



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

**The Assistant Director-General
for External Relations and Public Information**

**To Non-Governmental Organizations,
official partners of UNESCO**

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30 November 2015

Dear Partners,

The major event of the month of November was, of course, the 38th session of the General Conference which ended on 18 November last. You will find below detailed information on the main outcomes of this Conference.

Regarding the participation from non-governmental organizations in official partnership with UNESCO, you may wish to know that there were more than 300 representatives from 103 NGOs who attended the 38th session of the General Conference.

The space dedicated to NGOs was again very popular. Every day, around 40 NGOs participated in meetings on the work of the Conference and on important issues such as the #Unite4Heritage campaign or the Participation Programme. Thirty NGOs ran a stand and had the opportunity to present their activities. This space was an important showcase to help raise awareness of our partnership among the participants in the General Conference it was also a privileged place for exchanges and interaction between NGOs, which were able to understand the work of other NGOs, learn from each other and, in some cases, consider new activities.

With December beginning, we are now turned towards the forthcoming International Conference on Climate Change (COP21), which is being held in Paris, France from 30 November to 11 December, and the numerous side events which we will organize on this occasion.

38th Session of the General Conference

The Organization's role in the fight against violent extremism and in taking forward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was highlighted by the unprecedented number of Heads of State and Government at UNESCO for this 38th Session.

Marking UNESCO's 70th anniversary, the Leaders' Forum held on 16 and 17 November saw a resounding reaffirmation of solidarity with France after the terrorist attacks on 13 November and the importance of UNESCO's mandate. In this regard, the General Conference adopted a Strategy for Reinforcing UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict, to integrate protecting cultural heritage and diversity into humanitarian interventions in conflict and emergency situations.

The core role of education in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* is the focus of the Education 2030 Framework for Action, endorsed during the General Conference by more than 180 States.

Access to knowledge and information was reinforced by the General Conference in a Resolution on Internet universality. The General Conference also issued a Recommendation on the Preservation and Access to Documentary Heritage, including Digital Heritage, and proclaimed 28 September as the International Day for the Universal Access to Information.

Ahead of COP21, the General Conference tasked the Organization to prepare a Declaration on Ethical Principles for Climate Change: Adaptation and Mitigation.

Concern for sustainable development also inspired Member States to create the UNESCO Global Geoparks label, underlining the importance of outstanding geological sites and landscapes.

Ethical principles guided Member States to revise the 1978 International Charter for Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport, so as to reinforce the protection of sport from doping, violence, manipulation and corruption.

Finally, strengthening the Organization's universality, the General Conference welcomed Montserrat as UNESCO's 10th Associate Member.

In terms of our partnership with NGOs, the General Conference had the opportunity to review the quadrennial report of the Director-General on the contribution made to UNESCO's activities by non-governmental organizations (document 38/C 34), which I invite you to read [under this link](#). The General Conference welcomed the new mobilization of NGOs, in particular regarding the impact and quality of international NGO forums organized under the direction of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee in collaboration with the Secretariat and invited Member States to support the organization of such forums in different regions. It also invited the Secretariat to continue its efforts in order to encourage the admission, as official partners, of non-governmental organizations which actively cooperate with the Organization, on both an international and national level, and to promote greater geographic diversity. Finally, it put emphasis on dialogue between Member States and non-governmental partners.

Executive Board of UNESCO

As customary, the Executive Board, in its new composition further to the elections that took place during the General Conference, met on Friday 20 November, and elected its Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and also the composition of its subsidiary bodies. You will find more information [under this link](#).

I am pleased to inform you that H. E. Mr Michael Worbs, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Germany to UNESCO, was elected to the Chair of the Executive Board for a two-year mandate.

You will also find soon the composition of the NGP Committee for the 2016-2017 biennium. Its new Chairperson is H. E. Ms Besiana Kadare, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Albania to UNESCO.

The next session of the Executive Board is expected to be held from 4 to 15 April 2016. However, the Committee on Non-Governmental Partners is expected to

meet in the Autums session of the Executive Board. I will not fail to keep you informed in this regard.

