



National Commissions for UNESCO

Annual Report

2015

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2015



FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the third edition of the Annual Report of National Commissions for UNESCO, which features the contributions of more than 140 National Commissions. This report is a rich testimony to the sustained efforts deployed by National Commissions during the course of 2015, to support the Organization's programmes in education, culture, the natural sciences, the social and human sciences, and communication and information, as unique and valuable advocates of UNESCO's fundamental values all over the world.

As you recall, 2015 constituted an important turning point in the Organization's life. UNESCO celebrated its 70th anniversary, offering all of us an excellent opportunity to look back on the Organization's past achievements, reassert its core and universal mandate, and reflect on ways to tackle current and future challenges. I am especially delighted that this 2015 Annual Report includes a large number of activities undertaken by National Commissions in partnership with NGOs, Clubs and Associations for UNESCO and civil society in general, to commemorate this special anniversary through conferences, cultural events, youth camps and other initiatives. This Annual Report illustrates the depth of their commitment to advancing the ideals and objectives of UNESCO. Allow me to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to all National Commissions actively associated in these celebrations, notably Austria, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Georgia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Namibia, Peru, Slovenia, Thailand, Uganda, Uruguay, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe, among many others.

The year 2015 was also marked by the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly, in September. The seventeen SDGs represent a universal, ambitious and



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sustainable development agenda for 2015–2030. UNESCO has a crucial role to play in implementing this agenda through global education, culture, the sciences, water and ocean sustainability, freedom of speech and good governance. As I mentioned during the 38th session of the General Conference, 'the role of UNESCO is to propose initiatives that bind people together, to strengthen intellectual and moral solidarity among peoples and to reinforce the conviction of humanity as a single family, united in its diversity'.

It goes without saying that such a role cannot be ensured without the dynamic participation and deep involvement of the National Commissions, which have been constituent elements of the Organization since its inception. Indeed, the National Commissions are important bodies for liaison, advice, information and programme implementation, due to their direct links to government and close contacts with academia and civil society networks. In this regard, I would like to commend the efforts made by a number of National Commissions to develop networks at regional and interregional levels, in line with the recommendations of the Action Plan. Let me encourage all National Commissions to further strengthen these interactions and partnerships so that cooperation between UNESCO and the network of National Commissions can together play a vital role in mobilizing the international community towards the attainment of the newly adopted sustainable development goals.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Irina Bokova'.

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 subsequent follow-up action 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, it was only two years ago that the Organization produced for the first time 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, the Secretariat has continued to invite all National Commissions to provide an update of their activities in 2015, including one success story and a photographic illustration. Based on the contributions received between December 2015 and February 2016, from 143 out of 199 National Commissions around the world, the Secretariat has been able to compile the relevant information and produce this third 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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Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'Éducation,
la science et la culture



MISE EN ŒUVRE DES ACTIVITÉS DES PLATEFORMES DE PREVENTION LA CULTURE DE LA PAIX EN MILIEUX SCOLAIRE ET EXTRASCOLAIRE

ATELIER DE FORMATION DES JEUNES AMBASSADEURS

Maroua, du 18 au 21 Décembre



The Rapid Response for Enhancing Resilience and Conflict prevention in Far North and East regions of Cameroon project, funded by Japan and implemented jointly by UNDP and FAO. The project gives UNESCO the mandate to improve conflict prevention and management mechanisms as well as inter-community dialogue between refugees and host communities. This picture shows young ambassadors for peace trained by UNESCO to educate their peers during school and post-school activities.

© Jean-Roland Onana Nkoa, UNESCO Office in Yaoundé

ON DES CONFLITS ET DE PROMOTION
S DANS LA REGION DE L'EXTREME-NORD
SSADEURS DE LA PAIX
e 2015



Africa

**BENIN • BOTSWANA • BURKINA
FASO • BURUNDI • CABO VERDE •
CAMEROON • CENTRAL AFRICAN
REPUBLIC • CHAD • COMOROS
• CONGO • CÔTE D'IVOIRE •
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
• EQUATORIAL GUINEA • GAMBIA •
GHANA • GUINEA • KENYA • LESOTHO
• MADAGASCAR • MALI • MAURITIUS
• NAMIBIA • NIGER • NIGERIA •
RWANDA • SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE
• SENEGAL • SEYCHELLES • SOMALIA •
SOUTH AFRICA • SWAZILAND • TOGO
• UGANDA • UNITED REPUBLIC OF
TANZANIA • ZAMBIA • ZIMBABWE**

BENIN

National Commission of Benin for UNESCO

President: Mrs Eléonore C. Ladékan, Minister of Pre-School and Primary Education

Secretary-General: Mr Marcel N'dah Oya

Update of activities in 2015

The National Commission of Benin for UNESCO carried out a strong programme of activities in 2015 that heightened its visibility at the national level.

Two statutory sessions of the Executive Committee of the National Commission of Benin provided an opportunity to assemble the intellectual community to review the programme and budget of the Organization and discuss challenges related to the functioning of the Commission. These themes were revisited during the General Assembly of the National Commission of Benin (see below), which provided a framework to study and amend the above documents and explore ways to enhance the role of Benin at the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

In 2015, Benin, like other countries, celebrated the International Day of Peace (21 September). The National Commission marked this occasion with a series of activities including competitions, workshops, debates, sketches and a carnival held in the city of Savè. The events cut across political, religious, ethnic, social and even administrative divisions by bringing together different social strata and political and administrative authorities of the city to celebrate under the banner of peace.

With the aim of enabling UNESCO Associated Schools to integrate the post-2015 education agenda, the National Commission of Benin organized tours of school departments throughout Benin to disseminate best practices for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in schools. Pupils and teachers were invited to implement practices that can ensure access to quality education for all and promote lifelong learning possibilities.



The Minister of Pre-School and Primary Education and President of the National Commission, Mrs Eléonore C. Ladékan, surrounded by leading figures of the 2015 General Assembly of the National Commission of Benin.

© Mrs Brigitte Houngbedji, Head of the Administrative Secretariat of the National Commission of Benin for UNESCO

A success story

The General Assembly of the National Commission of Benin brings together members of the intellectual community to discuss issues linked to the promotion of UNESCO's ideals and objectives. However, partner ministries have noted a lack of interest in this statutory meeting over the last few years.

This year saw an increase in participation with numerous figures attending the Ordinary Session of the General Assembly. The interest of these members in the smooth functioning of the National Commission enabled the latter to achieve meaningful objectives. Thanks to the involvement of everyone concerned, Benin has been able to overcome obstacles that were impeding financial requests to UNESCO. As such, the country may now regain its privileged position and restore the National Commission of Benin's standing with the Organization.

BOTSWANA

Botswana National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Rahim Abdool Khan

Secretary-General: Mr Oteng Basimolodi Mokowe

Website: www.moe.gov.bw

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Botswana National Commission for UNESCO celebrated a number of International Weeks and Days, including World Radio Day, World Water Day, World Press Freedom Day, International Jazz Day and so on.

The Botswana National Commission also organized a Youth Forum (23–27 August) for young people across the country. The forum, which took the form of a camp, was held at the Tsodilo Hills Word Heritage Site.

Youth empowerment has the potential to increase economic opportunity, accountability and equality across the country. As the planet strives for a sustainable future, youth in Botswana are expected to drive meaningful change.

The core activities covered at the forum included capacity building on World Heritage and awareness raising about UNESCO and the role of youth within the Organization's mandate. The camp included outdoor activities organized at the Tsodilo Hills to enable the participants to appreciate the heritage site. Activities also imparted key leadership skills to

youth to enable them to promote development in key areas of UNESCO's mandate within their own communities.

The forum was officially opened by Mr Richard Matlhare, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Education and Skills Development. In his speech, he explained the role and goals of the Ministry of Education & Skills Development (MoESD), and the significance of UNESCO and its mandate for the MoESD. He gave examples of existing youth empowerment initiatives in the country and emphasized the importance of the 1st UNESCO Youth Forum an important initiative aimed at youth empowerment through capacity building.

During the forum the facilitators presented an introduction to world heritage, its value and significance. The facilitators explained the global perspective underlying the perpetual protection of heritage resources and the conservation of natural and cultural heritage worldwide. They further emphasized that nature and culture are perceived as equal entities within the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, co-existing in the form of cultural resources, natural sites, animals and so on.

The Secretary-General of the Botswana National Commission for UNESCO highlighted the significance of teamwork and explained that the camp was designed to work as a platform for networking and creating partnerships. He emphasized the importance of UNESCO's work worldwide to uphold peace through a variety of initiatives and quoted the Constitution of UNESCO to explain the concept of peace and how it is understood at the Organization.



A success story

In 2015, the Botswana National Commission assisted by UNESCO organized and coordinated a successful Youth Forum, which prompted dialogue among stakeholders, all of whom provided a wealth of different perspectives and valuable ideas. The Youth Forum was designed to increase both awareness and capacity building with regard to the protection of natural and cultural heritage resources.

A football match was held during the event with balls donated by the Ministry of Youth Sport and Culture. It was attended by the Tsodilo community and schoolchildren from nearby villages.

Youth Forum to promote dialogue among stakeholders.

© Botswana National Commission for UNESCO

BURKINA FASO

Burkina Faso National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Filiga Michel Sawadogo, Minister of Secondary and Higher Education

Secretary-General: Mr Sanmalmé Aristide Dabire

Website: www.conasco.bf

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Burkina Faso National Commission for UNESCO organized several activities across a wide range of domains.

The first activity was a training course for young journalists within the framework of the 2015 elections in Burkina Faso. This activity involved some thirty journalists from television, radio, and print and online media. The training focused on topics ranging from building a culture of peace to citizenship, democracy and good governance. A key outcome of the training course was the UNESCO Network of Young Journalists for Non-violent Communication, created by the participants to help promote freedom of expression, peace, non-violence and freedom of the press.

The second initiative was the launch of the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2015*. The report covered a wide variety of social issues and constituted a summary of existing reports on education.

Burkina Faso received financing for four of its requests submitted to the UNESCO Participation Programme (2014–2015), two of which were proposed by the National Commission for UNESCO. The two successfully funded projects were: a 'National Workshop for Training in Non-violent Communication for Headteachers, Education Advisers and Officers', and a 'National Capacity-building Workshop for the Actors of the Burkina Faso Associated Schools Network'.

The second of these workshops was implemented in 2015 (the first took place in 2014) and helped to strengthen the capacities of education actors through three flagship training courses on promoting the ideals of UNESCO. A teaching guide for primary school teachers was produced to allow teachers to better transmit knowledge relating to a culture of peace, tolerance, respect for human rights and so on. The production of this teaching guide proved very helpful for a large number of teachers.



Sketch on conflict prevention and management performed by the Fraternal Union of Dori's Believers in the north of Burkina Faso .
© Burkina Faso National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The most successful activity of the National Commission in 2015 was without doubt the joint UNCCT-UNESCO project on counter-terrorism. The UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (UNCCT), UNESCO and the Government of Burkina Faso established a partnership to promote a culture of peace, conflict management and prevention, as well as counter-terrorism, in the Sahel (Dori, Djibo) and Central regions (Ouagadougou and the surrounding areas).

Training courses, radio programmes, plays and sketches were used to raise awareness of these themes among more than 70,000 people. In addition, a documentary film was produced to capitalize on the achievements of this project in Burkina Faso.

Within the framework of this activity, six local committees were established in regions concerned with the prevention and management of internal conflict. This initial phase undertook a feasibility assessment with a view to extending the initiative to the other regions. Given the success of the project, the different actors were keen to set up a second phase of the project to extend it to the entire country, and to a limited extent to Mali and Niger.

BURUNDI

Burundi National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Janvière Ndirahisha, Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research

Secretary-General: Mr Salvator Nyabenda

Update of activities in 2015

The Secretariat of the National Commission is modestly sized and its human and financial resources are very limited. Its most important events were linked to the biennial UNESCO Participation Programme.

In 2015, the Secretariat of the National Commission worked in collaboration with UNESCO Headquarters, the UNESCO House for a Culture of Peace in Burundi, partner ministries, civilian society, organizations and mass media to establish programmes, projects and events, and to increase UNESCO's

visibility within the country. The Burundi National Commission implemented projects approved as part of the 2014–2015 Participation Programme. It also took part in conferences, workshops and meetings organized by UNESCO.

As part of its cooperation with UNESCO's National Commissions, the Secretary-General supervised German volunteers sent by the German National Commission. This was unfortunately interrupted in May 2015 due to the prevailing political security situation in Burundi.



Protected application of pesticides in school fields in Bubanza (March - April) as part of the 'Training and awareness workshop for female leaders in organizations: sound management of persistent organic pollutants (POPs)'.

© Burundi National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Secretariat of the National Commission in collaboration with the Christian Association for Integrated Development (FCDI) organized a workshop on 'Training and awareness for female leaders in organizations: sound management of persistent organic pollutants (POPs)' (31 March – 8 April), financed by UNESCO's 2014–2015 Participation Programme.

The purpose of this workshop was to help protect the health of the people and environment against the negative impacts of persistent organic pollutants (POPs). The anticipated results were achieved with 150 participants learning about the different categories of pesticides – including those that are prohibited – as well as protected application methods. The participants established a short-term and long-term plan of action to increase prevention against the harmful effects of pesticides.

CABO VERDE

Cabo Verde National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr António Correia e Silva, Minister for Higher Education, Science and Innovation

Secretary-General: Ms Maria da Glória Rendall Ribeiro Serrano Santos

Update of activities in 2015

Most of the events headed by the Cabo Verde National Commission for UNESCO in 2015 were developed in cooperation with UNESCO and the Portugal and Guinea-Bissau National Commissions. Activities focused in particular on citizenship education, cultural heritage, science, the environment and sustainable development. Collaboration between National Commissions, UNESCO, the government and other bodies led to involvement in several UNESCO initiatives.

In addition to the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, the National Commission participated in number of significant events.

A programme promoting science in schools led to a travelling exhibition on crystallography, the creation of a physics laboratory and a training project for micro-science teachers

coordinated by UNESCO, as well as a fundraiser for the 'House of Science' project, which was co-funded by the UNESCO Participation Programme.

In the field of culture and intangible heritage, the first meeting of the International Scientific Committee (ISC) of the Slave Route Project was held to discuss projects relating to the history of slavery, with a focus on education (see below).

UNESCO ASPnet schools took part in a number of projects, such as training for trainers courses on global citizenship organized with the support of the Portuguese National Commission. Other projects included a national water competition to promote access to drinking water in schools supported by the Water Sciences Division/UNESCO IHP, an education project on water in schools and a project to create vegetable gardens in schools. A number of other citizenship training initiatives were also undertaken.



Open public meeting of the International Scientific Committee for the UNESCO 'Slave Route' project, held at Hôtel Vulcão, Cidade Velha – a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

© Pingo d'Ono

A success story

In 2015, the first International Scientific Council meeting on 'The Slave Route' project took place in Cidade Velha and Praia (26–27 October), accompanied by an International Symposium, exhibitions and a cultural performance. Several ministers, the Head of the History and Memory for Dialogue department, Mr Aly Moussa Lye, eighteen ISC members, academics, and renowned national and international researchers participated in the events. The meeting also established the agenda for the International Decade of People of African Descent (2015–2024), which addresses issues related to the memory of slavery.

CAMEROON

National Commission of Cameroon for UNESCO

President: Mrs Hadidja Alim Youssouf, Minister of Basic Education

Secretary-General: Mr Sally Mairiga

Update of activities in 2015

UNESCO's events are attracting increasing interest in Cameroon, especially following the visit in 2014 of the Director-General, Irina Bokova. In 2015, the National Commission of Cameroon led several events in various areas of expertise.

In the field of education, the National Commission organized the 'National Forum on University Governance and Development' with the Ministry of Higher Education at the University of Yaoundé (11–14 May), which was funded by ISESCO. Along with the Ministries of Secondary Education and Basic Education, it also helped to develop the 2015 *Global Monitoring Report on Education for All* (EFA) in Cameroon, with the support of the UNESCO Regional Office in Central Africa.

In the field of science, the National Commission implemented several projects, including the establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Microscience in Yaoundé, as a Category II Centre under the auspices of UNESCO. The Commission also revitalized the National Committees for the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme, the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme, the International Hydrological

Programme (IHP) and the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC).

In the field of culture, the National Commission led a number of events with the technical and financial support of the UNESCO Regional Office in Central Africa. These included Cameroon's 1st School Festival for primary and secondary schools in Yaoundé (April and May); the establishment of a Directory of Cameroon Museums and a cultural agenda in partnership with the Blackitude and Africrea Museum (March); AMBAM, the 1st 'Cultural Festival of the FANG Peoples' of Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea; the 11th Choral Singing Festival at Djoungolo, the oldest Protestant church in Yaoundé; and support for traditional chiefdom festivals in Western Cameroon.

The National Commission implemented five projects as part under the UNESCO Participation Programme (2014–2015). These were an international symposium on 'Memories of the slave trade and slave descendants in Africa and in the Americas' (10–11 December), held at the University of Yaoundé I; the organization of a 'Gender Awards' ceremony presented by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Family; a seminar/workshop and construction of laboratories at the Yaoundé Category II Centre of Excellence in Microscience; a 'Workshop on capacity building of National Secretaries and Secretaries for Education from private teaching bodies in administrative and educational management'; and the 'Pan-African Conference of UNESCO Associations, Centres and Clubs'.

Finally, as part of the resumption of UNESCO Clubs, the National Commission hosted a General Meeting for the Cameroonian Federation of UNESCO Associations, Centres and Clubs, which elected a new Executive Committee.



A success story

In 2015, the National Commission of Cameroon for UNESCO celebrated the International Day of Peace (21 September). The National Commission in collaboration with the Committee of the Cameroonian Federation of UNESCO Association, Centres and Clubs organized a conference (9 September) around the central theme of 'Partnerships for Peace, Dignity for All', with a view to introducing young people to the ideals of peace. The conference was attended by many pupils, students and members of UNESCO Clubs from the country's institutions, who discussed the culture of peace.

The International Day of Peace organized by the Cameroonian Federation of UNESCO Associations, Centres and Clubs, in the presence of Mr Owona Ada, Secretary-General of the National Commission, Mr Silvere Elat, President of the Cameroonian Federation of UNESCO Associations, Centres and Clubs, and Mr Jean-Emmanuel Pondi, Secretary-General of the University of Yaoundé I.

© National Commission of Cameroon for UNESCO

CENTRAL AFRICA REPUBLIC

National Commission of the Central African Republic for UNESCO

President: Mr Elois Anguimate, Minister of National Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research

Secretary-General: Mrs Georgette Florence Koyt-Deballe

Website: www.unesco.cf

Update of activities in 2015

Development continues in the Central African Republic despite a highly challenging context. The country is still experiencing security issues following the military-political crisis that began in December 2012 and the coup of 23 March 2013. Despite the efforts of the transitional authorities, supported by the international community, non-conventional armed groups continue to operate in certain parts of the country and administrative services are not yet fully effective. Nevertheless, a fragile peace has begun to be restored in Bangui. Against this backdrop, the National Commission is endeavouring to accomplish its mission, while taking into consideration the intensity of the crisis.

In education and the social and human sciences, an event to celebrate World Teachers' Day (16 February) was organized under the theme 'Promoting peace and peaceful conflict resolution are also the responsibility of teachers'. Eighty participants took part in the event.

A workshop was held to update the training framework of the Ecole des Métiers d'Art during which a recruitment drive was launched for 100 learners as part of the securitization and social rehabilitation of child soldiers, as victims of the Central African crisis (9–16 March). The activity was followed by a joint UNESCO/Juventus de Turin mission.

An Information Day on the implementation of activities for Education for All (EFA) (19 November) brought together some fifty participants to revive the UNESCO Associated Schools and Clubs and organize a workshop on HIV/AIDS for Regional Education Centres and teacher training colleges in Bambari.

A workshop contributing to the development of the MAB 2015–2025 strategy was planned within the framework of the natural sciences Sector. The process to establish an IHP National Committee is also underway.

In communication, the National Commission organized journalism workshops, with a particular focus on women journalists.

The Administration Sector enabled eight executive managers to undertake information technology training. The premises were renovated, secured and equipped.

Lastly, priorities were set for the following domains: youth and sports, the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) and the International Bioethics Committee (IBC).



Mrs Georgette Florence Koyt-Deballe, Secretary-General of the National Commission of the Central African Republic for UNESCO, being interviewed at the Ecole Sainte Thérèse.

© Eli Moussa/UNESCO

A success story

Deferred celebrations for EFA Global Action Week (9–13 December) mobilized the capital's schools around the theme 'Peace is back, school is back'. Activities organized by teachers and pupils demonstrated their concerns with regard to peace, as highlighted in the following extracts.

*My country C.A.R.
My country C.A.R.
Why do you cry?
Why so many deaths?
You go from one plight to another,
From death to death,
Is there a future for us in this land?
Your children are crying,
Your homeland is dying,
Why all this suffering?*

Can we hope one day to see you change?

*We cry each day,
Open your heart as you are the centre of
Africa,
And let us experience your true life,
We love you very much,
But sometimes we are greatly saddened.*

Consolé E. Piamale, Lycée La Renaissance,
Year 7

CHAD

Chadian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Ahmat Khazali Acyl, Minister of National Education

Secretary-General: Mr Abdelkérîm Adoum Bahar

Update of activities in 2015

The Chadian National Commission for UNESCO works with ministries concerned with UNESCO's areas of expertise, as well as civil society organizations.

In 2015, the National Commission submitted several requests for co-sponsored scholarships in China, Israel and Poland, all of which were approved. UNESCO also approved a request to finance a cultural non-governmental organization. In addition, the National Commission managed the recruitment process for the UNESCO Young Professionals Programme 2015.

Together with the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training, the National Commission participated in rolling celebrations for International Literacy Day in 2015, with the financial participation of the UNESCO Office in Yaoundé. It also co-organized the implementation of the Interim Strategy for Education and Literacy 2013–2015, drawn up with the support of UNESCO and financed by the Global Partnership for Education and Qatar. This strategy targets universal primary

education, the development of non-formal education and literacy, and the strengthening of institutional and educational capacities of national education structures.

On behalf of the Ministry of Higher Education, the National Commission organized a training workshop for members of the National Bioethics Committee, financed by the UNESCO Office in Nairobi (December). It also took part in celebrations for World Radio Day, organized by the Union of Private Radio and financed by the UNESCO Office in Yaoundé (13 February).

With the Ministry of the Environment, the National Commission actively collaborated in drawing up a risk management plan for the Lakes of Ounianga, included on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2012, with financing from the Fund for African World Heritage and the technical support of experts from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF).



Abyssinian roller: the bird most often seen by visitors to Zakouma.

© Ministry of the Environment

A success story

As a member of the national technical team responsible for preparing candidatures for the inscription of cultural and natural sites on the UNESCO's World Heritage List, the National Commission played a very active role in preparing the file for Zakouma National Park. The preparation was made possible through co-financing by the World Heritage Fund and the technical support of experts from IUCN and AWHF. The nomination process was initiated in 2014 and the file has just been submitted to the World Heritage Centre.

Zakouma National Park is one of the last refuges for flora and fauna of Sahelian Africa, and still shelters viable numbers of large mammals. It also encompasses a river network and dense and diversified fauna, and is a preferred habitat for certain species that are threatened or endangered.

COMOROS

National Commission of Comoros for UNESCO

President: Mr Ali Attoumani

Secretary-General: Mr Abdou Ahamada Said Abdou

Update of activities in 2015

The National Commission of Comoros for UNESCO carried out several activities in 2015.

Within the framework of the UNESCO Global Microscience Project, the National Commission, in collaboration with the Permanent Delegation of Comoros to UNESCO in France and the Ministry of National Education, organized training workshops for lower and upper secondary school teachers on microsciences in June 2015. This training, which focused on hands-on learning offered teachers the opportunity to

develop their skills in this domain. This project was financed by UNESCO with a contribution from the Comoros Government.

As part of UNESCO activities for peace education, the National Commission of Comoros and the Ministry of National Education toured the islands in October 2015 to sensitize managers and actors in the education system about ways to introduce a culture of peace into school curricula. The programme aims to educate young people on the values of peace, human rights, citizenship and civic spirit.



A success story

The National Commission of Comoros with the organizational support of the Education Commissions organized training workshops for lower and upper secondary school teachers on the three autonomous islands of the Comoros. The training sessions were led by Mr Magalie Lebreton-Traoré, a Programme Specialist in UNESCO's Natural Sciences Sector.

Comprehensive kits and manuals were distributed by UNESCO to teachers on each of the islands. The participants showed great interest in the practical applications of the kits, as scientific programmes often take a more theoretical approach.

Training workshops for lower and upper secondary school teachers on the three autonomous islands of the Comoros.

© National Commission of Comoros for UNESCO

CONGO

Congolese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Georges Moyon, Minister of Higher Education

Secretary-General: Mr Gabriel Bokoumaka

Update of activities in 2015

True to its traditional mission, the Congolese National Commission for UNESCO continues to implement UNESCO programmes at the national level, despite constraints mostly of a material and budgetary nature. Its activities cover all areas of UNESCO's expertise (education, the sciences, culture, information and communication) thanks to sustained collaboration with the ministries and administrations concerned.

It should be noted that in 2015 the activities of UNESCO Clubs played a central role in implementing UNESCO activities, thanks to the participation of the Congolese Parliament (the National Assembly and the Senate). The Congolese National Commission for UNESCO also made an active contribution to preparations for Congo's participation at the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.



Participants at celebrations organized for the '2nd UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations Day in Congo', held in Brazzaville.

© Congolese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The best example of a successful activity in 2015 is without doubt the '2nd UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations Day in Congo', which was jointly organized by the National Commission, the Congolese Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations (FECASU), the UNESCO Office in Brazzaville and the Congolese Parliament.

FECASU organized the event in the international hall of the Palace of the Parliament in May 2015 with the aim of promoting the visibility of actions undertaken by UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations in the country.

The day was given special prominence thanks to its central theme: UNESCO, UNESCO Clubs and the culture of peace. It took place under the patronage of the Chairman of the National Assembly, with the assistance of the Minister of Higher Education, the President of the Congolese National Commission for UNESCO, the UNESCO Representative to Congo, the Executive Secretary of the International Centre for Research and Documentation on African Traditions and African Languages (CERDOTOLA) and the Secretary-General of the Congolese National Commission for UNESCO.

The activities during the day emphasized the important role played by UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations in promoting the ideals of the Organization and a culture of peace.

In recognition of the important role of civil society, and in particular the contribution made by UNESCO Clubs, as shown by the excellent work done by UNESCO in the field, the President of the Parliament promised to provide assistance to the work of FECASU.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Côte d'Ivoire National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Kandia Camara, Minister of National Education

Secretary-General: Mr Lou Mathieu Bamba

Update of activities in 2015

As part of celebrations organized for the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, and in accordance with a draft project under the UNESCO Participation Programme, 'Strengthening cooperation between the National Commission, partners and UNESCO in Côte d'Ivoire', the Côte d'Ivoire National Commission organized several events dedicated to strengthening cooperation with its partners.

Within this framework, the Representative of the UNESCO Office in Abidjan organized a conference emphasizing UNESCO's role in the United Nations system and cooperation among Member States, citing the example of Côte d'Ivoire (28 April). The key speaker highlighted a special post-conflict support programme implemented in the country to promote socio-economic recovery, the consolidation of social cohesion and the construction of a lasting peace. He further explained that implementation of the programme was fundamental to the newly established UNESCO Office in Abidjan.

The conference participants also benefited from capacity-building sessions presented in the form of modules.

The first module, 'The National Commission, civil society and the ideals of UNESCO', led by the Secretary-General of the National Commission, helped to explain the growing influence of non-state actors on strengthening democracy and multilateralism, and supporting UNESCO in the achievement of its ideals. The module sought to raise awareness among civil society leaders of UNESCO's ethics and major programmes.

The second module, 'The role of specialized committees in the implementation of UNESCO programmes', provided a framework for the exchange of best practices on the priorities of intergovernmental committees (e.g. Bioethics, IFAP, MOST, World Heritage, MAB) with civil society representatives. In the case of the MOST committee, Côte d'Ivoire provides a good example of a country characterized by immigration and mixing in which citizens of West African States enjoy political and property rights.

The third module, 'Financing mechanisms for UNESCO cooperation with Member States', educated participants on the financing of activities, including the procedures and preparation of financing requests for projects, programmes and UNESCO grants.

Finally, an event held to celebrate the 70th anniversary was honoured by the presence of the Permanent Delegate of Côte d'Ivoire to UNESCO, Mrs Denise Houphouët-Boigny, and received broad media coverage. The celebration mobilized a large number of partners and provided a wealth of comprehensive and in-depth information. At the opening ceremony, the Permanent Delegate commended the cooperation between Côte d'Ivoire and UNESCO and the work accomplished by the National Commission, and urged the participants to persevere in their efforts to disseminate the ideals of UNESCO.



A success story

In 2015, the reorganization of the Clubs for UNESCO was completed thanks to the involvement of the Minister of National Education and the Secretary-General of the National Commission. Two hundred and fifty-six clubs are currently registered with the Ministry of the Interior and certified by the National Commission for a two-year period (2016–2017). Each club has an administrative organization chart, a headquarters and an address, as well as a two-year action plan. Renewal of certification at the end of this period is dependent on an activity assessment.

Press conference held to announce the reorganization of the Clubs for UNESCO.

© Côte d'Ivoire National Commission for UNESCO

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

National Commission of the Democratic Republic of Congo for UNESCO

President: Mr Maker Mwangu Famba, Minister of Primary and Secondary Education and Introduction to the New Citizenship

Secretary-General: Mr Lazare Liema Ibongo Botie

Update of activities in 2015

2015 was notable for the remarkable quantity and quality of activities carried out with the support of UNESCO through the Participation Programme including Emergency Assistance, as well as internal initiatives undertaken with the support of the state budget.

Following a successful application to the UNESCO Participation Programme, the Faculty Institute of Information Sciences and Communication in Kinshasa received IT equipment to modernize its library, while the Geology Department of the Faculty of Sciences at the University of Lubumbashi received scientific equipment for its laboratory. Support from the Participation Programme and Emergency Assistance also helped to revitalize the Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the UNESCO Network of Associated Libraries.

Other successfully funded initiatives included the continuation of a public information campaign on human rights initiated in

2013; the organization of workshops and seminars, including an awareness-raising and capacity-building campaign targeting rural women on the subject of climate change and preservation of the environment; and an initiative to strengthen the capacities of school administrators in the New Citizenship Network. In addition, ten schools in the new Province of Kamina, affected by conflicts between the Bantu and the Pygmies, received school supplies funded through Emergency Assistance.

In cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Kinshasa and the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme, the National Commission produced a draft cooperation agreement between the Democratic Republic of Congo and UNESCO concerning the transformation of the Regional Post-graduate Training School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forests and Lands (ERAIFT), initiated in 2014, and setting out the status of ERAIFT higher education institutions and universities. The 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference adopted a Resolution to approve the establishment of the ERAIFT school in Kinshasa as a Category II Centre.

The National Commission also established the Capacity-building Centre for Planning and Education Management (CRCPGE) to train planners and education administrators. The draft decree for the institution was submitted to the government, which undertook to construct a building to house the institution.

Lastly, the National Commission, in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Kinshasa Office, prepared a 'Strategy for cooperation between UNESCO and the Democratic Republic of Congo', with a view to defining priority areas for action and cooperation over a given period, and to bring coherence to national plans with regard to objectives. An expert workshop for ministries and institutes in key areas of UNESCO competence was organized to strengthen capacities.



A success story

Following a round-table held in October 2013 on tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Democratic Republic of Congo on the UNESCO Tentative Lists, the National Commission launched a process for the inscription of the Ishango Bone. Discovered by the Belgium geologist-archaeologist Jean de Heinzelin de Beaucourt at the Ishango Site in the North Kivu Province, the bone is of exceptional interest as a cultural artefact. A Multidisciplinary Committee of Experts is currently assessing its scientific and cultural impact.

Within this framework, the Secretary-General and two colleagues paid a visit to ICCROM, a UNESCO institution based in Rome specialized in the field of preservation and restoration of cultural property. As a result of this visit, the Democratic Republic of Congo will become a Member State of ICCROM.

Monument erected in the 'Place des Artistes' in Matonge, Kinshasa.

© National Commission of the Democratic Republic of Congo for UNESCO

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

National Commission for UNESCO of Equatorial Guinea

President: Mr Jesús Engonga Ndong, Minister of Education and Science

Secretary-General: Mr Santiago Bivini Mangué

Update of activities in 2015

The National Commission for UNESCO of Equatorial Guinea falls under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science and works with the UNESCO Multisectoral Office in Yaoundé.

In order to strengthen the functioning of the National Commission, the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea promulgated Presidential Decree No. 122/2015 of 26 October, which provided for the renewal of the Commission. The decree was necessitated by the need to fill vacancies caused by the physical disappearance of a number of members of the National Commission and the change in status of others.

In 2015, the National Commission played a decisive role in the preparation of the *Yaoundé Education for all (EFA) Subregional*

Report with the production of the *Equatorial Guinea EFA Report* and the working document for the Teacher Training Programme (20–23 January).

The National Commission for UNESCO of Equatorial Guinea also participated in the 'World Education Forum', held in Incheon, Republic of Korea (19–22 May) and the 'International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education', held in Qingdao, People's Republic of China (23–25 May).

Lastly, the National Commission participated in the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, held in Paris (3–18 November), during which it discussed projects for submission under the Participation Programme for the 2016–2017 biennium.



Delegates from the Republic of Equatorial Guinea participating in an international conference.

© Esteban Mbo Obiang

A success story

In February and March 2015, the National Commission for UNESCO of Equatorial Guinea participated in an assessment of progress towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in Equatorial Guinea, with a particular focus on MDG 2 (universal primary education). The assessment report outlined the progress of certain coverage and quality indicators in the country's education sector.

GAMBIA

Gambia National Commission for UNESCO

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

Secretary-General: Mr Momodou Sanneh

Website: www.unesco.gm

Update of activities in 2015

The Gambia National Commission for UNESCO enjoys a stable financial environment through the increased support of partners such as the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, the Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. This support has enabled the National Commission to attract and retain highly qualified personnel with expertise in the promotion of UNESCO's ideals, policy dialogue and development in various fields.

The staff of the Gambia National Commission endeavours to participate fully in the activities of its partners despite some logistical constraints and a limited number of staff (four professionals). The Commission has also worked to increase its visibility through the implementation of various UNESCO-sponsored activities in the Gambia.

A training course organized for young people and women filmmakers in Gambia constituted an opportunity for the National Commission for UNESCO and the National Centre for Arts and Culture to foster creativity and promote cultural diversity in the country. Twenty-five participants from various backgrounds produced five short films of 30 minutes on endangered Gambian cultural expressions: the Mandinka Kankurang masquerade, the Kanyeleng sacred infertility rituals, the endangered indigenous weaving craft, traditional wrestling sports, and the stories behind tangible Gambian world heritage sites such as Fort Bullen and James Island. The training sessions took place in the suburbs of Banjul and the films were shot at locations intimately linked with these cultural expressions (5 December 2014 – 13 March 2015).

In cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the National Youth Council, and the support of the UNESCO Participation Programme, the National Commission promoted youth governance with the development of new legal policy framework for the effective implementation of a National Youth Policy. A nationwide sensitization and training campaign was initiated on 'Good Governance, Human Right and Peace building'.

Lastly, the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO received support from the UNESCO Office in Dakar to launch the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2015* and to facilitate Gambian participation in critical regional and sub-regional meetings on the development of a national teacher qualification framework, and the mapping of national strategies for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.



Young female trainees filmmakers participating in the UNESCO training course.

© Gambia National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO initiated a multiparty approach with the Ministries of Energy, Higher Education and Basic and Secondary Education for the development of a joint UNESCO project under the Participation Programme: 'Building capacities and reinforcing mutual engagement of science with society through training of Solar PV Technicians'.

This innovative and unprecedented move allowed the National Commission to pull together knowledge, expertise and experiences from basic and higher education institutions and field workers towards a common goal: the promotion of science and its uses in Gambia.

In Gambia, solar energy use is recognized as an important vehicle for increasing access to sustainable energy in homes, schools, health facilities, and information and communication technology centres. The training course helped to develop the design and installation capacities of a pool of Solar PV technicians, with discussions on using the training modules developed under this programme as part of a structured programme for training institutions.

The training course took place within the framework of UNESCO's declaration of 2015 as the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies, in recognition of the importance of light sciences and light-based technologies for sustained socioeconomic growth and development.

GHANA

Ghana National Commission for UNESCO

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

Secretary-General: Mr Riche-Mike Wellington

Website: <http://unescoghana.org/>

Update of activities in 2015

The Ghana National Commission implements numerous activities in UNESCO's fields of competence through committees linked to UNESCO programmes and initiatives.

In 2015, Ghana hosted the 4th Session of the General Assembly of the African Network of Biosphere Reserves (AfriMAB) in Accra (24–27 November) for the second year running. The theme of this year's meeting was 'AfriMAB:

Aligning to Agenda 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (2015–2030) and the MAB Strategy (2015–2025)'.

The three-day conference was hosted jointly by the Ghana National Committee of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and the General Assembly of AfriMAB, and resulted in the development of an Africa Position Paper and Priorities for the Lima Plan of Action.

During the year, the Ghana National Committee of the Intergovernmental Oceanography Commission (IOC) also organized and held a Public Forum on the theme 'Ocean Governance – the role of stakeholders' (17 November). The forum aimed to address key issues and challenges facing the coastal and marine environment and its various stakeholders in Ghana. It discussed ways to balance usage of the coastal and marine environment, in order to generate maximum benefits for socioeconomic advancement while ensuring the sustainability of ecosystem services.



A cross-section of participants at the Africa Regional Conference on 'Harnessing Light and Light-based Technologies for Africa's Development'.

© Ghana National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In celebration of the 2015 International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies, proclaimed by the United Nations, the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO organized the Africa Regional Conference and Exhibition on the theme 'Harnessing Light and Light-based Technologies for Africa's Development' (14–16 September).

The conference and exhibition sought to promote interaction and dialogue among academics, professionals, policy-makers, industrialists, entrepreneurs, innovators and other stakeholders to highlight the relevance of light and related technologies in the sciences, arts, culture and the humanities.

It brought together representatives from Algeria, Cameroon, Egypt, Mexico, Senegal, Sweden and other countries.

The conference issued a Communiqué urging the Government of Ghana to bring the issues discussed at the conference to the attention of a larger forum of stakeholders and the Africa Union for further deliberation, with a view to highlighting the potential of light-based technologies throughout Africa. The Government of Ghana was further urged to build effective institutions to increase efficiency in the energy sector, as a means of diversifying the energy mix, and to undertake research into solar and other renewable energy technologies, so as to reduce cost, increase efficiency and build capacity.

GUINEA

Guinean National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Abdoulaye Yero Baldé, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Secretary-General: Mr Ibrahima Solo Conde

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Guinean National Commission for UNESCO undertook activities of particular importance for the country. These helped UNESCO to reach out to civil society and increase its visibility at the national level.

A national workshop on the theme, 'Peace and cultural diversity in Guinea – Case study: Forested Guinea', was held in Kissidougou (28 February–4 March). Fifty participants took part in a training course designed to help them contribute to the consolidation of a national, fraternal, solidarity-based, united community respectful of the values necessary to create a legally constituted state and a democratic society.

A 'Campaign to raise awareness in schools and universities of the Ebola virus hemorrhagic fever disease' was held in towns of the Governorates of N'Zérékoré, Kankan and Labé (7–16 April). The campaign equipped 150 pupils and students with information regarding the different methods of prevention in the fight against Ebola (see below).

The '1st National Study Camp on Reforestation (Operation Green Guinea)' was held in Friguigbé, Kindia (2–7 September). This reforestation camp was the first of its kind in the Republic of Guinea. It provided a space for young people to meet, live together and exchange experiences, with an emphasis on psychomotor learning. The camp aimed to attract young people from Kindia, in particular local youth from Friguigbé.



The 'Campaign to raise awareness in schools and universities of the Ebola virus hemorrhagic fever disease', implemented in towns of the Governorates of N'Zérékoré, Kankan and Labé.

© Guinean National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The 'Campaign to raise awareness in schools and universities of the Ebola virus hemorrhagic fever disease' took place in the conference room of the Governorate of N'Zérékoré, the Kankan Regional Education Inspectorate and the Labé Centre of Professional Training, under the patronage of the governors of these administrative regions (7–16 April).

It involved the participation of 150 pupils and students and nine managers from secondary schools and colleges, vocation colleges and universities in these three regional capitals, and received substantial media coverage. The campaign helped to raise awareness among participants of the reality of the Ebola virus disease and the importance of prevention techniques. Particular emphasis was placed on strategies and key messages for promotion in schools, universities and communities to galvanize monitoring committees, break the chains of Ebola transmission and address resistance among the population nationally coordinated measures as part of the response to the Ebola virus.

Group work and sketches also helped to strengthen the operational capacities of representatives from UNESCO Clubs, UNESCO Associated Schools and other Youth Associations to eradicate this fatal disease which has produced many victims in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

KENYA

Kenya National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Fred Matiang'i, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Secretary-General: Ms Evangeline Njoka

Website: www.unesco.go.ke

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Education Programme of the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO conducted a baseline survey to establish the status of ASPnet registered institutions. The survey findings indicated that there was need to re-register all ASPnet institutions and train school patrons. Research was also undertaken into factors affecting girls' education in the Mount Elgon Region of Bungoma County with a view to informing the development of education policies for girls' education.

A scientific camp of excellence for mentoring girls in science, technology and mathematics (STEM) was organized and held in Kisumu (23–27 November) to raise girls' interest in scientific, engineering and technological courses, with a view to nurturing future female scientists, engineers and technologists.

The National Commission also evaluated the status of the Mt Kulal Biosphere Reserve and undertook periodic reviews of the Watamu/Malindi and Kiunga Biosphere Reserves.

In the social and human sciences, the Kenya National Commission organized an Ethics Teachers' Training Course (ETTC), at the UNESCO Regional Documentation and Research Centre on Bioethics based at Egerton University (10–14 August) and a sensitization project for Kenya UNESCO Clubs (13–14 October) under the theme 'UNESCO Clubs for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence'.

The National Commission also implemented a project on 'Universities for a Sustainable Culture of Peace and Security', and undertook a study to evaluate knowledge, attitudes and practices on doping in sport and other co-curricular activities, with a view to informing policy-makers about doping in schools and making appropriate recommendations.

In 2015, the Communication and Information programme of the Kenya National Commission published *The Fifty Year Journey of UNESCO–Kenya Cooperation 1964–2014*. It also coordinated national and regional youth-training workshops (25–29 May and 25–30 October) on the development of mobile apps for sustainable development (see below). In addition, the programme coordinated a capacity-building workshop on the 'Safety of Journalists and Media Freedom', thus making Kenya one of the few countries globally to have trained journalists and media stakeholders on the UN plan of action for the safety of journalists.

Lastly, the National Commission undertook several activities in the field of culture. It planned the development of frameworks for the promotion of cultural industries as a way of creating wealth and employment and supporting the tourism sector. It also undertook a baseline survey in Kilifi and Kwale Counties to inventory natural and cultural heritage elements for protection and safeguarding.



Ms Evangeline Njoka, Secretary-General, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, Mr Jaco Du Toit, Communication Adviser, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, and Christine Maingi, Programme Director Communication and Information, with participants at the regional capacity-building workshop.

© Kenya National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Communication and Information programme of the National Commission coordinated the first ever regional capacity-building workshop for youth on Mobile Applications Development (25–30 October). The workshop was funded by the UNESCO Participation Programme. The main objectives were to build the capacity of young people in mobile application development, increase the expertise of youth in using efficient mobile technology tools for easy access of information and knowledge, and to promote participation in civic processes through mobile platforms. Forty-five participants were trained in the East African Region (Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda), technology institutions, the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO and the Kenya National Commission Youth Forum. The key outcome of the workshop was a series of mobile apps developed by the participants.

LESOTHO

Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Mahali Phamotse, Minister of Education and Training

Secretary-General: Ms Palesa Montši

Website: www.unesco.org.ls

Update of activities in 2015

During 2015, the Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO executed a number of activities in UNESCO's five fields of competence. These activities contributed to UNESCO's visibility in the country.

A noteworthy milestone was the strengthening of the working relationship between the Lesotho and Korean National Commissions for UNESCO through the Bridge Africa Project. This project aims to establish Community Learning Centres for disadvantaged communities as a way of advancing the literacy levels of Basotho children. The project also aims to foster local ownership through community-led projects.

A number of Community Learning Centres with cafeteria facilities were established in the rural areas of Ha Motsu and Ha Teko. Two centres were officially launched by the Korean National Commission together with the Minister and Deputy

Minister of Education and Training, the Honourable Dr Mahali Phamotse and the Honourable Thabang Kholumo.

Another highlight of the year was the implementation of the Mobile Digital Library project, funded through the 2014/2015 Participation Programme (2014–2015). The programme, entitled 'Distance and Rural Learner/Teacher Support Through Mobile Digital Mode', was warmly welcomed by rural high schools, teachers, pupils and part-time learners, as well as villagers. The project provided digital and print information to students who reside in selected rural areas of the northern region of Lesotho, where library services are usually unavailable. Part-time learners and the general public used this facility to borrow print materials and perform internet-based research using services provided by the mobile van. This initiative was executed within the framework of the UNESCO theme, 'Building Knowledge Societies', as a means to access open educational resources, free and open source software, and open and distance learning.

Finally, Mr Hubert Gijzen visited Lesotho (17–19 November) on his first mission since his appointment as Director of the new UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa. During the mission he paid a courtesy call to the Ministries of Education and Training, Tourism, Environment and Culture, Communications, Science and Technology, and Water, where he met with ministers and senior officers. He also met with the United Nations team in Lesotho and the Vice-Chancellor of the National University of Lesotho to discuss the planned creation of a Water Institute.



Newly elected members of the Lesotho Youth Desk during the first youth conference.

© Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

For the first time since its establishment, the Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO launched a UNESCO Youth Desk during the National UNESCO Youth Conference, held in Maseru (30–31 July). The conference attracted about eighty young participants from eight of the ten districts in Lesotho.

The Youth Desk serves as a coordinating body between the Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO and the young people of Lesotho, and aims to involve them in initiatives linked to implementing UNESCO's mandate in the country. More importantly, the desk serves as a platform for the youth of Lesotho to participate in the UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth for 2014–2021, as well as the other programmes of the Organization.

During the conference, a committee of eleven participants was chosen through a rigorous selection process. The committee subsequently toured the eight districts during the months of September and October, where they held district workshops. The objectives of these workshops were to familiarize the youth of Lesotho with UNESCO and its mandate, inform them about the UNESCO Operational Strategy and to gather information about pertinent issues affecting youth. The committee found commonalities between the districts, but also differences depending on the location. This baseline will inform Action Projects planned for the years 2016 to 2017.

MADAGASCAR

Malagasy National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Paul Andrianiana Rabary, Minister of National Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Hanta Raboanary

Update of activities in 2015

The National Commission helped to improve education in Madagascar in 2015 through the implementation of activities within its remit. This year, the country received the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy, the presentation of which was a highlight of International Literacy Day (8 September). UNESCO Associated Schools and Clubs also contributed to activities, with training organized for eight teachers from schools in two regions and other members of the UNESCO network.

To meet challenges in the natural sciences, the National Commission participated in various celebrations, including those held for World Water Day (22 March). Activities were also organized to highlight the review of the Madagascar water code and World Water Week (23–28 August), organized by the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

In the social and human sciences, the National Commission supported activities organized as part of celebrations for International Women's Day (8 March). In Madagascar, particularly close attention was paid to social development programmes in the form of validation of the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP).

With regard to culture, the Malagasy National Commission for UNESCO participated in the formulation of the National Action Plan for the implementation of cultural conventions ratified by the country, including the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. The Commission also collaborated with stakeholders to provide information on the diversity of expressions of culture through its support for the Classik'art classical music festival (22–30 August) and the HAIFY food festival (25–27 September), both held in Antananarivo.

In collaboration with national radio and the supervising ministry, the communications and information sector of the National Commission organized events for World Radio Day (13 February). The initiatives allowed young people to express themselves on the airwaves with a view to highlighting the value of radio beyond mere entertainment. The Commission also participated in the World Press Freedom Day (3 May), which was marked by the inauguration of a monument in Antananarivo marking the revival of the Order of Journalists of Madagascar.



Training in the use of IT equipment (computers, multi-function printers) for students at Ambohibary High School.

© Malagasy National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, Madagascar was one of the countries to benefit from a project to provide solar electrification to fifteen rural schools. This project is the product of close collaboration between UNESCO and its partners, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund for International Development (OFID) and Panasonic, and the Ministry for National Education. The schools were selected from regions with the lowest electricity supply. These schools now have access to electricity, thanks to the use of solar energy. Thousands of students from middle and high schools in Madagascar can learn and benefit from information technology (IT) and the advantages provided by the internet.

To crown the project and mark the International Year of Light, a Forum on Renewable Energies was organized with a delegation from UNESCO Headquarters and the UNESCO Office in Nairobi. Teachers and researchers from the Ecole Polytechnique de Montréal shared their knowledge of renewable energies with Malagasy students and technicians, to enable them to formulate projects. In addition to this forum, exhibits and open-day sessions were organized to provide the public with information on issues linked to demand for energy and associated employment opportunities.

MALI

Malian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Mountaga Tall, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Secretary-General: Mrs Sangare Coumba Toure

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Malian National Commission for UNESCO carried out a number of activities despite its limited resources and its shortage of personnel.

The first of these activities was the organization of a workshop to prepare the Malian delegation for the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO. This three-day workshop held on the premises of the Malian Academy of Languages in Bamako brought together members of the Malian National Commission representatives of sectoral departments, central services of the state and civil society, and elected representatives of the nation. The workshop developed recommendations presented in the form of a report that served as a road map

for the Malian delegation at the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

The second activity was the launch of the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2015*. This event was relocated to the grounds of the Mali National Assembly in a bid to involve the elected officials of the nation and to raise the profile of UNESCO in Mali.

The third activity was a national training workshop on the role of young people in the conservation and promotion of cultural heritage in Bamako. The workshop, held in Djenné, enabled a number of young people to discover the cultural heritage of the country in all its forms and to participate in its safeguarding.

The fourth activity was a workshop to raise awareness among teachers in the northern regions of Mali of the concept of a culture of peace and human rights. The workshop, which was financed by UNESCO through the Participation Programme and Emergency Assistance (2014–2015), drew the attention of teachers to the need for dialogue, peace and co-existence to ensure Mali's development. Due to the crisis in the region the workshop was held in Mopti.

A success story

A major event for the Malian National Commission for UNESCO was the presentation of school kits and furniture to schools in Diabaly and Konna, two districts where schools were destroyed by terrorist attacks during the political and security crisis that affected Mali in 2012.

The return of peace brought about a need to reopen these schools with all actors in the education sector being called upon to rebuild classrooms and school furniture. The Malian National Commission for UNESCO requested and obtained finance for the kits and furniture thanks to the UNESCO Emergency Assistance Programme.

The presentation of these kits to the political and administrative authorities of these districts by the Secretary-General of the National Commission for UNESCO not only allowed these schools to be refurnished and students to receive school kits, but also helped to raise the profile of UNESCO in Mali through national media.



Mrs Sangare Coumba Toure seated next to the sub-prefect of Konna at the ceremony for the handover of school kits and furniture to city authorities.

© Malian National Commission for UNESCO



A sample of the material delivered to schools in Diabaly and Konna.

© Malian National Commission for UNESCO

MAURITIUS

Mauritius National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research

Assistant Secretary-General: Mrs Aneeta Ghoorah

Website: <http://ministry-education.govmu.org>

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, a number of projects submitted by the Mauritius National Commission to the UNESCO Participation Programme were approved. These projects are now underway.

To commemorate the bicentenary of the official creation of the National Archives of the Republic of Mauritius (1815–2015), the National Commission organized an exhibition at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, which was officially inaugurated by the Minister of Arts and Culture of Mauritius in the presence of the Assistant Director-General of Arts and Culture (11 May).

During the year, the National Commission also worked to implement the Digital Awakening Experience in five pre-primary schools in Mauritius. This project was designed to introduce ICTs into the pre-primary sector of educational development, thereby providing teachers with an opportunity to use new pedagogical tools to expand teaching and

learning opportunities. The project also promotes the use of open educational resources and software in the pre-primary sector. Teachers were trained on the use of interactive digital projectors, which can be used in conjunction with laptops to display images on white surfaces.

Digital tools were also the focus of the 'National Conference on ICT for Pre-Primary Educators', organized for the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues, which saw the launch of a booklet on ICT use in pre-primary schools.

In the field of cultural heritage, the National Commission submitted 'Bhojpuri Folk Songs of Mauritius, Geet-Gawai' for possible inscription in 2016 on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The Mauritius National Commission also worked throughout the year on the establishment of a UNESCO Category II Regional Centre for Ocean Science and Innovation for Capacity Building and Research in Mauritius.

