which promotes tolerance. The project was implemented in Antigua Guatemala in the department of Sacatepéquez (28–29 October) and monitored the effectiveness and impact of specific 'Teaching respect for all' documentation distributed among schools. More than 100 social studies teachers and officials of the Ministry of Education took part in this activity.

For 2014, the most important challenge for the National Commission is to improve communication with relevant government ministries working on areas related to key UNESCO themes.



Workshops organized with the teachers of San Marcos in response to the 2012 earthquake in Guatemala.

© Guatemalan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

A success story

One of the main activities undertaken by the Guatemalan National Commission during 2013 was an Emergency Assistance project, implemented in response to the 2012 earthquake. The objectives of this project were to strengthen the capacity of teachers in San Marcos to cope with victims of post-traumatic stress, and to provide computer equipment to the San Marcos Ministry of Education Field Office.

To achieve these objectives the project trained seventy persons, including teachers and officers of the San Marcos Ministry of Education Field Office, to further train teachers of 222 educational establishments, identified by the National Coordinator for Disaster Reduction as those most affected by the earthquake.

The project encompassed 37,730 students and 1,260 teachers at kindergarten, elementary, middle school and high-school level. Special educational materials were distributed, including a Teacher's Guide and accompanying story book, and a pack containing items needed to carry out the activities in the Teacher's Guide.

HONDURAS

Honduras Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Mr Marlon Oniel Escoto, Minister of Education

Permanent Secretary: Ms Hilda Muñoz Tábora

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Honduras Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO participated in various events throughout the country related to UNESCO's main areas of work.

The National Commission managed, fundraised and executed four projects, framed in UNESCO's areas of competence, for the development of the country.

In education the Commission expanded the number of UNESCO Associated Schools to thirty-five, certifying five new schools in the departments of Gracias a Dios, Islas de la Bahía, Ocotepeque, Francisco Morazán and Copan. The Commission also implemented training for local authorities, teachers and parents on the theme of a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence, at the pre-basic and basic level, in six departments located in different regions of the country (see below).



Pre Básica, La Mosquitia.

© Wendy Judith Vásquez, Honduras Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

The Commission participated in the Regional Meeting on Education for Sustainable Development, held in San Jose, and at the Workshop on Education Statistics, held in Guatemala City. It also participated in the management and establishment of activities related to the UNESCO National Memory of the World programme.

The Commission provided ongoing support to the Permanent Delegation of Honduras to UNESCO and maintained relationships with the regional offices of UNESCO through frequent video conferences.

The Commission trained officials from different ministries, foundations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to prepare and present projects for the benefit of the country. It also worked to establish synergies between the National Commission, Secretaries of State and NGOs.

The Commission established contacts and relations with other Latin American countries and accompanied missions from UNESCO offices and the Permanent Delegation of Honduras to UNESCO throughout Latin America.

The Commission worked to enhance the visibility of UNESCO and its actions in different fields in Honduras, disseminating information on important activities carried out by the National Commission via the press, radio, television and social networks

Finally, in 2013 the National Commission celebrated the 65th Anniversary of the Honduran Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO.

A success story

The Honduran Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO developed the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence project to help promote harmony, equality and non-violence in schools. The project operates on common values of dialogue, tolerance, respect, understanding and solidarity.

The project was developed in the departments of Francisco Morazán, Ocotepeque, Copán Valley, Gracias a Dios and Islas de la Bahía in different pre-basic schools together serving a population of 17,392 children, 884 teachers and 12,482 parents.

Funded under the Participation Programme 2012–2013, the project trains teachers, students and parents in violence prevention. The objective is to promote coexistence in schools as a tool to transforming relationships among pupils, parents, teachers and the community. The aim is to improve the present and future climate of schools, and thereby facilitate and improve the work of educators.

With further support from the Participation Programme of UNESCO this project could be expanded to basic-level schools across the country, establishing a multiplier effect in Francisco Morazán and the Department of Copan, and up to eighty communities across the nation. Using this project as a model, it is possible to set in motion a dynamic developmental process to help improve relationships in the classroom and society.

JAMAICA

Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Lisa R. Hanna, Minister of Culture

Secretary-General: Mr Everton Hannam

Website: www.jncunesco.gov.jm

Update of activities in 2013

The Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO promotes the free flow of ideas and advances mutual understanding of all people through collaborations with UNESCO Member States. It advises the Government of Jamaica on issues relevant to UNESCO's objectives, thus ensuring that government ministries work towards the advancing of education, science, culture, and communication and information. The National Commission also publicizes UNESCO's fellowships and study grants.

The National Commission maintains, increases and disseminates knowledge. It works to achieve this through the participation of elected members who serve on the various bodies of UNESCO, such as the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport and the International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The National Commission also celebrates UNESCO international days through the organization of activities, events and exhibitions.

The Commission implements the activities of the UNESCO Participation Programme, such as the project 'Increase the visibility of UNESCO among youth'. In 2013, the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO also participated in the 8th Youth Forum.

The National Commission achieves many of the above-mentioned objectives through close collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Kingston. The National Commission also collaborates closely with other ministries, agencies and departments of government and non-governmental organizations.

