To Secretaries-General of National Commissions for UNESCO

10 February 2017

Ref. : ERI/MSP/2017/4

Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to inform you that, in the margins of the 201st session of the Executive Board (19 April to 3 May 2017), our traditional morning meeting of National Commissions will take place on Thursday 27 and Friday 28 April 2017. The agenda and other relevant information regarding this meeting will be communicated to you in due course.

As you know, the Progress Report by the Director-General on the implementation of the Action Plan for Enhancing the Cooperation between UNESCO’s Secretariat and the National Commissions for UNESCO will be on the agenda of the 201st session of the Executive Board. I would like to seize this opportunity to thank those of you who have made valuable contribution to this Report, which I hope will provide a good opportunity for fruitful discussion.

You can find more information on the forthcoming session of the Executive Board, as well as on the two inter-session meetings held on 22 February and 29 March 2017 by accessing the webpage of the Executive Board.

Nominations for 2017 UNESCO-Japan Prize on ESD now open

I am pleased to inform you that the 2017 call for nominations for UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is now open.

UNESCO is inviting the Governments of all Member States as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in official partnership with UNESCO to nominate up to three individuals, institutions or organizations engaged in ESD for the 2017 edition of the Prize.

Nominations must be submitted in English or French and need to focus on a specific ESD project or programme of the nominee. They will be assessed by an independent jury of five international experts on the basis of their potential for transformation, integration and innovation. Projects must have been running for at least four years, already show evidence of a high impact, be easily replicable and scalable and contribute to one or more of the five Priority Action Areas of the Global Action Programme on ESD (GAP).

Interested candidates should contact the National Commission for UNESCO of their country, or an NGO in official partnership with UNESCO.
All nominations must be submitted online by **2 May 2017** (midnight, Paris time) at this [link](#), only accessible to UNESCO Member States and NGOs in official partnership. More information could be found out via this [link](#).

I encourage National Commissions to disseminate this information to relevant individuals, institutions and organizations engaged in ESD, and submit your nominations.

Contact: esdprize@unesco.org

**6-10 March 2017 – UNESCO Week for Peace and Sustainable Development: The Role of Education, Ottawa, Canada**

The Week is a unique platform for discussion on two key UNESCO programmes, namely Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED), and their practical contribution in achieving Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education. The Week will focus on the issue of teachers and teacher training, and highlight best practices in the fields of ESD and GCED.

UNESCO and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO are jointly organizing this Week for Peace and Sustainable Development, which will present two important events, organized back-to-back with sessions open to all participants:

- Review Forum for the UNESCO Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD: implementation and innovation;
- Third UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education (GCED): the Role of Teachers.

I know that many of you are actively engaged in promoting peace and sustainable development in your activities. If you want to get involved in this Week, please complete the enclosed “Expression of Interest to Participate” form and submit it as soon as possible by e-mail to: ESD-GCED-Week@unesco.org. For more information about the Week, please consult the dedicated website.

Contact: Mr Alexander Leicht ([a.leicht@unesco.org](mailto:a.leicht@unesco.org))

**8 March 2017 – International Women’s Day**

On this Day, UNESCO will host several events at Headquarters in Paris:

- an artistic exhibition from 6 to 17 March, with artists from all around the world and a focus on young women. The opening ceremony will take place on 8 March in the Salle des Pas Perdus, at 1 p.m.;
- a Round Table on “Gender Equality through the arts and culture”, held on 8 March in cooperation with *Le Comité ONU Femmes France*, in the framework of the HeforShe Arts Week in Paris. The event will be open to the public and will include stories on how cultural creation can be a means to promote gender equality, on the linkages between gender and freedom of artistic expression during conflicts and humanitarian crisis, and on music as a way of deconstructing stereotypes;
- a concert on 8 March in cooperation with *Le Comité ONU Femmes France*.

I encourage National Commissions to organize your own events within the framework of this Day and then report to us on your respective experiences. Your events will be posted in the section dedicated to National Commissions on the website of Member States: [www.unesco.int](http://www.unesco.int). Relevant information on the celebration of the Day will be available soon on UNESCO website.

Contact: Mrs Gülser Corat ([gender.equality@unesco.org](mailto:gender.equality@unesco.org))
20-24 March 2017 – Mobile Learning Week

This year, the theme of the Week is “Education in emergencies and crises”. At UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, in partnership with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the event will examine how new and affordable technologies can reinforce education in emergency and crisis contexts and expand learning opportunities for displaced people while facilitating their inclusion.

The five-day event will include:

- a Symposium to highlight solutions that leverage technology to: reach displaced learners, protect and maintain education in emergency situations, and assist integration efforts. The Symposium will feature over 80 breakout sessions, exhibitions, a mix of panel discussions and high-level plenary addresses;
- workshops to facilitate demonstrations of innovative mobile learning content, technology, research, and projects;
- strategy labs to help guide the conceptualization and refinement of projects to expand educational opportunities for learners in emergency and crisis contexts;
- a policy forum to examine how governments can foster innovation in the education sector and facilitate the acquisition of e-skills, particularly for disadvantaged or displaced learners.

I know that many of you would be interested in contributing to this important Week and participating in one of its events, I invite you to disseminate this information to interested participants and register as soon as possible under this link. You will also find more information about the Week through the devoted website.