This planned centre will be hosted at the Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI) under the aegis of the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, International Shipping and Outer Islands.



A one-day national consultation on education for sustainable development with the participation of relevant stakeholders.

© Mauritius National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Swedish International Centre for Education for Sustainable Development (SWEESD) invited participants from Mauritius to a five-day Regional Workshop held in Harare (31 August – 4 September) on the implementation of the Global Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

Prior to the workshop, UNESCO asked the Mauritius National Commission to organize a one-day national consultation with relevant stakeholders in the field of ESD (9 July). This exercise was designed to map existing policies, strategies and programmes on ESD at national level and identify gaps and priority areas for implementing ESD.

About sixty representatives participated in the national consultation from different ministries, parastatal bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The day included a number of presentations and debates on the subject of ESD, with the resulting proposals and recommendations shared at the Regional Workshop in Harare.

NAMIBIA

Namibia National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Itah Kandjii-Murangi, Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation

Deputy Secretary-General: Mr Roderick Graham April

Update of activities in 2015

Despite a personnel shortage, the Namibia National Commission for UNESCO organized several successful events in 2015 under the leadership of its new Chairperson. The year also saw the election of Mr Stanley Simataa, Deputy Minister of Information, Communication and Technology to the Presidency of the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference. The opportunity to lead the highest governing body of UNESCO was an honour for Namibia and all of Southern Africa.

In the field of culture, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, in collaboration with UNESCO, hosted the 10th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (30 November – 4 December). About 900 participants from Member States and States Parties to the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage attended the session.

In education, the National Commission remained committed to a holistic vision of quality education, inclusion and lifelong learning. Accordingly, the Commission facilitated the participation of Namibia in the Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post-2015, held in Paris (19–20 February), the World Education Forum 2015, held in Incheon, Republic of

Korea (19–22 May), and the International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education, held in Qingdao, China (23–25 May).

In addition, the Commission assisted the UNESCO Office in Windhoek with the launch of the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2015* and the 'Virtual Learning Community of Educators in Namibia' (22 April). The Commission also promoted the professional development of pre and lower primary teachers through the programme 'Enhancing Teacher Education for Bridging the Education Quality Gap in Africa: Capacity Development for Quality in Pre- and Lower Primary Teacher Education in Namibia', presently being implemented throughout Namibia.

The National Commission facilitated the participation of Namibia in the World Skills Competition, held in Brazil (11–16 August), with a view to revitalizing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

In the natural sciences, the Commission continued to implement the Namibia Water Resources Management Project in collaboration with the Jaroslav Černi Institute for the Development of Water Resources and UNESCO.

In the field of communication and information, the National Commission promoted Namibia's stance on freedom of expression through events to celebrate World Radio Day (13 February) and World Press Freedom Day (3 May), and by building capacity among community radio stations.

Lastly, the National Commission implemented three Participation Programme projects, as well as numerous activities in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Windhoek to heighten UNESCO's visibility in the country and ensure that Namibia derived maximum benefit from its programmes.



Ms Itah Kandjii-Murangi (far right), toasting the success of UNESCO with Ms Kiki Gbeho (UN Resident Coordinator in Namibia) and Mr Jean-Pierre Ilboudo (Director, UNESCO Office in Windhoek).
© Namibia National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the National Commission's activities gave prominence to the 70th anniversary of UNESCO and the role played by the Organization in Namibia before, during and after independence. The celebrations offered UNESCO and Namibia, as a Member State of the Organization since 2 November 1978, a unique opportunity to reflect on past achievements, and revisit and rethink UNESCO's orientations and programmes for the future, with a particular focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNESCO's 70th anniversary celebrations in Namibia were launched by the National Commission in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Windhoek in August with a series of events leading up to the main celebration (28 October), which was attended by more than 150 stakeholders. A documentary exploring the relationship and collaboration between UNESCO and Namibia from 1992 onwards was also broadcast on this occasion. The celebrations concluded in November with a public lecture by the Director of the Regional Office of Southern Africa, who highlighted the importance of the SDGs in education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information.

These celebrations illuminated the mission and vision of UNESCO and the role played by the Namibia National Commission and enhanced the visibility of UNESCO.

NIGER

National Commission of Niger for UNESCO and ISESCO

President: Mrs Ali Mariama Elhadji Ibrahim, Minister for Primary Education, Literacy, the Promotion of National Languages and Civic Education

Secretary General: Mr Issa Namata

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the National Commission of Niger undertook several activities with the support of the Government of Niger, UNESCO and ISESCO.

Among these, the General Assembly of the National Commission for UNESCO took place at the Palais des Congrès in Niamey (20–27 October), and was funded by the State of Niger. The chief objective of the Assembly was to validate Niger's contribution to the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

The opening ceremony was chaired by the Minister for Primary Education, Literacy, the Promotion of National Languages and Civic Education, and President of the National Commission for UNESCO and ISESCO. The General Assembly was attended by representatives of ministries responsible for the vice-presidencies of the National Commission for UNESCO and ISESCO, and representatives of the institutions of the Republic and civil society.



The Tahoua regional authorities at the opening of the workshop on peace education for the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

© National Commission of Niger for UNESCO and ISESCO

A success story

UNESCO funded seven requests by Niger for projects undertaken through the Participation Programme (2014–2015).

In this context, the National Commission for UNESCO and ISESCO implemented activities relating to peace education for the prevention and resolution of conflicts in towns in the regions of Agadès, Tahoua and Tillabéry, for the benefit of schools partnering with UNESCO (18–25 February).

The objective of these activities was to facilitate workshops and conferences on peace education for the prevention and resolution of conflicts, for the benefit of the schools.

In all the regions visited, activities focused on approaches related to causes and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa in general, and Niger in particular, as well as on the outcomes of sustainable development. The choice of peace as a theme was opportune as Niger is currently beset by insecurity along the length of its borders.

A variety of rich and varied themes were developed with a view to heightening participants' awareness of the virtues of peace, including questions related to a culture of peace and intercultural dialogue.

The desired results were achieved with the participants demonstrating their understanding of key elements from the presentations.

NIGERIA

Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Malam Ibrahim Adamu Adamu, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Magdalene Anene-Maidoh

Update of activities in 2015

The Nigerian National Commission collaborated with UNESCO line ministries and agencies, the UNESCO Regional Office in Abuja and civil society organizations throughout the year to promote the ideals and programmes of UNESCO in Nigeria.

In 2015, the Federation of UNESCO Clubs in Nigeria was reactivated in accordance with the mandate of the National Commission and in recognition of the role of UNESCO Clubs as a platform for fostering UNESCO's mission and ideals, especially among youth. Inactive clubs were requested to revive their status and forward details of their Coordinators and work plans for 2015.

As a consequence, Clubs are now implementing activities to promote UNESCO's mission in their schools under the supervision of the National Commission's Youth Desk. One of the schools participated in the 5th Sub-regional Inter-School Choral Singing Festival, organized by the Togolese National Commission in Lome (August).

To ensure effective coordination of UNESCO activities by the National Commission and improve communication

with stakeholders, the Commission requested UNESCO line ministries and agencies to establish UNESCO Desks. This ensured timely responses to UNESCO circulars for the benefit of Nigerians.

Media and Information Literacy Week was observed in June under the theme 'Celebrating Connectivity across Cultures', with activities attended by about 300 participants, including students, youth groups, educators, media professionals, librarians and civil society groups. The week provided an opportunity to promote the concepts of diversity, pluralism and intercultural dialogue.

The National Commission collaborated with the UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office in Abuja to organize the formal launch of the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report: Education for All 2000–2015, Achievements and Challenges*. The event, held in September, afforded an opportunity to evaluate Nigeria's progress with EFA and to make recommendations on future actions in light of the post-2015 agenda.

In the field of culture, the National Commission facilitated the participation of three officers in 'Training on Underwater Archaeology for African countries', held in Kemer, Turkey (13 May).

During the year, the Commission also collaborated with relevant government agencies and UNESCO Clubs to commemorate International Mother Language Day (21 February), World Press Freedom Day (3 May), the International Day to end Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (2 November), World Teachers' Day (5 October), World AIDS Day (1 December) and United Nations Day (24 October).

Lastly, 2015 saw the creation of a UNESCO Chair on Mathematics in the National Mathematical Centre.



Empowerment of girls through the use of ICTs for literacy.
© UNESCO Abuja

A success story

In 2011, Nigeria initiated a national programme entitled 'Revitalizing Adult and Youth Literacy in Nigeria' to accelerate and underpin national efforts to increase the literacy rate among youth and adults in Nigeria. Funds were deposited with UNESCO as a self-benefiting fund-in-trust for implementation of the programme, with UNESCO providing technical support and playing a leading role in the mobilization of international assistance. Project implementation is on course with the National Commission serving as Secretariat to the National Programme Steering Committee, which acts as the advisory body.

The project has also enabled the mobilization of further resources to support literacy in Nigeria, with a donation from Procter and Gamble allocated for the empowerment of girls and women through the use of ICTs for literacy and skills development, and additional funds pledged for 2016. Samsung Electronics has donated 1,200 laptops for use by non-governmental organizations, state agencies for mass literacy and schools, and is supporting the project with smart education (solar powered Internet schools) and community services for skills development programmes for youth.

The programme has also established strong partnerships with media organizations, which broadcast activities at no cost while increasing support for literacy.

RWANDA

Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Fidele Ndahayo

Secretary-General: Mr Eliphaz Bahizi

Website: www.unesco.rw

Update of activities in 2015

During 2015, the Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO undertook a variety of activities in line with the Organization's mandate.

In collaboration with the ministries and institutions concerned, the National Commission celebrated numerous UNESCO international days including World Press Freedom Day, World Philosophy Day, World Water Day, World Mother Tongue Day, World Poetry Day, World Science Day and World Teacher Day.

The National Commission implemented and monitored five projects funded under the UNESCO Participation Programme (see below for an example), and produced four financial and evaluation reports.

The National Commission devoted resources to training and equipping its own staff, as well as key personnel in UNESCO's main fields of interest. Recipients included thirty District Officers in charge of culture countrywide who received training on UNESCO Conventions, and head-teachers from forty ASPnet (Associated Schools Network) schools. In collaboration with the Nairobi UNESCO Office in Nairobi, the National Commission

also organized training for journalists on the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Rwanda National Commission prepared and organized the EFA Review validation workshop and the Sub-Saharan Africa Education Ministers Conference. It also organized validation workshops for the HELP/Ecohydrology research project (UNESCO-IHP) and National Research Policy.

In addition, the National Commission prepared the Rwandan delegation to the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference, which included the participation of the Secretary-General, and organized two National Commission General Assembly sessions and three Technical Committee sessions.

The National Commission actively publicized UNESCO's work throughout the year, participating in TV and radio shows, and publishing articles and announcements in local media. The Commission also updated its website.

The Commission worked to provide technical and financial assistance to local UNESCO partners, including the provision of computer printers to UNESCO clubs. Twenty-five out of the forty-three UNESCO Clubs were visited countrywide, thirty of which are now equipped with printers, while all clubs now have desktop computers.

Lastly, the Commission endeavoured to strengthen cooperation with other UNESCO National Commissions. It signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO to host a volunteer to coordinate literacy projects in Rwanda. The Rwanda National Commission also participated in an ongoing capacity-building project for East African National Commissions, and hosted the 9th Volunteer from the German National Commission for a period of twelve months.



FAWE students at work in the ICT-equipped laboratory.

© Rwanda National Commission

A success story

In April 2015, the Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO presented IT equipment to Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Girls' School at Gisozi, Gasabo district in Kigali City.

The equipment included forty-five desktop computers with uninterrupted power supply and accessories including anti-virus and other forms of software. The donation was funded by the UNESCO Participation Programme (2014–2015).

The ceremony took place in the presence of the Secretary-General of the National Commission, the President of the FAWE School Parents-Teachers Association, the school head-teacher, the District Representative, the FAWE Rwanda Coordinator, staff from the National Commission and students.

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE

National Commission of São Tomé and Príncipe for UNESCO

President: Mr Olinto da Silva Daio, Minister of Education, Culture and Science

Secretary-General: Sónia Almeida de Ceita Carvalho

Website: www.mecc.gov.st

Update of activities in 2015

The National Commission of São Tomé and Príncipe for UNESCO maintains friendly relations with its counterparts in the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) and the group of Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP), and with the Regional Office in Yaoundé. The National Commission has been less active than it would have liked due to political and financial reasons, but insisted that the country's different sectors participate in regional and sub-regional conferences and meetings on a variety of subjects.

Within this context, the National Commission, in association with the Directorate General of Culture and UNESCO, organized a workshop on inventorying intangible cultural

heritage in April, followed by a second workshop in November to validate the inventoried list. In December, the National Commission organized a workshop in partnership with the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme and the Príncipe Biosphere Reserve to discuss the green economy of the Island of Príncipe (see below).

Lastly, thanks to its good relations with other National Commissions and the generosity of the Portuguese Commission for UNESCO, São Tomé and Príncipe participated in the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris (3–18 November), where it was represented by its Secretary-General.



A technical workshop to promote sustainable development practices for biosphere reserves in Africa.

© Mr António Abreu

A success story

In December 2015, the National Commission of São Tomé and Príncipe for UNESCO organized a technical workshop to promote sustainable development practices in biosphere reserves in Africa. The workshop was a joint initiative of the MAB programme, the Príncipe Biosphere Reserve and the government of the Autonomous Region of Príncipe, and focused principally on the concept of the green economy. The participating experts presented green economy projects and discussed their promotion in biosphere reserves within the future development of AfriMAB, thereby heightening the awareness of national authorities and civil society on this topic.

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 2015

The Senegalese National Commission carried out a number of activities in 2015, including a subregional workshop for the technical validation of the eighth module on 'Teaching values through Sport and Physical Education' (20–21 January). The objective of the workshop was to increase awareness of the promotion of these values and to validate the content of the eighth module of the Economic Community of West African States (CEDEAO) reference manual on human rights and a culture of peace. To this end, six experts from countries in the sub-region and their Senegalese colleagues participated in the meeting.

Dakar also hosted the 'National Sign Language Workshop' (10–12 March), the main objective of which was to increase the ability of young people with special needs (in particular deaf children and those with a hearing impairment) to integrate

into the community. Instructors, teachers, institutional actors and local authorities involved in the re-adaptation process took the opportunity to conduct an exhaustive diagnosis of the issue of teaching through sign language.

A workshop was held in Dakar to disseminate the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2015* on the date of its launch (3 June). This workshop presented the main results and recommendations on progress made and future challenges. Mrs Nihan Koseleci-Blancy from UNESCO Headquarters in Paris – a member of the team that drafted the report – led a panel with the participation of representatives from the Ministry of National Education, civil society, teachers' unions, and technical and financial partners.

A consultation between the education and training sectors and local authorities also resulted in a series of activities in partnership with the Office for Planning and Education Reform (16–17 September). The objective was to involve stakeholders in exchanges with a view to deepening dialogue on education and training policies.

Finally, a seminar on 'Reform of the national anti-piracy and contraband brigade' was held in Dakar (12–14 September) to discuss and exchange views on measures planned to promote modernization of the national system to combat piracy and contraband.



Opening ceremony of the consultation meeting in the presence of Mr Aliou Sall, President of the Union of Associations of Local Elected Representatives and Mayor of the City of Guédiawaye, Mr Baba Ousseynou Ly, Secretary-General of the Ministry of National Education, Mr Huot Marchand of the UNESCO Office in Dakar, Mr Aliou Ly, Secretary-General of the National Commission for UNESCO, and Mr Djibril Ndiaye Diouf, Director of Planning and Education Reform.

© Senegalese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The Senegalese National Commission for UNESCO in partnership with the Office for Planning and Reform in Education organized a consultation between leaders in the education and training sectors and local elected officials.

The purpose of the meeting was to promote dialogue between central agents and those at decentralized levels and – building on experience to date – revisit the conclusions of national education conferences and the general code for local authorities as well as education and training policy following various decentralization reforms in Senegal.

Following the general presentation, the participants discussed several topics with a focus on key issues. The first topic addressed the 'Impact of the third stage of decentralization on the education and training sector and the financing of education', the second explored the 'Organization of decentralized reviews: a mechanism for the drafting of accounts', and the third examined the 'Participation of agents within the framework of consultation and management of the basic education system'.

SEYCHELLES

Seychelles National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Macsuzy Mondon, Minister for Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Marie-Reine Hoareau

Update of activities in 2015

The Secretariat of the Seychelles National Commission for UNESCO is based at the Ministry of Education. The annual meeting of the Seychelles National Commission for UNESCO (30 July) took place in the presence of Mr Mohamed Djelid, Director of the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa.

During 2015, the Seychelles National Commission celebrated most UN international days in collaboration with stakeholders. The events received extensive media coverage.

In the field of education, the Seychelles National Commission attended the World Education Forum held in Incheon, Republic of Korea (19–22 May). A delegation of four education officials also participated in a Regional Colloquium on ICT and Teacher Training in Eastern Africa (25–27 November), held at the Regional Office in Nairobi.

The Ministry of Education hosted a one-week workshop (13–17 July) to launch Phase 2 of the General Education

Quality Analysis Framework (GEQAF) for over fifty education stakeholders. The main objective of the workshop was to review and adopt a planning framework for the different priority interventions, and identify crosscutting issues for further collaboration and coordination within the 'Education Sector Medium Term Strategic Plan 2013-2017 and beyond' implementation, monitoring and evaluation framework.

A national conference entitled 'Towards Quality Education for All' (28–29 October) was organized by the Ministry of Education to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of World Teachers' Day celebrations. The conference aimed to provide a platform for education professionals and partners to reflect on ways to enhance the quality of Education for All in Seychelles, within the context of a Small Island Developing State.

A number of projects benefitted from Participation Programme (2014–2015). The first project led by the Association of the District Disabled Support Group from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Community Development involved a series of workshops on improving livelihoods among people with disabilities. The second project was a workshop on 'Capacity Building in School Inspection process and procedures' organized by the Ministry of Education. The third project, entitled 'Awareness raising of the Seychelles Population on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women' consisted of capacity-building workshops, which led to the production of a booklet.



A success story

The Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA) of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Energy in collaboration with the Seychelles National Commission for UNESCO organized a seven-day training workshop entitled 'Creating environmental education props and games for 4-8 year-old pupils using recyclable materials'. The objectives of the workshop were to sensitize teachers on the need for recycling and to provide the SNPA, crèche and primary schools with a set of tools (props and games for use in environmental education activities). The workshop was funded by the UNESCO Participation Programme.

Over fifty participants comprising secondary Wildlife club students and Wildlife club leaders attended the workshop. Participants engaged in a wide variety of activities, acquiring skills in making basic props and materials for environment education (EE) using waste material from several districts. Teachers also had the opportunity to express their views regarding existing resources and create appropriate tools adapted to the Seychelles context for EE. At the end of the workshop a manual for the effective use of props and games for 4-8 year-olds for EE was produced to help Wildlife clubs make effective use of recyclable materials.

Participants at the 'Creating Environmental Education props and games for 4-8 year old pupils using recyclable materials' workshop.

© Isabelle Ravinia, Seychelles National Parks Authority, 2015

SOMALIA

Somali National Commission of Education, Culture and Science

Chairperson: Ms Khadar Bashir Ali, Minister of Education, Cultural and Higher Education

Secretary-General: Mr Esam Hussein Aljama

Website: www.moesomalia.net

Update of activities in 2015

Three years ago, the Somali National Commission resumed educational, cultural and scientific activities after twenty-two years of absence from the regional and international arena. The National Commission has since carried out a variety of activities and events including workshops and conferences on education planning, scientific research, development, dialogue, immigration and youth. The National Commission is also working with the UNESCO Regional Office through the Ministry of Education to implement literacy projects and teacher training programmes.

The main four challenges in the education sector in Somalia are lack of access to schools and learning, lack of

quality education, lack of equity, and lack of financial and administrative resources. Given these enormous challenges, it became clear to the Ministry of Education and the Somali National Commission that the only way to improve and strengthen sustainable development and stability in Somalia is through education, and by providing equal access to quality education in an equitable manner for all Somali children and youth. The National Commission is therefore working closely with its strategic partners at UNESCO, ISESCO and ALESCO to achieve these desired goals.

In 2015, the delegation of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in cooperation with Permanent Delegation of Somalia to UNESCO resumed its participation in the meetings of the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO after twenty-five years. An official speech was delivered by the Chair of the Somali National Commission and Minister of Education, Cultural and Higher Education, Mr Khadar Bashir Ali, who also participated in the Executive Board elections.

The Somali National Commission still faces many challenges in spite of its achievements during the last three years, most notably the creation of an organizational structure and reorganization of internal regulations, the construction of a permanent headquarters and the provision of an annual budget. In this regard, it should be noted that all personnel working on the activities of the Somali National Commission are volunteers who contribute their time without any financial compensation.



The Somali Cultural Festival 2015, hosted by the State of Kuwait.

© Somali National Commission of Education, Culture and Science

A success story

The Somali National Commission believes that the implementation of several educational, cultural and scientific activities over the last three years constitutes a success story in itself, given the purely voluntary nature of the National Commission staff and its limited resources.

In 2015, the Commission devoted much of its time to preparing its first initiative: a forthcoming donors' conference to support the education sector in Somalia, hosted by the State of Kuwait, which it hopes will be its next success story. The state of Kuwait also hosted the Somali Cultural Festival (15–20 February).

SOUTH AFRICA

South African National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Yousuf Gabru

Secretary-General: Mr Carlton Lufuno Mukwevho

Website: www.dbe.gov.za/unesco

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the South African National Commission continued to promote the implementation of UNESCO programmes and activities throughout the country.

UNESCO and the Swiss minting company Produits Artistiques Métaux Précieux (PAMP) entered into a partnership with the South African Mint to produce and issue a series of commemorative coins to celebrate South Africa's MAB Biosphere Reserves. The launch of the UNESCO-South African Mint's 'Man and the Biosphere: Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve Coin Set' took place during Heritage month at the Waterkloof Wine Estate in Cape Town (23 September).

A four-day 'Workshop on Shared Groundwater Sources', hosted by South Africa (28–31 July), was organized by the governments of Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, UNESCO-IHP and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI). The meeting was convened within the framework of the UNESCO-IHP project 'Groundwater Resources Governance in Transboundary Aquifers' (GGRETA), the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and the Resilience in the Limpopo Basin (RESILIM) programme. The meeting focused on tools for the sustainable management of transboundary aquifers.

The South African National Commission for UNESCO collaborated with New York University through the university's Summer Study Abroad Program. This annual programme, led by Professor Teboho Moja, provides American students with an opportunity to examine South Africa's post-apartheid education and social reforms.

The National Commission also participated in the 'Regional Digital Wellness Conference: Education and Information for All' (24–26 November), held at the University of Pretoria. The conference aimed to raise awareness about the subject of information ethics and to promote dialogue about the Information for All programme and Digital Wellness among stakeholders. Representatives from the National Commissions of Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe also attended, along with representatives from Kenyatta University and other South African institutions.

The National Commission held a ceremony to honour South African individuals and organizations who received UNESCO funding, awards and prizes in 2014. During the ceremony the recipients were congratulated and presented with certificates.

In the social and human sciences, South Africa played a major role in updating the International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport.

Lastly, the Minister of Science and Technology, Mrs Naledi Pandor, opened South Africa's First Science Forum in December 2015. The forum was attended by the Chairperson of the African Union, Mr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the founder of Japan's renowned Science and Technology in Society Forum, Mr Koji Omi, and representatives from the European Commission and the International Council of Science, among hundreds of other attendants.



A success story

In 2015, the National Commission in partnership with Rhodes University hosted the South African chapter of the national consultation on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (24 August). Over sixty delegates attended the meeting from universities, provincial and national government departments, local government structures, non-governmental organizations, youth groups and civil society. The objective of the national consultation was to map existing policies, strategies and programmes using the five priority areas on ESD at the national level, and to identify gaps and priority areas for implementation.

The National Consultation on Education for Sustainable Development

© South African National Commission for UNESCO

SWAZILAND

Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Phineas L. Magagula, Minister of Education and Training

Secretary General: Ms Hazel Busi Zungu

Website: www.gov.sz

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Swaziland National Commission strengthened partnerships with a number of different institutions and ministries related to areas of UNESCO's competence. It collaborated with other organizations to implement activities and participated in special committees, such as the National Research, Science and Technology Steering Committee, to increase the visibility of UNESCO in Swaziland.

The National Commission was responsible for coordinating education stakeholders in Swaziland to prepare documents and country responses in preparation for two forums, the 'Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post-2015', held in Kigali (9–11 February), and the 'World Education Forum', held in Incheon (19–22 May), as a contribution to the 2030 Education Agenda. The National Commission accomplished this role with the technical and financial support of the UNESCO Regional Office in Harare. The Swaziland National Commission also benefited from capacity-building workshops organized by the Multi-sectoral Regional Office for Southern Africa to help countries in the region achieve the goals set by the Education 2030 Agenda.

The Swaziland National Commission with the support of the International Bureau of Education (IBE) also coordinated a Ministry of Education and Training quality assessment of education offered under the education system. The exercise employed General Education Quality Analysis/Diagnosis Framework (GEQAF) tools and was completed in 2015, with phase II of the GEQAF process foreseen for 2016.

With support from the UNESCO Participation Programme (2014–2015), the National Commission was able to fund an educational TV programme entitled 'Brains on the Go', which featured secondary school learners from difficult home backgrounds. The winning learner received a bursary to further his or her studies, and some learners also received financial support at various stages of the competition from viewers.

The National Commission also provided support to enable officers from the National Curriculum Centre to attend a face-to-face session of the Postgraduate Diploma in Curriculum Design and Development in the United Republic of Tanzania. This programme is especially critical for Swaziland in the context of the present transformation towards a competency-based curriculum.

In the area of HIV/AIDS prevention and health, the National Commission supported the finalization and launch of the 'Guidance and Counselling Life Skills Curriculum for Secondary Schools'. The Commission also supported the inclusion of HIV/AIDS sensitive indicators into education management information systems (EMIS).

Lastly, the National Commission celebrated a number of international days including World Press Freedom Day, World Teachers' Day and International Literacy Day.



Student teams busy with a 'bridge-building' competition.
© Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Swaziland National Commission, with support from the UNESCO Participation Programme, organized a series of Science fairs in four regions of Swaziland, and a national Mathematics Fair (25 March) and Information Technology Fair (10 July), held in Matsapha with a view to enhancing girls' participation in these fields.

While numerous science fairs have been conducted over the years, this was the first year in which a special effort was made to encourage girls to enter competitions. Participation by female students in the Mathematics and Information Technology Fairs, both held for the first time, was also encouraging. Girls performed particularly well in the Mathematics Fair, receiving a number of prizes. Some of the winners from Swaziland also went on to participate in a regional Science Expo.

The Mathematics Fair was also accompanied by a symposium, which enabled teachers to meet with other professionals to discuss new and innovative ways of teaching mathematics, with a view to enhancing comprehension and sustained interest in the subject. The participants showed great enthusiasm and passion for the subject and for the event, which raised UNESCO's profile among learners, teachers and the nation at large.

TOGO

Togolese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Octave Nicoué K. Broohm, Minister for Higher Education and Research

Secretary-General: Mr Michel Koffi Agboh

Website: www.unesco-tg.refer.org

Update of activities in 2015

The Togolese National Commission in association with its partners implemented several activities with the financial support of UNESCO in 2015, and participated in international meetings in accordance with its mission.

The National Commission organized the meeting of the national Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme (2 February). The meeting elected its executive bureau, appointed its subcommittees and adopted a series of activities to prepare an action plan.

An awareness and training workshop to provide a baseline level of competence in ICTs for UNESCO instructors was held for partners in the education system and the digital economy (24–25 February). The workshop was organized by the Université de Lomé in collaboration with the National Commission, and successfully formulated an action plan for the introduction of ICTs in education.

To achieve this, the National Commission designed a training platform for teachers on the use of open educational resources (OER), with funding from UNESCO. This mechanism was validated in collaboration with the Ministry of Post and the

Digital Economy at a workshop (9–12 December), and the platform was implemented as part of the second phase of the 'Paris Declaration on Open Educational Resources: Policy and Teacher Training'.

The National Commission for UNESCO also organized a national meeting (29–30 June) to finalize the reference skills matrix for basic education teachers on behalf of the UNESCO Office in Dakar, who provided financial support.

With a view to better equipping the Togolese delegation to play an active role at the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, the National Commission organized a collaboration day (8 September). With the support of the representative of Togo on the UNESCO Executive Board, the delegates exchanged views on the programme and main subjects of the General Conference, and discussed issues related to participation in this key meeting of the Organization.

Finally, fifteen schools in rural environments were fitted with solar panels, lights and internet-connected computers with the support of UNESCO and its partners (Panasonic and the OPEC Fund for International Development).



Performance by the Collège Protestant Agomé-Kpalimé choir.
© Togolese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

For the fifth year, the National Commission held a subregional choral singing meeting (3–7 August) to strengthen cooperation, cross-cultural dialogue, fraternity and friendship between students in the sub-region. The meeting brought together students from schools in the West African Associated Schools Network (RESEAO) from Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo.

The meeting included presentations from the UNESCO Associated Schools project 'Network and Climate Change' supported by video projections, and was followed by a cultural evening with a choral singing competition. The choir from the Collège Protestant Agomé-Kpalimé (Togo) was declared the winner, followed by the Complexe Scolaire Protestant de Porto-Novo (Benin), the Sky High School (Ghana) and the Federal Government College, Ikot Obio Itang (Nigeria), all of whom received prizes.

The itinerary also included a walking tour of the city of Lomé, a visit to the Slave House (Wood Homé) in Agbodrafo and a picnic on the shores of Lake Togo.

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 2015

The Uganda National Commission for UNESCO undertook a number of successful activities in 2015.

In education, the National Commission organized two capacity-building workshops to improve competency-based teaching and assessment skills. The participants included 120 primary schoolteachers and 20 district officials from Central and Western Uganda. A subject specialist from the Uganda National Curriculum Development Centre provided technical support.

In collaboration with the Department of Guidance and Counselling of the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports, the National Commission implemented a project under the UNESCO Participation Programme, which aimed to reduce school dropout rates among girls in rural communities of Northern Uganda by increasing the drive for learning and conceptual skills development. Thirty teachers and peer leaders from five selected primary schools in Northern Uganda were trained in conceptual skills development, and a training manual was developed to help replicate the programme in other areas of the country.



Participants in the National Youth Dialogue Camp at Ndejje University.
© Uganda National Commission for UNESCO

The Commission also collaborated with the Ministry to launch the *Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report 2015* in Kampala (27 August), in the presence of a cross-section of stakeholders and partners. The report aimed to inform, influence and identify effective policy reforms and best practices in all areas related to EFA, track progress towards achieving the EFA goals, and sustain genuine commitment towards achieving set targets for Education for All.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission organized teacher-training sessions on integrating Earth Science Education into the Curriculum. Sixty-four basic science and geography educators from five public universities, five national teachers' colleges, and thirteen selected secondary schools, as well as planners from the National Curriculum Development Centre, undertook the training.

In the field of communication and Information, the Commission worked with fifty selected journalists from the Central and Northern regions of Uganda to promote freedom of expression and access to information.

In culture, the Uganda National Commission in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development worked to increase the capacity of 100 stakeholders to promote the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the four regions of Uganda.

Lastly, the National Commission joined with other Member States in celebrating the 70th anniversary of UNESCO. Activities organized during the year included a public lecture delivered by the Vice Chancellor of Ndejje University, and a colourful performance by Buddo Junior Primary School. The Speaker of Parliament, Ms Rebecca Kadaga, graced the occasion with her presence and launched a booklet on Best Practices of UNESCO Associated Schools in Uganda.

A success story

In 2015, the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO organized a national youth dialogue camp at Ndejje University (10 July) to train forty-four student youth leaders on entrepreneurship, social transformation and HIV prevention. As a result of the skills gained, the youth leaders mobilized their peers to fight high unemployment and dependence levels through the creation of small-scale businesses and social entrepreneurship, including the government's Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES).

Skills gained in conflict resolution and reconciliation also led to a decrease in student unrest in schools and institutions, with the exception of a peaceful stand-off in Makerere University over fee payment, which was resolved peacefully. In the past, such stand-offs had resulted in violent and destructive confrontations with students' strikes becoming a regular phenomenon.

The training also resulted in the establishment of a network of young student leaders, and the use of social media to enhance communication.

The training and tips on rights, obligations and self-esteem has led many youth to participate in elections as candidates and civic educators, and a Youth Manifesto generated by youth leaders on youth concerns has been disseminated to aspiring political candidates at different levels.

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

UNESCO National Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania

Chairperson: Mr Elifas T. Bisanda

Secretary-General a.i: Mr. Moshi M. Kimizi

Website: www.natcom.go.tz

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the UNESCO National Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania collaborated with local and international stakeholders and received support from government ministries and institutions enabling it to effectively coordinate UNESCO programmes and promote the visibility of the Organization. The Commission also mobilized resources to implement UNESCO programmes aimed at building peace, eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development in Tanzania.

In education, the National Commission, in collaboration with education stakeholders in the Ministry of Education and other ministries, inaugurated the National Education Policy. The new policy aims to ensure that attainment of quality education for all and lifelong learning goals are achieved. Education for All activities took place across the country to ensure that education is provided to all Tanzanians at all levels irrespective of gender and other discriminatory aspects. In addition, the National

Commission processed international fellowships and scholarships for Tanzanians through UNESCO co-sponsored programmes.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission was commended for its efforts to protect the environment, for example, through the 'green economy' biosphere reserve project in Eastern Usambara (GEBR) and projects on freshwater resources organized in cooperation with UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme. The Commission's activities also extended to the use of science, technology, engineering and mathematics for national development, and the application of oceanography to mitigate and prevent ocean-related hazards and promote the proper use of the oceans and their resources.

In culture, the National Commission in cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters organized an inter-ministerial meeting to discuss challenges facing World Heritage Sites in Tanzania. The meeting highlighted plans and activities of other ministries, departments or institutions that could jeopardize the outstanding universal values of World Heritage Sites. The objective was to share and exchange information among institutions to ensure the common goal of preserving World Heritage Sites.

In the social and human sciences, the National Commission conducted several training sessions and workshops on pre-education with a view to building character and morals in children on themes relating to peace, global stability and sustainable development.

In communication and information, the National Commission conducted several workshops among schools in the Dar es Salaam region to promote safe and responsible use of the internet. In addition, Tanzania participated in the 'Mobile Apps for Sustainable Development' workshop, which took place in Nairobi (25–30 October). Its objective was to attract talented youth in universities and Tech-Hubs to train and guide young developers to build mobile applications that promote sustainable development.



A cross-section of participants at an Amani Kwanza campaign meeting.
© UNESCO National Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania

A success story

The National Commission for UNESCO designed the Peace Initiative Programme with the overarching objective of mitigating social and political tension and violence, and maintaining peace throughout Tanzania, with a clear focus on the post-election crisis. The programme targeted citizens, political parties and other stakeholders of peace.

The programme now has more than 5 million supporters including young men and women from different backgrounds, including higher learning institutions, colleges, universities, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations. It works with the private sector, mass media and UNESCO Youth Peace Ambassadors to actively encourage and create a conducive environment for peace.

To ensure the objective of this initiative is attained and sustainable, the National Commission provides the necessary technical skills and capacity development to promote capacity-building and activities such as national media and Amani Kwanza campaigns.

ZAMBIA

Zambia National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Michael Kaingu, Minister of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education

Secretary-General: Mr Charles Ndakala

Update of activities in 2015

The year 2015 represented an important milestone in Zambia's role within UNESCO. At the 38th session of the General Conference, Zambia was elected to three UNESCO bodies – the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation, the Intergovernmental Council for the Information For all Programme, and the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication.

2015 also marked the target date for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Education for All (EFA), however, Zambia has continued to implement strategies aimed at meeting targets that have not yet been achieved. In this regard, the country participated in setting the agenda for Education 2030 and took part in the first 'ICT and Post-2015 Education' conference, held in Qingdao, China (23–25 May).

The Zambia National Commission for UNESCO also collaborated with education stakeholders to carry out several projects addressing adult illiteracy. Learning materials were developed and a community learning centre was established

in Nega-Nega. In addition, the Commission sponsored training sessions for teachers and other experts in charge of computer studies and ICT in education.

Encouraging young people, especially women and girls, to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics is key to developing a much-needed cadre of scientists. Accordingly, the Zimbabwe National Commission organized UNESCO Africa Engineering week in Zimbabwe with the objective of highlighting the role of engineering in sustainable development. The Commission also participated in celebrations for World Science Day (10 November) in the Copperbelt province and finalized preparations for the training of science educators in chemistry and physics at secondary schools in January 2016.

In addition, the Commission provided financial support and cooperated with other partners to implement an anti-doping project to sensitize education officers, coaches and athletes on doping issues.

In the field of communication and information, the National Commission co-organized World Press Freedom Day (3 May) and addressed the issue of gender-based violence. Activities included media training and an exhibition about media services among others. The Commission also helped to establish the Kanyama Community Information Centre, which provides information facilities for community members.

Lastly, in the field of culture the Commission organized a training workshop for cultural officers, practitioners and community members on inventorying, held in Choma. The workshop played a vital role in raising awareness of safeguarding cultural heritage.



Activities for sensitizing rural communities on the importance and use of safe water.

© Zambia National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

UNESCO, through the Zambia National Commission for UNESCO, implemented a project to strengthen freshwater security systems in two provinces of Zambia. Its main aim was to improve health through the provision of sustainable water supply, sanitation and hygiene. Activities focused on sensitizing rural communities on the importance and use of safe water.

Different awareness-raising strategies including dramatic performances, dance, plenary sessions and distribution of reading materials in local languages were used to share information with community members. The messages were grouped under three themes: 'the importance of safe water and sanitation', 'the effects of inadequate safe water and sanitation', and 'ownership and responsibility of water incomes'.

One aspect of the project targeted water-stressed communities of rural areas and was carried out in two rural districts in the Eastern Province (Chipata and Petauke) and two districts in the Southern Province (Sinazongwe and Gwembe).

The success of the project owed much to the active participation of local stakeholders and authorities in the planning and implementation stages. The involvement of traditional leaders also underlined their appreciation of the need for clean water. More awareness-raising initiatives on the importance of safe and clean water were requested, as the majority of partners focus on the installation of water points and less on informing communities about the importance of safe water and their role in conducting maintenance.

ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Jonathan N. Moyo, Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development

Secretary-General: Ms Margaret Chirapa

Update of activities in 2015

The Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO implemented a number of projects during 2015 within UNESCO's main fields of competence.

In education, advocacy activities on Education for All were a success and received widespread support (see below). Teachers' unions in Zimbabwe united for the first time to jointly celebrate World Teachers' Day (5 October), and celebrations for International Literacy Day (8 September) in Matabeleland South Province received the buy-in of local leadership, who promised to help ensure that adults who missed an opportunity for school are afforded the chance to learn. A touching testimony was given by a 64-year-old woman who completed basic literacy through her participation in the literacy programme.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission participated in the hosting of two workshops on 'Sustainability Science' to support the Post-2015 Agenda and 'Gender and Science, Technology, Innovations and Engineering' to mainstream

gender policies in science, technology and innovation, respectively.

The Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Committee developed biosphere reserves proposals targeting Honde Valley in Manicaland Province and the Greater Harare Region, and advocated for a transboundary biosphere reserve with Mozambique. There are also plans to resuscitate wetland areas, especially the Munondo Wetland Area in Chihota, currently used for research purposes by the University of Zimbabwe.

In culture, the National Commission conducted a monitoring and evaluation trip to the Mana Pools World Heritage Site, resulting in a report designed to help stakeholders manage issues related to development and conservation.

The Youth Volunteers Programme saw a number of youths attend 70th anniversary celebrations for the United Nations held at the majestic Victoria Falls. The youths undertook volunteer work at this World Heritage Site by pulling up lantana camara weed, which threatens the environment.

The National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe held a training workshop and produced a manual on the *Prevention of Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Objects* under the 1970 Convention.

Lastly, in communication and information, the Commission successfully coordinated celebrations for World Radio Day (13 February), which for the first time were held outside Harare in Gweru, Midlands Province, and World Press Freedom Day (3 May), which brought together variety of stakeholders who gave speeches in support of a free press.



A success story

The Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO in collaboration with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the Education Coalition of Zimbabwe, World Education Incorporated, Save the Children, Leonard Cheshire, teacher organizations and the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, successfully organized the Global Action Week for Education for All (EFA). The event took place in the Midlands Province with representatives from all ten provinces of Zimbabwe. The theme of the event was 'The Right to Education 2000–2030: Vote for Education'.

The event received the support of the highest political leadership in the country. In his keynote address, the Vice-President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, the Hon. E.D. Mnangagwa, highlighted the efforts of the Government to promote Education for All, underscoring the 92 per cent literacy rate, the highest on the African continent, and noting that education received the largest allocation from the public treasury. He further emphasized that the government is committed to the promotion of inclusive education through the provision of suitable infrastructure for children who are physically challenged.

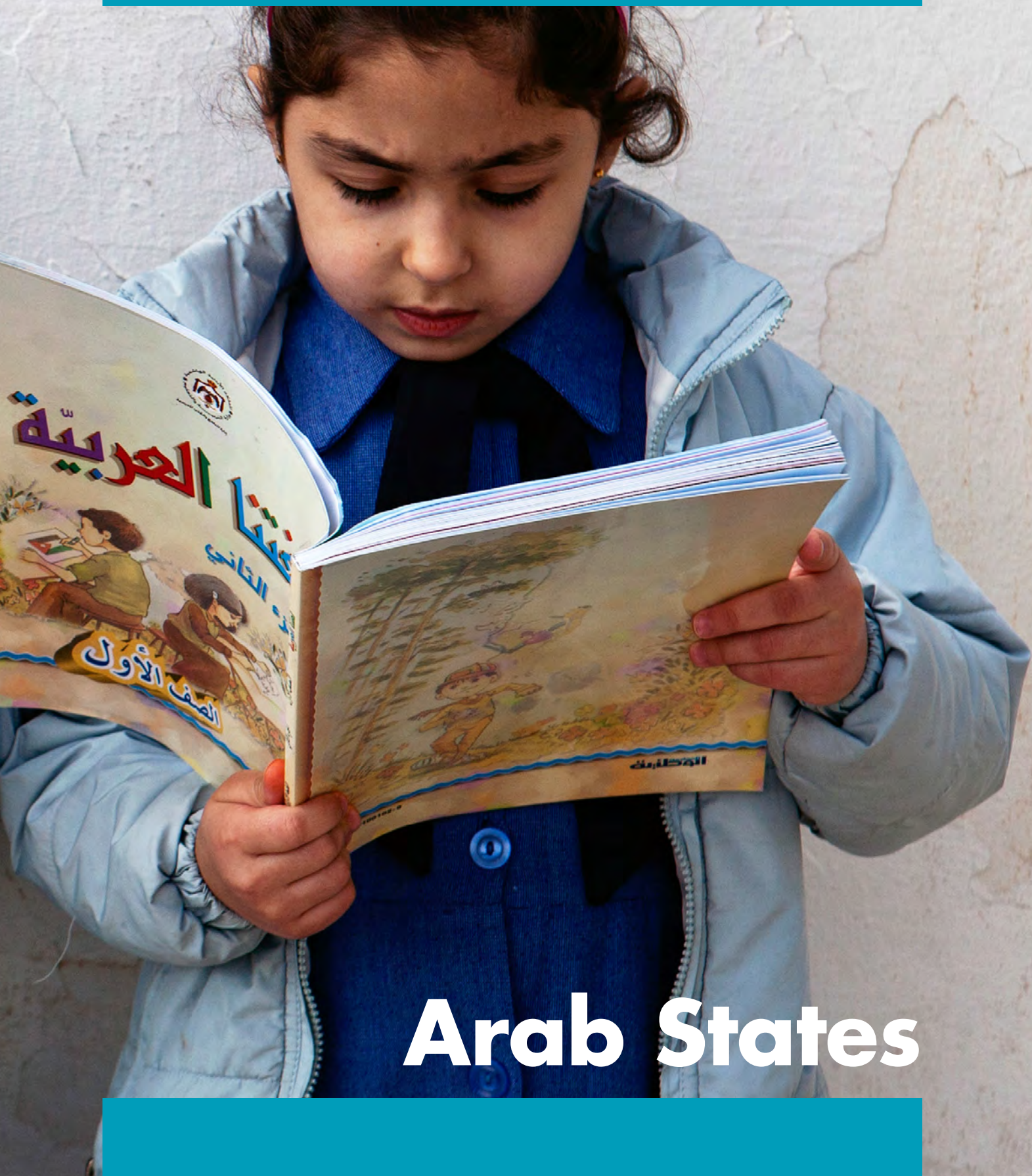
Education partners capitalized on this opportunity by urging the government to undertake greater efforts in provision of quality Education for All and sign language education for teachers, noting that sign language is recognized in the Constitution as one of the national languages.

Top: Hon. Vice President Mnangagwa giving his keynote address at the 2015 Global Action Week in Gweru. Bottom: the Vice-President talking with the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education and one of the students.

© Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO



2011 Education for All Global Monitoring
Report - Education pre-and-posts conflicts.
Government primary school in Amman,
Jordan- two young girls reading a book
Credit : © UNESCO/Tanya Tabjouqa



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UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

ALGERIA

Algerian National Commission for Education, Sciences and Culture

President: Mrs Nouria Benghabrit, Minister of National Education

Secretary-General: Mr Mourad Mahmoudi

Website: www.unesco.dz

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Algerian National Commission for UNESCO undertook a promotion and target achievement programme aimed at meeting the specific priorities of UNESCO.

The year was also marked by an official visit to Algeria by the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, accompanied by a representative from the Regional Office in Rabat, for the launch of the International Year of Light and a special event to celebrate 'Constantine: Capital of Arab Culture' (11–12 April).

The National Commission made preparations for Algeria's participation in the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO (3–18 November), and attended the second interregional meeting of National Commissions (2 November),

as well as meetings organized at national and international levels (UNESCO, ALECSO and regional offices).

In the natural sciences, the National Commission in conjunction with the UNESCO Cluster Office organized a number of events including a workshop on 'Cooperation and diplomacy in the water sector' (8 October) for the benefit of media representatives. The Algerian Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Committee also held a workshop on 'Biosphere reserves: a tool for sustainable development' (2 January).

In culture, the National Commission, the Sidi Abderrahmane at-Thaâlibî Association for the Promotion of Heritage and the Ministry of Culture organized a symposium on 'Sheikh Abderrahmane at-Thaâlibî and his role in the cultural influence of Algiers' in special recognition of the '600th anniversary of the establishment of the at-Thaâlibiyya school' (28 November).

During the year, the natural site, 'Parc de Belzema', was classified as a biosphere reserve and 'sbaâ, the annual pilgrimage to zawiya Sidi El Hadj Belkacem, Gourara' was added to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Candidatures were presented for both the UNESCO/King Hamad Bin Isa El-Khalifa prize for the use of ICTs and the MAB awards 2016 for young scientists. The National Commission implemented requests approved under the 2014–2015 Participation Programme and was involved in the work of the 'NET-MED Youth' project. Finally, two publications were produced for the 70th anniversary of UNESCO.



Chr a Biosphere Reserve reforestation operation. Planting the Atlas cedar.
  Algerian National Commission for Education, Sciences and Culture

A success story

In 2015, a workshop was organized by the UNESCO Office in Cairo in collaboration with the Algerian National Commission for UNESCO and the General Directorate for Forestry (Algeria) on the topic of the 'Sustainable Management of Biosphere Reserves in the Arab Region' (1–3 December).

This workshop brought together thirty-five participants from the ArabMAB network, including biosphere reserve managers from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen, Morocco, Tunisia, Qatar and Sudan, the presidents of the MAB National Committees, and experts on the impact of climate change on biosphere reserves and the role of mass media or ecosystem services.

The presentations and discussions related to support for capacity-building in terms of sustainable management in biosphere reserves, the condition of existing reserves and the creation of new ones in the Arab region, and the establishment of coordination mechanisms between biosphere reserve managers and experts from the ArabMAB network, as well as the identification of sustainable solutions to challenges facing biosphere reserves through the exchange of best practices. A field visit was also organized to the Chr a Biosphere Reserve (3 December).

BAHRAIN

Bahrain National Commission for Education, Science and Culture

Chairperson: Mr Majid Ali Al Noaimi , Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Lubna Selaibeekh

Website: www.moedu.gov.bh

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Bahrain National Commission conducted a number of workshops related to the field of statistics in education, with the participation of specialists from the Ministry of Education, the Supreme Education Council, the Central Informatics Organization and representatives of higher education institutions.

An event to celebrate the International Year of Light was co-organized with the Bahrain Gifted Students Centre, aiming at raising awareness of light technology solutions that meet the global challenges of energy, education, agriculture and health.

The National Commission completed its entry and classification of books in the Ministry's public library software, following its agreement with the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States to regularly supply the library with new and different titles of educational material.

The National Commission revamped its monthly page published under the name 'Nafetha' (window) in the national newspaper Alayam. The page covers educational articles, ASPnet news

and Commission activities. The National Commission has also been working on a print magazine that will contain diverse research articles and news relating to UNESCO events and activities. The magazine will also carry student contributions.

Many projects linked to UNESCO themes were implemented during the year thanks to the efforts of specialists in collaboration with the ASP schools network. The link between the ASPnet Committee and school coordinators was also strengthened through social media and training workshops. Accordingly, the number of ASPnet schools rose to sixty-two in 2015 (twelve private and fifty public schools) including one school catering to pupils with special needs.

Two training workshops were held during 2015 to help school coordinators successfully prepare projects to implement an operational plan in response to their school's needs. Throughout the year, the Commission continued to guide and empower coordinators to execute their projects and prepare activities that support the main objectives.

Evaluation visits to ASPnet schools took place from January to March 2015, to review operational plans for the present academic year. The National Commission also examined measures taken to achieve general and specific objectives at the school level, which correspond with the Ministry's emphasis on promoting peace, respect and belonging.

Lastly, the ASPnet committee held its annual closing ceremony, which coincided with the celebration of World Day for Cultural Diversity. The ceremony took place at Hidd Intermediate Girls School under the patronage of the Minister of Education, Dr Majid Alnoaimi. Around forty public and private schools participated in the ceremony, which included a number of activities and an exhibition that highlighted cultural diversity in Bahrain.



A success story

The main objective of encouraging ASPnet schools to celebrate international days is to raise awareness of issues and themes that have the potential to unify people at the global level, and to promote acceptance of others and co-existence. Hence, the Bahrain National Commission encouraged all schools to revive Arabic Language Day, celebrated by the United Nations on 18 December, due to the language's prominence throughout history, its role in human civilization and its contribution to scientific development. The Ministry established a committee for Arabic Language Day, chaired by Mrs Lubna Selaibeekh, Secretary-General of the Bahrain National Commission, and achieved remarkable success in implementing this year's theme – Arabic and Science – through site visits to public and private schools.

These schools carried out a variety of cultural, scientific and educational activities, such as plays, musicals, poetry, scientific experiments and competitions, and learnt about the many Arab scientists and philosophers that played a significant role in developing the language. Teachers and students, including those with special needs, participated in activities that increased their awareness and esteem of the rich cultural heritage of their mother tongue.

A group of students use their creativity to express UNESCO's principles.

© Bahrain National Commission for Education, Science and Culture

EGYPT

Egyptian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Ashraf Mohamed Al-Sheehy, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Secretary-General: Mr Mohamed Hossam Eldin El Mallahy

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Egyptian National Commission launched a project entitled 'Raising awareness of gender equality: equal opportunities in education for better life'. During the first phase the National Commission organized an expert meeting to establish the content of three workshops aimed at women in Aswan City (April), the Suez Canal Cities (June) and Great Cairo (October). The National Commission also produced a publication documenting key activities of the project for dissemination to interested stakeholders and responsible parties.

The Egyptian National Commission implemented a project on 'Fostering Science for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and Disaster Risk Reduction'. The first phase consisted of an expert one-day round-table (3 May) on crisis management and risk reduction, with participants from the Ministries of Defense, Environment, Water Resources and Irrigation, and the Nasser Military Academy. The second phase comprised a three-day training course on 'Building capacities in crisis

management in the field of natural resources' (1–3 December). The course aimed to strengthen the capacity of trainees to deal with crises relating to water scarcity, flood and drought risks, and to reduce the impact of disasters on natural resources. The third phase consisted of a one-day seminar to discuss the creation of a national network for early warning mechanisms.

The Egyptian National Commission implemented a series of activities to promote UNESCO's

#Unite4Heritage initiative, launched in Egypt during the visit of the Director-General, Irena Bokova, in May at the Islamic Museum in Cairo. The campaign continued with numerous activities carried out by the National Commission in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Cairo, ASPnet schools in Egypt, the Ministry of Antiquities, universities and UNESCO Clubs. All activities were published on social media and received mass media coverage. In addition, the famous Egyptian actress and designated Envoy for Heritage, Laila Elwi, represented UNESCO at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and the pyramids.

