



**The Assistant Director-General
for External Relations and Public Information**

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**To Non-Governmental Organizations,
Official partners of UNESCO**

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10 February 2017

Dear Partners,

The beginning of this year has already been rich in interesting developments for the future of our partnership.

On 7 February, I joined the members of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee and their Chairperson Philippe Beaussant, for their first official meeting in 2017. The meeting was an opportunity to examine and discuss the priorities and action plan of this biennium, based on the orientations given by the last International Conference of NGOs.

The meeting also allowed us to report on the outcomes of a recent mission to Saudi Arabia I made together with Mr Beaussant to explore the possibility of holding an NGO Forum in that country. I am very pleased to inform you that the Committee has decided to endorse the organization of an NGO Forum to be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in partnership with the Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Foundation (MiSK), on 3-4 May 2017, around the theme of youth and social impact. Mr Beaussant and I will officially write to you in the coming days in this respect.

NET-MED Youth launches “The Writers and Artists Initiative”

NET-MED Youth, or Networks of Mediterranean Youth, is a three-year project (2014-2017) implemented by UNESCO and funded by the European Union in 10 countries in the eastern and western basins of the Mediterranean Sea. The project works with youth organizations and provides young women and men with the necessary skills, tools and capacities, so they can be empowered and take part in decision-making.

“The Writers and Artists of NET-MED Youth initiative” came as an organic evolution of the NET-MED communication strategy, including through portals such as [Facebook](#). Through this initiative, UNESCO has called Mediterranean youth to express themselves about issues that matter to them the most. Contributions (written and non-written) will be posted on the project website: www.netmedyouth.org. All young women and men (under 30) from countries in the Mediterranean region are invited to participate.

I invite you to share this initiative within your organization and through your communication channels, so that stories, essays, editorials, poetry, or non-written artwork such as photography, illustrations or graphic stories, can be published on the [NET-MED website](#). Submissions are accepted in Arabic, English and French. Written pieces should be less than 1,500 words and on any topic related to youth. The submission guidelines are available in [English](#) and [Arabic](#).

Contact: Ms Amina Lahbabi (a.lahbabi@unesco.org)

6-10 March 2017 – UNESCO Week for Peace and Sustainable Development: The Role of Education, Ottawa, Canada

The Week is a unique platform for discussion on two key UNESCO programmes, namely Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED), and their practical contribution in achieving Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education. The Week will focus on the issue of teachers and teacher training, and highlight best practices in the fields of ESD and GCED.

UNESCO and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO are jointly organizing this Week for Peace and Sustainable Development, which will present two important events, organized back-to-back with sessions open to all participants:

- Review Forum for the UNESCO Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD: implementation and innovation;
- Third UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education (GCED): the Role of Teachers.

I know that many of you are actively engaged in promoting peace and sustainable development in your activities. If you want to get involved in this Week, please complete the form available online. For more information about the Week, do not hesitate to consult the [dedicated website](#).

Contact: Mr Alexander Leicht (a.leicht@unesco.org)

8 March 2017 – International Women’s Day

On this Day, UNESCO will host several events at Headquarters in Paris:

- an artistic exhibition from 6 to 17 March, with artists from all around the world and a focus on young women. The opening ceremony will take place on 8 March in the Salle des Pas Perdus, at 1 p.m.;
- a Round Table on “Gender Equality through the arts and culture”, held on 8 March in cooperation with *Le Comité ONU Femmes France*, in the framework of the HeforShe Arts Week in Paris. The event will be open to the public and will include stories on how cultural creation can be a means to promote gender equality, on the linkages between gender and freedom of artistic expression during conflicts and humanitarian crisis, and on music as a way of deconstructing stereotypes;
- a concert on 8 March in cooperation with *Le Comité ONU Femmes France*.

I encourage NGOs to join us in Paris or to organize their own events within the framework of this Day and then report to us on their respective experiences. Your events will be posted in the section dedicated to NGOs on the website of Member States: www.unesco.int. Relevant information on the celebration of the Day will be available soon on UNESCO website.

Contact: Mrs Gülser Corat (gender.equality@unesco.org)

20-24 March 2017 – Mobile Learning Week

This year, the theme of the Week is “Education in emergencies and crises”. At UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, in partnership with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the event will examine how new and affordable technologies can reinforce education in emergency and crisis contexts and expand learning opportunities for displaced people while facilitating their inclusion.

