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National Commissions for UNESCO *Commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO*

Annual Report | *Rapport annuel*

2024

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National Commissions for UNESCO

Commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO

Annual Report | *Rapport annuel*

2024



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FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the 2024 Annual Report of National Commissions for UNESCO, which offers a vivid testimony to how much can be achieved when UNESCO's mandate is combined with the creativity, knowledge and determination of National Commissions.

National Commissions are indeed invaluable partners in ensuring that UNESCO's ideals take root within societies worldwide. The vitality of this unique network was once again clear in 2024, with exceptional efforts undertaken across all areas of UNESCO's mandate.

In efforts to promote freedom of expression, for instance, the Swedish National Commission launched its 'Voicebearers of Democracy' project – bringing together journalists, researchers and cultural practitioners to address threats to professional freedom and protect the role of these fields in upholding democratic discourse.

Meanwhile, in Bhutan, the National Commission reflected UNESCO's commitment to defending education by successfully piloting the Global Citizenship Education project. Over 200 teachers across 15 schools received lesson plans and curriculum integration guides, with greater focus placed on parental involvement to improve students' learning outcomes.

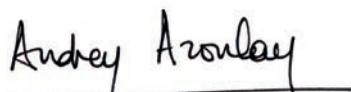
In the field of science, the South African National Commission launched the Citizen Science for Water Photo Story Competition to mark the 50th anniversary of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme. By linking water, culture and education through photography, this initiative mobilized communities, inspiring them to share local knowledge.

The Oman National Commission's efforts mirrored UNESCO's firm commitment to protecting heritage, including through the inscription of the Oman Youth Sail Training Ship on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices – highlighting how maritime heritage can educate the next generations and promote peace.

And across the Atlantic, students and teachers in Peru promoted civic engagement and environmental sustainability through a community-wide recycling initiative at the Santiago Antúnez de Mayolo school as part of their UNESCO Science and Technology project.

Also in 2024, UNESCO's regional and subregional consultations with National Commissions provided strategic guidance for UNESCO's Programme and Budget for 2026-2029. Through these consultations, Commissions identified shared challenges such as digital divides and social inequalities, along with opportunities in the areas of disaster preparedness, digital literacy and cultural creativity.

Looking ahead, I am confident that 2025 will bring yet deeper cooperation between UNESCO and its National Commissions, and between the Commissions themselves, to ensure that multilateralism remains inclusive, effective and aligned with the needs of communities worldwide.



Audrey Azoulay,
Director-General of UNESCO
Directrice générale de l'UNESCO

AVANT-PROPOS



Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO
@ Cyrille George Jerusalmy

J'ai le plaisir de présenter le Rapport annuel 2024 des Commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO, qui témoigne avec force de tout ce qu'il est possible d'accomplir lorsque le mandat de l'UNESCO se conjugue avec la créativité, le savoir et la détermination des Commissions nationales.

Les Commissions nationales sont en effet des partenaires inestimables pour faire en sorte que les idéaux de l'UNESCO s'enracinent au sein des sociétés du monde entier. La vitalité de ce réseau unique s'est une fois de plus illustrée en 2024, à travers des efforts remarquables menés dans l'ensemble des domaines relevant du mandat de l'UNESCO.

Dans le cadre des actions de promotion de la liberté d'expression, par exemple, la Commission nationale suédoise a lancé son projet « Porte-voix de la démocratie » – réunissant journalistes, chercheurs et acteurs culturels afin de faire face aux menaces pesant sur la liberté professionnelle et de protéger le rôle de ces secteurs dans la défense du discours démocratique.

Au Bhoutan, la Commission nationale a reflété l'engagement de l'UNESCO en faveur de l'éducation en menant avec succès le projet d'Éducation à la citoyenneté mondiale. Plus de 200 enseignants issus de 15 écoles ont reçu des plans de cours et des guides pour l'intégration dans les programmes scolaires, avec un accent particulier mis sur l'implication des parents pour améliorer les résultats d'apprentissage des élèves.

Dans le domaine des sciences, la Commission nationale sud-africaine a lancé le concours d'histoires photographiques « Science citoyenne pour l'eau », à l'occasion du 50e anniversaire du Programme hydrologique intergouvernemental de l'UNESCO. En reliant l'eau, la culture et l'éducation à travers la photographie, cette initiative a mobilisé les communautés et les a encouragées à partager leurs savoirs locaux.

Les efforts de la Commission nationale d'Oman ont illustré l'engagement ferme de l'UNESCO pour la protection du patrimoine, notamment par l'inscription du navire-école de la jeunesse omanaise au Registre des bonnes pratiques de sauvegarde – soulignant la manière dont le patrimoine maritime peut éduquer les nouvelles générations et promouvoir la paix.

De l'autre côté de l'Atlantique, élèves et enseignants du Pérou ont promu l'engagement civique et la durabilité environnementale grâce à une initiative de recyclage à l'échelle communautaire menée à l'école Santiago Antúnez de Mayolo, dans le cadre de leur projet UNESCO sur la science et la technologie.

Toujours en 2024, les consultations régionales et sous-régionales de l'UNESCO avec les Commissions nationales ont fourni des orientations stratégiques pour le Programme et budget de l'UNESCO pour 2026-2029. À travers ces consultations, les Commissions ont identifié des défis communs, tels que les fractures numériques et les inégalités sociales, ainsi que des opportunités dans les domaines de la préparation aux catastrophes, de la littératie numérique et de la créativité culturelle.

En regardant vers l'avenir, je suis convaincu que 2025 apportera une coopération encore plus approfondie entre l'UNESCO et ses Commissions nationales, ainsi qu'entre les Commissions elles-mêmes, afin de garantir que le multilatéralisme demeure inclusif, efficace et en adéquation avec les besoins des communautés du monde entier.



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Craftsmanship of traditional woven textile Kente – Ghana
– Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of
Humanity - inscribed in 2024 ©Kingsley Hemans/Unsplash

Africa

ANGOLA

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Angola National Commission for UNESCO carried out a series of important initiatives reflecting its commitment to education, culture, science and sustainable development. Among them were the 2nd Regional Meeting of African National Commissions for UNESCO and a workshop presenting the preliminary results of the national follow-up report, with the main objective of developing strategies for regional cooperation towards building a peaceful and sustainable Africa. Another notable activity was the 3rd edition of the Kandenge Escritor Contest, dedicated this year to António Jacinto and organized in partnership with the Art and Culture Foundation. The contest promoted reading and writing among children and young people aged nine to eighteen.

Success story

A major success in 2024 was the 2nd edition of the Regional Meeting of African National Commissions for UNESCO, accompanied by a regional consultation under the theme "Challenges and Opportunities of Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Development and the Promotion of Peace in Africa." With the motto "Education and Culture as Vectors of Sustainable Development," the meeting took place in Luanda from 18 to 21 June 2024. It brought together Secretaries-General of African National Commissions, senior government officials and members of the international diplomatic corps. Discussions were substantive, leading to the signing of the Regional Operational Plan, a working instrument aligned with UNESCO's Africa Priority Programme 2022–2029. This achievement strengthened Angola's leadership role in promoting dialogue and cooperation across the continent.

The Commission also convened the 6th National Meeting of Associated Schools (PEA-UNESCO), held in the province of Malanje. As part of the Community with Sustainable Awareness project, ten biofilters were installed in the community of Lifune Ana-Passo in Bengo province, municipality of Dande, to mark World Water Day. Another significant initiative was the 1st edition of the Thematic Fair and Round Table on the Promotion and Empowerment of Angolan Women, organized with the Ministry of Social Action, Family and Promotion of Women under the theme "The Promotion of the Culture of Peace through the Arts."

In partnership with UNESCO, Angola also hosted the BootCamp and the World Conference of Young Engineers in Luanda from 9 to 13 September 2024, as part of the celebration of World Engineering Day, welcoming participants from Africa, Europe and Asia. In the field of research and knowledge sharing, Angola participated in the Global Summit on Diamond Open Access, held in Cape Town, reinforcing its commitment to international cooperation on open science. Further activities included the organization of the National Meeting on Museums and the Angolan Museum Route, fostering dialogue on heritage and memory.



Family Photo – the 2nd Edition of the Regional Meeting of African NatComs for UNESCO ©Angola National Commission

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking ahead, Angola is preparing several proposals to enhance its contribution to UNESCO's mandate. Among them is the plan to nominate Chitundu Ulo in Namibe province and the Kwanza Corridor in Kwanza-Norte for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Within the framework of the Priority Africa Operational Plan, the country is also working on the designation of Angolan municipalities as UNESCO Creative Cities. In addition, a major proposal has been submitted for the designation of Quiçama Municipality as a World Biosphere Reserve, encompassing terrestrial and marine ecosystems over an area of approximately 32,000 square kilometres. Through these initiatives, Angola demonstrates its commitment to safeguarding cultural and natural heritage while promoting creativity, sustainability and peace.

BÉNIN

Commission nationale béninoise pour l'UNESCO (CNBU)

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Résumé des activités

En 2024, la Commission nationale béninoise pour l'UNESCO a conduit six activités, dont cinq financées par le budget national et une par l'UNESCO dans le cadre du Programme de participation du biennium 2024-2025. Parmi celles financées par le budget national, la première a été une session d'étude des recommandations issues de la 42e Conférence générale de l'UNESCO. Organisée en septembre 2024, elle a réuni les acteurs nationaux afin de favoriser l'appropriation des décisions et des recommandations. La deuxième activité a porté sur la sensibilisation des acteurs des universités et des communautés aux grands enjeux de l'UNESCO et sur la vulgarisation des actions de la CNBU, menée dans plusieurs communes dont Lokossa, Parakou, Natitingou, Kandi, Bohicon et Abomey-Calavi.

La troisième activité a consisté à renforcer les capacités des acteurs des écoles associées pour promouvoir la culture à

travers des danses traditionnelles, des panégyriques et des activités ludiques. Elle s'est déroulée dans les communes de Bassila, Ifangni, Copargo, Toucountouna, Covè, Tchaourou, Savè et Banikoara. La quatrième activité a concerné le renforcement des capacités des directeurs et coordonnateurs des écoles associées sur l'Éducation à la citoyenneté mondiale (ECM) en vue du développement durable, organisée à Kétou, Djidja, Bassila, Boukoumbé, Grand-Popo, Savè, N'dali et Sinendé. La cinquième activité, conduite par la Fédération béninoise des associations et clubs pour l'UNESCO, a été une campagne de sensibilisation dans les établissements publics des zones frontalières pour prévenir et lutter contre l'extrémisme violent, notamment à Savalou, Bantè, Tanguiéta, Ifangni, Kandi, Malanville, Sèmè, Banikoara, Ségbana, Bembèrèkè, Sinendé et Pèrèrè.

La sixième activité, financée par l'UNESCO, fut une session de formation des leaders étudiants des universités publiques sur les changements climatiques, organisée à Parakou. Une cinquantaine de participants venus des universités nationales y ont pris part pendant trois jours, encadrés par un professeur d'université. Par ailleurs, en janvier 2024, une action d'aide d'urgence a été menée dans le cadre du Programme de participation 2023-2024, consistant en l'acquisition et la distribution de 2000 kits scolaires aux élèves de Dogbo et Natitingou, touchés par de graves intempéries. En 2024, aucune activité n'a été réalisée avec les bureaux hors-siège de l'UNESCO.

Une activité réussie

Toutes les initiatives entreprises au cours de l'année se sont soldées par des résultats positifs. Parmi elles, l'activité de renforcement des capacités des directeurs et coordonnateurs des écoles associées sur l'Éducation à la citoyenneté mondiale a été particulièrement marquante. Elle a suscité un vif intérêt, en raison de la qualité des communications, de la pertinence des débats et de la forte satisfaction des

participants. Ceux-ci ont exprimé le souhait de renouveler régulièrement ce type d'atelier. Une attention spéciale a été accordée à la dimension environnementale, avec la mise en terre de plants dans chacun des départements visités. Chaque directeur d'école a également reçu des plants pour reproduire l'initiative dans son établissement, assurant ainsi une continuité et un impact durable.

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

Pour 2025, la Commission nationale béninoise pour l'UNESCO espère l'approbation de trois projets restants dans le cadre du Programme de participation 2024-2025. Elle prévoit également des actions ciblées pour lutter contre la propagation de l'extrémisme violent, notamment dans le nord du pays, ainsi que contre les violences basées sur le genre, afin de favoriser la scolarisation et le maintien des filles à l'école. À travers ces priorités, la Commission réaffirme son engagement à promouvoir l'éducation, la paix, l'égalité et le développement durable.

BOTSWANA

Botswana National Commission for UNESCO

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Secretary-General: Mr Itseng Kwelagobe

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Botswana National Commission for UNESCO successfully implemented several activities. A two-day regional event was held in Gaborone to commemorate World Press Freedom Day, with a virtual keynote address delivered by His Excellency Dr Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi, former President of the Republic of Botswana. In September 2024, the Commission hosted a one-day Regional Panel Discussion on Artificial

Intelligence for Information Accessibility (AI4IA), followed by a three-day Regional Training-of-Trainers Workshop on Media and Information Literacy for the Federation of African Journalists.

The Commission also secured the approval of two projects, each valued at USD 26,000, under the UNESCO Participation Programme 2024–2025. The first project, entitled Increasing scientific expertise and the prominence of females in STEM academia and research for a knowledge-based economy, is implemented by the Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources in partnership with the Organization of Women in Science from the University of Botswana. The second project, Capacity building workshop for national impact to combat GBV, is carried out by the Healthy Families Foundation in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government, Social Protection Department.

In addition, the Botswana National Commission for UNESCO submitted its first Quadrennial Periodic Report under the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Success story

In December 2023, Botswana hosted the 18th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). The meeting took place in Kasane, a town in north-eastern Botswana, and was an important event for discussions on the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. As in previous sessions, the meeting focused on intangible cultural heritage globally, including oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, and knowledge related to nature and the universe.

Botswana and other African nations have been increasingly active in UNESCO's efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. This session highlighted African traditions, languages, music, dances, crafts and other cultural practices. Botswana has also been an advocate for the protection of both natural and cultural heritage. In addition to its World Heritage Sites, such as the Okavango Delta, Botswana possesses a rich cultural heritage, with indigenous practices and traditional knowledge integral to its diverse communities.

By hosting this session, Botswana emphasized its commitment to the global movement for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, aligning with UNESCO's broader goals to protect cultures across the world. The 18th Session of the UNESCO Committee for the Safeguarding of the ICH was a significant event in promoting and preserving the world's diverse cultural expressions. As the world faces challenges from globalization, environmental change and cultural erosion, this meeting provided a platform for countries and communities to collaborate on safeguarding the unique and diverse traditions that make up humanity's intangible cultural heritage.



The Tsodilo Hills - a UNESCO World Heritage Site
©Botswana National Commission

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

For the future, the Botswana National Commission for UNESCO has set several priorities. These include organizing an awareness-raising and experience-sharing workshop for professionals such as university lecturers, heritage experts and government officials on heritage, entrepreneurship and digital skills, in collaboration with the Estonian National Commission for UNESCO. The Commission also plans to host a STEM and robotics workshop in conjunction with the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA), and to enhance teacher training programmes to incorporate sustainability and climate education.

