

Ref: CL/4485

Subject: **Proposals by Member States regarding the celebration of anniversaries in association with UNESCO during the 2026-2027 biennium**

Sir/Madam,

Following the decision of the 206th session of the Executive Board concerning the celebration of anniversaries in association with UNESCO, it is my pleasure to invite your National Commission to submit proposals to the Secretariat for commemorative events and celebrations that your country would like to mark together with UNESCO during the 2026-2027 biennium.

Each Member State may submit **two proposals**, one of which should relate to the **promotion of gender equality**. Indeed, we strongly recommend that this UNESCO strategic priority be taken into account, including in proposals that do not specifically celebrate female figures. Furthermore, with a view to improving geographical distribution in the anniversaries programme, each Member State is encouraged to submit proposals.

I therefore invite your Government to complete the online submission form available at <https://www.unesco.org/anniversaries/> or the paper version that is attached to this letter. This form should be completed, in English or in French, before **20 December 2024**.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.



Audrey Azoulay
Director-General

Enclosures: 2

cc: National Commissions for UNESCO
Permanent Delegations to UNESCO
UNESCO field offices

ANNEX I

Criteria and procedure for UNESCO's association with the celebration of anniversaries, as approved by the 206th session of the Executive Board

1. UNESCO is associated with the commemoration of historic events and anniversaries of eminent personalities that are celebrated by Member States and Associate Members, with the aim of giving them worldwide significance in accordance with the overall mandate of the Organization, promoting peace, understanding and rapprochement among peoples and enhancing the visibility of the Organization.
2. For each biennium, the Director-General shall address to the National Commissions a circular letter enclosing a simple form (annexed hereto) seeking detailed and precise information on their request. The circular letter shall be sent no later than **1 September** of the first year of the biennium, the deadline for nominations being **1 December of the same year**.
3. Requests shall be submitted to the Director-General by the Member States through the National Commissions for UNESCO, **through the permanent delegations**, or, where there is no National Commission **or permanent delegation**, through the appropriate government channel.
4. Each Member State may submit a maximum of two requests, one of which preferably relates to promotion of gender equality. **The inclusion of the reflection on gender equality in proposed anniversaries is encouraged, even in the case of anniversaries not specifically celebrating women candidates.**
5. **Submissions:**
 - (a) Requests must be submitted as soon as possible and no later than the stipulated deadline, without exception.
 - (b) Requests must, wherever possible, be submitted in electronic form, with a view to moving to exclusively electronic submissions in due course. **Within the 30 days following the deadline, the Secretariat shall acknowledge receipt of those requests which have been submitted by post.**
 - (c) Requests submitted after the deadline shall not be considered.
6. **Approval of requests.** When deciding upon a request, the Director-General may wish to take into account:
 - (a) the assessment of the request made by the relevant sector(s) in accordance with the criteria set out below;
 - (b) the contribution that anniversary celebrations can make to the attainment of Member States' objectives in UNESCO's fields of competence and within the framework of the major priorities set out in the Medium-Term Strategy (C/4) and Programme and Budget (C/5) approved by the General Conference; preference **may be** given to the celebration of anniversaries of personalities and events that may be linked to UNESCO's priority activities during the biennium;
 - (c) the need to strike an equitable balance in the distribution of anniversaries by giving priority to Africa, least developed countries (LDCs), promotion of gender equality, developing countries, countries in transition and small island developing States (SIDS);
 - (d) the need to reduce and limit anniversary celebrations to a reasonable number;

- (e) the recommendation of the Intersectoral Committee tasked with screening anniversary requests, which must meet the criteria set out below.

7. Criteria for the selection of anniversaries

- (a) Each proposed anniversary must be indisputably linked to the Organization's ideals and missions in the fields of education, culture, natural sciences, social and human sciences and communication and must promote closer relations among peoples, tolerance and the ideals of peace, cultural dialogue and mutual understanding among peoples. Preference may be given to anniversaries linked to the programme and to UNESCO's current priorities and if possible to high-level events that have already been planned.
- (b) Commemorations of the birth, independence or institutional regime of a State will not be eligible for consideration; similarly, the anniversaries of military events will be excluded.
- (c) The anniversary must concern personalities of genuinely universal stature, nominated posthumously only and events of universal scope or at least of regional significance, indisputably known outside the borders of their own country, in order to reflect the ideals, values, cultural diversity and universality of the Organization.
- (d) The anniversary must be a fiftieth anniversary, a centenary or a multiple thereof, **except for least developed countries (LDCs), developing countries, countries in transition, and small island developing States (SIDS), and proposals that promote gender equality and eminent women, for which multiples of 25 years may be accepted.**
- (e) National, subregional, regional, or international events must be already planned for the anniversary, and resources must have been allocated in order for said events to be held in the Member State or group of Member States directly concerned.
- (f) It is preferable that all anniversaries be proposed by a Member State with the support of at least two other States or of a regional group. Any anniversary proposed involving more than one State must be submitted by all the States concerned.
- (g) Requests relating to works of the intangible heritage – which comprise oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices and festive events and rituals, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship – will not be considered because they cannot be dated in time.

8. Consideration of requests by the governing bodies

- (a) On the basis of proposals by the Intersectoral Committee, the Secretariat shall prepare a description of each anniversary selected, which shall include relevant historical and biographical information.
- (b) This document will be submitted to the Executive Board for decision at its first session in the second year of the biennium. In addition, the Secretariat shall inform the Member States of the anniversaries that it proposes to select or to strike off the list, providing, in the latter case, the relevant explanations.
- (c) The Member States concerned shall have two months, as from the end of the session of the Executive Board, to reformulate, if need be, their requests concerning anniversaries that have been rejected on the ground that they do not appear to meet the criteria adopted.
- (d) Furthermore, during the appeal period, Member States from underrepresented or unrepresented regions may submit new requests.

