Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to begin this monthly letter with the announcement of the opening of the Luanda Biennale for a Culture of Peace, held in Angola from 18 to 22 September. UNESCO is proud of both its results and the high level of participation notably by African Heads of State. The Biennale was marked by the signature of the Director-General of UNESCO and the Minister of Higher Education of Angola of a national program of doctoral training in science, technology, and innovation, for an unprecedented amount of 50 millions of dollars, to train 160 researchers. This event marks a vital point in UNESCO's commitment to advancing Global Priority Africa, with all Member States and all partners, as a symbol of an Organization serving Member States in facing major issues today.

UNESCO’s sharp relevance was demonstrated also in New York, too, at the United Nations General Assembly to which the Director-General, Audrey Azoulay, participated - particularly in the field of education, culture, and environmental sciences, at the Climate Action Summit, and on defending press freedom. In particular, UNESCO launched at a high-level event in New York on 25 September, the Futures of Education initiative to rethink how knowledge and learning can contribute to the common good of humanity. The event was marked by the presence of the President of Ethiopia, Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, the Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, the Bulgarian President Rumen Radev and the Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg and Prime Minister of Andorra Xavier Espot.

In the same spirit, we are preparing a number of strategic events and activities. The 207th session of the Executive Council will take place from 9 to 23 October. The provisional agenda and work schedule for this session are now available online on the dedicated Executive Board page: https://en.unesco.org/executiveboard

As I mentioned in the July Letter, the updated Global Partnership Strategy, to which you have contributed, will be discussed at this session. I urge you to follow the discussions to this point. It is proposed that this Strategy, covering the period 2022-2029, be presented as an integral part of the Organization's next Medium-Term Strategy (C4).

Less than three weeks after the Executive Board, the 40th session of the General Conference will take place at UNESCO Headquarters from 12 to 27 November. I am pleased to see that almost three-quarters of you have confirmed their participation in the 6th Interregional Meeting of National Commissions that we are organizing on 15 and 16 November in the margins of the Conference. I am also
delighted to welcome the new Secretaries General on 14 November for a day of training with the participation of UNESCO Sectors and my team in the Sector for Priority Africa and External Relations.

**Education Sector Monthly Digest - September 2019**

I am pleased to share with you the Education Monthly Digest of September, under [this link](#), in which you can find out the latest activities, such as the International Literacy Day Celebration 2019, UNESCO’s International Literacy Prizes 2019, which recognize outstanding initiatives from Algeria, Colombia, Indonesia, Italy and Senegal, and promote literacy in a multilingual environment. The Digest is also available in [French](#) and [Spanish](#).

Contact: edknowledge@unesco.org

**24-31 October - Global Media and Information Literacy Week MIL 2019**

The yearly Global Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Week, initiated in 2012, is led by UNESCO in cooperation with the Global Alliance for Partnerships in Media and Information Education, the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), and the International University Network for Media and Information Education and Intercultural Dialogue. It brings together various actors involved in the promotion of media and information literacy (MIL) to promote social inclusion and intercultural dialogue. The eighth annual global celebration of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Week will be celebrated from 24 to 31 October 2019. Global MIL Week 2019 highlights will include the Ninth MILID Conference and the Youth Agenda Forum, to be held in Gothenburg (Sweden), from 24 to 26 September 2019.

For more information: [https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/globalmilweek](https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/globalmilweek)

**27 October - World Day for Audiovisual Heritage 2019**

The World Day for Audiovisual Heritage is a commemoration of the adoption, in 1980 by the 21st General Conference, of the Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images. The World Day provides an occasion to raise general awareness of the need to take urgent measures and to acknowledge the importance of audiovisual documents.

Audiovisual archives tell us stories about people’s lives and cultures from all over the world. They represent a priceless heritage, which is an affirmation of our collective memory and a valuable source of knowledge since they reflect the cultural, social, and linguistic diversity of our communities. They help us grow and understand the world we all share. Conserving this heritage and ensuring it remains accessible to the public and future generations is a vital goal for all memory institutions as well as the audience at large. UNESCO Archives has launched the project "Digitizing our shared UNESCO history" with this goal in mind.

This year, the theme of the World Day for Audiovisual Heritage is "Engage the Past Through Sound and Images".

For more information: [https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/worldaudiovisualday](https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/worldaudiovisualday)
23-26 October - Asia-Pacific Creative Cities Conference at Adelaide, UNESCO City of Music

Running alongside the Adelaide Festival Centre’s OzAsia Festival, Adelaide, UNESCO City of Music, will host the Asia-Pacific Creative Cities Conference from 23-26 October 2019. The Conference will bring together delegates and speakers representing the Asia-Pacific region to take part in panels and discussions, deepen regional collaboration and highlight cultural leadership across the region.

With 2019 being designated by the United Nations as the International Year of Indigenous Languages, the Conference will address how indigenous arts, language, entrepreneurship, and culture in the Asia-Pacific region can be protected, championed, promoted and supported.

The Conference will provide unique opportunities to meet, network, and collaborate with key stakeholders from across the Asia-Pacific region as a strategic regional gathering that is outcome-focused and based on partnership development.