Other priorities include documenting and preserving endangered languages, traditional practices and heritage sites, conducting cultural mapping to identify and prioritize at-risk heritage, and strengthening policies on sustainable water use and biodiversity conservation. In addition, the Commission intends to advance scientific education and innovation while integrating indigenous knowledge systems.

BURKINA FASO

Commission nationale burkinabè pour l'UNESCO (CNB-U)

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Résumé des activités de 2024

En 2024, la Commission nationale burkinabè pour l'UNESCO a conduit plusieurs activités dans ses différents champs d'action. Les cinq comités nationaux des programmes Man and the Biosphere (MAB), Management of Social Transformations (MOST), Mémoire du Monde (MdM), Programme hydrologique international (PHI) et Bioéthique de l'UNESCO ont tenu leurs assemblées générales. Ainsi, le Comité national Mémoire du Monde s'est réuni le 12 mai 2024 à Ouagadougou, le Comité burkinabè de Bioéthique le 13 juin 2024 à Ouagadougou, le

Comité national PHI les 21 et 22 août 2024 à Ouagadougou, le Comité MAB le 6 septembre 2024 à Ouagadougou, et enfin le Comité national du MOST le 28 septembre 2024 à Ouagadougou. Ces rencontres ont permis à des experts d'évaluer la mise en œuvre des activités, d'analyser les difficultés rencontrées tant au niveau mondial qu'au Burkina Faso, et d'adopter des feuilles de route pour l'année 2025.

Par ailleurs, après l'adoption du « Rapport d'évaluation de l'Internet au Burkina Faso », la Commission a organisé le 12 juillet 2024 à Ouagadougou un atelier de plaidoyer pour le développement de l'internet, en collaboration avec le Bureau de l'UNESCO à Dakar. L'objectif était de mobiliser et de sensibiliser les acteurs du secteur sur la nécessité d'améliorer les indicateurs de l'universalité de l'internet au Burkina Faso. L'atelier a servi à présenter le document de plaidoyer, à vulgariser le rapport final et à susciter l'adhésion des parties prenantes. La majorité de ces activités a été financée sur fonds publics, sous la tutelle du ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche et de l'Innovation, avec un appui du Bureau de l'UNESCO à Dakar pour l'atelier de plaidoyer.

Une activité réussie

Parmi les activités réussies, la Commission a procédé, en différé, au lancement officiel du Rapport mondial de suivi sur l'Éducation pour tous de l'année 2023, organisé le vendredi 13 décembre 2024 à Ouagadougou. Placée sous le thème « Les technologies dans l'éducation : qui est aux commandes ? », cette cérémonie visait à évaluer les progrès réalisés en matière de technologies éducatives, à promouvoir un accès équitable à l'éducation grâce aux outils numériques et à évaluer la qualité des technologies déployées. L'événement a mis en avant l'importance d'approches pédagogiques efficaces et de la formation des enseignants.

Un panel de discussion a réuni les représentants des trois ministères en charge de l'éducation et la Coalition nationale pour l'Éducation pour tous (Coalition EPT) afin de débattre du thème central du rapport. Cette activité a permis d'ancrer le rôle des technologies dans l'amélioration de l'éducation tout en rappelant les défis d'inclusion, notamment pour les filles, les enfants en situation de handicap et les populations vivant en zones de conflit.



Participants au lancement officiel du Rapport mondial de suivi sur l'éducation pour tous 2023
©Commission nationale burkinabè pour l'UNESCO.

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

Pour 2025, la Commission nationale burkinabè pour l'UNESCO exécutera deux projets financés dans le cadre du Programme de participation 2024–2025. Le premier, intitulé « Apprendre pour vivre ensemble : Contribution du Réseau des écoles associées de l'UNESCO du Burkina Faso », vise à promouvoir la culture de la paix, l'entente, le civisme, la citoyenneté et la cohésion à l'école. Il ambitionne de renforcer les capacités des encadreurs, enseignants et apprenants sur les droits humains, l'inclusion sociale et la démocratie.

Le second projet, intitulé « Renforcement des capacités des acteurs nationaux sur la préservation du patrimoine documentaire et promotion des institutions de la Mémoire du Monde au Burkina Faso », sera mis en œuvre avec le Comité national Mémoire du Monde. Il vise à sensibiliser les acteurs nationaux et à renforcer leurs compétences en matière de conservation du patrimoine documentaire. Enfin, dans la perspective de la Conférence générale de l'UNESCO prévue en novembre 2025, la Commission nationale burkinabè organisera une assemblée générale des comités spécialisés afin de préparer les documents qui seront présentés. Cette rencontre rassemblera l'ensemble des experts nationaux concernés par les domaines d'action de l'UNESCO.

CAMEROON

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Résumé des activités de 2024

L'année 2024 a été marquée par une activité intense au sein de la Commission nationale du Cameroun pour l'UNESCO, confrontée à des défis nationaux complexes tels que les crises sécuritaires, alimentaires et leurs impacts sur le pouvoir d'achat des populations, en plus des problématiques récurrentes comme l'analphabétisme, la promotion de la paix, l'unité nationale et le dérèglement climatique. Malgré ces difficultés, la Commission a poursuivi son rôle essentiel dans la mise en œuvre des programmes de l'UNESCO, couvrant des domaines variés tels

que l'éducation, la culture, les sciences exactes et naturelles, les sciences sociales et humaines, ainsi que la communication et l'information.

Le rapport de 2024 témoigne des efforts constants du Secrétariat général, soutenu par le Président de la Commission, à travers des actions collectives et individuelles menées tout au long de l'année. Ces initiatives ont contribué à la réalisation des 17 Objectifs de développement durable adoptés en 2015, notamment par des appuis techniques et matériels aux organisations de la société civile, un accompagnement des administrations sectorielles, des célébrations de journées commémoratives et des formations pour renforcer les capacités.

Une réalisation majeure de l'année a été l'inscription du Ngondo, culte des oracles de l'eau et traditions culturelles associées chez les Sawa du Cameroun, sur la Liste du patrimoine culturel immatériel de l'humanité de l'UNESCO. Cette réussite est le fruit d'une collaboration entre le ministère des Arts et de la Culture, la Commission nationale du Cameroun pour l'UNESCO, la communauté Sawa et le Bureau régional multisectionnel de l'UNESCO pour l'Afrique centrale. Cet événement souligne l'engagement de la Commission à préserver et promouvoir le patrimoine culturel tout en répondant aux défis contemporains.

Une activité réussie

En 2024, la Commission nationale du Cameroun pour l'UNESCO a marqué une étape importante avec la célébration de la première édition de la Journée du patrimoine culturel immatériel. Cette initiative visait à mettre en valeur la diversité et la richesse du patrimoine vivant, tout en sensibilisant à l'importance de sa sauvegarde. Deux activités principales ont été organisées.

La première a été une journée d'études sur le thème « Spécificités, enjeux et problématique de l'édition des littératures orales », tenue le 17 octobre 2024. Cette rencontre a réuni des enseignants, des chercheurs et des experts nationaux et internationaux pour discuter de la littérature orale, de sa transmission, de son enseignement et des défis liés à son édition. Des sujets comme le Mbooku, genre oral peul du Nord-Cameroun, et l'édition scientifique des textes oraux ont été abordés, soulignant l'importance de l'oralité dans la préservation des langues et des savoirs locaux.

La deuxième activité a consisté en des descentes sur le terrain dans les quatre aires culturelles du Cameroun (Fan-beti, Sawa, Soudano-sahélien et Grass Field) pour sensibiliser les communautés et les chefs traditionnels à la sauvegarde du patrimoine immatériel. Ces missions ont encouragé l'inventaire des traditions locales et renforcé le lien entre les communautés et leur patrimoine, tout en promouvant la Convention de 2003 de l'UNESCO pour la protection du patrimoine culturel immatériel.

Ces actions reflètent l'engagement de la Commission à préserver la richesse culturelle du Cameroun, perçue comme une mosaïque de traditions complémentaires. La sauvegarde de ce patrimoine, souvent méconnu ou menacé, est essentielle pour les générations futures et nécessite une collaboration étroite entre l'État, les communautés et les acteurs locaux.



Participants à la Journée d'études sur les littératures orales, organisée dans le cadre de la première édition de la Journée du patrimoine culturel immatériel ©Commission nationale du Cameroun pour l'UNESCO

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

Parmi les priorités futures, la Commission nationale du Cameroun pour l'UNESCO prévoit d'organiser un séminaire sous-régional de renforcement des capacités du personnel des Commissions nationales de l'UNESCO de l'Afrique centrale. Ce séminaire vise à améliorer les compétences, les connaissances et les pratiques professionnelles des membres afin de mieux atteindre les objectifs poursuivis par l'UNESCO.

Il convient également de souligner la collaboration continue entre la Commission nationale du Cameroun pour l'UNESCO, le Bureau régional multisectionnel de l'UNESCO pour l'Afrique centrale et les organisations de la société civile, dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre des objectifs de l'Organisation. Les résultats obtenus jusqu'à présent témoignent d'un travail harmonieux et efficace, avec une exécution des activités dans de bonnes conditions.

CONGO

Commission nationale congolaise pour l'UNESCO

Présidente: Mme Edith Delphine Emmanuel Adouki

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Résumé des activités de 2024

En 2024, la Commission nationale congolaise pour l'UNESCO a pris part à plusieurs activités sous-régionales et nationales. Elle a participé à la consultation sous-régionale de Luanda, organisée du 18 au 21 juin 2024, en vue de l'adoption du Plan opérationnel régional 2024-2026 des Commissions nationales africaines pour l'UNESCO. La Commission a également pris part à la 11e réunion interrégionale des Commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO, organisée en ligne les 2 et 3 juillet 2024. Sur le plan national, elle a coordonné l'organisation d'un atelier de consultations multi-acteurs consacré aux recommandations de l'UNESCO (2021) sur la science ouverte et sur l'éthique de l'intelligence artificielle.

Une activité réussie

Dans le cadre du renforcement de la gouvernance de l'eau, et afin de contribuer à l'accélération de l'atteinte des Objectifs de développement durable à l'horizon 2030, le Secrétariat général de la Commission nationale congolaise pour l'UNESCO a coordonné un atelier de validation du processus d'élaboration d'une proposition de méthodologie de l'indicateur ODD 6.a.2 relatif à l'éducation à l'eau. Cet atelier s'inscrivait dans le cadre d'un contrat d'étude conclu avec le Bureau de l'UNESCO.

Les données à collecter pour cet indicateur doivent mesurer et suivre dans le temps le nombre de diplômés en matière d'eau, exprimé en pourcentage du nombre total de diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur et également en pourcentage de la population totale du pays. L'UNESCO a ainsi demandé aux États membres de proposer une démarche méthodologique. Sollicitée pour appuyer cette initiative, la Commission nationale congolaise pour l'UNESCO a organisé l'atelier qui a rassemblé des chercheurs et enseignants des institutions publiques et de recherche. Les travaux ont abouti à la production d'une méthodologie représentant la contribution du Congo.



De gauche à droite, le directeur de l'Énergie hydraulique, les membres de la Commission nationale, les professeurs des deux universités (Marien NGOUABI/Denis SASSOU NGUESSO), les experts @Commission nationale congolaise pour l'UNESCO

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

La Commission nationale congolaise pour l'UNESCO est une structure organisée qui s'efforce de faire connaître les idéaux de l'UNESCO, malgré les difficultés diverses auxquelles elle fait face. Dans le cadre du programme de participation de ce biennium, elle a retenu un projet sous-régional relatif à la Décennie mondiale de l'eau. Ce projet a reçu l'appui de la République démocratique du Congo, de l'Angola et de la République gabonaise.

Au niveau national, la plupart des domaines nécessitent un renforcement des capacités, ainsi qu'une mobilisation accrue des ressources, notamment à travers les contributions volontaires au budget de l'UNESCO. La recherche de financements et l'amélioration des capacités de mise en œuvre constituent donc les défis majeurs auxquels la Commission doit répondre dans les prochaines années.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Commission nationale ivoirienne pour l'UNESCO

Présidente: Mme Mariatou Koné, Ministre de l'Éducation Nationale et de l'Alphabétisation

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Résumé des activités de 2024

En 2024, la Commission nationale ivoirienne pour l'UNESCO a poursuivi deux objectifs principaux : renforcer la qualité de l'école ivoirienne et promouvoir les idéaux de l'UNESCO. Ses activités ont ciblé la société civile, les organisations non gouvernementales, les universitaires, les collectivités locales et les acteurs des ministères en charge de la Culture, de la Transition écologique et du Développement durable, des Eaux et Forêts, ainsi que de la Communication et de l'Information.

En collaboration avec le Bureau de l'UNESCO à Abidjan, les ministères techniques et différents partenaires, la Commission a

conduit plusieurs activités. Parmi elles figurent un séminaire de formation sur les réseaux et programmes des villes de l'UNESCO et un séminaire destiné aux porteurs de projets de création de chaires UNESCO. Le personnel du Lycée moderne de Cocody a bénéficié d'une formation sur le réseau des écoles associées de l'UNESCO. La ville de Gagnoa a reçu officiellement le label de « ville apprenante UNESCO ». Un atelier de renforcement des capacités du REDICI et des responsables syndicaux a été organisé autour de l'éducation à la santé et à la vie saine, de la lutte contre les violences basées sur le genre en milieu scolaire et de la santé mentale.

La Commission a également supervisé la création du Comité PHI et a renforcé les capacités du personnel de l'Office ivoirien du patrimoine culturel (OIPC) afin de mieux maîtriser les outils et processus de reconnaissance et de valorisation internationale du patrimoine culturel. Elle a célébré la Journée mondiale de la philosophie et a assuré l'accréditation des clubs pour l'UNESCO pour la période 2024–2026.

Sur le plan international, la Commission a participé au Royaume du Maroc à la mise en place de la Fondation africaine pour l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie. Elle a également pris part en Angola à la réunion régionale des Commissions nationales africaines pour l'UNESCO, ainsi qu'en République de Corée au Forum sur les futurs de l'éducation.

Une activité réussie

Le vendredi 19 janvier 2024, sous la présidence du Professeur Mariatou Koné, présidente de la Commission nationale ivoirienne pour l'UNESCO, et avec le soutien de Son Excellence Madame Bakayoko-Ly Ramata, déléguée permanente de la Côte d'Ivoire auprès de l'UNESCO, la Commission a organisé un séminaire de formation en partenariat avec la Commission nationale du Royaume du Maroc et l'Université virtuelle de Côte d'Ivoire.

Ce séminaire, tenu à l'Université virtuelle de Côte d'Ivoire, portait sur le thème « Présentation des mécanismes de candidature aux réseaux et programmes des villes de l'UNESCO ». Il a réuni les élus des villes et communes ivoiriennes, l'Union des villes et communes de Côte d'Ivoire (UVICOCI) représentée par son Secrétaire général, ainsi que des représentants des universités publiques nationales.