- (e) The Executive Board, at its session preceding the opening of the General Conference, shall take a decision on new requests and/or requests that have been the subject of an appeal or have been reconsidered by the Intersectoral Committee and, after reformulation, have been deemed by the Director-General to meet the criteria adopted.
- (f) The General Conference shall decide on the list of celebrations with which the Organization could be associated during the following biennium, as adopted by the Executive Board.

9. Implementation

- (a) Implementation of activities relating to the celebration of anniversaries is the responsibility of the applicant Member State. The request submitted to the Director-General must include information on specific scheduled implementation start and end dates, cost estimates (in United States dollars), funds pledged or expected from Member States or private institutions and the website/application to be used as a communication tool. **Participating Member States shall select the most important events prior to celebrating the anniversary and inform the Secretariat to allow for their publication on UNESCO's public website and social media. Member States will report on those events only, using the results-based format.**
- (b) The Member State must plan at least one subregional, regional or international activity (regional/international conference, exhibition, multilingual communication material, event/exhibition held at UNESCO Headquarters, etc.). **In order to strengthen the global reach of anniversaries, events should, preferably, be organized in/with the participation of multiple Member States.**
- (c) In implementing activities relating to the celebrations, Member States are encouraged to mobilize UNESCO networks in the country/region(s) concerned.
- (d) The results of anniversary-celebration events, linked to UNESCO's objectives and priorities and to the Organization's flagship events, will be posted on the UNESCO website. The activity reports (listing the institutional stakeholders involved in the celebration, the activities carried out, the estimated number of participants, media impact, **and the contribution of the anniversary to UNESCO's programme and objectives, including the overall number of anniversaries promoting gender equality** and any other measurable results in connection with the anniversary celebration) submitted after the completion of each anniversary celebration by Member States will be used by the Secretariat to evaluate the impact and results of the anniversaries programme and its consistency with the objectives and priorities set by UNESCO.
- (e) The use of UNESCO's name and logo for the activities approved under the anniversaries programme, in accordance with the directives approved by the governing bodies, will raise the profile of the programme when it is carried out nationally, subregionally, regionally or interregionally, and the beneficiaries will report on the results thus achieved.
- (f) In conformity with 30 C/Resolution 58, any contribution by the Organization to these celebrations shall be financed under the anniversaries programme, in accordance with rules governing that programme. Nevertheless, in order to maintain a balanced distribution of funds from the programme, such financial assistance must remain exceptional and contingent on the submission of a priority request to the Director-General, with the required support in the case of a regional request.

10. Conditions for UNESCO's association with the celebration of proposed anniversaries

UNESCO will be associated with the celebration of proposed anniversaries only if the applicant, when submitting written requests to the Director-General, accepts the following conditions. The applicant must:

- (a) submit requests as soon as possible and no later than the set deadline. Neither the Executive Board nor the General Conference shall consider requests submitted after the deadline; the governing bodies will thus not be required to decide on requests that have not been previously evaluated by the Secretariat in accordance with the established procedure;
- (b) bear full financial and administrative responsibility for holding the anniversary-celebration events;
- (c) submit to the Director-General, on completion of the project, a detailed activity report on the results and their usefulness to the Member State(s) concerned and UNESCO. The report must be submitted at the latest before the submission of new requests. It is understood that no new anniversary proposals will be considered until the Member State concerned has provided all the requisite activity reports. **All activity reports due for the celebrations held by Member States must be submitted no later than 31 January of the year following the biennium.**

ANNEX II

Form for the submission of an anniversary proposal

A. Information concerning the personality/event to be commemorated

1. Family name and first name of the personality/Title of the event

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2. Born Died
or Date of the event

3. Date(s) chosen for the celebration

4. Field of activity

5. Brief description of the personality listing his or her major works/of the event

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6. Describe the way(s) in which this personality/event has had a genuine regional and/or worldwide impact

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7. Website(s) (including the website established/created for the anniversary celebration)

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B. Co-sponsors (two Member States or regional group)

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C. Anniversary to be celebrated

Fiftieth
Centenary
Multiple thereof

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

D. Information on the activities held on the occasion by the country or countries concerned

Place	Type of activity	Institution responsible	Time frame (start and end dates for the celebration)	Estimated cost (US \$)	Funds earmarked/ requested (under the Participation Programme)
In your country					
In other countries (please state which)					

E. Links to UNESCO

1. Please indicate the UNESCO field(s) of competence to which the celebration is linked

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Education | <input type="checkbox"/> | Link to: | |
| Natural Sciences | <input type="checkbox"/> | Priority Gender Equality | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Culture | <input type="checkbox"/> | Priority Africa | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Social and Human Sciences | <input type="checkbox"/> | Explain: | |
| Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Transdisciplinary projects: | | | |

2. Explain the contribution that such an anniversary celebration can effectively make to the attainment of Member States' goals in UNESCO's fields of competence and in regard to the major priorities set in the Medium-Term Strategy (C/4) and Programme and Budget (C/5) approved by the General Conference

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3. Form of participation requested from UNESCO

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4. Describe the way(s) in which this commemoration is consistent with and enhances UNESCO's goals and mission

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F. Other information

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