Sir/Madam,

I wish to follow up on my message to you all of 20 December 2019 requesting contributions to the seventh edition of the Annual Report of National Commissions for UNESCO. I would like to thank the National Commissions that sent us their contributions and kindly request that, if you have not done so already, to send them by the end of February. As you know, this report is an important tool for sharing information and good practices between National Commissions. Indeed, not only does it highlight and give visibility to your activities with your different national partners, but I believe it also strengthens your position with your respective governments.

In addition, the UNESCO Secretariat is currently preparing for the 209th session of the Executive Board, which will be held from 23 March to 4 April 2020. The provisional agenda and calendar of work for this session will soon be available online on the Executive Board website: https://en.unesco.org/executiveboard I would be very happy to meet those of you who will be present during this session. As usual, the Sector for Priority Africa and External Relations (PAX) will be organising on the margins of this Executive Board, our traditional morning meeting of representatives of National Commissions for UNESCO. I will inform you soon of the proposed date of this meeting.

Please note that the preparatory group of the Executive Board will meet on 5 and 6 March 2020 at UNESCO Headquarters. I am pleased to inform you that the resolutions adopted by the 40th session of the General Conference are available online: 40 C / Resolutions. Besides, I am pleased to share with you the Reports of the 6th Interregional Meeting of National Commissions (15-16 November 2019, UNESCO Headquarters) and the Training Workshop for new Secretaries-General (14 November 2019, UNESCO Headquarters).

Finally, I want to inform you that several regional and sub-regional meetings will be organized in the next two months:

The 5th Meeting of the informal network of European National Commissions for UNESCO will take place from 16 to 19 February in Cascais, Portugal.

The Regional Meeting of Arab National Commissions for UNESCO will take place from 24 to 27 February in Cairo, Egypt. A consultation on the C/4 and C/5 is planned on this occasion.

The Meeting of the National Commissions of East Africa National Commission will take place from 3 to 6 March in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
A workshop on resource mobilization will take place on 18 March in Bangkok, Thailand, followed by a regional consultation on the development of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029, from 19 to 20 March. This activity will be preceded by a regional dialogue on the role of education in building a peaceful and sustainable future in Asia and the Pacific, from 16 to 17 March.

Other meetings are being prepared in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as in Africa. I will keep you informed of the details as they become available.

I am confident that these meetings will be very productive in preparing also for the 7th Interregional Meeting to be held in Lugano in Switzerland from 25 to 29 May 2020, which will provide the framework for the global consultation on the C/4 and C/5 with National Commissions for UNESCO of the five regions.

Thank you once again for your commitment and support to the values we share and the Organisation that embodies them.

10 February 2020- Award ceremony of the UNESCO–Equatorial Guinea International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The UNESCO–Equatorial Guinea International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences was awarded to three laureates during the award ceremony that took place at the African Union Headquarters in Addis-Ababa (Ethiopia) on Monday, 10 February 2020 during the 33rd African Union (AU) Summit of Heads of State.

The three laureates of this 5th edition of the UNESCO–Equatorial Guinea International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences were:

- Prof. Laurencin, a teacher, a biomedical engineer, and orthopaedic surgeon. He is the Chief Executive Officer of the Connecticut Convergence Institute for Translation in Regenerative Engineering and the Albert and Wilda Van Dusen Distinguished Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery. His outstanding contributions to the advancement of science have been recognized worldwide.

- Prof. Kevin McGuigan of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland-(RCSI). He is rewarded for his cutting-edge research on the development and implementation of solar water disinfection technology (SODIS) to combat waterborne diseases among people without access to safe drinking water in Africa and Asia.

- Prof. Youyou Tu of the Chinese Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences, laureate of the 2015 Nobel Prize for Medicine. She is recognized for her research into parasitic diseases. She discovered an entirely new anti-malarial treatment, artemisinin, which made possible the treatment of thousands of patients in China in the 1980s.

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11 February 2020 - International Day of Women and Girls in Science, UNESCO Headquarters

This year, the celebration of the Day at UNESCO Headquarters will gather experts from different sectors and backgrounds, including key scientific partners, talented women scientists rewarded through the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science
Programme, representatives of UNESCO scientific networks and Chairs. The invited speakers and participants will discuss and examine the issue of gender gap in science, also drawing on the conclusions of the Conference “A Global Approach to the Gender Gap in Mathematical, Computing, and Natural Sciences: How to Measure It, How to Reduce It?”, held in November 2019 at the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP).