Participants au séminaire de formation sur les mécanismes de candidature aux réseaux et programmes des villes de l'UNESCO, Université virtuelle de Côte d'Ivoire ©Commission nationale ivoirienne pour l'UNESCO

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

Les priorités futures de la Commission nationale ivoirienne pour l'UNESCO reposent sur deux axes : améliorer sa visibilité et renforcer son implication effective dans les programmes et activités de l'UNESCO, ainsi que dans les organes de gouvernance de l'Organisation. Dans cette perspective, la Commission prévoit le suivi de l'évaluation de l'exécution des projets financés dans le cadre des Programmes de participation, ainsi qu'une formation sur les impacts positifs de l'intelligence artificielle dans le domaine de la communication.

Elle envisage également de renforcer les capacités des points focaux du réseau des écoles associées de l'UNESCO et d'organiser un séminaire de formation à l'intention des présidents des associations et clubs pour l'UNESCO. En préparation à la Conférence générale de l'UNESCO de 2025, la Commission organisera les travaux préparatoires nécessaires. Enfin, elle entend intensifier sa collaboration avec les autres Commissions nationales afin de promouvoir la coopération régionale et internationale.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

National Commission for Cooperation of Equatorial Guinea with UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Clemente Engonga Nguema Onguene

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Success story

A highlight of the year was the Subregional Seminar for French- and Portuguese-speaking African countries on Digital Skills and Artificial Intelligence, held in Dakar, Senegal, on 28 to 29 October 2024 at the King Fahd Palace. The seminar emphasized the importance of equipping teachers with basic digital skills to enhance teaching and adapt to a technological learning environment. Teachers from Equatorial Guinea benefited from training on the effective use of technology in classrooms through targeted educational technology sessions.

The initiative is part of a broader national effort referred to as the "Digital Education Revolution in Equatorial Guinea: Transforming Learning." Education, seen as the foundation of social progress, is undergoing transformation in the country through the integration of technology. This revolution is redefining both the way students learn and the way educators teach, establishing digital education as a central pillar for building a connected and empowered future.

A particularly notable achievement has been the expansion of access to online educational resources. Digital platforms, virtual libraries and online courses have opened up new opportunities for learners of all ages. This development has allowed students, regardless of their geographic location, to access up-to-date and diverse educational materials that support their learning process.

Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Equatorial Guinean National Commission for UNESCO supported a project aimed at students who did not pass the university entrance examinations in the city of Malabo. This project was funded under the UNESCO Participation Programme. The Commission also worked in close collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Office for Central Africa, based in Yaoundé, to reinforce its initiatives.



Teachers receiving training materials during the Subregional Seminar on Digital Skills and Artificial Intelligence ©Equatorial Guinean National Commission for UNESCO

ESWATINI

Eswatini National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities in 2024

During 2024, the Eswatini National Commission for UNESCO actively engaged with a wide range of stakeholders to fulfill its mandate effectively. Collaboration was a cornerstone of its work, ensuring the successful implementation of programmes. UNESCO's broad areas of competence provided the Commission with a strategic advantage, enabling engagement with diverse

and dynamic partners across the country. This inclusive approach deepened the understanding of stakeholder needs and allowed for the seamless integration of UNESCO's mandate into local contexts.

These collaborative efforts also created opportunities for co-funding activities, fostering shared ownership and ensuring the long-term sustainability of initiatives. They promoted alignment between Eswatini's development priorities and UNESCO's strategic objectives, thereby amplifying the impact of both. Regular quarterly meetings with the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa played a pivotal role in strengthening cooperation. These meetings provided a platform to share updates on UNESCO's ongoing work and to explore new opportunities for collaboration with other Member States, thereby enhancing regional partnerships.

The Commission underscored the importance of partnerships and collaboration as key drivers of multilateralism, innovation, and diversity in programme development and implementation. Through these synergies, the impact and reach of the National Commission's efforts were significantly strengthened.

Success story

In 2024, the Eswatini National Commission for UNESCO successfully hosted the inaugural Walk for Sustainable Development Goals in the Biosphere Reserve. The event aimed to raise awareness among communities about the SDGs while highlighting the role and importance of biosphere reserves.

The Walk was considered a resounding success, largely due to the collaboration and strong partnerships that supported it. It provided an opportunity for wide dissemination of knowledge across various sectors of Eswatini, reaching both urban and rural communities. Beyond raising awareness of the contributions of the SDGs, the initiative encouraged community engagement and participation in sustainable development efforts.



Participants during the inaugural Walk for Sustainable Development Goals in the Biosphere Reserve, Eswatini, 2024
©Eswatini National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking ahead, the Eswatini National Commission for UNESCO plans to launch a UNESCO Youth Network. This initiative seeks to amplify youth voices and ensure their effective representation in both national development planning and UNESCO's priority areas. As Eswatini continues its efforts to transform the education system, the Youth Network represents an opportunity for UNESCO to contribute through capacity building for sector leaders. In particular, training in systems-thinking approaches will help leaders understand the interconnections between different sectors and leverage these linkages for greater impact.

The Commission has also identified the urgent challenge of gender-based violence in the country. To respond, awareness-raising campaigns are being developed, alongside plans to host a regional peace conference. Eswatini also aspires to nominate its first World Heritage Site and to develop local expertise to support this process. Other priorities include implementing community-based tourism initiatives within the Biosphere Reserve, as well as promoting STEM education among youth. These efforts aim to empower future generations and drive sustainable development in the Kingdom of Eswatini.

GABON

Commission nationale gabonaise pour l'UNESCO

Présidente: Mme Camélia Ntoutoume-Leclercq, Ministre de l'Education nationale, de l'Instruction civique et de la Formation professionnelle

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Résumé des activités de 2024

En 2024, la Commission nationale gabonaise pour l'UNESCO, avec l'appui du Bureau de l'UNESCO à Libreville et en collaboration avec ses partenaires, a mené plusieurs activités inscrites au Programme de participation. Celles-ci ont traduit la volonté de l'UNESCO d'accompagner les États membres dans leurs programmes phares et ont illustré le caractère interdisciplinaire de certaines actions, garantissant leur succès.

Du 30 au 31 octobre 2024, la Commission nationale gabonaise pour l'UNESCO, en partenariat avec le Comité intergouvernemental pour l'éducation physique et le sport et la Fédération gabonaise omnisport pour personnes handicapées (FEGOPH), a organisé un séminaire-atelier consacré à l'élaboration d'une stratégie nationale de promotion et de développement du handisport. Cet événement a rassemblé les parties prenantes à différents niveaux du sport, permettant de définir une feuille de route claire pour l'encadrement et le suivi de l'handisport au Gabon.

Du 2 au 3 décembre 2024, la Commission a organisé un atelier intitulé « Initier les jeunes filles à la culture entrepreneuriale en milieu scolaire », en partenariat avec l'ONG FANAVAZ. L'objectif de cette rencontre était de sensibiliser les jeunes filles scolarisées à l'esprit entrepreneurial afin de favoriser leur autonomisation. Dans un contexte marqué par une crise du chômage des jeunes en Afrique et au Gabon, l'atelier a permis de mieux faire connaître la création d'entreprise, de développer la prise de conscience du potentiel entrepreneurial et de renforcer les compétences nécessaires à l'autonomisation des participantes.

Une activité réussie

Dans le cadre des réformes structurelles entreprises par l'UNESCO et reconnaissant le rôle central des Commissions nationales, la Commission nationale gabonaise pour l'UNESCO a poursuivi son processus de redynamisation en 2024. Madame Camélia Ntoutoume Leclercq, ministre de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Instruction civique et de la Formation professionnelle, présidente de la Commission, a convoqué une assemblée générale ordinaire le 9 octobre 2024, sous le thème « Une Commission nationale gabonaise pour l'UNESCO restaurée ».

L'objectif de cette assemblée générale était de replacer la Commission nationale au cœur de la coopération entre l'UNESCO et les ministères sectoriels relevant de ses domaines de compétence. Cet événement a marqué une étape importante dans la revitalisation de l'organe national et dans la clarification de son rôle stratégique auprès de l'UNESCO.



Participants à l'assemblée générale ordinaire de la Commission nationale gabonaise pour l'UNESCO, Libreville
©Commission nationale gabonaise pour l'UNESCO

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

La Commission nationale gabonaise pour l'UNESCO, avec l'appui du Bureau de l'UNESCO à Libreville, envisage d'accompagner le Réseau des écoles associées de l'UNESCO dans l'intégration de l'intelligence artificielle dans les méthodes d'enseignement et d'apprentissage, tout en tenant compte des risques liés à son utilisation. L'IA est perçue comme un levier essentiel pour relever certains défis majeurs du XXI^e siècle, notamment dans le domaine éducatif, en favorisant l'innovation pédagogique et en accélérant les progrès vers l'ODD 4.

Cette initiative pourrait bénéficier du soutien du gouvernement gabonais, à travers le ministère de l'Éducation nationale chargé de la Formation civique, le ministère de la Communication et des Médias, le ministère de l'Économie numérique, le ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur ainsi que le Comité technique national pour l'IA (CTN-IA). Ce dernier est un instrument national chargé de promouvoir et d'évaluer l'IA en vue de son implémentation efficace au Gabon.

GAMBIA

Gambia National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Habibatou Drammeh, Minister of Basic and Secondary Education

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO carried out activities aligned with its advisory, liaison and coordination, information, and participation mandates. Working closely with local partners, the Commission connected national institutions with UNESCO's initiatives in its five areas of competence. In collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, the Commission set up the first joint e-learning and digital library platform in the country, as part of a wider effort to transform higher education. This initiative demonstrated significant progress, including the adoption of real-time data analytics tools among educators

and policymakers, which enhanced decision-making processes and contributed to positive outcomes in education policies.

The Commission also supported the application process of the Gambia College and the International Open University for the establishment of a UNESCO UNITWIN Chair on digital learning, teacher education and assessment. As a result, the Vice-Chancellor of IOU and the Principal of Gambia College were invited to the UNESCO Chairs and Partners Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 30 September to 2 October 2024.

Later in the year, the Commission collaborated with the National Federation of Clubs for UNESCO and ASPnet to organize sensitization activities on medical and electronic waste management for students, teacher coordinators and communities. These activities were part of the Participation Programme-funded project entitled "Effects of Electronic and Medical Waste on the Environment and Human Health: Engaging Schools and Communities to Advocate for a More Resilient Ecosystem Management." Another engagement involved ASPnet schools and Clubs for UNESCO in popularizing the National Inventory List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, with the aim of integrating living heritage into school curricula.

Success story

In partnership with the National Centre for Arts and Culture, the National Federation of Clubs for UNESCO and ASPnet, the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO implemented the project "Living Heritage and Cultural Expressions in Gambian Schools." The project sought to safeguard the National Inventory List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The activity was held in Janjangbureh, a settlement representative of living heritage in the Gambia. It brought together students, teacher coordinators and community members. Experts explained the process and spirit behind each ICH element, and participants visited the Kankurang Centre where local masking traditions are preserved in a museum. Group simulations of inventoried items deepened their understanding. The project successfully popularized the Gambia's 30 inventoried ICH elements across 54 selected schools in both urban and rural areas. Through interactive sessions, participants described the activity as innovative and revealing, giving them a sense of discovery and self-worth. By highlighting the cultural logic behind various practices, the project aimed to integrate ICH into school curricula.



Fula Traditional Wedding on the Tentative ICH List
©Gambia National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Gambia National Commission for UNESCO has set several priorities for the coming years. Following the registration of the Niumi Biosphere Reserve in UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme, the development of a management plan has been identified as a priority to strengthen conservation efforts. The Department of Parks and Wildlife highlighted this need, which was also reiterated by the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves. The Commission also envisages collaboration with its Senegalese counterpart, as the Niumi and Sine-Saloum Biosphere Reserves form a transboundary continuum requiring pooled resources and coordinated management. This effort will require additional funding and capacity building for stakeholders.

The Commission is also working with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education to integrate the General History of Africa into national curricula. Recognizing that this initiative would have greater impact through a collective approach, the Commission plans to convene a sub-regional conference of curriculum experts under the framework of the West African Examinations Council. By learning from the experiences of countries such as Ghana, which has already initiated integration, the Gambia aims to accelerate the process nationally.

Institutionally, the Commission has recruited new professional staff in recent years who require further training to enhance efficiency. A staff exchange programme with other National Commissions is being considered to strengthen capacity, promote networking, share experiences and motivate personnel.

GHANA

Champions of Change

Ghana Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Yaw Osei Adutwum, Member of Parliament

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Ghana Commission for UNESCO implemented activities across UNESCO's five sectors with a focus on preserving cultural heritage, advancing education, and strengthening international partnerships. These initiatives promoted sustainable development, intercultural dialogue, and innovation, supported by collaboration with national and international stakeholders.

In October 2024, in partnership with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO and the Korea Heritage Service, the Commission organized a *Memory of the World* workshop that brought together representatives from eleven African countries to document women's contributions to documentary

heritage. The Commission also played a central role in hosting the 10th UNESCO Africa Engineering Week, supported by UNESCO, the Ghana Institution of Engineering and the Ghana Engineering Council, and carried out in collaboration with the Technology Consultancy Centre. This event inspired new initiatives, including training programmes for engineering students in computer-aided design and smart manufacturing, involving 24 engineering institutions.

In June 2024, the Commission collaborated with the Seocho-Gu District in Korea, through the Korea National Commission for UNESCO, to launch a student exchange programme. This North-South cooperation initiative, implemented through ASPnet schools in Ghana, aimed to strengthen cross-cultural understanding between the two countries. The Commission also worked closely with the UNESCO Accra Field Office on a workshop under the Education for Sustainable Development initiative, which resulted in a collaborative action plan involving various stakeholders.

Additional achievements included a partnership with the Ghana Tourism Authority to establish the first Kente Museum in Bonwire, aimed at preserving traditional weaving techniques and promoting cultural tourism. The adoption of the Ghana Anti-Doping Act in 2024 reinforced the country's commitment to the International Convention against Doping in Sport by creating the Ghana Anti-Doping Agency.

Success story

A major milestone was achieved in 2024 when the Ghana Commission for UNESCO successfully inscribed the craftsmanship of traditional woven Kente cloth on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity during the 19th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The inscription process was carried out with strong community involvement. Local artisans and weavers contributed their knowledge and expertise, underscoring the cultural and historical significance of Kente as a symbol of Ghanaian identity. The cloth's vibrant patterns and colours embody the values, narratives and social identities of Ghana's diverse ethnic groups. Recognition by UNESCO provides international visibility and protection for Kente weaving, ensuring its transmission to future generations. The inscription also promotes cultural tourism, creating economic opportunities for communities.



Traditional Woven Textile Kente ©Ghana Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Ghana Commission for UNESCO has outlined several priorities for 2025. These include working with national scientific institutions and sister Commissions to undertake activities marking the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology and supporting the roll-out of UNESCO programmes to increase the Organization's visibility. The Commission also plans to establish a national geoscience committee to initiate work on geoparks in Ghana.

Finally, the Commission aims to expand cooperation with other National Commissions, through both North-South and South-South exchanges, to strengthen staff capacities, promote knowledge sharing, and enhance institutional effectiveness.

KENYA

Kenya National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM), in collaboration with partners, hosted multiple cross-cutting and multidisciplinary initiatives across UNESCO's areas of competence.

