Sir/Madam,

As you know, 21 September marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. In his speech to the General Assembly ceremony marking this event, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called an "inclusive, networked multilateralism vital for a better world governance, now that COVID-19 has made such solidarity more urgent". I cannot emphasize this enough; we live in a world that needs UNESCO. Our Organization has demonstrated its capacity, 75 years after its creation, as a global platform, which nurtures and strengthens multilateralism for stronger, more structured international cooperation with significant impact on the lives of the citizens of the world we serve. All credit and gratitude go to the Member States of UNESCO and their National Commissions which are fully committed to this mission.

The "Li-Beirut" initiative, launched by the Director-General in Beirut itself, on 27 August, after the massive explosions in this capital, is a telling example of our shared responsibility to place education, culture and heritage, at the heart the reconstruction of this city, and as an expression of UNESCO’s unwavering solidarity with the Lebanese people.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the sincerest condolences of UNESCO, those of all my colleagues in the Sector for Priority Africa and External Relations as well as my own, to all the Lebanese families bereaved by the explosions. I also renew our unfailing support for the city of Beirut, the Lebanese National Commission and Lebanese citizens.

In this context, the Director-General has immediately approved, through UNESCO's emergency aid program, two projects in response to requests made by the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO. They will focus on media education and will provide financial support for the badly damaged Oriental Library at Saint Joseph University in Beirut.

As you know, the Secretariat is in the midst of preparations for the 210th session of the Executive Board, to be held from 4 to 18 November, at Headquarters. I would like to draw your attention to several items on the agenda of this session, which will be particularly important to follow to strengthen our fruitful cooperation within the network of National Commissions. These include documents 210 EX / 5.III.G on the regulatory framework for associations and clubs for UNESCO, 210 EX / 5.III.E on the implementation of the participation and emergency aid, 210 EX / 5.III.C on the repositioning of the United Nations development system and 210 EX / 5.III.B on the sustainability of the field network. You will soon be able to access them online on the website of the Executive Board.
As you know, last year, on the occasion of the 40th session of the General Conference, the Priority Africa and External Relations Sector organized a training seminar for the new Secretaries-General. This year, we will continue on this path to support the new Secretaries-General in the exercise of their functions and contribute to the strengthening of their operational capacities. Our goal over the next months and into 2021 will be to organize a regular series of thematic trainings for National Commissions where needs are highest. After the Executive Board, we will start with online training on cooperation with UNESCO Clubs. They will be followed by an exploration of different aspects of communication and visibility for national commissions. More details on dates and themes will be communicated in due course.

Also, we will share very soon information related to your respective contributions for the 2020 Annual Report of the National Commissions. Please note that we would like to collect your contributions by the end of November so as to be able to launch this report at the beginning of 2021. The Annual Report for 2020 will be dedicated, inter alia, to your respective actions against COVID-19.

I would also like to inform you that we are currently in contact with the Swiss National Commission to discuss the various options available for holding the 7th Interregional Meeting of National Commissions. Due to the pandemic and various restrictions still in place, this meeting will be organized virtually. However, and in consultation with the Swiss National Commission, we will do our best to translate still the spirit that had been guiding preparations for the meeting in Lugano and the draft program on this occasion. You will be further informed relating to this important meeting.

In this regard, I strongly encourage you to continue to consult the platform of National Commissions on which we will regularly publish important news for your work, including major events such as the Interregional Meeting of National Commissions or the various details relating to a future training.

Finally, allow me to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and gratitude to the UK National Commission for the report, UNESCO’s National Value to the UK, which was launched last July. This report, which is the first to examine the cultural, environmental and financial strengths of various UNESCO projects for life in the UK and their effective contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, is a vital communication tool for our Organization. I invite you to visit this link for more information and encourage you to share with us publications of this nature which can only strengthen our work within your respective countries.

I wish you an excellent reading and take care of yourself and your loved ones!

The Director-General launched from Beirut the "Li Beirut" initiative, putting education, culture and heritage at the heart of reconstruction efforts

The Director-General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay, launched on 27 August 2020 an international fund raising appeal, Li Beirut (For Beirut in Arabic), to support the rehabilitation of schools, historic heritage buildings, museums, galleries and the creative economy, all of which suffered extensive damage in the deadly explosions that shook the Lebanese capital on 4 August 2020.

As she launched Li Beirut, the Director-General expressed the unflagging solidarity of UNESCO with the people of Lebanon. “UNESCO, of which Lebanon is a founding member, stands at their side to mobilize the international community and support the city’s recovery for and through culture, heritage and education” Ms Azoulay declared.