Lastly, the Egyptian National Commission implemented the project 'Applying an Early Alarm System in Suez Canal Governorates to Evaluate and Mitigate Environmental Risks resulting from Climate Change'. The project undertook a detailed study of the environmental effects of climate change using remote-sensing and GIS technology. Field visits were made to Suez Canal Cities (Port Said, Suez and Ismailia) to obtain water and soil samples, which were analysed at Suez Canal University Lab. The project coordinator also attended an international training course in Bangkok on 'Climate and Managing Risks in a Changing Environment' at the Asian Disasters Preparedness Centre (16–18 June).



Mrs Zainab Elwakeel, Assistant Secretary-General of the Egyptian National Commission for UNESCO, with the group of experts in a field visit to Malawi Museum.

© Egyptian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

A key activity implemented by the National Commission in 2015 was a three-phase project on 'The Role of UNESCO in the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflicts and Promoting the Return of Cultural Property'.

The first phase of the project was a preparatory Expert Meeting (19–21 April) to shed light on the UNESCO Conventions of 1954 and 1970, and to develop the general framework for an assessment of Malawi Museum, as a case study for the destruction of cultural sites. During the second phase, the researchers studied the state of the museum before and after the attack. This phase involved a field visit to the museum site to evaluate the drastic effects of the attack and assess the most suitable approaches for rehabilitation. The third phase consisted of a training workshop (8–10 December) to disseminate the conclusions of the study.

The project as a whole targeted groups of researchers in the field of antiquities, with the aim of raising their awareness of UNESCO's conventions for the protection of cultural heritage. Participants in this project included representatives and experts from the Ministries of Antiquities, Tourism, Culture, Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior.

IRAQ

Iraqi National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Mohammed Iqbal Omar Mahmood

Secretary-General: Mr Hasanain Fadhil Abbas Maallah

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Iraqi National Commission for UNESCO undertook a variety of activities in the Organization's fields of competence and participated in several meetings and conferences.

During the year, the National Commission participated in the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, the 196th session of the Executive Board, and the 12th session of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), held at Baku (26–27 November).

The National Commission also took part in the Ninth Conference of the Arabic Ministers of Culture, held in Muscat (2–4 November). The theme of the conference was 'Towards a Middle-Stance Culture Favouring Muslim Societies' Development'.

In addition, the Secretary-General of the Iraqi National Commission was appointed to the post of Vice-President of the Executive Council of ISESCO.

In education, the National Commission established the first National Centre for Curriculum Development and Systems Tests in Iraq.

In the field of culture, the city of Baghdad was nominated as the first Arabic city in the literature component of the Creative Cities Network of UNESCO.

Lastly, an Iraqi student was awarded an ISESCO scholarship to study at the Komstas Institute of Technology for Media in Pakistan.



'The First Islamic Conference for Secretaries-General of National Commissions in the Countries of the Islamic World', held in Baghdad (28–29 March) under the auspices of the Iraqi National Commission for Education, Culture and Science. From left to right: Mrs Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO; Dr Al-Tuwaijri, Director-General of ISESCO; Dr Haider Al-Abadi, Iraqi Prime Minister; Dr Mohammed Iqbal Omar Mahmood, Iraqi Minister of Education and President of the National Commission; and Mr Hasanain Fadhil Abbas Maallah, Secretary-General of the Iraqi National Commission.

© Iraqi National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Iraqi National Commission, in collaboration with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), organized the First Islamic High-level Conference of the Secretaries-General of National Commissions in the countries of the Islamic World, held in Baghdad (28–29 March).

The conference, entitled 'Baghdad, city of peace and religions', discussed means to promote a culture of tolerance between religions and respect for religious and cultural diversity in the Muslim world. It also explored ways to use culture, education and science to encourage cooperation and rapprochement among the Islamic countries of the Muslim world.

The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, participated in the conference, which was deemed a great success.

JORDAN

Jordan National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

Chairperson: Mr Mohammad Thneibat, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Ziad Al-Nsour

Website: www.natcom.gov.jo

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Jordan National Commission for UNESCO implemented several activities to promote education, culture and the sciences.

In the field of culture, the National Commission organized an awareness-raising campaign in Jerash to advance the ideals

and objectives of UNESCO in the safeguarding and protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Students and teachers from several schools were encouraged to participate in traditional handicraft exhibitions and folkloric dances and rituals, all of which encompass tangible and intangible elements from Jordan. Representatives and guests from civil society were invited to visit the exhibitions and sample traditional dishes at a buffet prepared by students, teachers and the local community.

In the field of education, the Jordan National Commission for UNESCO organized a heritage event as part of the global campaign 'Unite for Heritage', in cooperation with the UNESCO office in Amman and the regional department of education in Petra, to raise awareness of national heritage.

Students and teachers at Rofaida secondary school for girls and Petra primary school presented cultural and traditional shows, that included traditional songs about weaving and harvesting, as well as an exhibition to display traditional arts, crafts and musical instruments.



ASPnet students make organic compost for use with plants in their schools.

© Jordan National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

A success story

The Sustainable Development Prize aims to enhance understanding of sustainable development among ASPnet students, and encourages them to play an active role in their communities towards achieving the goals of sustainable development.

One secondary school for girls won first place in an electricity consumption awareness project involving workshops for girls and the local community. The same school set up a stall to make available energy-saving bulbs at affordable prices. Second place was awarded to students who designed a water harvest project to store water wasted at a student drinking water site. The water was re-used to irrigate trees and plants in the school grounds.

The third place winner was awarded to a compost production project. The aim of the project was to increase awareness of the potential applications of organic waste in the environment. Students learnt how to re-use organic waste to make compost for plants in the school grounds or for sale outside the school. They also used leaflets and the school's morning programme to share this knowledge.

KUWAIT

Kuwait National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Bader Al-Essa, Minister of Education

Acting Secretary-General: Mrs Nadia Al-Wazzan

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Kuwait National Commission for UNESCO undertook several successful activities to promote and support UNESCO's main fields of competence.

In March, the Kuwait National Commission hosted Mrs Fozia Belhami, the Assistant International Coordinator of the Associated Schools Programme Network (ASPnet), who conducted a three-day workshop to train local ASPnet coordinators on the new strategy for the network for 2014–2021.

In April, the Kuwait National Commission organized its fourth Cultural Season, officially launched by the Minister of Education and President of the National Commission, Mr Bader Al-Essa, with the participation of numerous authorities, non-governmental organizations, and other ministries and partners. It included diverse activities such as a 'Cultural Dialogue' event held at the National Museum, a 'Biological Diversity' event held at the Environment Centre, activities centring on 'Women's Role in Development' and the 'History and Culture of Kuwait', an activity on the 'Role of Youth in Development', a film on violence, poetry performances and an art exhibition.

In October, a sub-regional consultation meeting on 'Green Schools' as an approach to sustainability was held in Kuwait with support from UNESCO, and in cooperation with the Al-Saad Foundation and the Kuwait National Commission. The Minister of Education officially launched the meeting, which included the participation of forty participants from Kuwait schools. UNESCO provided technical input and introduced different thematic areas of education for sustainable development and Green School modalities.



Celebration of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO at the Kuwait National Commission

© Kuwait National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, the Kuwait National Commission in cooperation with the Kuwait ASPnet, organized a successful event at the Kuwait National Museum. The celebration, organized under the patronage of the Minister of Education, Mr Bader Al-Essa, was attended by many official authorities and embassies in Kuwait, and included a variety of activities and performances presented by schools highlighting UNESCO's main fields of competence and achievements over the last seventy years.

LEBANON

Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Henri Awit

Secretary-General: Mrs Zahida Darwiche Jabbour

Website: www.lncu.org

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Lebanese National Commission conducted several activities related to UNESCO's main fields of competence as part of celebrations for the 70th anniversary of the Organization

In the field of communication, a regional training workshop was organized in collaboration with the UNESCO office in Beirut entitled 'Memory of the World: preservation and promotion of Arab documentary heritage'. The objective of this workshop was to boost the capabilities of professionals in Arab countries in the area of documentary heritage and to promote the preservation of archives and collections in the region.

With regard to education, the National Commission, in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Beirut, organized

two workshops for the UNESCO Associated Schools network on the professional skills of teachers: 'A whole-school approach' (16–17 October) and a seminar on 'The Arabic language in the face of the challenges of the contemporary world' (15 December), as part of World Arabic Language Day.

In the area of culture, the National Commission, in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Beirut, launched a schools competition on 'Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development: A Message from Lebanon to the World' with a national awards ceremony (20 October). The competition formed part of the 'King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Programme for the Culture of Peace and Dialogue', which aims to involve young people in the promotion of peace and a culture of dialogue and respect for diversity.

As part of the 'Unite for Heritage' campaign (#Unite4Heritage), the National Commission in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Beirut organized a gathering at the National Museum for students from Associated Schools in the presence of the Director-General, Irina Bokova, during her visit to Lebanon (15 May), and a workshop as part of a drawing competition to promote #Unite4Heritage. The drawings produced have been included in a calendar for 2016. The aim of the competition was to teach young Lebanese people the importance of valuing and safeguarding heritage, as a means to protect and promote culture diversity.



Festival of Associated Schools held to celebrate the 70th anniversary of UNESCO.

© Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Lebanese National Commission, under the patronage of the Minister of Culture, Mr Raymond Araygi, celebrated the 70th anniversary of UNESCO through art, culture and, specifically, intangible cultural heritage, in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Beirut and Associated Schools of UNESCO.

A celebration held at the UNESCO Office in Beirut (11 December) included a variety of activities.

A seminar on 'Culture and the struggle against violence and discrimination', was held with the participation of prominent individuals from the worlds of academia, politics and the media. The inaugural conference was hosted by the eminent Lebanese political scientist and sociologist Georges Corm.

The Lebanese artist and painter Bernard Renno led a graphic arts symposium on the values of UNESCO, with the participation of fifteen artists, and a culinary art festival illustrated the diversity of culinary heritage.

Lastly, members of UNESCO Associated Schools took part in a festival showcasing dances from the five regions of UNESCO and a zajal competition – a popular form of recited or sung poem classified by UNESCO as an intangible element of cultural heritage. Prizes were awarded to winners of the various competitions.

MAURITANIA

Mauritanian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

President: Mrs Vatma Vall Mint Soueina

Secretary-General: Mr Ismail Ould Chouaib

Update of activities in 2015

In order to combat poverty and underdevelopment, which are merely overt expressions of a lack of education and ignorance of one's rights, the Mauritanian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture paid particular attention in 2015 to the situation of young girls and women in Mauritania, many of whom do not enjoy fundamental rights, particularly in rural areas.

The National Commission developed an extensive national programme in line with concerns identified during the 37th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, which identified gender as a main priority. Convinced that nothing lasting can be built while women do not enjoy their fundamental rights, the National Commission maintains that 'a society that chooses to live on the income of half of its population (men) will impoverish more than half' (Mustafa Kemal Atatürk).

In this context, the National Commission held a seminar for forty young girls and women from the Gorgol region to enable them to become true actors for development.



Workshops for women organized by the Mauritanian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture, following the seminar on women's enjoyment of their fundamental rights.

© Mauritanian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

A success story

In 2015, the National Commission organized a seminar on women's enjoyment of their fundamental rights. As a follow up, the Commission organized several workshops for women led by three eminent national experts on the following themes: Women and human rights, Educating women on democracy and citizenship, Creation of micro-projects, and Administration and fund management.

The workshops enabled the participants to work together and pool their different experiences in combination with information presented by the experts. The themes captured the attention of the participants who demonstrated great motivation and expressed their desire for a follow-up.

MOROCCO

Moroccan National Commission for Sciences, Education and Culture

President: Mr Salaheddine Mezouar

Secretary-General: Mr Abdeljalil Lahjomri

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Moroccan National Commission for Science, Education and Culture implemented several initiatives in collaboration with UNESCO, increasing its participation in the Organization's work, especially regarding the development and implementation of its programmes.

The National Commission made available online ecological, archaeological and historical aspects of the M'Goun Geopark, as part of an information-sharing initiative for UNESCO Global Geoparks.

Promotion of Gnaoua culture, which represents the African side of culture in Maghreb countries, resulted in the Gnaoua element being nominated to the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage – a process initiated by the Commission in 2015.

Regarding UNESCO Chairs, the National Commission focused on monitoring the implementation of the UNESCO 'Child, Family and Society' Chair, established at the Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University in Fez.

In 2015, five winners received the L'Oréal-UNESCO Award 'For Women in Sciences'. The recipients included Moroccan winner, Rajaâ Cherkaoui El Moursli, Professor of High Energy Physics and Nuclear Physics at the Mohammed V University in Rabat. She was nominated for her significant contribution to one of the greatest discoveries in physics, namely proof of the existence of the Higgs boson, the particle responsible for the creation of mass in the universe.

A symposium and exhibition entitled 'Reinventing Toumliline: Strengthening Debate and Dialogue Spaces' was held at the Archives du Maroc and the Fondation Mémoires pour l'Avenir, Rabat (9–10 October).

In the context of activities to celebrate the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies, steps were taken to establish the Astromede Maroc/Aldebaran project to create astronomy clubs in Morocco at the Mohammed V University and Al-Akhawayn University, and to establish the Moroccan Amateur Astronomers Network.

In response to new international challenges, the National Commission changed its structure and operational focus, with a view to strengthening its momentum and commitment with regard to UNESCO's activities. The Permanent Secretary of the Académie du Royaume, Mr Abdeljalil Lahjomri, was appointed Secretary-General of the National Commission, supported by a new team that is fully committed to this revitalization process. Since his appointment, the Secretary-General has invited Michael Millward, the UNESCO Representative for Maghreb countries and Director for UNESCO's Cluster Office in Rabat, to pay a courtesy visit to the National Commission. Both representatives discussed new prospects for cooperation between UNESCO Headquarters and the Moroccan National Commission.



Maghreb discussion workshop on water diplomacy and cooperation, held in Rabat.

© Moroccan National Commission for Science, Education and Culture

A success story

As part of the duties undertaken by Mr Abdeljalil Lahjomri since his appointment as Secretary-General, the National Commission, in partnership with the UNESCO Office in Rabat and the Cluster Offices for Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, and the Secretariat-General of the Arab Maghreb Union, organized a 'Maghreb discussion workshop on water diplomacy and cooperation', held in Rabat (16–17 November).

Workshop participants discussed water diplomacy as a shared cross-border water management scheme, as well as a vehicle for intercultural dialogue.

This initiative successfully contributed to the development of a culture of sharing and exchange of knowledge in the water sector between Maghreb countries.

OMAN

Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

Chairperson: Mrs Madiha bent Ahmed Al Shaibaniya,
Minister of National Education

Secretary-General: Mr Mohammed Saleem Al Yaqoubi

Website: www.onc.gov.om

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, represented by the Ministry of Education, organized a workshop on Education Financing Statistics, held in Muscat (29–31 March 2015), in collaboration with the National Centre for Statistics and Information and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. The National Commission also hosted a meeting to discuss the major findings and conclusions of the 2013/2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report and the priorities of the Post-2015 agenda (29 April 2015), with the participation of experts from the UNESCO Doha Office. As part of the Open Educational Resources project – a partnership between the Ministry of Education and UNESCO – the Commission organized a Training of Teacher Trainers session in May 2015, and convened a meeting on Achieving Gender Equity in Education in collaboration with the UNESCO Doha Office (24 November 2015).

In the field of culture, the Oman National Commission organized a symposium celebrating the fourth centenary of the Omani physician and pharmacist Rashid bin Omaira, inscribed

on UNESCO's list of influential people (18 February 2015). The National Commission also participated in a regional training workshop for the Memory of the World Register Programme, organized by the UNESCO Beirut Office, ALECSO and the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO (20–22 May 2015). The Commission took part in meetings of the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Bonn, Germany (28 June – 8 July 2015), and organized a training workshop on National Capacity-Building for the preparation of files submitted to the UNESCO International Fund for Cultural Diversity, with the participation of cultural diversity experts from UNESCO and the Arab region. The Commission also participated in the 10th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in Windhoek (30 November – 4 December 2015).

In the sciences, the Oman National Commission organized the second meeting of the Arab Network for the management of water resources in arid and semi-arid regions, hosted by the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources (3–4 June 2015), in cooperation with the UNESCO Cairo Office. The National Commission in cooperation with the UNESCO Doha Office also organized a workshop on Grey Water for Sustainable Use in Food Production (8–10 December 2015). In addition, it coordinated a workshop on the effective management of natural reserves and the preparation of nomination files for the Man and Biosphere programme in cooperation with the UNESCO Doha Office (13–15 December 2015).

Lastly, the National Commission, represented by the Department of UNESCO Associated Schools, youth programmes and UNESCO Clubs, participated in the UNESCO Associated Schools annual conference in Germany (20–23 September 2015).



A success story

In 2015, the Oman National Commission began implementation of the 'Green Schools' project – an activity that falls within the framework of the recommendations of the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, and specifically the item relating to 'enhancing the learning and training environment'. The Green Schools initiative aims to transform school environments into sustainable environments under the supervision of experts from Sultan Qaboos University and the UNESCO Doha Office.

Three schools were initially selected to implement the project, which lasts from 2016 to 2016, and a team was created to follow up on implementation. Seminars and meetings were held to introduce the project to schools and visits were carried out to countries where such projects have been implemented. In particular, the team visited Indonesia (22–28 March 2015) to visit and learn from the model Green Schools project successfully implemented in the country.

Field visit to the Green School Project by an expert from the UNESCO Doha Office.

© Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

PALESTINE

Palestinian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

Chairperson: Mr Mahmoud Ismail

Secretary-General: Mr Murad Sudani

Website: www.pncecs.org

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Palestinian National Commission organized a calligraphy exhibition entitled 'Jerusalem in the eyes' with the participation of Palestinian calligraphers from the West Bank and Gaza and Palestine. The show included twenty-six paintings with selected phrases incorporated into the calligraphy focusing on Jerusalem and its special values. The exhibition was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and funded by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, with the aim of raising awareness of and preserving this aesthetic heritage, and promoting its theoretical and practical application in schools.

To help promote education in Palestine and give all children in the Gaza Strip area access to schooling in the aftermath of the last war, the Palestinian National Commission in coordination with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education distributed 2,600 schoolbags and stationery to a number of schools. The

initiative was funded by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization.

Within the framework of heritage preservation, the Palestinian National Commission worked to develop the Durr Tree Museum, which focuses on the history of olive oil production (and related tools) throughout Palestinian history. The museum was established inside an old olive mill restored in 2014 by the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee and handed over to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The committee working on the development of the Museum and its exhibition spaces aims to convert the building into an important tourist extension project, able to receive delegations of local and international tourists.

The National Commission also participated in a 2015 project to document Palestinian popular folklore heritage.

The Palestinian National Commission collaborated with ISESCO to help five Palestinian students benefit from a training course for educational frameworks for schools in Jerusalem. With ISESCO'S support the National Commission also helped to fund the award for best tourist city in the Muslim world.

Through the UNESCO Participation Programme, the Palestinian National Commission implemented a project highlighting youth's relation to society, which focused on ways for young people to protect themselves from harassment.

Lastly, the National Commission implemented several activities in partnership with UNESCO clubs based in Palestine, which work hard to achieve UNESCO's objectives. More than five meetings were held with the forty-one clubs, in particular to encourage the involvement of youth in programmes to safeguard local heritage.



The Delegation to the 7th Educational and Cultural Forum with the Palestinian Prime Minister, Dr Rami Al Hamdallah.

© The Palestinian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

A success story

Under the patronage of the President of the State of Palestine, Mr Mahmud Abbas, the Palestinian National Commission organized the 7th Cultural and Educational Forum (4–28 August 2015), under the title 'Palestine ... Freedom and Loyalty'. The forum featured the participation of writers, poets and translators from Iraq, the Republic of Dagestan and Spain, as well as creative youth from Palestine and the Palestinian Diaspora.

The National Commission held an official opening ceremony, which was attended by many cultural, educational and civil associations. The delegation and writers, poets and intellectuals participated in several meetings and events, which focused mostly on the contemporary role of poets, writers and intellectuals, and aimed to spread a message of peace from Palestine to the world. The forum also featured literary contributions in multiple languages. During the forum, the delegation visited the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and Jericho, the oldest city in the world.

The forum gathered together artists, intellectuals and poets from across the world and provided a good opportunity to affirm the role of Palestine on the cultural map.

QATAR

Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

Chairperson: Mr Mohammed Abdul Wahed Al-Hammadi, Minister of Education, Higher Education, Secretary General of the Supreme Education Council

Secretary-General: Mrs Hamda Hassan Al-Sulaiti

Website: www.sec.gov.qa

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the National Preparatory Forum on Education Beyond 2015 was organized under the auspices of the Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, with a view to gathering the views of national partners about proposed education plan goals from the perspective of national challenges and priorities in education.

The Qatar National Commission also organized a joint workshop with the Agricultural Research Department of the Ministry of Environment on 'Fauna and Flora'. The workshop, attended by experts and individuals from academic and industrial institutions, and coordinators from UNESCO-affiliated schools, aimed to raise awareness of the importance of trees, the preservation of the environment and combating desertification.

In cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Doha, the National Commission organized a Regional Workshop on Open Educational Resources (18–19 March 2015) to review and explain the basics of open educational resources and explore the possibility of developing digital content in Arabic. Two national workshops were also organized to build national capacity to promote OER and increase access to quality education (28–29 October and 22 November 2015).

In collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Doha and the Supreme Education Council, the National Commission organized seminars on 'Improving GCC Students' performance in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study' (TIMSS) (13–14 September 2015) and (12–13 October 2015).

In November, the Qatar National Commission held an introductory meeting on UNESCO's global Youth Mobile Initiative. The initiative aims to encourage young people to acquire the high-level skills and confidence to develop and promote successful smartphone applications in the fields of education, culture and sustainable development.

In celebration of World No Tobacco Day, the Qatar National Commission held a joint public seminar with the Supreme Education Council on the theme 'Please Quit Smoking!' to review and discuss the negative effects of tobacco on health and ways to quit smoking.

The Qatar National Commission implemented three programmes during the 2014/2015 academic year in UNESCO-affiliated schools, namely: the Green School Programme, Media Awareness and Patriotism, and the UNESCO Student Ambassador Programme. A number of winning students, school coordinators and outstanding schools were honoured.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Heritage of Qatar and the College of Arts and Sciences at Qatar University, the National Commission organized the 1st Doha Symposium for Arab Calligraphy, which included a number of lectures on the Arabic language, a series of talks with Arab artists and an exhibition on Arabic calligraphy.

Lastly, the Qatar National Commission organized an educational symposium for students from UNESCO-associated schools under the theme, 'Media awareness and national affiliation', in cooperation with the Doha Centre for Media Freedom (12 February 2015).



A success story

To celebrate the International Year of Light, the Qatar National Commission organized an exhibition of light at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (14 January 2015). The exhibition was a joint initiative with the UNESCO Doha Office and the Qatar National Library, with the support of the AlFaisal Without Borders Foundation – a non-for-profit organization that promotes sustainable development and provides humanitarian aid and relief.

H.E. Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani, the founder and Chair of the foundation, inaugurated the exhibition together with UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova, in the presence of experts in heritage and Islamic culture from French and Arab communities in France.

Celebration of the International year of light (14 January 2015) at UNESVO Headquarters.

© Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

President: Mr Ahmad ben Mohamed Alissa, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Ghormallah ben Salleh Alghamdi

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the delegation from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia led by the Minister of Education actively participated in the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, held in Paris (3–18 November). The Minister affirmed the vital importance of education and the commitment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to achieving the objectives of the 'Education 2030' agenda. In the run up to the conference, the Saudi National Commission participated in the working meetings for UNESCO National Commissions (1–2 November).

During the year, the National Commission participated in the 2015 'World Education Forum', held in Incheon, Republic of Korea (19–22 May), where it recommended that the different national education sectors respond as quickly as possible to the Incheon declaration for quality education by 2030.

The National Commission reviewed the study of the Pact for Education in Arab Countries issued by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, and provided recommendations to the Ministry Of Education.

The National Commission also participated in the work of the 80th session of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, held in Jeddah (13–14 November). This session reiterated the importance of promoting education in the Member Countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf.

Lastly, the National Commission developed a workshop for physical educators in coordination with the Arab League's Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO).



The Delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

© Saudi National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

A success story

Since its creation, the Saudi National Commission for UNESCO has taken on the responsibility of forging and promoting links between UNESCO and the different public and private sectors of the country, in all fields of the Organization's competence.

The National Commission endeavours to raise awareness among and educate Saudis on the role and actions of UNESCO for the peaceful evolution of humanity. (62 words)

SUDAN

Sudanese National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mrs Souaad Abdelrazig Mohammed Saeed, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr AbdulGadir Muhammad Hassan Nouredin

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, a delegation headed by the Minister of Education and Chairperson of the Sudanese National Commission for UNESCO attended the 38th session of the General Conference. During the session, Sudan was elected as a member of the Executive Board of UNESCO.

During the year, the National Commission celebrated the International Year of Light throughout Sudan, in cooperation with Sudanese universities and the Associated Schools network (ASPnet). It also commemorated International Days related to UNESCO's fields of competence.

Fruitful cooperation between the Sudanese National Commission, UNESCO Headquarters, the Regional Offices in Beirut and Cairo, the field office in Khartoum and other National Commissions resulted in the successful implementation of many activities throughout the year.

In culture, the Commission prepared a Tentative List of Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites in Sudan. It also collaborated with the Swiss National Commission to grant its patronage to the Film Production Initiative, which is related to the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Within the framework of the UNESCO project 'Unite for Heritage' the National Commission organized an annual trip to Jebel Albarkal for ASP students across Sudan to acquaint them with their national heritage. The Government of Sudan and the telecommunications company MTN sponsored the trip.

In the sciences, the National Commission established an Arab International Hydrological Programme (IHP) National Commission communication and coordination facility, and launched a project to address 'Urgent Capacity Development for Managing Natural Disaster Risks of Flash Floods in Sudan'.

In education, the Commission organized a sub-regional workshop on global citizenship education, promoted access to education and health for children with disabilities, prepared and published The Learning Difficulties Manual, and organized an orientation workshop on 'Early Childhood Development'.

The National Commission also collaborated with the Ministry of Education to developing an action plan to set standards and indicators for public education in Sudan, implemented the project 'Sudan: TVET Policy Review', and organized a validation workshop on 'Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Policy Review in Sudan'.

Lastly, the Sudanese National Commission in cooperation with related institutions successfully completed the implementation of seven projects under the Participation Programme. These dealt with the capacity-building of researchers and specialists at the Sudan National Centre for Curriculum and Educational Research (NCCER), the zonation of Dinder Biosphere Reserve, research on the situation of women in conflict areas, a training course on the management of academic libraries in Sudan, a website development training programme, the establishment of a Women Information Unit and a regional workshop on achieving gender equality through education.



The Director-General, Irina Bokova, welcomes the Sudanese Delegation to the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

© UNESCO

A success story

Under the auspices of the Presidency of the Republic of Sudan and UNESCO, the National Commission, in cooperation with the Council of African Parties, organized a meeting of the International Scientific Committee for the Pedagogical Use of the General History of Africa.

The meeting held in Khartoum (4–10 April) was sponsored by the Government of Sudan and included a visit to Jebel Albarkal, the first Sudanese site to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. Thirty participants attended the meeting including members of the Committee, history teachers, curriculum developers, pedagogues and specialists in history teaching. The principal focus of the meeting was the pedagogical use of the UNESCO General History of Africa series in basic education.

The main objectives were to review the common pedagogical content (curriculum outlines, student manuals and teacher guides) developed for the three selected age groups (10-12, 13-16 and 17-19 years); assess observations and recommendations submitted through peer reviews; draw up a plan of action for the submission of approved common pedagogical content to ministers of education, heads of state and government in the African Union; and consider a strategy to facilitate the integration of this content into primary and secondary school curricula in Africa.

SYRIA

Syrian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Hazwan Alwaz, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Nidal Hassan

Website: www.syriannatcom.gov.sy

Update of activities in 2015

The Syrian National Commission for UNESCO organizes activities and provides support to policy-makers in the fields of education, culture, the sciences and communication. It promotes and coordinates cooperation among government ministries, international organizations, national academic and scientific bodies, non-governmental organizations and stakeholders.

In 2015, the National Commission, in close collaboration with the Syrian Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, focused its activities on building national capacities in cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Office in Beirut. The Chairperson of the Commission and several experts visited Damascus (31 August – 3 September) to make a study of basic needs during the current crisis. The aim of the visit was to provide an effective response to urgent needs in many sectors by providing coordination and logistical support.

Despite the present crisis, the National Commission continued training activities in all areas of its mandate and participated in events organized by UNESCO at the regional level.

The National Commission participated in several education meetings including: the 'Regional Conference for the Arab States on Education Post-2015', held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt (27–29 January); a 'Regional Experts Meeting on Climate Change and Education for Sustainable Development in the Arab States', held in Beirut (5–7 May); and the 'Regional Meeting on Education 2030: Towards Collective Action in Achieving Education 2030 Goals in the Arab Region', held in Cairo (15–16 December).

The National Commission also took part in a workshop on 'The Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Humanitarian Crisis Response', held in Beirut (11–15 May); and a 'Workshop on Education Statistics', held in Tunis (12–16 October). In addition, the National Commission supported an intensive education training course, held in Beirut (1–3 October), designed to give failing students a second chance to succeed.

As part of the official delegation, the National Commission participated in the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO (3–18 November), and played an active role in the high-level ministerial meeting on the adoption of the Education 2030 Agenda.

Finally, in the framework of the UNESCO Participation Programme (2014–2015), the Ministry of Culture carried out a 'Training Course on Archaeological Sites Management', held in Tartus (1–5 October), and the Ministry of State for Environmental affairs organized two workshops in Damascus to analyse the environmental impacts of the current crisis in Syria: 'Standards of Waste Management and Recycling' (26–28 October) and 'Green Architecture' (20–22 December).



'Workshop on Investigative Journalism', held in Damascus.

© Syrian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

During the year, the Syrian National Commission for UNESCO organized a number of successful workshops. In particular, two national workshops should be highlighted: 'The Application of Education for Sustainable Development', held in Homs (29–31 March), and 'The Skills of Work and Life in The Vocational and Technical Education', held in Damascus (7–9 April).

The National Commission also coordinated several successful workshops, including 'Youth-Led Intercultural Dialogue through Sport', held in Damascus (23–25 November) and Latakia (1–3 December) and a 'Workshop on Investigative Journalism', held in Damascus (25–27 May). The latter was organized under the patronage of the Minister of Information, Mr Omran Alzoubi, and the Ministry of Education, and hosted by the Syrian National Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with the Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States in Beirut. The workshop aimed to spread a culture of 'investigative Information' by reinforcing the role of giving mass media as an authority to deal with societal issues, allowing investigative journalism sufficient time to produce accurate and thorough reporting, and providing guarantees to support the right to access information.

TUNISIA

Tunisian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture

President: Mr Néji Jalloul, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Mohamed Kamel Essid

Website: www.edutic.edunet.tn/comnatn

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Tunisian National Commission for UNESCO continued to play a central role as an interface between UNESCO Headquarters and the UNESCO Offices in Beirut, Cairo and Rabat, for the implementation of actions to enhance social and political awareness in the country.

Mr Michael Millward, Director of the UNESCO Office in Rabat, paid a visit to the National Commission in early 2015, with a view to defining priorities in collaboration with the National Commission and the different departments concerned. The Commission and the Director also explored ways to benefit from the UNESCO Project Office, established in Tunisia in 2011, which focuses on communication, in particular freedom of expression. An information meeting was also held to launch the NET-MED Youth project, also housed at the UNESCO

Project Office, and was attended by different representatives of the departments concerned with youth issues.

Throughout 2015, the National Commission coordinated and organized numerous missions from the UNESCO Office in Rabat to Tunisia to support education reform, primarily in the field of planning, with a view to implementing an education strategy for adults.

In the field of heritage protection, the National Commission supported the organization of a training workshop on the preparation of nomination files for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, and on requests for international assistance from the Intangible Heritage Fund. It also provided support to a national workshop on the 'Fight Against Illicit Traffic of Cultural Property', organized with the Ministry of Culture and Heritage Preservation.

The National Commission examined and then submitted three nomination files for the creation of new UNESCO Chairs. All three nominations were successful.

Lastly, the Tunisian Federation of UNESCO Clubs received constant support from the National Commission. The Commission organized several working meetings at its secretariat in cooperation with the Executive Office in order to guide and promote the network of clubs, which plays a central role in enhancing the visibility of UNESCO.



Culture and Heritage Committee.

© Tunisian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The National Commission hosted a meeting of the Specialized Committee for Culture and Heritage, with a view to organizing a campaign to support Tunisia's nomination to the World Heritage Committee. The meeting included the participation of members of the UNESCO Executive Board and led to the establishment of a collective plan to conduct a campaign in support of Tunisia's nomination.

The National Commission supervised this campaign with national bodies and carried it forward to the 38th session of the General Conference, where Tunisia was elected a member of the World Heritage Committee for the next four years.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

United Arab Emirates National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

Chairman: Mr Hussein bin Ibrahim Al Hammadi, Minister of Education

Secretary-General (acting): Mrs Amal Alkoos

Update of activities in 2015

The UAE National Commission for UNESCO implemented many educational, scientific and cultural activities throughout 2015 as part of the ongoing partnership between the United Arab Emirates and UNESCO.

The UAE National Commission participated in the 'World Education Forum 2015', held in Incheon, Republic of Korea (19–22 May), where all the participating countries adopted the Incheon Declaration for Education 2030 which sets out a new vision for education for the next fifteen years.

The UAE National Commission also participated in a sub-regional meeting on enhancing capacity for the development of regional monitoring and the evaluation of education in 2030 in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Yemen. The meeting was held in the Regional Centre for

Educational Planning in Sharjah (13 September) in cooperation and coordination with the UNESCO Office in Doha and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (Montreal, Canada). The participants exchanged views on education priorities for 2030 and proposed goals for education.

The UAE National Commission attended the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, held in Paris (3–18 November). The UAE delegation consisted of nineteen persons who took part collectively in almost all the conference activities.

In the natural sciences, the UAE National Commission participated in many local events, such as the World Water Summit (16–23 January) organized by the Abu Dhabi Environment organization under the title 'Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week', and international forums, such as the 7th World Water Summit held in Daegu, Republic of Korea (12–17 April). At the regional Arab level, the UAE National Commission participated in a workshop on Water and Education held in Amman (18–20 August).

In the areas of culture and communication, the UAE National Commission played an instrumental role in a number of local and international events. Examples include the 'World Forum for Intercultural Dialogue', held in Baku (18–19 May); the meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, held in Paris (14–16 December); the 'International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education', held in Qingdao, China (23–25 May); and the Regional Seminar on the digital divide and requirements to cope with in the Muslim World, held in Muscat (8 December).



'Fourth training workshop for building Arab capabilities in the field of intangible cultural heritage'.

© United Arab Emirates National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

A success story

In September 2015, UAE organized the 'Fourth training workshop for building Arab capabilities in the field of intangible cultural heritage' with the participation of thirty experts and specialists in the field of heritage from Arab countries.

The experiences of participating Arab countries were presented in terms of the availability of laws and regulations for the protection of intangible cultural heritage, and the role of customary laws with regard to heritage.

The workshop also discussed challenges facing capacity-building in the field of intangible cultural heritage, and explored ways to employ sustainable development in the Arab states system, and the role of media and information technology institutions in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and the most important Arab initiatives in this field.

In addition, the workshop shed light on the importance of research and documentation centres and museums, and their role in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The workshop discussed prospects for the promotion of these centres with the aim of ensuring the protection of human treasures and facilitating the transfer of heritage to future generations.

These are students of an elementary school in Makassar who follow a 'class of inspiration'. Every year this class is conducted to give a clearer perspective to students about their dreams for the future. Tutors of this class come from different professions such as accountants, officers, doctors, pilots, journalists, designers, photographers etc. It is expected that students will be able to define their future dreams from childhood. As seen in this picture, students are flying paper planes that they made with the hope that their wishes could fly as high as the sky, and that one day, they could perhaps even fly a real plane.

© UNESCO/Tina Miedtank





Asia and the Pacific

**AUSTRALIA • BANGLADESH •
BHUTAN • CAMBODIA • CHINA •
DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC
OF KOREA • FIJI • INDONESIA
• IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)
• JAPAN • KAZAKHSTAN • LAO
PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC •
MALAYSIA • MONGOLIA • NEPAL
• NEW ZEALAND • PAKISTAN
• PHILIPPINES • REPUBLIC OF
KOREA • SINGAPORE • SRI LANKA
• TAJIKISTAN • THAILAND •
UZBEKISTAN • VIET NAM**

AUSTRALIA

Australian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Annmaree O'Keeffe AM

Secretary-General: Mr Adam Illman

Website: www.dfat.gov.au/intorgs/unesco/

Update of activities in 2015

The Australian National Commission for UNESCO aims to promote UNESCO's objectives in Australia and the Asia-Pacific, and to provide expert advice to the Australian Government on UNESCO matters.

In 2015, the Australian National Commission continued to raise the profile of UNESCO via its Grants Scheme. The National Film and Sound Archive undertook an audiovisual preservation needs analysis across several countries in the Pacific; the Indigenous Remote Communications Association delivered a five-day training programme on the preservation of audiovisual collections held by remote Australian and Torres Strait media organizations; the University of Sydney developed a website and held a symposium related to UNESCO's involvement in migration, environmental and heritage issues in Australia since the Second World War; and Arts Mildura convened an international art project celebrating three Australian UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Two meetings of the Executive Board of the National Commission were held during the year introduced the new Secretary-General to Board members and ex-officio government representatives. The Chair and Secretary General were also involved in State and Federal Government celebrations for the 70th anniversary of the United Nations. In addition, the Chairperson of the National Commission delivered a speech at Parliament House and laid a wreath at the Cenotaph in Sydney (23 October).

The highlight of the year for the Chair and Secretary-General was undoubtedly attending the 38th session of the General Conference in Paris (3–18 November). This provided the National Commission with the opportunity to participate in the 2nd Interregional Meeting of National Commissions and to meet and share ideas with other Commissions in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. In 2016, the Commission hopes to continue building upon these relationships and to launch a new round of exciting grant projects.



A detail from the cover of the *LEAP+* magazine 2015.
© LEAP+ 2015.

A success story

LEAP+, the magazine of Asia-Pacific Writers and Translators, benefited from a National Commission grant, which allowed them to develop an online journal. This website showcases new writing from across the Asia-Pacific and links authors to translators, allowing them to widen their audience. New works of poetry and prose are shared and events and opportunities of interest are publicized. Authors also benefit from a platform to discuss how and why they write and how they engage with the translation process.

The website is an excellent accompaniment to the hardcopy magazine and allows easy access to its new and archived content. *LEAP+* can be visited here: www.leap-plus.com/

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Nurul Islam Nahid, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Md. Sohorab Hossain

Website: www.bncu.gov.bd

Update of activities in 2015

The Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO celebrated 2015 by launching a programme to celebrate the 70th anniversary of UNESCO in Bangladesh. The programme began with an Inter-Ministerial meeting headed by the Minister of Education and Chairman of the Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO. A bookstall was installed at the vast *Amar Ekushey Granthamela* book fair at Bangla Academy to exhibit and distribute UNESCO publications, posters, leaflets, photos, relevant certificates and information. The fair regularly enjoys the patronage of thousands of writers, publishers and book-lovers. As part of the ongoing celebrations, an art competition was organized at the International Mother Language Institute (23 February) with the Bangladesh National Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Students from diverse education establishments including ASPnet schools participated in the event.

Throughout the year, the National Commission facilitated the participation of the Bangladesh delegation in the UNESCO Executive Board and the 38th General Conference, which culminated in the establishment of the International Mother Language Institute at Dhaka as a Category II Centre.

The Bangladesh National Commission successfully carried out five approved projects under the UNESCO Participation Programme (2014–2015) in collaboration with different governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.

The National Commission also organized a National Training Session on financial management (15 July) with the cooperation of ISESCO, with a view to enhancing its capacity to implement development activities.

With the support of the Korean National Commission, the Bangladesh National Commission successfully implemented a 'Literacy Campaign for the Women of Char Khalifa, One of the Marginalised Communities of Bangladesh'. The project took place at Bhola in conjunction with the local administration, and targeted illiterate adult women in the locality. In addition, the Bangladesh National Commission organized the launching ceremony for the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2015* in October in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Dhaka.

The Commission also collaborated with the Dhaka Office to organize a 'National Consultation Forum on Education 2030: Towards Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All' (9 December). The forum initiated discussions among stakeholders regarding implementation of the new 'Education 2030' agenda in Bangladesh.

Lastly, the Commission collaborated with ISESCO to implement a 'National Workshop on the Use of ICTs in Literacy and Non-Formal Education' (December), and a project entitled 'Documentation on Islamic Heritage Sites in Dhaka City', which resulted in the publication of an e-book providing researchers with historic details of the capital city.



Closing ceremony of the joint project, 'Preservation and Promotion of the Songs of Abdul Alim', at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

© Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the National Commission and the Abdul Alim Foundation (AAF) launched a joint project dedicated to preserving the work of Abdul Alim and introducing his matchless songs and singing style to a wider audience.

The project, entitled 'Preservation and Promotion of the Songs of Abdul Alim, the legendary folk singer of Bangladesh', undertook a nationwide talent hunt programme to locate young folk artists across Bangladesh to take part in a programme at the National Music and Dance Centre (23 December). The project also produced a high-quality DVD containing the songs of Abdul Alim performed by selected artists, as well as a publication based on research by experts targeted at teachers and students of music, and a full-colour souvenir brochure on the life and works of Abdul Alim.

The project is expected to attract the attention of new generations and will promote and protect the songs of Abdul Alim in the years to come.

BHUTAN

Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Mingbo Dukpa, Minister for Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Sangay Zam

Website: www.education.gov.bt

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Bhutan National Commission conducted a National Capacity-Building Workshop on the theme of 'Global Citizenship Education' at Zilukha Middle Secondary School with funding from the Korean National Commission for UNESCO. The workshop trained new ASPnet school coordinators to promote UNESCO's aims and ideals. The participants exhibited increased awareness of the issues involved and the work and resolutions of UNESCO. They also indicated a readiness to share the knowledge they learned with colleagues and peers, and to carry out activities and

programmes on global citizenship and peace in their schools and communities.

The schools also observed International UN Days through various literary activities, exhibitions, awareness-raising programmes, stage shows, plantation and gardening activities, field trips, cleaning campaigns and visits to cultural sites.

In October, all the schools in Bhutan carried out a week-long programmes of activities on Global Goals for Sustainable Development. The aim of the initiative was to highlight 17 goals that would help the students to change the world.

Lastly, the first-ever APCEIU-Alumni seminar held in Bhutan (18 November) created a platform to allow alumni to share experiences and skills gained from capacity-building workshops and training sessions organized by the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU).



A success story

In 2015, the National Commission organized a project entitled the 'National Programme to Strengthen Children/Youth Sports and Physical Activities in the Schools in Bhutan'. This workshop aimed to preserve and promote Bhutanese Indigenous Sports in schools. It was well received with ninety-three school sports administrators and sports personnel from across the country participating in activities.

The workshop helped to highlight the significance of indigenous sports and included discussions on strategies for their preservation and promotion. The major outcome of the workshop was the development of the Bhutanese Indigenous Sports booklet, which was distributed to schools across the country.

Bhutan Indigenous Sports Booklet

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© Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO

Bhutan Indigenous Sports Booklet.

© Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO

CAMBODIA

Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister

Secretary-General: Mrs Tan Theany

Update of activities in 2015

A highlight of 2015 was the continued return of important relics that disappeared at the start of the 1970s – an issue that has received both Cambodian and foreign media coverage. The return of cultural property has taken place within the framework of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. The process involves negotiations and the recovery of works from certain museums in the United States of America. The latest relic to be recovered was a statue of the Monkey King, Hanuman – a key figure in the great Indian epic Ramyana. Proof was found at a recent excavation in Koh Ker that the statue was stolen from the Prasat Chen temple and later acquired by the Cleveland Museum of Art.

The year also saw the establishment of a national Memory of the World (MOW) Committee under the auspices of the Ministry for Culture and Fine Arts, and within the framework of the MOW programme.

The National Commission also worked in close collaboration with both the Ministry and the UNESCO Office in Phnom

Penh to engage reputable experts, with a view to revising the application file for the nomination of the pre-Angkorian historic and archaeological site of Ishanapura, today known as Sambor Prei Kuk.

Finally, the Commission, in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh, organized a regional training seminar for military personnel and military representatives from other Asian countries (1–3 September). The seminar was held within the framework of the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, and UNESCO's recommendations on the reinforcement of awareness-raising and training activities related to The Hague Convention (1954). Experienced trainers a statue of the military's obligations regarding the protection and preventive conservation of cultural property in peacetime and in times of armed conflict. The seminar took place at the headquarters of a special army unit in the Preah Vihear region and was attended by 130 high-ranking military personnel and HRH Prince Karl von Habsburg, President of the Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield.



The training meeting on the 1954 Convention held at the Training Centre in Angkor, September 2015.

© Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the National Commission, in cooperation with the World Heritage Centre, and supported by APSARA, the National Management Authority for the Angkor site, organized the '1st Youth Regional Forum for World Heritage in Asia' (26 November – 3 December). The forum brought together forty young people from twenty-one Asia-Pacific countries. The official speakers addressed issues such as site management, tourist flows, water, monument conservation and local community participation, as well as challenges to be met. The issues were the subject of a declaration submitted to the Technical Session of the International Coordinating Committee for Angkor (ICC-Angkor) in December 2015.

The forum emphasized heritage preservation issues including excavations, such as at the one village of Choeung Ek near Phnom Penh, and the importance of preventive conservation, such as the techniques used at the central sanctuary of Angkor Wat and the Wat Bo pagoda of Siem Reap.

CHINA

Chinese National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Hao Ping, Vice Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Du Yue

Website: www.unesco.org.cn

Update of activities in 2015

The Chinese National Commission enhanced cooperation between UNESCO and the People's Republic of China in 2015. This year witnessed continued high-level exchanges between UNESCO and China, greatly increasing the visibility of UNESCO in the country. President Xi Jinping sent congratulatory letters to the 'International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education', held in Qingdao (23–25 May), and the '9th UNESCO Youth Forum', held in Paris (26–28 October).

Premier Li Keqiang met with the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, during his visit to France, and the Director-General in turn visited China on the occasion of the International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education and during commemorations marking the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War (September). In-depth exchanges were held between Vice-Premier Liu Yandong and the Director-General on both occasions.

The First Lady of China and UNESCO Special Envoy for the Advancing Girls' and Women's Education, Peng Liyuan, met with the participants of the 'International Seminar on Girls' and

Women's Education', held in Beijing (4 September). The First Lady was also one of the high-level speakers at the UN Global Education First Initiative's (GEFI) high-level event in New York (26 September).

Several important events held in China were co-organized by China and UNESCO, including the 'International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education' (see below) and the '5th Intangible Cultural Heritage Festival', held in Chengdu (11–20 September).

During the year, Tusi Sites were inscribed on the World Heritage List and the Nanjing Massacre Documents were added to the Memory of the World Register. In addition, the Guizhou Zhiyin Cave Geopark and Gansu Dunhuang Geopark were accepted as UNESCO Global Geoparks. In addition, four Category II Centres to be established in China were approved by the 38th General Conference, and Professor Xie Yi, from the University of Science and Technology of China won the L'Oréal-UNESCO Awards 'For Women in Science'.

The UNESCO-China Funds-in-Trust Project on 'Enhancing Teacher Education for Bridging the Education Quality Gap in Africa' went smoothly this year and will be extended for two more years.

Lastly, the exchange programme conducted with the National Commissions of Japan, the Republic of Korea and Thailand continued in October with staff members from these National Commissions visiting Category II Centres, UNESCO Club schools and World Heritage Sites in China and sharing information and good practices.



Participants at the 'International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education', held in Qingdao, China,
© Chinese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

On 23 May 2015, Vice-Premier Liu Yandong and the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, addressed an audience of more than 500 international experts from eighty-two countries and regions at the 'International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education', which was organized by UNESCO, the Ministry of Education of China and the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, with the support of the Qingdao Municipal Government.

In a congratulatory letter to the conference, shared by Vice-Premier Liu Yandong, President Xi Jinping asserted that 'Talents determine the future. Dreams are realized through education. China is willing to expand the platform of international communication and cooperation with all the countries in the world, and to actively promote innovative development combining ICT and education, exploring a way to promote the sustainable development of education and create a better future for humanity.' The Vice-Premier outlined the Chinese Government's efforts to realize the modernization of education with the help of ICT in a country with 260 million students and more than 15 million teachers, and also presented the core goal of 'three connections and two platforms' for the country.

The opening was attended by the Minister of Education, Mr Yuan Guiren, the Governor of Shandong Province, Mr Guo Shuqing, the President of the UNESCO General Conference, Mr Hao Ping, and the Chairperson of UNESCO's Executive Board, Mr Mohamed Sam Amr.

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The National Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Ri Yong Ho, Vice-Minister for International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Kim Chang Min

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the National Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea celebrated the 70th anniversary of UNESCO.

Mr Ri Su Yong, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, met with the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, in December at UNESCO Headquarters, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of UNESCO and exchange viewpoints on developing further favourable relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and UNESCO in its main fields of competence: education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information.

In education, a UNESCO workshop on education statistics was organized in Pyongyang (August) in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Beijing and the UNESCO Institute of Statistics. Specialists from the Education Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea also participated in the Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED2030), where an agreement was reached on the way forward for 2016, and an outcome document was prepared to support Member States in their planning and implementation of Education 2030.

In the sciences, Mr Han Qunli, Director of Ecological and Earth Sciences and Secretary of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme of UNESCO visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea during August, at the invitation of the MAB National Committee, to explore ongoing management activities related to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, including Mt Myohyang. The National Committee also discussed various issues concerning the preservation of biosphere reserves and cooperation within the framework of the East Asia Biosphere Reserves Network (EABRN).

In culture, the National Commission in close cooperation with the National Authority for the Protection of Cultural Heritage carefully formulated and presented the nomination file for the 'Tradition of Kimchi-Making in DPRK'. The file was examined at the 10th Session of the ICH Intergovernmental Committee meeting, held in Windhoek (29 November – 4 December), and inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This decision is a testament to the long and rich history of this national intangible cultural heritage.

In communication and information, female specialists from the Grand People's Study House participated in a workshop on the preparation of nominations for inscription on the Asia-Pacific Memory of the World (MoU) Regional Register, held in Suzhou, China (24–27 March).



Conservation of mural paintings on the west wall of the Susan-ri Tomb.

© UNESCO/The National Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for UNESCO

A success story

A UNESCO Expert Workshop on the 'Conservation of Mural Paintings: Access, Research, Conservation' was organized at the National Museum in Berlin (3–4 June), within the framework of the UNESCO/Republic of Korea Funds-in-Trust Project, 'Preservation of Koguryo Mural Paintings and Tombs in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea', in close cooperation with the World Heritage Centre.

Scores of specialists from various countries, including three experts from the National Authority for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (NAPCH) of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, participated and exchanged success stories and experiences gained in this field of expertise, and discussed provisional guidelines for safeguarding mural paintings in humid areas.

FIJI

Fiji National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Mahendra Reddy, Minister of Education, Heritage and Arts

Secretary-General: Mr Amani Cirikisuva

Website: www.education.gov.fj

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Fiji National Commission for UNESCO provided support to the Minister of Education, senior civil servants, teachers, youth leaders, partners from non-governmental organizations and students enable them to attend conferences, seminars and training workshops in Fiji and abroad.

Accordingly, the Minister of Education attended the World Education Forum, held in Incheon, Republic of Korea (15–22 May). The outcome document entitled 'Framework for Action Education 2030', presents a blueprint for the development of education up to 2030. The Minister also attended the 'International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education', held in Qingdao, China (23–25 May).

A research study on science, technology and innovation (STI) in Fiji and the Pacific commissioned by UNESCO was submitted to the National Commission in 2015. The main objective was to survey existing STI programmes and activities in schools and tertiary institutions, and identify achievements, challenges and future projects.

Fiji continued to revise its Quality Physical Education Policy (QPEP) package for piloting in selected schools. The main goal

is to review and adapt physical education policy to ensure inclusion and quality provision. UNESCO is implementing the project in partnership with UNDP, UNICEF and WHO.

A study on 'Career Pathways for Teachers in Fiji' was completed and sent to the UNESCO Office in Bangkok in December. The study was conducted by an Education Quality Assessment Programme (EQAP) consultant and supported by the Fiji National Commission.

A Multilingual Education Mapping Exercise was completed in April. The languages captured in the survey were iTaukei, Hindi, Rotuman and languages used at pre-school centres. The exercise aimed to assess inequalities in educational attainment of ethnolinguistic minorities and promote good practice in increasing access and equality.