In the field of education, the Commission contributed to the implementation of the 2023–2027 National Education Sector Strategic Plan. It organized training for teachers on peace education, Global Citizenship Education, Education for Sustainable Development, and Media and Information Literacy. It also developed a manual for mainstreaming Gender Responsive Pedagogy in education, and a training manual on integrating ICT in Early Childhood Development and Education. The Commission conducted research on the effects of teenage pregnancies and organized the UNESCO Eastern Africa Sub-Regional Forum on Artificial Intelligence.

In the natural sciences, KNATCOM inaugurated Kenya's National IHP Committee and the National Water Stakeholders IHP-IX. It undertook capacity building for STEM teachers on gender,

transformative STEM and digital education, and conducted a periodic review of the Kiunga Biosphere Reserve. It organized a regional workshop on gender-responsive disaster risk reduction in Eastern Africa and participated in the event "Sustainably Unlocking the Economic Potential of Lake Turkana."

In the social and human sciences, the Commission organized training sessions to strengthen capacities of stakeholders on the UNESCO Convention against Doping, sensitized students on the establishment of Clubs for UNESCO, and contributed to hospital ethics support on strategic planning. It also developed a draft curriculum for training HEC members, completed the General History of Africa matrices for integrating content into the Competency-Based Curriculum, and sensitized athletes on gender-based violence. Entrepreneurial training was also organized for young people.

In the cultural sector, the Commission worked on the world heritage listing of the archaeological sites of Gede, facilitated the ratification of the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import of Cultural Property, and supported Kenya's election to the World Heritage Committee, where it assumed the role of Vice-Chair of Group V(a) Africa.

In the area of communication and information, KNATCOM organized capacity building for community media workers on editorial formatting and content development, and trained media professionals on the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists.

The Commission also published Volumes 4, Issues 1 and 2 of the Journal of the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO. Finally, its Resource Centre was refurbished, improving access to both print and electronic information resources.

Success story

In 2024, KNATCOM hosted and organized the UNESCO Eastern Africa Sub-Regional Forum on Artificial Intelligence (EARFAI) in Nairobi. The event brought together representatives from 13 Member States to discuss the role of artificial intelligence in regional development. EARFAI was held in line with Flagship Programme 4 of UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa (2022–2029), entitled "Harnessing new and emerging technologies for sustainable development in Africa, including through the implementation of the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence."

The forum aimed to improve the capacity of African countries in the development, adoption and use of emerging technologies, including AI. It provided a platform for high-level political exchanges and technical discussions on the key issues that should guide Member States in developing norms, institutions, and capacities for the responsible and sustainable use of AI. The discussions emphasized strategies to strengthen human and institutional capacities across Eastern Africa, drawing from country experiences.

Key recommendations from the session included prioritizing ethics alongside technological progress, establishing policy frameworks, ensuring expert involvement,

improving governance mechanisms, encouraging youth to embrace STEM subjects, promoting digital literacy, investing in digital infrastructure, developing AI talent, and encouraging regional collaboration and knowledge sharing.



Delegates during the UNESCO Eastern Africa Sub-Regional Forum on Artificial Intelligence ©Kenya National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking ahead, KNATCOM remains committed to hosting a regional conference on gender inclusivity and equity, as well as to continuing its capacity-building work through its Journal and renovated Resource Centre. The Commission will also pursue its strategic objectives in international engagement, educational initiatives, environmental conservation, cultural heritage preservation, communication and information, and research and documentation.

Through the implementation of its 2024–2029 Strategic Plan, the Commission intends to strengthen partnerships at national, regional, and international levels, thereby contributing to Kenya's Vision 2030. KNATCOM will also expand regional initiatives and exchange programmes, such as the Kulturweit programme, carried out in collaboration with the German Commission for UNESCO.

LESOTHO

Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO undertook activities focusing on Education for Sustainable Development and Green Education. Training sessions were organized in selected schools on tree planting, while infrastructure support was provided for the Greening Schools Initiative, with assistance from UNESCO's Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA).

In the cultural field, efforts were made toward the conservation of rock art sites in Sehlabathebe National Park, part of the

Maloti Mountain Park World Heritage Site. With the support of local communities, rock art sites were located, documented, and protective measures were introduced.

Concerning UNESCO's 2003 and 2005 Conventions, the Ministry led stakeholder engagement and periodic reporting, with reports submitted in collaboration with UNESCO ROSA and the Department of Culture. The Commission also participated in the observation and commemoration of several UN and international days. In particular, it highlighted partnerships during events such as World Environment Day, International Mother Language Day, World Radio Day, World Art Day and Copyright Day, African Traditional Medicine Day, International Literacy Day, and World Teachers' Day.

Through UNESCO Participation Programme projects, three Community Learning Centres received support to revive and strengthen their vocational component, offering training in Vaseline production, packaging, promotion, and sales. This work was carried out with support from UNESCO Headquarters and the GEM Institute.

Success story

A major highlight of 2024 was the role of culture and creative industries in the celebrations of Lesotho's Bicentennial. While this sector had long lacked recognition, the Bicentennial brought it to the forefront. Innovation and creativity shaped the festivities, beginning in 2023 with the design of the Bicentennial logo.

The celebrations gave Basotho creatives at all levels the opportunity to produce and showcase their work. They included a vibrant Arts and Innovation Week, which featured a spectacular parade highlighting both traditional and contemporary arts, traditional attire, the Miss Bicentennial pageant, and a fashion show. The launch of the Annual National Music Awards and Mega Music, alongside the release of the first all-Basotho film, *Lieme ka Lekoe* (Wish for My Daughter), added further momentum.

The celebrations also saw the establishment of the Lesotho Copyright Society of Authors and Artists, under Section 31 of the Copyright Order of 1989. This step was an important milestone in fostering a vibrant and fair creative economy in the country. Overall, the Bicentennial marked a profound shift in the appreciation of Lesotho's history, culture, and creative industries.



The legendary Famo music artist, Puseletso Seema, received the Lifetime Award, alongside young contemporary artists
©Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO has set a number of priorities for the coming years. These include the review of its Constitution and the finalization of the 2005 Cultural Policy. The Commission also plans to prepare nomination files for the Heritage Route from Botha-Bothe and Menkhoaneng to Thaba-Bosiu, and to develop nomination dossiers for the Basotho Hat craft technique and the Mokhobo dance as part of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

Further work is planned to map the culture and creative industries, and to collaborate with South Africa on a joint submission to the Memory of the World Register. Climate change education is also a priority, with plans to strengthen its integration into school curricula through the implementation of the Green School Quality Standard and the Greening School Curriculum Guide in seven schools within and around the Matšeng Biosphere Reserve.

Youth in the Biosphere Reserve will be supported to launch climate-smart initiatives for sustainable development, while stakeholders, schools, and communities will be more actively engaged in the Man and the Biosphere Programme and the Greening Education Partnership. Other priorities include the ratification of the Global and Addis Conventions, validation of the ESD Strategy, and resuscitation of the pending Integrated National Teacher Policy with UNESCO support.

The Commission also aims to strengthen the UNESCO Associated Schools Programme to promote a culture of peace and global citizenship, revive the UNESCO Youth Desk, and officially launch the Matšeng Biosphere Reserve in November 2025. Livelihood projects such as beekeeping and orchards will be expanded in communities around the Reserve, while grazing lands will be rehabilitated with the help of herders and livestock owners. Finally, the Commission intends to resuscitate the National IHP Committee and build stakeholder capacities on the UNESCO Global Geoparks Programme.

MALAWI

Malawi National Commission for UNESCO (MNCU)

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Malawi National Commission for UNESCO (MNCU) successfully achieved its mandate of coordinating and facilitating interaction between UNESCO and Malawi government agencies in the fields of education, sciences, culture and communication and information. The Commission received six approvals of Participation Programme projects for the 2024 – 2025 biennium. In addition, it mobilised additional support beyond UNESCO through collaboration with partners such as the German Commission for UNESCO, Rei Foundation Limited of New Zealand, Norwegian Embassy to Malawi and Korean National Commission for UNESCO.

In the education sector, with support from Korean National Commission for UNESCO, MNCU continued to support lifelong learning opportunities to marginalised communities in

Community Learning Centres (CLCs) through the Bridge Malawi Project. The project conducted capacity building trainings and provided financial scholarships to Adult Education Diploma students at Magomero Community Development Training College. The sector also held a national consultation on the 2024 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) to contribute to the draft Fortaleza Declaration, generating ideas and actionable recommendations. The UNESCO Team Lead in Malawi participated in the consultation.

In a bid to address gaps and improve the integration of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in key development sectors, the Natural Sciences sector supported the Ministry of Education in reviewing the National STI Policy. The draft policy, yet to be launched, aims to ensure that STI initiatives align with national priorities such as industrialization, environmental sustainability, digital transformation, and socio-economic growth.

In a cross-sectoral project in Communication & Information and Social and Human Sciences, MNCU continued with implementation of UNESCO Recommendation on Ethics of Artificial Intelligence in Malawi. The draft Malawi AI Readiness Assessment Report was published and awaits validation. The AI Readiness Assessment Methodology exercise aimed to guide Malawi in assessing what frameworks, capacities and competencies exist at the country level to support the ethical development and use of AI.

Success story

For many years, the creative industry in Malawi lacked a formal body to oversee and promote its development. Challenges included a lack of funding, inadequate regulation, and underpayment of artists. To address these issues, MNCU championed the establishment of the National Arts and Heritage Council (NAHEC) through its project "Strengthening Institutional Capacities in Implementing the Malawi Cultural Policy," aligned with UNESCO's 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Following a series of consultations and capacity-building trainings, the Malawi Parliament passed the NAHEC Bill in November 2024. This landmark achievement was finalized with the assent of the State President of the Republic of Malawi, H.E. Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, who signed the Bill into law. This development marked a turning point for both the creative sector and MNCU. With NAHEC established, the creative industry will now benefit from a more formalized structure, improved economic opportunities, and strengthened preservation of cultural heritage.

The project received financial support from the Norwegian Embassy to Malawi through the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa. Its objectives included strengthening institutional capacities, formalizing the sector, and ensuring that the

arts and heritage industries contribute more significantly to economic development and cultural preservation.



Honorable Chimwendo Banda, MP, Minister of Local Government, Unity and Culture, presenting the NAHE Bill in Parliament
©Malawi National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking at 2025, MNCU has identified several priorities requiring support from the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa. In education, the Commission plans to facilitate the ratification of UNESCO Conventions and Recommendations to raise awareness among stakeholders. Under the Bridge Project, efforts will focus on introducing technical and vocational skills to enhance livelihoods among communities surrounding Community Learning Centres.

In the natural sciences, MNCU aims to support the nomination of a new site as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The sector will also begin implementation of the Man and the Biosphere Strategic Action Plan for Malawi to improve human livelihoods and conserve ecosystems.

In the cultural field, the Commission will review Malawi's World Heritage Tentative List to identify and prepare potential sites for nomination, with consultative meetings and conferences planned as part of the process.

Finally, in the areas of communication, information, and social sciences, MNCU will continue to implement UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. It plans to support the development of AI ethical standards to guide Malawi in responding to the challenges posed by new technologies and digital transformation.

MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

The year 2024 was particularly challenging for Mozambique. Due to the financial crisis affecting the country, the Mozambique National Commission for UNESCO did not benefit from State Budget allocations to implement its statutory activities. The lack of funding hindered preparations for statutory meetings and reduced participation in regional and global events organized by UNESCO. For example, the Commission was unable to attend the 2024 Global Education Meeting in Fortaleza.

Success story

Under the Participation Programme for the 2022–2023 biennium, the Commission submitted a project to train technicians on gender equality in education. This project targeted the provinces of Gaza in the south and Tete in central Mozambique.

The general objective was to strengthen the capacities of technicians assigned to the education sector at provincial and district levels on issues of gender equality in education. The specific objectives were threefold: to disseminate UNESCO instruments for assessing progress in gender equality in education, to assess the status of national initiatives and programmes in this area, and to present the structure and functioning of gender units from central to district levels.

The training methodology comprised two workshops of two days each. Participants included members of gender units at provincial and district levels, gender focal points in provincial services for social affairs, trainers from teacher training institutions, and primary and secondary school teachers. The sessions were facilitated by technicians from the Provincial Education Directorates, the Provincial Services for Social Affairs in Gaza and Tete, and officials from the Mozambique National Commission for UNESCO.

Nevertheless, the Commission implemented several activities with financing from UNESCO through the Participation Programme, the UNESCO Office in Mozambique, and the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa. In line with government priorities in the field of sciences, particularly the Man and the Biosphere Programme, Mozambique advanced efforts to increase the number of Biosphere Reserves. With support from the German Government for SADC countries, Mozambique secured technical and financial assistance to prepare the nomination of Chimanimani National Park as a Biosphere Reserve.

Despite financial constraints, the Mozambique National Commission for UNESCO continued to fulfill its mandate of promoting UNESCO's ideals within the country and showcasing Mozambique's contributions to the international community. This was reflected in the participation of national experts in various subregional, regional, and global events organized by UNESCO in its fields of competence.



Group photo of participants during the training of technicians on gender equality in education, Mozambique, 2024
©Mozambique National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

For the 2024–2025 biennium, the Commission has submitted several projects under the Participation Programme. These focus on climate change and its impacts, gender equality in education, youth empowerment through professional skills and non-formal education, and digitization of State Archives.

In partnership with the National Commissions for UNESCO of South Africa and Zimbabwe, Mozambique has submitted a project entitled "Rescuing Memories of Liberation Movements in Southern Africa," aimed at fostering intergenerational dialogue and addressing contemporary youth challenges.

Working with the German Commission for UNESCO, Mozambique will also host the Meeting of the Southern African Biosphere Reserve Committees. The country has expressed an interest in hosting a Meeting on Artificial Intelligence for Portuguese-speaking African countries, although financial constraints have slowed this initiative.

In terms of institutional capacity building and resource mobilization, Mozambique has requested UNESCO's support in areas such as advocacy for climate justice for youth, youth empowerment in employability, education for peace and sustainable development, and the role of artificial intelligence in education.

NAMIBIA

Namibia National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Namibia National Commission for UNESCO remained committed to cultural sustainability and intangible cultural heritage (ICH) preservation through strategic initiatives and partnerships. A key project, Aboxan Musik |Öb, †Ans tsî ||Khasigu, celebrates Nama ancestral music, showcasing traditional instruments such as the khab (musical bow), !guitsib (traditional guitar), and vlies (harmonica). This initiative ensures the transmission of traditional musical knowledge, reinforcing Nama identity and Namibia's diverse heritage. The Safeguarding of Okuruuo project focuses on preserving cultural practices through community-based capacity building, inventorying, and documentation. Aligned with the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, it integrates ICH into education to strengthen school-community ties and cultural resilience.

In collaboration with UNESCO ROSA, the project on Safeguarding ICH in Basic Education in Namibia and Zimbabwe promotes cultural pride, inclusivity, and knowledge transmission through a whole-school approach. Namibia also actively engages in high-level UNESCO platforms, including the World OER Congress, Internet Governance Sessions, Memory of the World Conference, Global Policy Forum, and World Press Freedom Day. The National Commission has submitted three proposals for the Memory of the World Register: Namibia Terrorism Trial (1967/68) & Namibian Robben Island Prisoners, The Windhoek Declaration (1991), and The Maherero Papers.