Contact: Mr Mark West (mlw@unesco.org)

22 March 2017 - World Water Day

Each year, World Water Day highlights a specific aspect of freshwater and its potential contribution to the sustainable development agenda. Under the theme “Water and Wastewater”, the 2017 celebrations provide an important opportunity to underline the importance of managing wastewater as a resource, an undervalued and sustainable source of water.

UNESCO will celebrate this Day by revealing, in Johannesburg (South Africa) and Brasilia (Brazil), the 2017 edition of the United Nations World Water Development Report (WWDR) entitled “Wastewater, The Untapped Resource”. The Report will be available in English and in French, and all its related publications will be published in the six United Nations languages.

The development of the WWDR, coordinated by the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), is a joint effort of the UN agencies and entities which make up UN-Water, working in partnership with governments, international organizations, NGOs and other stakeholders.

The success of this Day’s celebrations is dependent upon the involvement and the commitment of a broad number of stakeholders. I hope that many of you foresee the organization of activities that would contribute to the achievement of the goals of this Day. You will find more information on the report and on the Day under this link.

Contact: Mr Engin Koncagul (e.koncagul@unesco.org)
Launch of Water Information Network System (IHP-WINS)

I would also like to inform you that the Water Information Network System (WINS), developed by UNESCO’s International Hydrological Programme (IHP), was launched recently. WINS serves as a global reference in the design and support of operations, management, and decision support functions for sound water resources governance. It is also designed to assist Member States in monitoring and implementing the Sustainable Development Goal to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” (SDG6).

This user-friendly, interactive tool can be used by a wide variety of stakeholders, to explore the data and generate customized maps. I encourage you to find out more in its website: https://en.unesco.org/ihp-wins.

23 March 2017 – Colloquium “Journalism under fire: challenges of our time”, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France

The colloquium will consist of two round table discussions in order to provide a global platform to assess the international landscape facing media professionals. Thus, media leaders, journalists, experts and Member States will have an opportunity to analyze the extent to which there is a “crisis of journalism”, and unpack the main driving forces involved.

The focus will extend to discuss what measures could be taken in order to ensure that journalism, on all platforms, is able to play its vital role. The colloquium will therefore also discuss new approaches in understanding the role of journalism in this changing environment, and debate existing and new measures aimed to strengthen quality reporting and to empower audiences with media and information literacy.

You may know that UNESCO is at the forefront of defending freedom of expression, namely through the promotion of the safety of journalists and the fight against impunity. It is also engaged in media development. For more information on the Colloquium or to register, please consult the dedicated website.

Contact: Mr Marius Lukosiunas (m.lukosiunas@unesco.org) and Ms Flavie Romer (f.romer@unesco.org)

UNESCO Publications

- The French edition of the UNESCO Science Report (Rapport de l’UNESCO sur la science, vers 2030) is now available on line, thanks to the financial support from the Government of Djibouti. This edition will enable French-speaking countries to devise science policies, which not only reflect their own needs but also emerging global challenges. Click on this link for the full story of the launching ceremony of this edition and to read or purchase the report in French. The Chinese and Russian editions will be available online soon and the Arabic and Spanish editions towards the middle of the year. For details, please contact Ms Susan Schneegans (s.schneegans@unesco.org).

- N°82 issue of World Heritage “African Heritage and its Sustainable Development” is now available under this link. This publication presents for the first time a comprehensive overview of the rich and diverse World Heritage properties in the Africa region. It highlights emerging issues, the impact on local communities and their role in managing and monitoring. E-versions in French and in Spanish are also available.
School Violence and Bullying: Global Status Report has been prepared by UNESCO and the Institute of School Violence and Prevention at Ewha Womans University in Seoul (Republic of Korea). It aims to provide an overview of the most up-to-date available data on the nature, extent and impact of school violence and bullying and initiatives to address the problem. The report is available in English and in French.

Appointments of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions (January/February 2017)

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

In Afghanistan, Mr Mohammad Shakir Habibyar has been appointed Secretary-General.

In Belgium, Mrs Eva Haeverans has been appointed Secretary-General of the Flemish Commission for UNESCO, succeeding Mr Tijs D’Hoest.

In Benin, Mrs Adélaïde Fassinou Allagbada has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Marcel N’dah Oya.

In the Czech Republic, Mr Stanislav Štech has been appointed Chairperson, succeeding Mr Petr Gazdík.

In Honduras, Ms Rutilia Calderón has been appointed President, succeeding Mr Marlon Oniel Escoto.

In Montenegro, Mr Milica Nikolic has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mrs Marija Raznatovic.

In Peru, Mrs Oriana María Suarez Perez has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms Carmen Beltrán Vargas.

In the Republic of Korea, Mr Kwangho Kim has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Dong-seok Min.

In Seychelles, Mr Joel Morgan has been appointed President, succeeding Mrs Macsuzy Mondon.

In Thailand, Mr Teerakiat Jareonsettasin has been appointed Chairperson, succeeding Mr Narong Pipatanasai, and Mr Chaiyosh Imsuwan has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Kaon Siriban.

In Tonga, Mr Penisimani ‘Epenisa Fifita has been appointed Chairperson, succeeding Mr Samuela ‘Akilisi Pohiva.

In the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Mrs Beth Taylor has been appointed Chairperson, succeeding Mr Tim Williams.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

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