28-31 October - Open Water Symposium - Rabat, Morocco

This Open Water Symposium, dedicated to African and Arab countries, aims to foster the access and use of free and/or open-source software, as sustainable tools for water resources management. Selected participants, whether decision-makers, students, academics, and other water stakeholders – as present and future water planners – will receive training on the use of different software applied to various aspects of water management, such as irrigation, flow management, mapping, wastewater treatment, etc.

Free and Open Source Software promotes openness in content, technology, and processes, and as such, are trusted as a tool to broaden access to information, knowledge, and technologies. They also provide an affordable, sustainable solutions to support water resources management in countries where license costs may be challenging, while also contributing to greater transparency and accountability in the water sector. As such, free and open-source software supports the sound management of water resources, and overall sustainable water security and peace.

For more information: https://en.unesco.org/events/open-water-symposium-2019

29-31 October - Seventh session of the Conference of Parties to the International Conference against Doping in Sport

The Conference of Parties (COP) to the International Convention against Doping in Sport will convene its seventh session from 29 to 31 October 2019 at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris. All States Parties to the Convention and UNESCO Member States are invited to participate in this statutory conference held every two years.

For the first time, the COP will be preceded by a Forum, taking place on 29 October 2019, which will benefit from interventions of experts and personalities and bring together a wide range of stakeholders. Panels will be dedicated to three themes: artificial intelligence and gene doping; values-based education; and women and youth engagement in sport. Besides, the Forum foresees open exchanges between Permanent Delegations of States Parties, National Anti-Doping Organizations, and UNESCO.
The second and third days will focus on follow-up to the COP6 Resolutions and progress made since COP6. COP7 will also contribute to shaping its operational tool, the Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sport, by implementing the recommendations of the external evaluations conducted in 2017 and 2018. COP7 will be inaugurated on 30 October 2019 by an official ceremony bringing together high-level international guests.

Contact: antidopingteam@unesco.org

2 November – International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI)

The 2019 IDEI event will be the sixth annual commemoration of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. Drawing on the successful example of previous IDEI seminars, this day will seek to consolidate support from all stakeholders on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity, and to advance cooperation on mechanisms to prevent violence against journalists, protect them in their work and establish systematic prosecution mechanisms. The objective of the seminar will be to promote freedom of expression and the rule of law by fostering the safety of journalists and ending impunity. This event falls under the global framework of the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on The Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, UN Resolutions, and UNESCO Decisions on the safety of journalists. By increasing the safety of journalists, reinforcing the fight against impunity, and raising awareness for international standards and regional cooperation, the project aims to contribute to fostering peace and security, good governance and the rule of law.

For more information: International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists

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

18 November – 11th UNESCO Youth Forum – Youth Spaces in Action!

The 11th UNESCO Youth Forum – Youth Spaces in Action will take place at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France, on 18 and 19 November 2019, during the 40th session of UNESCO’s General Conference. This Forum will encourage dialogue, experience- and knowledge-sharing, peer learning, and cooperation among young change-makers and youth representatives, with UNESCO and its Members States, and with other stakeholders. Every two years, youth from every region of the world meet at UNESCO’s Headquarters to discuss the challenges we face today within UNESCO’s fields of competence.

This year, the Forum will be the opportunity to showcase and discuss good practices in youth engagement with UNESCO in the context of the Youth Space Initiative or other projects youth have developed with the support of the Organization.

The outcome document of the Forum will be presented by youth at the General Conference. The constitution of a Global UNESCO Youth Community of Practice, which will grow with newly engaged youth from throughout the world, will maintain a long-term relationship between UNESCO and young people and facilitate their direct involvement in the Organization’s work at all stages and all domains of concern.

For more information: UNESCO’s Youth Programme

Contact: 11thUNESCOYouthForum@unesco.org
20 November – Celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

On 20 November 2019, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) will celebrate 30 years since its adoption. This anniversary is an opportunity to bring together key actors, whether directly involved or not, for discussion.

The Convention enshrines the fundamental rights of all children: the right to equality; the right to live in a family environment; the right to an identity; the right to health; the right to education and leisure; the right of disabled children to live in the community; the right to privacy; freedom of expression; the right to be protected from all forms of violence and exploitation; the right to child-friendly justice; and the right to be protected in wartime. The four fundamental principles of the Convention are non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to survival and development, and the participation of children.

According to articles 28 and 29 of the Convention, States have a legal obligation to ensure the right to education of all children. The CRC recognizes the right to education in terms of universality, participation, respect, and inclusion. While the right to education is a fundamental right in itself, it is also key to the enjoyment of all other rights, be they civil, political, economic, or social.

Despite these legal commitments, violations of the rights of the child persist across the globe, so it is vital to consider the concrete responses that must be made to meet these challenges to ensure children’s rights are protected.