To strengthen collaboration and knowledge exchange, the National Commission partners with the Estonian National Commission on digital heritage skills and entrepreneurship. This initiative focuses on leveraging digital tools to document, preserve, and promote Namibia's cultural heritage while equipping communities with entrepreneurial skills linked to heritage-based industries. Through capacity-building workshops, knowledge-sharing sessions, and the development of digital heritage platforms, this collaboration fosters innovation in cultural preservation and economic empowerment.

The Commission also partners with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO through STEP – Together with Africa, and engages in an exchange visit with Angola, with significant support from sister Commissions. By leveraging these initiatives, Namibia continues to promote heritage preservation, digital innovation, and global knowledge exchange, ensuring that its cultural legacy remains vibrant and relevant.

Success story

In partnership with the Estonian National Commission for UNESCO, Loov Eesti and Viljandi Culture Academy, the Namibia National Commission for UNESCO entered into an agreement in 2023 to create and implement the Creative Entrepreneurship Academy Namibia. After successfully completing the first phase in 2023, both partners signed a new contract for 2024–2025 to reach a wider group of stakeholders. The overall project explores the convergence of heritage, innovation, and entrepreneurship within the cultural and creative sectors, with a strong emphasis on harnessing digital technologies and involving youth in the heritage-based creative economy. The second phase focuses on the role of education in preserving and digitizing cultural heritage. The project is ongoing, with the possibility of a third phase in 2025–2026.

The programme included the participation of Ms Madli Kumpas, Coordinator of UNESCO Education and Science Programme, Estonian National Commission for UNESCO; Ms Eunice Smith, Head of Office and UNESCO Representative in Namibia; Hon. Itah Kandjii-Murangi, Minister of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation; Prof. Gilbert Likando, University of Namibia; and Dr. Lisho Mundia, Deputy Executive Director of the Ministry of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation. The photo further includes government policymakers, Estonian experts, educators, and youth.



Group photo of participants of the Creative Entrepreneurship Academy Namibia, organised in partnership with the Estonian National Commission for UNESCO and local stakeholders, Windhoek, 2024
©Namibia National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Namibia reaffirms its commitment to the Windhoek Declaration, with a strong focus on advocacy in heritage preservation, internet governance, and access to information. Key priorities include strengthening digital governance frameworks and ensuring inclusive participation in the evolving digital landscape. Additionally, Namibia seeks to enhance the capacity of civil servants through strategic partnerships, fostering a deeper understanding of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital transformation in the public sector. As part of this commitment, Namibia is eager to participate in the Internet for Trust Pilot Project, reinforcing ethical digital engagement and governance.

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) initiatives remain essential, particularly in addressing the digital divide among youth and equipping them with critical thinking and digital skills. The proposed ASPnet Regional Capacity Building for Educators aims to empower teachers and principals in Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) across Southern Africa. In collaboration with the UNESCO Windhoek Field Office and UNESCO ROSA, with a particular emphasis on Zimbabwe, this initiative will foster regional cooperation among ASPnet schools.

The programme includes a capacity-building workshop, student-led SDG initiatives, and an intercultural knowledge exchange conference. Educators will benefit from targeted training and resource toolkits, while students will engage in local sustainability projects with dedicated support. An interactive online platform will also be developed to facilitate peer learning and knowledge-sharing. Expected outcomes include enhanced teaching methodologies, stronger regional collaboration, increased student engagement in SDG-related projects, and a comprehensive repository of best practices. This aligns with UNESCO's vision of empowering educators and students as proactive contributors to a sustainable and equitable future.

NIGER

Commission nationale du Niger pour l'UNESCO et l'ICESCO

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Résumé des activités de 2024

En 2024, malgré le contexte socio-politique et économique difficile marqué par une recrudescence de l'insécurité, la Commission nationale pour l'UNESCO du Niger a contribué activement à la réalisation de plusieurs d'activités dans des domaines variés, en lien avec les objectifs de l'UNESCO en général et la priorité Afrique en particulier. Ces objectifs ont été atteints grâce à l'appui de l'État du Niger, du Bureau régional de l'UNESCO à Dakar, des programmes de l'UNESCO implantés au Niger, de certaines Commissions nationales africaines, des ONG et autres associations partenaires.

Ainsi, la Commission a réalisé le bilan de la mise en œuvre des conventions de l'UNESCO au Niger et a accompagné les partenaires de l'Organisation, qu'il s'agisse d'ONG, de structures étatiques ou d'associations, dans l'élaboration de projets inscrits dans le cadre du Programme de participation. Elle a pris part à la révision des programmes de l'Institut de formation en alphabétisation et éducation non formelle (IFAENF) ainsi que de la Direction des programmes d'alphabétisation et de la formation des adultes (DPAFA), avec l'appui financier du Programme de renforcement des capacités pour l'éducation (CapED) de l'UNESCO. Elle a également apporté son soutien à l'harmonisation des programmes de formation des instituts et facultés des sciences de l'éducation, toujours avec l'appui du CapED.

La Commission a participé à l'élaboration d'un Plan d'actions prioritaires (PAP) dans le cadre de la Politique nationale en matière de sciences, de technologies et de l'innovation du Niger (POSTINI), afin d'assurer sa mise en œuvre harmonieuse et réussie. Elle a également pris part à l'organisation de la Semaine africaine de l'ingénierie 2024, bénéficiant de l'appui financier du Bureau régional de l'UNESCO à Dakar, ainsi qu'au Sommet du savoir 2024 organisé à Dubaï par la Fondation Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum. La Commission a participé à un atelier de formation destiné aux États membres d'Afrique de l'Ouest sur le processus de désignation des réserves de biosphère, et a été représentée à Rabat lors des travaux de présentation de la Fondation africaine pour l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie, organisée par la Commission nationale du Maroc.

Une activité réussie

La Semaine africaine de l'ingénierie au Niger, organisée par NOVATECH en partenariat avec l'UNESCO, a constitué un succès notable. Les objectifs fixés ont été atteints, voire dépassés, grâce à la mobilisation de tous les partenaires, notamment les jeunes étudiants, les startups, les techniciens en génie civil et architecture, les enseignants ainsi que les passionnés de l'ingénierie. L'événement a permis de sensibiliser les professionnels, les étudiants et le grand public au rôle essentiel des ingénieurs dans la construction d'un avenir durable pour l'Afrique. Il a contribué à promouvoir l'innovation dans le domaine des infrastructures durables en mettant en avant les nouvelles technologies et les meilleures pratiques, à accélérer la mise en œuvre de la Zone de libre-échange continental africaine (ZLECAF) en soulignant le rôle stratégique de l'ingénierie dans la création d'infrastructures et de réseaux logistiques efficaces, ainsi qu'à renforcer les compétences locales en ingénierie, notamment dans le domaine de l'intelligence artificielle appliquée aux infrastructures.

Cet événement a mis en lumière le rôle essentiel de l'ingénierie dans la construction d'un avenir durable pour l'Afrique. Il a également permis de renforcer les capacités locales en matière d'ingénierie et d'intelligence artificielle, ouvrant ainsi de nouvelles perspectives pour les professionnels du secteur.



Séance de formation lors de la Semaine africaine de l'ingénierie 2024, organisée en partenariat avec l'UNESCO
©Commission nationale du Niger pour l'UNESCO

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

Les domaines où le renforcement des capacités et la mobilisation des ressources sont nécessaires dans le contexte du Niger se résument essentiellement à la réforme curriculaire en cours et au numérique éducatif.

NIGERIA

Nigerian National Commission on UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO collaborated with UNESCO line Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs); UNESCO Abuja Office, and civil society organizations to promote the ideals and visibility of UNESCO in Nigeria during the year under review.

In promoting Education for Health and Wellbeing (EHW) for Adolescents and Young People (AYP), a two-day sensitization workshop with the theme Education for Health and Wellbeing: A foundation for healthy growth and development for adolescents and young people was held on 15 May 2024.

A one-day workshop on the Ethical Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Post-Pandemic Era was organised for secondary school students on 25 March 2024 to analyze the ethical ramifications of AI development across various

sectors and share best practices for integrating AI technologies responsibly.

The Commission participated in the validation and launch of a website, SoftLife247.com, for adolescents and young people, to create more opportunities for young people to access factual, accurate and life-building information on health and wellbeing. The programme was held between 18 and 30 September 2024.

In a bid to preserve geological heritage and promote sustainable development for local communities, an Inauguration Workshop for the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme Nigerian National Committee (IGGP-NNC) was held on 19 November 2024.

The Commission collaborated with the UNESCO Abuja Office between May and July 2024 to consult and establish an effective interface with the benefiting communities to promote biodiversity business, conservation, sustainable development and poverty reduction in Oban Biosphere, Omo Biosphere and Shere Hills Forest Reserves.

Under UNESCO Fellowships Programmes, a Nigerian was awarded the UNESCO/The People's Republic of China - The Great Wall - Co-Sponsored Fellowship Programme. Two other Nigerians (one male and one female) were also selected to participate in the UNESCO/Poland Co-Sponsored Fellowships Programme in Engineering Cycle at AGH University of Science and Technology, Poland.

Success story

The Commission collaborated with the UNESCO Abuja Office to hold the Regional Launch of the Better Education for Africa's Rise (BEAR) III project, funded by the Government of the Republic of Korea, held on 16–17 April 2024 in Abuja, where Nigeria was one of the beneficiaries.

The BEAR III project was carried out in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education, its Agencies and in partnership with the contributing state. Agriculture, post-harvest management and agro-processing were prioritized to address food insecurity challenges, stimulate economic development, eradicate poverty, promote peace, equip youth and adults with the skills required, and support the transition to a green economy.

The Commission also participated with the UNESCO Abuja Office and the Kano State Government at the World Youth Skills Day and the National Launch of the project, held on 15 July 2024 at the Dangote Ultramodern Skills Acquisition Centre. Both formal and informal youth showcased their initiatives at the National Skills Exhibition. Participants presented prototypes of airplanes and drones, footwear, textiles, architectural designs, cosmetics, cleaning products, as well as pastries.



Exhibition of youth skills and innovations during the National Launch of the Better Education for Africa's Rise (BEAR) III project
©Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In 2025, the Commission, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education and UNESCO line Ministries, plans to organize a workshop on enhancing girls' education through UNESCO's initiatives on girls' education, aimed at sparking immediate action and dialogue around girls' education in Nigeria. As Nigeria is made up of different ethnic nationalities, the Commission will organize a workshop titled Developing a National Identity in a Multi-Cultural Society: Challenges and Prospects, aimed at fostering a common identity through peace, unity and understanding in learning different cultural values.

To contribute to peace and security in Nigeria and train young people to be agents of peace, the Commission, in collaboration with UNESCO line Agencies and the UNESCO Abuja Office, will organize a sensitization workshop on The Roles of Youth in Nigeria's Sustainable Development towards a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence. To raise awareness regarding ozone layer depletion and explore solutions for its preservation, the Commission will commemorate the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer under the theme "A Pathway to Phase out Ozone-Depleting Substances and Protect All Life on Earth". To increase access to educational resources, break down barriers to knowledge and facilitate self-directed learning, the Commission intends to organize a workshop on digital literacy and online safety for students in collaboration with UNESCO line Ministries.

RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO

Commission nationale de la République démocratique du Congo pour l'UNESCO

Présidente: Mme Raïssa Malu Dinanga, Ministre d'Etat en charge de l'Education nationale et Nouvelle Citoyenneté

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Résumé des activités de 2024

Au cours de l'année 2024, la Commission nationale de la République démocratique du Congo pour l'UNESCO a mis en œuvre une série d'activités prévues dans sa planification annuelle, financées à la fois par le Trésor public et avec l'appui de l'UNESCO. En collaboration avec le ministère du

Genre, Famille et Enfant, la Commission a apporté un soutien significatif aux femmes maraîchères de Kinshasa afin de renforcer leur autonomisation et de contribuer à la lutte contre les effets du changement climatique.

Un autre volet important a concerné le renforcement des capacités humaines. Des ateliers ont été organisés au profit des acteurs institutionnels pour mettre en lumière leur rôle dans l'élaboration de politiques publiques susceptibles de contribuer à l'atteinte des Objectifs de développement durable.

Enfin, la Commission a participé aux préparatifs du 30e anniversaire du projet international de l'UNESCO « Les routes des personnes mises en esclavage : Résistance, Liberté, Héritage ». L'objectif était d'évaluer la mise en œuvre du projet en République démocratique du Congo et de définir de nouvelles orientations à partir des problématiques actuelles. Un comité ad hoc, placé sous le pilotage de la ministre d'Etat chargée de l'Éducation nationale et Nouvelle citoyenneté, présidente de la Commission nationale, a été constitué, regroupant des experts des ministères travaillant dans les domaines de compétence de l'UNESCO. Ce comité était chargé de préparer les éléments techniques nécessaires pour faciliter le déroulement des activités. Toutefois, en raison de l'agenda très chargé des ministres concernés, la mise en œuvre de cette activité a été reportée à 2025.

Une activité réussie

L'organisation d'un séminaire de sensibilisation sur la gestion et la conservation des écosystèmes naturels du Parc des mangroves, à Moanda dans le Kongo-Central, a été l'une des grandes réussites de la Commission nationale de la République démocratique du Congo pour l'UNESCO en 2024. L'objectif était de contribuer à la protection et à la gestion durable de ces écosystèmes afin de lutter contre les effets du changement climatique.

Le séminaire a réuni des représentants des peuples autochtones, des leaders communautaires, des chefs coutumiers, des femmes, des jeunes, des ONG œuvrant dans le domaine de l'environnement ainsi que le représentant de la société pétrolière PERENCO. Les femmes, en particulier, ont été formées à l'utilisation des briquettes écologiques pour favoriser la conservation et la protection des mangroves.



Travaux pratiques de conservation menés par les participants dans le cadre du séminaire sur la gestion et la protection des écosystèmes du Parc des mangroves ©Commission nationale de la République démocratique du Congo pour l'UNESCO

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

En 2025, dans le domaine des sciences exactes et naturelles, la Commission prévoit d'organiser un atelier de formation destiné au personnel des services géologiques africains. Cet atelier visera à faciliter la création de géoparcs mondiaux UNESCO sur l'ensemble du continent. Actuellement, seuls deux géoparcs mondiaux UNESCO existent en Afrique, celui de M'Goun au Maroc et celui de Ngorongoro-Lengai en Tanzanie. Avec l'accompagnement de l'UNESCO, la République démocratique du Congo souhaite initier la création d'autres géoparcs dans la région afin de contribuer à la réalisation des ODD et de leurs cibles correspondantes.

La Commission entend également accompagner plusieurs villes, notamment Mbandaka, Kananga, Moanda et Kalemie, dans leur processus d'adhésion au Réseau mondial des villes apprenantes de l'UNESCO. Enfin, dans le cadre de la promotion du multilinguisme, elle prévoit l'organisation de conférences-débats sur la Décennie internationale des langues autochtones, afin de sensibiliser et de favoriser l'intégration des langues locales en République démocratique du Congo.

