Sir/Madam,

The 204th session of the Executive Board (4-17 April) is fast approaching. You may find the provisional agenda and the timetable of work under this link.

As already announced, our traditional meeting of the National Commissions will take place on 11 and 12 April 2018 in Room IV at UNESCO Headquarters from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. The invitation has been sent to you previously. Please find attached herewith the draft agenda of our meeting. I should be very grateful if you could confirm your participation through the network of National Commissions (natcom@unesco.org), if not yet done.

I look forward to meeting many of you on this occasion.

UNESCO Education Sector Monthly Digest – March 2018

I am pleased to share with you UNESCO’s Education Monthly Digest of March, under this link, where you can find an interesting video on “celebrating multilingualism with the SDG4” and how UNESCO continue its work to preserve linguistic diversity and promote mother tongue-based multilingual education. The Digest is also available in French and Spanish.

Contact: edknowledge@unesco.org

Nominations for 2018 UNESCO Prize for Girls’ and Women’s Education now open

I am pleased to inform you that the 2018 edition of the UNESCO Prize for Girls’ and Women’s Education was launched on 8 March, International Women’s Day.

Thanks to the generous support from the Government of the People’s Republic of China, this Prize was established to honour outstanding contributions to advancing girls’ and women’s education. Please consult the Prize Webpage for the nomination process and more information on the Prize. We invite you to share the information widely with those doing excellent work in your country to advance gender equality to, in and through education.

Nominations should be submitted to UNESCO by Governments of Member States through their National Commission and Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, and by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in official
partnership with UNESCO, via an online platform available from 8 March until 11 May 2018.

Members of National Commissions are required to use their generic accounts to access the platform. UNESCO has created a generic user name for each National Commission. This account is linked to the main e-mail address communicated by each National Commission, and the information related to it and the associated password were communicated in June 2016.

If you want to receive a reminder with the user name and password, and/or to change the e-mail attached to the generic account, please inform us accordingly at natcom@unesco.org. You can find more information regarding the user accounts of National Commissions and Permanent Delegations on the website for Member States unesco.int, on the page “How to use this site”.

Contact: Mr Leyong Gao (GWEprize@unesco.org)

Registration to #MuseumWeek 2018 (23-29 April 2018) is open

As you may know, in 2015 the UNESCO General Conference adopted the Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society. UNESCO has long recognized that museums are key players in promoting the values of heritage, diversity and intercultural dialogue.

These cultural institutions are living laboratories of creativity, inspiring new ideas and the creation of solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing societies today. In order to support the museum community in its efforts to promote their work digitally, UNESCO has decided to actively support #MuseumWeek, the world’s first cultural event on social media. This well-known initiative brings together more than 4,500 cultural institutions from 100 countries online each year.

The theme of this fifth edition – to be held from 23 to 29 April 2018 – is “living together,” focusing on the values of tolerance, and citizenship. The event aims to infuse the digital environment, which is often dominated by intolerance, with the cultural, artistic, technical, and scientific content promoted by museums.

In an effort to increase the number of participating institutions, especially in Africa and Asia, we are seeking your cooperation to encourage your networks and partners to register at http://www.museum-week.org/register so that they can take part in this global cultural initiative.

Please do not hesitate to contact Ms Armelle Arrou, Chief of Public Relations and Partnerships (a.arrou@unesco.org), Sector for External Relations and Public Information, should you require further information.

23 April 2018 – World Book and Copyright Day 2018

UNESCO has celebrated this day since 1995, providing an opportunity to reflect on ways to better disseminate the culture of the written word and to allow all individuals to access it, through literacy programmes, open educational resources, and support for careers in publishing, book shops, libraries, and schools.

The year 2018 is special, marking the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. UNESCO is working to promote and disseminate literacy programmes as a means to teach about human rights.
Once more this year, many activities will be held at UNESCO Headquarters in order to share our love for books in an instructive and entertaining way.

The 23rd of April will also open Athens’ (Greece) mandate as 2018 World Book Capital, a title that will be celebrated with participants from the previous title-holder, Conakry (Republic of Guinea) in a handover ceremony.

To give an international dimension to the celebration, an interactive map featuring events organized by librarians, booksellers, and publishers around the world will be produced online.

We welcome and encourage the support and cooperation of National Commissions in the celebration.

If you wish to propose ideas for activities and initiatives for the celebration, please contact Ms Caroline Bordoni (c.bordoni@unesco.org).

More information on this Day will be available soon at unesco.org/new/wbcd.

Contact: Mr Ian Denison (i.denison@unesco.org)


This year, UNESCO will lead the 25th celebration of World Press Freedom Day. UNESCO, in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Ghana, will organize the main event in Accra, Ghana from 2 to 3 May, as well as the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize Ceremony, which will take place on 3 May.