For more information: Right to Education

25 November – Internet Governance Forum 2019

The fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) will be hosted by the Government of Germany at the Estrel Congress Centre in Berlin on 25-29 November 2019. The Internet Governance Forum serves to bring different stakeholder groups together as equals, in discussions on public policy issues relating to the Internet. While there is no negotiated outcome, the IGF informs and inspires those with policy-making power in both the public and private sectors. At their annual meeting, delegates discuss, exchange information, and share good practices. The IGF facilitates a common understanding of how to maximize Internet opportunities and address risks and challenges that arise. As a platform for discussions, the IGF has identified several policy issues at global and national levels over the years and shaped policy decisions related to ICTs.

For more information: Internet Governance Forum 2019

National Commissions’ Community board - sharing initiatives

- The Consultative Meeting of the National Commissions for UNESCO of Member States of UNESCO Executive Board took place on 12-13 September 2019 in Istanbul. The meeting was organized by the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO and coincided with the 70th anniversary of its establishment. It brought together representatives of 37 National Commissions to discuss the roles and contributions of the National Commissions to UNESCO Programmes, Lists, Networks and Governance and share experiences gained during the Executive Board membership.

- The Caribbean Partners’ Forum took place in Kingston (Jamaica), from 11-12 September 2019, and was organized by the UNESCO Kingston Office and the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO on the theme of “Advocating for
Small Islands Developing States”. It was also the first of the decentralized UNESCO Partners’ Forums following the global event in September 2018 at UNESCO’s Headquarters.

This Forum was held over two days of high-level sessions, including ministers, majors donors, regional partners, celebrities such as Veronica Campbell –Brown, (Eight-time Olympic medalist and UNESCO Champion for sport), the UN Resident Coordinator a.i., UNESCO representatives and the active participation of some Caribbean National Commissions.

The Forum illustrated UNESCO’s added value and relevance in the region and allowed to create opportunities for specific discussions with donors on future cooperation. In a joint exercise, it was possible to enlist a donor mapping on the two priorities for UNESCO in the region: building climate change resilience and tackling youth unemployment and violence.

UNESCO publications

- A study entitled “The Promise of Large-Scale Learning Assessments: Acknowledging Limits to Unlock opportunities,” looks at the more problematic aspects of such standardized assessments. Building on UNESCO’s deep experience in this area - whether it is to participate directly in the implementation of evaluations, to relay knowledge or to network - it presents the critical point of view of the Organization about these initiatives. It aims to rebalance the debate on the large-scale assessment of learning by examining its beneficial effects while cautioning against the risks and pitfalls that can result.

- "Books Beyond Bars: The Transformation Potential of Prison Libraries,” this publication explores the extent to which prison authorities fulfill their social mandate of rehabilitating and reintegrating prisoners by allowing them to use prison libraries for exercise their right to education. Reading and using a penitentiary library can pave the way for a world beyond prison bars, allowing inmates to forget for a moment the harsh reality of penitentiary life and allowing them to choose their reading material in an otherwise extraordinarily restrictive and regulated environment. Providing access to relevant books and information in a variety of languages, including accessible reading materials, is essential for the personal development of prisoners.

Appointment of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions for UNESCO (August - September 2019)

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

In Austria, Ms. Patrizia Jankovic has been appointed Acting Secretary-General, succeeding Ms. Gabriele Eschig.

In the Bahamas, Mrs. Deidre L. Bevans has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. Clarence Clare.

In Costa Rica, Mrs. Andrea Mendez Calderon has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. Fernando Montoya Fernández.

In Croatia, Mr. Zvonko Kusić was appointed President, succeeding Mr. Radoslav Tomić.
In Eswatini, Ms. Phumzile has been appointed Acting Secretary-General, succeeding Ms. Hazel Zungu.

In Finland, Mrs. Henna Virkkunen has been appointed President, succeeding Mrs. Jutta Urpilainen.

In Guinea, Mr. Ibrahima Alpha Bah was appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. Ibrahima Solo Conde.

In Lesotho, Mr. Teboho Tsilane has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms. Palesa Monts’i.

In Madagascar, Mrs. Marie Thérèse Volahainga has been appointed President, succeeding Mr. Gatien Horace.

In Panama, Mr. Elio Abner Aparicio Barsallo has been appointed Secretary General, succeeding Mr. Flavio G. Méndez.

In Palestine, Mr. Dawas Dawas has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. Mourad Soudani.

In the Netherlands, Ms. Kathleen Ferrier has been appointed President, succeeding Mrs Andrée van Es.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mr. Thomas Luhaka Losendjola has been appointed President, succeeding Mr. Gaston Mesumena.

In the Republic of North Macedonia, Mr. Edmond Ademi has been appointed President, succeeding Mr. Asaf Ademi.

In the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Ms. Debra Laloo has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms. Sheriza Ali-Sarran.

In Timor-Leste, Mr. Francisco Barreto has been appointed Executive Secretary, succeeding Ms. Cédelizia Faria Dos Santos.

In Tuvalu, Ms. Kaai Fanoiga has been appointed Acting Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. Neaki Letia.

In Vanuatu, Mr. Iati Bergmans has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. Jesse Dick Joe.

Yours sincerely,

Firmin Edouard Matoko