The National Commission for UNESCO continues to operate in an autonomous environment in close collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Culture under whose responsibility UNESCO falls.



A success story

In November 2013, Jamaica was elected for the first time as a member of the World Heritage Committee. The National Commission provided guidance and support in the lead up to this election in close collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Kingston. It also provided useful help to the Jamaica delegate in liaison with other delegations and parties concerned.

The National Commission also oversaw the production of necessary documentation and resources in relation to heritage conservation work in Jamaica.

World Literacy Day 2013 – St Thomas, Jamaica.

© Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO

MEXICO

Mexican National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Mr Emilio Chuayffet Chemor, Secretary of Public Education

Secretary-General: Ms María Del Socorro Rovirosa Priego

Website: <http://www.sep.gob.mx>

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, Mexico hosted the 3rd extended meeting of the Board of the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean (29–30 January). The meeting reviewed the region's progress towards the Education for All goals and examined proposals for the post-2015 international education agenda.

The Director-General of UNESCO, Mrs Irina Bokova, paid a visit to Mexico in 2013 at the invitation of the Mexican Government (13–17 March). She met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Public Education and the Rector of the National Autonomous University of Mexico among others. At the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Director-General delivered an address on 'Priority education – quality education for all as an engine for economic and social development'. At the National College, she met with the National Committee for the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme, established on 16 January, to discuss linkages between social science and public policy concerning matters of security and justice and migration and bioethics, as well as the post-2015 development agenda.

The 6th annual awards ceremony for the UNESCO-L'Oreal/Mexican Academy of Sciences Fellowships for young women scientists was held in the National Museum of Anthropology (8 April).

The Annual Meeting of UNESCO Chairs was held in Mexico City (22–23 August) in the presence of the Resident Coordinator for the United Nations system in Mexico and in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Mexico. Twenty-one Chairs and representatives of three of the five projects formally submitted to the Organization attended the meeting. The status of the Chairs was discussed in five panel sessions and the importance of joint action for visibility, institutionalization, communication and inter-institutional relations was highlighted in plenary.

The Mexican Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO introduced the MOST National Committee at the 9th Forum of Ministers of Social Development for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Buenos Aires (17 September) within the framework of the MOST Regional Forum.

The Mexican National Commission is also in the process of implementing four projects funded under the UNESCO Participation Programme. These focus on gender equality, a culture of peace, world heritage and youth.

The national meeting of UNESCO ASPnet Coordinators in Mexico took place at the headquarters of the Regional Centre for Adult Education and Functional Literacy for Latin America (CREFAL) in Pátzcuaro, Michoacán (5–8 November). Topics discussed included the ASPnet Regional Plan of Action for Mexico and Central America 2014–2015, and seminars were held on gender equality in schools and on monitoring the activities of the first generation of heritage guardians.



A success story

Among the activities undertaken by the Mexican National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, the international volunteer programme *Kulturweit* – a collaboration with the German Commission for UNESCO – is of particular note. Young people aged 18–26 volunteer for a period of six or twelve months. The programme fosters intercultural competency and international cooperation. Since 2011, seven German women have volunteered in support of National Commission activities.

Participants of the international volunteer programme implemented in cooperation with the German Commission for UNESCO.

© Mexican National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

PERU

Peruvian National Commission of Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Mr Jaime Saavedra Chanduvi

Secretary-General: Mr Henry Pablo Armas Alvarado

Website: www.comiunesco.org.pe

Update of activities in 2013

The Peruvian National Commission of Cooperation with UNESCO operates within the Ministry of Education. In consequence, the Commission's efforts focus mainly on the fields of education and culture. During 2013, the Commission worked with other institutions and government bodies to implement agreements in support of UNESCO, and made progress in the fulfillment of various commitments.

In May, the National Commission, in coordination with the UNESCO Office in Lima and with the active participation of the Peruvian Press Council, organized the forum, 'Freedom of the press, ethics and self-regulation' on the occasion of the 20th World Press Freedom Day. The forum debated issues surrounding self-regulation and defence of the freedom of the press in Peru.

The Regional School of Management of Social Transformations (MOST) organized a seminar and workshop entitled 'Inclusion, gender and sustainable development' (19–23 August). The Executive Committee of the Peruvian Government along with the UNESCO Regional Office in Uruguay, the Latin American Centre for Human Economy, the Latin American Social

Sciences Council and the Consortium for Economic and Social Research participated as part of the organizing committee.

Lastly, the 14th Meeting of the Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Memory of the World programme took place in Lima (23–25 October). The three-day meeting convened international experts in archiving, protection, promotion and safeguarding of documentary and bibliographic heritage, and comprised two parallel events: a conference on national document preservation policies and a forum on documentary and bibliographic heritage preservation. Both events were organized by the Peruvian Memory of the World Committee, a specialized division of the Peruvian National Commission of Cooperation with UNESCO.

At the conclusion of the meeting two examples of documentary heritage were inscribed on the Memory of the World Register. The first was the 'Travelling registry of the Conquistadors' (or 'Becerro Book') and the second was 'Peruvian and South American first editions', a collection of thirty-nine books printed between 1584 and 1619 that give a firsthand account of encounters between the Spanish Conquistadors and Inca civilization. Certificates for both were presented by the Director of the Regional Bureau of Education of UNESCO for Latin America and the Caribbean.