A revised set of teacher's standards known as the Fiji School Teachers Competency Framework and the Fiji Schools Leadership Competency Framework was developed and completed in November following extensive consultations and training of teachers throughout Fiji.

Fiji also completed its first National Consultation on Open Education Resource (OER) Policy in March. The consultation took place in response to international conferences attended by officials from the Fiji Higher Education Commission.

The State Party Progress Report on Levuka, Fiji's World Heritage Site, was prepared by the Department of Heritage and Arts and submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. The Department also conducted consultations with relevant stakeholders to mainstream culture in the National Curriculum.

Lastly, the National Archives of Fiji (NAF) oversaw the successful restoration and digitization of 2,000 hours of unique historical audiovisual footage. The heritage is now fully accessible and available to the general public.



Traditional basket weaving practised and transmitted through the revitalization programme.

© Fiji National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs submitted the 'Cultural Mapping Methodology for the 'Safeguarding of the iTaukei Intangible Cultural Heritage' to UNESCO for inclusion on its Register of Best Safeguarding Practices.

The Cultural Mapping Project (CPP), which began in 2004, is an information-gathering exercise involving the collection, recording and documentation of iTaukei tangible and intangible cultural heritage throughout Fiji. Information collected is stored in the National Inventory for Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Expressions of Culture (EC).

The establishment and protection of TK and EC was initiated to preserve and safeguard tangible and intangible cultural heritage, support cultural diversity and respect for cultural rights, and promote tradition-based creativity and innovation as components of sustainable economic development.

The project allows custodians to appreciate and utilize their TK and EC to create employment opportunities. Furthermore, the project seeks to raise awareness of people identified as potential Living Human Treasures, and conduct revitalization workshops to promote the revival of TK and EC through the transmission of knowledge related to cultural expressions, especially those in danger of disappearing.

INDONESIA

Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Anies Baswedan, Minister of Education and Culture

Secretary-General: Mr Arief Rachman

Update of activities in 2015

The Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO participated in several international conferences during the year, including the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO and organized the following activities.

In 2015, the Indonesian National Commission supported the Indonesian edition of the L'Oréal-UNESCO 'For Women in Science' fellowships programme (3 December). Four fellowships were awarded to young women researchers - two in the life sciences and two in the material sciences.

In education, the National Commission, in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Jakarta, successfully piloted the Adiwiyata Green Schools Indonesia (AGSI) programme in six elementary schools in Mataram, Lombok. The AGSI programme integrates Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into schools through the involvement of students, parents and the local community, with the support of local government.

In the natural sciences, the Indonesian Commission for IOC-UNESCO, in consultation with the Regional IOC-UNESCO Office, continued to develop a Regional Training and Research Centre (RTRC) for Tropical Marine Biodiversity. The centre trains young scientists in the Western Pacific Region and carries out integrated research and monitoring of coral reef ecosystems to support the sustainable use of coastal resources.

In culture, the Indonesian National Commission in cooperation with the General Directorate of Culture, organized the 2015 edition of 'Kawawitan Muda Indonesia' (KMI), an annual concert designed to introduce young people to traditional Indonesian music and to help preserve traditional musical culture. This year, the concert featured nine Indonesian artists from different provinces and was attended by the Minister of Education and Culture and ASPnet schoolteachers and students.

The Indonesian National Coordinator of ASPnet participated in the 'International Seminar on Water: Nature's Precious Gift', held at the University of the Philippines, Quezon City, Philippines (27–31 July). The seminar was co-organized by the Philippines National Commission and the National Institute of Science and Mathematics Education Development.

During the year, the Indonesian National Commission sent two female students to participate in the 9th UNESCO Youth Forum, held in Paris (26–28 October). Indonesia also sent seven teachers, two students and one National ASPnet Coordinator to participate in the 'International Seminar on Climate Change Education' (7–8 December), held at UNESCO Headquarters within the framework of COP21.

Lastly, two natural sites in Indonesia were designated biosphere reserves under the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme: Taka Bonerate (a marine reserve) and Bromo Tengger Semeru (a terrestrial reserve). Three genres of traditional dance in Bali were inscribed on the List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and the Asian-African Conference Archives were inscribed on the Memory of the World register.



The 'Eco-Friendly Entrepreneurship for Youths and Adults' project encourages people between the ages of 18 and 45 to work with their local community.

© Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Centre for Development of Early Childhood, Non-Formal and Informal Education (Jayagiri, Bandung, Indonesia) was awarded the Japan-UNESCO ESD Prize for its 'Eco-Friendly Entrepreneurship for Youths and Adults' project. This project takes an innovative and committed approach to the development of entrepreneurial skills and local engagement in sustainability. It encourages people between the ages of 18 and 45 to work with their local community to harness local traditions and resources, and to create their own products using recycled materials. The project preserves local culture and the environment, while stimulating rural businesses and competitiveness through active pedagogies.

IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)

Iranian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Mohammad Farhadi, Minister of Science, Research and Technology

Secretary-General: Mr Sadollah Nasiri Gheydari

Website: www.irunesco.org

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Iranian National Commission planned, organized and implemented several programmes in line with the objectives of UNESCO, in cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations, universities, scientific associations and social entities. It also organized exhibitions and talks to commemorate international days, such as the World Science Day for Peace and Development.

In education, the Iranian National Commission organized the Sub-regional Launch of the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2015* (28–29 July) in cooperation with the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office (UTCO), the Ministry of Education and UNICEF-Tehran, with the participation of Tehran Cluster countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkmenistan).

The National Commission also worked with UTCO and governmental institutions to organize a 'High-level Meeting on the Application of Modern Technologies, Especially Mobile Learning Tools in Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning' (23 February) and the 'National Research Seminar on Applying Modern Technologies, especially Modern Learning Tools to the Teaching-Learning Process' (25 February).

On the occasion of International Literacy Day (8 September) the National Commission organized a seminar on the 'Role of Literacy and Adult Continuing Education in Establishing Sustainable Societies'.

In the field of communication and information, the National Commission coordinated a 'National Workshop on Information Literacy for Teachers' (23 May), in cooperation with the Information Technology Organization and the Information Technology Research Centre of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It also compiled and published a work on Iranian documentary heritage inscribed on the Memory of the World register.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission organized a Consultative Meeting of the Chairpersons of the National Committees and UNESCO science-related entities in the Islamic Republic of Iran (18 May), in the presence of the Assistant Director-General for the Natural Sciences, DMs Flavia Schlegel.

The National Commission also contributed to the organization of the '5th International Conference on Sustainable Development and Urban Construction', held in Esfahan (17–19 December), in cooperation with the Daneshpajooan Institute of Higher Education and the Technical University of Dortmund.

In the social and human sciences, the National Commission organized the 'National Consultative Meeting on the Use of ICTs for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities', held in Tehran (5–6 December). The meeting laid the foundations for the development of a National Plan of Action that will include recommendations on enhancing the role of ICTs in increasing access to education, public information, social services and job opportunities for persons with disabilities.



Participants at the Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on Biosphere Management in the Islamic Republic of Iran, held at Miankaleh Biosphere Reserve.

© Iranian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Iranian National Commission organized a 'Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on Biosphere Management in the Islamic Republic of Iran' at Miankaleh Biosphere Reserve in the north of the Islamic Republic of Iran (4–6 October). The event was organized in cooperation with the UTCO, the Iranian Department of the Environment, the Michael Succow Foundation and the international project team of Conservation of Biodiversity in the Central Zagros Conservation Landscape Zone.

During three working sessions, the participants developed a set of procedures to improve the capacities of local biosphere reserve managers and coordinators in the Islamic Republic of Iran; reviewed the current situation in Iran's biosphere reserves and identified areas for improvement; and produced a comprehensive roadmap on ways to address identified challenges, such as hunting and poaching, unsustainable use of resources, management and legal issues, impacts of climate change, vulnerability and adaptation strategies.

The event hosted participants from Afghanistan, Germany and Pakistan, and was attended by Directors-General of environment offices in related provincial areas, national biosphere reserve managers, the Head of UNESCO's Ecological and Earth Sciences Division, and the Secretary of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme, Mr Han Qunli.

JAPAN

Japanese National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Yuichiro Anzai

Secretary-General: Mr Yoshio Yamawaki

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

Update of activities in 2015

To commemorate the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, the Japanese National Commission prepared a statement proposing three vital roles for the Organization in the coming era – serving as an intellectual leader of the global community, paving the way towards a sustainable society and helping to build a culture that respects diversity.

The last seventy years have witnessed enormous social changes and society now faces new problems that impede the realization of sustainable societies. As a specialized UN agency, UNESCO has spearheaded initiatives aimed at different sectors to promote lifelong learning. It should leverage such experience to work with different organizations and individuals to form a global community built on a foundation of diversity and sustainability with a focus on educational, scientific and cultural development.

The Chairperson of the Japanese National Commission, Mr Yuichiro Anzai, handed the prepared statement to the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, at UNESCO Headquarters on the occasion of celebrations for the 70th anniversary of UNESCO.

The 2015 meeting of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network was held in Kanazawa City in Ishikawa Prefecture (25–28 May). This highly successful event gathered over 150 representatives from 61 of the Network's 69 member cities, including 17 mayors and vice-mayors, as well as the Chief of Executive Office of the Culture Sector, Lynne Patchett, and other representatives. With the designation of Sasayama City in Hyogo Prefecture as a City for Crafts and Folk Art (11 December), Japan now has seven cities participating in the Creative Cities Network.

The Japanese National Commission for UNESCO also held the 14th' Meeting of the East Asia Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN)' in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Beijing and the Shiga Highland Biosphere Reserve at Yamanouchi Town in Nagano Prefecture (6–9 October). The meeting brought together around forty representatives of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme from China, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. The meeting provided an excellent opportunity to improve communication and deepen friendly relations among the EABRN member countries.



Mr Hiroshi Hase, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology presenting the UNESCO-Japan Prize on ESD in the presence of the Director-General, Irina Bokova.

© Japanese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the award ceremony for the 1st UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was held at UNESCO Headquarters (5 November) during the 38th session of the General Conference. The UNESCO-Japan Prize on ESD was established with the support of the Japanese Government to help spread outstanding efforts in ESD throughout the world.

The prize was awarded to three organizations from El Salvador, Guatemala and Indonesia. Mr Hiroshi Hase, the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) presented the awards in the presence of the Director-General of UNESCO Irina Bokova.

The Minister stated that he hoped the activities recognized by the UNESCO-Japan Prize would be disseminated through the Global Action Programme on ESD. Furthermore, he was certain that the efforts of the laureates would have an important impact on the world. He also expressed the hope that ESD would contribute to addressing global issues.

KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhstan National Commission for UNESCO and ISESCO

Chairperson: Mr Arystanbek Mukhamediuly,
Minister of Culture

Secretary-General: Ms Assel Utegenova

Update of activities in 2015

The Kazakhstan National Commission for UNESCO and ISESCO conducted its activities for 2015 according to a National Action Plan adopted during its annual meeting in May. The National Commission carries out its mission to promote UNESCO ideals in Kazakhstan and the Central Asia region in close cooperation with the UNESCO Almaty Cluster Office, the UNESCO Secretariat and advisory bodies, as well as other representatives of the UNESCO family and communities.

In line with UNESCO's strategy, in 2015 the National Commission focused on evaluating the activities of organizations affiliated with the Organization in Kazakhstan. Using the

experience of the United Kingdom National Commission, the Kazakhstan National Commission implemented a thematic research project to assess the 'Wider value of UNESCO in Kazakhstan' with the support of the UNESCO Participation Programme.

The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr Nursultan Nazarbayev, delivered an address at the 38th session of the General Conference on the occasion of celebrations for the 70th anniversary of UNESCO. The President praised UNESCO's contribution to 'maintaining our cultural and historical heritage and expanding international cooperation in education, science and communications'. In this context, the President proposed the consideration of 'a global strategy to eliminate the root causes of wars and conflicts'.

Before addressing the General Conference, President Nazarbayev and the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, discussed cooperation between Kazakhstan and the Organization in a bilateral meeting. The President emphasized UNESCO's importance in promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue, global citizenship education and social cohesion within and between societies 'in current, turbulent times'.

A success story

In 2015, the Kazakhstan National Commission for UNESCO and ISESCO, in cooperation with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the UNESCO Almaty Cluster Office, organized the '4th Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Serial World Heritage Nomination of the Silk Roads', held in Almaty (23–27 November).

The meeting brought together national focal points and experts from twelve countries, including members and candidates for membership of the Silk Roads Coordination Committee. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the ICOMOS International Conservation Center (IICC) Xi'an (China), the Secretariat of the Silk Roads Coordination Committee, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and international experts to participate in discussions on further technical assistance and cooperation.

The event resulted in the adoption of the Almaty Agreement and provides a good example of cooperation between National Commissions, Member States, UNESCO field offices, UNESCO Headquarters and working bodies.



The '4th Meeting of the Coordinating Committee on the World Heritage Serial Nomination of the Silk Roads', held in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

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Roland Lin

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Lao National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Phankham Viphavanh, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Education and Sports

Secretary-General: Mr Somboun Masouvanh

Website: www.moe.gov.la

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Lao National Commission held its Annual Meeting and implemented a number of significant activities in UNESCO's main areas of competence, with a particular focus on education, sustainable development and world heritage.

In education, the National Commission organized a 'Capacity-Building Training Workshop on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction', with government support. The workshop targeted provincial education and sports services, principals and teachers from ASPnet schools, and schools in Khammouan, Saravan, Xekong and Attapue Province.

The National Commission also held an 'Awareness Raising Training Workshop on Education for Sustainable Development

(ESD) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)' for schools in Luangnamtha, Bokeo, Oudomxay and Phongsaly Province, as well as a similar workshop on ESD that targeted principals and teachers from secondary schools in Xiengkhouang Province.

During the year, the National Commission organized several ASPnet-related activities, including a seminar on the 'Monitoring and evaluation of good practices in ASPnet schools'. The Commission also coordinated a 'Training workshop on the promotion of inclusive education in UNESCO ASPnet schools of Lao PDR'.

In culture, the Lao National Commission joined the team of the Reactive Monitoring Mission to Vat Phou and the Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape. The National Commission also participated in celebrations to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the designation of the Luangprabang World Heritage Site.

The Lao National Commission and the Korean National Commission also visited Luangprabang during the year to make a joint preliminary assessment of local ceramic craft heritage for nomination to the '2015-2016 Bridge Programme: Craft Design for Sustainable Development'. A 'Training Workshop on Improving Techniques and Production of the Traditional Ceramic Craft for Sustainable Development', was held in Ban Chan Village, Luangprabang Province, to illustrate local traditional techniques.

Lastly, the National Commission participated in a consultation meeting for the 1st Expert Mission to the Plain of Jars, Xiengkhouang Province, to prepare the associated World Heritage nomination file.



School activities of ASPnet school members presented at the 2015 Annual Meeting of UNESCO ASPnet Schools in Lao PDR.

© Lao National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

Since 2010, the Lao National Commission for UNESCO has worked to disseminate ESD and DRR concepts within relevant departments and organizations in the Ministry of Education and Sports, teacher training colleges, thirty-three ASPnet schools, and primary and secondary schools. ESD concepts now play a central role in the Lao PDR education system and curriculum at all levels, with visible improvements in the teaching-learning process and school environments. For example, ASPnet schools have integrated ESD and DRR content into their school activities and teaching-learning processes.

This was demonstrated clearly at the 2015 Annual Meeting of UNESCO ASPnet Schools in Lao PDR, organized in Champasak Province (22–24 September), which provided an opportunity for school members to share and exchange ideas, knowledge and experience on ESD and DRR.

MALAYSIA

Malaysian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Dato'Seri Mahdzir Bin Khalid, Minister of Education

Secretary General: Mr Mohd Khairul Adib Bin Abd Rahman

Website: www.unesco.org.my

Update of activities in 2015

The Malaysian National Commission of UNESCO comprises seven permanent sub-committees whose members include representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development and the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia. This diversity results in positive synergies which enable the National Commission to work towards the implementation of UNESCO's agenda. To date, a total of twenty projects have received funds awarded under the Malaysian Funds-in-Trust Project.

In 2015, the National Commission hosted a variety of regional and international workshops, conferences and courses, including a 'South East Asia Water Foot Print Course' (24–26 March) and a 'Sustainability Science Workshop' (for SDGs) (4–5 March) both held in Kuala Lumpur, and a 'Workshop on Sustainability Science Demonstration Site: Framework for Action', held in Langkawi, Kedah (23–25 November). In the

natural sciences, the National Commission played an active role in organizing the 'Asia Pacific Conference on Education and Training (ACET 2015)', held in Kuala Lumpur (3–5 August) under the theme 'Making Skills Development Work for the Future'. The objective of the conference was to boost the role of technical and vocational education (TVET) and training in addressing issues of youth unemployment and deep-rooted social inequality. The key outcome of the conference was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which was endorsed and adopted by twenty-six countries within the Asia-Pacific region.

The Malaysian National Commission was also involved in a project entitled 'The Power of Culture: Supporting Community-based Management and Sustainable Tourism at World Heritage Sites in Malaysia and Southeast Asia'. Organized by the National Commission in collaboration with the UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism programme, this project empowers site managers and other key stakeholders to make constructive changes in the way tourism is managed to ensure the sustainability of heritage sites. The project involves Malaysia (Melaka and George Town and the Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca), the Cultural Landscape of Bali Province in Indonesia, and the Rice Terraces of the Philippines Cordilleras in the province of Ifugao. Three successful initiation workshops were completed in 2015, with specialization and final assessment workshops due to take place in 2016.

The Malaysia National Commission also worked closely with various agencies to promote sustainable science, through the establishment of four Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) camps for ASPnet students focusing on water resources, which were conducted across Malaysia for students and teachers of primary and secondary schools.



The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, giving a speech during celebrations organized for HUM2015.

© Malaysia National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

Each year, Malaysia celebrates Hari UNESCO Malaysia (HUM) or national UNESCO Day. HUM2015 was a significant occasion officiated by the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova (24 May). This year, the theme 'Togetherness' was chosen to symbolize the unity and trust among the different entities that make up the country of Malaysia, as well as the vital cooperation between Member States necessary to drive UNESCO's agenda forward and realize its goals. This theme also reflects the unity and diversity of Malaysian children, young people and the elderly – a key element in a holistic and sustainable society.

HUM2015 took place over two days with the presence of many ambassadors and High Commissioners. The celebrations included numerous creative activities such as a street painting contest, traditional shadow plays, an ASEAN Puppetry Conference, a heritage trail contest, a traditional art crafts demonstration, the L'Oréal-UNESCO Gallery Walk and an innovative food exhibition.

MONGOLIA

Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Lundeg Purevsuren, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Gundegmaa Jargalsaikhan

Website: www.unesco.mn

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO supported Mongolia's participation in a variety of activities in UNESCO's fields of competence.

In education, the National Commission collaborated with the Institute of Teachers Professional Development and the Mongolian State University of Education to organize the EFA National Forum. It developed and submitted recommendations on equitable inclusion in learning and teaching, supported the 'Live Long Education National Programme' project, and participated in meetings, conferences and workshops.

The National Commission also collaborated with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the UNESCO Office in Beijing to implement a project on Science, Technology and Innovation statistical questionnaires.

In culture, the National Commission coordinated the translation of the 'Law on Protection Cultural Heritage' into English including its registration on the UNESCO Cultural Heritage Laws Database. The Commission also renewed and approved the Natural and Cultural Heritage List. Two elements of Mongolian heritage were formally recognized in 2015: the

'Great Burkhan Haldun Mountain and its surrounding sacred landscape' was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List; and the 'Coaxing ritual for camels', which employs music to help female camels accept newborn or adopted calves, was inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

The National Commission also organized a 'National roundtable meeting on the enhancement of national capacities and assistance in the understanding and implementation of the 2005 Convention'. The roundtable highlighted the importance of strengthening national policies, and presented reports prepared by researchers at the Mongolian National University of Arts and Culture in four selected areas.

To provide Mongolian youth with an opportunity to learn about practical diplomacy and options for solving global issues, the United Nations Youth Advisory Panel Mongolia, in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Beijing, jointly organized 'Model UNESCO Mongolia' under the theme 'Women and men's equal participation in sustainable development'.

Within the framework of the UNESCO/Monaco Funds-in-Trust Project, the National Commission organized a National Expert Meeting on the 'Fight against Cultural Heritage Crimes' and published a review of the Criminal Code, which led to the elaboration of a new section on 'Crimes Against Cultural Heritage'.

Lastly, the Deputy Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Getachew Engida, attended the '5th Freedom Online Ministerial Conference' in Ulaanbaatar (4–5 May), where he delivered speeches on UNESCO's activities and cooperation with Mongolia. The visit followed events organized in celebration of World Press Freedom Day (3 May). The National Commission also organized activities to commemorate World Philosophy Day and World Day for Audiovisual Heritage (27 October) among others.



Government officials and UNESCO and SDC representatives at the opening ceremony of the National forum on ESD in Mongolia.

© Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO organized a 'National Forum on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)' in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Beijing, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MECS), the Ministry of Environment, Green Development and Tourism (MEGDT) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The forum took place in Ulaanbaatar (24–26 February) and was attended by around 250 representatives from governmental and non-governmental organizations and local communities, as well as students from universities, colleges and secondary schools, and local community representatives from each of the twenty-one provinces.

Opening speeches were delivered by Ms D. Oyunkhorol, the Minister of MEGDT, Mr B. Tulga, the Vice-Minister of MECS, Mr H. Thulstrup, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Office in Beijing, and Mr D. Valenghi, Programme Leader of SDC.

A report on education for sustainable development activities carried out during the decade (2005–2014) was presented at the forum, within the framework of a discussion on issues and challenges facing the implementation of ESD objectives in Mongolia.

NEPAL

Nepal National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Girirajmani Pokharel, Minister for Education

Secretary-General: Mr Bishwa Prakash Pandit

Update of activities in 2015

The Nepal National Commission for UNESCO functions as a Secretariat for the coordination of UNESCO-related activities in the fields of education, culture, science and mass media. It works in close cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters and the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu, the Government of Nepal, non-governmental organizations, ASPnet schools and UNESCO Clubs.

In 2015, the Nepal National Commission implemented a series of projects under the UNESCO Participation Programmes to promote sustainable development and quality education, build the capacity of local media and education stakeholders, empower community learning centres and enhance organic agricultural practices.

The Nepal National Commission was heavily involved in relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities following the devastating earthquake of 25 April. The National Commission organized a Disaster Risk Reduction programme to reinforce the knowledge and skills of schoolteachers and to ensure that education stakeholders were sufficiently skilled in preparedness,

response, recovery, relief and rehabilitation techniques for emergency situations. The programme was conducted in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu.

The Nepal National Commission also collaborated with the UNESCO Office to launch a programme entitled 'Planning Effective Delivery of Education in the Future Federal State'. The programme brought together ministerial personnel of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, educational experts, academia and stakeholders, to discuss educational structures, the curriculum and student assessment throughout Nepal.

During the year, the Nepal National Commission launched a programme to promote child-friendly school environments through the mobilization of student clubs for quality education. The programme invited students to participate in efforts to make school environments green, clean, safe and peaceful, and to work jointly with community members to sustain the initiative. The programme encouraged students to exchange plants with one another in an effort to 'green' the school environment and the local community. The programme has since been expanded to other schools in the network under the leadership of the National Commission.

Lastly, the Nepal National Commission for UNESCO implemented climate change education activities in selected schools with the financial support of the Korean National Commission and the Government of Nepal. The National Commission also distributed solar lights to poor and marginalized students and Community Learning Centres, to enable students from homes without electricity to study outside of school hours. This programme was made possible by the support of the Hope and Light Sharing Foundation.



Unveiling of the Lord Gautam Buddha statue at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

© Nepal National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Government of Nepal donated a statue of the Lord Gautam Buddha (who was born in Nepal) to UNESCO through the Nepal National Commission for UNESCO. The statue was unveiled at a ceremony at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (22 June), by the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, and the Ambassador of Nepal to France, Ms Ambika Devi Luitel.

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Ian McKinnon

Secretary-General a.i.: Ms Vicki Soanes

Website: www.unesco.org.nz

Update of activities in 2015

The New Zealand National Commission began the year by assisting with the organization of the Consultation of Pacific National Commissions. Hosted in Auckland (26–28 January) by the Cook Islands National Commission, the objective of the consultation was to identify Pacific priorities to be included in UNESCO's Action Plan. The plan was developed in response to the '3rd UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Small Island Developing States', held in Apia (1–4 September 2014), and will be adopted by the Executive Board in 2016.

In September, the New Zealand Minister of Education, Ms Hekia Parata, hosted a parliamentary function to mark the 70th anniversary of UNESCO. Attended by staff, past and present Commissioners, and other key stakeholders, the Minister paid tribute to the many New Zealanders who have played a significant role in UNESCO since New Zealand became a founding member of the Organization in 1946.

The Director of the UNESCO Office for the Pacific States, Mr Etienne Clément, gave an interesting keynote speech detailing UNESCO's many responses to today's global challenges, including support for education programmes that enhance teachers' skills and scientific research contributing to tsunami early warning systems.

The Commission also stepped up its contribution this year to the work and programmes of the UNESCO Office for the Pacific States through the provision of New Zealand expertise. This included a workshop in Vanuatu with one of the authors of the *Looking Beyond Disaster* toolkit, New Zealander Jason Pemberton. The workshop provided a platform to share knowledge, experiences and good practices in disaster recovery and community resilience in the aftermath of cyclone PAM, and to prepare an action plan for the future.

Another key effort was the production of a video for a Melanesian workshop on the 'Fight Against the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property', outlining New Zealand's experiences in actively protecting cultural objects.

The Commission also promoted two discretionary funding rounds during the year, calling for applications for activities that would contribute in a lasting way to the mandate of UNESCO at national and sub-regional levels. A total of twenty-seven projects were funded during the year, including a report intended as a blueprint for multiculturalism in New Zealand, activities to mark the International Year of Light, and the first ever New Zealand Young Writers Festival, held in Dunedin (4–7 June), a UNESCO City of Literature.



Chalkle helps communities teach and learn from each other.

© Chalkle

A success story

Chalkle is an independently owned New Zealand social enterprise that empowers local community educators to use new forms of technology to set up lifelong learning opportunities in their communities. Any organization can access Chalkle's website (chalkle.com) and set up their own provider page. Chalkle software then supports their administration, including enrolments and financial management, and the payment of tutors. If the course is offered for free, then online tools are also provided at no cost.

Chalkle has found, however, that providing software is not enough. With a commitment to supporting learning communities across the country, Chalkle is dedicated to building and sharing support material and resources, and bringing together people to undertake training, receive support and make connections.

Using funding provided by the National Commission's Contestable Activity Fund for 2014/15, Chalkle launched the 'Always Be Learning' programme. After carefully selecting four 'Champions' from very different community education settings, a three-month programme enabled Champions to share challenges, and teach and learn from each other. The goal of the programme was to ensure that Champions are equipped to help their community to continue learn, thus complementing the Chalkle software and providing ongoing opportunities for lifelong learning across New Zealand.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman,
Minister of State for Education

Secretary-General: Mr Hafiz Sher Ali

Website: www.pncugovpk.com/

Update of activities in 2015

The Pakistan National Commission coordinates with UNESCO and ISESCO and other international institutions programmes in the fields of education, science, culture, information and communication, external relations and cooperation. In 2015, the Pakistan National Commission undertook a series of activities at national and international level, in line with its mandate.

The National Commission celebrated World Cultural Diversity Day (21 May) in collaboration with the Pakistan National Council of the Arts and the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), among others. It organized three events showcasing the cultural diversity of different provinces of Pakistan, China, Egypt, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka and Thailand, including art and crafts, paintings and cultural performances by different communities and UNESCO ASPnet schools.

During the year the Pakistan National Commission helped governmental and non-governmental organizations working

for the promotion of literacy and non-formal basic education to organize events in their respective constituencies to mark International Literacy Day (8 September). The National Commission in collaboration with ASPnet organized a seminar to raise awareness of the importance of literacy, inviting eminent scholars from different fields to participate in an exchange of views.

The Pakistan National Commission also supported the 'Mitsubishi Asian Children's Enikki Festa Art Competition – 2015–2016'. Enikki are illustrated diaries that portray daily events and thoughts in the form of pictures and short narratives. In Pakistan, the diaries of eight children from public, private and UNESCO ASPnet schools were chosen by experts, and the selected diaries were forwarded to the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan for consideration.

The National Commission coordinated events for Education For All week, celebrated throughout the country during April, and organized activities for World Teachers' Day (5 October). Following on from the World Conference on ESD, held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan (10–12 November 2014), where Pakistan showcased good practices and learned from global experiences, the National Commission worked to promote the concept of Education for Sustainable Development in cooperation with the government.

Lastly, the National Commission mobilized government support for the Malala Fund to promote girls' right to education. The aim of the programme is to support government efforts to increase access and improve the quality of girls' education (at primary level) through capacity-building and targeted interventions at both institutional and community level.



The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, awarding the 2015 UNESCO Avicenna Prize for Ethics in Science to Professor Zabta Khan Shinwari at a ceremony held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in the presence of Mr Mohammad Farhadi, Minister of Science, Research and Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Mr Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman, Minister of State for Education, Trainings and Standards in Higher Education of Pakistan.

© UNESCO/Nora Houguenade

A success story

In 2015, Professor Zabta Khan Shinwari, Secretary-General of the Pakistan Academy of Sciences and Chair of the Biotechnology Department of the Quaid-i-Azam University of Islamabad, was awarded the UNESCO Avicenna Prize for Ethics in Science by the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, upon the recommendation of an independent international jury of scholars and ethicists.

The jury noted that Professor Shinwari, a Specialist in Plant Sciences and Agricultural Biotechnology, was a role model in the area of ethics of science because he combines an outstanding personal commitment to ethically responsible research and science with high academic standards of scientific research, education and management.

PHILIPPINES

UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines

Chairperson: Mr Albert F. Del Rosario,
Secretary of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Ms Virginia A. Miralao

Update of activities in 2015

During 2015, the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines engaged in partnerships and collaborations with multi-stakeholders to implement projects and activities across UNESCO's priority areas, advancing efforts in awareness-raising, cultural heritage preservation, youth empowerment and environment conservation.

In education, the National Commission facilitated the support of the Philippine's tri-focalized education agencies for the upcoming implementation of the Education 2030 Framework for Action and the Platform for Human Rights Education and Training. The Commission also supported major programmes spearheaded by the UNESCO Southeast Asia Centre of Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Development, hosting the Education Category II Centres' Biennial Meeting (25–27 May) and International Seminar on Using Water Education to Strengthen Community Efforts Towards Sustainable Development (27–31 July).

The National Commission supplied technical support to the Philippine delegation for the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee. Thirty-six properties nominated for inscription to the World Heritage List were reviewed, as well as State of Conservation Reports for 141 World Heritage Sites. The

National Commission in cooperation with the Department of Foreign Affairs also coordinated the publication of papers by Filipino experts on the Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade Project, laying a foundation for the promotion of the cultural heritage of the Galleon Trade Route, both in the Philippines and beyond.

In collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Jakarta, the National Commission promoted the sustainable development of the 'Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras', with an emphasis on building the capacity of local authorities involved in the overall management of this World Heritage Site. A sustainable tourism workshop was conducted in conjunction with the Provincial Government of Ifugao and its partner agencies, benefitting around fifty site planners and tourism officers. The UNESCO Office in Jakarta also supported two recent National Commission publications presenting information on Ifugao and their terraces, which increased public awareness and knowledge of the site and appreciation of ongoing changes affecting preservation efforts.

The National Commission revitalized its work on documentary heritage through a series of seminars involving 300 participants nationwide. The seminars raised awareness of UNESCO's Memory of the World (MOW) programme, with a focus on the importance of preserving and transmitting documentary heritage.

In close coordination with the Provincial Government of Albay, the National Commission of the Philippines endorsed the nomination file for the Albay Biosphere Reserve to the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme. The National Commission also provided technical assistance for the nomination of Mindanao's Mount Malindang Range Natural Park, and supported monitoring and capacity-building for sustainable management of the Palawan and Puerto Galera Biosphere Reserves.



Filipino youth taking part in the Awareness and Commitment Campaign on Anti-Doping in Philippine Sports.

© UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines

A success story

Filipino youth played a central role in the National Commission's activities in 2015. Hundreds of young athletes engaged in the National Anti-Doping Awareness and Commitment Campaign, resulting in over 200 pledges for a fair and healthy sporting environment. The campaign included a national summit, an anti-doping sports education seminar, two conferences in the Visayas and Mindanao regions, and anti-doping essay and poster-making contests for youth.

During the International Assembly of Youth for UNESCO, held in partnership with the National Association of UNESCO Clubs in the Philippines, 350 youth participants took part in dialogues and activities designed to tackle the ASEAN Integration and Sustainable Development Goals.

About 200 young participants also benefitted from two conferences supported by the National Commission on Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Philosophy for Children and Youth. The National Commission also endorsed representatives for the '1st Youth Regional Forum for World Heritage in Asia', held in Siem Reap, Cambodia (25 November – 3 December) and the '9th UNESCO Youth Forum', held in Paris (26–28 October), where they represented the voices of over 20 million Filipino youth.

Lastly, in celebration of International Youth Day (12 August), the National Commission published *We Are All Connected*, a collection of poetry and visual art depicting young perspectives on 'connection in a highly digitized world'.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Korean National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Lee Joon Sik, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Dong-seok Min

Website: www.unesco.or.kr/eng/front/main/

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO continued to implement its Bridge Africa Project in Lesotho, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The project aims to improve accessibility to non-formal education in rural communities and enhance quality in literacy, early childhood education and vocational training, in alignment with the development strategies of partnering countries. Through the project, the National Commission strengthened ties with its partners in Asia with a view to tackling illiteracy and climate change. Individual projects were implemented in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, based on partnerships with governments, other National Commissions and local expert organizations.

In July, the Korean National Commission established the Korea UNESCO Global Citizenship School (KUGCS), to help widen Global Citizenship Education (GCED) in the country. KUGCS integrates the National Commission's existing GCED

programmes, while also introducing new programmes, such as Saturday classes for middle-school students and on-site lectures. More than 500 students benefited from these new programmes in the second half of 2015. In addition, 100 Korean teachers and fifty Japanese teachers took part in annual exchanges between teachers at ASPnet schools in Japan and the Republic of Korea. The Korean National Commission also facilitated exchanges between ASPnet schools in the Republic of Korea and Lao PDR, and organized a visit by Korean teachers to Germany, to promote partnerships between schools.

In the sciences, the Korean National Commission focused on promoting sustainable development and intercultural dialogue, through the Climate Change Youth Frontier Initiative, the International Youth Forum on Historical Reconciliation in East Asia and the *Korea Journal*, while also advising and supporting UNESCO's international programmes and committees in the natural, social and human sciences.

In culture, the Korean National Commission initiated a three-year fundraising programme for the World Heritage Fund in partnership with a leading Korean travel company, Hana Tour. The National Commission also launched a new craft and design capacity-building programme that organized two workshops in Uzbekistan with support from the Uzbekistan National Commission, and displayed products from these workshops at the 2015 Craft Trend Fair in the Republic of Korea. The Korean National Commission continued to support heritage nomination efforts in developing countries, by hosting a regional Memory of the World Training Workshop in cooperation with the Jamaican National Commission and the UNESCO Office in Kingston. It also worked with relevant National Commissions, local authorities and the UNESCO Office in Bangkok to help Bangladesh, Fiji and Lao PDR prepare World Heritage nominations.



The report *Value and Impact of UNESCO Activities in Korea* in English and Korean.

© Korean National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Korean National Commission published a report entitled *Value and Impact of UNESCO Activities in Korea*, which analysed the contributions of UNESCO and the Korean National Commission to the Republic of Korea's development over the past sixty years. The study was inspired by a 2013 report entitled *Wider Value of UNESCO to the UK*, produced by the United Kingdom National Commission. The Korean National Commission took the process a step further, however, by combining qualitative and quantitative analyses of UNESCO's contribution to Korean society in its fields of competence.

This publication is the first to comprehensively examine UNESCO's impact to the Republic of Korea over time, and is expected to contribute greatly to raising awareness of UNESCO and the National Commission among the general public, and increase public participation in their activities.

The report was introduced and distributed at the '2nd Interregional Meeting of National Commissions', held during the 38th General Conference of UNESCO (3–18 November), and received substantial attention from participants.

SINGAPORE

Singapore National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Grace Fu, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth

Secretary-General: Mrs Rosa Daniel

Website: www.unesco.sg

Update of activities in 2015

This year has been a particularly meaningful one for Singapore. The Singapore Botanic Gardens became Singapore's first UNESCO World Heritage Site (see below) and Singapore was also designated a UNESCO Creative City of Design to support the development of a creative eco-system. The National Design Centre will play a key role in Singapore's contribution to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

Throughout the year, the Singapore National Commission for UNESCO continued to champion UNESCO's mandate through its programmes and activities.

The Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and Chair of the Singapore National Commission, Ms Grace Fu, led Singapore's delegation to the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris (3–18 November), where she presented Singapore's people-centred approach to urban planning and design, which twins economic and physical development with social, cultural and environmental needs.

Capacity-building remains a core focus of the National Commission's work. In 2015, the Commission participated in the 'ASEAN Ancient Cities Network: Preservation and Conservation Management of Bagan Ancient City' workshop in Bagan, Myanmar (21–24 September), where it gave

presentations on preservation and site management to assist with Myanmar's efforts to inscribe Bagan as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Singapore also hosted the UNESCO Memory of the World (MoW) workshop (21 April), which aimed to increase awareness of the MoW programme and guide participants through the nomination process. The workshop was led by overseas speakers with extensive experience in the MoW programme and was attended by thirty-four participants.

In the natural sciences, Singapore served on the UNESCO International Bioethics Committee (IBC) and the UNESCO Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC). Singapore also attended the 9th session of the UNESCO IGBC, held in Paris (16–17 July) and hosted the UNESCO IGBC/IBC Asian delegates meeting.

In education, Singapore participated in several conferences including the 'World Education Forum 2015' (19–22 May), held in Incheon, Republic of Korea (19–22 May); the 'International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education' (23–25 May), held in Qingdao, China (23–25 May); and the 'Asia-Pacific Conference on Education and Training', held in Kuala Lumpur (3–5 August). Singapore also participated in the 'Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Progress Review in the Asia-Pacific Survey' and the 'International Thematic Report on Teaching as a Profession: Requirements for Equitable Quality Education'.

To promote excellence in the creation, production, publication and global distribution of children's materials with Asian content, the Singapore National Commission supported the Festival of Children's Content (AFCC) in Singapore (29 May – 7 June).

Lastly, the National Commission affirmed its commitment to UNESCO by seconding an officer to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.



Unveiling of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Inscription Plaque at the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

© National Parks Board Singapore

A success story

In 2015, the Singapore Botanic Gardens were inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site at the 39th Session of the World Heritage Committee. The Gardens were accepted on account of their significant contribution to the growth of the rubber industry in Southeast Asia and the world, and their well-preserved landscape as a British tropical colonial garden. The Gardens remain a centre for research, conservation and education, as well as a tranquil oasis for recreation.

The inscription represents Singapore's commitment to protecting and promoting cultural heritage, through safeguarding buildings and sites of historical significance, and conserving and enhancing natural landscapes.

Singapore will continue to protect the integrity and authenticity of the Singapore Botanic Gardens as a World Heritage Site. Protective measures such as building restrictions and the conservation of heritage buildings within the Gardens are already in place, and the country has also developed a five-year site management plan for the site.

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Akila Viraj Kariyawasam,
Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Dhammika Wijayasinghe

Website: www.slncu.lk/

Update of activities in 2015

The Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO carried out numerous activities in 2015 in the Organization's fields of competences. The Commission focused in particular on initiatives to promote education for peace, sustainable development and social cohesion.

In collaboration with the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Paris and the Permanent Delegation of Sri Lanka to UNESCO, the Sri Lanka National Commission convened a three-day symposium at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (27–29 May) in celebration of the Day of Vesak. The symposium, entitled 'Fostering Peace through Cultural Education', focused on promoting interfaith dialogue and education as effective tools to 'build peace in the minds of men and women'. Mr Karu Jayasuriya, Minister of Buddhasasana and Mr Akila Viraj Kariyawasam, Minister of Education and Chairman of the Sri Lanka National Commission, participated in the symposium, which was inaugurated by religious observances.

The Sri Lanka National Commission participated in a variety of conferences on educational issues throughout the year.

These included the 'World Education Forum', held in Incheon, Republic of Korea (19–22 May); the 'International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 education', held in Qingdao, China (23–25 May); and the 'Sub-Regional Conference on EFA Unfinished and Post-2015 Educational Agendas in SAARC Countries', held in New Delhi (13–14 October).

The National Commission also took part in key meetings on education, including the 'UNESCO APEID consultation meeting on entrepreneurship education', (19–22 May) and the 'Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030', (25–27 November). It participated in a Learning Enablers for Asia and Pacific (LEAP) workshop on 'Strengthening education systems for better outcomes' (6–10 July) and a 'Sub-regional Workshop on Teacher Preparation for Global Citizenship Education' (27–29 July), all of which took place in Bangkok.

In addition, the National Commission participated in the 'International seminar on Girls' and Women's Education', held in Beijing (1–5 September) and a 'Seminar workshop on using water education to strengthen community efforts towards sustainable development', held at the University of the Philippines (27–31 July).

During the year, the National Commission provided assistance to female students from low-income families enabling them to pursue advanced technological studies through the Sujatha Diyani Scholarship Fund. It also assisted displaced students and learners with disabilities through the UNESCO scholarship fund.

Lastly, in 2015 the Sri Lanka National Commission opened the administrative and lecture hall complex of the South Asian Centre for Teacher Development in Meepe – a Category II Institute established under the National Institute of Education.



Student camp for the promotion of peace and reconciliation between students.

© Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO in collaboration with the Ministry of Education organized a three-day residential student camp at the Pulathispura National College of Education, Polonnaruwa (26–30 August). This activity was the first in a series of camps to promote peace and sustainable development among students, as recommended in the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) report.

The participants consisted of fifteen teachers and 100 students representing thirty ASPnet schools from the western, northern and north-central provinces of the country.

The students participated in a variety of activities designed to develop their leadership qualities, as well as their skills in key areas, such as disaster management, sustainable development, peace, world heritage, and food and drinking habits in relation to non-communicable diseases.

Other activities included cultural performances, kayaking and taekwondo, and a visit to a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The objectives of the project were to promote peace, reconciliation and harmony among students; raise awareness of education for sustainable development (ESD); and to create a space for students to reflect and build a better future.

TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Shamsiddin Orumbekzoda,
Minister of Culture

Secretary-General: Mr Sarvar Bakhti

Website: www.unesco.tj

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO, in cooperation with the UNESCO Almaty Cluster Office, organized a training seminar on the theme, 'Implementation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions', which took place in Dushanbe (16–18 February). The seminar was presented by a specialist from the relevant UNESCO culture section on the 2005 UNESCO Convention.

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the National Commission in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture organized an international handmade folk art festival and a scientific and practical conference on the 'Cultural heritage art of the people of Kulob: protection and restoration'. The festival and conference took place in Kulob (24–25 April) and featured the participation of a wide range of artists, scientists, experts and representatives from international organizations.

The Secretary-General of the National Commission participated in a meeting in Tehran on the joint preparation of the final nomination file for the New Year's celebration 'Navruz' (2–6 March). Representatives of the twelve nominating countries signed the final version of the file, which was then submitted to UNESCO.

During the year, the Tajikistan National Commission in close cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, the Tajik National Conservatory and the Academy of Sciences, also prepared and submitted nominations for 'Falak song' and the 'Oshi Palav meal and its social and cultural context'. In addition, the National Commission collaborated with the National Commissions of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan to prepare a multinational nomination file for the horse-riding game 'Chavgon'.

During the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO a number of anniversaries from Tajikistan were added to the List of Anniversaries to be celebrated in 2016-2017 in association with UNESCO. These included the 100th anniversary of the birth of the choreographer Gafar Valamat-Zade, the 1,250th anniversary of the birth of the scientist Hakim at-Tirmizi, and a joint nomination with the Islamic Republic of Iran for the 1,150th anniversary of the birth of the physician, chemist and philosopher Muhammad Zakariya Razi.

Lastly, the National Commission represented Tajikistan at a meeting between among Central Asian countries and the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (ICHCAP), which resulted in an agreement to implement a three-year project, 'Increasing visibility of the intangible cultural heritage in Central Asia'. Under this project, the countries will develop a documentary film, a publication and an online site to promote intangible cultural heritage in Central Asia.



The Secretary-General of the Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO, Mr Sarvar Bakhti, pictured with the finalists of the exhibition, 'I love my family', organized on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO.

© Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO.

A success story

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, the National Commission in cooperation with Tajikistan UNESCO Clubs organized an exhibition of children's pictures around the theme, 'I love my family' (11 October). More than 290 children from all parts of the country submitted pictures with the twenty-three best entries awarded diplomas and prizes.

The UNESCO National Commission also worked with the Tajikistan UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) to organize a cultural event dedicated to the 70th anniversary. The schoolchildren took part in a variety of cultural activities hosted at a general secondary school in Dushanbe city (20 October) to present their knowledge of the ideas and aims of UNESCO. Outside visitors and speakers were invited to participate and talk about UNESCO. At the climax of the event, the National Commission presented certificates and gifts.

THAILAND

Thai National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Admiral Narong Pipatanasai, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Kaon Siriban

Website: www.bic.moe.go.th/newth/

Update of activities in 2015

The Thai National Commission for UNESCO organized several activities during 2015, with a particular focus on education.

The Commission coordinated a National Seminar for ASPnet schools based on the Asian Regional Initiative for Climate Change Education (RICE) Project (12–13 February). This regional initiative aims to implement collaborative learning on education for sustainable development (ESD) under the common theme of 'rice'. One hundred and twenty-seven ASPnet schools participated in the seminar and learnt about the project.

The National Commission also encouraged all schools nationwide to participate in the RICE Project by disseminating relevant information via the website of the Ministry of Education. In addition, the Commission submitted a request to the Office of the Basic Education Commission and the Office of

the Private Education Commission to nominate representatives for a national team to encourage participation among schools. Throughout the year, the Thai National Commission for UNESCO partnered with schools to implement the RICE Project, providing learning materials on ESD and resource persons from either the Ministry of Education or the UNESCO Office Bangkok to assist with activities.

The National Commission also took part in an Exchange Programme for Members of UNESCO National Commissions (21–28 July). Staff members from the National Commissions of the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea were invited to participate in the programme.

With the cooperation of the UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP) and the UNESCO Office in Bangkok, the National Commission launched a project entitled 'Strengthening the Education System of Thailand for Effective Human Resource Development'. The Commission also held workshops to review the 'Education Sector Planning Project: ESP Modules' (9–10 March) and on 'Training for ESP Modules' (24–26 August) (see below).



IIEP-UNESCO Education Sector Planning Programme (Thai Version) Training for Trainer workshops, held in Bangkok

© Thai National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Thai National Commission for UNESCO organized the IIEP-UNESCO Education Sector Planning Programme (Thai Version) Training for Trainer workshops, held in Bangkok (23–26 August). The workshop aimed to train trainers and education personnel, with a view to developing their capacity to improve education quality in Thailand.

The Ministry of Education invited education planners, education statisticians, education services areas administrators, senior experts and educators to attend the workshop, as well as other personnel involved in the usage of training materials, amounting to a total of thirty participants. The workshop was conducted by a variety of speakers who provided an overview of the contents of the six modules in the IIEP Education Sector Planning Training Materials (Thai Version). This was followed by group discussions on selected topics related to the Training Materials. In general, participants found the material to be very useful, providing both general and strategic concepts, as well as a framework for education planning.

UZBEKISTAN

National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Bakhodir Khodiev, Vice Prime Minister

Secretary-General: Mr Alisher Ikramov

Update of activities in 2015

The activities of the National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO were carried out in line with the Medium-Term Strategy of UNESCO for 2014–2021. The Commission focused in particular on gender equality and four of the strategic objectives presented in the strategy.

The first objective concerns high-quality education systems and lifelong learning. The National Commission implemented projects on business skills development for women and girls in rural areas of three provinces of Uzbekistan (Qashqadaryo, Andijan and Syrdaryo). The projects, which took place during May and June, were undertaken in close collaboration with the Centre for Vocational Training and the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan. The activity delivered training to 180 unemployed women and girls and contributed to the creation of small-scale enterprises. The National Commission in cooperation with DVV International also coordinated the organization of a national workshop and a Central Asian regional seminar on adult non-formal and informal education, which was held in Tashkent (26–27 November).



Participants at the International Conference on the 'Scientific Legacy of Avicenna and Actual Problems of Modern Medicine', held in Bukhara.
© National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO

The National Commission tackled the second objective to strengthen science, technology and innovation systems and policies by establishing capacity-building training programmes on crystallography for university graduates and young PhD scholars at the Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry of the Academy of Sciences. The courses took place from February to June with course lecturers selected from local scholars who attended the respective OpenLab programmes.

The third objective to protect, promote and transmit heritage was addressed through the organization of a mobile training programme on museum management, which took place from January to May. The programme covered about 400 public and private museums from all provinces of the country, and led to the capacity-building of museum professionals, the publication of a textbook entitled *Museum and Society*, and the revival of Uzbekistan's membership of ICOM.

For the last objective the National Commission worked to promote freedom of expression, media development, and access to information and knowledge through the creation of a cycle of training seminars, held from March to September, on the promotion of open educational resources and free access to information. The training sessions took place in the National Library of Uzbekistan, Tashkent and the Uzbekistan National University, and included experts from thirty-one universities, fourteen provincial libraries, as well as specialists from the State Archive and representatives of the non-governmental organization (NGO) Oltin Meros.

In addition to the above activities, the National Commission organized the successful 'Crafts Design for Sustainable Development' project in conjunction with the Margilan Crafts Development Centre, with the support of the Korean National Commission.

A success story

In 2015, the National Commission successfully implemented the project 'Support for Activities of the National Bioethics Committee of Uzbekistan'. The National Bioethics Committee was established in 2002 under the NGO Avicenna Foundation with the support of the National Commission. The project consisted of two events: a capacity-building training seminar held at the Termiz State University (April) and an international conference on the 'Scientific Legacy of Avicenna and Actual Problems of Modern Medicine', held in Bukhara (23 November).

The national seminar invited about 100 researchers to participate from across the country to increase awareness of bioethics education and the ethical challenges arising from advancements in science and technology. The international conference brought together 250 participants, including scholars from twelve countries, and provided a platform for the exchange of theoretical and practical knowledge and information on Avicenna's heritage related to the ethics of science and technology. The conference included master-classes on contemporary medical treatment and the use of traditional medical plants.

The National Bioethics Committee of Uzbekistan was awarded an Excellency Certificate by the National NGO Association of Uzbekistan in recognition of its outstanding partnership performance in 2015.

VIET NAM

Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Le Hoai Trung, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Secretary-General: Mr Pham Sanh Chau

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO successfully celebrated the 70th anniversary of UNESCO coupled with the 5th anniversary of the inscription of Thang Long Imperial Citadel on the World Heritage List. This occasion provided an opportunity to evaluate the achievements of UNESCO over the last seventy years, to raise people's awareness of the significant role played by the Organization, and to recognize the many contributions of leaders and officials of Viet Nam to the ongoing relationship between Viet Nam and UNESCO.

During the year, the Viet Nam National Commission collaborated with the UNESCO Office in Hanoi to implement a project to analyse the education sector, with the aim of supporting a review of the Strategy for Development of Education 2011–2020. The main objective was to innovate methods of organizing educational activities and assessing

students' results, in order to boost the engagement and creativity of learners.

In the natural sciences, the Viet Nam National Commission proposed an initiative to apply a green growth and low carbon framework to UNESCO biosphere reserves. The initiative was adopted by the 38th session of the General Conference and discussed on the sidelines of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) in Paris (30 November – 12 December). This year also saw the creation of two Category II Centres of Physics and Mathematics in Hanoi under the auspices of UNESCO. These first Category II Centres established in the field of basic science represent a significant commitment on the part of Viet Nam to the Organization's activity in these fields.

In culture, Viet Nam fulfilled its financial commitment to the UNESCO World Heritage Fund through its sponsorship of the UNESCO conference 'Heritage and Sustainable Development', organized in Ninh Binh (22–24 January). Viet Nam also hosted numerous international conferences throughout the year relating to key UNESCO topics, including 'Gender Dimensions of Social Exclusion: Towards more inclusive policies for women' (29 September), and 'Community Participation and Rights-based Approaches in World Heritage' (25–26 November).