The Director-General emphasized UNESCO’s commitment to applying the highest internationally recognized professional and management standards in coordinating support for education and culture in the framework of UN assistance to Lebanon. “I
solemnly call for the historic center to be protected – through administrative measures and appropriate regulations – to prevent property speculation and transactions taking advantage of residents’ distress and vulnerability,” she added. In addition to coordinating UN efforts to support education in Beirut, which will require $2.5 million, UNESCO has committed to the rehabilitation of 90 primary and secondary establishments, 20 vocational training centers and 3 universities thanks to funds already collected. In the coming months, UNESCO will prioritize funding for schooling and distance learning, an urgent issue for the 85,000 affected students.

UNESCO also hosted during the month of September, three virtual ResiliArt debates in the framework of its action #ForBeirut to mobilize support for the recovery of the Lebanese capital:

On 10 September 2020: Defending cultural diversity through creativity.
On 24 September 2020: Bridging the Past and Future through Built Heritage.

**UNESCO showcases education responses to Covid-19 Crisis at UN General Assembly**

UNESCO hosted on 25 September a virtual presentation and discussion of the measures, best practices and achievements implemented by its newly created Global Education Coalition in helping countries ensure education continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The event, *Education During Covid-19 and Beyond: The Global Education Coalition in Action*, held within the framework of the United Nations General Assembly, hosted by the Director-General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay, who initiated the Global Education Coalition in March this year to respond to the educational challenge of COVID-19 which, at its worst, kept 1.6 billion learners worldwide out of the classroom.

The event presented the progress report about UNESCO’s Global Education Coalition achievements and discussed lessons learned in responding to requests from more than 70 countries during the pandemic with a view to rethinking the future of education.

In Senegal, for example, the Ministry of Education, UNESCO and Coalition members, Microsoft and Huawei, joined forces to support tens of thousands of teachers and students to continue learning. 82,000 teachers and 500,000 learners enrolled on the Ministry’s Distance Learning Platform and a further 1.5 million learners and teachers are expected to sign up with support from Microsoft. UNESCO is supporting training for 200 teachers to be ‘master trainers’ and Huawei has provided devices to improve their connectivity.

In Lebanon, UNESCO is supporting the production of communication and education resources targeting teachers and parents (brochures, videos and guides) and capacity building for the Ministry of Education in the fields of ICT and education benefitting 50 coordinators to date. 280 video lessons are being acquired for the online platform of the Ministry, which will reach 1,000 schools and 200,000 learners throughout the country.

In Samoa, Vodafone is mobilizing US$7.5 million to offer free access to education data for 60,000 learners and teachers. Orange is providing free internet access to accredited learning platforms in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Similar packages are forthcoming in Botswana, Cameroun, Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia and Madagascar, an initiative due to be extended to Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

Finally, a **Global Skills Academy** has also been established to equip 1 million youth with digital skills and help them find jobs during the looming recession with Coalition partners Coursera, Dior, Festo, Huawei, IBM, Microsoft, Orange Digital Centres and PIX, alongside WorldSkills International and intergovernmental organizations ILO, ITU and OECD. The Academy operates in synergy with UNESCO’s global network of institutions of technical and vocational education and training, UNEVOC.
The meeting concluded with an exchange between the beneficiaries of the programs set up with the support of the UNESCO World Education Coalition.

The Global Education Coalition is a platform for collaboration and exchange to protect the right to education during this unprecedented disruption and beyond. It brings together more than 150 members from the UN family, civil society, academia and the private sector to ensure that #LearningNeverStops. The Coalition’s programmes have targeted 400 million learners and 12.7 million teachers directly and indirectly.

UNESCO’s event builds on the UN Secretary-General’s policy brief concerning the impact of COVID-19 on education.

On World Clean-up Day, UNESCO launches a campaign to encourage young people to learn about sustainability by tackling the problem of waste (19 September). Join us to spread the message of the #TrashHack campaign.

Every year, the world produces more than 2 billion tonnes of waste, which fills our oceans, covers our streets and vast areas of the planet. By becoming Trash Hackers, young people will take action to fight waste, change the way they think about it and inspire others to do the same.