AULA DE CLASES DE ESTUDIANTES DE PRIMARIA

© MinED Peru

A success story

In 2013, the Peruvian National Commission of Cooperation with UNESCO collaborated with several Peruvian ministries and other key partners to organize the 5th UNESCO-MOST Regional School for Latin America and the Caribbean. The three-day seminar and workshop, held in Lima, included the participation of government officials and an outstanding selection of international lecturers and professors from Latin American countries. The meeting focused on the training of professionals in governmental positions related to public policy design, implementation and evaluation, and emphasized the themes of social inclusion, gender equality and sustainable development.

Participants were trained and sensitized on the need for joint efforts between the government and academia to improve public policies in these key areas. Participants also worked to implement a multidisciplinary project with the National Commission acting as overall coordinator.

The event also provided an essential forum for discussions and decision-making on issues relating to admission criteria and educational programmes. The decisions taken during the meeting took into account the experiences of previous Regional Schools while incorporating the main priorities of the ministries and the Peruvian state.

SAINT LUCIA

Saint Lucia National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Arsene Vigil James

Secretary-General: Ms Marcia Symphorien

Website: <http://saintlucia.comnat.unesco.org>

Update of activities in 2013

At the beginning of 2013 the Saint Lucia National Commission for UNESCO nominated new members to its thematic sub-commissions and organized an orientation and training workshop on the role and functions of the Commission. This capacity-building exercise was intended to increase participation by Saint Lucia in the many activities of UNESCO.

In July, the Commission, in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Kingston and the government, hosted a media and information literacy meeting and workshop. The workshop aimed to empower people by fostering equitable access to information and knowledge, and promoting free, independent and pluralistic media and information systems. The meeting considered interventions to promote the adoption and use of free and open source software, open standards and open data.

In September, Saint Lucia joined the international community in the annual celebration of the International Day of Peace under the theme 'Education for peace'.

In October, the youth ambassador of Saint Lucia attended the 8th Youth Forum of the 37th General Conference at UNESCO Headquarters. She participated in a Startup Weekend Programme prior to the Youth Forum, which allowed international participants to familiarize themselves with American approaches to entrepreneurship and to meet with experts in their areas of professional interest. The ambassador and her group were awarded top prize for their project submitted during the programme.

Saint Lucia was represented at various stages of the 37th session of the UNESCO General Conference by a delegation comprising ministers, the Permanent Delegation and the Secretary-General of the National Commission.

The National Commission implemented an exciting programme of activities under the Youth PATH project – launched in 2012 in collaboration with the Saint Lucia National Youth Council (NYC). These including training programmes in the areas of tourism and hospitality, drug and sexual abuse, anger management and violence reduction, local craft production, entrepreneurship, small business management, the art of dance and culinary art.

The National Commission was actively involved in the successful implementation of projects funded through the UNESCO Participation Programme 2012–2013. The five projects selected focused on skills for social and academic success, strengthening the capacity of the Saint Lucia NYC, stimulating innovative learning for science and technology, strengthening the capacity of the National Commission, and fostering artistic skills and creative development in students through art and design education.



ASPnet 60th anniversary Exhibition.

© Saint Lucia National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, UNESCO commemorated the 60th anniversary of ASPnet. As part of a national programme of activities celebrating this milestone, the Saint Lucia National Commission for UNESCO, in collaboration with the government, undertook a number of activities.

The ASPnet Poster Competition provided students with an opportunity to share with Saint Lucia their views on the values of ASPnet, while practising their visual arts skills. Overall, the competition recognized and rewarded excellence in student research and attention to instruction and detail.

During the ASPnet 60th Anniversary Week (25–29 November) schools implemented a programme of activities, including a special Commemorative Assembly to celebrate the occasion.

The ASPnet 60th Anniversary Exhibition charted the progress of the local ASPnet movement over sixty years and recognized the formidable contribution of the late Ms Cynthia Joseph, ASPnet National Coordinator for the period 2003–12.

Finally, Saint Lucia was represented at the International Forum for the 60th Anniversary of ASPnet (7–9 September), held in the Republic of Korea under the theme 'UNESCO ASPnet for global citizenship: peace education and education for sustainable development'.

SINT MAARTEN

Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mrs Patricia D. Lourens-Philip, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs

Secretary-General: Ms Marcellia Henry

Update of activities in 2013

In 2013, the Government of Sint Maarten approved the legal framework to establish the Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO. A Secretary-General was appointed and the Secretariat became operational.

During its first year the Sint Maarten National Commission collaborated with various governmental departments and civil society organizations, including the Department of Youth Affairs, the Student Support Services Division and the Windward Island Teachers Union in organizing a series of successful conferences. Among these were the Youth Round Table (26–27 September); the World Teacher's Day Conferences for elementary and secondary teachers (2–3 October); and the Special Needs Education Conference (1 November).

A number of activities were organized to commemorate UN and UNESCO international days. In one case, children from the nearby islands of Anguilla, Saba, St. Eustatius and the French side of Sint Maarten were invited to participate in two

weeks of events held to commemorate the International Day of the Rights of the Child.

