The Assistant Director-General
For Priority Africa and External Relations

To Secretaries-General
of National Commissions
for UNESCO

22 June 2020

Ref.: PAX/DRX/NAC/2020/02

Sir/Madam,

First of all, I would like to reiterate my sincere thanks to all the National Commissions for UNESCO who joined the first online meeting on COVID-9, organized by the Priority Africa and External Relations Sector on 29 April. I was pleased with your active participation in this meeting, as no less than 113 National Commissions from the five regions, more than 23 representatives of Permanent Delegations and 30 directors of field offices, attended. In total, around 500 people participated (270 people took part via the Microsoft Teams platform, while about 230 participants followed it online via the UNESCO webcast).

The updated Report of this meeting, as well as your contributions concerning the measures and activities you have taken to address COVID-19, are attached here and are also available on the platform of the National Commissions and on the UNESCO.int website. I want to thank the 60 National Commissions that have shared their contributions and encourage all those that have not yet done so to share with us their respective actions and initiatives in response to the pandemic in order to disseminate them widely.

As announced at the meeting on 29 April, UNESCO had to suspend the organization of regional face-to-face consultation meetings with National Commissions on the preparation of the Director-General’s preliminary proposals on the draft 41C/4 and 41C/5. To date, only the consultation with Arab National Commissions has been organized in late February in Cairo, Egypt.

In order to comply with the approved roadmap and to ensure timely input to the preliminary proposals (to be submitted to the next session of the Executive Board next autumn), we have decided to proceed with the organization of online consultations at the sub-regional level during the month of June. They will be organized by our offices concerned with the support of the Bureau of Strategic Planning and the Priority Africa and External Relations Sector. Details about these consultations will be communicated to you shortly.

I am also pleased to inform you that the 7th edition of the Annual Report of the National Commissions for UNESCO has been finalized and I am delighted to share with you the electronic version of this edition. Please note that this 7th edition of the report, whose publication has been delayed due to the pandemic, is also available on the platform and on the web page of the National Commissions, which I invite you to consult under this link. Allow me to take this opportunity to thank all the National Commissions that have contributed to this activity report for the year 2019. Let me tell you also how much we appreciate your precious support to our commun work and I wish you every success for your ongoing and future actions.
Finally, I would like to announce that, to mark the 75th anniversary of the UN in 2020, UNESCO is joining the UN’s launch of the biggest-ever global conversation on the role of global cooperation in building the future we want. The views and ideas that are generated will be presented to world leaders and senior officials at a high-profile event during the 75th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2020 to build a global vision for the year 2045, the UN’s centenary.

As part of this global conversation, we invite you to take part in a short online 60 second survey, available at www.un75.online. The survey is available in 18 languages.

We encourage you to share the survey widely with all of your networks, and to feature the survey on your webpage and on your social media networks.

Finally, you may also wish to consider organizing a virtual dialogue with your partners and stakeholders. More information on the toolkits to organize such dialogues is available at https://www.un.org/en/un75.

#TheWorldin2030: Helps UNESCO set the global agenda on the issues you care about!

UNESCO has launched an unprecedented global public survey, entitled "The World in 2030", with the aim of better understanding the main challenges facing the world and the solutions needed to address them. In the context of the elaboration of the new Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2099), this quest, which is part of the third pillar of the strategic transformation process, aims at ensuring that the Organization’s Programme is as inclusive and representative as possible, especially for youth. Respondents are invited to identify the challenges that concern them most and, for each, to respond to a series of questions exploring the underlying reasons and possible solutions, linked transversally to UNESCO’s programmes.

The support of the National Commissions is invaluable in getting as many responses as possible. The Secretariat kindly asks you to relay this survey to the networks, partners and donors in your respective countries by inviting them to participate. In view of our special focus on youth, particular attention should be paid to youth organizations and networks, educational institutions and other relevant partners. Publishing the survey on your office website and social media accounts would also help disseminate it. The survey will be available in all the official languages of the United Nations and some 20 other languages - check the survey for the languages currently available.

UNESCO warmly thanks the National Commissions for translating this survey into their own national languages.

17 – 26 June 2020 – World Heritage City Lab, Online.