RWANDA

Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO (CNRU)

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO (CNRU) organized or contributed to the celebration of various International and World Days designated by UNESCO, including those dedicated to science, philosophy, poetry, education and teachers, communication, water, biodiversity and others. The CNRU also coordinated the ongoing implementation of the six projects funded by the UNESCO Participation Programme 2024–2025 and conducted various activities in its four departments.

In the field of education, in 2024, the Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO organized a consultative meeting on education and health for the well-being of adolescents and young people. The event brought together partners who play a key role in education and health. During participant exchanges, the need for a counselor in every school was highlighted. It was stressed that parents and teachers should take time to talk to teenagers about reproductive health rather than letting them rely on peers for information. Participants emphasized the importance of comprehensive sexual education based on science, age and cultural norms.

Success story

A highlight of 2024 was the historic visit of UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay to Rwanda. During her three-day visit, Ms Azoulay highlighted UNESCO's strong commitment to preserving cultural heritage and promoting environmental conservation. She met with H.E. President Paul Kagame and presented certificates for Rwanda's recent UNESCO World Heritage inscriptions, including Nyungwe National Park as a natural site and the memorial sites of the genocide—Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi and Bisesero—as cultural heritage sites. This recognition celebrates Rwanda's rich biodiversity and safeguards the memory of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi for future generations.

Ms Azoulay also visited the Murambi Genocide Memorial, emphasizing UNESCO's role in preserving the history of the genocide and promoting peace, unity and reconciliation. By engaging with genocide survivors, UNESCO supports efforts to educate younger generations about the atrocities, fostering a culture of understanding and preventing the recurrence of such tragedies. The Director-General's visit underscored the importance of collaboration between UNESCO, the Rwandan government and local communities in building a more unified, peaceful society.

In the field of sciences, the Government of Rwanda, through UNESCO technical support, developed the National TVET Digitalization Strategy (2024–2029) to modernize the TVET system and align it with Rwanda's National Strategy for Transformation (NST2). The strategy aims to integrate digital technologies into technical education to equip Rwandans for a knowledge-based economy. In collaboration with UNESCO and local partners, workshops identified challenges and opportunities, culminating in a framework for a digitally inclusive and innovative TVET ecosystem. The final strategy will be submitted for approval in January 2025.

In the field of culture, the National Commission organized a National Policy Dialogue on the Memory of Genocide against the Tutsi in 1994 in Rwanda through Education and Dialogue. Panelists discussed the challenges of remembering the genocide, combating denial, and teaching survivors' perspectives. They recommended the use of local languages, teacher training and ongoing dialogue. Aheza Healing and Careers Center addressed mental health and transgenerational trauma through community-driven approaches. The integration of genocide education into the national curriculum was emphasized as a means to foster trust, reconciliation and peace while promoting inclusivity and healing.

In the field of communication, the National Commission, in partnership with the Rwanda Journalists Association (ARJ) and UNESCO, hosted a two-day Media and Information Literacy (MIL) training for media practitioners and content creators. The workshop aimed to enhance participants' skills to critically evaluate information and promote MIL, contributing to a more informed, democratic and resilient society in Rwanda. The training was attended by 25 journalists, both male and female, from various media platforms, along with five content creators.



Ms Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO DG unveils World Heritage plaques to H.E Paul KAGAME ©Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

During 2025, the National Commission, with the support of UNESCO, local stakeholders and partners, intends to conduct several initiatives. These include the inscription of Rwanda's documentary heritage on the National Memory of the World Register, the implementation of the UNESCO Women for Bees project (Phase II) in Gishwati Mukura National Park and Biosphere Reserve, and the provision of technical and financial assistance to implement World Heritage Committee recommendations in relation to the management and conservation of Nyungwe National Park and World Heritage Property.

Further plans include a national workshop on UNESCO Artificial Intelligence Competency Frameworks for teachers and students in Rwanda, the designation of Imigongo (an art form) as the second element for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity after the recent inscription of Intore (a Rwandan dance), and an update on the status of Rwanda's Geopark nomination dossier concerning the Rwanda Northern GeoPark.

SENEGAL

Commission nationale du Sénégal pour l'UNESCO

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Résumé des activités de 2024

En 2024, la Commission nationale du Sénégal pour l'UNESCO a conduit plusieurs initiatives majeures. L'activité de valorisation du patrimoine culturel immatériel (PCI) par les associations culturelles de quartier a eu pour objectif principal la mise en valeur, par ces associations, des formes d'expression culturelles des traditions, savoir-faire et expressions de créativité. Elle a également permis de revisiter la Convention pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine culturel immatériel et les éléments du PCI national inscrits sur la liste de l'UNESCO, notamment le ceebu jén, art culinaire du Sénégal, et le Kankurang, rite d'initiation mandingue, ainsi que ceux répertoriés sur la liste indicative comme le Baak, le Leul (Kassak) ou encore Mame Ndiaré.

Le séminaire sur la jeunesse et la migration irrégulière avait pour objectif général de sensibiliser les jeunes aux risques liés à la migration irrégulière, d'en analyser les causes profondes et de proposer des solutions pour lutter contre ce phénomène. Il

s'agissait d'encourager et de soutenir les initiatives de recherche sur les causes, les effets et les dynamiques migratoires, mais également d'examiner les conséquences sociales, économiques et politiques de la migration pour les territoires, les communautés, en particulier la jeunesse, ainsi que pour l'État central. Le séminaire visait aussi à analyser les politiques nationales et internationales liées à la migration.

La réunion du Bureau exécutif du Comité régional africain du Programme Mémoire du Monde (ARCMoW) a regroupé les 11 membres du Bureau exécutif venus de huit pays africains, en présence des Présidents des Comités régionaux partenaires (Asie-Pacifique – MoWCAP et Amérique latine et Caraïbes – MoWLAC), du Chef de l'Unité pour le patrimoine documentaire et la Mémoire du Monde de l'UNESCO, des conseillers en communication et information des Bureaux régionaux de l'UNESCO à Nairobi et à Dakar, des membres du Comité national sénégalais MoW, ainsi que du Secrétaire général de la Commission nationale du Sénégal pour l'UNESCO. L'objectif de cette réunion était de présenter les projets de textes de l'ARCMoW élaborés à partir des dispositions des Principes directeurs du Programme Mémoire du Monde de 2021, notamment les modalités et le formulaire de présentation des propositions d'éléments, ainsi que les critères de sélection pour l'inscription au Registre régional. Ces textes ont ensuite été amendés et validés par l'ensemble des membres du Bureau exécutif. Un autre objectif était de définir les statuts du comité de sélection, d'en déterminer les membres et de réfléchir à la mise en place du Registre africain Mémoire du Monde.

Une activité réussie

Le lancement de l'activité sur « Jeunesse et migration », présidé par le préfet du département de Pikine, a réuni une centaine de participants, notamment des associations de migrants, des associations de jeunes, des journalistes, des élus, des représentants du gouvernement (ministères), des représentants des communautés, des groupements de femmes ainsi que des associations de travailleurs du secteur formel et informel. L'activité était marquée par des présentations d'experts, des séances plénières et des travaux de groupe. Parmi les présentations figuraient celles portant sur le cadre juridique et institutionnel de la migration au Sénégal, l'analyse des causes profondes de la migration irrégulière chez les jeunes sénégalais, l'impact socio-économique de ce phénomène sur les communautés locales, ainsi que les stratégies de sensibilisation et de prévention. Des travaux de groupes et des rencontres ont également été organisés pour recueillir les avis et impressions des acteurs sur le sujet. Enfin, plusieurs recommandations ont été formulées en faveur d'une meilleure prise en charge de la question migratoire.



Séminaire de sensibilisation sur la jeunesse et la migration irrégulière, département de Pikine ©Commission nationale du Sénégal pour l'UNESCO

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

La Commission nationale prévoit d'organiser un séminaire sur les métiers de l'information et de la communication à l'épreuve de l'intelligence artificielle, des journées d'animation pour la promotion des études scientifiques dans les écoles du Réseau des écoles associées de l'UNESCO, un atelier sur l'éducation aux droits humains, à la citoyenneté, à la tolérance et à la paix, ainsi qu'un atelier de formation de jeunes femmes en milieux défavorisés dans le cadre de la lutte contre la pauvreté et la vulnérabilité.

SEYCHELLES

Seychelles National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the National Commission worked closely and greatly appreciated the support received from the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa and the UN Resident Coordinators Office for Mauritius and Seychelles.

The National Commission submitted seven projects under the UNESCO Participation Programme 2024-2025, of which four were approved. These included projects on promoting peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution strategies in primary and secondary schools, strengthening caregiver support for school-going children with disabilities, promoting a positive learning environment in the home through the "Seychelles Read with Me" project, and the digitization of archives at the National Information Services.

Success story

The third Teachers Convention was organised on 2 December 2024 under the theme "The Changing Face of Teaching and Learning: Promoting High Impact Classroom Processes." The event took place at the Double Tree by Hilton, Seychelles – Allamanda Resort and Spa and was organized by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the National Commission. A total of 102 delegates, including headteachers, teachers from state and private schools, and senior officials from the Ministry of Education, attended the convention.

This convention was aimed at Primary 3 teachers in state schools who will be engaged in a longitudinal study in 2025. The study, labelled PETALE (Project for Enhancing Teaching and Learning Experiences), is designed to re-engineer the provision and processes of education in line with the National Development Strategy 2024-2028. A new learning package for primary school pupils, incorporating new learning approaches such as Ethics Education, Social and Emotional Learning, and the use of effective technology and its impact on learning outcomes, is being introduced. It seeks to empower students with life skills and to develop them into productive and responsible citizens. Parents and communities have been placed at the heart of schooling. All teachers endorsed the PETALE project, which intends to bring innovation and improvements to schools.

The National Commission supported the work of the five fellows in the implementation of the second phase of the Ethics Education Programme in Seychelles, who were involved in the evaluation of Phase 1. It trained 22 teachers, integrated Ethics Education in the curriculum, organized a compassion event, and expanded the programme in new schools. The National Commission also supported the work of the National Technical Working Group on Education for Sustainable Development to implement the ESD for 2030 Framework in Seychelles and to develop the five-year action plan. It participated in the organization of workshops for stakeholders under the five areas of the framework in March 2024.

In August 2024, the National Commission organized national consultations on the 2024 UNESCO Global Education Meeting and provided feedback to the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa. It also participated in the Eastern and Southern Africa subregional consultation meeting held on 2 and 3 September 2024 and contributed to the document that emanated from this meeting. Furthermore, the National Commission supported UNESCO in organizing and launching the Island Watch Workshop in Seychelles from 25 to 26 October 2024, in collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, the UNESCO SIDS Unit, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment.



Group photo of headteachers with the Minister of Education,
Dr Justin Valentin
©Seychelles National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In the future, the Seychelles National Commission intends to strengthen Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education at all levels of the education system to promote STEM-related jobs, enhance capacity building and support for the development and implementation of competency-based curricula in schools, and expand networking in line with data management and big data systems in early childhood care and education (ECCE) for the monitoring and evaluation of holistic early childhood development, including storing and retrieving data on ECCE services. It also plans to set up a statistical matrix for the collection of cultural statistics on Seychelles and undertake a comprehensive mapping exercise, develop a second Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Policy 2026-2035, and enhance capacity building in resource mobilization.

SOUTH AFRICA

South African National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Ministry of Basic Education, in collaboration with UNESCO International Teacher Task Force for Education 2030 (TTF), co-hosted the 14th Policy Dialogue Forum under the theme: "Addressing teacher shortages and making the profession more attractive." About 400 delegates attended the event, including the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, UNESCO ADG/ED Ms Stefania Giannini, the African Union Commissioner on Education, as well as classroom-based teachers, teacher unions, and non-governmental organizations. The discussions focused on global collaboration to address the shortage of qualified teachers and measures to allow easier mobility of teachers between countries in order to mitigate against shortages.

On 27 September 2024, the South African National Committee for UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) launched the Citizen Science for Water Photo Story Competition as an initiative to celebrate the 50th anniversary of UNESCO IHP. The competition aims to raise awareness on

the links between water, culture, values, education and the natural sciences.

From 5 to 8 November 2024, in Mpumalanga, the South African National Commission for UNESCO, together with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, the Mpumalanga Tourism Agency and the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, hosted a regional capacity-building workshop on UNESCO Global Geoparks. The workshop formally launched the UNESCO Geoparks Programme in South Africa, developed a roadmap for the establishment of Geoparks in South Africa and Southern Africa, and produced an expert analysis report on the feasibility of Geoparks in the region.

The Science Forum South Africa was held from 3 to 6 December 2024 and hosted by the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) together with the Science Diplomacy Capital for Africa (SDCfA) initiative. Its key objectives were to create a platform for vibrant debate on the role of science, technology and innovation in society, to promote international partnerships in these fields, and to foster interaction between key actors including senior government leaders, academics, scientists, industry, civil society and students.

On 18 November 2024, the South African National Commission for UNESCO, in collaboration with the University of Pretoria, launched the Information for All Programme (IFAP) National Committee. The committee will serve as a meeting point for diverse stakeholders and create a pool of expertise to consolidate existing knowledge as a basis for formulating policy advice and its implementation.

Success story

The Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay, paid an official visit to South Africa from 15 to 17 April 2024. She was hosted by the former Minister of Basic Education, Ms Angie Motshekga, and the then President of the South African National Commission for UNESCO. During her visit, Ms Azoulay held a bilateral meeting with the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Shipokosa Paulus Mashatile, and toured the Union Buildings as part of the celebration of South Africa's 30th anniversary of democracy. She extended UNESCO's support for South Africa's presidency of the G20 in 2025.

The programme also included a visit to the Funda UJabule School, a primary school within the University of Johannesburg's Faculty of Education. This institution is a flagship project in childhood education and teacher training and is recognized for its practical and research-oriented methodologies. Ms Azoulay also toured Robben Island on 17 April 2024, one of South Africa's ten UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and visited the Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve, where she was presented with demonstration projects by Biosphere officials and the Western Cape Department of Environment and Development Planning. These included the Cape Winelands Biosphere Mobile Science Educational Units and the UNESCO Be Resilient Project (Citizen Science Project in Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve).



Ms Audrey Azoulay, along with Ms Angie Motshekga, during her official visit to South Africa
©South African National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In 2025, South Africa will hold the presidency of the G20, with UNESCO as a privileged partner focusing on artificial intelligence. The National Commission also intends to implement a potential regional initiative to support the UNESCO-G20 focus on AI, to carry out the roadmap for the establishment of UNESCO Geoparks in South Africa and Southern Africa, and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of UNESCO IHP with a regional initiative on the programme.

TANZANIA

UNESCO National Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania

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Summary of activities during 2024

Throughout 2024, the UNESCO National Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania implemented activities across all five areas of UNESCO's competence. The Commission analyzed and reflected on Tanzania's contributions in the framework of UNESCO Chairs on Teacher Education and Curriculum. This work reviewed a new social contract for education presented in the Sahel's Commission Report (SCR21) and the Education and Training Policy of 2014 (ETP14), resulting in a position paper. In collaboration with the Tanzania Institute of Education, recommendations were shared during the country's review of the basic education curriculum.

The Commission also conducted the first National Meeting on the Implementation of the International Convention against Doping in Sports. The meeting reviewed the national sports policy and established the National Antidoping Law to facilitate the implementation of the Convention in the United Republic of Tanzania.