The five-day event will include:

- a Symposium to highlight solutions that leverage technology to: reach displaced learners, protect and maintain education in emergency situations, and assist integration efforts. The Symposium will feature over 80 breakout sessions, exhibitions, a mix of panel discussions and high-level plenary addresses;
- workshops to facilitate demonstrations of innovative mobile learning content, technology, research, and projects;
- strategy labs to help guide the conceptualization and refinement of projects to expand educational opportunities for learners in emergency and crisis contexts;
- a policy forum to examine how governments can foster innovation in the education sector and facilitate the acquisition of e-skills, particularly for disadvantaged or displaced learners.

If you are interested in contributing to this important Week and participating in one of its events, I invite you to register as soon as possible on [this link](#). You will also find more information about the Week on the [devoted website](#).

Contact: Mr Mark West (mlw@unesco.org)

22 March 2017 - World Water Day

Each year, World Water Day highlights a specific aspect of freshwater and its potential contribution to the sustainable development agenda. Under the theme “Water and Wastewater”, the 2017 celebrations provide an important opportunity to underline the importance of managing wastewater as a resource, an undervalued and sustainable source of water.

UNESCO will celebrate this Day by revealing, in Johannesburg (South Africa) and Brasilia (Brazil), the 2017 edition of the United Nations World Water Development Report (WWDR) entitled “Wastewater, The Untapped Resource”. The Report will be available in English and in French, and all its related publications will be published in the 6 United Nations languages.

The development of the WWDR, coordinated by the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), is a joint effort of the UN agencies and entities which make up UN-Water, working in partnership with governments, international organizations, NGOs and other stakeholders.

The success of this Day’s celebrations is dependent upon the involvement and the commitment of a broad number of stakeholders, including NGOs. I hope that many NGOs foresee the organization of activities that would contribute to the achievement of the goals of this Day. You will find more information on the report and on the Day on [this link](#).

Contact: Mr Engin Koncagul (e.koncagul@unesco.org)

23 March 2017 – Colloquium “Journalism under fire: challenges of our time”, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France

The colloquium will consist of two round table discussions in order to provide a global platform to assess the international landscape facing media professionals. Thus, media leaders, journalists, experts and Member States will have an opportunity to analyze the extent to which there is a “crisis of journalism”, and unpack the main driving forces involved.

The focus will extend to discuss what measures could be taken in order to ensure that journalism, on all platforms, is able to play its vital role. The colloquium will therefore also discuss new approaches in understanding the role of journalism in this changing environment, and debate existing and new measures aimed to strengthen quality reporting and to empower audiences with media and information literacy.

You may know that UNESCO is at the forefront of defending freedom of expression, namely through the promotion of the safety of journalists and the fight against impunity. It is also engaged in media development. For more information on the Colloquium or to register, please consult the [dedicated website](#).

Contact: Mr Marius Lukosiunas (m.lukosiunas@unesco.org) and Ms Flavie Romer (f.romer@unesco.org)

UNESCO Publications

- The 82nd issue of World Heritage, *African Heritage and its Sustainable Development*, explores concerns of rapid development change having an impact on sustainability in emerging economies in the African region. It examines African Heritage through several case studies, from Mosi-oa-Tunya/Victoria Falls (Zambia/Zimbabwe) to the future of traditional masons in Timbuktu (Mali). The electronic version of the issue is available in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).
- *School Violence and Bullying: Global Status Report* has been prepared by UNESCO and the Institute of School Violence and Prevention at Ewha Womans University in Seoul (Republic of Korea). It aims to provide an overview of the most up-to-date available data on the nature, extent and impact of school violence and bullying and initiatives to address the problem. The report is available in [English](#) and in [French](#).
- *Getting Climate-Ready - A Guide For Schools On Climate Action*, is based on a survey looking especially at climate action projects implemented in 55 ASPnet (Associated Schools Project Network) schools in 12 countries. It aims to include action for reducing climate change in every aspect of school life, in a “whole-school” approach. The Guide exists only in English and is available under [this link](#).

Yours sincerely,



Eric Falt