14-16 December 2015 - Ninth ordinary session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France

Composed of 24 State Party members, the Committee meets annually in ordinary session. On this occasion, it will have several items on its Agenda, including the Secretariat's activities during 2014 and 2015 as well as the workplans for the Committee during 2016 and 2017; the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD), with a review of its implementation and fundraising strategy, and approval of new projects; implementation and impact of Articles 16 (Preferential Treatment for Developing Countries) and 21 (International Consultation and Coordination) along with the data base for sharing best practices; the engagement of civil society in the implementation of the Convention; and a preliminary framework for draft Operational Guidelines on Digital Issues. Additionally, the Director-General will launch the first global report to monitor the implementation of the Convention on 16 December.

Civil society organizations wishing to participate in the sessions of the Convention's governing bodies are advised to submit a written request with the required documentation, mentioning the wish to participate in both the sessions of the Conference of Parties and the Intergovernmental Committee. More information can be found under [this link](#).

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18-20 January 2016 - International Conference on Education Policies for 2030: Governance, School Leadership and Monitoring and Evaluation as levers for change, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France

The Conference will compare policies and strategies practiced in different countries to clarify questions and illuminate best practices related to governance, leadership and monitoring, and evaluation systems in education.

Presentations, panels and debates will be informed by three UNESCO reports featuring the main findings and lessons of the comparative analysis of public policies in these domains carried out over the past biennium and due to be launched at the conference.

The 2030 education agenda places a strong emphasis on quality, hand in hand with inclusiveness and equity. The suggested goals will require governments to maximize the use of existing policy levers for change. Over the past two years, UNESCO has been closely monitoring three of such levers; namely, School Leadership, Education Governance, and Monitoring and Evaluation.

Those of you interested in the Conference will find additional information on the [dedicated web page](#).

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UNESCO Publications

- Written by about 60 experts who are each covering the country or region from which they hail, the *UNESCO Science Report: towards 2030* provides

more country-level information than ever before. The trends and developments in science, technology and innovation policy and governance between 2009 and mid-2015 described therein provide essential baseline information on the concerns and priorities of countries that should orient the implementation and drive the assessment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the years to come. Officially launched on 10 November 2015, the report is available in English for download [under this link](#). You can also [order a copy](#).

- Designed on the occasion of 70 years of UNESCO, the book *70 Quotes for Peace* brings together 70 quotes of artists, intellectuals, activists, politicians and statespersons. Each in their own way, they reflect the conviction that to be sustainable, peace must be built on mutual understanding of peoples and intellectual solidarity of humankind. Based on an original idea of Guila Clara Kessous, UNESCO Artist for Peace, this book is available in bilingual edition French / English [under this link](#).
- Compiled by UNESCO's EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR), the publication *Gender and EFA 2000–2015: Achievements and Challenges* provides detailed evidence of how much has been achieved in the past 15 years but also where considerable – some quite intractable – challenges remain. It highlights notable progress in gender parity in primary and secondary education, particularly in South and West Asia, while underscoring the persistent barriers to achieving gender equality in education. It is available in English at the following address: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002348/234809E.pdf?new>

Finally, I am pleased to announce the admission of three organizations, partners of UNESCO, namely:

- [World Confederation of Private Education \(COMEP\)](#), an NGO based in Argentina, admitted to official partnership with UNESCO (consultative status)
- [Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz \(MiSK\) Foundation](#), a foundation based in Saudi Arabia, admitted to official relations with UNESCO under the *Directives concerning UNESCO's relations with foundations and similar institutions*;
- [Education Above All \(EAA\) Foundation](#), a foundation based in Qatar, admitted to official relations with UNESCO under the *Directives concerning UNESCO's relations with foundations and similar institutions*.

By clicking on their names, you will be redirected to their websites for more information. I welcome them and am happy to extend even further our network of partners.

Yours sincerely,



Eric Falt