Sir/Madam,

Further to the information provided on the 202nd session of the Executive Board (4 to 18 October 2017) in our last newsletter, I am pleased to inform you that the provisional agenda of that session is available on line.

I note also that a letter of invitation to the 4th Interregional Meeting of the National Commissions to be held on Friday 27 October 2017 at UNESCO Headquarters on the eve of the General Conference, was recently sent electronically to all National Commissions. As requested in the letter, we look forward to receiving from you, proposals of topics for discussion. Based on your initial feedback, we will then narrow down the topics in a survey to be sent to you shortly.

We should be grateful if you could confirm your participation to natcom@unesco.org, if not already done. I look forward to seeing many of you on that occasion.

UNESCO Education Sector Monthly Digest – September 2017

As usual, I am pleased to share with you this month’s Education Monthly Digest where you can find interesting information, for example, on Exploring literacy in a digital world and gender inequality in STEM education, under this link. The Digest is also available in French and Spanish.

Contact: edknowledge@unesco.org


The call for nominations for the fifth edition of the UNESCO-Hamdan bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Prize for Outstanding Practice and Performance in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Teachers is opened until 31 October.

The prize is awarded every two years and it recognizes initiatives that contribute to improving educational practices around the world, with priority given to developing countries and to marginalized and disadvantaged communities.
Candidates should be international or national non-governmental organizations, as well as institutions or local, national and regional communities who are working to enhance the performance and effectiveness of teachers.

Further information about the Prize can be found at: https://en.unesco.org/teachers/Hamdan-prize and www.ha.ae.

I encourage you to disseminate this information to relevant partners, NGOs and institutions in your country.

Contact: teacherprize@unesco.org

1 November 2017 – Strengthening accountability in the implementation of SDG4-Education 2030, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France

Two ministerial level panel debates themed “Accountability: A diversity of approaches” and “Accountability in the Financing of Education” will be organized on the sidelines of the 39th session of the General Conference. These panel debates aim to share knowledge and experiences on what countries have undertaken, and how to move the Education 2030 agenda forward.

Such reflection is expected to enhance our understanding of the key challenges, as well as opportunities, for strengthening accountability in the implementation of SDG 4 – Education 2030 commitments and the right to inclusive, equitable and quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. In addition, the debates will provide further peer insights into other changes occurring at the country level in the implementation of the new education agenda to inform the way forward.

By featuring the multitude of approaches, policy measures, strategies and tools used by governments in the context of SDG4, Panel 1 discussion will identify the enabling environments required for effective accountability across the diversity of contexts. Panel 2 will examine ways in which improved accountability can improve efficiency and equity in domestic financing of education.

Contact: Ms Melika Loncarevic (education2030@unesco.org)

6 November 2017 – Responding to Cultural Cleansing, Preventing Violent Extremism, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France

This symposium will include a high-level panel discussion from noon to 2:00 p.m. in Room X and a screening of the documentary film "The Destruction of Memory" from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in Room IV.

The event will focus on the wide-ranging social and cultural repercussions of attacks on culture – including the denial of cultural rights, the displacement of peoples and the erosion of cultural expressions. In particular, it will address UNESCO’s successful efforts to rehabilitate the mausoleums of Timbuktu, highlighting the importance of culture for healing communities recovering from conflict.

This event is one of a series of events organized under the theme “UNESCO’s Soft Power Today” highlighting the Organization’s use of soft power across its mandate over the past eight years.

Contact: Ms Marissa Potasiak (m.potasiak@unesco.org)
10 November 2017 – World Science Day for Peace and Development (WSDPD)

The theme for this year’s celebration is “Science for Global Understanding”, recognizing the role of science as driver of the three pillars of sustainable development: environmental, social and economic, as well as in the promotion of peace.

This year, UNESCO is continuing its close collaboration with international networks of science centers and museums worldwide, including the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC), as well as regional networks such as Asia Pacific Network of Science Centres (ASPAC), the European Network of Science Centres and Museums (Ecsite), the North Africa and Middle East Science centers network (NAMES), the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) India, the Latin American and Caribbean Network for the Popularization of Science and Technology (RedPOP) and the Southern African Association of Science and Technology (SAASTECT).

Engaging and empowering people through science is crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). That is why I strongly encourage National Commissions and other actors around the topic of science for peace and development to join us in celebrating the day by organizing your own event or activity in keeping with this year’s theme.

For more information on the Day, please visit the devoted UNESCO website.

Contact: Ms Susan Shneegans (s.schneegans@unesco.org)

18 November 2017 – World Philosophy Day

By celebrating World Philosophy Day each year, UNESCO underlines the enduring value of philosophy for the development of human thought, for each culture and for each individual.

A range of activities will be held around the world to celebrate the World Philosophy Day this year. For instance, the 16th International Encounters on New Philosophical Practices will take place in Rhodes (Greece) in partnership with the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme. The Encounters provide a forum for everyone who is interested in the practice of philosophy in all its forms, including the least traditional. They enable reflection on how to make philosophy accessible to as many people as possible, outside its traditional spaces and modes of expression – through primary and secondary schools, hospitals, cafés, evening classes, public libraries, theatres, cinema, businesses and other organizations, etc.

MOST will also associate itself with the 2017 Ciudad de las Ideas, organized in Puebla (Mexico) from 17 to 19 November by UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Andrés Roemer. The 2017 event is titled “Beyond X”, and includes cutting-edge scientists and entrepreneurs who will discuss where humanity is going in the face of technological change.

This Day concerns everyone for whom philosophy matters. If your National Commission would like to organize activities or events related to this Day, do not hesitate to inform us and send brief details to wpd@unesco.org. For more details on this Day, please consult this website.

Contact: Mr John Crowley (j.crowley@unesco.org)
UNESCO Publications

- The report *Cracking the code: Girls’ and women’s education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)*, aims to ‘crack the code’, or to decipher the factors that hinder or facilitate girls’ and women’s participation in STEM education, and what can be done to promote girls’ and women’s engagement with STEM. A major concern includes how to address the lower participation and learning achievement of girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education. It is available in English only under this link.

- Edited by the Coordinator of the UNITWIN Network on Interreligious Dialogue for Intercultural Understanding, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia, the book *Interculturalism at the Crossroads, Comparative Perspectives on Concepts, Policies and Practices* helps clarify how interculturalism is conceptualized and operationalized across the world. In the context of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (IDRC) 2013-2022, it offers theoretical examinations, policy discussion and practical explorations of its uptake across the world. The book is available in English and French.

- The Technical Series 129 of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC), a report entitled *What are Marine Ecological Time Series telling us about the ocean? A status report*, was released recently with the support of the Korea Institute for Ocean Science and Technology (KIOST). This first report presents an analysis and overview of oceanic trends through the end of 2012, based on a collection of over 340 in situ marine ecological time series data, and supplemented with satellite-based spatio-temporal sea surface temperature and chlorophyll background fields. With this report, the IOC is showcasing the importance of the ship-based biogeochemical and ecological time series as one of the most valuable tools to characterize and quantify ocean ecosystems. You can download the full report via this link.

**Appointments of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions (August /September 2017)**

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

In Nigeria, Mr Kehinde A. Ayotunde has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mrs Chioma Nwadei.

In Peru, Mr Idel Vexler Talledo has been appointed President, succeeding Ms Marilú Martens.

Yours sincerely,

Eric Pält