This year’s global theme is “Keeping Power in Check: Media, Justice and The Rule of Law”, and will cover issues of media and the transparency of the political process, the independence and media literacy of the judicial system, and the accountability of state institutions towards the public. The Day will also examine contemporary challenges of ensuring press freedom online.

The celebration will feature a wide range of sessions (plenaries, debates, lightning talks, etc.). Two other components of the main celebration will heighten its impact. First, an Academic Conference on the Safety of Journalists will foster greater synergies between academic research and the work of media development practitioners. Second, a youth newsroom will sensitize young reporters and media students to emerging challenges regarding freedom of expression, through live coverage of a major international event while being mentored by media professionals. One photo exhibition and a film screening, as well as various cultural performances, will be organized.

Please consult via this link on the World Press Freedom Day 2018 and the Prize to get more information.

I encourage National Commissions to disseminate this information to interested participants and register here to participate in the main event of the World Press Freedom Day. You are also encouraged to join these celebrations around the world in favor of the fundamental right of press freedom.

Contact: Ms Sylvie Coudray (s.coudray@unesco.org) and Ms Saorla McCabe (s.mccabe@unesco.org)
UNESCO Publications

The 2018 Gender Review of the Global Education Monitoring Report: Meeting our commitments to gender equality in education was published by UNESCO most recently. In this sixth Gender Review, in a series that began in 2011, the Global Education Monitoring Report team maintains the focus on a broad conception of gender equality that extends beyond counting boys and girls in classrooms. The review’s first part examines disparities in participation and skills, in education and political leadership positions, and in selected aspects of infrastructure and curricula. It also examines gender issues in professional development by exploring the role of education in three other SDGs: those concerning agriculture, health, and water and sanitation. The second part of the review analyses institutions, laws and policies to explore ways to determine and enforce accountability for gender equality in education.

Following the 2016 UNESCO international conference on “Safeguard African World Heritage as a Driver of Sustainable Development”, UNESCO launched a publication on World Heritage for Sustainable Development in Africa recently. This publication addresses the challenges of safeguarding World Heritage in the Africa Region in the face of rapid contemporary development, and advocates for the mainstreaming of the World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy (WH-SDP) into regional and national policies. It highlights the achievements made in the management and conservation of cultural and natural heritage in Africa, reflects on the dynamic nature of this heritage, and provides recommendations to ensure its safeguarding. The English-French bilingual version is available via this link.

The World Water Development Report is the reference publication of the UN System on the status of freshwater resources worldwide. The 2018 edition of the World Water Development Report (WWDR 2018) was launched recently by the Director-General of UNESCO at the 8th World Water Forum in Brazil. Titled “Nature-based solutions for water”, this Report seeks to inform policy and decision-makers, inside and outside the water community, about the potential of nature-based solutions (NBS) to address contemporary water management challenges across all sectors, and particularly regarding water for agriculture, sustainable cities, disaster risk reduction and water quality. The full report is now available in English, French and Spanish. You may find more information via this link.

Appointments of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions (February / March 2018)

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

In Belarus, Ms Natalya Schasnovich has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Vadim Pisarevich.

In Burundi, Ms Céline Nimbona has been appointed Secretary-General a.i. (since November 2017), succeeding the late Mr Salvotor Nyabenda.

In Cabo Verde, Mr Abraão Vicente has been appointed President, succeeding Mr António Correia e Silva, and Ms Stéphanie Brito Duarte has been appointed Secretary-General (since December 2017), succeeding Ms Maria da Gloria Rendall Ribeiro Serrano Santos.

In Chile, Mr Gerardo Varela has been appointed President, succeeding Ms Adriana Del Piano Puelma.

In Dominica, Ms Chandler Hyacinth has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms Sonia Williams.
In Kenya, Ms Amina C. Mohamed has been appointed President (since January 2018), succeeding Mr Rashid A. Aman.

In Libya, Mr Abdulmunem Mohamed Abulanha has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Othman Abdel Jalil Mohamed.

In Nepal, Mr Giriraj Mani Pokharel has been appointed Chairperson, succeeding Mr Gopal Man Shrestha.

In Palestine, Mr Mahmoud Ismael has been appointed President, succeeding Mr Mahmoud Ismaile Ali.

In Portugal, Mr José Filipe Moraes Cabral has been appointed President, succeeding Mr Álvaro Mendonça e Moura.

In Spain, Mr Fernando Valenzuela Marzo has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Juan Maria Alzina de Aguilar.

In Sweden, Ms Lena Sommestad has been appointed President, succeeding Ms Inger Davidson.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Nicolas Kassianides