Other activities included the establishment of a Man and the Biosphere committee. A potential site has been selected and the committee is in the process of completing the nomination form. The Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO was also involved in reviving the process of accession to the Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, which will be finalized in 2014.

The Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO ensured that a number of personnel within various ministries of government benefitted from UNESCO training courses and conferences on capacity-building, organized by the UNESCO Office in Kingston, the UNESCO Secretariat or Regional Offices. In addition, the National Commission ensured that a delegation from Sint Maarten participated in the 8th UNESCO Youth Forum and the 37th Session of the General Conference.

Finally, to facilitate the process of establishing a UNESCO Documentation Centre on Sint Maarten, the National Commission made contact with various Regional Offices and sectors at UNESCO Headquarters to obtain printed publications and other forms of media, which will be made available to the public of Sint Maarten upon the inauguration of the documentation centre.



Students listening to group presentations at the Youth Round Table Conference.

© Alston Lourens, Ministry of Education

A success story

In 2013, the Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO assisted with the planning, organization, execution and hosting of the Youth Round Table Conference.

The activity, spearheaded by the Department of Youth Affairs, allowed approximately 250 young people to review programmes deriving from the Sint Maarten Integrated Youth Policy 2006, and to discuss possible new initiatives dedicated to achieving the indicators outlined in the policy.

The conference played a crucial role in raising awareness about the mandate of UNESCO, especially in relation to Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The conference focused in particular on EFA Goal 3: 'Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people ... are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes'; EFA Goal 6: 'Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all'; and MDG Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; MDG Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women; and MDG Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

Numerous topics were discussed including post-compulsory education and training, employment and the labour market, values and religion, criminal justice, nation-building, the arts and sports, and health, welfare and family.

SURINAME

Suriname National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Michael A.S. Adhin, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Anuradha Kamtasing

Website: www.gov.sr/sr/ministerie-van-onderwijs-en-volksontwikkeling/samenwerking.aspx

Update of activities in 2013

The year 2013 was a transitional period for the Suriname National Commission for UNESCO. At present, the National Commission does not have a budget or members. In spite of these challenging circumstances, however, the Commission convened the National Consultation meeting on the UNESCO Conventions on Culture, held in Paramaribo (8–9 October).

This two-day meeting was organized in collaboration with the Directorate of Culture to bring together stakeholders from government, non-governmental organizations and academia to present and discuss the various UNESCO Conventions. The meeting was facilitated by the Secretary-General of the National Commission to provide a forum for participants to understand the nature of the different UNESCO Conventions and the various ways in which Suriname can benefit from them. The meeting also discussed the process of ratification (more below).



National Consultation meeting on the UNESCO Conventions on Culture.

© Suriname National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The National Consultation meeting on the UNESCO Culture Conventions Suriname was a welcome opportunity for the National Commission to raise awareness of UNESCO's Conventions on Culture.

At the start of the meeting the Permanent Secretary of Culture expressed his appreciation for UNESCO's assistance and requested the input of participants during the next two days. The Programme Specialist for Culture from the UNESCO Office in Kingston gave interactive presentations on the various Culture Conventions yet to be ratified.

Suriname has already ratified the 1972 World Heritage Convention and has two cultural heritage sites inscribed on the List. Therefore, the meeting also served to bring these cultural properties into focus. The two site managers of Suriname sites on the World Heritage List gave presentations on the status of the 'Inner City of Paramaribo' and the 'Central Suriname Nature Reserve'.

The closing remarks were made by the Vice-Chairman of the National Commission. The two-day meeting concluded with the formulation of an action plan in the form of a one-page recommendation for the Minister, which states that the stakeholders agree on the importance of ratifying the Conventions, without losing sight of the required capacity-building.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Tim Gopeesingh, Minister of Education

Chairperson: Ms Krishendaye Rampersad

Secretary-General: Ms Susan Shurland

Website: www.unesco.org.tt

Update of activities in 2013

Trinidad and Tobago became a Member State of UNESCO on 2 November 1962, shortly after the country gained its independence. To mark the 50th anniversary of the presence of UNESCO in Trinidad and Tobago, the National Commission for UNESCO organized a number of commemorative activities, produced displays and publications highlighting its work, and hosted a series of local and regional meetings during the year 2013.

Major activities included Caribbean regional meetings on educational planning and management (January), which saw education planners reviewing various strategic plans and incorporating a regional approach. The Commission also hosted meetings on the Memory of the World (MOW) programme (September), which raised awareness of the programme and increased nomination submissions to the regional MOW Register, especially among Caribbean nations. At the national level, the Commission conducted stakeholder consultations and training on UNESCO's Cultural

Heritage Conventions, in particular, training in community-based inventorying. As a result, the Ministry of the Arts and Multiculturalism implemented inventorying exercises in several areas, including in indigenous communities. In addition, a bioethics stakeholder consultation, facilitated by UNESCO Montevideo in February, led to the drafting of a note to Cabinet for the establishment of a National Bioethics Committee.

A number of UNESCO Participation Programme projects were launched, most notably 'Leading for literacy and numeracy now!' and 'Reflections on 50 years of independence and membership in UNESCO'. The former proved highly successful during the first four months of its implementation (see below), and the latter resulted in a forthcoming anniversary publication on milestones and achievements.

