Sir/Madam,

The 200th session of the Executive Board is fast approaching. Let me remind you of our traditional morning meeting of National Commissions, which will be taking place on 11 and 12 October in Room IV from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and which will be preceded by morning coffee and tea starting at 8 a.m. Further to my proposal of topics for discussion, please find attached the draft agenda of our meeting. I look forward to meeting many of you on this occasion.

Celebration of anniversaries with which UNESCO will be associated in 2018-2019

The National Commissions are invited to inform the Secretariat of the commemoration(s) with which their country would like UNESCO to be associated during the 2018-2019 biennium, in accordance with the revised criteria and procedures relating to the celebration of anniversaries, adopted by the Executive Board through 195 EX/Decision 25.

Each Member State may submit two requests for the celebration of anniversaries in association with UNESCO and preferably, one of these would relate to gender equality. Member States who have anniversaries approved by the 38th session of the General Conference (check here the List of anniversaries to be celebrated in 2016-2017 in association with UNESCO) are kindly reminded that they are responsible for the implementation of the activities relating to the celebration of anniversaries and must submit to the Director-General, on completion of the project, a detailed activity report on the results achieved and their usefulness to the Member State(s) and UNESCO. No new anniversary proposals will be considered until the Member State concerned has provided all of the requisite activity reports (ref. DG/7/16/6730 of 8 September 2016).

You can find on-line forms for the submission by the Member States of new proposals and for the submission of reports at: https://teams.unesco.org/ORG/eri/anniversaries/. The deadline for submission is 15 January 2017.

Further information can be obtained on UNESCO’s website at http://en.unesco.org/celebrations/anniversaries and on the Member States’ website http://www.unesco.int/.

Contact: Ms Monica Crutescu (mo.crutescu@unesco.org).
17 October 2016 – A tribute symposium to the former Secretary-General of the United Nations Boutros Boutros-Ghali, UNESCO HQ, Paris

A tribute symposium to the former Secretary-General of the United Nations Boutros Boutros-Ghali, “A Visionary committed to the service of Peace and Development”, will take place in Room II at UNESCO Headquarters, at 6 p.m. on Monday 17 October 2016.

This tribute is dedicated to the vision and action of Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali in favour of peace and development. During the ceremony, a number of high-level speakers will notably testify to the universal meaning and continuing relevance of his Agenda for Peace and of his Agenda for Democracy and Development, which are closely linked to UNESCO’s mandate.

This event, co-organized by UNESCO and the Permanent Delegation of Egypt to UNESCO with the cooperation of the regional groups of UNESCO, including the Group of la Francophonie, the Arab Group and the African Group, will take place during the forthcoming 200th session of the Executive Board (4 – 18 October).

I would like to invite you to be among us at this special tribute to the former Secretary-General of the United Nations Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Contact: ERI Arab Desk : Ms Dalia Elbeltagy (d.elbeltagy@unesco.org) / Ms Sara Moustafa (sa.moustafa@unesco.org)

24-26 October 2016 – 40th session of the World Heritage Committee (Continuation and conclusion), UNESCO HQ, Paris

Further to the meeting in Istanbul (July 2016), the World Heritage Committee will continue the work of its 40th session at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (Room II), from 24 to 26 October, in line with Decision 40 COM 17.

The items to be examined at the forthcoming meeting include issues related to the use of the World Heritage Fund, International Assistance, Periodic Reporting, Policy and Operational Guidelines, as well as other issues concerning the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

You will find all necessary information on the site of the 40th session: http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/40COM/.

30 October – 1st November 2016 – Conference “Internet and the Radicalization of Youth: Preventing, Acting and Living together”, Quebec, Canada

Organized by UNESCO and the Government of Quebec, this conference will bring together in Québec up to 400 researchers, experts, civil society representatives as well as government officials. The participants will gather for three days to identify innovative and collaborative projects at the national and international levels; not only to prevent but to curb youth radicalization leading to violence. As part of UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP), this event will also pay a special attention to the role the Internet and media play in the radicalization of youth.
As you may know, UNESCO is committed to the UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, with a focus on priorities of direct relevance to UNESCO’s work: (i) education, skills development and employment facilitation; (ii) empowerment of youth; (iii) strategic communications, the Internet and social media; and (iv) gender equality and empowering women.