Launched on World Clean-up Day, September 19, 2020, the Trash Hack campaign will promote simple actions that young people can take to fight waste in their neighborhoods, homes or even their mailboxes, while respecting the safety measures taken as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information on the campaign, see the website https://www.trashhack.org/ and Use the Social Media Toolkit

How to participate in the campaign:
- **Share the pre-prepared social media posts, videos and images with #TrashHack**
- **Find our Social Media Toolkit in PDF here or head to Trello to find updated copy and images in English, French and Spanish.** Please get in touch if you want any content translated to your local language.
- **Create your own #TrashHack tips or feature inspirational young people from your local area**
  You can [download the editable PowerPoint templates here](https://www.trashhack.org/) to create Trash Hack branded content of your own.
- **Spread the word with your youth networks**

Do you have young people in your network that should be involved in the campaign? Share this information with them or let us know by emailing trashhack@unesco.org

The Trash Hack campaign is coordinated by UNESCO (Section for Education for Sustainable Development), with the support of the Japanese government. Education is at the heart of the campaign, with action on waste being an entry point towards a deeper commitment to sustainability.

Visit the website: [https://www.trashhack.org/](https://www.trashhack.org/)
Use the Social Media Toolkit
Contact: trashhack@unesco.org

5 October 2020 - World Teachers' Day

Held annually on 5 October since 1994, World Teachers’ Day commemorates the anniversary of the adoption of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers. This Recommendation sets benchmarks regarding the rights and responsibilities of teachers and standards for their initial preparation and further education, recruitment, employment, and teaching and learning conditions. The Recommendation
concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel was adopted in 1997 to complement the 1966 Recommendation by covering teaching and research personnel in higher education.

With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education, and the dedicated target (SDG 4.c) recognizing teachers as key to the achievement of the Education 2030 agenda, WTD has become the occasion to mark progress and reflect on ways to counter the remaining challenges for the promotion of the teaching profession.

World Teachers’ Day is co-convened in partnership with UNICEF, the International Labour Organization and Education International. In 2020, World Teachers’ Day will celebrate teachers with the theme “Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future”. The day provides the occasion to celebrate the teaching profession worldwide, take stock of achievements, and draw attention to the voices of teachers, who are at the heart of efforts to attain the global education target of leaving no one behind.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly added to the challenges faced by already over-extended education systems throughout the world. It is no exaggeration to say that the world is at a crossroads and, now more than ever, we must work with teachers to protect the right to education and guide it into the unfolding landscape brought about by the pandemic.

The issue of teacher leadership in relation to crisis responses is not just timely, but critical in terms of the contribution’s teachers have made to provide remote learning, support vulnerable populations, re-open schools, and ensure that learning gaps have been mitigated. The discussions surrounding WTD will also address the role of teachers in building resilience and shaping the future of education and the teaching profession.

This year, in view of the current situation, the celebrations will take place online. As well as the WTD Opening Ceremony and UNESCO-Hamdan Prize Awards Ceremony on 5 October, and the Closing Ceremony on 12 October, there will be a series of national, regional and global events throughout the week.

For more information: Concept note

**12-14 October 2020 - Beyond Disruption: Online edition of Mobile Learning Week 2020**

UNESCO is hosting the annual flagship event on ICT in education of UNESCO, previously entitled Mobile Learning Week (MLW) 2020. The online event will be dedicated to the theme Beyond Disruption: Technology Enabled Learning Futures. MLW 2020 is set against the backdrop of the COVID-19 education disruption and response and will shine a light on prospects for technology-enabled futures of learning.

Contact: tolerance.prize@unesco.org


UNESCO will convene an extraordinary session of the Global Education Meeting (2020 GEM) on 22 October 2020 from 1 to 3pm (CEST – Paris), co-hosted by the Government of the United Kingdom. This high-level segment of the 2020 GEM will be preceded by a technical segment on 20 October 2020 from 1 to 4 pm (CEST – Paris). The meeting will take place online.

The 2020 GEM will provide a unique platform for exchange among high-level political leaders, policy makers and global education actors to protect and rethink education in the current and post-COVID-19 world and agree on global priority actions for educational recovery and progress in the Decade of Action for Sustainable Development.
The event will provide a strategic opportunity for Member States and the international community to maintain and scale up their commitment to education as the most critical investment for a sustainable recovery and future, to be highlighted particularly during the Leaders’ Dialogue of the high-level segment on 22 October.

Contact: Global Education Meeting (GlobalMeeting@unesco.org)

27-28 October 2020 - Eighth Session of the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties to the 1970 Convention


This session will be organized on the basis of the functions assigned to the Subsidiary Committee by the Meeting of States Parties (art.14.6 of the Rules of Procedure of the Meeting of States Parties). In 2020, the theme will revolve around the 50th anniversary of the 1970 Convention.
Working and information documents will be published online shortly.