The Secretariat of the National Commission acquired a full complement of staff and hired programme development officers in the areas of education and communication and information. The year was also marked by the launch of the National Commission's website and the hosting of the Annual Youth Symposium on the Transatlantic Slave Trade (23 August), held on the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition. The symposium targeted ASPnet students and focused on the training and development of teachers. ASPnet activities in Trinidad and Tobago achieved significant recognition as a result of a presentation given by the ASPnet National Coordinator at the 60th Anniversary Conference in Korea (September).

In November, Trinidad and Tobago gained membership of UNESCO's Executive Board. This was the result of significant preparation by the National Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the support of the Caribbean Community and Common Market, and Member States in other regions.



First year infant class at Crystal Stream Government School Diego Martin, Trinidad.

© Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2013, the Leading for literacy now! pilot project provided school leadership training for forty principals, eighty teachers and seven school supervisors (19–25 August). The project was a collaboration with the Ministry of Education with seed funding provided by UNESCO Headquarters.

The project aims to enhance the teaching of reading skills, and is facilitated by the UK-based National College for School Leadership, the global provider of leadership training for principals. Additionally, the Army Learning Centre of the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment provided training for principals in team-building exercises.

Both principals and teachers together with the five project monitors participated in an online learning community, offering opportunities for sharing, collaboration and capacity-building. The monitors regularly visit all forty schools and provide feedback. The National Library Information Systems Authority also collaborated in this project, demonstrating new and innovative ways of teaching and leading for literacy enhancement, including distribution of library cards to students and parents, and the promotion of a model classroom. Corporate support was provided by Republic Bank Limited for the Parenting for Literacy component of the project.

The project aims to teach 6,000 primary school students to become competent readers. It will be repeated over a five-year period at other schools.

URUGUAY

National Commission of Uruguay for UNESCO

President: Mr Oscar Gómez da Trindade, Minister of Education and Culture

Secretary-General: Mrs Andrea Vignolo

Website: www.comisionunesco.mec.gub.uy

Update of activities in 2013

The National Commission of Uruguay for UNESCO is composed of representatives of various ministries, public institutions and civil society. It meets regularly with an agenda that addresses both governmental and UNESCO issues of concern. Multi-sectoral integration of the Commission ensures an overview of the issues.

The National Commission maintains a fluid and ongoing relationship with the Permanent Delegation of Uruguay to UNESCO and the UNESCO Office Montevideo. Its work with civil society occurs through two main instruments: the UNESCO Participation Programme and ASPnet.

Cultural heritage cuts across all activities and projects of the National Commission. The Commission provides advice to local governments and cooperates with them in the process of preparing applications to the World Heritage List and in the management of heritage sites that are already listed. The Commission also collaborates with the National Heritage Commission to coordinate the preparation of inventories, safeguarding plans and management activities for intangible cultural heritage. The Commission disseminates materials and

videos and undertakes activities in various regions of the country.

A key project under the 2012–2013 Participation Programme was 'The Blue Planet'. This experience represented a clear example of cooperation among different agencies, including the Regional Office in Montevideo and public educational institutions.

The National Commission of Uruguay helped to create the country's first Geopark: 'Caves of the Palace'. It also supported the establishment of a UNESCO Category II Centre for groundwater management in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Finally, the Commission arranged for 800 ASPnet students from rural and urban schools to travel to Montevideo to see the plays 'Hansel and Gretel' and 'Peter and the Wolf' performed at the Adela Reta, one of the country's best theatres.



Children and young people of the ASPnet during a plenary session at the National Parliament.

© Eduardo López, National Commission of Uruguay for UNESCO

A success story

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of ASPnet, the National Commission of Uruguay proposed the organization of a National Meeting for students of ASPnet schools. The meeting would resemble the format of the General Assembly of UNESCO: each school would represent a UNESCO Member State and discuss the subject 'Education for peace, a culture of peace'.

On 11 October, children and young people participated in workshops by region. They offered their points of views and proposed measures to improve the different regions of 'their country'. They then approved a draft document in a plenary session.

On 12 October, they debated different aspects of the draft in the National Parliament, sent amendments to the Chair and finally voted the document.

The teachers also participated in workshops and the overall experience proved valuable for both young students and adults.

The commitment of the children and young people was evident as they worked to represent the different countries in a responsible and serious way, and to propose approaches for peaceful coexistence.



Director-General's consultation with Member States and National Commissions for UNESCO of the Africa region on the preparation of the Medium-Term Strategy (Abidjan, 6-8 June 2012).





The Director-General's consultation with Member States and National Commissions for UNESCO of the Asia and Pacific region on the preparation of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (Thanh Hoa, 16-18 June 2012).





Director-General's consultation with Member States and National Commissions for UNESCO of the Arab region on the preparation of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (Muscat, 29 September – 1 October 2012)



The Director-General's Consultation with Member States and National Commissions for UNESCO of the Europe and North America Region on the Preparation of the Medium-Term Strategy (Bratislava, 9-12 September 2012).



The Director-General's consultation with Member States and National Commissions for UNESCO of the Latin America and Caribbean region on the preparation of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (Montevideo, 14-16 September 2012).