In 2024, the Commission collaborated with various stakeholders, including the Ministry responsible for culture, to commemorate International Kiswahili Day. The celebrations recognized Kiswahili's role in promoting cultural diversity, fostering dialogue among civilizations, and promoting multilingualism.

In partnership with the UNESCO Dar es Salaam Field Office, the Commission participated in the Media Literacy and Digital Skills Initiative, which included the promotion of monetization of digital platforms in Tanzania. Media professionals, content creators, students and influencers were empowered with essential skills and opportunities to thrive on these platforms. The Commission also participated in the Safer Campuses Campaign across the country.

During 2024, a survey was conducted on how media and information literacy affects journalistic practices in selected Tanzanian universities, colleges and media institutions. The survey emphasized the importance of adapting to the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Success story

The UNESCO National Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania, in collaboration with the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR), implemented a water safety project entitled "Universal Access to Safe Drinking Water, Hygiene and Sustainable Sanitation (WASH) in Rural Communities" in Katoma, Geita Region. The project introduced modern technology to provide clean and safe water services, mitigating environmental degradation previously caused by deforestation, as villagers used to cut down trees for firewood and charcoal to boil water. By offering a sustainable method of water treatment, the project protects both public health and the environment from the harmful effects of tree cutting.



Installation of modern water supply technology as part of the project
"Universal Access to Safe Drinking Water,
Hygiene and Sustainable Sanitation (WASH) in Rural Communities"
©UNESCO National Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The National Commission intends to strengthen collaboration with stakeholders by building the capacities of women journalists and creating a free and safe environment to empower them in their work, thereby strengthening peace, democracy and sustainable development. It will also organize a sensitization workshop to promote the participation of girls from less privileged areas in STEM education. Furthermore, the Commission will conduct training on institutionalizing the Whole Institution Approach (WIA) as an ESD technique for climate change mitigation in schools. The aim is to scale up good practices in climate action, provide education stakeholders with the necessary skills to lead institutional change, equip school quality assurers to support and monitor this process, and give both groups the tools to implement WIA for ESD successfully.

TCHAD

Commission nationale tchadienne pour l'UNESCO

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Résumé des activités de 2024

La Commission nationale tchadienne pour l'UNESCO entretient de bons rapports avec l'ensemble des ministères sectoriels chargés des relations avec l'UNESCO, ainsi qu'avec diverses organisations de la société civile impliquées dans des activités en lien avec les idéaux de l'Organisation. Elle collabore étroitement avec le ministère en charge de l'éducation, notamment dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre des projets financés par le Partenariat mondial pour l'éducation. À ce titre, la Commission a participé à l'élaboration de la politique nationale pour les enseignants du Tchad. Elle facilite également l'arrivée et le séjour des experts de l'UNESCO au Tchad ainsi que leurs contacts avec les ministères et institutions concernées.

La Commission initie par ailleurs des activités avec les enseignants des écoles associées à l'UNESCO, dans les

domaines de la culture de la paix et de la non-violence, du règlement pacifique des conflits et de la protection de l'environnement. En collaboration avec le ministère de la Communication, elle a formé des animateurs et techniciens des radios communautaires, qui produisent et diffusent des émissions sur la paix et le vivre-ensemble dans différentes régions du pays. Ces émissions contribuent à la lutte contre l'extrémisme violent et participent à la recherche de solutions pour une paix durable, notamment dans les zones frontalières touchées par des crises.

L'introduction des technologies de l'information et de la communication dans les écoles est un autre domaine d'intervention de la Commission, qui sollicite l'appui de l'UNESCO pour son développement. Au niveau du ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche scientifique, la Commission a aidé à la création du Comité national de bioéthique et participe à ses activités, son secrétaire général siégeant en tant que membre. Avec le ministère de la Culture, elle contribue à la mise en œuvre des conventions de l'UNESCO ratifiées par le Tchad, notamment la Convention sur la protection du patrimoine culturel et naturel, en accompagnant la préparation des dossiers de candidature pour le classement du lac Tchad et du parc national de Zakouma. Dans le cadre du programme MAB, la réserve de biosphère de Sena Oura, au sud du pays, a été désignée en juin 2022.

Une activité réussie

Une activité réussie de la Commission nationale tchadienne pour l'UNESCO en 2024 a été la formation de quarante-deux jeunes du canton Bidyo à l'entretien et à la réparation des pompes d'eau manuelles, électriques et solaires. Avec l'accélération de la scolarisation, de nombreux forages à motricité humaine ont été réalisés dans presque tous les villages du canton, notamment dans ceux dotés d'une école ou d'un centre de santé. Toutefois, faute d'entretien, ces forages tombaient souvent en panne, privant les populations d'eau potable pendant plusieurs mois.

L'absence de personnes formées à l'entretien et à la réparation de ces installations entraînait de lourdes conséquences. Les femmes étaient contraintes de parcourir de longues distances pour s'approvisionner dans des villages voisins, ce qui provoquait parfois des tensions et des conflits. Certaines écoles se retrouvaient également privées d'eau potable, poussant les élèves et leurs familles à recourir à des mares insalubres, avec des conséquences néfastes sur la santé publique.

Le projet de formation a donc été mis en place afin de doter le canton d'un corps de jeunes techniciens capables d'intervenir rapidement partout où un forage tombait en panne. Ces jeunes, en plus d'assurer la maintenance des pompes manuelles, électriques et solaires, sont également en mesure de prévenir les pannes grâce à un suivi régulier des équipements. Cette initiative permet ainsi de garantir un accès plus permanent à l'eau potable dans les villages du canton Bidyo et de répondre efficacement aux besoins essentiels des populations.



Installation de panneaux solaires dans le cadre de la formation des jeunes du canton Bidyo à l'entretien et à la réparation des pompes à eau
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TOGO

Commission nationale togolaise pour l'UNESCO

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Résumé des activités de 2024

En 2024, dans le cadre du Programme de participation et de budget 2024-2025, la Commission a introduit sept projets, tous approuvés. Elle se chargera de leur exécution et de la collecte des rapports et pièces justificatives, d'une part. Par ailleurs, elle a coordonné les activités et géré les fonds des ateliers, tout en collectant les pièces justificatives y afférentes : ateliers d'élaboration de l'initiative nationale EDD ; atelier sur l'étude de faisabilité de la mise en place du dispositif de validation des acquis de l'expérience dans l'ETFP au Togo (8-12 avril), suivi de l'atelier de mise en place d'un cadre national de certification au Togo (29-31 mai) ; et ateliers de validation nationale du rapport d'examen périodique de la réserve de biosphère Oti-Kéran/Oti-Mandouri, à l'issue desquels un rapport a été soumis.

À l'international, la Commission a participé à la rencontre officielle de présentation de la Fondation africaine pour l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie (29 et 30 mai, Rabat), qui vise à renforcer la coopération Sud-Sud, ainsi qu'à la 2ème édition de la réunion régionale des Commissions nationales africaines pour l'UNESCO, tenue à Luanda du 18 au 20 juin, ayant pour objectif de développer des stratégies de coopération au niveau régional.

Par ailleurs, la Commission a participé à des réunions en ligne sur différentes thématiques, principalement la réunion des Commissions nationales sur la stratégie de mobilisation des ressources de l'UNESCO pour l'exercice biennal 2024-2025 ; la célébration de la Décennie internationale des langues autochtones ; la réunion en ligne de l'UNESCO et de la CCNUCC (Convention – cadre des Nations unies sur les changements climatiques) sur l'éducation au changement climatique ; ainsi que différentes réunions de formation des secrétaires généraux et membres des Commissions nationales.

La coopération avec les bureaux hors siège a toujours été bonne. Néanmoins, il faut souligner que certaines activités concernant l'UNESCO sont encore réalisées sur le territoire national à l'insu de la Commission.

Une activité réussie

Elaboration de l'initiative nationale Education au développement durable (EDD) : La Commission a été le lead d'une série de réunions pour l'élaboration de l'initiative nationale pour l'éducation durable au Togo. Il s'agit de la mise en œuvre d'une recommandation issue de la réunion régionale EDD-NET pour l'Afrique subsaharienne. Une équipe interministérielle nationale a été créée pour charger son élaboration, sa validation et sa soumission à l'UNESCO. Ce processus s'est poursuivi en 2024 avec d'autres rencontres. Il a été facilité par une mission de suivi de l'UNESCO Dakar, du 27 au 29 mars 2024, qui a donné des orientations ayant conduit au recrutement d'un consultant chargé de réaliser une cartographie des interventions majeures liées à l'initiative EDD dans les différents ministères impliqués. Une présentation des premiers résultats de cette cartographie a eu lieu à l'hôtel « Imagine Business Center » les 9 et 10 juillet 2024. Plusieurs réunions techniques se sont ensuivies, et la validation technique de l'initiative s'est déroulée du 17 au 18 décembre 2024. La prochaine étape sera le transfert du document au siège de l'UNESCO dans un délai raisonnable, afin que le Togo se positionne dans le rang des rares pays africains ayant élaboré leur document d'initiative de l'éducation au développement durable en 2024.



Atelier de validation technique de l'initiative nationale Education pour le développement durable (EDD) du Togo tenu du 17 au 18 décembre 2024 à l'université de Lomé (Togo) ©Commission nationale togolaise pour l'UNESCO

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

La Commission va réaliser les projets soumis au Programme de participation 2024-2025, notamment le « Séminaire national de formation et de renforcement des capacités des nouveaux et anciens responsables/encadreurs des écoles associées de l'UNESCO pour une éducation inclusive et de qualité au Togo en vue d'un développement durable », prévu dans la semaine du 24 février au 1er mars 2025 respectivement à Kara et à Kpalimé, ainsi que le « Camp de sciences à l'intention des jeunes filles scolaires » à Atakpamé en août 2025. D'autres activités de renforcement des capacités des membres du Comité l'Homme et la biosphère (MAB) sont prévues, de même que la mise en place du Programme Information pour tous (PIPT), afin de redynamiser les comités spécialisés, sur financement étatique. À concurrence d'autres financements, les sous-commissions et les autres comités spécialisés vont être redynamisés. La Commission a entamé les préparatifs de sa participation à la 43e Conférence générale de l'Organisation, qui se tiendra à Samarkand, en Ouzbékistan, en novembre 2025.

UGANDA

Uganda National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO (UNATCOM) undertook numerous initiatives across the education, natural sciences, and social and human sciences sectors. In the field of education, UNATCOM promoted gender-responsive and disability-inclusive teaching practices through training workshops for primary school teachers and developed a resource guide to support inclusive pedagogy. It also disseminated the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for 2030 framework in five institutions, engaging around 500 students and teachers in awareness workshops. These efforts aim to embed inclusive and climate-conscious education practices across various education levels.

In the area of natural sciences, UNATCOM supported the operationalization of the Mount Elgon Transboundary Biosphere Reserve and organized several awareness and training activities. These included engaging youth in World Heritage education during World Tourism Week, mentoring STEM girls in Northern Uganda, and disseminating UNESCO's recommendations on Open Science to academic and government stakeholders. A significant focus was placed on involving marginalized groups—particularly girls and refugee communities—in STEM education, while also supporting discussions on future natural sciences programming and biosphere reserve management.

In the fields of social and human sciences, culture, communication, and information, UNATCOM empowered youth through civic education, peacebuilding, and gender-responsive climate action programmes. The Commission organized bioethics dialogues, supported World Philosophy Day, and celebrated numerous international observances. Cultural activities included capacity building in the film sector, training on UNESCO cultural conventions, and preparing a nomination for the Imbalu ceremony. In the area of communication and information, UNATCOM strengthened community media centres, held a regional seminar on documentary heritage protection, and supported cultural institutions in preserving heritage in digital formats. Overall, 2024 was marked by inclusive, cross-sectoral initiatives aligning with UNESCO's global priorities, particularly on gender equality, empowering youth, and promoting sustainable development.

Success story

In partnership with Norwegian Refugee Council and Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE): Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG), UNATCOM hosted Teacher Training 'Training of Trainers' (ToT) which was held in Entebbe, Uganda, on 2-12 December 2024. The training brought together members of the INEE AEWG from twenty-one different countries. The training focused on delivering a trainer of trainers for teachers of Accelerated Education and it was based on the INEE AEWG Accelerated Education Teacher Training Pack.



Participants from 11 AEWG member organizations and 21 countries engaging in interactive sessions during the ToT for the AEWG AE teacher training pack in Uganda ©Uganda National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Commission aims to promote the concept of Sustainable Cities in Uganda and to track national progress in the achievement of the targets in the SDGs that UNESCO is associated with.

ZAMBIA

Zambia National Commission for UNESCO (ZNCU)

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Zambia National Commission for UNESCO (ZNCU) conducted a feasibility study for establishing three Community Learning Centres in collaboration with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, aimed at promoting self-reliance in marginalized communities. It also explored the creation of community radio stations in Meheba, Mayukwayukwa, and Mantapala Refugee Settlements with support from UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA). ZNCU co-chaired the 19th Joint Technical Committee Meeting for the Mosi-oa-Tunya/Victoria Falls World Heritage Site with the Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO. It facilitated Zambia's participation in the UNESCO/EU Capacity-Building Workshop for Culture|2030 Indicators, securing Zambia's selection as one of ten countries to implement these indicators with EU funding. ZNCU also oversaw updates to Zambia's World Heritage Tentative List and documented

the culinary tradition of Chibwantu as part of the country's Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Commission organised an online forum and sensitization meetings for women and youth in two Chiefdoms and the Kafue Flats Biosphere Reserves, aligning with SDG13 and global climate change adaptation. ZNCU established Zambia's National Memory of the World (MoW) Committee and successfully submitted the country's first project under UNESCO's MoW Initiative to safeguard documentary heritage at risk. It also facilitated the appointment of experts for the Global Task Force on Traditional Pharmacopoeia, the Open-ended Working Group on the International Convention Against Doping in Sport, and the Draft Recommendation on the Ethics of Neurotechnology. ZNCU coordinated UNESCO surveys in Zambia across all five areas of UNESCO's work and ensured Zambia's participation in statutory meetings for UNESCO Conventions. It attended the 2nd Regional Meeting of African National Commissions for UNESCO and conducted capacity-building activities with National Commissions for UNESCO of Namibia, Uganda, and Kenya. In partnership with other stakeholders and support from UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, ZNCU organized events for the World Radio Day, World Press Freedom Day, International Teachers' Day, World Library Week, Africa Engineering Week, International Day for Women and Girls in Science, International Mother Language Day, World Poetry Day, and the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

Success story

The Kafue Flats Biosphere Reserve (KFBR) was designated by UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) International Coordinating Council (ICC) in 2022. The German Commission for UNESCO signed a ten thousand euros (Euro 10,000.00) contract with the Zambia National Commission for UNESCO to finance a Goat Breeding Project in the KFBR. The project was successfully launched with the completion of the Goat House, Caretakers Shelter, drilling of a borehole and installation of a solar powered water pump and the placement of the goats on the project site.



Goat house built under the Goat Breeding Project in the Kafue Flats Biosphere Reserve, supported by the German Commission for UNESCO and the Zambia National Commission for UNESCO, 2024."