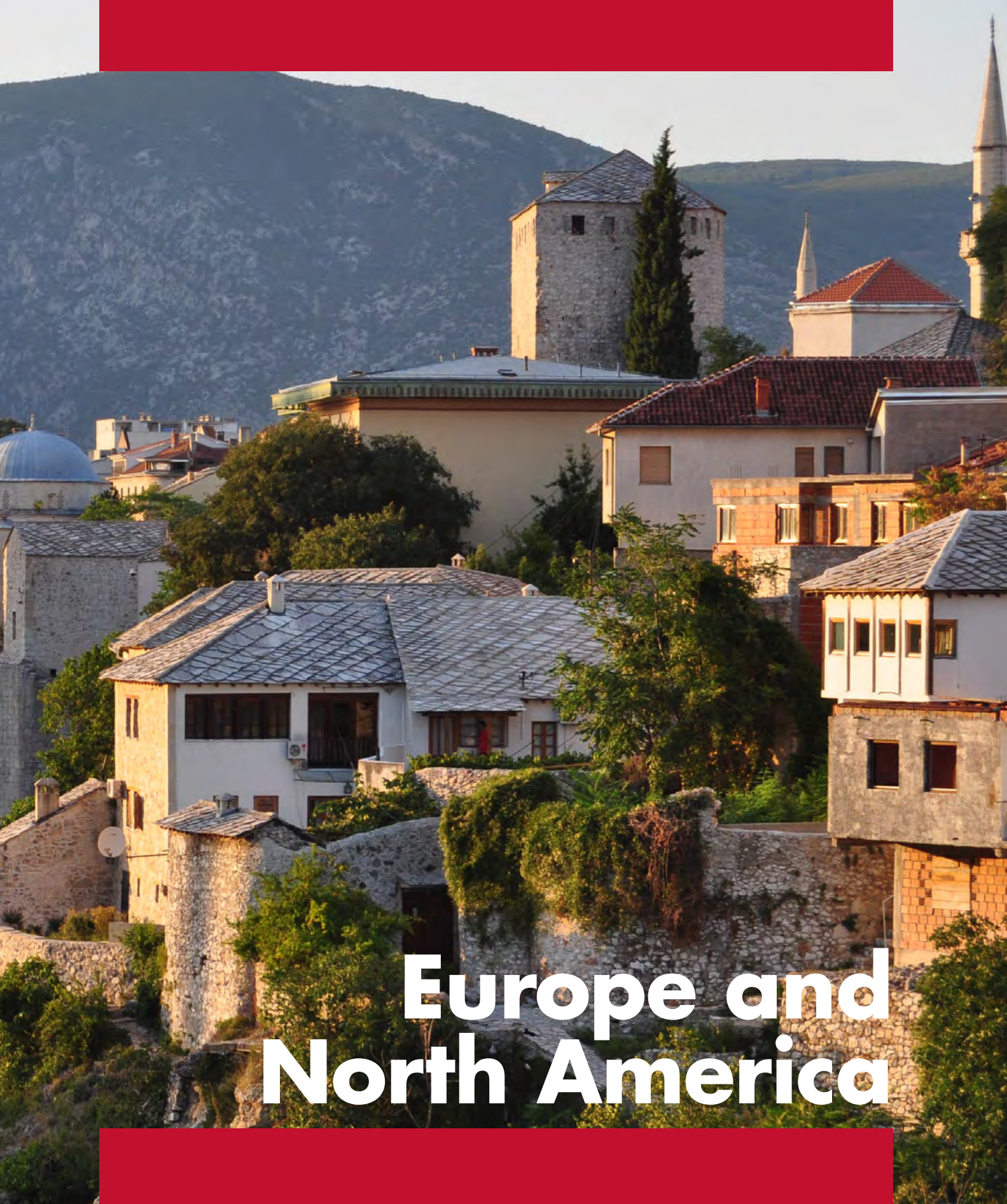
The Prime Minister attended the signing by the Director-General and Mr Ha Kim Ngoc, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Viet Nam and UNESCO for the period 2016–2020. The MOU foresees increased activities in the Organization's fields of competence in Viet Nam.

© VGP/Nhat Bac

A success story

On the occasion of the '21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21)' Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung of Viet Nam paid a historic visit to UNESCO Headquarters (1 December). During the visit, Viet Nam and UNESCO signed a Memorandum of Understanding covering education, culture, natural sciences, social science, and communication and information for the period 2016–2020. This document was established pursuant to the aims of the 2030 Agenda and the specific requirements of Vietnamese ministries and local authorities with regard to UNESCO, and marked an important step in the relationship between Viet Nam and UNESCO.



A scenic view of a historic town, likely in the Balkans, featuring stone buildings, a prominent tower, and a mountain in the background. The town is built on a hillside, with a mix of traditional stone and modern white-washed buildings. A large, multi-story stone tower with a tiled roof stands out in the center. To the right, a mosque with a tall, slender minaret is visible. The background shows a large, forested mountain under a clear sky. The foreground is filled with lush green trees and a stone wall. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and historic.

Europe and North America

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ANDORRA

Andorran National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Elisenda Vives

Secretary General: Mr Jean-Michel Armengol

Website: www.unesco.ad

Update of activities in 2015

The main events for 2015 were developed around the International Year of Light with a travelling exhibition, Beyond the Bulb, shown in all UNESCO Associated Schools and Andorra's cities up till the end of December. The events were made possible by the Ministries for the Environment and Education, and were financed by the private sector.

During the year, paintings produced by artists as part of 'Art camp 2014' were presented to UNESCO Headquarters (June) and to the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva (October).

Celebrations of World Day for Cultural Diversity (21 May) took place thanks to the involvement of the city of Andorra la Vella

and the participation of numerous cultural organizations within the country.

Travelling exhibitions on crystallography and Madriu-Perafita-Claror Valley, a World Heritage Site, were shown in UNESCO Associated Schools, as well as a documentary entitled Sur les Chemins de l'École by Pascal Plisson.

In the context of world heritage, an Andorran-Portuguese meeting took place in Porto, Portugal on the challenges of cultural landscape management in the Madriu-Perafita-Claror Valley (Andorra) and the wine-growing region of Alto Douro (Portugal), as well as a meeting on the challenges surrounding the management of these cultural landscapes in collaboration with the Portuguese National Commission (May).

The promotion of experimental mathematics led to the promotion of a virtual exhibition in Catalan, in collaboration with the Andorran Science Society (SAC).

Finally, on International Mountain Day (11 December), mountaineer Patrice de Bellefon led a conference on the topic of UNESCO cultural landscaping and local products, in partnership with the Andorran government and the city of Ordino.



A success story

The 'Art camp Andorra' experience created a link with Malta through its sponsor, Ms Hedva Ser, a UNESCO Artist for Peace. The first Maltese Art Camp (26 October – 4 November) brought together a dozen painters from different Mediterranean countries: Andorra, Bulgaria, Croatia, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Palestine, Serbia, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

Thanks to the efforts of Malta's President, the permanent Maltese delegation for UNESCO and the Centre for Education, Science and Culture in Gozo, Malta, this artistic and human encounter was a great success in terms of cultural diplomacy and the promotion of international dialogue for peace. The need to build new bridges between countries is particularly necessary against the backdrop of a Mediterranean troubled by multiple conflicts. Maltese participants and representatives can congratulate themselves on having worked tirelessly to create a favourable space for dialogue and creation. It is hoped that the next gathering, scheduled for 2017, will produce further successes.

Art Camp Malta 2015
© CNAU

ARMENIA

Armenian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Edward Nalbandian, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Vahram Kazhoyan

Website: www.mfa.am

Update of activities in 2015

Throughout the year the Armenian National Commission performed its functions in close collaboration with the Permanent Delegation of Armenia to UNESCO. The Commission succeeded in further promoting and deepening ties and cooperation between UNESCO and educational, scientific and cultural organizations in Armenia.

The Armenian delegation headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and President of the National Commission, took part in the 38th session of the General Conference. In his address, the Minister stressed Armenia's strong commitment to the ideals and goals of UNESCO and its willingness to continue its involvement in UNESCO's initiatives and programmes.

The National Commission actively engaged in celebrations for the 70th anniversary of UNESCO. The 'Youth for peace' concert organized at UNESCO Headquarters featured some of Armenia's most remarkable young musicians. The Commission also launched an initiative to host a 'Young Artists Forum' in Armenia in 2016.

Four projects submitted to UNESCO under the 2014–2015 Participation Programme received financial support, thereby increasing public awareness of UNESCO's activities on the ground. In addition, activities organized within the framework of the 'Puppets for Peace and Intercultural Dialogue' project reaffirmed the importance of international efforts to advocate for intercultural dialogue, protection of cultural heritage, and the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination.

The National Commission also took an active role in a conference to promote the 'Journey through the History of Armenian Typography' project, devoted to the renowned Armenian typographer, linguist and cultural figure, Voskan Yerevantsi. In his address, the Secretary-General of the National Commission highlighted the key role of UNESCO in internationalizing national cultural heritage.

Armenia contributed to efforts to protect and preserve World Cultural Heritage through constructive engagement in the relevant bodies of UNESCO. In 2015, Armenia joined the Subsidiary Committee to the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of cultural property, and submitted its candidature for the UNESCO ICH Intergovernmental Committee for 2016–2020. In addition, Armenia accepted membership of the Regional Category II Research Centre for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in West and Central Asia, based in Tehran.

The Commission also coordinated the activities of UNESCO Chairs and schools in Armenia. In cooperation with the Chair in Education for Sustainable Development, participants of the 'Learning for the Future' UNESCO Pilot Project organized an essay contest with the involvement of ASPnet partner schools in Belarus, Moldova, Bashkortostan (Russian Federation) and Kyrgyzstan.



Plenary Session of the 3rd International Conference on 'Cultural Policy, Policy for Culture: the Role of Culture in Sustainable Development in the Post-2015 Agenda'

© Hrant Khachatryan, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia

A success story

A key event within the framework of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO was the 3rd International Conference on 'Cultural Policy, Policy for Culture: the Role of Culture in Sustainable Development in the Post-2015 Agenda', organized by the Ministry of Culture in close collaboration with the Armenian National Commission. The conference hosted representatives from more than forty countries and international organizations. The participants of the conference were unanimous in their recognition of culture as a driver and an enabler of sustainable development.

The main outcome of the conference was the 'Yerevan Declaration', which condemned, in the strongest terms, cultural cleansing, barbaric destruction, violence and looting, and other crimes committed against the cultural heritage of humanity.

AUSTRIA

Austrian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Eva Nowotny

Secretary-General: Mrs Gabriele Eschig

Website: www.unesco.at

Update of activities in 2015

The Austrian Commission for UNESCO acts as an advisory body for federal and state governments, and NGOs, with a view to implementing the Organization's objectives. It establishes and maintains contacts between UNESCO and national partner institutions and informs the public of UNESCO's goals and programmes.

In the field of culture, the government has entrusted the Commission with the implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Among other measures, the Commission compiles and maintains a National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage. In 2015, the inscription of seven examples of intangible heritage brings the inventory to eighty-six elements. With a view to promoting effective safeguarding, the Commission in cooperation with the University of Vienna, organized a lecture series on intangible cultural heritage, which was open to the public.

The National Commission also operates as point of contact for the 2005 Convention, tasked with coordinating information-sharing and cooperation between all relevant government and non-government stakeholders at sub-national and national

level. To this end, the Commission provides regular dialogue forums for inter-departmental exchange and the involvement of civil society. In 2015, exchange sessions focused on culture in ongoing trade negotiations, arts education and visa policies for artists, resulting in comments and recommendations on these policy developments.

In the field of World Heritage, the Commission assumes a supportive role, initiating and organizing the annual meeting of all relevant World Heritage stakeholders in Austria and working closely with Austrian schools to adapt World Heritage educational material for online usage (www.welterbe-schule.at), thereby contributing to increased awareness of the importance of cultural heritage.

In education, the National Commission coordinates the Austrian Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), which comprises eighty-six schools. In 2015, the network focused on Global Citizenship Education in practice with the support of experts in the field of global learning, as well as human rights and democracy education.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission promoted international cooperation on sustainability science in Central and Eastern Europe, and further enlarged the network of representatives from ministries, politics and science academies. Two new UNESCO Chairs fostered interdisciplinarity at Austrian Universities: the UNESCO Chair on Bioethics at the Medical University of Vienna and the UNESCO Chair on Human Rights and Human Security at the University of Graz.

Lastly, in collaboration with L'Oréal Austria and the Austrian Academy of Science, the Commission once again awarded four fellowships 'For Women in Science' to support excellence among young female scientists.



High-level panel discussion held on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO. From left to right: Eva Nowotny, President of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO; Josef Haslinger, writer, President PEN-Centre Germany; Isolde Charim, philosopher, publicist; Phillip Bloom, writer, historian, philosopher; Manfred Matzka, Director-General of the Federal Chancellery; Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek, Federal Minister of Education and Women's Affairs; and moderator Alexandra Förderl-Schmid, Editor-in-chief, Der Standard.

© Austrian Commission for UNESCO/APA-Fotoservice/Preiss

A success story

In recent years, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO has undertaken extensive efforts to reach a wider public by boosting its visibility through a dedicated website, media and social media channels, diverse publications and public events.

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, the National Commission hosted a high-level panel discussion on the status of the engenderment of peace via education, science, and culture today, in cooperation with the Austrian Federal Chancellery, the Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs, and the daily newspaper Der Standard. The panel attracted considerable media attention and public interest.

Likewise, the 10th anniversary of the 2005 UNESCO Convention provided a good opportunity to reflect on challenges, visions and strategies for a sustainable cultural environment. The Commission organized a public event to bring together key stakeholders from Austria's art and culture sector to discuss the consequences of demographic changes, migration, trade negotiations and the digital realm for the cultural sector, and the necessary policy responses.

The feedback received from participants at these events and the media clearly illustrates how participatory dialogue contributes to raising awareness and visibility for UNESCO's programmes among new audiences.

AZERBAIJAN

National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO

President: Mr Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General a.i.: Ms Gulnara Agalarov

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan continued its work to promote UNESCO's ideas and objectives in Azerbaijan.

The 3rd World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, held in Baku (18–19 May) and organized with the support of UNESCO, ISESCO, the UN Alliance of Civilizations, the World Tourism Organization, the Council of Europe and the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, gathered together high-level representatives from all over the world. The high-level speakers included the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, who attended the forum during her official visit to Azerbaijan. She addressed a large audience of eminent personalities from over 100 countries including the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr Ilham Aliyev.

On this occasion, the Director-General launched the book, *Agree to Differ*, a landmark publication by UNESCO celebrating the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures. Together with the First Lady of Azerbaijan and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, Mrs Mehriban Aliyeva, Ms Bokova took part in a ceremony in the centre of Baku to

inaugurate the sculpture *Tree of Peace* – a unique art work by the UNESCO Artist for Peace, Hedva Ser.

The National Commission supported a number of events at UNESCO Headquarters during the year. One such event jointly organized with the International Turkic Academy celebrated the 200th year anniversary of the translation into the German language of the ancient Turkic legend *Kitab-i Dede Qorqud* (15 April). A high-level delegation headed by the Deputy Prime-Minister of Azerbaijan, Mr Elchin Afandiyev, attended the event.

The National Commission also organized traditional events in cooperation with state bodies, for example, the 13th Conference on the 'Constitutional right and the role of appropriate national and international institutions in the provision of freedom' (12–14 November), held on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO and the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The National Commission organized several events in celebration of UN international days such as International Jazz Day (30 April), as well as the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies in Azerbaijan. It also participated in the preparation of the nomination for 'Copper craftsmanship of Lahij', which was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO.

Lastly, the Commission continued to implement joint projects with other National Commissions. In cooperation with the National Commission of Moldova it organized a book launch to promote Azerbaijani Fairy-tales in the Eyes of Moldovan Children, held in Chisinau (11–12 March), within the framework of the joint project 'To see, to listen and to understand each other'.



Participants at the 3rd World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue
© National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan together with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan and UNESCO organized the 1st Academic Forum of UNESCO Chairs on Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (19 May). The event, held for the first time in Baku within the framework of the 3rd World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, brought together representatives of UNESCO Chairs and prestigious international organizations from more than twenty countries to share experiences on intercultural and interreligious dialogue and exchange views on prospects for closer cooperation. The forum also included the participation of scientists, researchers and media representatives.

In their opening statements, the Secretary-General of the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ms Gunay Afandiyeva, and the Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences at UNESCO, Ms Nada al-Nashif, explored the ways in which Azerbaijan constitutes a model of intercultural dialogue.

BELGIUM

Flemish Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Marc Vervenne

Secretary-General: Mr Tijs D'Hoest

Website: www.unesco.be

Belgian French and German Speaking Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Philippe Busquin

Secretary-General: Mr Marien Faure

Website: www.unesco.be

Update of activities in 2015

The Flemish Commission for UNESCO and the Belgian French and German Speaking Commission for UNESCO undertook a number of activities in 2015.

In February, the Flemish Commission actively participated in the formal inauguration session of the Network of European National Commissions for UNESCO, held in Bonn. This joint initiative of the German, Dutch and Flemish Commissions resulted in a living network encompassing over thirty-five countries.

In May, the Commissions supported the organization of the European Gala for Freedom of Expression, also known as 'Difference Day', to mark World Press Freedom Day (3 May). Governmental representatives and delegations from UNESCO and European institutions participated in the celebrations,

heightening the visibility of World Press Freedom Day throughout Belgium.

In September, around 150 experts from over 60 countries were invited by the Commissions to attend the SOIMA (Sound and Image Collections Conservation) 2015 International Conference: 'Unlocking Sound and Image Heritage', held in Brussels. This UNESCO/ICCROM training conference received the support of UNESCO's Participation Programme, and forms part of an international training programme designed to help preserve twentieth-century audiovisual heritage, which is at risk of disappearing. The training conference targeted mid-career professionals in charge of conservation and archiving of sound and image collections in cultural institutions.

In October, the Commissions cooperated with the Government of Flanders to organize a network event in Brussels, entitled 'UNESCO, the European Union and the Government of Flanders #Unite4Heritage'. Panel members included representatives from different heritage institutions and the UNESCO Office in Beirut.

In the same month, the Commissions organized the first European Preparatory Youth Meeting for (UNESCO) Youth Representatives from twenty-nine countries. The meeting prepared forty Youth Delegates for their tasks as representatives during the 9th UNESCO Youth Forum (26–28 October).

In November, the Flemish Commission and the Dutch National Commission for UNESCO organized a first international Model UNESCO with around eighty young people aged between 12 and 16 years old. The topic of the meeting was 'Heritage in the Syrian and Iraqi Conflict'.

Finally, December saw the installation of the Belgian Memory of the World Committee with the participation of both Commissions.



The mobile carillon bell that formed the heart of celebrations of the recent inscription of 'carillon culture in Belgium' as intangible cultural heritage.

© Tijs D'Hoest, Secretary-General of the Flemish Commission for UNESCO

A success story

On 18 September 2015, carillonneurs from Belgium and abroad gathered in Brussels to celebrate the recent recognition of carillon culture in Belgium as a best safeguarding practice for intangible cultural heritage.

In honour of the occasion, a mobile carillon from the northern French city of Douai was installed in the heart of the city. In the morning, carillonneurs from Flanders and Wallonia gathered together with students from different carillon schools to play this remarkable instrument. The music of the bells was heard all the way to the centre of Brussels, and attracted crowds of people who joined in with the event.

The official ceremony part took place in the Brussels Town Hall, where the Belgian carillon associations solemnly received the official UNESCO charter from Mr Salvatore Mineo, Officer-in-Charge of the UNESCO Liaison Office to the European Institutions in Brussels.

The celebrations continued with the transformation of the forty-nine bells of the cathedral Saint-Michel-et-Gudule into 'the largest jukebox in the world'. A dedicated 'carillon' mobile phone app enabled members of the public to select songs from a playlist of national and international hits, which the carillonneurs then performed live, 245 steps above the ground. Finally, the audience was able to enjoy a special 'Carillon beer', launched to commemorate the occasion.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Adil Osmanović, Minister of Civil Affairs

Secretary-General: Ms Biljana Čamur Veselinović

Website: www.unescobih.mcp.gov.ba

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Commission for UNESCO worked to promote the Organization's mandate, objectives and activities through the organization of events to celebrate the 70th anniversary of UNESCO.

One key event was the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the inscription of the Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar on the UNESCO World Heritage List, held in the presence of the Director-General, Irina Bokova (see below).

To celebrate its 70th anniversary, UNESCO also granted its patronage to several cultural events, including the traditional festival 'Days of Mowing – Kupres, Bosnia and Herzegovina'. This festival gathers together folklore ensembles from across Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad to participate in concerts and shows featuring traditional dance, sports and crafts. On the final day harvesters take part in a competition that dates back 200 years. This year, the event also hosted an international symposium entitled 'CIOFF Festivals – A Contribution to the Safeguarding of World Cultural Heritage'.

Another event held under the patronage of UNESCO was the 3rd edition of the 'Project Biennale of Contemporary Art, D-O ARK Underground', which uses the setting of a cold war bunker in Konjic to explore the dreams and visions of contemporaries of the Cold War (24 April – 24 July).

The Bosnia and Herzegovina Commission also organized a 'Roundtable Session on Experiences and Practices of Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in Bosnia and Herzegovina'.

Throughout the year, the National Commission ensured Bosnia and Herzegovina fulfilled its obligations towards UNESCO by engaging competent authorities to prepare and submit periodic reports on the implementation of the UNESCO 1970 Convention and the UNESCO 2003 Convention, and to verify the status of elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and information on the implementation of the International Convention Against Doping in Sport.

In collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Sarajevo, the National Commission organized an event to mark the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (21 May) and the 10th anniversary of the Convention on Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The event included screenings of four documentary movies made by young directors from Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the project 'Filming the Other', financed through the UNESCO International Fund for the Promotion of Culture.

Lastly, this year saw the appointment of new members to the National Commission following the end of the previous mandate. The new president Mr Adil Osmanović participated in the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference.



The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, being presented with the prestigious Mostar Peace Connection Award by Mr Ljubo Bešlić, Mayor of Mostar and Mr Safet Oručević, Director of the Centre for Peace and Multiethnic Cooperation, Mostar, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the inscription of the Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

© Miroslav Landeka

A success story

In 2015, the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, attended the celebration for the 10th anniversary of the inscription of the Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar on the UNESCO World Heritage List (4 July). The celebratory event included the opening of the reconstructed shop of the legendary Mostar Mayor, Mujaga Komadina, which was built in 1883 and located within the Old City Area, and a concert performance by the Mostar Symphony Orchestra as part of the programme 'The Bridge Embracing the River Banks', which took place was on the riverbanks under the Old Bridge.

Speaking at the event, Ms Bokova praised Mostar as a powerful symbol of what can be achieved when people are united.

During her visit, Ms Bokova presented to Mr Mladen Ivanic, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a certificate inscribing Zmijanje embroidery on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

BULGARIA

National Commission of Republic of Bulgaria for UNESCO

President: Mr Rumen Alexandrov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mrs Maria Donska

Website: www.unesco-bg.org

Update of activities in 2015

2015 was a special year for the Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO, which drafted a national plan with activities and events to mark the 70th anniversary of the Organization. The activities covered all spheres in which UNESCO operates and included the participation of young people and students.

Highlights among the many activities of the past year included the production and launch of a set of commemorative postcards illustrating Bulgarian sites inscribed on the World Heritage List, in the presence of the Director-General, Irina Bokova. The Bulgarian National Commission also co-organized an international roundtable entitled '70 Years UNESCO – Peace through Education, Science and Culture' with the Sozopol Foundation (8 August). In addition, the Bulgarian musician,

Theodosii Spasov, was appointed a UNESCO Artist for Peace, and an international conference dedicated to the looting of Syria's cultural heritage was organized on the same day in partnership with the Norwegian Embassy and the Embassy of Cyprus in Sofia (16 September).

One notable event dedicated to UNESCO's 70th anniversary was the national youth contest, 'Cultural and Natural Heritage of Bulgaria – Let's Think Today about Our Tomorrow'. The event, organized by the Bulgarian National Commission and the Diplomatic Institute at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aimed to develop a multimedia project on one of the nine Bulgarian sites inscribed on the World Heritage List.

As a follow-up to this contest, the Bulgarian National Commission and the Regional Centre in South-Eastern Europe (SEE) for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage held another competition dedicated to the three Bulgarian elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The winners of both contests received their awards at an international forum co-organized by the National Commission and the Regional Centre (12–13 December). The main focus of the forum was the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in SEE countries and their contribution to the implementation of the eponymous 2003 UNESCO Convention.

Finally, the year ended with the good news that the Surva folk feast had been accepted for inscription on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.



The national festival of Bulgarian folklore in the town of Koprivshtitsa.
© Sozopol Foundation

A success story

In 2015, Bulgaria celebrated the 50th anniversary of the National Festival of Bulgarian Folklore in the town of Koprivshtitsa (7 August). The jubilee celebrations were held under the patronage of the Director-General, Irina Bokova, who attended the opening concert.

The festival represents a highly memorable contribution to Bulgaria's rich cultural life, and attracts performers of all ages and from all regions of Bulgaria. It demonstrates the vitality of Bulgarian intangible heritage and the variety of Bulgarian traditions from the country's seven folklore regions. It also plays a key role in preserving and communicating intangible cultural heritage to a wide audience. The opening concert was broadcast live by Bulgarian National Television and accompanied by a special documentary on the folklore festival.

CANADA

Canadian Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Christina Cameron

Secretary-General: Ms Louise Filiatrault

Website: www.unesco.ca

Update of activities in 2015

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO connects Canadians with the work of UNESCO. Its aim is to create a society in which Canadians share knowledge and learn from each other, locally and globally, in order to build peaceful, equitable and sustainable futures. As stated in its strategic plan (2014–2021), the National Commission promotes collective reflection, sets priorities, and facilitates concerted action in the fields of education, science, culture, and communication and information. The National Commission operates within the Canada Council for the Arts. This provides it with a great degree of independence and allows it to serve as a bridge between civil society and the government.

The tragedy at the offices of Charlie Hebdo in Paris was a reminder that freedom of expression cannot be taken for granted. To foster dialogue, the National Commission worked with Carleton University and the Canadian Committee for World Press Freedom (CCWPF) to organize a panel discussion entitled, 'Charlie Hebdo: When it comes to free expression, where do we draw the line?'

The National Commission and CCWPF also held their annual international editorial cartoon competition honouring the work of cartoonists on issues related to freedom of expression. The best editorial cartoons were displayed as part of a travelling exhibition entitled 'Freedom of Expression in Broad Strokes 2001–2014', which this year travelled to Africa.

To catalyse Canadian engagement in the rapprochement of cultures, the National Commission issued a call to action at its Annual General Meeting, inviting its members to create a shared understanding of the constructive role played by cultures in bridging divides. The National Commission also launched the UN Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024) at the Federal and Provincial Black Government Leaders Summit.

Indigenous people in Canada are a key priority of the National Commission. During the year, the Commission supported several Innu youths in their work with experts to create a directory of sacred Innu sites in Northern Canada, a project inspired by the UNESCO International Conference on Sacred Sites, held in 2013. The National Commission also supported Journalists for Human Rights through the Indigenous Reporters Programme.

Lastly, the National Commission worked to connect Canadians to UNESCO programmes at the international level in a variety of ways in 2015, including through leading discussions with UNESCO's Education Sector in preparation for the Education Week for Peace and Sustainable Development (to be held in March 2017) and partnering with UNESCO for Habitat III 2016, a UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development to be held in Quito in October.



Participants in the Students on Ice (SOI) expedition.
© Lee Narraway

A success story

The National Commission was a key partner in the Students on Ice (SOI) 2015 Arctic Expedition. SOI aims to foster a passion for the North among youth. Participants gained the tools to lead positive change in their communities and help strengthen a shared sense of Nordic identity.

The National Commission supported the participation in the expedition of two youths from the Manicouagan–Uapishka Biosphere Reserve, located in Québec, one of whom also participated in the 9th UNESCO Youth Forum on the theme 'Young Global Citizens for a Sustainable Planet'.

To prepare for the forum, the National Commission launched its largest-ever national youth consultation process, surveying 3,000 young Canadians to gather their views and recommendations. Some of these found their way into the forum's conclusions – specifically, the need to include multiple voices, such as those from traditional and indigenous cultures, within the framework of global citizenship education.

The reflections and perspectives of SOI participants on Arctic change were also captured in the concluding chapter of *Acting on Climate Change: Extending the Dialogue Among Canadians*, an e-publication launched by the UNESCO Chair for Dialogues on Sustainability (McGill University), which aimed to prepare leaders for their participation in COP21.

http://sustainablecanadialogues.ca/pdf_2015/extending_dialogue/CollectionTextes_EN_v2.c.pdf

CROATIA

Croatian Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Radoslav Tomić

Secretary-General: Ms Rut Carek

Website: www.min-kulture.hr/unesco/

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, Croatia celebrated a number of anniversaries associated with UNESCO including the 200th anniversary of the birth of the politician, bishop and benefactor Josip Juraj Strossmayer, and the 400th anniversary of the publication of the book *Machinae Novae* by Faust Vrančić.

In culture, Croatia together with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia submitted a transnational nomination for Stećci-Medieval Tombstones for inscription on the World Heritage List. Croatia, Italy and Montenegro also inscribed Venetian works of defence between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries on the World Heritage Tentative List.

The Croatian Commission for UNESCO proposed a project for the preservation of intangible heritage of Rovinj through the Eco-museum 'House of Batana' for inclusion on the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices of UNESCO. The Commission also continued its successful cooperation with the International Centre for Underwater Archaeology in Zadar, a UNESCO Category II Centre.

In addition, the Croatian Commission with the support of UNESCO initiated work on the 'Culture for Development

Indicators (CDIS)' project. Data collection at the national level is currently underway.

In education, the Croatian Commission and the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, organized a series of workshops for teachers on implementation of the World Heritage in Young Hands educational kit. An accompanying international seminar to allow teachers to share experiences of using the kit was also organized for 2016.

In collaboration with UNESCO and the University of Zagreb, the Croatian Commission successfully coordinated the creation of the UNESCO Chair on the Free Movement of People, Migration and Inter-Cultural Dialogue at the University of Zagreb.

The Croatian Commission also coordinated the nomination of the Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities at the School of Medicine, University of Rijeka, for the UNESCO Chair in Social Sciences and Medical Humanities.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Croatian Commission supported the establishment of the 'World Day of Roma Language' at UNESCO. The initiative was the brainchild of Kali Sara, an education association working with Roma people in Croatia. The 'World Day of Roma Language' was officially proclaimed during the 38th session of the General Conference.

Lastly, the Croatian Commission for UNESCO provided support to Croatian experts through its membership of numerous committees including the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Event of Armed Conflict, and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Body of the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.



Recipients of the 2015 'For Women in Science' L'Oréal ADRIA UNESCO awards. From left to right: Ksenija Uroić, Nevena Cvetešić, Anamarija Rogina and Ivana Mikolašević

© L'Oréal ADRIA UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Croatian Commission for UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture together with L'Oréal ADRIA organized and celebrated the 10th Annual National Awards 'For Women in Science'. On this occasion, four fellowships were successfully awarded.

The National Awards 'For Women in Science' have proven highly popular among young women scientists at the last stage of their doctorates, since they were first established. The popularity of the awards, as well as the extraordinary excellence of the candidates, led the organizers this year to increase the amount of each fellowship from €4,000 to €5,000.

The Croatian Commission for UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture with the support of L'Oréal ADRIA will continue to organize the 'For Women in Science' awards as a mean to encourage young women at the beginning of their scientific careers and to foster the presence of women in scientific as well as other fields.

CYPRUS

Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Loukia Loizou Hadjigavriel,

Secretary-General: Mr Pavlos Paraskevas

Website: www.unesco.org.cy

Update of activities in 2015

The Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO acts as a link between UNESCO and national governmental and non-governmental institutions, as well as a public information point for UNESCO's mission and programmes. Among the core objectives of the Commission in 2015 were the implementation of capacity-building activities and the enhancement of cooperation with existing networks and national or international stakeholders, namely in the areas of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), human rights and intercultural dialogue, with a special focus on youth.

The National Commission has participated since 2013 in the multi-stakeholder Steering Committee for the promotion of the Council of Europe 'One in Five' campaign to combat sexual violence against children. Within this framework, the Commission, in collaboration with the UNESCO Chair at the University of Nicosia and the Cyprus Sports Organization, organized two training seminars for staff of sports associations and youth camps on the prevention of sexual abuse against children (June).

In the field of culture, the National Commission implemented activities to promote and safeguard tangible and intangible cultural heritage. In collaboration with the Press and Information Office and the Cyprus Department of Antiquities, the National Commission prepared a travelling photographic exhibition on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, entitled 'World Heritage of Cyprus: history, myth and religion'. Among other activities, the Commission organized a group exhibition in October 2015, which included original artworks created by young artists during a workshop organized by the Commission to promote Lefkara Embroidery Lace, an element inscribed on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The exhibition was the result of a pilot training programme involving artists, tradition bearers and the local authorities.

Within the framework of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022), the National Commission co-organized the '2nd Euro-Arab Youth Music Forum', held in Limassol, Cyprus (5–6 December). The theme of the forum was music as a medium for cultural expression and dialogue among young people of the European Union and the League of Arab States.

Finally, to promote UNESCO's educational objectives, the National Commission continued its collaboration with school networks, such as the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) and the South Eastern Mediterranean Sea Project (SEMEP). Throughout the year, ASPnet students and their teachers explored the 'Elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Cyprus', while SEMEP schools worked on projects related to 'Cooperation for water sustainability through science and culture'. Both networks had the opportunity to present their projects during their annual conferences held in March.



Training workshop on community-based inventorying
© CUTing Edge/Cyprus University of Technology

A success story

The National Commission coordinates activities for the inventory and safeguarding of ICH elements in line with the 2003 Convention. Following the adoption of a proposal by the Commission, the Ministry of Education and Culture revised the inventorying process in Cyprus and in 2015 launched a multi-stage comprehensive procedure involving the broader participation of communities.

Against this background, the National Commission organized training workshops, during which participants were provided with the essential knowledge for the preparation of nomination files and the transmission of ICH elements. Several communities and groups responded to the open call and submitted proposals to the Expert Committee established for the examination of nomination files. Information about the elements inscribed on the National Inventory of ICH is available through the National Commission's website.

Furthermore, the Commission collaborated with the Cultural Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture to prepare a funding scheme to support activities aimed at safeguarding traditional cultural expressions and elements inscribed on the National Inventory and the Representative List of ICH. The main objectives of the scheme are to support the transmission, education and development of ICH elements; encourage the documentation and research of ICH; and provide incentives for the implementation of innovative projects that produce added cultural value.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Czech Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Petr Gazdík

Secretary-General: Mr Karel Komárek

Website: www.mzv.cz/unesco

Update of activities in 2015

The Czech Commission for UNESCO was founded as an advisory body to the Czech Government. It consists of representatives of respective ministries, important institutions and individual experts in the fields of UNESCO competence. Its main tasks are to facilitate the cooperation of national institutions, experts and UNESCO, and to promote the goals and objectives of the Organization within the country.

The composition of the Commission was renewed in December 2015, with the total number of members increased to fifty-eight, mostly due to growth in the number of important institutions represented in the Commission.

The National Commission and its members were actively involved in preparing the Czech delegations for the Executive Board's sessions and the 38th session of the General Conference. The Commission also took advantage of opportunities presented by the celebrations for UNESCO's 70th anniversary to raise awareness of the Organization's broad range of activities and to highlight its role as an irreplaceable part of the UN system, through a series of events organized across the whole country.

In 2015, the Commission granted its patronage to twenty-five projects organized by national institutions and non-governmental organizations directly related to UNESCO's programmes and mandate.

In education, the Commission coordinated the realization of three long-term fellowships for graduate studies placed at the disposal of UNESCO by the Government of the Czech Republic to benefit certain developing countries.

As coordinator of the Associated Schools Project Network, the Commission organized the 21st Annual Meeting of ASPnet in Ostrava. This year, the meeting was devoted to the protection and promotion of human rights. It provided a good opportunity for school coordinators to present their most successful projects, exchange experiences and create new partnerships.

The Commission also established an intersectoral working group for the Memory of the World programme with a view to coordinating the participation of Czech institutions.

In 2015, the Commission devoted substantial attention to measures preventing the illicit trafficking of cultural objects. In a statement, the Commission condemned the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage. The Commission also organized a seminar on the illicit trafficking of cultural items from Iraq, Syria and other parts of the world (see below).

During a visit to the Czech Republic (October 2015), representatives of the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalization discussed heritage management best practices and explored potential new collaborations with the relevant authorities including the Czech Commission for UNESCO.

Lastly, the Secretariat of the Commission continues to publish monthly online information bulletins on UNESCO programmes and its own activities, which are distributed to a broad range of governmental and non-governmental institutions.



Opening of the seminar, 'Measures Preventing Illicit Export of Cultural Heritage from Iraq and Syria', held in Prague.

© Czech National Commission

A success story

In 2015, the Czech Commission for UNESCO, the Czech Committee of ICOM and the Czech Commission of Blue Shield organized an expert seminar entitled, 'Measures Preventing Illicit Export of Cultural Heritage from Iraq and Syria', held in Prague (23 September). The organizers invited representatives of the respective ministries, the Directorate General of Customs and the Police Presidium, as well as academicians (including from the UNESCO Chair for Museology and World Heritage) and independent experts, to present the issues involved and recent activities from their perspectives. The participants also devoted due attention to the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria.

This seminar represented the start of a long-term awareness-raising campaign. The planned cooperation also underscores the undisputed success of activities such as the Czech project to map destroyed monuments at Mosul and implementation of the ICOM Red List, the Object Identification standard and the 100 Missing Objects series, with requests received from the police and customs officers to train staff in this field. The outcomes of the seminar demonstrated that the Czech Republic is able to offer world-class expertise in this area, in particular via UNESCO and ICOM.

DENMARK

Danish National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Professor Ms Linda Nielsen

Secretary-General: Mr Jens Dalsgaard

Website: <http://uvm.dk/Om-os/Ministeriets-internationale-arbejde/UNESCO>

Update of activities in 2015

For the Danish National Commission 2015 was a very active year. In line with its new national strategy, the Commission reached out to new partners and implemented activities in all areas of UNESCO's mandate related to key national priorities.

To support Education 2030 – the new global agenda for inclusive quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all – the Danish National Commission upheld and deepened its focus on global citizenship education (GCED). With strong support from UNESCO Headquarters, especially through high-quality publications, the National Commission worked with the Ministry of Education, the Danish Associated School Network, pupils' organizations and key stakeholders in education to promote the concept of global citizenship, and to explore and highlight examples of good practice. In particular, the Commission embarked on a Danish translation of the 2015 UNESCO-publication Global Citizenship Education – Topics and Learning Objectives, for national dissemination with a view to mainstreaming GCED.

Another promising initiative is 'Learning Cities'. Together with a range of public and private partners and non-governmental organizations, the Danish National Commission succeeded in stimulating interest in UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) and its potential to refocus local strategies on education and learning as a driver of inclusive and sustainable city development. A number of municipalities are now considering membership of the GNLC, with a national network to support Learning Cities under development.

In science, the eighth UNESCO-L'Oréal awards 'For Women in Science' presented prizes to talented young women scientists, as role models for girls and women. The award ceremony took place in the presence of H.R.H. Princess Marie, patron of the Danish National Commission for UNESCO, with the cooperation of L'Oréal and the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters.

In culture, members of the National Commission contributed to public debates on the role of UNESCO conventions, in particular the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. In the context of the 38th session of the General Conference, Denmark also joined with other Nordic countries to organize a successful side event on creative and artistic freedom.

Lastly, in 2015, Denmark and the Danish National Commission furthered its contribution to the work of the Committee and the Bureau of the International Programme for the Development of Communication and the Executive Council of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.



Members of the Danish National Commission discussing education issues at the People's Meeting on Bornholm. From right to left: Chairperson, Ms Linda Nielsen, Mr Laust Joen Jakobsen, Ms Trine Bendix Knudsen and Ms Helle Gudmandsen

© The Danish National Commission for UNESCO



Kagemand, a traditional Danish pastry birthday cake prepared in celebration of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO

© The Danish National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, the Danish National Commission for UNESCO took part in the popular political festival on the island of Bornholm known as the 'People's Meeting on Bornholm' (June). Equipped with UNESCO t-shirts, caps, infographic posters, brochures and a traditional Danish pastry birthday cake, members of the National Commission engaged in debate with local decision-makers and the general public around key priorities of UNESCO's national work.

Among the topics discussed for the 70th anniversary celebration were the relevance of UNESCO to education in Denmark, global citizenship education, national heritage and world heritage, and cultural diversity and the roles of libraries and museums. The event helped to increase UNESCO's visibility and impact.

ESTONIA

Estonian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Kristin Kuutma

Secretary-General: Ms Kerli Gutman

Website: www.unesco.ee

Update of activities in 2015

The Estonian National Commission for UNESCO serves as focal point for liaison and coordination between UNESCO and Estonian national institutions and organizations, both

governmental and non-governmental, as well as private individuals connected with UNESCO's work. The National Commission consists of a Supervisory Board, an Advisory Committee and a Secretariat.

In 2015, Estonia continued its term as a Member of the Executive Board. In spring, the National Commission hosted the European Man and the Biosphere (EuroMAB) meeting in the city of Haapsalu (19–23 May). In December, Estonia joined the Creative Cities Network with the country's second biggest city – Tartu – nominated as a UNESCO City of Literature.

The National Commission contributed to discussions at the national level on the new Sustainable Development Goals and continued its work with the UNESCO Associated Schools Network. On the occasion of the COP21 Climate Conference, held in Paris (30 November – 12 December) the Commission organized a thematic event for young people (see below).



Handing over the Youth Climate Declaration to the head of the Estonian delegation.

© NGO Mondo

A success story

To address challenges related to climate change and promote awareness among young people of the COP21 meeting in Paris, the Estonian National Commission for UNESCO, the non-governmental organization Mondo and the Estonian Fund for Nature (ELF) organized a social marketing campaign and a seminar for Estonian schools on the topic of climate change.

The social marketing campaign, which invited youth to create videos on climate change, took place in October 2015. The most active participants were invited to the youth climate seminar, which urged participants to actively discuss the issues at hand, and aimed to motivate them to think and act globally. The seminar, which took place in the Estonian Parliament (6 November), included a variety of practical workshops including on building solar panels, creating a street campaign on climate change and personal energy usage.

The participants also formulated a Youth Climate Declaration, which stressed the importance of renewable energy, keeping global warming below 2°C and the responsibility of people as global citizens to achieve the goals agreed in Paris. The declaration was given to the head of the Estonian delegation at the COP21 meeting and to the Minister of the Environment.

Finally, the Estonian Fund for Nature organized a trip to Paris for Estonian climate activists and one of the most active participants of the youth seminar was invited to join the group.

FINLAND

Finnish National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Jutta Urpilainen

Secretary-General: Ms Zabrina Holmström

Website: www.minedu.fi/OPM/Kansainvaliset_asiat/kansainvaliset_jaerjestoet/unesco/suomen_unesco-toimikunta/?lang=en

Update of activities in 2015

The Finnish National Commission for UNESCO consists of a Chairperson and eleven members nominated for a four-year term by the Government. The members of the National Commission represent high-level expertise in the fields of UNESCO's competence. They advise the Ministry of Education and Culture and contribute to the work and visibility of UNESCO. The Commission meets approximately six times per year.

A new National Commission was nominated at the beginning of 2015, whose term will last up to the end of 2018. Ms Jutta Urpilainen, Member of the Parliament and former Minister of Finance was appointed as Chair of the Commission.

Education was a major theme of the Commission's work in 2015; accordingly, it devoted significant effort to preparations for the UN Education 2030 Agenda and offered expert views and feedback to the Finnish negotiators during the UN process.

Press freedom and freedom of expression were also prominent themes in 2015. Due to the involvement of the National Commission (among other actors), Finland will host the main event of World Press Freedom Day (WPFD) in Helsinki (2–4 May 2016). The main themes of the UNESCO-coordinated event are freedom of information, press freedom and the safety of journalists. Throughout 2015, the Commission played an active role in preparations for WPFD 2016, for example, by organizing a seminar on freedom of speech, its limits, censorship and hate speech.

Experts of the National Commission took part in the formulation of the 'Draft Recommendation concerning the Preservation of, and Access to, Documentary Heritage in the Digital Era'. The recommendation was drafted during an Intergovernmental Special Committee meeting of experts in Paris (1 July) and approved by the 38th session of the General Conference in November.

2015 marked the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Commission organized a seminar in October to celebrate this occasion, concentrating on the history, content and influence of the Convention, and Finland's active role in its drafting.

Lastly, the National Commission elected new representatives to the prize jury of the National L'Oréal-UNESCO Awards 'For Women in Science', the governing board of the RCE (Regional Centre of Expertise on ESD) Espoo network, and the National Committee of the International Geoscience Programme.



Participants at the Nordic UNESCO meeting condemned the destruction of cultural heritage.

© Paula Hannus, Ministry of Education and Culture

A success story

In 2015, Finland organized the annual Nordic UNESCO Coordination Meeting. The meeting was held in Helsinki in June and attended by more than fifty participants from all Nordic countries. Members of the Finnish National UNESCO Commission took an active part in the proceedings, the main focus of which was preparations for the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO. The meeting offered an excellent opportunity to exchange views and consolidate Nordic efforts to support and enhance the work of UNESCO.

FRANCE

French National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Daniel Janicot

Secretary General: Mr David Fajolles

Website: www.unesco.fr

Update of activities in 2015

2015 was the first year of operation for the new French National Commission for UNESCO. The following priorities served as guiding themes for its actions:

To commemorate the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and as part of the UN International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022), the French National Commission for UNESCO organized several international events, most often in partnership with the Secretariat of the Organization.

To strengthen the Associated Schools Programme, the National Commission made plans to open up the network to French schools in the high-priority education system, and reorganize the UNESCO Chairs to engender better coordination between them.

An emphasis was placed on developing cooperative relationships with other National Commissions (China, Dominican Republic, Germany, Lebanon, Republic of Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia, etc.) and on the participation of the National Commission in European and international networks. Accordingly, the French National Commission participated in meetings held in Bonn (February), Seoul (March) and Lugano (August).

The drafting of proposals for major agreements and to update recommendations (1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers) is also a priority, as is the renewal of the French National Commission's intervention methods as regards partnerships, communication strategy, the use of new technologies and decentralized territorial organization.

Finally, the French National Commission, in collaboration with the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie and UNESCO's education sector, contributed to a symposium on 'Higher education in the digital age: What do African societies expect today?', held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (6–7 May).



Twitter Museum Week, a digital work by Marcin Ignac, produced by Bright, partner and exhibition curator of the 'Manufacturing Curiosity' conference
© Bright (www.brig.ht)

A success story

To commemorate the 10th anniversary of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the French National Commission organized a conference entitled 'Manufacturing Curiosity' on digital aspects of the Convention, held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (17 December). The conference provided an innovative format to discuss the impact of new online methods on shaping individual tastes, with the participation of major players in digital entrepreneurship, alongside experts from the Convention.

This initiative provided an opportunity to tackle the digital revolution from the point of view of cultural practices, such as those that may be influenced by new production and distribution models and patterns. In particular, the conference focused on a crucial dimension of the digital revolution: the impact of recommendation algorithms and social networks on the diversity of cultural expressions.

GEORGIA

Georgian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Mikheil Janelidze, Vice-Prime Minister,
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Ms Ketevan Kandelaki

Website: www.unesco.ge

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, Georgia celebrated International Jazz Day for the third time, joining more than 1 billion people worldwide (30 April). The Georgian National Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia lent its support to the event, which included a concert by the renowned jazzman Ron Carter.

The Government of Georgia devotes substantial attention to the implementation of the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the illicit Import, Export and Transfer

of Ownership of Cultural Property. Following the invitation of the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of the States Parties to the 1970 Convention, the National Commission supported the distribution of video clips specifically produced to raise awareness of the illicit trade of cultural objects among all travel companies registered in Georgia, as well as national ports, airports and railway companies. UNESCO recognized the National Commission's efforts in this regard as an 'unprecedented decision among the States Party to the Convention', which 'reflects a good practice to be followed by the other States'.

Georgia's commitment to increasing its role through missions and activities aimed at promoting the values of the Organization worldwide, was reflected in a gala concert held in Batumi, Georgia (15 September) as a tribute to UNESCO's 70th anniversary. The gala was conceived by the prominent Georgian pianist and UNESCO Artist for Peace, Ms Eliso Bolkvadze, and organized by the Government of Georgia. Upon the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and the Georgian National Commission, the Assistant Director-General for UNESCO, Mr Éric Falt, paid a visit to Batumi, underlining the importance of the event.



The award ceremony for students who participated in the project 'Traditions of Environmental Protection and Sustainable Use of National Resources of Georgia' initiated by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia

© Georgian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In March 2015, the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia, in cooperation with Georgian National Commission, the Ministries of Culture and Monument Protection, Education and Science, Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia initiated the project 'Traditions of Environmental Protection and Sustainable Use of National Resources of Georgia'. The project is designed to promote competition among schools as a means to enhance student knowledge of local intangible heritage through research and recording.

In recognition of the pedagogic value and relevance to UNESCO's objectives concerning the promotion of cultural diversity and the visibility of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Director-General generously granted the Organization's patronage to the project and authorized the use of UNESCO's logo together with the emblem of the Convention.

GERMANY

German Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Verena Metze-Mangold

Secretary-General: Mr Roland Bernecker

Website: www.unesco.de

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the work of the German Commission for UNESCO was defined largely by efforts to organize the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee (see below). The Commission undertook many other successful initiatives throughout the year to further strengthen the visibility and work of UNESCO in the country.

A notable example was the rise in number of young Germans participating in the International Voluntary Service 'kulturweit', which surpassed 2,000 in 2015. Implemented in cooperation with the German Foreign Office, kulturweit offers young volunteers the chance to live and work abroad (for a period of 6 or 12 months), including at other National Commissions. This year, kulturweit organized its first 'reverse' exchange, inviting international volunteers to live and work in Germany. Several hundred kulturweit alumni collaborated with the Commission on issues such as education for sustainable development (ESD) and World Heritage.

In February, the National Commission hosted the first meeting of the new informal network of National Commissions of EU Member States, created principally to support the exchange of

experience and practical know-how. The German Commission provides support for the website underpinning this network.

The German Commission also initiated a collaboration with the Ugandan Commission to co-host a workshop resulting in a new cooperation framework known as the 'Seeta Agreement'. In addition, it completed implementation of an entrepreneurship training programme (STEP) in Kenya and Uganda, with implementation underway in Lesotho and due to start in Mexico.

In the field of education, the National Commission, in cooperation with relevant government entities, adopted a quality assurance framework for over 200 German Associated Schools. It also re-established an ESD team to implement the Global Action Programme with funding from the Ministry for Education and Research.

The German Commission marked the 10th anniversary of the 2005 Culture Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression by organizing a number of policy events targeting current international trade negotiations. The Commission is a key partner of a new EU-funded consortium to support cultural initiatives in North Africa. It also organized the second call for the German inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage, resulting in seven new entries. Germany also successfully nominated one World Heritage site, six UNESCO Global Geoparks (one transboundary site with Poland), and submitted five nominations to the Memory of the World Registry (including three international co-nominations).

Throughout the year, the Commission produced German translations of Executive Summaries of the Education For All Global Monitoring Report, the UNESCO Science Report and the World Water Development Report. The Commission also published a Manual for Managers of African Biosphere Reserves.



The President of the German Commission for UNESCO speaking with a Young World Heritage Expert from India at the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee.

© Sarah Heuser/German Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the German Commission, in collaboration with UNESCO and the German Federal Foreign Office, hosted the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee in Bonn (28 June – 8 July). This event was the largest ever organized by the National Commission, with 1,186 delegates from 127 countries and more than 600 observers and media representatives. The session was accompanied by over sixty side-events and ten exhibitions on World Heritage-related topics.

The Commission also organized the 2015 World Heritage Young Experts Forum (18–29 June), which gathered together thirty-two young people from thirty-one countries from all regions of the world. Under the motto 'Sustainable Management of World Heritage Sites', the interactive forum enabled young experts to discuss views on the future of World Heritage. Their findings were subsequently presented at the opening ceremony of the World Heritage Committee.

In order to share its experience of organizing of such meetings and inspire future organizers, the German Commission compiled a series of manuals comprising experiences, practices and lessons learned. An overview of the newly inscribed properties, the Bonn Declaration, the manuals, the participants' evaluations, photos and videos can be found at: www.39whcbonn2015.de

GREECE

Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Ekaterini Tzitzikosta

Assistant Secretary-General: Ms Christina Boulakaki

Website: www.unesco-hellas.org

Update of activities in 2015

2015 was a very productive year for the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO, despite ongoing budget and personnel constraints due to the financial crisis affecting Greece.