Conference on Euro-Arab Dialogue:
Our Commonly Shared Values
(Algarve, 25-26 November 2013)



International Conference of National Commissions for UNESCO: 'Euro-Arab Dialogue: Contribution to a New Humanism' (Vienna, 31 May – 1 June 2012).





Sub-regional Seminar for Pacific National Commissions (Honiara, 14-18 May 2013).



Sub-regional Seminar for Latin American National Commissions (Quito, 3-5 September 2013).



Sub-regional Seminar for Caribbean National Commissions (Kingston, 21-23 May 2013).



Sub-regional Seminar for Southern African National Commissions (Gaborone, 24-26 July 2013).



Sub-regional Seminar for French-speaking African National Commissions (Dakar, 11–13 September 2013).



Regional Forum of Arab National Commissions (Rabat, 12-13 June 2013).



Regional Training Workshop for Officials of Asian National Commissions (Dhaka, 30 March – 2 April 2013).





Second meeting of the open-ended Tripartite Working Group for the follow-up to the review on the cooperation of UNESCO's Secretariat with National Commissions (UNESCO Headquarters, 20–21 February 2013).

Annex

**ACTION PLAN
FOR ENHANCING THE COOPERATION OF UNESCO'S
SECRETARIAT WITH NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO¹**

PREAMBLE

Guided by the desire to further enhance the cooperation between Member States, their National Commissions and the Secretariat,

Recognizing that the UNESCO Constitution (Article VII) sets the foundation and legal framework for the establishment of National Commissions,

Bearing in mind that the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO reaffirms that it is for each Member State to define the range of responsibilities and the nature of the function of its National Commission.

Considering the need to promote exchanges and networking among National Commissions in the context of their diversity in organization and status by sharing information and best practices in a transparent and cooperative manner,

Emphasizing the responsibility of the Secretariat, including all programme sectors and field offices, to work with Member States and their National Commissions

The open-ended tripartite working group composed of representatives of the Permanent Delegations, National Commissions and UNESCO Secretariat adopts the following findings and recommendations:

I. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND STRUCTURAL ISSUES

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 1**

The UNESCO Constitution (Article VII) and the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO set the foundations and legal framework for the establishment and functioning of National Commissions. They specify basic roles and responsibilities of the UNESCO Secretariat, Member State Governments and National Commissions in this regard. Certain additional responsibilities have been given to National Commissions (for example, in the fields of decentralization, public information, partnerships with civil society, and use of UNESCO's name and logo) by subsequent resolutions and decisions of the General Conference and the Executive Board (Ref. Resolutions 27 C/13.12, 28 C/13.5, 29 C/60, 30 C/83, 34 C/86 and 36 C/104, 174 EX/ Decision 34).

As regards the responsibilities of the National Commissions, the Working Group does not at this stage consider that it is a priority to revise or update either UNESCO's Constitution or the Charter of National Commissions. The guiding principles laid out in these documents – and relevant above-mentioned resolutions and decisions taken subsequently by the General Conference and the Executive Board – should however be drawn to the attention of all Member State governments and National Commissions.

¹ This Action Plan was adopted by the General Conference at its 37 session (37 C/Resolution 97).

It is recommended that, where they have not already done so, Member States adopt legal or administrative instruments specifying the role and the organization of their National Commission within the national context.

Other Member States could review as appropriate their existing provisions to ensure that full account is taken of the relevant legal documents and recent decisions of the Governing Bodies (Ref. Resolutions 27 C/ 13.12, 28 C/13.5, 29 C/60, 30 C/83, 34 C/86, 36 C/104 and 174 EX/ Decision 34) as well as international best practice.

All Member States are invited to provide information to the Secretariat on the legal status (with a copy of the legal text establishing its National Commission where possible) and organization of their National Commission (with a copy of its organizational chart where possible).

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 2**

Each Member State has developed its own way of operating its National Commission, as provided for in UNESCO's Constitution. It is important that each Member State's National Commission should reflect its particular political, legal and administrative context. The Working Group is agreed that, although there are certain features in common to all National Commissions and a measure of standardization can be helpful, no single model can or should be adopted for all National Commissions. Each National Commission's mandate, organizational structure, working modalities and programme priorities, even though guided by the UNESCO Constitution and the Charter of National Commissions, should be decided on its own.

The Working Group recommends that the principle of the diversity of National Commissions continue to be respected.

II. ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBER STATES, INCLUDING PERMANENT DELEGATIONS AND NATIONAL COMMISSIONS

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 3**

Member States have primary responsibility for providing their Commissions with appropriate status and authority as well as the human and financial resources needed to carry out the work of their National Commission in accordance with UNESCO's Constitution and the Charter of National Commissions.

The Working Group recommends that all Member States review the status and structure of their National Commissions and their secretariats to ensure that they have the authority, the capacity and the expertise to work effectively in UNESCO's areas of competence, with their governments, government agencies, as well as intellectual communities, civil society partners, UNESCO Secretariat at Headquarters and field offices and other National Commissions, and fulfil their advisory function.

