The Assistant Director-General
for Priority Africa and External Relations

To Secretaries-General
of National Commissions
for UNESCO

29 January 2019

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Sir/Madam,

At the outset, I would like to extend to you and your families my best wishes for success and happiness in 2019.

2019 marks the International Year of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements (IYPT 2019) and the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL 2019). During this year, many interesting events and activities will be organized around the world. I encourage you to find out more from the dedicated webpage (IYPT 2019: https://www.iypt2019.org/; IYIL 2019: https://en.iyil2019.org/) and join us in the celebrations!

As requested by many of you, we are preparing the Provisional list of UNESCO Main Events and Main UNESCO Publications in 2019 as well as the provisional Calendar for the submission of nominations, reports, calls and applications, which may facilitate your planning. These documents will be sent to you shortly.

As announced last December, allow me to reiterate my call for your contributions for the 6th edition of the Annual Report of National Commissions. I would also like to remind you that this edition will focus on your actions undertaken to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the progress made in your respective countries, with a view to promoting a more proactive and coherent approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We kindly ask you to send your contributions to natcom@unesco.org no later than 8 February 2019, if you have not done so yet.

I also take this opportunity to inform you that the next meeting of National Commissions will take place on the mornings of 10 to 12 April 2019, in the margins of the 206th session of the Executive Board. We will provide you with more details on the meeting in due course.

UNESCO Education Sector Monthly Digest – January 2019

I am pleased to share with you UNESCO’s Education Monthly Digest of January, under this link, in which you can find out the most updated news about the celebration of the first-ever International Day of Education on 24 January 2019. The Digest is also available in French and Spanish.

Contact: edknowledge@unesco.org
13 February 2019 – Celebration of World Radio Day 2019

This year, UNESCO will celebrate the 8th edition of World Radio Day. World Radio Day 2019 will be focused on the theme of “Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace”. Broadcasts that provide a platform for dialogue and democratic debate over issues, such as migration or violence against women, can help to raise awareness among listeners and inspire understanding for new perspectives in paving the way for positive action.

Radio programming can also build tolerance and surpass the differences separating groups by uniting them under common goals and causes, like ensuring education for one’s children or addressing local health concerns.

I invite National Commissions and your partners to join us to celebrate the impact of radio in pursuing of a more peaceful and tolerant world. You are also encouraged to find out more information via the homepage of the World Radio Day 2019: https://www.diamundialradio.org/.

Contact: Mr Blake Schierman (b.schierman@unesco.org)

15 February 2019 – Deadline for the submission of nomination for the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize 2019

The UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize is intended to reward “a person, organization or institution that has made a notable contribution to the defence and/or promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world, especially if risks have been involved”.

The governments of Member States are invited to nominate candidates for the Prize 2019, in consultation with their National Commissions, as well as international and regional professional non-governmental organizations, working in the field of journalism and freedom of expression.

I would like to remind you that the deadline for submission of candidates for the Prize is 15 February 2019. Nominations for the Prize should be submitted by filling out this form in English or French and sending it by post or by email.

Contact : Ms Sylvie Coudray (s.coudray@unesco.org)


IGCP is a joint programme of UNESCO and the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS). It supports scientific projects related to the Earth sciences across the world, selected by the IGCP Council and Scientific Board and involving one of the five themes that constitute the Programme: earth resources, global change, Geohazards, Hydrogeology and Geodynamic.

On the occasion of the IGCP Council 2019, an Open Session will be organized in the Headquarters of UNESCO for the public, especially IGCP National Committees, representatives of UNESCO’s Member States and cooperating organizations. The provisional agenda of this meeting is available under this link.

Member States and the public are invited to participate in this meeting and contribute with constructive comments regarding IGCP projects.

Contact: Ms Ozlem Adiyaman Lopes (o.adiyaman@unesco.org)
4 - 8 March 2019 – Mobile Learning Week 2019

This year, UNESCO, in partnership with the International Telecommunication Union and the Profuturo Foundation, will convene a special edition of Mobile Learning Week (MLW) at the UNESCO Headquarters building in Paris.

The five-day event, under the theme “Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable development”, will start with the “Global Conference - Principles for AI: Towards a humanistic approach?”, followed by a one-day Policy Forum and Workshops, a two-day International Symposium and a half-day of Strategy Labs.