In education, the President of the Hellenic Republic awarded fifteen prizes on behalf of the National Commission for 'Educational Contributions in Primary Education in Border and Remote Areas of Greece'. The 15th Annual Symposium of ASPnet Schools of Attica (26–27 February) was held under the theme 'Education as a means of social cohesion' and the 1st Annual Symposium of ASPnet schools of Central Macedonia explored the theme 'Hellenic World Heritage Monuments of UNESCO'. The Commission also submitted three Greek Nominations for UNESCO Prizes for the 'Use of ICTs in Education' and for 'Outstanding Practice and Performance in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Teachers'.

In the sciences, the National Commission established the UNESCO Category II Centre on Integrated and Multidisciplinary Water Resources Management Centre at

the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and with the Ministry of Reconstruction of Production, Environment and Energy co-organized the 13th International Conference of the International Network of Basin Organizations, entitled 'Europe INBO 2015', held at Thessaloniki (21–24 October).

In culture, the National Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Attica Prefecture for the promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and placed under its patronage, among others, the exhibition 'Light in the Dark', hosted at the Museo del Greco in Toledo, Spain (11 November 2015 – 10 January 2016). The National Commission also co-organized with ICOMOS the conferences entitled 'ICOMOS and the Protection of World Heritage Sites', held at the Ministry of Culture (June) and 'Heritage Driver of Historic Towns-Sustainable Development', held in Syros (September).

In communication and information, the National Commission supported the inscription of 'Derveni Papyrus: the oldest "book" of Europe' on the International Memory of the World Register and organized an official ceremony held at the Archaeological Museum in Thessaloniki (December). In addition, the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO successfully submitted a proposal for the Organization to formerly associate itself with the 2,400th anniversary of the birth of the renowned philosopher Aristotle.

The Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO participated in the 196th and 197th session of UNESCO's Executive Board and took part in the respective meetings of National Commissions, as well as the Interregional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO, held in November.

THE HELLENIC NATIONAL
COMMISSION FOR UNESCO
& TERRABOOK
WORK TOGETHER
FOR PROMOTING
UNESCO'S VISIBILITY



Cooperation between the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO and the Terrabook e-platform.

© Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO signed an MOU with the innovative platform Terrabook to enhance UNESCO's visibility at the national and international level. Terrabook is a pioneering interactive website that provides detailed information in the form of text, maps and photographs on different destinations in Greece.

This cooperation will enable visitors to the platform to become acquainted with a variety of geographical areas in Greece, and learn more about UNESCO's programmes on cultural and natural heritage, biosphere reserves, the Memory of the World and Global Geoparks among others. Terrabook is available to a wide international public and will promote the broad diffusion of UNESCO's priorities, enabling visitors to discover the numerous educational, cultural, natural and scientific linkages between UNESCO and specific sites, while immersing themselves in the ideas and objectives embodied in the Organization's mandate.

HUNGARY

Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Miklós Réthelyi

Secretary-General: Ms Mariann Géher

Website: www.unesco.hu

Update of activities in 2015

The Hungarian National Commission's programmes and events in 2015 were defined by the main themes of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, the International Year of Light, the 150th anniversary of the death of the physician Ignác Semmelweis and the 200th anniversary of the birth of the archaeologist Flóris Rómer.

Among these, the International Year of Light proved highly thought provoking and versatile, making possible the creation of a common platform for scientists, artists, industrial actors, educators, philosophers, theologians and the general public.

In terms of celebrated anniversaries, Ignác Semmelweis was a physician renowned today as an early pioneer of antiseptic procedures. He discovered that the practice of washing hands with chlorinated lime solutions could drastically reduce incidences of 'childbed fever'. Flóris Rómer was one of the most important scientists of the nineteenth century in the Carpathian Basin, responsible not only for founding archaeology in Hungary, but also for the influential role he played in preserving historical monuments and national heritage throughout the region.

Throughout the year, the National Commission organized various exhibitions and conferences and supported the publication of a variety of bilingual (Hungarian-English) books. In December, the Commission organized a joint exhibition held in the Miró Halls of UNESCO Headquarters, Paris to commemorate the anniversaries of Semmelweis and Rómer.

Following the success of last year's interfaith event, the National Commission organized a second two-day conference at the Abbey of Tihany (16 July) under the title, 'Common Path – the Situation of Religions in Europe and the Coexistence of the Religious Communities in Hungary', with the aim of promoting interreligious dialogue.

The Whitsun Heritage Festival, an annual event of the Hungarian Open Air Museum was held for the fifth time under the patronage of UNESCO. The festival celebrates elements of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) on the National Inventory, and also presents ICH elements from other countries on the UNESCO Representative List. The aim of the festival is to facilitate exchange of experiences among communities and to introduce heritage to the general public. This year, guests from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia presented a social dance from the village of Dramche inscribed on the Representative List in 2014, while the UNESCO Artist for Peace, Márta Sebestyén, opened an acclaimed gala event in celebration of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO.

Lastly, in the field of education, the Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development organized a conference entitled 'Education-Personality-Health' (17 September) in cooperation with the National Teachers Chamber and the National Commission to commemorate UNESCO's 70th anniversary in September.



The 70th anniversary conference, held in Budapest. From left to right: Mr Ákos Farkas, Mr Miklós Réthelyi, Mr László Lovász and Mrs Katalin Bogayay.

© MTA/Szigeti Tamás

A success story

In 2015, the Hungarian National Commission co-organized a 70th anniversary conference with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, held in Budapest (26 November). The participants were welcomed by Mr László Lovász, the President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and Mr Miklós Réthelyi, the President of the Hungarian National Commission. The National Commission invited several noted Hungarian experts on the history of UNESCO to be distinguished speakers, including Mrs Katalin Bogayay, Ambassador and President of the 36th session of the UNESCO General Conference, and Mr András Szöllösi-Nagy, former rector of the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education.

The National Commission celebrated this anniversary by taking stock of the achievements of the past seventy years and examining contemporary global challenges, with a special focus on the natural sciences. The conference gave the participants an opportunity to discuss key issues and exchange ideas, possible projects and solutions.

The conference also provided a platform to commemorate famous persons from the history of the UNESCO, such as the Huxley family, and to highlight national and international milestones from the past seventy years. Participants were drawn from a variety of backgrounds, including academicians, experts in the field of UNESCO and the natural sciences, teachers, journalists and the media.

ICELAND

Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Gunnar Haraldsson

Secretary-General: Ms Áslaug Dóra Eyjólfsdóttir

Website: www.unesco.is

Update of activities in 2015

The Icelandic National Commission consists of a chairperson and six members nominated for a four-year term by the Government. The Commission provides independent policy advice to the Minister of Education Science and Culture of Iceland on UNESCO-related issues and acts as a forum for government and civil society, encouraging national organizations, institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individuals to implement UNESCO's programmes and activities.

This year, the National Commission partnered with the University of Iceland and governmental ministries to celebrate the International Year of Light. It organized an opening ceremony at the University of Iceland in Reykjavík (27 January) to officially launch the year and introduced the concept and

the programme of activities for 2015. The President of Iceland spoke at the ceremony along with the Minister of Education, Science and Culture and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The university and other institutions organized events to promote the International Year of the Light, including 'The Dynamics of Darkness in the North', a scientific and artistic multi-disciplinary international event held in Reykjavík (26–28 February).

Concerning education, the National Commission played a central role in organizing the implementation of the Associated Schools Project (ASP) network in Iceland. The UN Association in Iceland acts as the national coordinator and has initiated preparatory work in cooperation with five grammar and secondary schools in the Reykjavík capital area. Hopefully, Iceland will soon formally join the ASP network with the designation of a number of UNESCO schools. A new education project for three grammar schools in the Katla UNESCO Geopark, located in the south of Iceland, was also supported by the National Commission.

The Icelandic Memory of the World (MOW) Committee was established in 2013 and has been active in working with the MOW programme. In May, the Committee held an explanatory seminar on the programme and simultaneously launched a web-based application for nominations to the national MOW Register. A number of applications were received and are being reviewed by the Committee, with the first Icelandic MOW Register due to be announced in early 2016.



Ms Vigdis
Finnbogadóttir
and
Mr Sveinn
Einarsson
with children
from the
Landakotsskóli
ASPnet
school.

© Icelandic
National
Commission for
UNESCO

A success story

Iceland celebrated the 70th anniversary of UNESCO's and the United Nations in Reykjavík by organizing a well-attended seminar and panel discussion (30 October). The event was the result of cooperative efforts between the Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO, the UN Association in Iceland and the Ministries of Education, Science and Culture and Foreign Affairs. The 70th anniversary event reflected on the history of UNESCO and the United Nations, especially in connection with Iceland. The panel discussion focused on the relevance of the Organization's mandate with particular emphasis on the new Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. UN and UNESCO were also discussed within the framework of the media, NGOs, youth and scholars.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture and the Minister for Foreign Affairs both addressed the seminar and emphasized the importance of the United Nations and UNESCO in Iceland and from a global perspective. Dr Sveinn Einarsson, Director and former Executive Board member of UNESCO spoke about the essential ideals and objectives of UNESCO, and Ms Vigdis Finnbogadóttir, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador and former President of Iceland, reflected on her twenty years of work with the Organization.

LATVIA

Latvian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Dace Melbārde, Minister of Culture

Secretary-General: Ms Dagnija Baltiņa

Website: www.unesco.lv

Update of activities in 2015

To celebrate the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, the Latvian National Commission initiated multiple projects and activities. One of the most notable, which brought together the most active partners and members of the National Commission's networks in Latvia, was a conference on 'Creative communication of cultural heritage in the local community', held during annual UNESCO week (15–16 October) in Kuldīga.

The promotion of education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship were the main thematic directions of the Commission's education programme in 2015. To discuss the achievements of the UN Decade on ESD and the challenges that lie ahead, the National Commission in cooperation with the UNESCO Chair at Daugavpils University and the National Centre for Education organized an international conference on 'Bridging Education and Science for Sustainable Development', held in Daugavpils (2–3 December).

The 10th anniversary of the L'Oréal Latvia fellowships 'For Women in Science' was a highlight of the science programme

in 2015. The fellowships have been awarded since 2005 with the support of the National Commission and the Latvian Academy of Sciences, within the framework of the international UNESCO-L'Oréal partnership programme. They are designed to support women's involvement and encourage their achievements in different fields of sciences in Latvia.

UNESCO programmes in culture were supported through different projects related to both heritage programmes and cultural diversity. 2015 was the 10th anniversary of the inscription of the Geodetic Arc of Struve on the World Heritage List. To mark the occasion, an international two-day conference was organized with around 100 participants from Latvia and the six other nominating countries. In addition, a three-day capacity-building seminar on intangible cultural heritage was organized to strengthen and promote the capacity of experts of Baltic countries.

Various projects and activities were initiated and organized to promote UNESCO's communication and information programme both in Latvia and worldwide, including the preparation and co-organization of World Press Freedom Day 2015 in Riga (2–4 May). To strengthen implementation of the Memory of the World (MOW) programme in Latvia, study courses on safeguarding and the digitization of documentary heritage were launched in cooperation with the Latvian Academy of Culture and the National Library of Latvia. In addition, the National Commission continued work on the international nomination of 'Letters on Birch Bark from Siberia' to the MOW Register. These letters were written on birch bark by thousands of deportees or prisoners from Baltic States following the incorporation of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania into the Soviet Union.



Organizers and winners of the translation and essay contest, 'Found in Translation: Rainis and Aspazija' at the closing ceremony of the project.

© Latvian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the National Commission together with its partners implemented the project, 'Found in Translation: Rainis and Aspazija', devoted to the 150th anniversary of two eminent and influential Latvian poets, playwrights and socio-political figures. This anniversary was recognized by the UNESCO General Conference in association with the 2014–2015 biennium of the Organization.

The target audience of the project were students studying Latvian language and culture in foreign universities. Nine partner universities in China, Europe and the United States of America organized events to raise awareness of the works of Rainis and Aspazija and their role in Latvian culture and the history of Europe.

The key event of the project was an essay and translation contest. Around sixty students from universities involve in the project translated the works of both poets into their mother tongue and wrote essays on this experience and their perceptions of both figures within the broader cultural context. The winning works of the contest were made available as an electronic publication.

At the end of the year, the authors of the best essays and translations were invited to a special closing ceremony and expert discussion seminar, held in Riga (15 December).

LITHUANIA

Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Romas Pakalnis

Secretary-General: Mrs Asta Junevičienė

Website: www.unesco.lt

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO focused on training and capacity-building activities. It organized an international capacity-building seminar on communication and management for specialists working at UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and a capacity-building seminar on implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for specialists working at national and local level. The Commission also participated in the project 'Towards a Nordic-Baltic Pilot Region for World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism', which focused on creating an international framework for sustainable tourism.

Together with the National Committee on Information for All and the Committee on the Development of an Information Society, the Lithuanian National Commission organized a round-table discussion entitled 'Multilingual and multicultural content services for network society', held at the Parliament (Seimas) of the Republic of Lithuania (2 October). The discussion produced a series of recommendations for the Government and relevant ministries.

The National Commission also organized a series of monthly exhibitions at the gallery of the National Commission and

supplemented these activities with diverse educational events (lectures, educational seminars, discussions, etc.). These public events helped to increase the visibility of the National Commission and promote UNESCO values to a broader audience. Public lectures presented by Lithuanian and international experts covered a variety of issues related to world heritage, including architectural and urban projects around the Historic Centre of Vilnius, architectural sites nominated for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List, protection of audiovisual heritage in Lithuania, and global issues such as world heritage impact assessments, historic cities and sustainability, and world heritage and rights-based approaches.

Exhibitions and concerts organized by the Commission in association with UNESCO took place throughout the year to celebrate the 250th birth anniversary of the renowned Polish-Lithuanian diplomat and composer Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis.

The National Commission also organized a series of lectures and events in celebration of the International Year of Light 2015. The events were targeted at schoolchildren and a wide public audience and focused on the importance of light and light-based technologies.

The National Commission played an active role in developing the national network of higher education and scientific research institutions for the promotion of the Sustainability Science in Central and Eastern Europe platform.

Lastly, six Lithuanian institutions dedicated to memory heritage were presented with certificates confirming the inscription of seven elements of documentary heritage on the National Memory of the World Register. The presentations took place at a ceremony organized jointly by the National Commission and the National Memory of the World Committee.



The seminar 'Communication and Management Capacity Building for the Transboundary Sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List'.

© Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The Curonian Spit is one of the most unique tourist sites in the Baltic region, comprising a unique and fragile cultural landscape formed by the sea, sand, wind and human activities. In 2015, the site celebrated fifteen years of inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. To help ensure an appropriate level of protection for the natural and cultural heritage in this sensitive area, sustainable economic development and positive dialogue between local people and tourist interests, the Lithuanian National Commission hosted a two-day training seminar entitled, 'Communication and Management Capacity Building for the Transboundary Sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List'. The principal goal of the event, which took place in Nida (28–29 September), was to strengthen the communication and management skills of specialists working at UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Two expert lecturers in cultural heritage and sustainable urban development led the training seminar, while representatives from environmental, heritage and tourism institutions from Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, the Russian Federation and Ukraine participated in the training and discussions.

The main outcome of the discussions was a set of guidelines for effective communication. These will contribute to implementation of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and help strengthen the capacities of specialists: <http://unesco.lt/images/stories/recommendations.pdf>

LUXEMBOURG

Luxembourg National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Ms Simone Beck

Secretary General: Mrs Catherine Decker

Website: www.unesco.lu

Update of activities in 2015

Under the Grand-Ducal Regulation of 12 December 2014, the Ministry of Culture established a new Luxembourg National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO (3 September) and organized an official inauguration (24 September) in the presence of the media.

The Commission is composed of representatives from the Chamber of Deputies, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Ministry of National Education, Children and Youth, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, the Department of the Environment at the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure,

the National Youth Service, the University of Luxembourg, the National Press Council, the National Women's Council, the Luxembourg National Youth Council, the Advisory Committee on Human Rights, the National Ethics Commission, the Circle of Cooperation of Development NGOs and the Higher Council for Sports, as well as representatives and experts from the education, science, culture, communication and tourism sectors.

Since its appointment, efforts have been made to implement and structure the activities of the Commission, which has an executive office and different work groups focusing on the issues of heritage, communication and teaching (in close collaboration with the UNESCO Associated Schools Network). Furthermore, the Commission was asked to rule on issues relating to heritage on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The National Commission also participated in the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties to the 1970 Convention. This meeting focused on measures to be taken to prohibit and prevent the import, export and illegal transfer of cultural property at the 2nd Interregional Forum of UNESCO National Commissions and the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

Finally, the Commission began building the website of the National Commission.



Academic symposium organized for the 70th anniversary of the UN and UNESCO with a performance by the choir from the lycée Sainte-Anne secondary school, a UNESCO Associated School.

© Michel Brumat

A success story

In 2015, the Luxembourg Association for the United Nations and the UNESCO Chair for Human Rights at the University of Luxembourg, hosted an evening event to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the United Nations and UNESCO (29 October). The event brought together speakers and young artists from various UNESCO schools in Luxembourg, and focused on the importance and defence of human rights in today's world.

Artistic contributions by young people whose teachers promote awareness of UNESCO's values will regularly enrich events organized by the Luxembourg National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO in the coming year.

MALTA

Maltese National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Henry Frendo

Secretary-General: Mr Philip Cassar

Website: www.unescomalta.org

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Maltese National Commission for UNESCO met regularly and implemented a number of activities.

The National Commission began the year by organizing a public exhibition of artistic collages depicting scenes from famous films, entitled *Film and Fame*, by Ruth Bianco (24 March). This was followed by a public exhibition of ceramics depicting scenes from Malta, entitled *Heritage Link*, by Godfrey Xuereb (26 May). Both exhibitions were inaugurated at the Corinthia Hotel in St Georges Bay.

Initial meetings and preparations started in April for a course on risk management organized with the UNESCO Office in Venice. The preparations involved close collaboration with colleagues in civil defence and heritage sites, among others. The week-long course took place at the University of Malta

(14-19 November), and at other locations organized by the UNESCO Office in Venice, with the participation of experts and representatives from different Mediterranean countries.

Meetings and discussions were held from May onwards regarding the possibility of submitting a nomination for the Maltese festa to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The UNESCO National Commission is also working on submissions for 'kumitiva' dance and 'Ghana' folksong. In addition, the National Commission attended ICOMOS meetings, in particular regarding the planned museum extension for St John's Cathedral in Valletta.

The latter part of the year saw intensive preparations for the 70th anniversary of UNESCO Concert, organized at the Manoel Theatre (3 October). The concert line up featured numerous highly respected professional musicians, as well as a renowned guest artist, Sergei Nakariakov, dubbed 'the Paganini of the trumpet'.

The National Commission accompanied the President of Malta to the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference, held in Paris, where she gave an address (17 November) shortly after the Islamist massacres.

Finally, most of this work was conducted on a purely voluntary basis and a limited budget. The Malta UNESCO National Commission therefore has reason to be proud of its members and volunteers for their achievements throughout the year.



5th Meeting of the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves, held in Malta.

© Maltese National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the National Commission was involved in high-level preparations to organize the '5th Meeting of the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves', held in Attard (24–27 March). The successful conference was attended by participants from twenty countries representing all continents, and held in conjunction with UNESCO's Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences, with the helpful cooperation of Mr Miguel Clusner-Godt, the Deputy Director.

The participants included specialists on the Madrid Action Plan and the Jeju Biosphere Reserve in the Republic of Korea, together with various experts and representatives from the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) national committees. The proceedings were chaired by the President of the Malta National Commission with the organizational assistance of the Executive Secretary, among others.

The programme included an expertly conducted tour of Dwejra, a site on the island of Gozo, with the participation of the Ministers for Education and the Environment. The possibility of upgrading Dwejra and another site on the main island, Majjistral, to become a biosphere reserve is being evaluated in consultation with UNESCO Headquarters. The proceedings of the conference are due for publication shortly, and include a foreword by the Minister.

MONACO

Monegasque National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Geneviève Vatrican

Secretary-General: Mr Jean-Charles Curau

Update of activities in 2015

At the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, the President of the National Commission participated in the 2nd Interregional Meeting of National Commissions and the Secretary-General assisted in the work of the Culture Commission.

A Monegasque student represented the principality at the 9th Youth Forum, organized on the margins of the General Conference. The recommendations made at this forum were presented at COP21.

Schools in the principality participated in celebrations for various international days, including: the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, International Francophonie Day, the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, World Environment Day, World Oceans Day and World AIDS Day.

The Scientific Centre of Monaco is a partner of World Oceans Day (8 June). This year, the centre organized workshops and conferences, and participated in the 'Our Common Future Under Climate Change' international scientific conference (7–10 July) in preparation for prepare the 21st Conference

of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21).

For the third consecutive year, the Monegasque National Commission celebrated World Theatre Day (27 March). Seven Monegasque companies appeared on stage at the Princess Grace Theatre.

To celebrate International Jazz Day (30 April), the Académie Rainier III – Musique et Théâtre programmed a concert given by the Jazz and Amplified Current Music department.

As part of the 'Year of Russia in Monaco', the Prehistoric Museum of Anthropology presented two exhibits on Siberian art during the third millenium BCE: 'The Secret of Stones' and 'The Mysterious Okuniev Civilisation'.

The Monegasque National AIAP-UNESCO Commission participated in the 'Monaco-Japan Artistic Meeting'. In addition, an artist from the Committee was invited to exhibit at the 6th Beijing Biennale. Finally, the Russian Federation was invited to participate in the annual salon of the Committee.

During COP21, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation sought to highlight climate change through an exhibit of contemporary Inuit and Western works presented at the Monaco Oceanographic Museum. The 'Linked' exhibit emphasized the interdependence of different cultures and the urgency of reaching an international agreement that will enable humanity to effectively combat climate change.

Lastly, the Department of Cultural Affairs organized a second information meeting in the presence of an expert on intangible heritage and local agents working in this area. Training sessions will be held in 2016 to establish an inventory of this heritage.



A marionette performance of William Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale* by La Compagnie Arketal at the Fort Antoine Theatre Festival, held in Monaco, August 2015.

© Cultural Affairs Department of Monaco

A success story

Close to 2,500 spectators attended seven free performances during the 45th season of the 'Fort Antoine Theatre Festival' (6 July – 17 August). The programme, organized under the theme, 'And where does love stand in all of this?', comprised an eclectic mix of live theatre with a focus on contemporary creativity.

The warm atmosphere of the festival encouraged interaction with the public, enhanced in particular by meetings between spectators and theatre companies before each show.

Placed under the patronage of UNESCO, this season was one of the events organized to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of 2005.

NETHERLANDS

Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Andrée van Es

Secretary-General: Ms Marielies Schelhaas

Website: unesco.nl | unescoscholen.nl

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, The Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO undertook numerous activities in line with UNESCO's main fields of expertise and continued to raise awareness about these domains through its website and social media channels.

To celebrate UNESCO's 70th anniversary the National Commission chose to organize a forum discussion on dealing with sensitive topics in the classroom. What can schools do when a student radicalizes and vents unwanted opinions? What strategies can teachers use to respond in such situations? One conclusion of the lively debate was that teachers should try to create an atmosphere of mutual respect in the classroom where students feel free to share their thoughts, where genuine interest is shown in the opinion of others, and where there is room for continuous dialogue and questions.

In 2015, the Netherlands National Commission expanded the ASP network from thirty-two to thirty-seven schools. The newly admitted schools will place a strong focus on global citizenship education.

In May, the Netherlands National Commission organized an expert meeting on cultural heritage and its role in promoting social cohesion and inclusive societies. Understanding this role is essential for policies designed to prevent conflict and exclusion. Much research has been done on this issue, however the findings are not often translated into policy and practice.

Fifty experts from three regions – the Caribbean, the Balkans and Anatolia, and Western Europe – were invited to exchange academic insights and to develop concrete policy recommendations addressing UNESCO, and Dutch and European policy-makers. The draft recommendations were shared with the participants for feedback in December.

Together with the Honours Academy of Leiden University, the National Commission hosted the conference, 'The heritage heist: how war and conflict threaten cultural heritage' (18 May). The conference addressed the protection of cultural heritage in war zones and during conflict situations.

The National Commission also assisted the UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office with the organization of a joint training session on implementing the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, with representatives of the Dutch Caribbean.

Lastly, the main focus of the Commission's activities in the field of communication was UNESCO's PERSIST project on digital sustainability. PERSIST aims to create a platform to link the ICT industry, governments and heritage institutions, in order to exchange and work collectively on solutions for digital preservation. A successful side event on PERSIST was also organized at the 38th session of the General Conference, where the latest version of the Draft Guidelines were presented.



Participants of the training course 'First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis' discuss strategy during the final simulation exercise.

© Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the National Commission decided to address the growing number of acts of intentional destruction and the significant loss of historic monuments and collections due to natural disasters, by hosting an international training seminar, entitled 'First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis', held in Amsterdam (30 March – 24 April).

The purpose of this four-week course was to train heritage professionals in giving 'first aid' to cultural heritage damaged by intentional or natural disasters. Twenty participants from countries including Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine were equipped – under the guidance of an international team of experts – with the necessary skills and knowledge to save and protect cultural heritage under complex circumstances.

Participants learned to take preventive measures, analyse risks and stabilize damaged heritage. The hands-on programme consisted of seventy different modules, including field visits, case studies and a final simulation, with the aim of combining theory with practice.

The course was a joint collaboration between the National Commission, ICCROM and the Smithsonian Institution, with the support of eleven national institutions, including the Netherlands Ministry of Culture.

Following the course, several participants organized workshops in their own countries to share their knowledge. The Dutch Prince Claus Fund supported these initiatives in Mali and Ukraine.

NORWAY

The Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Tora Aasland

Secretary-General: Ms Tanja Kristine Hegge

Website: www.unesco.no

Update of activities in 2015

There is increasing interest in UNESCO's mandate in Norway, in particular relating to the Organization's participation in the Education 2030 agenda and its efforts to mobilize efforts against the destruction of culture and heritage. In 2015, the Norwegian National Commission participated in a Nordic Conference against the illegal trafficking of cultural objects.

This year also saw the nomination of the national Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Committee. The National Commission played an instrumental role in its creation with the support of the Ministry of Climate and Environment.

During the year, Rjukan-Notodden in Telemark county was designated a UNESCO Industrial Heritage Site and Norway's eighth World Heritage Site. The area comprises a cluster of pioneering hydroelectric power plants, transmission lines, factories, transport systems and towns located in a dramatic

landscape of mountains, waterfalls and river valleys. UNESCO also designated the city of Bergen as a Creative City of Gastronomy.

In celebration of World Press Freedom Day (3 May), the National Commission collaborated with non-governmental organizations to organize a seminar on freedom of expression, freedom of the press and blasphemy (4 May). The seminar was well attended with contributions from the President of the Norwegian Parliament, editors, journalists, correspondents and cartoonists.

The National Commission also organized a two-day seminar on the occasion of the launch of the Education For All Global Monitoring Report: Achievements and Challenges (April). The seminar entitled 'Addressing the Challenges of Quality in Education and Perspectives for Lifelong Learning and Basic Skills' (27–28 April) gathered about 200 participants and was organized in cooperation with the University of Oslo, the Norwegian Agency for Development, UNICEF, the Global Campaign for Education and the Norwegian Association for Adult Learning, with the support of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

Finally, members of the National Commission played an active role in the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO. His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Haakon, attended the opening of the conference to celebrate the 70th anniversary of UNESCO.

The screenshot shows the website of FN-SAMBANDET (United Nations Association of Norway). The header includes the UN logo and the text 'FN-SAMBANDET UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF NORWAY'. Navigation links include AKTUELT, TEMA, FN-INFORMASJON, SKOLE, UNESCO-SKOLER, ILO, OM OSS, and KONTAKT. A search bar is also present. The main content area features a photo of a group of people in a meeting, with the headline 'Fra 2015 blir UNESCOs skolenettverk ASPnet koordinert av FN-sambandet'. Below the headline, it says '09.11.2015' and 'Marianne Mathisen'. A sub-headline reads 'FN-sambandet tar over koordineringen av UNESCOs skolenettverk ASPnet.' To the right of the photo is a box titled 'UNESCO nytt' with bullet points: 'New name, new logo for UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report reflects new focus', 'UNESCO and European Union launch a new project to build trust in media in South East Europe and Turkey', and 'Portuguese Version of the Teacher's Manual on "Heritage for Peace and Reconciliation" available'.

A success story

In 2015, the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO worked to revive and revitalize the Associated Schools Programme Network in Norway in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research and the United Nations Association of Norway. The United Nations Association agreed to take over as the national coordinator for ASPnet after the Directorate for Education and Training relinquished the role. The National Commission was instrumental in reaching this solution and the Ministry allocated financial resources.

Work has already begun with a kick-off seminar held in September that gathered together teachers from ASPnet schools, many of whom were new to the network. Tora Aasland, Chair of the National Commission, presented UNESCO's mandate and work, as well as the #unite4heritage campaign. Her commitment to ASPnet was highly appreciated by all participants. The seminar also included a presentation on the new Sustainable Development Goals and a discussion regarding the way ahead for the Norwegian ASPnet.

In December, a new website was launched for ASPnet schools. The content was based on input and ideas volunteered at the seminar to ensure its relevance and continued usefulness. The website is updated continually at www.fn.no/UNESCO-skoler and has a companion ASP group on Facebook.

'From 2015, the United Nations Association will coordinate the UNESCO ASPnet'

© United Nations Association of Norway

POLAND

Polish National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Jacek Purchla

Secretary-General: Mr Sławomir Ratajski

Website: www.unesco.pl

Update of activities in 2015

As in previous years, the Polish National Commission carried out its role as an advisory body to the Government on UNESCO-related matters and organized activities in cooperation with the ministries concerned and other institutions. In particular, it was involved in the preparations for the 38th session of the General Conference and the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee.

In 2015, the National Commission launched a new project on arts education (see below) and continued to provide multicultural educational workshops on 'the World of Islam' for schools in various regions of Poland.

The Commission continued to support fellowship programmes. Seventy-two young researchers, especially from sub-Saharan Africa, were beneficiaries of the UNESCO-Poland Co-sponsored Fellowships Programme in the field of engineering, while fifty-nine fellows from Central and Eastern Europe and some developing countries conducted research in various universities and scientific institutions. The Commission was also involved in the recruitment of fellows from the Belarusian State Academy of Arts for the second edition of the Fellowship Programme for young restorers from Belarus.

In addition, an international summer school on the revitalization of historic cities, held in Lublin (20–24 July), gathered together thirteen young professionals from seven countries of Central and Eastern Europe, selected by the respective National Commissions.

In the natural sciences, the Commission organized an international expert seminar on sustainability science in Central and Eastern Europe in Warsaw in co-operation with the German and Austrian Commissions for UNESCO and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland.

In culture, the National Commission worked to increase public awareness of the importance of culture for development through the publication of Cultural and Natural Landscape from a Societal Perspective, which explores the legal, sociological, anthropological, educational and other aspects of the issue.

A book entitled On the Need for Media Education in Poland, published in 2015, inspired a debate on communication and information. The Commission was also involved in activities related to Poland's cooperation with UNESCO within the framework of the Memory of the World programme, the International Programme for the Development of Communication and the Information For All Programme, as well as the preparation of a Recommendation concerning the Preservation of and Access to Documentary Heritage, including in Digital Form.

Lastly, a special bilingual (Polish-English) issue of the Bulletin of the National Commission dedicated to the 70th anniversary of UNESCO recapitulated the milestones in the longstanding relationship between the Organization and Poland since 1945.



Participants at the 'Conference on Arts Education', held in Lodz, Poland.

© Joanna Miklaszewska

A success story

Inspired by UNESCO experiences and documents related to arts education, the Polish National Commission organized an international conference in cooperation with the City of Lodz and its cultural institutions entitled, 'Cultural education – innovative and creative society: the need for arts education in the modern school'. The conference took place in Lodz (17–18 September) and attracted substantial interest from teachers, chief education officers, policy-makers and educators from across the country. Two hundred participants took part in inspiring discussions led by experts from Austria, France, Germany and Poland, which explored issues related to the role of culture and arts education in economic development and its influence on creativity and innovation, education on cultural heritage, as well as new educational challenges related to the implementation of arts and cultural education in school curricula.

Lodz cultural institutions working with local communities conducted various workshops on teaching methodologies, and schools from the whole country, many belonging to UNESCO ASPnet, presented good practices in cultural and arts education.

The success of the conference encouraged the National Commission to organize an entire series of such events in different regions of Poland.

PORTUGAL

Portuguese National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mrs Ana Martinho

Secretary-General: Mrs Rita Brasil de Brito

Website: www.unescoportugal.mne.pt

Update of activities in 2015

2015 was a particularly busy year for the Portuguese National Commission. The National Commission focused on continuing activities that proved successful in previous years – the resumption of competitions and prizes including school competitions, the L'Oréal Portugal 'For Women in Science' fellowships, the UNESCO 'Human Rights and Integration' Journalism Award, conferences, the 3rd Education, Media and Citizenship Congress, investment in cooperation with Portuguese-speaking African countries, the development and consolidation of networks, the translation and production of education kits and other publications, and celebrations of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO and international years.

Efforts for the dissemination of information and the organization of meetings bore fruit, with a large increase in the number of UNESCO Associated Schools, clubs and chairs. As of December 2015, there were seventy-eight UNESCO Associated member Schools, forty-two clubs and five chairs.

Given the importance of underwater cultural heritage, the National Commission produced a Portuguese language version

of the teachers' manual, Heritage for Peace and Reconciliation: Protecting the Underwater Cultural Heritage of the First World War, in collaboration with the Secretariat of UNESCO and national partners responsible for implementation of the manual. The Commission also organized a conference/exhibition on this theme as part of the 'Semaine Bleue' and supported the creation of the UNESCO Chair on the Cultural Heritage of the Oceans.

In terms of cooperation with Portuguese-speaking African countries, the National Commission invited the National Commissions of Cabo Verde and Angola and professors from these countries to participate in the 14th National Meeting of Associated Schools (17–18 April) and jointly organized the Meeting of National Commissions of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, held in Lisbon (30 October).

As a current member of the World Heritage Committee (2013–2017), Portugal participates in meetings of the Committee, with a team of four experts encompassing vast experience in a variety of fields. It acts in cooperation with Portuguese-speaking countries and with some twenty countries in the Portuguese sphere of influence noted for their rich world heritage.

2015 was also the International Year of Light and the International Year of Soils, which were commemorated through the issue of official stamps in partnership with the Portuguese post office.

Lastly, to celebrate its 70th anniversary, UNESCO published a book of accounts by Portuguese personalities associated with the fields of operation of the Organization, and an exhibit inaugurated at the National Palace of Sintra (16 November).



Meeting of National Commissions for the Europe and North America Region on the scientific programme 'Global Geoparks of UNESCO', held in Arouca.

© Arouca Global Geopark of UNESCO

A success story

In collaboration with the Secretariat of UNESCO, the Portuguese National Commission for UNESCO hosted a technical meeting of National Commissions for the Europe and North America Region, held in Arouca (22–23 May), which focused on the scientific programme 'Global Geoparks of UNESCO'.

The meeting discussed the role of National Commissions in accordance with the guidelines and articles of this new programme, particularly in relation to the application process for Geopark status and the revalidation of Geoparks already part of the global network.

The National Commissions of Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom were present at the meeting, as well as the Geosciences Division of the Secretariat of UNESCO.

The success of this meeting was of particular significance for Portugal, as it represented the culmination of extensive efforts on the part of the Working Group, with the involvement of the National Commission. The meeting was also promoted by the Director-General of UNESCO, in view of the creation of the Geosciences and Global Geoparks programme approved at the 38th session of the General Conference.

ROMANIA

Romanian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Adrian Curaj, Minister of Education and Scientific Research

Secretary-General: Mr Ani Matei

Website: www.cnr-unesco.ro

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO implemented a series of initiatives to raise awareness of UNESCO and its programmes.

For the 7th consecutive year, the National Commission in partnership with L'Oréal, the Romanian Academy and the National Authority for Scientific Research and Innovation organized the national fellowship programme 'For Women in Science'. The programme awards two fellowships each year to young female researchers in the life sciences and physical sciences.

The National Commission partnered with the Alumnus Club for UNESCO and public institutions to organize the 7th 'Youth and museums' international conference, held in Bucharest (15–16 May), within the framework of the UNESCO 'Rapprochement of Cultures' programme. The conference aimed to attract young people to museums and to promote national heritage, identity and values through specific educational programmes.

The National Commission endorsed the final round of the 6th International Conducting Competition Jeunesse Musicales,

hosted at the Romanian Athenaeum in Bucharest and supported by the UNESCO Elite Art Club Association. Over 100 competitors aged 35 and under participated in the competition from over thirty countries and five continents.

The National Commission attended the 22nd edition of the Gaudeamus International Book and Education Fair, held in Bucharest (16–22 November), to promote UNESCO's Associate Schools Project Network. The Commission also organized a seminar and book presentation during the fair to raise awareness of the UNESCO 'Blue Danube River Project', which focuses on natural and biosphere reserves along the Danube.

The National Commission also gave a presentation on UNESCO's response to crisis and transition at the Civil Affairs Seminar organized in Bucharest by the US Marines of the Black Sea Rotational Force and the Romanian Ministry of Defence.

Romania nominated two scientists for the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Young Scientists Awards 2015: Constantin Gheorghe Cerbu of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, for his research on Danube salmon, and Claudiu Constantin Manole of the Faculty of Applied Chemistry and Materials Science, Polytechnic University, for his work on soil elements and their contribution to life sustainability in the Danube Delta Biosphere.

Lastly, in 2015 the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage inscribed 'Lad's dances in Romania' on the Representative List. Lad's dances are a genre of men's folk dance practised by rural communities in Romania on festive occasions, such as weddings and holidays, as well as during stage performances.



The 3rd edition of the Asia-Europe Forum on Education, an activity of the UNESCO Youth programme

© Romanian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the National Commission co-organized the 3rd edition of the Asia-Europe Forum on Education, held in Bucharest (7–11 October), in partnership with the Alumnus Club for UNESCO and the Department for Interethnic Relations, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main theme of this year's forum was developing innovative solutions for effective intercultural education and sustainable development to help diminish existing tensions in different regions of the world. Over 100 representatives from 34 countries and experts from UNESCO Headquarters participated in the debates.

The forum commenced with the opening of the exhibition 'Here Bucharest, Romania!' with the participation of children from the Degetica kindergarten. The exhibition promoted the creative development of preschool children from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Young participants of the METAMORPHOSES VII project also participated in the activities and debates of the forum. This year the project was dedicated to European culinary traditions with guest members drawn from Clubs for UNESCO in eighteen countries. The project hosted a series of workshops during which the participants presented traditional recipes belonging to the intangible heritage of their respective countries.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Grigory Ordzhonikidze

Website: www.unesco.ru

Update of activities in 2015

In May 2015, Khanty-Mansiysk hosted the International Conference of UNESCO Associated Schools (eleven countries) within the framework of the 'Save and Preserve' initiative, which addresses ecological challenges and climate change. Twenty-six schools joined ASPnet in the Russian Federation with the total number exceeding 300.

The Commission of the Russian Federation in partnership with the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE) organized the 5th International Conference 'UNESCO Chairs Partnership on ICT use in Education' (1–5 June), which took place within the 16th International Forum on 'Modern information society formation – problems, perspectives, innovation approaches', in St Petersburg. The conference focused on the need to leverage ICTs to address current educational challenges and ensure equitable quality education and lifelong opportunities for all.

The Commission also organized the International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), held in Khanty-Mansiysk (8–11 June), which brought together experts

from seventeen countries. The conference took stock of outcomes from the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) (2005–2014), the World Conference on ESD (November 2014), which adopted Recommendations on the Implementation of the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD, and the World Education Forum (May 2015).

St Petersburg hosted the 4th meeting of the UN Secretary-General's Scientific Advisory Board (14–15 December). The meeting was co-chaired by the UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova, and the President of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Member of the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO, Vladimir Fortov. The meeting allowed the board to finalize the results of a Delphi Study on Challenges for the Future of Humanity and a policy brief on the Data Revolution, and to flesh out future briefs assessing the risk of climate change, the role of science in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the mobilization of knowledge including local indigenous knowledge to achieve sustainable development.

Within the framework of the meeting, the Commission organized a high-level discussion panel with members of the Scientific Advisory Board and leading Russian scientists, scholars and politicians (14 December), focusing on the role of the fundamental sciences in addressing significant issues in modern life. During the panel, six young scientists from Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Italy, the Islamic Republic of Iran and South Africa were awarded the PhosAgro/UNESCO/IUPAC Partnership in Green Chemistry for Life.

Lastly, the 3rd National Congress of the UNESCO Chairs in the Russian Federation discussed the outcomes of the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference and the role of academia in implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (14–15 December).



President Putin meets with Ms Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO

© Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO.

A success story

In 2015, the Commission of the Russian Federation organized the 4th St Petersburg International Cultural Forum dedicated to the 70th anniversary of UNESCO (14–16 December). It brought together more than 11,000 participants from seventy countries. The forum included twelve sections, about fifty panels and roundtable discussions and a number of conferences.

Speaking at the plenary session, the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, confirmed the Russian Federation's strong support for UNESCO's role in addressing the most pressing challenges facing today's world.

The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, who took part in the event, emphasized that the forum was an exceptional occasion to celebrate the power of culture and to showcase the powerful contribution of the Russian Federation to the promotion of cultural diversity, cultural industries and intercultural dialogue worldwide.

The Forum adopted the St Petersburg Declaration on the Protection of Culture in Areas of Armed Conflicts, which strongly condemns the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage and the looting of cultural property in Iraq, Libya, Syria and other conflict-stricken or post-conflict countries, including the destruction of religious monuments and sites. It also supported efforts by the Director-General to strengthen the role of the Organization in the UN system as a facilitator of intercultural dialogue, and concerning the prevention of illicit trafficking in cultural property, the protection of heritage and the preservation of cultural diversity in conflict areas.

SAN MARINO

San Marino National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Sara Mancini

Secretary-General: Ms Silvia Marchetti

Update of activities in 2015

During 2015, the San Marino National Commission for UNESCO continued to promote the ideas and principles that constitute the core of UNESCO's philosophy and mission. Significant emphasis was placed on the promotion of culture as a driver for development, growth, and creative citizenship and identities.

The National Commission offered financial support to a number of cultural activities that pursued these objectives. The Commission provided funding for three students to attend a junior summer school for young people aged 14–17 from San Marino and Italy, within the Theatre Festival of Democratic Citizenship, which takes place every year in San Marino. The students attended the courses and received free board and lodging for ten days.

Financial support was also granted to the Dante Alighieri Society, an organization with branches all over the world,

which not only promotes knowledge and study of the works of the great Italian poet, but also issues an annual publication on various aspects of San Marino society and its relations with other countries.

In addition, the National Commission sponsored events organized in San Marino for International Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January), ranging from conferences to activities and lectures for high school students, as well as the Renata Tebaldi International Voice Competition, which takes place annually in San Marino and features talented candidates from all over the world.

In the field of education, the Commission completed two questionnaires prepared by the UNESCO Institute for Learning and the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack on lifelong learning and the protection of education institutions from violent attacks, respectively.

The Commission also submitted fifteen candidatures on behalf of San Marino citizens to the 2015 Young Professionals Programme, which provides opportunities for young university graduates and young professionals to join UNESCO for one year.

Finally, the Secretary-General of the National Commission took part in the 38th session of the General Conference, held in Paris in November 2015.



San Marino National Commission for UNESCO condemned the destruction of archaeological sites.
© San Marino RTV

A success story

In October 2015, the San Marino National Commission for UNESCO issued a press release reiterating the importance of protecting cultural heritage. The press release shared the words of condemnation of the Director-General, Irina Bokova, regarding the destruction of Nimrud, an archaeological site in Iraq. Her exhortation 'We cannot remain silent' expressed the National Commission's firm belief that protecting cultural heritage in all its forms and promoting the creation of culture represents one of the best ways to combat the horrors of 'criminal chaos'. The National Commission also stated that culture offers an invaluable means to remain vigilant in the face of abuses and violence, and to create alliances and solidarity with other people of the world. The press release was published in all San Marino newspapers (6 October) and was well received by institutions and society at large. The Commission received a letter of appreciation from the Captains Regent, the two heads of state of San Marino.

SERBIA

Commission of the Republic of Serbia for UNESCO

President: Mr Goran Milašinović,

Secretary-General: Mrs Jasmina Stanković Tatarac

Update of activities in 2015

In May 2015, the Government of Serbia appointed a new president and members to the Commission of the Republic of Serbia for UNESCO. The Commission now consists of twenty-five members and has undertaken diverse activities to promote the goals and objectives of UNESCO in the country.

In the same month, the new President of the Commission, Dr Goran Milašinović, the Minister of Youth and Sport, Mr Vanja Udovicic, and the heads of the OSCE and UNICEF Offices in Serbia opened the national conference, 'Step forward to successful implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2015–2025', held in Belgrade (8 May). The goal of the conference was to discuss and analyse the main priorities and objectives of the newly adopted National Youth Strategy (NYS). The 143 participants included relevant stakeholders

involved in the process, from local to national level, the government sector and NGOs, and representatives from media, international partners and the academic community. The conference adopted a set of recommendations which were presented to the cross-sector governmental Working Group on the implementation of NYS, and distributed to the conference participants to guide and inspire their future work on the subject. The Working Group highlighted the significance of specific recommendations regarding improvements to monitoring and evaluation, enhancing cross-sector cooperation, and youth participation in line with the UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth.

The Commission of the Republic of Serbia for UNESCO traditionally supports celebrations in support of International Days. In 2015, it organized events to commemorate International Mother Language Day (21 February) in Kovačica, 'Babka' gallery of naive art, and marked World Jazz Day (30 April) through the organization of concerts with the participation of eminent jazz musicians in Belgrade.

Lastly, in 2015 the telegram carrying Austria-Hungary's declaration of war on Serbia on 28 July 1914 was inscribed on the Memory of the World International Register. The telegram was nominated by Serbia, and marked the beginning of the First World War, one of the most tragic conflicts in the history of the human race. The original is kept in the Archives of Serbia.



The recipients of the 2015 L'Oréal-UNESCO 'For Women in Science' awards with Dr Goran Milašinović, President of the Commission of the Republic of Serbia for UNESCO, Ms Brigitte Streller, General Manager of L'Oréal Balkan, and Dr Nikola Tanić, Assistant Minister at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.

© L'Oréal Balkan and the National Commission of Serbia to UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the L'Oréal-UNESCO 'For Women in Science' programme marked its fifth anniversary in Serbia. National fellowships were established in 2010 under the umbrella of the global 'For Women in Science' programme, which highlights scientific excellence among female researchers worldwide.

The aim of the 'For Women in Science' programme is to support outstanding young women scientists who contribute to the advancement of science and society. Each year three national fellowships are granted to young women engaged in scientific work and research, to help support their professional development and further their role in science. Since the launch of the programme, more than 400 young talented scientists have taken part in the contest with 14 fellowships awarded to the best candidates.

The 'For Women in Science' fellowships programme is implemented in partnership with the Commission of the Republic of Serbia for UNESCO, L'Oréal Balkan and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

In 2015, the 'For Women in Science' ceremony took place in Belgrade in the presence of high state officials and representatives from the scientific community and the media. Three young female scientists – mathematician Jelena Aleksić, physicist Ljubica Davidović and immunologist Tamara Saksida – were recognized for their outstanding research work in the fields of mathematical analysis, string and quantum theory, and immunology.

SLOVAKIA

Slovak National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Ľudovít Molnár

Secretary-General: Mrs Edita Filadelfiova

Website: www.unesco.sk/

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Slovak National Commission for UNESCO commemorated the 70th anniversary of UNESCO as well as several others anniversaries linked to the Organization.

The 50th anniversary of the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava (BIB) took place in Bratislava during 2015 under the auspices of UNESCO. The Biennial is one of the world's oldest honours for children's book illustrators. In September, the Chief of Executive Office of the Culture Sector, Ms Lynne Patchett, received a BIB plaque on behalf of UNESCO, awarded in recognition of half a century of cooperation and support for this initiative. More than fifty countries also participated in an international symposium entitled, 'How the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava has influenced children's picture books of the world over the last half century', which paid tribute to the initiative and its role in fostering dialogue, cultural diversity and mutual understanding.

The 20th anniversary of the inscription of the transboundary World Heritage property, 'Caves of Aggtelek Karst and Slovak

Karst' (Hungary/Slovakia), was celebrated at the site with the participation of the Presidents of the Slovak and Hungarian Republics (22 September). The 10th Scientific Conference on 'Research and Protection of the Caves of Aggtelek Karst and Slovak Karst' also took place in Rožňava, Slovakia on the occasion of the anniversary.

In 2015, the Poľana Biosphere Reserve celebrated twenty-five years of existence. The reserve belongs to one of the most distinctive regions in Slovakia in terms of folklore and ethnographic heritage, and is renowned for the music of the fujara flute, which is inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The Poľana Biosphere Reserve Administration in cooperation with the Slovak Man and the Biosphere Committee organized a special 'open day' event to commemorate the occasion (29 October), attended by representatives of local municipalities, communities, local and regional authorities, principal land-users, and representatives of various companies and tourism organizations. The Committee also prepared and submitted a proposal for the extension of the biosphere reserve.

Towards the end of the year, the Slovak Commission organized an event entitled 'We love UNESCO' at the Comenius University in Bratislava (24 November) to commemorate the 70th anniversary. The President of the Slovak Republic, Andrej Kiska, addressed an auditorium of young people to explain the mission of UNESCO and its founding values. The members of the Slovak Commission then presented the different areas of activity that UNESCO deals with at the international and national level, such as world heritage, intangible cultural heritage, bioethics, biosphere reserves, and information and communication.



A success story

Each year, the Slovak Commission organizes a summer training course on management of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, otherwise known as the Visegrad Four (V4) countries. The training course focuses on issues related to implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and provides an opportunity to exchange experiences and address a wide variety of questions arising from world cultural heritage management. The project stems from the V4 Culture Ministers' initiative and is overseen by the Steering Committee of the V4 Cultural Experts' Working Group.

In 2015, the course took place in Banská Štiavnica, Slovakia and Krakow, Poland (13–19 July) and focused principally on the Historic Town of Banská Štiavnica and the Technical Monuments in its Vicinity. Participants from the V4 countries, Belarus and Ukraine met with representatives from the site's management to discuss key issues, familiarize themselves with the site's values, and attempt to address problems relating to preservation and sustainable use. The participants also attended several workshops and worked to resolve practical challenges relating to the integration of an archaeological monument and the historic burgher's house into the present town, as well as the preservation and current use of the cultural landscape in Štiavnické Bane.

Participants at the 2015 summer training course on management of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Banská Štiavnica, Slovakia.

© The Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic

SLOVENIA

Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Radovan Stanislav Pejovnik

Secretary-General: Ms Marjutka Hafner

Website: www.unesco.si

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Slovenian National Commission organized the first Motivation Weekend (27–28 August) aimed at youth. During two days, young people gathered at Idrija, a World Heritage Site and UNESCO Geopark, to participate in lectures, workshops and a World Café on topics as 'World Heritage Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow', and the role of youth in education and science. The weekend also included a pedagogical visit to local Geopark sites and a thematic roundtable open to the public.

Three young Slovenian female researchers were awarded National Fellowships through the L'Oréal-UNESCO 'For Women in Science' programme at a ceremony held at the Slovenian National Theatre in March. The programme aims to reward and encourage excellence among young women working in science.

The 2nd 'Responsibility to Protect in Theory and Practice Conference' took place at the University of Ljubljana (23–24 April) with the support of the National Commission. Forty-three recognized lecturers from different disciplines around

the world shared their views and research on the necessity and responsibility of governments to protect the inhabitants of countries against global threats, and examined ways in which the international community could offer assistance and support.

In celebration of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, the Slovenian National Commission organized an event held at Castle Podsreda, situated in the heart of Kozjanski Park, a biosphere reserve (26 September). More than 100 participants gathered at this medieval site to celebrate this important milestone and to exchange opinions and reflections during two roundtables on 'UNESCO's World Heritage Today' and 'Rapprochement of Cultures – Intercultural Dialogue'. The President of the National Assembly and the Minister of Education, Science and Sport gave the opening addresses, while the President of the National Commission presented a keynote on UNESCO's value in modern times.

The first 'Slovenian UNESCO Youth Summit' took place in parallel to the main event. Around fifty young people from across Slovenia, including students from ASP schools and universities, discussed issues that matter to young people. The outcome of the summit was the first 'Slovenian Youth Initiative', which was presented to governmental representatives, leading decision-makers and the UNESCO Secretariat.

In October, UNESCO approved the UNESCO Chair on Water-related Disaster Risk Reduction – the third UNESCO Chair to be appointed in Slovenia.

Lastly, in October the Slovenian ASPnet organized a two-day study visit to Vienna for ninety school coordinators. The core of the visit comprised a tour of the UN International Centre Vienna with a dedicated lecture and a visit to ten Viennese UNESCO Schools, with a view to facilitating future cooperation.



