Sir/Madam,

Let me first extend my sincere thanks to those of you who participated in the meeting of the National Commissions on 10 to 12 April last, organized on the margins of the 206th session of the Executive Board. I was pleased to note that over 120 participants, representing 90 National Commissions/Permanent Delegations, attended this meeting. You may find under this link the report of this meeting.

During this meeting, the Annual Report of National Commissions 2018 was launched, as well as the new Online Platform of National Commissions (https://unesco.sharepoint.com/sites/natcom). Allow me to take this opportunity to thank all National Commissions who kindly contributed to this 6th edition of Annual Report. I would also like to encourage you to explore the Online Platform and welcome any suggestions that you may have with regard to the layout or technical modalities of this new communication tool. The Users Guide of the Platform is enclosed for your reference.

As announced in our meeting, the 6th Interregional Meeting of National Commissions is envisaged to take place on 16 November 2019, on the margins of the 40th session of the General Conference, and the 7th Interregional Meeting will be hosted by the Swiss National Commission in Lugano, from 25 to 29 May 2020. More information will follow on the themes for discussion of both these meetings, for the consideration of the National Commissions.

Celebration of anniversaries with which UNESCO will be associated in 2020-2021 - Appeals and second call for nominations

The call for Appeals and new Proposals by Member States from unrepresented or under-represented regions concerning the celebration of anniversaries with which UNESCO could be associated in 2020-2021 has been released, with a deadline for replies set to 17 June 2019, in accordance with the revised criteria and procedures relative the celebration of anniversaries with which UNESCO could be associated, adopted by the Executive Board through 206 EX/Decision 30.

The applications are reopened for National Commissions for UNESCO from Africa, Arab States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific.

Each Member State from the regions listed above may submit two requests for the celebration of anniversaries in association with UNESCO and preferably, one
of these would relate to gender equality. Please find here the **Priority Gender Equality Guidelines**.

The Member States having anniversaries approved by the 39th session of the General Conference (check here the [List of anniversaries to be celebrated in 2018-2019 in association with UNESCO](https://teams.unesco.org/ORG/eri/anniversaries/)) are kindly reminded that they are responsible for the implementation of the activities relating to the **celebration of anniversaries** and must submit to the Director-General, on completion of the project, a **detailed activity report** on the results achieved and their usefulness to the Member State(s) and UNESCO.

Circular letter: **ADG/PAX/19/M.21**

On-line forms for the submission by the Member States of new proposals and for the submission of reports: [https://teams.unesco.org/ORG/eri/anniversaries/](https://teams.unesco.org/ORG/eri/anniversaries/).

**Deadline for submissions: 17 June 2019**

Further information can be obtained on the Member States’ website [http://www.unesco.org/new/en/member-states/anniversaries/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/member-states/anniversaries/); for other information please contact: Ms Monica Crutescu (mo.crutescu@unesco.org).

**UNESCO Education Sector Monthly Digest – May 2019**

I am pleased to share with you UNESCO’s Education Monthly Digest of May, under [this link](https://teams.unesco.org/), where you can find information about the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education and other interesting stories. The Digest is also available in [French](https://teams.unesco.org/ORG/eri/anniversaries/) and [Spanish](https://teams.unesco.org/ORG/eri/anniversaries/).

Contact: edknowledge@unesco.org

**28 May 2019 – Deadline for the submission of nomination for the UNESCO Prize for Girls’ and Women’s Education**

Established in 2015 and funded by the Government of the People’s Republic of China, the Prize honors outstanding and innovative practices advancing girls’ and women’s education. It consists of two US $50,000 awards to help further the work of laureates in this field.

Governments of all Member States, in consultation with their National Commissions, as well as NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO, are invited to nominate up to three individuals, institutions or organizations who have made strong contributions in favor of girls’ and women’s education.

Nominated projects must meet the eligibility and **selection criteria** set by the Prize. They must be established and running for at least two years, show potential to be replicable and scalable, and contribute to one or more of the priority areas of the Prize.

Nominations must be submitted in English or French via the [online platform](https://teams.unesco.org/), only accessible to UNESCO Member States and NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO. This platform can be opened to external candidates at the Member States’ or NGOs’ request.

The deadline for submission is **28 May 2019** (midnight, Paris time).

Contact: gweprize@unesco.org
31 May 2019 – Deadline for applications: UNESCO Global Geoparks Mentorship and Knowledge Exchange Programme

Within the United Nations, UNESCO alone has a mandate to support research and capacity building in Earth Sciences. The International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP) is one of its flagships.

The IGGP of UNESCO is launching a Mentorships and Knowledge Exchange programme, which will contribute, in particular, to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4, 8 and 17.

Please find in the Annex the details of the call for applications from both qualified representatives of sites aspiring to join the UNESCO Global Geopark network (‘Trainees’) as well as experienced managers of UNESCO Global Geoparks (‘Mentors’) who will provide Mentorship and Knowledge Exchange opportunity to the representatives of aspiring sites to join the UNESCO Global Geopark network.

If you wish to become a mentor or trainee, please submit your expression of interest to the IGGP Secretariat by 31 May 2019.

National Commissions are encouraged to distribute this call within your networks.