Contact: convention1970 (convention1970@unesco.org)

2 November 2020 - Global Conference on Climate Resilient Water Management Approaches

Climate change is accelerating even as countries around the world develop strategies to mitigate its impacts and adapt to new standards. The effects of climate change are most acutely felt through impacts on the water cycle and extreme water events. To secure water supplies for humans and the environment while simultaneously meeting ambitious climate and development goals globally, policymakers and regulators will need to embrace a new paradigm of resilient water management that takes into account the uncertain future. Climate change resilience and sustainable development depend essentially on urgent and ambitious emission reductions associated with coordinated, sustained and increasingly ambitious adaptation actions.

The objective of this three-day conference, to be held before COP26, is to build capacity around new approaches to respond to climate risks in all sectors and assess their vast potential in global climate policies and development programs.

The objectives of this conference are: 1) to introduce participants to the technical and practical components of bottom-up approaches to climate adaptation; 2) share a global set of case studies; 3) identify the policies and institutional capacities needed to integrate these approaches more broadly into national climate programs, climate finance and the private sector; and 4) present the results of the conference to the political community at COP-26. The conference will also contribute to the formulation of strategies for the 9th phase of IHP (IHP-IX; 2022-2029).

UNESCO’s publications

« UNESCO Creative Cities’ response to COVID-19».

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) joins together cities from across the world around the common objective of harnessing the potential of culture and creativity for a sustainable future. The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting people everywhere, and the culture sector has in many ways come to a standstill – cultural events, cinema, theatre and music performances have been cancelled, international tourism has largely ceased, restaurants and markets have closed, amongst others. This has not only impacted the sectors concerned, but also the
public, which tends to turn to cultural products and services for education, entertainment, leisure, personal development, or social engagement. While this undoubtably has a serious impact on the economic viability of the cultural sector, the sector's fundamental creativity and ability to inspire social connection remains intact. The information submitted by over 90 Creative Cities from 44 UNESCO Member States shows how cities have come together to nurture new ideas and projects by connecting people to culture and creativity during the pandemic.

«Education in a post-COVID world: nine ideas for public action». The global health pandemic has shined a harsh light on the vulnerabilities and challenges humanity faces. It has provided a clear picture of existing inequalities - and a clearer picture of what steps forward we need to take, chief among them addressing the education of more than 1.5 billion students whose learning has been hampered due to school closures. This report is the result of the collective work of the International Commission on the Futures of Education, established by UNESCO in 2019. It presents nine key ideas for navigating through the Covid-19 crisis and its aftermath, contending that we cannot forget core principles and known strengths as we face unprecedented disruption to economies, societies and our particular focus here - education systems.

Appointment of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions for UNESCO

In Afghanistan, Ms. Rangina Hamidi has been appointed President, succeeding Mr. Mirwais Balkhi.

In Argentina, Mr. Pablo Gentili has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. Francisco Miguens Campos.

In Armenia, Mr. Arman Khachatryan has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms. Lena Terzikyan.

In Azerbaijan, Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov has been appointed President, succeeding Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov.

In Bhutan, Mr. Karma Tshering has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. Karma Yeshey.

In Burkina Faso, Mr. Fatié Ouattara, has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. Aristide Dabire.

In Honduras, Ms. Mayra Motiño Canales has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms. Hilda Muñoz Táboro.

In Mauritania, Mr. Mohamed Sidi Abdalla has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. Ismail Ould Chouaib.

In Mongolia, Mr. Enkhtaivan Nyamtseren has been appointed President, succeeding Mr. Tsogtbaatar Damdin.

In Portugal, Mr Sérgio Gorjão has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms Rita Brasil Brito.

In Poland, Mr. Jacek Purchla has been appointed President, succeeding Mr. Michal Kleiber.

In the Dominican Republic, Mr. Jesús Paniagua has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. Luis O. Brea Franco.
In Singapore, Mr. Edwin Tong has been appointed President, succeeding Ms. Grace Fu.

In Slovenia, Ms. Verica Trstenjak has been appointed President, succeeding Mr. Radovan Stanislav Pejovnik.

In Sweden, Ms. Anna Karin Johansson has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. Mats Djurberg.

In Syria, Mr. Darem Tabbaa, has been appointed President, succeeding Mr. Emad Mouafak Al Azeb.

In Ukraine, Ms. Emine Dzhaparova has been appointed President, succeeding Mr. Sergiy Kyslytsya.

In Uzbekistan, Mr. Sayidafzal Mallakhanov has been appointed Acting Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. Alisher Ikramov.

Firmin Edouard Matoko