The World Heritage City Lab is an innovation laboratory to analyze, assess, and explore strategies for the protection and management of World Heritage (WH) properties in the urban context. As cities start to slowly resume their activity in the context of the global pandemic of COVID-19, the City Lab offers an opportunity also to reflect on ways to recover the notion of heritage cities as thriving urban centres using heritage-based strategies to build back the cities to be stronger, more sustainable, more resilient, and more deeply connected to their histories and landscape.
The workshop will be over 5 online sessions of 2 hours each from 17 to 26 June 2020. This workshop will help strengthen the international community of experts working closely with UNESCO to support the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and the Historic Urban Landscapes Recommendation in diverse World Heritage cities. On the successful completion of the Online World Heritage City Lab, if not already so, participants will have the opportunity to become part of this community of experts on the UNESCO HUL Recommendation and urban heritage.

The World Heritage City Lab will be using Microsoft Teams as a collaborative platform to allow participants access the preparatory and working materials. The online sessions will be held on Zoom and will have simultaneous interpretation in English and French.

For more information: Online World Heritage City Lab

18 June 2020 – Inter-regional Webinar “Mobilizing Intellectual from West and Central Africa”, Online.

This inter-regional webinar will bring together intellectuals, policy makers and key actors in social, economic and cultural life of all generations and both genders, from the Western and Central regions.

The main objective of the online round table “Mobilizing the elites of West and Central Africa” is to pursue and deepen African, multidisciplinary and prospective reflection on the impact of the multidimensional crisis of COVID-19 and actions to be taken in order to better base public policies and practices on scientific evidence.

The panelists and speakers will thus have the opportunity to contribute to rethinking Africa and reorienting it in the desired direction. The diversity of actors and profiles will allow to capture the best in the methodological approaches of the different disciplines.

For more information: Inter-regional Webinar
Contact: M.toure-thiam@unesco.org


This webinar focuses on the opportunities and challenges experienced by young people in Latin America and the Caribbean regarding water in the context of the COVID19 pandemic.

The aim is to promote the exchange of ideas regarding water and generate recommendations to minimize risks, overcome barriers and take advantage of possible opportunities to guarantee water security in the region. Improving and guaranteeing access to drinking water and adequate sanitation are priorities so that no one is left behind in Latin America and the Caribbean. They are recognized as a fundamental human right, and are a commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Latin America and the Caribbean has an estimated 165 million people between the ages of 10 and 24. Young people are important partners and actors in achieving sustainable development and peace, as well as a priority group for action.

Contact: N.webley@unesco.org

The joint webinar series is organized around the Framework for reopening of schools, published in April 2020 in collaboration with UNICEF and the World Bank, and aims to support governments in strengthening distance learning and facilitating the reopening of schools, as part of the Global Education Coalition’s efforts on COVID-19. The series includes 5 webinars broadcasted over the month of June.

For more information: Webinar series on the reopening of schools
Contact: a.domiter@unesco.org

22 June 2020 – Webinar on “What role can African history play in addressing the social and human consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic of the continent?”, Online.

This webinar is part of the General History of Africa mainstream of the Humanities Pillar of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme of UNESCO.

Its aim will be to see how the history of Africa can help in analyzing the social/societal and human consequences of COVID-19 on the continent and in addressing the challenges posed by this pandemic.

It follows up on the webinar which UNESCO organized on 7 May 2020 on the theme "Imagining the world to come – How does Africa view the COVID crisis and its consequences".

Its purpose is to make a brief overview of the current healthcare and social situation on the continent, analyze the social/societal consequences that COVID-19 is likely to have on African societies as well as the challenges it poses to them and, with the light that history, particularly recent history, can shed on the development of pandemics/epidemics on the continent, propose possible solutions to meet these challenges.

The webinar targets social scientists, historians, experts on famines, economists among others.

Contact: L.Diagne@unesco.org

22 June –18 July 2020 – Central Asian workshops on Journalism, “Fake news” & Disinformation, Online.

The workshops for journalists and Media and Information Literacy specialists will take place in Nur-Sultan, Dushanbe and Bishkek during 2020. The final dates will be defined jointly with European experts.

Universities, media NGOs implementing MIL projects and journalism teachers will participate in the event. The trainer is an international expert recommended by UNESCO Headquarters invited by UNESCO Almaty. Training Materials in local languages will be provided by UNESCO Almaty.

For more information: Webinar on Journalism, Fake news" & Disinformation
Contact: s.karpov@unesco.org

On 23 June the GEM Report will host its first-ever virtual launch of the 2020 GEM Report on inclusion and education: All means all. The webinar will include a presentation of the 2020 GEM Report and an interactive discussion with inclusion and education champions, education policy makers and donors.