The first Slovenian UNESCO Forum, held at Portorož.

© Polona Iskra

A success story

In October, the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO and the University of Primorska organized the first Slovenian UNESCO Forum. This prominent event gathered together key representatives of programmes and activities operating within the framework of UNESCO in Slovenia.

The forum was prompted by the growth in number of UNESCO programmes and projects in Slovenia in recent years, which highlighted the need for a strengthened network and better exchange of information among all UNESCO stakeholders.

During the event, representatives of UNESCO programmes in Slovenia presented their history and experiences, recent activities and their main challenges. The programme covered four areas of activity: UNESCO World Heritage in Slovenia; natural sites, wetlands, biosphere reserves and Geoparks; the activities of youth and UNESCO ASP schools; and educational and research projects, such as UNESCO Chairs and the UNESCO Category II Centre.

The UNESCO Forum provided a tool for integration, communication and promotion of UNESCO programmes, stakeholders and activities. Its principal aim was to increase the visibility of UNESCO itself and to promote and popularize the Organization among the general public in Slovenia.

SPAIN

Spanish National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Mr Luis Ramallo,

Secretary-General: Mr Federico Palomera

Website: www.aecid.es/ES/sectores-de-cooperación/cultura-y-ciencia/unesco

Update of activities in 2015

UNESCO programmes play an important role in Spanish civil society. In 2015, the Spanish National Commission continued to support the implementation of activities and projects in spite of its limited human resources and lack of finance.

The Spanish National Commission nominated several candidates for UNESCO awards throughout the year. This year, the Islamic Library of the Spanish Development Cooperation Agency received the 2014–2015 Sharjah Price for Arab Culture.

Three Spanish cities were added to UNESCO's Creative Cities Network. Barcelona was designated a Creative City of Literature, and Burgos and Denia were designated Creative Cities of Gastronomy.

The Spanish National Commission also supported several activities under the patronage of UNESCO. It promoted the documentary *Black Man White Skin* by Spanish filmmaker José Colón, which explores the plight of African albinos suffering from skin cancer and exclusion and the team of Spanish doctors that travel every year to Tanzania to treat them.

The Commission also supported the global forum '100% Renewable Energy', held in Madrid (19 November), which was organized by Expansion with the sponsorship of ACCIONA.

In addition, the National Commission supported the 'Sustainable Tourism+20 Summit', organized by the Institute of Responsible Tourism and the Basque Tourism Agency. The summit gathered together stakeholders involved in sustainable tourism to exchange views and ideas for the future of the industry, develop a roadmap for sustainable tourism and revise the World Charter for Sustainable Tourism.

In the field of education, the National Commission supported the literacy project, 'Education and Literacy for Sustainable Development and Social Justice in Indigenous Ethnic Groups', coordinated by the UNESCO Centre in Murcia. The centre works with indigenous groups in Paraguay through the use of mathematics to promote interculturality and transversality. In 2015, a delegation of indigenous people visited the UNESCO centre in Spain and UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, within the framework of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO.

In communication and information, UNESCO partnered with Telefonica Learning Services to create the Mobile 4 Change (M4C) project. The company launched an online competition to develop mobile solutions to promote positive social change. The Director of the Knowledge Societies Division at UNESCO, Mr Indrajit Banerjee, attended the awards ceremony, which took place at the main Telefonica store in Madrid (7 July).

Lastly, Spain joined the International Network for the Silk Road and participated in the first meeting held in Xi'an, China (22–25 May). It also offered to host the next meeting held in Valencia in 2016. In this context, the Centro UNESCO Valencia-Mediterraneo undertook several activities to promote the cultural silk heritage of Valencia.



Lanzarote and Archipiélago Chinijo Geopark
© Lanzarote and Archipiélago Chinijo Geopark

A success story

In 2015, Lanzarote and the Chinijo Islands (La Graciosa, Montaña Clara, Roque del Este, Roque del Oeste and Alegranza) were officially designated a UNESCO Global Geopark. Spain now has forty-seven biosphere reserves and eleven Geoparks. Almost half of Spanish Geoparks overlap with existing biosphere reserves.

To explore the potential added value and discuss the management challenges arising from such overlaps, the Spanish National Commission organized a meeting in Madrid (26 February). Participants from Spanish Geoparks and biosphere reserves exchanged experiences and underlined the importance of coordination at the management level to take advantage of synergies and avoid duplication.

In July, the National Commission also established the Spanish National Geopark Committee following the recommendations of the operational guidelines for UNESCO Global Geoparks, approved at the 38th session of the General Conference. The Committee consists of representatives from all Spanish Geoparks, several ministries and regional governments, and will be chaired by the Spanish Geological Survey.

SWEDEN

Swedish National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Inger Davidson

Secretary-General: Mr Mats Djurberg

Website: www.unesco.se

Update of activities in 2015

The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO acts as a coordinating body for Swedish–UNESCO cooperation, advising and informing the Swedish Government on UNESCO-related matters, and organizing UNESCO activities in Sweden in cooperation with other bodies.

The National Commission also plays an instrumental role in the elaboration of Swedish answers to questionnaires from UNESCO regarding organizational and normative instruments, and participates in various government processes, including recently the ten-year follow up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+10) and Swedish preparations for UN Agenda 2030.

In 2015, the Commission embarked on the second year of the Swedish Government's strategy for cooperation with UNESCO. The strategy encompasses the National Commission and Swedish actors that cooperate with UNESCO, and contains focuses on priorities such as freedom of expression, access to clean water and gender equality.

In addition, the National Commission developed a new social media strategy, which will enable it to boost interest in UNESCO-related matters in Sweden.

As a member of UNESCO's Executive Board (2013–2017), the Swedish National Commission devoted much of the year to preparations for Board meetings and the 38th General Conference of UNESCO. In cooperation with the UNESCO Secretariat, the Commission organized a study tour to provide its delegates with input for discussions about the future of the Organization and the focus of its work.

During the year, the Commission – in cooperation with other organizations – organized a number of events to mark World Press Freedom Day (3 May), World Philosophy Day (17 November), the launch of the Education for All Global Monitoring report, and celebrations for the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

In cooperation with the Swedish Research Council, the Commission also launched a call for applications for four new Swedish UNESCO Chairs. Once appointed, the Chairs will work in line with the Swedish strategy for cooperation with UNESCO and UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy.

Lastly, 2015 saw Sweden launch two prizes: the National L'Oréal UNESCO 'For Women in Science' prize, organized in cooperation with the Young Academy of Sweden (who will perform jury work and be responsible for overall administration), and an annual prize for best UNESCO-related activity in Sweden, which will be awarded during the second quarter of 2016.



The Swedish Minister for Culture and Democracy, Ms Alice Bah Kuhnke (centre), met with Swedish authorities and agencies and the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation against illicit trafficking in cultural goods.

© Ministry of Culture, Sweden

A success story

During the year many organizations and institutions expressed increasing concern regarding the intentional destruction of cultural and world heritage and the illicit trade in looted and stolen cultural objects.

In response to UN Security Council Resolution 2199 of February 2015, which obliges all Member States to work against the illicit trade in cultural goods, the Swedish National Commission in cooperation with the Swedish Heritage Board launched a network aimed at building closer cooperation between museums, the police, the customs services and other actors, to encourage information sharing and closer cooperation around the issue of illicit trafficking of cultural goods from looted excavations and collections in the Middle East, and elsewhere.

This newly formed network will develop methods and tools for urgent action in cases where objects are identified at Swedish customs or ports and rapid identification and action is needed. It will also assess which rules and regulations might need modification in the light of recent developments.

The Nordic Ministers responsible for culture will further discuss these issues within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers in early 2016.

SWITZERLAND

Swiss Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Jean Bernard Münch

Secretary-General: Mr Nicolas Mathieu

Website: www.unesco.ch

Update of activities in 2015

The Swiss Commission for UNESCO renews its mandate and composition every four years. 2015 represented the final year of the current mandate, and its activities during the year represented the end of a commitment that will continue – albeit with a redefinition of objectives, instruments and modalities – for the period 2016–2019.

Among the activities undertaken during the year to promote UNESCO and its values, the Swiss Commission finalized a

series of thirty-four short films on World Heritage properties in Switzerland. This project was designed as a complement to a kit that comprises a book, an information brochure and the Swiss World Heritage Charter. Produced by the production company Mira Film (Zurich) on behalf of the National Commission, the series sets out the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and then highlights the exceptional universal value of each of the eleven properties located in Switzerland inscribed on the World Heritage List through three modules.

Eleven additional short films (one per property) made by students at the Haute Ecole d'Art et de Design in Geneva (HEAD) complete the series. The students were given total freedom in terms of their approach and artistic choices, resulting in diverse and unconventional perspectives on these World Heritage properties.

The forty-five short films were produced in four versions (English, French, German, Italian) and are available on DVD from the National Commission website.



Cover of the DVD World Heritage in Switzerland
© Swiss Commission for UNESCO



Cover of the manifesto.
© Swiss Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In celebration of Universal Children's Day (20 November), the Swiss Commission for UNESCO and the Swiss childcare network published a manifesto for early childhood education. This publication is part of a long-term commitment on the part of the National Commission to this issue. The aim of the publication is to stimulate debate in Switzerland.

Conceived as an manual for those who wish to become involved, the manifesto summarizes the situation, offers contextual elements, sets out the actions necessary and describes measures that have proved successful.

The manifesto sets out four objectives aimed at political, economic and administrative actors:

- quality – recognize the value and potential of high-quality services aimed at very young children;
 - recognition – give early childhood professionals the recognition they deserve and provide them with adequate working conditions; a
 - lieviate the financial burden – reduce the cost borne by parents with a larger, guaranteed financial commitment from the state and the economy; and e
 - arly childhood policy – clearly distribute areas of competence among villages, cantons and the Confederation to ensure an effective early childhood policy.
- The manifesto is available in French, German and Italian from the National Commission website.

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

National Commission for UNESCO of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Chairperson: Ms Elizabeta Kancheska Milevska, Minister of Culture

Secretary-General: Ms Lidija Topuzovska

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the National Commission for UNESCO of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia centred its activities on priorities identified in culture such as world heritage, cultural diversity and intangible cultural heritage, and the inclusion of culture into sustainable development strategies and policies, and key areas of education such as ESD and the Education 2030 agenda.

The National Commission continued its active and constructive cooperation with Clubs for UNESCO, UNESCO Chairs and ASP schools. All projects heightened the visibility of UNESCO and the universal values for which it stands, and

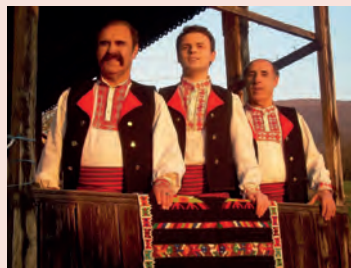
provided opportunities for the active involvement of institutions, experts and young talented people from across the country. Numerous activities approved under the UNESCO Participation Programme for 2014–2015 were dedicated to the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, including 'Key HR Competency Framework Development as Basis for Creation of Dual System on HRM Educational Program', 'Caravan of religions "To live with one another, not side by side" – Part II, 'Promotion of the natural and cultural heritage of Markovi Kuli' and 'Women's rights from the prism of audiovisual arts in South-East Europe'.

The UNESCO Chair for Intercultural Studies and Research at the Faculty of Philosophy, supported by the International Visegrad Fund and the National Commission, organized a conference on 'Education 2030 and Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue', held in Skopje (21 September). The event explored ways to achieve cooperation, dialogue and peace, especially in multicultural, multi-religious and post-conflict societies. The conference was an outcome of cooperation between the Visegrad 4 countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) and the UNESCO Chair in Skopje, who played a significant role during the conference, sharing their views, knowledge and experience on cooperation, shared education, and the importance of dialogue and interdisciplinary approaches in planning for the future, especially in the area of education.

Lastly, 2015 witnessed the inscription of 'Glasoechko, male two-part singing in Dolni Polog' on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding at the 10th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee, held in Windhoek. Glasoechko was the third element from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to be inscribed on ICH Lists.



Bitola
© Municipality of Bitola



Glasoechko, male two-part
singing in Dolni Polog

© National Commission for
UNESCO of the former Yugoslav
Republic of Macedonia



The Manaki brothers
© Film Archive of
Macedonia

A success story

In 2015, UNESCO designated the city of Bitola as a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of film.

Bitola is one of the largest cultural centres in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and has a long cultural tradition in film. The Manaki brothers, Balkan photography and cinema pioneers, brought the first camera to the Balkans in 1905 and made the first documentary in the region. The thirty-six year-old International Cinematographers' Film Festival 'Manaki Brothers' is the oldest international film festival dedicated to the creativity of cinematographers worldwide.

Due to the specific conditions that the city offers for film production, special locations and 'Film City' buildings, over fifteen domestic and international films and TV series have been shot in Bitola. The city has also organized and hosted numerous international film workshops, conferences and events. Bitola has thus become the capital of international cinematographers, leading to the discovery of many new talents, today deemed experts in the aesthetics of film photography and cinema.

TURKEY

Turkish National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Öcal Oğuz

Secretary-General: Ms Sema Dinçer

Website: www.unesco.org.tr

Update of activities in 2015

The Turkish National Commission devoted much of 2015 to celebrations and awareness-raising activities in recognition of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO. The year began with a visit by the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova (4–8 January), who met with the Minister of Education and the President of the National Commission to review the state of cooperation between UNESCO and Turkey, and review the main lines of actions of the Commission.

The National Commission undertook four main activities during the year. The first aimed to strengthen educational networks and awareness of UNESCO's objectives in education. Accordingly, the Commission organized a meeting with members of ASPnet to share best practices and build on experiences gained (21 April). Representatives of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks also met to review the higher education programme and share experiences in a consultative meeting open to all observers wishing to join the network (17 April). In addition, scholarships set up for masters and doctoral students in universities conducting research directly connected to UNESCO fields.

The second activity was a workshop organized for the 'Mediterranean Network in Bioethics' (7 April), which discussed different aspects of bioethics including the implications of new technologies, bioethics education, clinical trials, collaboration and partnership. Experts from the UNESCO Bioethics and Ethics of Science Section, and experts in the field from six countries and the Turkish Clinical Research Association participated in the meeting.

The third activity was a 'Roundtable Meeting for Experience Sharing between Turkey and Africa', organized to promote north-south cooperation (1 April). Discussions were held on issues related to intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and education. Twelve African countries attended and highlighted their experience with ICH and education covering topics such as transmission, educational curricula, the contribution of civil society partners, and the role of museums and media. The discussions were reflected in the Final Declaration, which was published and shared with the public.

The fourth activity was a conference organized to commemorate '10 Years of the Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions' (20 October). This aimed to gather and mobilize experts on various aspects of the Convention, raise awareness of its purpose, and gather national views with regard to contemporary debates. It received good media coverage and youth participation via social media.

Lastly, to emphasize the importance of heritage under risk, a consultative meeting was organized with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and ICOMOS and ICOM among others (28 April). The meeting highlighted UN Security Council decisions and UNESCO's action and stressed the importance of UNESCO's Cultural Conventions. It also underlined the importance of capacity-building and expertise.



A success story

In celebration of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, the Turkish National Commission prepared a booklet highlighting key events since Turkey joined UNESCO as a founding member. The booklet provides information on the impact of UNESCO in Turkey and the collaboration between UNESCO and the National Commission.

During the General Conference the booklet was distributed to the Member States to heighten the visibility of the vision of the National Commission. It was also distributed on various occasions and at events organized by the National Commission in Turkey.

The booklet 'UNESCO in Turkey 70 Years – 70 Key Events' produced to celebrate the 70th anniversary of UNESCO

© Turkish National Commission for UNESCO

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Tim Williams

Secretary-General: Mr James Bridge

Website: www.unesco.org.uk

Update of activities in 2015

This year, the UK National Commission for UNESCO undertook a UK-wide study of UNESCO-affiliated organizations to assess what value UNESCO brings to their work and how more value might be derived from UNESCO for the United Kingdom. The Commission produced a report detailing the results, as well as a report mapping the work of UNESCO designations (e.g. World Heritage Sites, Global Geoparks) in the country to UK government departmental priorities.

The research uses an innovative business-based Wider Value Scorecard methodology whereby respondents were asked to assess the added financial and non-financial value of their UNESCO involvement. A methodology paper presenting the consistent, structured, mixed methodology employed for collection and analysis of this dataset was peer-reviewed and presented at the 22nd EurOMA Conference in Neuchâtel Switzerland. The paper is available here: www.euroma2015.org/euromapapers/papers/ERO-16_33167.pdf

The National Commission approached all coordinators from nine of the UK's UNESCO designation categories for interviews, with participant responses to the survey gathered via a one-hour telephone interview and/or self-completion questionnaire conducted by the National Commission Secretariat.

The results of the survey showed that, in financial terms, UNESCO helped UK-affiliated institutions and bodies to attract at least £100 million (€130 million, US\$140 million) in additional income from April 2014 to March 2015.

In terms of wider, non-financial value, a UNESCO designation is both a recognized mark of quality, indicating that an asset is world class, as well as a mechanism to enhance quality. By leveraging the UNESCO brand and collaborating with the global UNESCO network, UK institutions and bodies say that they can access new programmes, partnerships and funding opportunities and influence key decision-makers.

With regard to support for UK government policy, UNESCO-supported activities in the United Kingdom complement a broad portfolio of UK-government and devolved administration policies.

The research indicates the presence of significant untapped potential for UNESCO in the United Kingdom. The National Commission is working in close partnership with the UK's UNESCO designations, through a series of feedback workshops, to unlock this potential.



The logo of the 'Wider value of UNESCO to the UK' initiative.
© United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the UK National Commission launched its new website (www.unesco.org.uk) to provide a simple and easy-to-use platform for those seeking UNESCO accreditation, and to celebrate and build a dynamic, collaborative UNESCO network in the United Kingdom.

Central features of the new website include the 'UNESCO in the UK' interactive map, the 'expert network' section and the 'engage' section.

The 'UNESCO in the UK' interactive map brings together the UK's UNESCO designations, highlighting similarities and shared values within the UK's UNESCO network.

The 'expert network' section includes a series of case studies that showcase the diversity and calibre of the UK's UNESCO network, demonstrate the value of belonging to such a network, and highlight how the National Commission's pro bono experts are working to further the goals of UNESCO in their respective fields.

The 'engage section' provides an online annual planner of UNESCO prizes and other UNESCO calls for entry, as well as downloadable accreditation resources and key contact information. This section intends to encourage, support and guide UK institutions and individuals seeking UNESCO accreditation.

The website was developed in consultation with the UK's UNESCO network through in-house user experience research.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

US National Commission for UNESCO

Executive Director: Ms Allison Wright

Website: www.state.gov/p/io/unesco/

Update of activities in 2015

The US National Commission values US membership in UNESCO and strongly supports participation by individuals across the country. With a diverse membership of 100 individuals, the US National Commission provides a strong network to promote the programmes of UNESCO. Many of its members represent NGOs working in UNESCO's areas of interest, whose vast expertise serves as a valuable resource. The National Commission also serves in an advisory capacity to the Secretary of State regarding matters relating to UNESCO.

A large number of citizens work with and are involved in UNESCO programmes. The US National Commission for UNESCO is committed to engaging and strengthening this

community and encouraging its growth. In 2015, many organizations and individuals serving on the US National Commission celebrated the 70th anniversary of UNESCO with events, discussions and symposiums. These events permitted more people to learn about the valuable work being undertaken by UNESCO.

During the year, staff used effective communication tools such as the National Commission newsletter and social media to promote UNESCO's programmes. The Commission also conducted in-person meetings and conference calls with working groups and subcommittees, and retained close contact with the UNESCO Office in New York and other Regional Offices. The Commission continued to broaden its engagement with other National Commissions, in particular at the 38th session of the General Conference.

National Commission staff continue to strengthen lines of communication with current networks such as Category II Centres, University Chairs, the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), the International Coalition of Cities Against Racism and Creative Cities. The National Commission and its staff look forward to integrating new additions to these networks.



Evening event hosted by the Smithsonian commemorating the 70th anniversary of UNESCO and celebrating the recently reissued UNESCO Collection of Traditional Music, on the occasion of the US National Commission's Annual Meeting

© Smithsonian

A success story

In 2015, the US National Commission held its Annual Meeting at the US Department of State (2 December). The meeting offered National Commission members and the US community engaged in UNESCO programmes an opportunity to discuss current work, programmes and future initiatives. Presentations by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the ASPnet School Three Rivers Educational Campus, the National Park Service, the US Geological Survey and the Creative City of Paducah, Kentucky, detailed innovative and transformative work being undertaken in partnership, alongside and within UNESCO programmes.

The meeting closed with an evening event hosted by the Smithsonian commemorating the 70th anniversary of UNESCO and celebrating the recently reissued UNESCO Collection of Traditional Music. The UNESCO collection published by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, in both digital and physical formats, stands as one of the earliest achievements of UNESCO's programme for safeguarding and revitalizing intangible cultural heritage.





Latin America and the Caribbean

**ARGENTINA • BAHAMAS
• BELIZE • BRITISH VIRGIN
ISLANDS • COLOMBIA • COSTA
RICA • CUBA • CURAÇAO
• DOMINICAN REPUBLIC •
ECUADOR • EL SALVADOR •
HAITI • HONDURAS • JAMAICA
• MEXICO • PARAGUAY • PERU
• SAINT LUCIA • SAINT KITTS
AND NEVIS • SINT MAARTEN
• TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
• URUGUAY • VENEZUELA
(BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)**

ARGENTINA

Argentina National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Esteban José Bullrich

Secretary-General: Mrs Juliana Burton

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Argentina National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO focused its efforts on a series of activities in line with UNESCO's main objectives.

During the year, the National Commission reinforced relations with UNESCO sectors and divisions and assisted the National Committees for Bioethics, the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme and Argentinean World Heritage, as well as the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, and the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

In the area of culture, the National Commission evaluated the file for Alerces National Park and presented it to the World Heritage Committee in February 2015. The Commission together with the National Committee for World Heritage also organized a seminar for administrators of World Heritage Sites

in Argentina, held in Rodeo, Province of San Juan (October). In addition, the National Commission assisted with the nomination of the element 'Filete Porteño in Buenos Aires, a traditional painting technique', which was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2015.

In the natural sciences, the National Commission supported the nomination for the Kalinga Prize for the Popularization of Science, which was awarded to Diego Golombek, Professor in Biology at the National University of Quilmes; and the nomination for the Sultán Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation, which was awarded to Fabio A. Kalesnik, Horacio Sirolli and Luciano Iribarren of the Wetlands Ecology Research Group from the University of Buenos Aires.

In education, the highlight of 2015 was the implementation of the Associated Schools Programme Network (ASPnet) Qhapaq Ñan project (see below). The National Commission also organized a photography contest in collaboration with Wikimedia, inviting ASPnet students to photograph examples of intangible cultural heritage in their communities for the Wikipedia website. Over 140 students from different provinces participated in the contest, with prizes for the best pictures presented at an awards ceremony in Buenos Aires (December).

Lastly, the National Commission assisted with the evaluation and renewal of UNESCO Chair agreements, within the framework of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Programme.



Workshop on World Heritage in Young Hands, Thursday October 8, 2015, School The Alfarcito, Province of Salta, Argentina.

© Florencia Buonomo

A success story

Following the inscription of Qhapaq Ñan, the Andean Road System, on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2015, the National Commission invited secondary schools located in the seven Argentinean Provinces (Salta, Catamarca, Jujuy, Tucumán, Mendoza, San Juan and La Rioja) near the site to join the Associated Schools Programme Network (ASPnet). The aim was to strengthen local communities and develop educational activities related to world heritage and education.

Inspired by the UNESCO 'World Heritage in Young Hands' programme, members of the Commission visited each of the schools and delivered training workshops to teachers and students on the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. The workshops explored the implications of living near a World Heritage Site and highlighted the importance of developing sustainable tourism. After working with teachers, students and principals in local communities, the National Commission invited students to develop their own World Heritage materials from their perspective. These will be included in an online publication for ASPnet schools.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism, the National Commission also developed dedicated materials on World Heritage Sites in Argentina for students, and collaborated with the Argentinean educational TV channel 'Canal Encuentro' to develop a series on World Heritage Sites entitled 'Tu Mundo, Argentina'.

BAHAMAS

The Bahamas National Commission for UNESCO

Secretary-General: Mr Leon Higgs

Update of activities in 2015

The year 2015 was an active one for the Bahamas National Commission for UNESCO, which furthered its partnerships with government and non-governmental entities to advance the objectives of UNESCO in the Bahamian community.

The National Commission observed several important International UN Days, including World Teachers' Day (5 October) and International Literacy Day (8 September).

The National Commission celebrated UNESCO's International Jazz Day (30 April) with a day of activities in Nassau. Local jazz artists gave public performances and the bandleader Duke Errol Strachan was honoured for his contribution to the local music industry. A concert for secondary school students also provided an opportunity for local high school jazz bands from both private and public schools to showcase their talents (29 April).

In July, the Bahamas in conjunction with the Regional Office in Jamaica hosted a workshop on science, technology and

innovation (STI), which brought together local governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, and speakers sponsored by UNESCO, with a view to developing a comprehensive strategic programme for the entire Bahamas.

The Secretary-General of The National Commission attended a Cluster Meeting in Montego Bay, Jamaica (26–27 October) for Secretaries-General of Caribbean National Commissions for UNESCO in preparation for the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

The Bahamas was subsequently represented at the General Conference by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology, the Ambassador, the Secretary-General and a Senior Officer from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Ms Ashleigh Rolle, a resident of Grand Bahama, one of the Bahamian islands, represented the Bahamas at the 9th UNESCO Youth Forum in Paris (26–28 October), where the participants discussed ways for youth to engage as global citizens to help build a sustainable planet.

In the field of culture, the Bahamas National Commission submitted five sites for inclusion on the World Heritage List.

Lastly, the Bahamas was elected to serve on the Approval Committee for the Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sport for 2016–2017.



Some of the participants on a boat trip during the workshop on coastal Ecohydrology in Exuma, the Bahamas.

© John A Bowleg

A success story

In 2015, the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (IHP-LAC) and the Ecohydrology Regional Programme for the LAC, the Bahamas National Commission for UNESCO and the Water and Sewerage Corporation collaborated to host the first Training Workshop on Coastal Ecohydrology in Exuma, the Bahamas (22–25 June).

The training workshop was tailored for officials from national and city administrations involved in water resources and coastal management, managers and planners responsible for preparing coastal management plans, practitioners involved in coastal management, non-governmental organizations, UN agencies and the private sector.

The main objectives of the workshop were to provide an understanding of the main ecological and hydrological processes occurring at the river basin from headwaters to coastal areas, how human activities and climate change impact these processes, and how they can be managed.

The participants were able to enhance their understanding of the ecohydrology of coastal areas in the context of river basins in a Caribbean setting, exchange experiences, discuss a systematic approach to ecohydrology and strategic approaches for integrated coastal management, and experience a field trip to Victoria Pond, a mangrove lake in George Town, Exuma.

BELIZE

Belize National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Patrick Faber, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports

Secretary-General: Mr Rudolph Anthony Jr.

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Belize National Commission for UNESCO had a very busy year. In January, the Commission welcomed a team from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and UNESCO experts from the World Heritage Centre to Belize. The team met with the focal point for the Barrier Reef System, a World Heritage Site currently on UNESCO's danger list. The team also met with the Prime Minister of Belize and the Ministers concerned, many non-governmental organizations and the Secretary-General of the National Commission. The visit outlined the steps necessary to remove the World Heritage Site from the danger list.

Throughout the year, Belizean experts participated in a number of UNESCO workshops and conferences around the world. The National Commission also conducted a workshop on the rights of the Indigenous People in Belize (November).

In culture, an expert from the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH) participated in and facilitated a workshop on

community-based inventorying for intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Willemstad, Curacao (22–28 February). The Secretary-General of the National Commission attended a workshop in Saint Kitts on Slavery and the Slave Route Trade (July); an expert on ICH attended a workshop in Paris and facilitated a workshop in Suriname on ICH (July); and an expert on ICH attended a workshop in Namibia (November).

In the natural sciences, an expert attended a workshop on tsunami training held in Oman (March). Two experts and the Secretary-General attended a workshop in Guyana on Micro-Science Kits in High Schools (April). Belize then hosted a workshop for schoolteachers on the use of the kits in high schools (September) and launched a pilot programme for their effective use in seven schools.

In education, an expert attended a workshop on higher education in Kingston, and two experts attended a workshop on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Montego Bay, Jamaica (May). The National Commission sent an educator to Israel in May for a month-long Fellowship on Educational Methodologies, and an expert in pre-school education attended a workshop in Brazil (July).

The Secretary-General represented Belize at sessions of the Executive Board and attended the 38th session of the General Conference (3–18 November) in Paris. The Secretary-General also attended a workshop in Montego Bay for Regional Secretaries-General (October) and represented Belize's National Commission at the 2nd Interregional meeting of National Commissions (2 November).



The Secretary-General of the National Commission of Belize, Mr Rudolph Anthony Jr., with the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova.

© Belize National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, five of the seven projects submitted by the National Commission to the UNESCO Participation Programme (2014–2015) were approved. The Commission was also successful in its efforts to send a young Belizean to Paris to represent Belize the 9th UNESCO Youth Forum (26–28 October). In addition, the National Commission submitted the applications of eleven young professional Belizeans for vacant posts in the newly restarted Young Professionals Programme.

However, the greatest success in 2015 was the ratification by the Government of Belize of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The Secretary-General of the National Commission was extremely pleased to personally deliver the ratified Convention to the Director-General, Irina Bokova, in Paris.

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

British Virgin Islands National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Myron V. Walywn

Secretary-General: Ms Allison Flax-Archer

Update of activities in 2015

During 2015 the British Virgin Islands National Commission for UNESCO continued its work to promote the objectives and ideals of UNESCO through a range of activities.

In education, the National Commission organized events in celebration of UNESCO International Days with a view to educating the public and schools on the importance of Education for All. These activities were undertaken in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and in partnership with other government agencies and civil society. The Commission also organized workshops and meetings funded by UNESCO.

The National Commission, government agencies and civil society participated in a five-day consultancy funded by the Kingston Cluster Office to provide technical support for files submitted to the Memory of the World programme. As a result of the consultancy, the Ministry of Education and Culture endorsed the creation and launch of the Official British Virgin Islands Memory of the World National Committee, which will

shortly submit its first Memory of the World application for consideration.

Four projects under the Participation Programme were implemented during the 2014–2015 biennium. These focused on early childhood education and teaching tolerance and respect, HIV/AIDS education and the promotion of health through education, learning improvements through reading, and the protection and conservation of the oldest African burial ground in the western hemisphere.

Since 2000, UNESCO has celebrated World Poetry Day (21 March) in recognition of the important role played by poetry in the arts and in different cultures. In 2015, in honour of World Poetry Day the British Virgin Islands National Commission sponsored a competition, inviting students from schools across the Territory to submit poems on topics related to world peace. 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 British Virgin Islands National Commission emphasized the importance of poetry and creativity in society, noting that these elements should be practised and appreciated by people of all ages and cultures.

Lastly, the National Commission continued its work on the project, 'The hanging of Arthur Hodge – a historical site', which focuses on the crimes, trial and execution of a prominent Virgin Islands planter and politician who was hung for the murder of one of his own slaves. This unprecedented verdict roused the British anti-slavery movement and helped to direct its efforts toward the ultimate emancipation of slaves throughout the British Empire.



The Advent Heart Beatz Drum Core performing at the 4th Annual World Science Day for Peace and Development.

© British Virgin Islands National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the British Virgin Islands National Commission for UNESCO invited several organizations to partner with it in celebrating the 4th Annual World Science Day for Peace and Development, by hosting a festival and competition (20 November) among pre-school, secondary and tertiary levels of education.

The festival commenced with a Parade of Professions in Science and concluded with the release of seventy balloons by the Minister of Education and Culture, the Permanent Secretary, Secretary-General and student participants, in celebration of UNESCO's 70th Anniversary and world peace.

The competition, which was moderated by the Secretary-General of the National Commission, was highly successful with over 100 scientific models illustrating 'Science in the 21st Century' entered and several prizes awarded to winners.

The Minister of Education and Culture spoke in support of World Science Day for Peace and Development and UNESCO, and the celebration received significant media coverage.

COLOMBIA

Colombian National Commission for UNESCO

President/Chairperson: Ms María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Mr Luis Armando Soto Boutin

Website: www.cancilleria.gov.co/unesco

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the National Commission achieved important results through the participation of Colombia as a member of several committees and subsidiary organs belonging to the technical programmes of UNESCO, including: the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS), the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC), the Executive Council of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and the World Heritage Committee (WHC).

In addition, the Colombian National Commission supported the participation of specialists and experts in international meetings, such as the 'World Education Forum 2015', held in Incheon (19–22 May); the inscription of 'Cirirí: Operación Lalinde's Family Documentary Fund' on the Register of the Memory of the World programme; the designation of Medellín as a Creative City of Music; and the recognition of the exceptional universal value of Colombia's cultural heritage through the inclusion of traditional Vallenato music on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

The National Commission also extensively promoted calls for fellowships, prizes and funds sponsored by UNESCO. In 2015, scholarships offered through the UNESCO/Israel (MASHAV) Co-sponsored Fellowships Programme 'Addressing the urbanization challenge' and the UNESCO/Poland Co-sponsored Fellowships Programme Cycle – Engineering 2015 were awarded to Colombian citizens.

During the year, the National Commission carried out four social investment projects, financed by the UNESCO Participation Programme (2014–2015), which benefited around 800 boys, girls, teenagers and women belonging to vulnerable communities. Entitled 'Music without Borders – Strengthening and Consolidating the Colombia-Ecuador Binational Tricolor Orchestra', the 'International Meeting of Traditional Midwives': Traditional Knowledge in Resistance and Resilience – the Know-How to Protect', 'Regional Seminar: Prevention of Illicit Trafficking of Documentary Heritage in Ibero-America' and 'Surfing for Equality Fest: Creating Opportunities for Vulnerable Youth in Colombia' (see below), the projects promoted social inclusion and peace through artistic education, sports and the strengthening of cultural identity.

Moreover, the National Commission established strategic alliances with civil society, academia, non-governmental organizations and official institutions to develop high-impact activities in Barranquilla, Bogotá, Buenaventura, Cali, Ipiales, Medellín and Nuquí within the framework of International Jazz Day, World Day for Cultural Diversity, the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, and UNESCO's Participation Programme among others.

Finally, the National Commission would like to highlight the essential role played by its partnership with UNESCO's Field Offices in Quito, Montevideo, Santiago and La Habana, in the development of activities for 2015, through their involvement in important national debates.



The 'Surfing for Equality Fest' started with the 'Sand Ceremony'. Each participant brought sand from his or her local beach and poured it into a glass container. The ceremony symbolizes the peaceful gathering of different nations of the world through surfing, and promotes values such as tolerance, respect and partnership.

© Colombian National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

The 'Surfing for Equality Fest' took place at the Pacific Coast of Colombia (9–12 October) thanks to the support of the UNESCO Participation Programme, and as a result of a partnership between the National Commission and the Buen Punto Foundation.

Its objective was to create new opportunities for 140 boys, girls and teenagers who surf on the beaches of Arusi, Partadó, Termale and in small villages near Nuquí, a town in the Department of Chocó.

The festival gave these children the chance to recognize their practice of this sport as an opportunity for personal and social development, and to increase their knowledge about beach safety and improve their technique.

This activity included the participation of special international guests such as Peruvian Surf World Champion, Anali Gomez. She shared her experiences with the young participants and taught them how to improve their skills on the waves. The four-day programme included a surf tournament for children and motivational workshops on gender equality, social entrepreneurship through sports, and women's empowerment, among others.

COSTA RICA

Costa Rica National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Ms Sonia Marta Mora Escalante, Ministry of Public Education

Secretary-General a.i.: Mr José Rafael Alvarado
Cortés Website: <http://comisionunesco.cr/comisionunesco.cr/index.html>

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Costa Rican National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO in coordination with the Director of the San José UNESCO Office presented the Education for All Report Global Monitoring Report 2015 (31 July). Mrs Ana Helena Chacón, Second Vice-President of the Republic and representatives from the Ministry of Public Education attended the launch. The broad participation of the education sector in Costa Rica has enabled the country to achieve and even surpass four of the six EFA goals, including universal education for all children at primary level. The country has also expanded its coverage to target secondary education. It also devotes resources to the learning needs of youth and adults, with literacy levels among adults

now higher than 99%, and to gender parity, with rates for women consistently higher than those for men.

To celebrate International Youth Day and ensure the participation of young people throughout the Huetar Atlantic Region, the Youth Committee of the Costa Rica National Commission organized a 'National Youth Meeting: Tools for Youth Development', held in the province of Limón (8–9 August). The event comprised a two-day workshop on various topics related to youth leadership and the promotion of art and culture, accompanied by a Youth Festival. The main purpose of the meeting was to provide tools to young people to aid their individual development and to support their initiatives on issues related to UNESCO's objectives and ideals.

The MAB Committee of the Costa Rican National Commission for Cooperation also presented a report of its work at the first National Meeting of Biosphere Reserves (18–19 October). The meeting consisted of an initial session of introductory lectures on the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Each reserve presented cases studies of successful practices developed in their territories. These included planning and management for the upper basin of the Reventazón River, actions for the protection of the Juan Castro Blanco water park, and socio-environmental projects located in communities surrounding the nucleus of the Cordillera Volcánica Central Biosphere Reserve.



Members of the jury assessing the drawings.

© Costa Rica National Commission

A success story

Within the framework of the 'International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies', the Costa Rican National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO organized a drawing and painting contest in November entitled 'My world through light'. The contest took place with the support of the telephone company Claro Costa Rica and featured the participation of 450 students aged between 4 and 15 years from ASPnet educational institutions. Students were asked to depict the importance of light in everyday life and to demonstrate its value for human development. The contest also represented a call for a more sustainability relationship between people and the environment.

Awards for the best drawings were awarded in four categories by age with the twelve best winning entries receiving laptops, selfie sticks and portable batteries.

Mrs Rocio Solis, the President of the Executive Committee, acclaimed the quality of the work and the creativity of the children, and noted the Institution's happiness with this closing event for the 'International Year of Light'.

CUBA

Cuban National Commission for UNESCO

President a.i.: Mrs Alicia González Gutiérrez

Secretary-General: Mrs Alicia González Gutiérrez

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Cuban National Commission focused on activities to celebrate the 70th anniversary of UNESCO. The Commission also reinforced cooperation with UNESCO sectors and divisions and established strong relationships with a number of national entities.

In education, the National Commission increased its coordination and institutional work in line with Education for All objectives and the Education 2030 strategy. A highlight was participation in the 'World Education Forum', held in Incheon, Republic of Korea (19–22 May), and the 38th session of the General Conference.

A watershed moment was the '14th edition of the International Congress on Pedagogy' (Pedagogía 2015), held in Havana (26–30 January). The Congress was co-sponsored by UNESCO and featured the participation of David Atchoarena, Director of the Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems.

Two other important education-related events were the '23rd National Seminar of the Associated Schools Network', held in Ciego de Ávila (18–22 May), which enjoyed the participation of seventy-six schools, and the '9th Annual Meeting of

UNESCO Chairs of Cuba', held at the University of Havana (10 December), which analysed the national process of higher education transformation.

In the natural sciences, the '10th Congress of Marine Sciences (MARCUBA)', held in Havana (16–20 November), was dedicated to the 70th anniversary of UNESCO. Several workshops were organized by Regional Offices of UNESCO and the Cuban National Commission, including the regional meeting on 'Climate Change Adaptation in Caribbean Biosphere Reserves' (23–25 November) and a regional workshop on 'Comprehensive Risk Management of Disasters of Hydrological Origin in the Caribbean Islands' (26–27 November), held in Havana.

One notable event was the presentation of the Carlos J. Finlay UNESCO Prize for Microbiology. In 2015, the prize was awarded to Professor Yoshihiro Kawaoka, an internationally recognized expert on the influenza and Ebola viruses.

In culture, the art exhibition 'Natural Codes' explored themes highlighted by World Environment Day, World Oceans Day and World Day to Combat Desertification, while the exhibition 'Among threads, wings and paintbrushes' was devoted to the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

In addition, the 'Jimaguayú Constitution' was successfully inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World National Register, and a five-year Plan of Action was approved to improve the work of the National Committee for the Memory of the World programme.

Lastly, the Cuban National Commission played an active role in the Second Interregional Meeting of the National Commissions for UNESCO, held in Paris (21–22 February).



A success story

For the Cuban National Commission for UNESCO, one of the most successful activities of 2015 was the special gala performance of *Tula*, organized by the National Ballet of Cuba under the direction of the Prima Ballerina Assoluta, Alicia Alonso, a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador. The performance of *Tula*, which took place at the National Theatre of Cuba (14 March), was dedicated to the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, and was inspired by the life of Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, one of the most notable female figures and significant writers of the nineteenth century. The bicentenary of the birth of Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda was one of anniversaries celebrated in association with UNESCO during the biennium 2014–2015.

Gala performance of *Tula* by the Cuban National Ballet Ceremony in celebration of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO

© Cuban National Commission for UNESCO

CURAÇAO

Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Irene Dick, Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport

Secretary-General: Ms Marva C. Browne

Website: www.natcomcuracao.org

Update of activities in 2015

During 2015, the Curacao National Commission implemented a variety of national programmes that contributed to the successful achievement of UNESCO's mandate and expanded its cooperation with ministries, civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The National Commission implemented several activities to raise awareness among the community of the importance of heritage, in particular Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). The Commission also worked with the Field Office in Jamaica to promote capacity-building in the area of Open Educational Resources, by facilitating a workshop in cooperation with a local counterpart. The National Commission also collaborated with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport to organize the first technical and vocational education and training (TVET) conference, held in Curacao (30 October) with the participation of experts from Barbados and Jamaica.

The National Commission worked with several partners to celebrate International Days throughout the year, collaborating with NGOs to organize a media experience evening for World Press Freedom Day, and with the Bureau for Intellectual Properties to host a lecture on copyright and to pay tribute

to local writers in celebration of World Book and Copyright Day (23 April). The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November) was marked by a one-day seminar on the theme, 'From Peace in the Home to Peace in Curacao', jointly organized by the National Commission with the Ministry of Social Development, Labour and Welfare, the Foundation for Victims Support Curacao, and the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action, which heightened awareness of domestic violence. The National Commission also celebrated Human Rights Day (10 December) by collaborating with Amnesty International Curacao and other partners to organize a seminar entitled 'Our Rights. Our Freedoms. Always'.

During the year, several projects were successfully implemented and executed within the framework of the UNESCO Participation Programme, with the involvement of civil society and NGOs. Notable successes included training on Intangible Cultural Heritage for community leaders, and the projects 'Free Open Source Spell-check Papiamentu', 'Media Development and Capacity-building for Curacao' and 'Supporting Curacao's STI Policy Development'. All these projects strengthened UNESCO's visibility within the country.

In addition, the National Commission organized a well-attended workshop for the MAB committee, which was facilitated by an expert on the MAB programme for Curacao.

Lastly, professionals from the National Commission participated in numerous workshops, meetings and conferences organized by other Member States in fields related to their area of expertise, including the Slave Route, Youth Leader Training in Heritage, Disaster Risk Reduction in School Curricula and training for Memory of the World registry for Latin America and the Caribbean. A delegation from the National Commission also participated in the 38th General Conference.



Henry Moen, an expert in playing the 'Wiri'.
© Curacao National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In February 2015, the National Commission organized an intensive seven-day training workshop on community-based inventorying for the project 'Strengthening the Capacities of Suriname and Dutch Caribbean islands for implementing the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage'. The workshop took place within the framework of UNESCO's actions on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and in conformity with its capacity-building strategy.

Inventorying is an obligation of the 2003 Convention and constitutes a vital step in the development of safeguarding policies for intangible cultural heritage elements. The workshop focused on teaching participants the techniques of interviewing and documenting, and also incorporated a two-day field trip with presentations on specific ICH elements of Curacao such as the Tambu dance, the making of the Tambu drum, musical instruments such as the horn and the 'wiri', and a variety of other historic traditions. The training exercise enabled the participants to acquire the necessary skills for field-based inventorying on each of the islands.

This project was made possible by the generous support of the Government of the Netherlands to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Dominican Republic National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr José Antonio Rodríguez, Minister of Culture

Secretary-General: Ms María Mercedes Brito-Feliz

Website: www.new.cndu.gob.do

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Dominican Republic National Commission for UNESCO developed a series of major projects and activities within the major themes and action framework of UNESCO's work. The initiatives improved cooperation with governmental institutions, private companies and non-governmental organizations, and strengthened the partnership between civil society and the Organization.

At the beginning of the year, the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, paid an official visit to the Dominican Republic (15–16 January) highlighting the hard work done by the country in the fight against the illiteracy and in pursuit of quality education. The inauguration of the new offices of the National Commission took place during the visit.

During the year, the National Commission developed a series of International Sandwatch Database training workshops held in Boca Chica (18–22 May), aimed at teachers who participate in the ASPnet Sandwatch Project. The training workshops were supported by UNESCO and the Sandwatch Foundation.

The Dominican Republic National Commission also commenced implementation of four projects benefiting from the UNESCO Participation Programme, including the project 'Strengthening capacities of young people and teachers through quality education on HIV/AIDS prevention and comprehensive sexual education in adolescents and young people', developed by the National Commission and implemented during the months of September–November (see below).

The National Commission also participated in a training workshop for the Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (MOWLAC) for the Memory of the World programme. The Commission successfully registered *Revistas Banilejas 1941–1975* as a 'Documentary Heritage of Latin America and the Caribbean'. Another training workshop on website development enabled the development of the virtual portal of the Dominican Republic National Commission. Both workshops took place in Kingston (23–30 August) under the auspices of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO and the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO.

In the run up to the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, the National Commission coordinated meeting and working group preparations for the Delegation of Dominican Republic. It also provided logistical support for the 'Meeting of Legislators, civil society and experts from Latin America and the Caribbean on the ethical dimensions of the information society', as well as the follow-up multi-stakeholder round-table.

Lastly, the National Commission ended the year by coordinating the participation of five ASPnet schools from the Dominican Republic in the seminar 'Getting Climate-Ready', held in Paris (6–8 December), where they presented good educational practices on climate change and the role of education in sustainable development.



Adolescents and young people at the training workshop on HIV/AIDS prevention in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 2015.

© Dominican Republic National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Dominican Republic National Commission for UNESCO, with the financial support of UNESCO's Participation Programme for 2014–2015, implemented the project 'Strengthening capacities of young people and teachers through quality education on HIV/AIDS prevention and comprehensive sexual education in adolescents and young people'. The project involved the development of a programme of training activities and the creation of a space for reflection through intersectional dialogue, which aimed to contribute to improvement in quality education for HIV/AIDS prevention and the promotion of values for responsible sexual behaviour.

The project benefited students and teachers of the National Associated Schools Programme (ASPnet) of UNESCO and young people of the Santo Domingo UNESCO Young Club, who live in the provinces of San Cristobal, San Cristobal and San Pedro de Macoris. Workshop participants received training on managing methodologies and useful skills for HIV/AIDS prevention and the promotion of values for comprehensive sexual education for adolescents and young people.

ECUADOR

Ecuadorian National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Andrés Arauz, Minister of Knowledge and Human Talent Secretary-General: Ms Amparo Miranda

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Ecuadorian National Commission for UNESCO undertook several important activities to reorganize its structure to strengthen its capacity and core functions.

In September, the Ecuadorian National Commission for UNESCO was reorganized and transferred from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Knowledge and Human Talent, under an Executive Decree. The latter Ministry acts as a coordinating organism and, as such, can more adequately promote inter-ministerial and intersectoral cooperation. In the following months, the National Commission concentrated on organizing its first General Assembly and planned its participation in the 38th session of the General Conference in Paris. It also updated its internal regulations and established

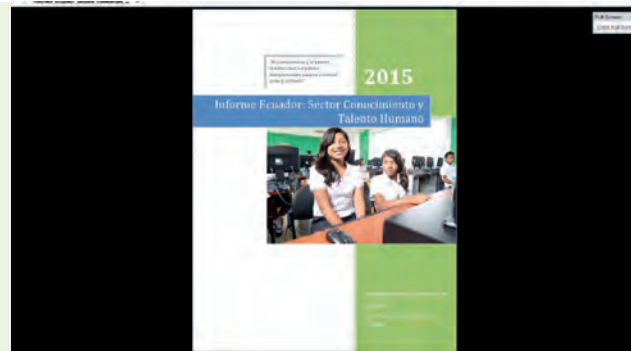
an inter-institutional group to support the work of the National Commission.

In November, the Minister of Knowledge and Human Talent and President of the Ecuadorian National Commission for UNESCO, Mr Andrés Arauz, participated in the General Policy Debate of the 38th session of the General Conference, during which he presented the current education transformation process underway in Ecuador and the programmatic guidelines of the government in the field of knowledge and human talent. He also denounced the unjust international division of labour, social inefficiency and the privatization of knowledge by developed countries.

In line with its main functions, the National Commission provided support and advice during the year to various projects, UNESCO contests and Chairs Proposals submitted by institutions of Higher Education of Ecuador. The most significant of these was the submission of the Geopark 'Tungurahua Volcano' project file to the Secretariat of the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme. The Commission has received very encouraging and positive feedback regarding this process and is hopeful that the site will become part of the Global Geoparks Network. If it is accepted, Tungurahua Volcano will be the first Geopark in Ecuador and the third in Latin America.



General Assembly of the National Commission.
© Communication Department, Ministry of Knowledge and Human Talent



Report of the Knowledge and Human Talent Sector of Ecuador 2015.
© Communication Department, Ministry of Knowledge and Human Talent

A success story

Within the context of the 38th session of the General Conference, the Ecuadorian National Commission submitted to UNESCO the first Report of the Knowledge and Human Talent Sector of Ecuador 2015. The report presents the achievements of Ecuador in this sector, which consists of the National Education System, the Higher Education System, the National System of Culture, and the National System of Science, Technology, Innovation and Ancestral Knowledge. The main indicators of each system were prioritized to show the results of the National Commission's public policy to eradicate poverty and transform the productive and cognitive matrix of the country.

EL SALVADOR

Salvadorian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Mr Carlos Mauricio Canjura Linares, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Mr Francisco Humberto Castaneda

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Salvadorian Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO developed a number of strategic actions in UNESCO's areas of expertise, all of which required coordination, monitoring and evaluation, and constant communication with the varying institutions that make up the committee. The National Commission also provided technical advice on a variety of topics, responded to polls and requests for information, formulated projects, promoted activities, organized contests and prizes, undertook surveys and participated in training sessions.

Four projects submitted by the National Commission under the UNESCO Participation Programme (2014–2015) were approved and implemented during 2015. These were: 'Design of an online diploma in vocational and professional guidance/counselling targeting basic education and high school'; 'Diploma for training young indigenous leaders';

'Workshop for capacity-building among the inhabitants of the Nueva Esperanza community about the importance of preserving cultural resources and natural heritage, in Usulután, El Salvador'; and 'Strengthening the network of universities through youth for environmental education, sustainable development and climate change, San Salvador, El Salvador'.

The National Commission also carried out activities related to projects supported by the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD). The purpose of the Fund is to promote sustainable development and poverty reduction in developing countries party to the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. El Salvador through the Salvadorian Commission participated with two projects, notably 'Protection and sustainable development of cultural industries with women and youth in Ilobasco, El Salvador'.

In April, officials from the Ministry of Education and the University of El Salvador presented a project to UNESCO for the creation of a Chair of Bioethics in El Salvador, with a view to strengthening the teaching process for students and raising the academic level of teachers in the field of bioethics. The project is currently under evaluation.

Lastly, the Salvadorian Commission coordinated the involvement of five young Salvadorians in the Young Professionals Programme 2015. Each year, UNESCO provides young people from different countries with the opportunity to work in the Organization for a period of one year with the possibility of being permanently selected.



The Secretary-General of the Salvadorian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO in plenary session, accompanied by attendees to the World Education Forum 2015.

© Salvadorian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Secretary-General of the Salvadorian Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, Mr Francisco Castaneda, and the Technical Secretary of the Commission, Ms Nelly Guadalupe Rodríguez, participated in the 'World Education Forum', held in Incheon, Republic of Korea (19–22 May). Officials and world educational leaders attended the forum with the purpose of developing an inventory of achievements and shortcomings in relation to the six education goals and the Millennium Development Goals for education.

The forum discussed the way forward for education in the post-2015 period, and established a new set of global goals. The objectives of the post-2015 Education Agenda will be taken up by El Salvador in its Educational Plan. In addition, the Salvadorian Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO took part in meetings that presented the results of this important forum, with a view to persuading participating institutions to integrate these goals into the priorities of their organizations.

