The Assistant Director-General for External Relations and Public Information

To Secretaries-General of National Commissions for UNESCO

12 July 2017

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Sir/Madam,

At the outset, I would like to thank those of you who participated in the Consultation Meeting of the National Commissions for UNESCO on the preliminary draft of the Cooperation Framework regarding Clubs for UNESCO, held on 29 and 30 June last at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

As promised, I am very pleased to share with you enclosed, the updated draft which is now entitled “Regulatory Cooperation Framework regarding Associations and Clubs for UNESCO” reflecting the fruitful discussion at the Consultation Meeting, as well as the list of participants of the meeting. I would also like to express my appreciation for two National Commissions who sent us their comments before the meeting.

We would be most grateful if you could send us your further comments and feedback at natcom@unesco.org by 5 September at the latest so that the Secretariat can finalize the text before submitting it to the 39th session of General Conference this autumn.

On a separate note, as you may be aware, the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee, just closed in Krakow, Poland on 12 July, has inscribed 21 new sites to UNESCO’s World Heritage List: 18 cultural and 3 natural sites. You can find out more about this session via this website: http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/41com/.

UNESCO Education Sector Monthly Digest – July 2017

I am pleased to share with you this month’s Education Monthly Digest, under this link, in which you may find stories of quality education and lifelong learning and news about the High-Level Event on Education held on 28 June 2017 at the UN Headquarters in New York to drive efforts on SDG4. The Digest is also available in French and Spanish.

Contact: edknowledge@unesco.org

12 August 2017 – International Youth Day

Emphasizing the potential of youth as partners in today’s global society, the 2017 International Youth Day will be celebrated on the theme “Youth Building Peace”. It will bring to the attention of the international community young people’s contributions to conflict prevention and transformation as well as inclusion, social justice and sustainable peace.
A variety of activities will take place across the world, organized by different partners and youth stakeholders. The official commemorative event will be held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 11 August 2017. Thematic discussions and information campaigns will take place on 12 August 2017 across the world, to engage both Member States and the general public to understand the needs of young people, to implement policies to help them overcome the challenges they face, and to encourage young people into the decision-making process.

In line with the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, UNESCO aims to create an environment where young women and men are empowered, heard and engaged as change-makers in their immediate communities to prevent violent extremism and build peace in conflict- or violence-affected areas.

I encourage you to join us in organizing activities around the world to celebrate this Day and promote young women and men as the leaders of today. Please feel free to send us any information on any activity you intend to coordinate and it shall be published on the website www.unesco.int.

Contact: Ms Kristina Balalovska (k.balalovska@unesco.org)

8 September 2017 – International Literacy Day (ILD)

This year’s edition of the ILD will be placed under the theme ‘Literacy in a Digital World’.

For this occasion, an international conference will be organized on 7 and 8 September 2017 at UNESCO’s Headquarters in Paris. The overall objective is to reflect on what it means to be literate in increasingly digitally-mediated societies and to explore effective literacy policies and programmes that can leverage the opportunities of a digital world. As in previous editions, the 2017 UNESCO International Literacy Prizes Awards Ceremony will also take place and reward excellent literacy practices from around the world in connection with the theme of the year.

ILD will also be celebrated at regional and country levels, involving governments, NGOs, multilateral organizations, donors, teachers, learners, communities, the private sectors, parents and experts. (Please see activity examples from ILD2016 at: http://www.unesco.org/new/index.php?id=131924).

Annual celebrations of ILD have been held since 1967 to promote literacy as an essential and integral part of lifelong learning and efforts for creating more inclusive and sustainable societies.

I encourage National Commissions to organize related activities, in collaboration with key partners, including UNESCO Field Offices. Please feel free to send us information on any activity that you intend to organize or participate in, and we shall publish it on our website which will be made available soon within the UNESCO’s literacy portal: http://en.unesco.org/themes/literacy-all.

Contact: Ms Mari Yasunaga (literacy@unesco.org)

This Conference comes at a critical time in global development with countries working towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to which cities have a significant contribution to make.

The meeting will provide a platform for cities to share knowledge, exchange ideas and compare strategies and approaches that can be used to further develop or initiate development of learning cities. Participants will discuss the development of learning cities in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly the local implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.

It is interesting to note that this is the first time that such a major international conference in this field is to be organized in Europe. The registration is now open. I invite you to find out more information via the event’s website.

Contact: learningcities@unesco.org

UNESCO Publications

- A new UNESCO policy paper, *Reducing global poverty through universal primary and secondary education*, was released recently. This policy paper shows that the global poverty rate could be more than halved if all adults completed secondary school. Yet, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) data show persistently that completion levels in education will remain well below that target for generations to come. The paper demonstrates the importance of recognizing education as a core lever for ending poverty in all its forms, everywhere. It is available in English via this link.

- The 84th issue of the World Heritage Magazine, a special issue for the World Heritage in Poland, was launched on the occasion the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee taking place in the Historic Centre of Krakow, Poland. In this issue, you will discover an overview of the architectural landscape of Poland, as well as the evolution of the protection of heritage in the country, and involvement of Polish experts in various international efforts such the drafting of the Venice Charter, and the formation of ICOMOS and of the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS). You may also find an in-depth interview with Professor Jacek Purchla, Chair of the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee, which touches on building relationships for heritage conservation, educating young people about heritage and best practice cases of heritage management in Poland. This publication is available in English, French and Spanish.

- A new UNESCO working paper, *Protecting the right to education for refugees*, was published recently with an aim to provide an overview of the international legal framework protecting the right to education of refugees worldwide. This paper covers the obligations of States, as well as the main current issues. This publication also shows that, despite the existence of a strong applicable framework to guarantee the right to education of refugees worldwide, the challenges and obstacles encountered in this context may dramatically prevent its enjoyment. The paper also emphasizes that, even though ensuring the right to education is fundamental in all phases of the situation, there is a particular need to draw attention to the stabilization phase.
Appointments of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions (June / July 2017)

I am pleased to welcome to the National Commissions network the following new members:

In Bulgaria, Mr Yuri Sterk has been appointed Chairperson, succeeding Mr Rumen Alexandrov.

In Tunisia, Mr Mohamed Bouhlel has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Mohamed Kamel Essid.

Yours sincerely,

Erík Falt