Moderated by the GEM Report’s Advisory Board Chair and former Prime Minister Helen Clark the webinar will offer a deep dive into the 2020 GEM Report’s findings and recommendations. The session will include welcome remarks from UNESCO’s Director-General Audrey Azoulay, a presentation by the Report’s Director Manos Antoninis and an interactive dialogue on inclusion education with Brina Kei Maxino from the Philippines, a teacher (tbc), DFID Minister, and the Minister of Education from Sierra Leone.

Join our first ever virtual global launch to hear from inclusion champions, ministers, teachers and celebrities from different corners of the world whose stories and efforts go to the very heart of the theme of the 2020 GEM Report - inclusion.

For more information: 2020 GEM Report Global launch
Contact: K.linkins@unesco.org

25 June 2020 – UNESCO Cities Platform online Meeting

To help reflect on urban policies and plans, and develop innovative local actions and practices towards building sustainable cities of tomorrow post-COVID-19 recovery phase and beyond, the UCP will bring together diverse city stakeholders and actors to discuss the evolution of cities’ responses in view of the different phases of COVID-19 though three e-discussions on the following topics: 1. Cities’ responses to the pandemic; 2. Learning from early recovery, and; 3. A more resilient future for cities.

For more information: UNESCO Cities Platform Online Meeting

28 June 2020 – Call for nominations 2020 UNESCO International Literacy Prizes

The nomination process is taking place via an online platform. An applicant can request the access to the online application form through this link: www.unesco.org/ilp/account. The deadline for the applicants to submit a candidature to the nominating entities is set on 28 June 2020. The deadline for nominations is Sunday 12 July 2020.

For more information: UNESCO International Literacy Prizes
Contact: literacyprizes@unesco.org

29 June 2020 – Webinar “Is it possible to talk about Evil in the time of the pandemic?”, Online.

The world is in the grip of Covid-19, and there is a deeper concern about pandemics in general and other global diseases, including climate change. Today, it is necessary to open a conversation about the diseases of the world through the concept of “evil. A philosophical approach to the pandemic is important to understand what is at stake in such a context and what we can learn from it about our world. Covid-19 forces humanity to focus on death and fear and reintroduces existential questioning into our individual and collective lives.
Since it accelerates our growing concern for the future of the planet while at the same time triggering other social, economic and political crises, this special webinar will focus on the pandemic. It is derived from the conference on “Confronting Evil”, which will be organized in collaboration with the College de France and has been rescheduled to November 2020.

Its objective is also to reflect on the importance of advancing philosophy and the human sciences in general to deepen the understanding of this pandemic and the global transformations taking place.

For more information: “Is it possible to talk about Evil in the time of the pandemic?”
Contact: C.guinet@unesco.org

UNESCO publications

➢ “Biennale of Luanda Pan-African for the Culture of Peace Final Report” This report reflects this spirit of Luanda, one of rich debate, experience sharing, innovation and partnership, expressed through a wide range of sessions and challenging, frank and robust discussions. The Culture of Peace in Africa is much more than a concept; it is the future of the entire continent at stake, underscoring the urgent need to unite forces essential to its development. With this perspective in mind, it is important to mobilize around a common objective: to ensure that the construction of a democratic Africa is based on a sustainable, humanistic, social, cultural and inclusive basis.

➢ “The Resource Mobilization Guidebook”, in French language. In light of the positive evolution in the mobilization of voluntary contributions over recent years, UNESCO can be more ambitious in setting its resource mobilization targets. At USD 453 million, the funding gap in the draft programme and budget for 2020-2021 represents an increase of 30% over that identified for 2018-2019. Going forward, in order to meaningfully play its role in the achievement of the SDGs, and to maintain its relevance and visibility in an increasingly competitive environment, UNESCO needs to step up its resource mobilization performance – leveraging additional financial resources, diversifying its financial partners, working to increase the predictability of its resources, and accessing know-how and capacity from its public and private partners.

Appointment of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions for UNESCO

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

In Bulgaria, Mr. Georg Georgiev has been appointed President, succeeding Mr. Yuri Shterk.

In Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Ms. Silinthone Sacklokham has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. Somboun Masouvanh.

In Sudan, Ms. Wafaa Seed Ahmed Mohamed Noureldin has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. AbdulGadir Nourreddin.

In Uruguay, Mr. Marcello Figueredo has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr. Nicolas Pôns.

Firmin Edouard Matoko