Member States are requested to ensure that the Secretariat has up-to-date information on the status, organization and resourcing levels of their National Commission.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 4**

The high turnover of appointees to the positions of President/Chair and Secretary-General in a large number of National Commissions creates instability and discontinuity in their National Commission's work. Moreover the mandates of these appointees are in some cases not well defined.

The Working Group recommends that each Member State consider appointing the Secretary-General of its National Commission for a reasonable period of time and that each appointee be issued with a clear and well defined mandate. In view of common practices, the Working Group recommends Member States to consider appropriate measures to ensure continuity.

Member States are requested to ensure that the Secretariat has up-to-date information on their approach to the appointment of President/Chair and Secretary-General of their National Commission.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 5**

With the recent adoption of the Comprehensive Partnership Strategy, UNESCO is increasing its engagement with the government donors, private sector and other funding partners. National Commissions are considered by the Working Group to have the potential to benefit from public and private partnerships. Value is seen in National Commissions engaging more closely and extensively with public and private partners in order to support their own programmes as well as to encourage support and contributions to UNESCO.

The Working Group recommends that National Commissions be encouraged to establish and/or expand the network of partners in their countries and that they may seek sponsorship in accordance with clearly established principles and procedures which are consistent with national legislation and UNESCO's comprehensive partnership strategy.

Member States are invited to report to the Secretariat on actions taken pursuant to this recommendation, and on any lessons learned or experience gained that might be useful to other National Commissions.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 6**

A number of National Commissions have recently started to work more closely with the various UNESCO networks and civil society partners in their respective countries. These networks include UNESCO Chairs, National Committees of Intergovernmental Programmes, networks such as ASPnet, UNESCO Clubs and Associations, category 2 centres and non-governmental organizations. Given the large number and great diversity of these networks, coordination and governance are often needed to better monitor and facilitate their activities. National Commissions are well placed to play such a facilitating, coordinating and monitoring role.

The Working Group recommends that National Commissions and Secretariat consider ways of engaging more closely with the larger UNESCO family, partners and networks, with a view to exchange advice, guidance and, as appropriate, coordination and support. National Commissions have a particular role to play (under the relevant Directives) on the use of UNESCO's name, acronym, logo and internet domain names. Member States are invited to report to the Secretariat on steps taken to create synergies and work more closely with the UNESCO-related bodies in their country.

The Working Group also recommends that National Commissions actively work with civil society and NGOs based in their respective countries, including legally established national branches of those international NGOs which have established official relations with UNESCO in line with the new “Directives concerning UNESCO’s partnership with non-governmental organizations”. They should contribute to the fostering of UNESCO’s partnership with NGOs by identifying and helping new interested non-governmental partners to join the UNESCO-NGO network.

Finally the Working Group calls upon National Commissions to accredit, monitor and assess as appropriate the Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO in their respective countries so as to ensure that activities implemented by Clubs and Centres for UNESCO will be in line with the mission and objectives of UNESCO and the name and logo of UNESCO be properly used by them. The National Commissions may withdraw the accreditation of Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO which are not meeting the required standards, including the “Directives concerning the use of the name, acronym. Logo and internet domain names of UNESCO”.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 7**

Most National Commissions report regularly to their government and partners. Some Commissions communicate also with their counterparts within – and even outside – the region to which they belong. Regular communication and reporting mechanisms such as newsletters contribute to the visibility and public awareness of the activities they undertake, to the profile of UNESCO and to the promotion of effective working partnerships and best practices.

The Working Group recommends that each National Commission report on a regular basis to its government as well as to its members and partners. These activity reports should as a rule be done on an annual basis and on a commonly agreed template.

The Working Group also believes that regular newsletters should be encouraged. All such reports should be shared with other interested National Commissions, Permanent Delegations and the Secretariat, which collects and posts them on UNESCO’s website.

III. STRENGTHENING INTERACTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS AMONG NATIONAL COMMISSIONS

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 8**

Regional and subregional consultations and meetings, as well as informal gatherings of National Commissions during the sessions of the Executive Board and the General Conference, are critical not just for enhancing communication with the Secretariat but for strengthening collaboration among National Commissions and deriving maximum benefit from this global network of like-minded agencies.

The Working Group recommends to maintain biennial regional meetings of the National Commissions. In this regard, the Working Group calls on Member States and other funding partners to co-fund and/or host regional meetings of National Commissions every two years, one of which would include every four years consultations of Member States and their National Commissions on the upcoming programme cycle.

The Working Group recommends that the informal meetings held on the margins of the Governing Bodies meetings be prepared in a manner that will optimize the possibilities for exchanging information and sharing experiences. In particular, the working group recommends that the Secretariat implement structured participatory events with clearly defined outcomes, which will improve both effectiveness and the exchange of best practice. These meetings will be prepared with appropriate advance consultation regarding the needs and wishes of the participants.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 9**

It is clear that a number of National Commissions, particularly those from developing countries or more recently established, would benefit from the opportunity to work more closely with other National Commissions and to receive assistance from them in the form of training, knowledge and experience sharing and occasional secondments or funding grants. This can be done within the same regional grouping, on a North/South or South/South basis or wherever a need on the part of one National Commission can be matched with the ability and readiness of another National Commission to help out. A number of examples have been drawn to the Working Group's attention of where such arrangements have been very successful.