Contact: Ms Marie-Laure Faber (ml.faber@unesco.org)

11 - 12 June 2019 – Workshop “Toward the establishment of BRIDGES: An International Sustainability Science Coalition”, UNESCO HQs, Paris

UNESCO’s Management of Social Transformation (MOST) Programme is organizing the 2nd Workshop with the theme “Building Resilience in Defense of Global Environments and Societies”, bringing together experts from UNESCO and partner institutions.

Since December 2017, exploratory discussions have taken place between UNESCO, the International Council for Philosophy & Human Sciences (CIPSH), and various institutional and organizational partners internationally active in the sustainability domain, concerning a proposal to establish a global coalition on sustainability science.

This initiative builds upon the refined sustainability science paradigm inaugurated in 2017 with the launch of UNESCO’s Guidelines for Sustainability Science in Research and Education which the coalition will be directly working to implement by providing concrete case studies, replicable model curricula and transdisciplinary and territories-based best-practices, as well as co-production models for adaptation, application and, where possible, scaling in different contexts.

The initiation phase is designed to define the nature and parameters of the proposed coalition, including whether an alternative name or mechanism might be preferable to achieve the substantive objective of promoting and operationalizing sustainability science. It will formalize terms of reference, an operational protocol, a governance structure and an activity plan, clearly identifying short, medium and long-term ambitions.

The two-day workshop of UNESCO HQs in Paris will more specifically produce a first draft outline of the terms of reference and protocol.
Contact: Mr John Crowley (j.crowley@unesco.org) and Ms Eve El Chehaly (e.el-chehaly@unesco.org)
30 June - 10 July 2019 – 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee, Baku, Azerbaijan

Organized by UNESCO with the Republic of Azerbaijan, the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee will meet in Baku in 2019.

During this session, the Committee reviews the state of conservation of World Heritage sites, inscribes new sites on the World Heritage List, and debates on other matters involved in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The General Information and the Provisional Agenda of this session are now available in the dedicated website of the World Heritage Centre.

Please note that all requests to participate in the 43rd session of the Committee must be submitted online under this link. All delegates and those who wish to attend the 43rd session as observers are kindly advised to register preferably before 1 June 2019. To register, please use the registration code provided in the invitation letter addressed to either the Permanent Delegation, National Commission or the specific organization.

As a side event, the World Heritage Site Managers’ Forum 2019 will be organized in Baku, from 26 June to 4 July. More detailed information about this Forum is available under this link.

Contact: information@43whcbaku2019.az

National Commissions’ Community Board – sharing initiatives

- The special session of the National Commission of the Republic of Belarus for UNESCO will be held on May 23, 2019 in Minsk to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the country’s membership in UNESCO. The National Commission of the Republic of Belarus for UNESCO consists of the Ministers of Education, Culture, Information, Sports and Tourism, the Head of the Academy of Sciences of Belarus, rectors of leading universities, museum directors as well as heads of non-governmental organizations. The anniversary is an excellent opportunity to appreciate the longstanding and fruitful cooperation between UNESCO and the Republic of Belarus.

  This event will take place under the honorary chairmanship of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, Chair of the National Commission for UNESCO, Mr Vladimir Makei, and will be attended by special guests from UNESCO, distinguished figures of Belarusian culture, education and science, representatives of NGOs.

UNESCO Publications

- As the sixth in a series of annual, thematic reports, the 2019 edition of the United Nations World Water Development Report (WWDR) focuses on the theme of “Leaving No One Behind”. It argues that fulfilling the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation for all can also significantly contribute to the achievement of the broad set of goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: from food and energy security, to economic development and environmental sustainability. Based on the latest data, this report’s findings clearly illustrate the need to make substantial progress towards delivering on the 2030 Agenda promise of reaching the most vulnerable. This latest Report, coordinated by UNESCO, is the result of a collaborative effort of the UN-Water Family. This Report is now available in English, French and Spanish.

- The latest issue of the UNESCO Courier, on the theme “Reinventing Cities”, is full of stories of creativity, innovation and resilience. UNESCO, home to no less than five cities networks, each of which is working to
harness the extraordinary capacity for innovation and connection that is hallmark of cities, is working to bring these networks together, encouraging them to exchange and collaborate on the policies and practices that can respond to the growing needs of urban residents. We wish that this issue of the UNESCO Courier will inspire and encourage you to engage closely with these questions in your own city or community. This publication is available in six languages under this link.

➢ The newly published working paper Artificial Intelligence in Education: Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Development, written for education policymakers, anticipates the extent to which AI affects the education sector to allow for informed and appropriate policy responses. This paper gathers examples of the introduction of AI in education worldwide, particularly in developing countries, as part of the multiple ways to accomplish Sustainable Development Goal 4, which strives for equitable, quality education for all. This working paper is available in English only.

Appointments of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions (April/May 2019)

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

In Iceland, Ms Sæunn Stefánsdóttir has been appointed Chairperson, succeeding Mr Gunnar Haraldsson.

In Morocco, Mr Saïd Amzazi has been appointed President, succeeding Mr Nasser Bourita.

In Palestine, Mr Ali Zidan Abu Zuhri has been appointed President, succeeding Mr Mahmoud Ismael.

In Spain, Ms Belen Llera has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Fernando Valenzuela.

In Ukraine, Ms Natalia Shakuro has been appointed Executive Secretary, succeeding Ms Oksana Kyzyma.

In the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Mr Colin McInnes has been appointed Chairperson, succeeding Ms Beth Taylor.

Yours sincerely,

Firmin Edouard Matoko