I am sure a number of you will be interested in participating in this event, and if it is the case, I encourage you to register as soon as possible. You will find more information here, including the concept note and draft agenda.

Contact: Mr Hara Padhy (h.padhy@unesco.org)

2 November 2016 – International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists

For the third consecutive year UNESCO is commemorating this Day and a range of activities will be organized around the world. In New York, UNESCO will organize a high-level meeting entitled “Safety of journalists and ending impunity in conflict zones” on 27 October at UN Headquarters. In Bogota, Colombia the Guillermo Cano Foundation, in partnership with several NGOs and universities, will commemorate the 30 years’ anniversary of the death of Guillermo Cano Isaza, the founder of the newspaper El Espectador murdered in 1986. Other events will also be organized in The Hague, Netherlands; Hanoi, Viet Nam; Kabul, Afghanistan; Astana, Kazakhstan; Sheffield, United Kingdom; and other cities.

Furthermore, on 17 November, the 39 Member States of UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for Development of Communication (IPDC) will receive the biennial report of the Director-General on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity, which provides an overview of killings of journalists condemned by UNESCO’s Director-General in 2014-2015 and the answers from Members States on the status of the investigations.

Please do not hesitate to inform us if you are planning an activity or event to celebrate this International Day. For more information, please visit the devoted UNESCO website.

Contact: Mr Mehdi Benchelah (m.benchelah@unesco.org)

10 November 2016 – World Science Day for Peace and Development (WSDPD)

The theme for this year’s celebration is “Celebrating Science Centres and Science Museums”, recognizing their role in facilitating access to science. This year marks the beginning of a close collaboration between UNESCO and international networks of science centres and museums worldwide, including the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the Association of Science Technology Centers (ASTC) as well as regional networks such as ASPAC, Ecsite, NAMES, NCSM India, RedPOP and SAASTECT.

Thus, a conference will be organized at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, on “The Promise of Science in a Rapidly Changing World; Working Together for Global Sustainability and Defining the Role of Science Centers and Science Museums”. The conference will be an opportunity to examine the future direction of science necessary to achieve real progress in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. Students will also be invited to participate in a UNESCO campus, and the day will be celebrated all over the world, particularly in science centres and museums.
Engaging and empowering people through science is crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). That is why I call upon the National Commissions to encourage and organize local and regional activities in keeping with this year’s theme in order to mobilize society and the scientific community.

For more information on the Day, please visit the devoted UNESCO website.

Contact: Ms Lucy Hoareau (l.hoareau@unesco.org) and for the conference Mr Yoslan Nur (y.nur@unesco.org)

UNESCO Publications

- The 2016 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report – titled Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all – is the first of a new series of reports which will monitor the state of education in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It examines key financing and governance challenges for the post-2015 era, as well as the complex interrelationships and links between education and key development sectors. It also determines which education strategies, policies and programmes are most effectively linked to the economic, social, environmental and political priorities of the new sustainable development agenda. The report is available in English under this link.

- Published by UNESCO and the International Social Science Council, the World Social Science Report 2016 - Challenging Inequalities: Pathways to a Just World - draws on the insights of over 100 social scientists and other thought leaders from all over the world, addressing inequality and social justice. The report emphasizes transformative responses to inequality at all levels, from the grass roots to global governance. Please consult this link for the English version.

- Drawn up by the Scientific Advisory Board of the UN Secretary-General for which UNESCO serves as Secretariat, The Future of Scientific Advice to the United Nations calls for a greater place for science in international decision-making. The report claims that science can be a game changer in dealing with nearly all the most pressing global challenges. It notes that the United Nations and its agencies can facilitate the gathering of all types of data while overseeing both quality and access. It also calls for international collaborative projects in this area. You can download the report in English under this link. French and Spanish versions are also available.

Appointments of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions (September 2016)

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

In Denmark, Mr Bo Manderup-Jensen has been appointed Chairperson, succeeding Ms Linda Nielsen;

In Djibouti, Mr Isman Ibrahim Robleh has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Aroun Omar Aden;
In Latvia, Ms Baiba Molnika has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms Dagnija Baltina;

In Mongolia, Ms Uyanga Sukhbaatar has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Jargalsaikhan Gundegmaa;

In Spain, Mr Juan Maria Alzina de Aguillar has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Federico Palomera.

Yours sincerely,

Eric Falt