The Working Group recommends that each National Commission which is in a position to assist other less well-equipped National Commissions take steps to make its position known and actively explore avenues for lending a hand in this way. Twinning system, staff exchange programme and cooperative network among National Commissions are most welcome and encouraged.

It is further recommended that National Commissions be invited to report to the Secretariat on their experience with such arrangements from time to time, so that their experience can be used by others.

IV. IMPROVING COOPERATION BETWEEN NATIONAL COMMISSIONS AND THE SECRETARIAT, BOTH AT HEADQUARTERS AND AT FIELD OFFICE LEVEL

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 10**

Although established with different status and structures, assigned different responsibilities and tasks and operating in different ways with distinct audiences and partners, National Commissions and UNESCO field offices have a common mandate to advocate the mission and carry out the work of UNESCO.

They are called upon to work together and to complement each other's effort in promoting UNESCO's activities, partnerships and visibility at country and regional levels.

The respective roles of these two networks are not clearly defined, and in some cases there is considerable confusion and misunderstanding about their respective responsibilities and roles. Inadequate communication and consultation between the two entities is widespread.

The Working Group recommends that the "Guidelines for interface and cooperation between UNESCO field offices and National Commissions for UNESCO" endorsed by the Executive Board in April 2006 (174 EX/34, Annex) be reviewed and updated to take stock of current situation to enhance the

collaboration between UNESCO field offices and National Commissions. It also recommends that Field Offices be reminded of the obligation to work in close cooperation with National Commissions as well as Member States in their region. Similarly, National Commissions should be reminded of the importance of keeping in touch with the field offices and keep them informed and consulted about any programmes of relevance at a regional level.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 11**

Information and knowledge sharing between the Secretariat Headquarters and National Commissions is an important way of enhancing the capacity of National Commissions to engage in various activities of UNESCO. Significant improvements in communication have taken place recently through monthly newsletters, online posting and e-Forum discussions.

Further efforts must be made to enhance two-way communication, using the new ICTs as well as the more traditional methods of communication. Biennial meetings of regional National Commissions remain an important element in this.

The Working Group recommends that the UNESCO Secretariat facilitate the networking of National Commissions by gathering, highlighting and sharing information, knowledge and good practices with National Commissions on a more regular basis. This requires National Commissions to submit, in timely manner and preferably in electronic format, relevant information, newsletters, activity reports and proposals to facilitate the Secretariat's work.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 12**

Member States' Governments, Permanent Delegations and National Commissions are not always kept informed of activities being undertaken by the UNESCO Secretariat (Headquarters and field offices) in their respective countries.

They occasionally learn about them only through the media. Bypassing National Commissions while conducting a project or implementing an activity in their country is neither courteous nor in conformity with the UNESCO Constitution (Article VII) and Charter of National Commissions.

The Working Group recommends that the UNESCO Secretariat ensure that Permanent Delegations and National Commissions be consulted about, informed in advance and involved where appropriate in every activity UNESCO is planning to implement in their countries, including staff missions and meetings with officials and partners; and subsequently be informed of the outcome of these missions and meetings.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 13**

All National Commissions need to constantly build and adapt their capacities and methods of work to effectively and efficiently play their role. Present training modalities and ways of seeking funding are in many cases no longer suited to current needs. There is an urgent need to explore and develop new ways of training by the Secretariat, drawing on the experience of both the Secretariat and National Commissions.

The Working Group recommends that the Secretariat develop training programmes to satisfy the various needs of different National Commissions. While face-to-face training can continue to be organized where needed and when funding sources are available, alternative cost-effective and targeted training modules should be further explored and developed, such as

- **video conferences**
- **online training**
- **study visits or learning stays of members of Commissions at Headquarters or in field offices.**

Initiatives of networking, partnership and cooperation among National Commissions for capacity-building purposes should be supported by the Secretariat.

➤ **Finding and Recommendation 14**

As principal beneficiaries of the Participation Programme, National Commissions rely on Participation Programme grants both to implement projects and to build their capacities and partnerships. The delay in approving requests for such items as equipment, celebration of anniversaries, training workshops and the publication of reports/news bulletins have triggered some concern.

Due to the incomplete presentation of a number of Participation Programme requests and the unsatisfactory quality of financial and evaluation reports on past grants, the whole evaluation and approval process has become problematic. It is understood that the Executive Board may be considering rules of eligibility and criteria for Participation Programme funding on the basis of the External Auditor's report.

The Working Group recommends that National Commissions and the Secretariat, including the Field Offices, work closely together to further improve the Participation Programme process. Special efforts need to be made in preparing the financial and evaluation reports.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIME-LINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned above, Permanent Delegations, National Commissions (both are in liaison with their government) and UNESCO Secretariat have the direct responsibilities to implement the respective recommendations.

Any reports by Member States on the implementation of the recommendations of findings 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9 are expected by 30 June 2014.

The Secretariat should submit a progress report on the implementation of all these recommendations to the Executive Board at its 196th Session (Spring 2015). The review of the "Guidelines for interface and cooperation between UNESCO field offices and National Commissions for UNESCO" (recommendation 9) could also be done on this occasion.

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