The event is organized in partnership with the International Council of Science and will be held in English and French. It will be open to UNESCO Permanent Delegations and staff members, scientists, and partners from the private sector based in Paris.

Tackling some of the greatest challenges of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - from improving health to combatting climate change - will rely on harnessing all talent. That means getting more women working in these fields. Diversity in research expands the pool of talented researchers, bringing in fresh perspectives, talent, and creativity.

11-14 February 2020- 13th session of Intergovernmental Committee of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

The Intergovernmental Committee of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions will meet in Paris at UNESCO HQ from 11 to 14 February 2020 in Room II. During its 13th session, the Committee will establish its work plan for 2020-2021, including policy monitoring and capacity-building activities, as well as activities to implement the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD). The Committee will approve the financing of new projects by the IFCD in the context of its 10th call for applications. It will also examine the conclusions of the 2nd edition of the Civil Society Forum and potential synergies with the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist.

Several important side events will take place during this session, notably:

- Two “Create | 2030 Debates”, which will highlight the links between the Committee’s work and the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These debates will focus on the impact of the digital environment on access to creative content and the outcomes of the first projects funded by the IFCD.

- Screening of the film that won the Cultural Diversity Award under the patronage of UNESCO at the 2019 Asia Pacific Screen Awards.

21 February 2020 – International Mother Language Day 2019, UNESCO Headquarters

International Mother Language day 2019 theme is: “Indigenous languages matter for development, peace building and reconciliation”.

An opening event will be organized at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

This year, International Mother Language day 2019 will be framed by the International Year of indigenous languages 2019 (IYIL19) around the theme “Indigenous languages matter for development, peace building and reconciliation”.

International Mother Language Day (IMLD) is celebrated every year on 21 February with the overall objective to promote linguistic diversity and multilingual education.

The opening event will start with speeches by two Permanent Delegates to UNESCO and a Francophonie Representative. A short video screening and a UNESCO brief presentation of linkages between the International Year of
Indigenous languages and International Mother Language Day will follow. A debate entitled “Languages count” will conclude the event.

The afternoon session will be dedicated to a round table on the importance of promoting the Kiswahili language in Africa.

Experts from Tanzania, the University Languages and Civilisations (INALCO/Paris), the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) will discuss issues, challenges and perspectives on Kiswahili.

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27-28 February 2020 - High-level event "Making a decade of action for indigenous languages," Los Pinos, Mexico

Building on the legacy of the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL2019) and as follow up to a decision on United Nations General Assembly (Ref.: A/C.3/74/L.19/Rev.1), UNESCO and the Government of Mexico, in cooperation with several national, regional and international partners, are organizing a High-level event “Making a decade of action for indigenous languages” on the margins of the International Congress on Endangered Languages from 25 to 26 February 2020 in Mexico City, Mexico.

The High-level event will conclude the IYIL2019 with a comprehensive review of the outcomes, lessons learnt on the impact and provide concrete recommendations for the preparatory and transitional process of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

The High-level event aims to contribute to the:

- Assessment of the implementation of the Action Plan for Organizing the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages (E/C.19/2018/8), in particular to the established roadmap towards achieving strategic objectives and expected impacts based on the Strategic Outcomes Document (UNESCO General Conference 40 C/68);
- Exchange of views on the necessary milestones during a transitional period of 2020 to 2021 and elaboration of a new Global Plan of Action for the organization of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032);
- Setting a future direction for the elaboration of first lines of action of future Global Plan for the organisation of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032).

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For more information: https://en.unesco.org/events/high-level-event-making-decade-action-indigenous-languages


The UNESCO publication in March 2019 of I’d Blush if I Could: closing gender divides in digital skills through education has helped spark a global conversation on the gendering of artificial intelligence (AI) technology and the importance of education to develop the digital skills of women and girls.