On 8 March, towards the close of MLW, participants will be invited to join the celebration of International Women’s Day, particularly a debate on Women in AI to be held at UNESCO Headquarters. During the entire week, exhibitions and demonstrations of innovative AI applications for education and more than 20 workshops will be organized by international partners and all programme sectors of UNESCO.

Policy-makers, project managers, educators, researchers, and representatives of NGOs, international organizations and private companies, are invited to participate in the activities. You may register your participation under this link.

You are also encouraged to find out more information under the dedicated webpage: https://en.unesco.org/mlw/2019

Contact: mlw@unesco.org


The United Nations World Water Development Report (WWDR), is the UN-Water flagship report on water. It is a comprehensive review that gives an overall picture of the state, use and management of the world’s freshwater resources and aims to provide decision-makers with tools to formulate and implement sustainable water policies.

The 2019 World Water Development Report “Leaving No One Behind” reinforces the commitments made by the UN Member States in adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in recognizing the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, both of which are essential for eradicating poverty and for building prosperous, peaceful societies.


National Commissions’ Community Board – sharing initiatives

- Hosted by the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO, the 4th Annual Informal Meeting of the European Network of National Commissions will be held on 24-27 February 2019 at Bled, Slovenia. This meeting will discuss the following agenda items: (1) addressing Contemporary Challenges – the Role of UNESCO and the Network of National Commissions; (2) the VINCI Project; and (3) the Role of National Commissions for UNESCO in the Strategic Transformation of UNESCO. 8 parallel workshops on themes with vital interest for mutual cooperation will also be organized.
UNESCO Publications

- A new UNESCO report *Behind the numbers: ending school violence and bullying* presents the most up-to-date and comprehensive evidence on school violence and bullying, analyzing global and regional prevalence and trends, the nature and impact of the issue, and successful national responses. It brings together quantitative and qualitative data from a range of global and regional surveys, covering 144 countries and territories in all regions. This publication is one of UNESCO’s contributions to the “Safe to Learn” campaign, a new initiative dedicated to ending violence in schools so children are free to learn, thrive and pursue their dreams.

- Published by UNESCO, *Digital Credentialing: Implications for the recognition of learning across borders* provides Member States, stakeholders active in the field of recognition of skills and qualifications, and regional organizations and partners, with critical guidance on how to respond to digitization in a proactive manner and seize its benefits for recognition of skills and qualifications, lifelong learning, and more broadly for sustainable development. This report is available in English via this link.

- Developed by UNESCO in cooperation with the Abat Oliba CEU University (Barcelona, Spain), within the framework of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), the book *Long Walk of Peace: Towards a Culture of Prevention* is analyzing the meaning of peace as a key element of the UN activity and one of the main targets of UNESCO. In the setting of the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDG 16 in particular, the book highlights the prospects of 32 UN structures on peacebuilding issues and considers the ways of their perception and promoting the peaceful agenda within their own fields of competence. The book is available in English and in French.

**Appointments of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions (January 2018)**

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

In Bangladesh, Ms Dipu Moni has been appointed Chairperson, succeeding Mr Nurul Islam Nahid.

In Bulgaria, Mr Christo Gueorguiev has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms Iskra Andreeva.

In Colombia, Ms Tatiana María García Correa has been appointed Executive Secretary (since October 2018), succeeding Mr Santiago Jara Ramirez.

In Costa Rica, Mr Fernando Montoya Fernández has been appointed Secretary-General a.i., succeeding Mr José Rafael Alvarado Cortés.

In Ecuador, Ms Doña Mireya Muñoz has been appointed President, succeeding Mr D. José Valencia.

In Fiji, Ms Alison Burchell has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms Tupou Gavidi.

In Serbia, Ms Aleksandra Kovač has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Mr Nemanja Grbic.

In Togo, Mr Koffi Akpagana has been appointed President, succeeding Mr Octave Nicoué Broomh.

In Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Mr Carlos Luis Uztáris Pérez- has been appointed Secretary-General, succeeding Ms Gabriela Vasquez Bass.

Yours sincerely,

Firmin Edouard Matoko