REPUBLIC OF HAITI

Haitian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Mr Nesmy Manigat, Minister of National Education and Professional Training

Secretary-General: Mr Jean Coulanges

Update of activities in 2015

The Haitian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO demonstrated significant positive development in 2015. With regard to biodiversity conservation, the National Committee for the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme submitted an application to UNESCO to designate a second biosphere reserve in Haiti. The National Commission also acquired an area of 70 hectares in the La Selle Biosphere Reserve to cultivate the first national botanical garden in the country. These achievements were made possible by funding from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), the National Parks Autonomous Organization (OAPN) of Spain, and the Haitian National Commission and UNESCO Headquarters, through the Participation Programme.

With regard to education, a manual on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching was produced, distributed and utilized in training workshops. These manuals enable teachers to strengthen their capacities with regard to the creation and use of online resources. Additionally, more than 120 teachers and school heads participated in a three-day training course on non-violent conflict resolution in the school environment. These activities were financed by the UNESCO Participation Programme with contributions from two member institutions of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (the Collège de Côte Plage and the Collège secondaire de Carrefour), the Fondation Connaissance et Liberté (FOKAL), the WISE Foundation and the German NGO Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland e.V. (ASB).

With regard to culture, and with the participation of UNESCO Headquarters, the Atelier Toto B Association (ATBA) institution undertook capacity-building of sixty women and young girls in the field of cultural heritage and cultural and creative industries, with a particular focus on running theatre workshops, painting techniques, music and dramatic writing.

Lastly, the National Commission cooperated with the UNESCO Office in Port-au-Prince to establish the Haitian Creole Academy (Akademi Kreyol Ayisyen); to facilitate access for the Haitian Association of Music Professionals (Ayiti Mizik) to the resources of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity; and to prepare Haiti's participation in major UNESCO events for 2015, in particular the 38th session of the General Conference.



Young Haitian girls and boys visiting the National History Park – Citadel, Sans Souci, Ramiers, a World Heritage Site

© Haitian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the National Commission hosted the national forum 'Heritage Youth Rally: What Risks for our Heritage?' (28 February – 2 April). Two hundred and sixty young girls and boys visited the craft village of Noailles, Ouest department – the centre of cut iron sculpture in Haiti. They also had an opportunity to explore three major sanctuaries of Haitian intangible heritage and built heritage sites in the Artibonite department, dating from the time of the slave trade and the fight for Haitian independence. Lastly, the participants visited Haiti's World Heritage Site located in the Nord department: the National History Park – Citadel, Sans Souci, Ramiers.

Supervised by the Ministers of Youth and National Education, heritage experts and two former Ministers of Culture and Tourism, the young people participated in conferences and workshops on cultural heritage, undertook reforestation activities and assessed the vulnerability of the sites.

The forum was financed by the Directorate of Civil Protection (DPC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the German NGO Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland e.V. (ASB), who provided supported to the participants.

HONDURAS

Honduras Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Mr Marlon Oniel Escoto, Secretary of State for Education

Secretary-General: Mrs Hilda Muñoz Táborá

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Honduras Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO implemented numerous successful activities, notably the training of 647 primary schoolteachers in information and communication technology in six of the country's departments (Francisco Morazán, Choluteca, La Paz, Intibucá, Santa Bárbara and Lempira). Cohesion between UNESCO Associated Schools located in the different departments was strengthened, leading to a more productive relationship between teachers and pupils, generating synergies that will ensure the sustainability of the Associated Schools Programme Network (ASPnet) in Honduras.

The National Commission requested the accreditation of two new Associated Schools for the Maya Chorti ethnic group of the Copan Ruinas, and the Pech ethnic group of the Pueblo Nuevo Subirana in the municipality of Dulce Nombre de Culmí, near the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve. The aim was to

promote access to schools among the indigenous populations of these geographic zones.

The National Commission also participated in the organization of the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Committee in Honduras, as well as international events such as the World Education Forum 2015, held in Incheon, Republic of Korea (19–22 May). The latter highlighted the successes and challenges of efforts to achieve the 2000–2015 education goals, as well as post-2015 commitments for the Honduras National Education System.

The training seminar 'Heritage as an element of social cohesion', held in Bogotá, Ibagué and Ambalema (Colombia) (21–24 July) developed the capacities of the National Commission and the Associated Schools Network to participate in the development of a project to foster knowledge, preservation and conservation of the different heritage sites in Honduras.

The National Commission provided support for the project 'Human development and the development of peace through freedom of expression and access to knowledge via a multifaceted and inclusive approach' funded by the UNESCO Participation Programme in 2015 and implemented by the Foundation Juan Manuel Gálvez. The project benefited 1,455 men and women from corporate and ethnic organizations, political parties and community organizations.

Lastly, a variety of events were organized to celebrate the 70th anniversary of UNESCO and the centenary of the Manuel Bonilla Theatre, including parades, mural paintings and publications, with reports and articles honouring UNESCO published in the mass media, literature and on social networks.



An ICT teacher trainer shares her knowledge with a first year primary school pupil.

© Wendy Vázquez

A success story

In 2015, the National Commission implemented the project 'Sport and recreation as a source of development of national identity and civic engagement to achieve peaceful co-existence in thirty-five schools in the Honduras Associated Schools Programme Network (ASPnet)'. The project proved a success for the National Commission, which coordinates and supports the network.

The project comprised several scenarios designed to strengthen cohesion between teachers and pupils of Associated Schools, through participation in training courses and sharing of experiences, as well as constructive skills such as folk dances, gastronomy and sport. The overarching aim was to promote values of solidarity, justice and identity for peaceful co-existence.

Pupils and teachers visited schools in the different departments to familiarize themselves with the dances, typical costumes and traditional dishes specific to each location, and to participate in sporting events.

The Honduras Committee simultaneously trained management personnel and teachers in the use of information and communication technologies in seven departments, contributing to an improvement in the level of ICT use among pupils and strengthening overall the capacities of the communities.

JAMAICA

Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO

President: Ms Olivia 'Babsy' Grange, Minister of Youth and Culture

Secretary-General: Mr Everton Hannam

Website: <http://jncunesco.gov.jm>

Update of activities in 2015

Last year was an auspicious one for the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO, which celebrated fifty years of service and received the congratulations of the Director-General of UNESCO for its 'leadership and action'. During the year, Jamaica's Blue and John Crow Mountains were inscribed on the World Heritage List and Kingston was designated a Creative City of Music (see below).

Within the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2013, the Jamaica National Commission and the Korean National Commission hosted the '2nd Website Development Training Workshop' (7 September), as well as the 'Memory of the World (MOW) Training Workshop for Latin America and the Caribbean' (3 September). Over four days, twenty persons from twelve countries received training on preparing applications for the preservation of documentary heritage with global significance, facilitated by a team of six MOW experts.

The Jamaica National Commission continued its participation in the German National Commission's 'kulturweit' programme, hosting two volunteers at various sister agencies to gain

experience of Jamaica and its culture. One of the interns assisted with the 50th anniversary activities.

The Jamaica National Commission worked closely with the Kingston Cluster Office, receiving funds to undertake a World Heritage public awareness-raising campaign on the Blue and John Crow Mountains, and launching a campaign to document aspects of Maroon heritage life in the buffer zone (drum-making, basketry, tales of the trails). The Commission also helped the Cluster Office to mount an exhibition for United Nations week.

UNESCO approved three Participation Programme projects for 2014–2015 on heritage, gender-based violence and youth mobile applications development (YouthApp), and funded one participant to attend the 'UNESCO Sub-regional Micro-science Workshop', held in Guyana (27–28 April).

The heritage project, 'Youth Leadership Training in Heritage Preservation and Protection', sought to build capacity among young people through two workshops held in Kingston and Montego Bay. It involved youth from all parishes of Jamaica and two young people from St Marten and Curacao. Two participants in the project also attended Cuban heritage site training.

The National Commission also participated in a workshop to develop a 'Follow-up Mechanism for Capacity-building Activities related to the 2003 ICH Convention' as well as the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee. The Secretary-General attended the 196th session of the UNESCO Executive Board and formed part of the Jamaican delegation to the 38th session of the General Conference.

Lastly, the Jamaica National Commission marked World Radio Day (13 February) by hosting a seminar entitled 'Youth & Radio', held in Accompong, to provide information to young people in the community on how to operate a radio station.



Former Minister Lisa Hanna being congratulated on the inscription of Jamaica's Blue and John Crow Mountains to UNESCO'S World Heritage List.
© UNESCO

A success story

Jamaica and Jamaican people celebrated two historic occasions in 2015. On 3 July, the renowned Blue and John Crow Mountains were inscribed on UNESCO's prestigious World Heritage List. The inscription represents the first World Heritage site for Jamaica and the first mixed (cultural and natural) site for the Caribbean sub-region. World heritage status will open up new opportunities for the country in terms of tourism, research, and the promotion of local-based initiatives.

On 11 December, Kingston was designated a City of Music as part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. Kingston has given the world six distinct musical genres: mento, ska, reggae, rocksteady, dub and dancehall. Music and cultural activities lie at the heart of the city, which boasts numerous theatres, a National Dance Theatre Company, a National Gallery, a craft market, the region's only Visual and Performing Arts College, the island's most important TV and radio stations, and numerous sound systems, recording studios and music venues.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the international community in September 2015 highlights culture and creativity as key levers for sustainable urban development.

MEXICO

Mexican Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Aurelio Nuño Mayer

Secretary-General: Mr Benito Mirón López

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Mexican Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO supported the nomination process of the Aqueduct of Padre Tembleque Hydrological System to the World Heritage List. The Director-General, Irina Bokova, presented the certificate to the President of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto, in a ceremony held in Paris (16 July). Later in the year, a permanent and free exhibition was inaugurated at the National Palace in Mexico City (5 November) to present the certificates of World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage in Mexico.

The National Commission also supported the registration of the 'work of Fray Bernardino de Sahagún (1499–1590)' and 'Judicial files concerning the birth of a right: the effective remedy as a contribution of the Mexican writ of amparo to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948' on the International Register of the Memory of the World programme.

The Secretary-General of the National Commission led the Mexican delegation to the 38th session of General Conference

of UNESCO, during which Mexico sponsored the launch of the Teacher Policy Development Guide, produced by the Teacher Task Force for Education For All (4 November). Mexico was re-elected as a member of the Executive Board, the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee, and the Intergovernmental Physical Education and Sports Committee.

In addition, the National Commission contributed to the Agreement for the creation of a Regional Centre of Advanced Training and Research in Mathematics, Physics, Energy and the Environment at the Autonomous University of Chiapas, as a Category II Centre under the auspices of UNESCO.

The National Commission contributed to inter-institutional arrangements necessary for the celebration of the '2nd International Conference of Learning Cities', held in Mexico City (28–30 September), organized by UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning and the Government of Mexico City. The 'Mexico City Statement' identifies six strategic orientations for the creation of sustainable learning cities.

Finally, the National Commission together with L'Oréal Mexico, the Mexican Science Academy (AMC) and the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT), awarded fellowships to five young women scientists within the framework of the UNESCO-L'Oréal-CONACYT-AMC 'For Women in Science' Scholarship Programme, bringing the total number of award winners to forty-three. The UNESCO-Poland Co-Sponsored Fellowships Programme in Engineering granted scholarships to two Mexicans and a Mexican engineer obtained a UNESCO/International Centre for Sustainable Energy Development Scholarship.



Opening Ceremony of the National Meeting of Local Coordinators of the UNESCO Network of Associated Schools (ASPnet) in Mexico, held in Tabasco© Mexican Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO.

A success story

In 2015, the 'National Meeting of Local Coordinators of the UNESCO Network of Associated Schools (ASPnet) in Mexico' was held in the City of Villahermosa, Tabasco (23–24 November). It was funded by UNESCO's Participation Programme (2014–2015), with the aim of identifying good practices among Associated Schools and fostering their activities within the framework of the 2030 Education Agenda and Mexico's Educational Reform. Key strategic approaches included equity, inclusion, gender equality, quality and lifelong learning.

National meetings for ASPnet have been held in Mexico since 2000. On this occasion, eighteen Federated States were represented to agree on a work plan and common strategies to be developed in 2016. The Governor of Tabasco presided over the opening ceremony, with the participation of the Secretary-General of the National Commission. The keynote speaker was Ana María Cetto, member of the International Committee for the International Year of Light.

PARAGUAY

Paraguay National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mrs Marta Lafuente, Minister of Education and Culture

Secretary-General: Mrs Andrea Weiss

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Paraguay National Commission for the UNESCO implemented numerous activities under its major programmes in coordination with the Permanent Delegation of Paraguay to UNESCO, the UNESCO Regional Office of Montevideo, the UNESCO Regional Office of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, and sectors working with member institutions of the National Commission.

In education, the National Commission collaborated with the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT) to coordinate a series of contests and awards aimed at high-school students, in celebration of the International Year of Light.

The National Commission also launched the National Report of the Third Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (TERCE) to measure the learning achievements of primary school students.

In the field of culture, the National Commission co-organized a training workshop in collaboration with the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America (CRESPIAL), to deliver training on the scope of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This was followed by a similar workshop on the Indicative List for Natural and Cultural Heritage.

The National Commission participated in an MERCOSUR-UNASUR inter-platform meeting on the Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property, within the framework of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

The National Commission also submitted two elements of documentary heritage – the Certificates of Bachelorhood of the Archbishop of Asuncion and the Enrique Solano Lopez Collection of the National Library of Paraguay – for inscription on the list of the Memory of the World for Latin American and the Caribbean (MOWLAC).

In the field of communication and information, the Paraguayan National Commission organized training seminars for judges on topics related to freedom of speech and information access. The sessions were the outcome of an agreement signed between the Supreme Court and the UNESCO Regional Office in Montevideo. The National Commission also organized a series of dialogues with journalists on implementation of the new law on access to public information.

Lastly, the Paraguayan National Commission played an active role in the network of focal points for education on the holocaust and the genocide, and participated as a member of the Intergovernmental Committee for Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the Scientific International Committee of the 'The Slave Route' programme, and the Executive Committee of the Regional Centre for Book Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLALC) among others. The Commission represented Paraguay in the 38th General Conference of UNESCO, and participated in debates, meetings, seminars and workshops organized by UNESCO through its various programmes.



A success story

On the occasion of World Teacher's Day, the Paraguay National Commission, in collaboration with the Network of Schools, organized the 14th Meeting of Peace Educators (9 October 2015) under the theme 'Teachers, key for the building of sustainable societies'. Teachers from all levels of education were invited to participate.

The meeting began with an Opening Ceremony, which included a message from the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova to mark the occasion. This was followed by a conference on the subject of the 'General Framework of Sustainable Development Goals'. During the meeting, workshops were held on key development issues, such as hunger, health, quality education, drinking water and sanitation, and peace and justice. Each workshop featured a range of dynamic activities designed to arouse the interest of the participants. At the end of the workshops, the participants selected a representative to present the group's conclusions.

The 14th Meeting of Peace Educators, held under the theme 'Teachers, key for the building of sustainable societies'.

© Paraguay National Commission for the UNESCO

PERU

Peruvian National Commission of Cooperation with UNESCO

President: Mr Jaime Saavedra Chanduvi, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Carmen Beltrán Vargas

Update of activities in 2015

In June (25-26), the Peruvian National Commission organized the Sub-Regional Meeting of South American National Committees of Cooperation with UNESCO, with representatives from the National Commissions of Argentina, Ecuador, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, Regional Offices, the Quito Cluster Office and UNESCO Headquarters. The meeting had two main goals – to improve relations and cooperation

between South American National Commissions in terms of work experience and procedures, and to promote collaboration with UNESCO Field Offices.

In December, the Peruvian Education Minister and President of the Peruvian National Commission, Mr Jaime Saavedra, participated in the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO. He set forth the Peruvian commitment to the Framework for Action on 2030 Education agenda and the implementation of the Integral Reform of Basic Education in Peru. This reform involves four lines of action: enhancing the prestige of the teaching profession, improving the quality of learning, upgrading educational infrastructure and modernizing education management.

At a meeting with the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, the Minister expressed his gratitude for the cooperation and technical assistance provided by UNESCO to the Ministry of Education, especially with regard to actions to enhance the value of the teaching profession.



Director and teachers during the Sub-Regional Meeting of South American National Commissions of Cooperation with UNESCO.

© Nadya Bravo

A success story

Social inclusion is a priority in Peruvian educational policy. This is why improving access to education and quality of education are the main goals of the Peruvian government. In this context, the Peruvian National Commission developed an Annual National Meeting with all Directors and Coordinators of the Associated Schools Programme Network (ASPnet).

The Peruvian ASPnet aims to promote quality education for all in pursuit of a culture of peace and sustainable development. Peruvian National Commission staff travel to different regions to monitor schools projects and to establish better relations with the education community. This year, in particular, saw the arrival of many new directors and teachers. It was therefore deemed important to clearly explain the aims and objectives of ASPnet members schools and the annual projects.

After monitoring and evaluating the different training requirements, the National Commission staff planned workshops to be presented as part of the Annual Meeting. The aim of the workshop was to provide training on developing global citizenship education (GCED) and education for sustainable development (ESD) projects, as well as other key ASPnet themes. With the support of the UNESCO Office, the workshop proved successful with widespread engagement among ASPnet schools. The Peruvian National Commission also plans to disseminate a Teacher's manual providing a step-by-step guide to implementing different ESD projects.

SAINT LUCIA

Saint Lucia National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Robert Lewis, Minister for Education, Human Resource Development and Labour

Secretary-General: Ms Marcia Symphorien

Update of activities in 2015

The year 2015 was an exciting one for the Saint Lucia National Commission for UNESCO, which maintained its customary active work programme, emphasizing visibility and vibrancy.

The National Commission began the year in a celebratory mode with plans for a yearlong, nationwide programme of activities marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of the renowned economist Sir William Arthur Lewis (see below), and in February commemorated its 34th anniversary with the premiere of a documentary entitled *A Celebration of Personalities and Progress*, highlighting its history and work.

In April, the Saint Lucia National Commission attended the Sub-Regional Micro-Science Workshop, held in Georgetown, Guyana. As a follow-up, in July 2015 the Saint Lucia National Commission, in collaboration with the Guyana National Commission and the UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office, hosted a two-day 'Sub-Regional Micro-Science Experiments Project Workshop'. The workshop aimed to introduce science teachers

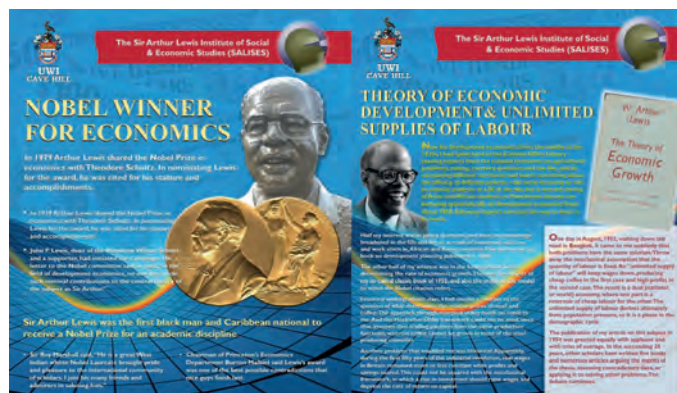
from around the island to the Micro-Science Experiments Project Kits.

In October, the National Commission and the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour officially launched the UNESCO Global Micro-Science Experiments Project in Saint Lucia. The launch took the form of an official presentation of the Project Kits to nine pilot schools (eight secondary and one primary) in the eight education districts of the island. These pilot schools are expected to lead to the eventual roll out of the Global Micro-Science Experiments Project across Saint Lucia.

In the same month, the Youth Ambassador, Ms Rhonda Amanda Pierre, represented the young people of Saint Lucia at the prestigious 9th Youth Forum, and a delegation led by the Minister for Education and Chairperson of the Saint Lucia National Commission for UNESCO, Dr Robert Lewis, participated in various stages of the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference.

In addition to its regular work programme, the National Commission remained actively involved in the successful implementation of projects funded by UNESCO, including those of the UNESCO Participation Programme 2014–2015.

Lastly, the Saint Lucia National Commission for UNESCO was especially pleased to support 'The Heritage Property and Artefact Protection Documentary and Awareness Campaign', a project funded through the UNESCO Participation Programme that is designed to help raise awareness among the public of the need to preserve Saint Lucia's unique cultural heritage.



The life and work of Sir William Arthur Lewis (1915–1991).

© The Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES)

A success story

At the 37th session of the General Conference in 2013, UNESCO adopted a decision to officially observe the 100th anniversary of the birth of Sir William Arthur Lewis, economist and Nobel Prize Laureate (1915–1991) (Saint Lucia). This decision came in response to a recommendation submitted by the Saint Lucia National Commission for UNESCO on behalf of the Government and People of Saint Lucia.

The official commemoration of the centenary celebration began with a press launch to present the yearlong, nationwide programme of activities. The event also included a symbolic presentation of a cheque for funds approved under the UNESCO Participation Programme, to Saint Lucia's Governor General and the Chairperson of the Saint Lucia Nobel Laureate Committee.

The Saint Lucia National Commission commemorated this milestone with a number of high-profile events both in Saint Lucia and overseas. These included a Sir Arthur Lewis Memorial Lecture, a Global Forum on Sir William Arthur Lewis and the 'Sir Arthur Lewis Centennial Panel' organized within the framework of the 2015 World Social Science Forum (Durban, South Africa).

The hosting of the OECD Tertiary Education Forum constituted a fitting close to the Sir Arthur Lewis Centenary year, given his passion for the development and expansion of higher education in the Caribbean.

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

Saint Kitts and Nevis National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Shawn Richards, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture

Secretary-General: Mr Antonio Maynard

Website: www.skunesco.com

Update of activities in 2015

The Saint Kitts and Nevis National Commission actively engages in UNESCO flagship projects and programmes at local and international level. In 2015, UNESCO activities in Saint Kitts and Nevis evolved significantly and dovetailed frequently with the national development agenda.

The National Commission organized a conference on the 'Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society and Internet Privacy' (23–24 September) within the framework of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Information for All Programme. The conference explored current challenges to information ethics and the balance to be struck – in policy and public intervention terms – between risks and opportunities in an age of increasing internet usage, with particular reference to youth, students and the general public. Interventions by experts, ministers, lawyers and lecturers focused on issues ranging from cyber bullying to identify theft, inappropriate online material, privacy, and the role of schools, governments and parents.

A list of projects submitted by the National Commission to the UNESCO Participation Programme (2014–2015) were approved and implemented. These included: 'Empowering

Single Fathers through Educational Programmes and about their Rights and Responsibilities as Parents'; 'Youth for Human Rights Awareness Programme for Saint Kitts and Nevis'; 'Educating the Population of Saint Kitts and Nevis on Afro-Caribbean Ancestry, and their Cultural Heritage'; and 'Youth Ambassadors for Climate Change and Sustainable Development'.

The Ministry of Education in collaboration with the National Commission, with technical support and expertise from UNESCO, conducted a Policy Review of the country's education strategy and its capacity to deliver sustainable and equitable education programmes across the twin-island state. UNESCO Experts undertook three technical missions on Saint Kitts and Nevis and incorporated the outcome into a comprehensive Sector Strategic Plan. This follows on the heels of a UNESCO review two years previously of the country's TVET strategy, which proposed a revised approach to TVET policy development.

Saint Kitts and Nevis hosted the first biosphere reserve in the English-speaking Caribbean. St Mary's MAB Reserve in St. Kitts encompasses a wide range of ecosystems from the volcanic ridgeline to the outlying coral reef. In 2015, the National Commission promoted the reserve as a model for sustainable economic, educational and human development, through the creation of a marketing and promotional programme involving local citizens.

The National Commission also played an active role in hosting conferences, meetings and workshops and assisted with the dissemination of relevant information to the mass media, general public, industry, government departments and local institutions linked to UNESCO's work. It supported the attendance of delegations and government officials, ministers, non-governmental organizations to relevant meetings. Notable amongst the events was the attendance of the new St. Kitts & Nevis education minister, accompanied by the country's Ambassador to UNESCO, at the World Education Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea (19–22 May), and the 38th session of the General Conference and sessions of the Executive Board.



The UNESCO 'Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society and Internet Privacy' Conference held in St. Kitts (23–24 September)
© Saint Kitts and Nevis National Commission for UNESCO

A success story

In 2015, the Saint Kitts and Nevis National Commission, in collaboration with the Slave Route Project at UNESCO Headquarters, organized the Slave Route Conference, 'Beyond Reparations: Strengthening the Slave Route Project in the Caribbean Region' (7–8 July). The conference explored constraints, challenges and opportunities associated with the Slave Route Project in the Caribbean sub-region and approaches to enhance collaboration among Caribbean countries to promote better understanding of the causes and consequences of slavery.

The National Commission and the UNESCO Slave Route National Scientific Committee also produced a local history textbook on the experiences and lives of enslaved Africans in Saint Kitts and Nevis, and their contribution to the country's culture. The text was the topic of a workshop in 2015 between the National Commission, the Education Ministry Curriculum Development Unit, and local history teachers, aimed at promoting usage of the book, and will be integrated into the local history curriculum for primary and secondary schools.

SINT MAARTEN

Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Silveria Jacobs, Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports

Secretary-General: Mrs Marcellia Henry

Website: www.unesco.sx

Update of activities in 2015

In 2015, the Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO held two successful conferences. The 10th Session of the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards Warning System for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions took place in Philipsburg (19–21 May 2015). The Caribbean Technology and Education Conference (C-TEC) was also held in Philipsburg (12–13 November 2015) and was partially funded by UNESCO through the Participation Programme.

The National Commission continued to participate in the development of the National Development Plan for Sint Maarten, national dialogues, and the creation of the MDG Acceleration Framework Country Action Plan to ensure Sint Maarten meets Millennium Development Goals 1 and 7 on poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.

Other accomplishments include the launching of a dedicated National Commission website with the assistance of the Korean and Jamaican National Commissions for UNESCO, and a Facebook page (Unesco Sint Maarten).

Activities in collaboration with governmental departments and several foundations were also organized to commemorate International Days observed by the United Nations. The National Commission organized an event in celebration of World Radio Day (13 February), which honoured young people and hosts of youth programmes with certificates for their work in radio. It also organized a poetry evening featuring youth poets to commemorate World Poetry Day (21 March), and a panel discussion and training session to mark International Literacy Day (8 September).

The International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade (TST) (25 March) was commemorated by the launching of a film on the subject of evidence of African heritage in Sint Maarten, made by the students of the Sint Maarten Archaeological Center (SIMARC). The film was distributed to elementary and high-school representatives on the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition (23 August), with the aim of integrating it into lesson plans as part of the TST 'Breaking the Silence' programme, and to promote intercultural dialogue.

Finally, the National Commission undertook targeted efforts to assist with the documenting and safeguarding of Sint Maarten's Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). A number of presentations and information-gathering sessions were held with individuals, groups and organizations within the community.



The ICH youth team during the Field Inventory Exercise with Ms Elisa Hyman (middle), practitioner of the 'Ponum Dance'.

© Alston Lourens

A success story

In 2015 the Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO organized a five-day ICH field inventory exercise targeting youth organizations in the community (20–24 July 2015). The goal of the exercise was to build young people's knowledge and understanding of intangible and tangible cultural heritage, and to convey the importance of identifying, safeguarding and inventorying Sint Maarten's cultural heritage.

The young participants obtained practical training in the usage of audio and video recording and photography. They learnt interviewing skills and techniques and discussed attitudes, ethics and responsibilities when inventorying an ICH element in a community. They also had the opportunity to obtain information about a specific ICH element, the 'Ponum Dance', a national dance of emancipation and freedom that dates back to the nineteenth century, created to celebrate the abolition of slavery on Sint Maarten. During excursions, the young participants interviewed and recorded video dancers, drummers and senior citizens who still practice, preserve and have knowledge of this national dance.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for UNESCO

President: Mr Anthony Garcia, Minister of Education
Secretary-General: Ms Susan Shurland

Website: www.ttunesco.org

Update of activities in 2015

The Trinidad and Tobago National Commission's 'Leading for Literacy Now!' project, funded through the UNESCO Participation Programme, has proven highly successful, and in 2015 the initiative was extended for a further five years thanks to a funding commitment from a major corporate donor. This development, alongside the continued commitment of partners such as the National Library, has had a positive impact on the engagement of principals and teachers, and therefore on the reading ability of children aged 5 to 7 years in 200 of the most vulnerable primary schools across the nation. By the end of the project in 2020, it is expected that a significant number of children will enter secondary education with a high level in reading, thereby increasing their ability to understand, tolerate and respect one other. The long-term goal of the project is to promote a culture of peace, non-violence, discipline and productivity in society.

Another project supported by UNESCO under its Participation Programme was 'Special Education Needs in the Regular

Classroom: A Gender-Sensitive Approach to Improving Student Engagement and Motivation in Selected Primary Schools in Trinidad and Tobago'. This project involved interaction with special teams trained to gather much-needed data on demographics and gender disparities in the classroom. The collected data will be the focus of a workshop for teachers in 2016.

In 2015, UNESCO also supported the creation of a Digital Heritage Portal by Trinidad and Tobago's National Library, the aim being to build capacity in digitization and digital preservation and access to heritage resources. The primary focus of the project is the development of a prototype electronic database that hosts resources chronicling the history of Trinidad and Tobago through significant people, places and events.

Another significant achievement during 2015 was the inscription of Father Gerard Pantin's collection on the regional Memory of the World Register. The collection comprises personal papers, monographs, memorabilia, and visual and audiovisual materials, which illustrate the depth of his conviction to help those in need through the development of Service Volunteered for all (SERVOL), and its related projects at a time when social inequality and marginalization pervaded Trinidad and Tobago.

The National Commission also organized and led discussions at the second annual Working Group for Interreligious Studies (WGIS) seminar, held in May under the theme 'Groundwork for Teaching Interreligious Studies II: Trinidad and Tobago – The Making of a Multi-Religious Society'. WGIS was formed following the success of a UNESCO project on comparative religion, and has since maintained a harmonious relationship with stakeholders from diverse backgrounds.



A success story

In March 2015, the National Commission partnered with the Ministry of the Arts and Multiculturalism, the National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago, and the Remember When Institute, to launch the first 'Musical Heritage Walk'. The initiative was a continuation of a Participation Programme project to prepare the city of Port of Spain to enter the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, and focuses on the musical 'pan yard' centres in the community of Belmont, a suburb of Port of Spain.

With additional government funding and community involvement, major infrastructural work was conducted at three pan yards and visual displays were mounted, transforming them from simply rehearsal places into more educational and interactive spaces. In addition, heritage sites within the community were identified and accorded greater visibility, creating a map for visitors of both musical sites and accessible heritage spaces.

Wall plaque at the Belmont Heritage Walk for the Creative Cities project.
© Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for UNESCO

URUGUAY

National Commission of Uruguay for UNESCO

President: Ms Edith Moraes, Vice Minister of Education and Culture

Secretary-General: Mr Nicolás Pons

Website: www.comisionunesco.mec.gub.uy

Update of activities in 2015

The National Commission of Uruguay is a multi-sectoral institution that implements a wide spectrum of activities in UNESCO's main areas of competence. The National Commission enjoys a fluid relationship with the Permanent Delegation of Uruguay to UNESCO and the UNESCO Regional Office in Montevideo. It maintains contact with civil society principally through the UNESCO Participation Programme and the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet).

The National Commission provides advice to local government in relation to sites currently listed on the World Heritage List and potential new sites. It also collaborates with the National Heritage Commission in the preparation of inventories, safeguarding plans and management activities.

Within the framework of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, the National Commission organized the National Meeting of the Uruguayan ASPnet in Montevideo (13–14 November). The meeting was held to improve cooperation among schools in the network, produce a declaration on future objectives and elect district speakers to facilitate internal coordination of the fifty-seven participating institutions.



Candombe dancers perform during celebrations commemorating the declaration of the Industrial Landscape of Fray Bentos as a World Heritage Site.

© National Commission of Uruguay for UNESCO

In the context of south-south cooperation, the National Commissions of Colombia and Uruguay signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop a partnership proposal for ASPnet institutions in the two countries working on the issue of human rights.

The National Commission of Uruguay also continued its cooperation with the German Commission for UNESCO through the voluntary service 'kulturweit'. Since 2012, ten volunteers have participated in this programme.

In November, the National Commission of Uruguay participated in the 38th session of the General Conference of the UNESCO, represented by the permanent Delegation of Uruguay and the Secretary-General. Moreover, the National Commission participated in the 10th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Namibia (30 November – 4 December).

In December, the Historic Quarter of Colonia del Sacramento celebrated its 20th anniversary as a World Heritage Site. Celebrations were accompanied by the presentation of results from a major, national project funded by the UNESCO Participation Programme (2014–2015) – 'Creativity, sustainability and social appropriation of heritage: The work of Eladio Dieste'.

The National Commission also contributed to the further development of safeguarding plans for Tango and Candombe music and dance, both of which are recognized by UNESCO as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Lastly, the National Commission published the Catalogue of the International Photographic Experience of Monuments 2014–2015 as result of photography and heritage workshops organized at ASPnet schools.

A success story

In 2015, a second cultural site in Uruguay was inscribed on the World Heritage List of UNESCO: the Industrial Landscape of Fray Bentos. As part of the celebrations, the National Commission of Uruguay organized an open session held at the department of Rio Negro (7 July).

The area containing the striking architecture of the meatpacking plant, Liebig's-Anglo, including its industrial installations, the docks over the Uruguay River, the slaughterhouse, and areas dedicated to pasturage and housing, constitutes an exceptional example of the evolution of social and economic structure during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Uruguay. The site is also representative of this region reflecting the cultural input of immigrants from more than fifty-five nationalities, who came to this region in search of work.

The open session programme included lectures about the history of the Anglo and its connection to UNESCO, a presentation on the management experience of Colonia de Sacramento as a World Heritage Site, and an audiovisual presentation by students from Fray Bentos. Former workers received recognition and various cultural activities took place including a drum parade, a magical show, and an artistic intervention on the façade of buildings accompanied by Tango music and dancers.

VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)

Venezuelan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

Secretary-General: Mr Porfirio Pestana Website: www.cncu.gob.ve

Update of activities in 2015 To mark the 15th anniversary of the inscription of the Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the Venezuelan Central University Preservation and Development Council, which manages the site, organized, with support of the National Commission, a public discussion with the architect Maciá Pintó, author of the book *Villanueva: La Síntesis*, at the Francisco de Miranda Hall of the university (26 November). The meeting discussed the publication which covers the life and work of the master Carlos Raúl Villanueva, the architect and designer of

the university campus. The book also contains Villanueva's previously unseen notes and thoughts on the design of this heritage site. The revenue from the sale of this limited publication will be donated to social action programmes.

Venezuela commemorated the 70th anniversary of UNESCO by organizing a lecture on the activities and success stories of the Bolivarian Government within UNESCO's fields of competence: education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information. The event was held at the Jacobo Borges University Museum in Caracas. The lecture underlined the efforts and global contribution of Venezuela to achieve inclusive, equitable and quality education and lifelong learning. It also explored the role of the International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC-UNESCO), headquartered in Caracas, in the context of the 2015 Incheon Declaration, as well as progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. Venezuela celebrated the 10th anniversary of its Proclamation as a Territory Free of Illiteracy at an event chaired by the President of the Republic, Nicolas Maduro, held at the Military Circle in Caracas. The latter emphasized the effectiveness of Mission Robinson, created in 2003, and the Cuban literacy method 'Yo, sí Puedo'. This education policy has freed millions of Venezuelans excluded from the education system from illiteracy. As of May 2014, 2,683,126 Venezuelans have benefited from this policy.



A lecture organized to commemorate the 70th anniversary of UNESCO at the Jacobo Borges Museum in Caracas. The speakers pictured are: Pedro Henríquez Guajardo, Director of IESALC-UNESCO; Luis Peñalver, Director of Academic Development of the Ministry of Popular Power for University Education, Science and Technology (MPPEUCT); Luis Bonilla, President of the Miranda International Centre (CIM); and Mr Porfirio Pestana, Secretary-General of the Venezuelan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO. © Lenin Peña

A success story

The '1st Venezuelan Congress of Oceanology: Portal to the Future' took place in Cumana, Sucre State (2–6 November), and formed an integral part of activities promoted by Venezuela in its capacity as a member of the Executive Council of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).

The event, which coincided with the 56th anniversary of the creation of the Oceanographic Institute of Venezuela, was intended to implement measures necessary for the creation of the National Oceanography Plan for the sustainable exploitation of maritime resources.

The congress addressed several themes including: biological oceanography, exploitation of marine resources and sustainable development, chemical oceanography, marine geology and marine sediment geochemistry, oceanography and climate, environmental quality, policy and legislation, culture and education, engineering, seabed resources and energy. It attracted a broad spectrum of participants including experts, researchers, institution representatives, academics and students.



196th session of the Executive Board © UNESCO



finish primary school
than richest children

The proportion of out
of school children in
conflict-affected
zones has grown since
2000

Pronounced learning gaps
remain between the most
and least advantaged
students

Nearly two-thirds of the 781 million
adults with minimal literacy skills are
women



UNESCO National Commissions dinner 2015 © UNESCO Pilar Chiang-Joo

196th session of the Executive Board © UNESCO



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.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERFACE AND COOPERATION

BETWEEN

UNESCO FIELD OFFICES AND

NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO¹

FOREWORD

The [Member States and their] National Commissions for UNESCO and the UNESCO Secretariat pursue the same purpose under the Constitution of UNESCO, namely “to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations”.

These constituent elements of the common purpose, all unifying by nature, primarily require *intellectual and moral solidarity* on the part of all those who work to achieve it.

UNESCO’s strategy for the reform of the field network is aimed at optimizing UNESCO’s operations and improving the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, quality and visibility of the field network, thus providing more effective support for the efforts that Member States have undertaken by ratifying the Constitution of UNESCO “to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other’s lives”.

The Organization’s unity of action must remain a key concern of the National Commissions for UNESCO and the Secretariat, at Headquarters and in the field. All work together to accomplish UNESCO’s mandate. Such unity is all the more important in the light of the concerted pursuit of post-2015 development agenda through ever closer cooperation among the organizations of the United Nations system and, even more broadly, with the international community.

Mission statement

National Commissions and field offices together promote UNESCO’s ideals and principles.

Introduction

The following guidelines have been developed in response to a need expressed repeatedly by National Commissions for UNESCO and were discussed by an informal Working Group of Secretaries-General and Directors/Heads of UNESCO field offices from all regions who met at UNESCO Headquarters on 28 and 29 January 2004. They were reviewed and amended at the first interregional meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO which was held in Astana, Kazakhstan from 22 to 24 July 2014, in accordance with UNESCO’s recent field reform and in the light of the Action Plan for enhancing UNESCO’s cooperation with the worldwide National Commissions network, adopted by the General Conference (37 C/Resolution 97).

These Guidelines outline the main areas of interface and cooperation between the UNESCO field network and the National Commissions for UNESCO: definition of each entity, their respective responsibilities and roles, and the modalities for planning and implementing UNESCO’s programme within the framework of the field network reform. They are based on legal texts of the Organization and decisions of its governing bodies in this respect. Furthermore, they were widely

circulated for comments and suggestions and agreed upon by all concerned.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

National Commissions and Field Offices have differentiated but sometimes joint and/or common activities. National Commissions report first and foremost to their Governments. Field Offices report first and foremost to the Director-General of UNESCO.

National Commissions

- **Advisory function**

- Advise representatives of their government on the Executive Board and their alternates as well as their delegations to the General Conference and other meetings convened by UNESCO;
- Advise the respective governmental bodies/line Ministries to ensure that UNESCO mandates are represented/positioned in the development of new National Development Plans, and in the roll out of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), in particular ahead of the UNDAF consultations with Government;
- Advise national institutions and partners on UNESCO-related matters;
- At the request of the UNESCO Secretariat, provide advice on possible linkages with national partners;
- Advise UNESCO's Secretariat on other relevant issues, either on request or on their own initiative, including through international and interregional consultations among National Commissions.

- **Contribution to UNESCO's planning/programming processes**

- Conduct timely national consultations with relevant governmental bodies and other stakeholders in order to identify and develop national priorities and strategies for cooperation with UNESCO, taking into account UNESCO's mandates and priorities;
- Contribute where appropriate to the development of the UNESCO Country Programming Document (UCPD);
- Participate and contribute to consultations meetings as appropriate with field offices and other National Commissions at the subregional, regional and interregional levels.

- **Liaison and outreach function**

- Foster the linkage with and involvement in UNESCO's activities of relevant governmental bodies, national institutions and other civil society stakeholders and individuals in order to obtain intellectual and professional inputs useful to the Organization, encouraging interdisciplinary dialogue and cooperation in the process;
 - Forge with the support of the field offices new partnerships with national civil society organizations - grass-roots and volunteer groups, NGOs, the academic and professional communities, parliamentarians, local authorities, trade unions and the private sector - and promote UNESCO's various networks and programmes;
 - Accredite, 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 are in line with the mission and objectives of UNESCO, and the name and logo of UNESCO are 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";
 - Play a proactive role in encouraging national entities to propose candidates for UNESCO prizes, participating in searching for candidates for vacant posts at UNESCO and placing UNESCO fellowship holders.
 - Reach out to other National Commissions in the region and beyond and strengthen cooperation, in particular South-South and North-South-South cooperation.
- **Implementation function**
 - In accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Conference, submit to UNESCO every biennium, after consulting with the relevant constituents, including with the field office, Participation Programme requests in alignment with UNESCO's programme priorities ;
 - Monitor, evaluate and report to the Organization on the implementation of the approved PPs;
 - May contribute on a contractual basis to activities funded under UNESCO's regular programme budget and through extrabudgetary resources, ensuring that requirements for efficiency, effectiveness and accountability are observed;
 - Provide, upon request, relevant information for facilitating programme execution, including on the most appropriate national contractors, experts and partners;
 - Coordinate national responses to UNESCO-conducted surveys and reports on national implementation of UNESCO's standard-setting instruments;
 - Seek support from potential donors at the national level for their own activities and where appropriate for supporting field office initiatives in this respect;

- Assume responsibility for the proper use of the Organization's name and emblem in their respective country and consult the field office as appropriate.

- **Information and advocacy function**

- Promote UNESCO's ideals and disseminate information on the Organization's activities and achievements, in order to strengthen UNESCO's impact at the national level;
- Contribute to the visibility of UNESCO;
- Work actively with the national media in order to bring the above to the attention of the public at large.
- Organize national and awareness-raising events which come within UNESCO's fields of competence.

Field Offices

- **Planning function**

- Analyse in close cooperation with National Commissions and relevant line Ministries trends in the Organization's fields of competence in the countries they cover in order to inform policy-making and action at national, sub regional, regional and global level;
- Develop and coordinate in close cooperation with National Commissions national/ cluster/regional strategic frameworks, UCPD and operational plans, for both regular programme and extrabudgetary activities, as a major input to UNESCO's overall planning process;
- Ensure that national priorities in UNESCO's fields of competence are duly reflected in the United Nations Country Team's Common Country Assessment (CCA), in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), and in joint activities for the advancement of the Post-2015 Development Agenda as well as in the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP);
- Draw up work plans for regular programme activities in close cooperation with National Commissions and ensure coherence and complementarities with Participation Programme requests.

- **Implementation function**

- Provide, upon request, policy advice and technical support to Member States in the formulation and review of policies and strategies in UNESCO's areas of competence;
- Act as broker for good practice and expert services;

- Support cooperation among National Commissions in sub-regions and beyond;
- Develop, implement and monitor UNESCO's regular programme and extrabudgetary activities in the country/ies under their coverage, including by consulting the National Commissions concerned and keeping them informed of progress;
- Document successes, failures and lessons learned in the execution of activities.
- Within the framework of the approved programme and budget, respond to unforeseen challenges and opportunities arising in the field.
- **Fundraising function**
 - Cooperate with Member States in identifying and formulating development projects and mobilize funds for UNESCO activities;
 - Ensure, with the help of National Commissions, that extrabudgetary activities and projects have received full endorsement by the respective member state.
 - Involve National Commissions in seeking opportunities for alignment and co-financing modalities via Government funded programmes.
- **Advocacy function**
 - Promote and advocate UNESCO's ideals and objectives and disseminate them to governments, civil society, professional communities and the public at large with the support of National Commissions;
 - Support governments, at their request, in the implementation of UNESCO's standard-setting instruments.
- **Contribute to the visibility of UNESCO**
 - Promote international events which come within UNESCO's fields of competence including in cooperation with National Commissions;
 - Maintain close relations with the media to ensure wide visibility, consulting National Commissions as appropriate to ensure complementarities;
 - Develop communication strategies and reinforce on-line presence of the field offices with a view to enhance UNESCO's visibility within the national and international communities.
- **Clearing-house function**
 - Gather, transfer, disseminate and share available information, knowledge and good practices on innovative solutions in UNESCO's fields of competence.

EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

- Directors/Heads of Field Offices regularly inform Secretaries-General of National Commissions of:
 - Visiting missions of UNESCO staff and consultants;
 - Activities and projects to be carried out at the national level or which involve national participation and the results thereof;
 - Significant developments at UNESCO.
- Secretaries-General of National Commissions regularly inform Heads/Directors of national/cluster offices of:
 - National issues, statements, events, developments, policies that may affect UNESCO's activities within its fields of competence;
 - Their interactions with other parts of UNESCO;
 - Their cooperation with regional IGOs and with NGOs active in UNESCO's domains.

Bilateral consultations

Directors/ Heads of Multisectoral Regional Offices in Africa/Cluster/National Offices regularly consult the Secretaries-General of National Commissions on:

- The conceptualization of activities to be carried out at national level, within the cluster/ national strategic frameworks agreed on at the sub-regional/cluster consultation;
- The identification of national partners.

Secretaries-General of National Commissions:

Consult as appropriate with Directors/Heads of Field Offices to ensure consistency with UNESCO's programmes.

PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS

National Commissions and field offices reciprocate invitations to events they organize at the national level.

PREPARATION OF C/4 AND C/5

Consultation for the C/4 and C/5 documents

The modality of consultation for the preparation of the C/4 and C/5 documents emphasizes building regional inputs to the process from a base in country-level consultations. Country-level consultations are within the purview of Member States, through their National Commissions. Management of the linkage between country, sub-regional/cluster and regional consultation falls

under responsibility of the Secretariat.

The modalities of regional consultations are presently under review. Please refer to document 192 EX/5 Part IIIC and related decision 192 EX/decision 5 IIIC.

Country-level consultations

- *Who is in charge?*
 - The National Commission.
- *Who participates?*
 - All governmental and non-governmental stakeholders at country level and UNESCO Field Office covering the country in question.
- *When do they take place?*
 - Ideally, one meeting before the subregional/cluster and regional consultations.
- *What are the outcomes?*
 - The countries' input to the consultations on the C/4 and C/5 documents.

Sub-regional/Cluster-level consultations

- *Who is in charge?*
 - UNESCO cluster and regional offices, and in Africa, the Multisectoral Regional Offices.
- *Who participates?*
 - National Commissions and within budget available, other stakeholders and experts as appropriate, representatives of Regional Bureaux and UNESCO Institutes. UNESCO programme sectors and central services as well as other United Nations agencies and other partners may participate in some of the meetings.
- *When do they take place?*
 - Ideally, at regular intervals and depending on budget availability during the four-year cycle. The meetings on the preparation of the C/4 and C/5 documents should be held prior to the regional consultations of National Commissions. In between meetings, collective consultations may be conducted by email.
- *What are the possible outcomes? Depending on the purpose of the consultation these could include, at the appropriate times:*
 - Regional/sub-regional/cluster/national strategic frameworks and operational plans to guide the implementation of the decentralized regular programme by Field Offices, the identification of projects for submission to extrabudgetary funding sources and advocacy and communication strategies;
 - Assessment of results achieved and follow-up of the implementation of activities and

- projects;
- Review of management and coordination issues arising between the Field Offices and National Commissions;
- Agreement on joint activities and increased synergy among National Commissions.

PARTNERSHIPS

Role of National Commissions in encouraging partnerships

- **With the private sector**

UNESCO's National Commissions have a particular role to play in the engagement with a private partner. In addition to the mapping and identification of new partners at national and regional levels, and/or in the screening phase, the National Commissions are major stakeholders and UNESCO's natural interlocutors at the country level. It is of critical importance that any action be consulted, coordinated and sustained within the national development agenda. Partnering with the private sector in a given country should not be seen as purely opportunistic but rather embedded in a more long-term development perspective for the benefit of the country and the region at large.

- **With Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

Relevant National Commissions for UNESCO are consulted during the admission process of NGOs into partnership with UNESCO, particularly when the request concerns a national or local NGO. Cooperation at country level is conducted in consultation and/or in partnership with the National Commission for UNESCO concerned.

National Commissions should identify NGOs that are relevant to the current work of UNESCO and support the admission of the Organization's non-governmental partners, both internationally and nationally, in order to increase the number of official NGO partners from all regions that actively cooperate with UNESCO.

USE OF UNESCO NAME AND LOGO

National Commissions and the Use and Authorization of the UNESCO Name and Logo

In addition to using the UNESCO name and logo themselves to promote UNESCO's visibility and outreach, National Commissions play an important role in the authorization of UNESCO's logo too.

National Commissions can authorize its own patronage, i.e. moral support, to civil society organizations' events at national level and grant the use of the UNESCO National Commission logo in this context. National Commissions can also authorize the use of their own logo when they organize joint events together with other national organizations in the framework of a partnership.

In addition, Nation Commissions are called to support the Secretariat by providing advice on logo use to members of UNESCO's vast networks, such as to managers of World Heritage sites and Biosphere Reserves, to UNESCO Associated Schools, as well as to the Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO, and UNESCO Chairs etc.

National Commissions are also called to support the Secretariat by providing recommendations when the Director-General's patronage is requested by civil society organizations in the relevant Member States.

Reorganization of the clubs for UNESCO in Côte d'Ivoire

I would like to pay tribute to Mr Lou Mathieu Bamba, Secretary-General of the National Commission of Côte d'Ivoire for UNESCO, for his initiative and endeavours to proceed with a complete reorganization of the clubs for UNESCO in his country in 2015. I would like to seize this opportunity to share with you that experience through a brief summary of the reports submitted by that National Commission in March 2015 and February 2016. I believe that it will be inspiring for many of you who have similar concerns and who wish to foster an effective and fruitful partnership with the associations, centres and clubs for UNESCO.

In Côte d'Ivoire, clubs for UNESCO have been in existence for over 40 years. In 1975, these clubs got together within the Ivorian Federation of UNESCO Clubs. In 1992, this federation became the Ivorian Federation of Associations, Centers and Clubs for UNESCO. However, as from 2008, the unity of this federation began to know some fractures through the creation of a parallel structure and in 2012, two other federations were created, bringing the total numbers of federations and clubs to 4 and 350 respectively. Thus the situation of these clubs become critical and even anarchical, due to the total lack of control of the National Commission on the clubs which were placed under multiple federations making many quarrels of legitimacy among them.

With a view to inspiring the clubs with a new and efficient dynamism, the Ivorian National Commission for UNESCO, upon the instruction of the Minister of Education, undertook, in the course of 2015, to improve the situation in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Abidjan, based on the relevant directives and guidelines, notably the *Action Plan for Enhancing the Cooperation of UNESCO's Secretariat with National Commissions for UNESCO*. In accordance with its prerogatives as defined in Recommendation 6 of the Action Plan, the National Commission suspended the activities of these clubs and established the following criteria for accreditation:

1. To be a club or an association legally recognized by the Ministry of the Interior;
2. To submit an application for accreditation to the National Commission for UNESCO;
3. To provide copies of the statutes and internal regulations of the club;
4. To submit a programme of activity in relation with the ideals and programmes of UNESCO;

5. To provide an attestation of commitment :

- Not to use the club for political purposes,
- Not to use the club for profit,
- To respect the values of morality, honesty, integrity, fairness, equity, etc.
- To meet the UNESCO norms and provisions regarding the use of names, acronyms and emblems of the Organization,
- To have an aim being in conformity with the mandate of UNESCO, the objectives and priorities of its programme,
- To have a confirmed legal status,
- To take actions with tangible, sustainable, disseminable results,
- To work transparently with the National Commission, the concerned UNESCO field office and other clubs,
- To provide a progress report every year to the National Commission and UNESCO.

It was also decided that the accreditation was valid for two years, renewable by the National Commission after assessing the activities of the club. In case of serious breach found, the accreditation can be withdrawn.

The reorganization of the clubs for UNESCO has been completed thanks to the active involvement of the Minister of National Education, minister of tutorship, as well as to the determination of the Secretary General of the National Commission. To date, of a total of 284 requests, 256 clubs have been registered with the Ministry of Interior, accredited by the National Commission for a period of two years (2016-2017), and they have effectively resumed their activities. Their accreditation is nominal and individual. Each club has now an administrative flowchart, an office and address. It has also an action plan over two years. At the end of the two-year period, the accreditation will be renewed or withdrawn following an evaluation of activities.

Future phases are: the training of leaders of these clubs to the knowledge of UNESCO and its programmes; consensual constitution of a single federation, and monitoring activities.



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