To celebrate the 2020 edition of International Women’s Day, UNESCO is taking the conversation further by looking at what concrete actions the private and public sector should take in order to ensure that AI is part of the solution, rather than part of the problem, in global efforts to achieve gender equality.
At Headquarters, UNESCO is organising the High-Level Conference: “The Private Sector Takes Action: Gender Equality and the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence”. It will take place on **Saturday 7 March 2020**, from 9:30 to 4:30pm. To find out more about this event and register your participation, please click here. Livestreaming will be available in English and French.

Additional information on all the events organized on the occasion of the 2020 International Women's Day will soon be available here.


UNESCO invites the governments of Member States, as well as international and regional professional non-governmental organizations, active in the field of press freedom, to nominate candidates for next year’s UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize.

This Prize was established by UNESCO's Executive Board, in 1997, in honour of Guillermo Cano, a Colombian journalist who died in the exercise of his profession. Its purpose is to reward each year a person, organization, or institution that has made a notable contribution to the defense and/or promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world, especially if risks have been involved.

Awarded annually, on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day (3 May), the Prize is marked by a ceremony and the winner is presented with the sum of US$25,000. In 2020, the Prize is scheduled to be awarded on 23 April.

The Prize is funded by the Cano Foundation (Colombia), the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation (Finland), and the Namibia Media Trust.

Nominations for the Prize should be submitted by filling out the form in English or French and sending it before 15 February 2020.

Contact: s.coudray@unesco.org

For more information: You may also consult the rules of the Prize here.

**30 April 2020 - UNESCO seeks nominations for the UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence 2020**

UNESCO invites governmental and non-governmental entities, civil society actors, and individuals active in strengthening foundations for peace and tolerance to propose candidates for the 2020 UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence. Its purpose is to reward individuals, institutions, and other entities or non-governmental organisations that have made exceptional contributions and demonstrated leadership in the promotion of tolerance and non-violence.

The Prize was established in 1995 on the occasion of the United Nations Year for Tolerance and the 125th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi. It was also the year when the UNESCO Member States adopted the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance. The creation of the Prize has been inspired by the ideals of UNESCO's Constitution that proclaims that “peace if it is not to fail, must be founded on the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.” Tolerance recognizes the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others. People are naturally diverse; only tolerance can ensure the survival of mixed communities in every region of the globe.
In recognition of a lifelong devotion to communal harmony and peace, the Prize bears the name of its benefactor Madanjeet Singh, who was a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, Indian artist, writer, and diplomat.

Awarded every two years, on the occasion of the International Day for Tolerance (16 November), the Prize is marked by a ceremony and the winner is presented with the sum of US$ 100,000.

Nominations for the Prize should be submitted by filling out the nomination form in either English or French, no later than 30 April 2020, by post or by e-mail.

For More information on the Prize, Statutes

Contact: tolerance.prize@unesco.org

UNESCO publications

- “Global education monitoring report, 2019: Migration, displacement and education: building bridges, not walls”. The Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action specifies that the mandate of the Global Education Monitoring Report is to be ‘the mechanism for monitoring and reporting on SDG 4 and education in the other SDGs’ with the responsibility to ‘report on the implementation of national and international strategies to help hold all relevant partners to account for their commitments as part of the overall SDG follow-up and review.’ It is prepared by an independent team hosted by UNESCO.

- “Culture & working conditions for artists: implementing the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist”. This study, consolidated by the 2005 Convention Secretariat, is based on an analysis of submissions to the 2018 global survey on the implementation of the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist by the UNESCO Member States, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and international non-governmental organizations (INGO). The analysis was carried out by Garry Neil (Canada), a leading international cultural policy expert and former Executive Director of the International Network for Cultural Diversity (2000-2011).

Appointment of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions for UNESCO (December 2019 - February 2020)

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

In Argentina, Mr Nicolás Trotta has been appointed President, succeeding Mr Alejandro Oscar Finocchiaro, and Mrs Marita Perceval has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Francisco Miguens Campos.

In Germany, Mr Roman Luckscheister has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Roland Bernecker.

In India, Mr Amit Khare has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr R. Subrahmanyam.

In Moldova, Mr Corneliu Popovici has been appointed President, succeeding Mrs Monica Babuc.
In Peru, Mr. Carlos Martín Benavides Abanto has been appointed President, succeeding Mrs Flor Aidee Pablo Medina.

In Saudi Arabia, Mr Hattan Muneer bin Samman has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Mansour DaifAllah Alosaimi.