©Zambia National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Zambia is preparing to host the UNESCO MAB regional network for Africa, AfriMAB Conference. The Member State will host the 8th Preparatory Meeting of African Members to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention ahead of the 47th World Heritage Committee session. Additionally, it is working to host the first session to fulfill its pledge from the 45th WHC to champion Sustainable Development in African World Heritage Sites, using the Mosi-oa-Tunya/Victoria Falls World Heritage Site as a case study. This aligns with UNESCO's "Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the World Heritage Convention" and the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The country will implement a Japan-funded UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa project for "Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Basic Education in Zambia", aimed at integrating living heritage into the national education system to enhance the quality and relevance of education while promoting cultural diversity and sustainable development. Zambia recently launched its new National Curriculum Framework, requiring capacity building for teachers, teacher educators, and policymakers at all levels to implement it effectively. The country also needs nationwide training for ASPNet school leaders and coordinators, as well as for the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and Disaster Risk Management for World Heritage. Zambia is engaged in discussions with the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa to establish community radio stations in refugee settlements. These stations play a vital role in communication, information sharing, cultural preservation, and fostering a sense of community, especially in settlements that lack other media outlets to help residents navigate their environment, access services, and stay connected.

ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO, hosted by the Ministry responsible for Higher Education, maintained a strong working relationship with the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA), with joint meetings taking place quarterly to update each other on various initiatives. ROSA also held semi-annual meetings with all the countries it covers and their Permanent Delegations. The Commission, in partnership with the local field office, continued its National Awareness Programme aimed at improving the visibility of UNESCO programmes. The meetings were attended by representatives from various government ministries, academia, traditional leaders, and civil society organizations.

Zimbabwe held a consultative meeting with the support of UNESCO on 21 August 2024 in Harare to deliberate on

progress in implementing SDG4, identify and prioritize concrete strategies and modalities necessary for accelerating the implementation of SDG4. The country embarked on strengthening pre-service teacher education in Climate Change (CC), Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The initiative aims to develop a shared understanding of the context of greening aspects in teacher education. Participants shared conceptual, pedagogical and curricular tools and strategies for strengthening integration of ESD, CC and DRR in the curriculum including the HBE framework, and initiated, together with stakeholders, the process of reinforcing these greening aspects in teacher education. Zimbabwe also continued to implement the project "Strengthening local communities' adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change through sustainable groundwater utilization in Zimbabwe." The objective of the project is to increase local communities' adaptive capacity and resilience to Climate Change through sustainable groundwater utilization for food security and other productive uses in rural areas of Zimbabwe.

The country continued to mobilize resources for establishing and commissioning community radios. These community radio stations help promote community-based developmental issues. Zimbabwe, through the support of the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, managed to successfully commemorate a number of International Days like International Literacy Day and World Press Freedom Day.

Success story

The Great Zimbabwe Development Project at the Great Zimbabwe National Monument World Heritage Property was funded by the French Development Agency and is being jointly implemented by the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ), UNESCO and UNOPS. Work to date includes the development of the following milestones in the first phase: the Heritage Impact Assessment Report approved by the World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS; ICT equipment, tractor, and grass cutting machinery procured and handed over to NMMZ in June 2024; the site management plan approved and launched in June 2024; training on conservation activities for NMMZ personnel, ZIMPARKS, and stakeholders conducted; the Interpretation and Visitor Facilities Implementation Framework validated; the Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy validated in May 2024; and the Disaster Risk assessment plan validated in November 2024.



Presentation of project documents during the Great Zimbabwe Development Project at the Great Zimbabwe National Monument World Heritage Property, 2024 ©Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO.

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Zimbabwe's future priorities include hosting the sub-regional National Commissions meeting, capacity development of personnel across the five areas of UNESCO competences, including capacity development of media experts to ensure responsible reporting at all times, education practitioners for effective teaching and learning, and heritage experts to ensure efficient management of heritage sites and to increase the number of sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It also aims to address governance issues within the Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO, continue implementing the National Awareness Programme aimed at improving the visibility of the National Commission and UNESCO programmes, and raise awareness and ratification of the Addis and the Global Conventions on Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education.



Arab States

Henna: rituals, aesthetic and social practices – Arab States
– Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of
Humanity - inscribed in 2024 ©Edy Lee/Unsplash

ALGÉRIE

Commission nationale algérienne pour l'éducation, la science et la culture

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Résumé des activités de 2024

En 2024, la Commission nationale algérienne pour l'UNESCO a participé à la réunion régionale de consultation des Secrétaires généraux des Commissions nationales arabes à Mascate. Elle a soutenu la participation de la mairie d'Alger au concours des villes apprenantes. Dans le cadre du Programme de participation de l'UNESCO, quatre projets ont été soumis et approuvés pour 2024-2025, et le projet retardé de 2022-2023 a été réalisé par l'Association algérienne pour la promotion de la citoyenneté et des droits de l'Homme.

Pour le réseau des écoles associées et des clubs pour l'UNESCO, la Commission a organisé une formation à distance en huit séances au profit de soixante coordinateurs

départementaux ; elle a célébré la Journée internationale des STEM avec la participation de l'école El Awaïl et d'acteurs internationaux ; et a organisé un concours en ligne intitulé « Les ambassadeurs de la paix » en trois langues.

Concernant la Chaire UNESCO Emir Abdelkader de l'Université d'Alger, la Commission a célébré la Journée internationale du vivre-ensemble en paix et le mois du Patrimoine avec une table ronde sur le patrimoine et l'éducation à la culture de paix ; elle a participé à distance à la réunion régionale des chaires UNESCO à Rabat ; elle a publié un ouvrage intitulé « Le adab ou bienséance dans l'éducation spirituelle à la lumière des enseignements du cheikh Ahmed ben Mustapha el-Alâwî » ; et a soumis la candidature de l'Université de Tlemcen pour la création d'une Chaire UNESCO intitulée « UNESCO Chair for Sustainability and Energy Resilience ». Dans le domaine de l'information et de la communication, la Commission a organisé une conférence intitulée « L'enseignement et le défi numérique, de l'homo erectus à l'homo numéricus », une rencontre à l'occasion de la Journée nationale de la Casbah sur « Le patrimoine citadin entre hier et aujourd'hui », et une conférence intitulée « Mémoire historique et écriture de l'histoire ». Enfin, dans le cadre du Programme sur l'Homme et la biosphère (MAB), l'Algérie a participé à l'atelier régional à Tunis et au Forum ArabMAB youth à Jazan.

Une activité réussie

Un atelier régional maghrébin sur les réserves de biosphère, sous le thème « Renforcer la durabilité des réserves de biosphère dans la région du Maghreb », a été organisé par le Bureau régional de l'UNESCO pour le Maghreb et la Commission nationale, en partenariat avec le ministère de la Culture et des Arts et la Direction générale des forêts, dans la réserve de biosphère du Tassili N'Ajjer du 5 au 7 novembre 2024. La Journée internationale des réserves de biosphère a ainsi été célébrée pour la première fois dans la région du Maghreb. L'atelier visait à consolider les fonctions des réserves de biosphère dans la région, en cartographiant et en évaluant les points forts et les défis des stratégies de gestion et des plans d'action, en encourageant la créativité dans les plans de gestion, et en identifiant deux thématiques spécifiques pour des projets adaptés aux réserves de biosphère des pays du Maghreb.



Atelier régional maghrébin sur les réserves de biosphère - Tassili N'Ajjer - 2024

Visite du site de Tikobaouine et Echanges avec les cadres du parc du Tassili ©Commission nationale algérienne pour l'éducation, la science et la culture

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

Les priorités de la Commission nationale porteront notamment sur le renforcement des personnels du réseau des écoles associées et des clubs pour l'UNESCO par des formations et des échanges, la mise en œuvre des quatre projets validés du Programme de participation 2024-2025, la proposition d'un dossier de patrimoine documentaire à inscrire au Registre international Mémoire du monde de l'UNESCO, ainsi que la soumission de nouvelles candidatures de création de chaires UNESCO. L'Algérie prévoit aussi d'identifier de nouveaux sites potentiels pour préparer des dossiers de candidature au Programme MAB, de mettre en œuvre un programme d'appui à la création de ressources éducatives numériques, et de célébrer les journées internationales à travers diverses activités : atelier international d'évaluation des STEM, concours « El Koundous » d'algorithmique, challenge national « Agir pour la paix », test pilote sur « L'apprentissage avec l'intelligence artificielle » et Forum de la langue arabe. La Commission poursuivra également l'animation bimensuelle du forum de l'EDD, consacré aux thèmes prioritaires de l'UNESCO : l'éducation au développement durable, la citoyenneté mondiale, l'innovation pédagogique et l'inclusion et l'équité.

BAHRAIN

Bahrain National Commission for Education, Science and Culture

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, there was a growing interest in joining the ASPnet network in Bahrain, bringing the total number of schools to 128 for the 2024–2025 academic year, including 104 public schools, 20 private schools, and 4 early childhood education

institutions. All ASPnet schools in Bahrain participated in World Cleanup Day by organizing awareness campaigns to promote behavioral changes in waste management. The National Commission successfully coordinated Bahrain's delegation for participation in the Arab Cultural Week at UNESCO. It attended the regional consultation meeting for national coordinators of Arab countries and ensured active participation in the 121st session of the Executive Council and the 27th General Conference of ALECSO. Support and guidance were provided to all UNESCO and ALECSO associated schools in Bahrain through field visits, aimed at directing their efforts toward preparing evaluative reports on their activities. The National Commission also participated in several in-person and virtual seminars and conferences organized by international organizations. Furthermore, the Secretary-General of the Bahrain National Commission was invited as a speaker during the educational forum held alongside the International School Sports Games. Coordination efforts were also undertaken to join UNESCO's Green Education Partnership initiative.

Success story

ASPnet schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain have been effectively implementing initiatives that contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and to celebrations organized by international organizations. These efforts aim to raise awareness of global issues, direct resources toward addressing major challenges, and promote human achievements. As part of these ongoing initiatives, Jidhafs Secondary School for Girls, one of Bahrain's ASPnet schools, won first place in the second edition of the Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE) competition for the 2023/2024 academic year. This recognition was awarded under UNESCO's international initiative Litter Less in the video category for the school's outstanding work entitled *Insidious Poison*. This achievement demonstrates Bahrain's commitment to promoting environmental awareness in its educational system while encouraging students to participate in innovative projects that reduce waste and improve its management.



Instilling the principle of Sustainable Development Goals in children's minds since pre-school age ©Dana Ali

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Ministry of Education in Bahrain places great importance on ASPnet schools and is developing a comprehensive strategy to instill the network's core values in children from an early age. Efforts are underway to include more early childhood education institutions in the UNESCO network, fostering awareness of values such as sustainable development, tolerance, peace, and innovation. Specialized training programmes will be provided for early education institutions to help teachers integrate these concepts into their curricula in ways appropriate for young children. The goal is to encourage children to engage in activities that foster an early understanding of environmental and social issues, nurturing a generation that is both aware and capable of critical and innovative thinking. In addition, twinning projects will be expanded between local and international ASPnet schools, with an emphasis on using modern technology to enhance knowledge and experience sharing. The Ministry of Education will also continue to actively participate in international competitions and events, while providing ongoing technical support to ensure excellence and achieve high rankings.

IRAQ

Iraqi National Commission for Education, Culture, and Science

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, under the UNESCO Participation Programme, the Iraqi project "Support Learning Girls by Life Skills Centers in the Post-Conflict Areas Kerkuk, Salahualdeen, Anbar, Nainawa, Diyala" was approved. The initiative focused on literacy and non-formal education and aimed to improve the work of life skills literacy centers located in post-conflict areas. It targeted three main objectives. First, to increase the number of life skills literacy centers to expand access for young learners. Second, supplying the centers with essential and high-demand equipment that would support both teaching and learning. Third, to provide students with targeted training courses relevant to the specific workshops available at each center, ensuring that the training matches local needs and opportunities.

Success story

The Arab Talents Initiative was launched in partnership with the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Science and the King Abdulaziz Foundation for talent and creativity. The initiative aims to promote the culture of talent recognition and care for talented people in the Arab world, identify and nurture talented individuals for a prosperous future, and create an inspiring environment for talent and creativity. By enhancing a passion for science, it seeks to cultivate Arab leaders and advance sustainable development across Arab societies. Iraq participated in the third edition of the initiative in 2024, with 71 students from talented and distinguished schools registered. Thanks to the exceptional efforts of the national coordinator, Iraq achieved wonderful results, as reported by the Arab Organization: 6 students were recognized for exceptional talent, 19 for talents, and 10 for promising talent.



Iraqi participants at the Arab Talents initiative 2024 ©Iraqi National Commission

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The National Commission plans to organize a symposium celebrating an intellectual heritage or an Iraqi personality who made a significant scientific impact and contributed important works in the fields of science and knowledge. It also intends to organize a conference or workshop dealing with scientific, intellectual, or educational issues within the scope of the National Commission's expertise in education, culture, science, and communication. Other planned initiatives include organizing an exhibition or knowledge-based activity related to books aligned with the work of the National Commission, publishing two issues of the National Commission magazine in accordance with the National Commission System No. 2 of 2008, and following up on the implementation of UNESCO projects in Iraq. The Commission also intends to coordinate with international and Arab organizations on their programmes and activities in the fields of education, culture, and science.

JORDAN

The Jordan National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

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Summary of activities during 2024

The Jordan National Commission for Education, Culture, and Science undertook several key initiatives in 2024. It conducted a training workshop focused on UNESCO's programmes in the natural and human sciences sectors. The workshop aimed to raise awareness about UNESCO's relevant awards, activities, and global declarations, highlight the roles of Jordanian national committees involved in UNESCO programmes, and address challenges while exploring potential partnerships among participants to enhance collaboration and effectiveness.

The National Commission also organized an awareness workshop for vocational and art education supervisors at the basic education level. The workshop highlighted the efforts of official institutions in preserving cultural heritage in its various forms and its connection to the SDGs, provided insights into

international conventions ratified by Jordan, and examined the processes for preparing World Heritage nomination files for inscription on the lists of international organizations.

Another awareness workshop was held on the UNESCO Chairs Programme and the UNITWIN Network for university professors from public and private universities across Jordan. The workshop introduced participants to the significance, objectives, and procedures of the UNESCO Chairs Programme, emphasized its role in strengthening ties between academic institutions, civil society, and decision-making bodies, and highlighted its contributions to interdisciplinary collaboration, knowledge creation, and addressing developmental challenges.

An additional awareness workshop was organized on the anniversaries with which UNESCO could be associated. It brought together representatives from various Ministries, including Education, Higher Education, Youth, Social Development, Culture, and Tourism. The workshop aimed to raise awareness of the nomination process for anniversaries of significant figures or events in Jordan, emphasized the importance of securing global recognition for Jordan's contributions and achievements through UNESCO, and explained the criteria, conditions, and procedures for submitting nominations.

The National Commission also prepared the Second National Report on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) for the years 2020–2023 in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders involved in achieving this goal. This comprehensive report outlines Jordan's progress and highlights the collaborative efforts made to improve education and align with SDG4.

Success story

The National Commission implemented a project titled "Enhancing the Concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) among Local Development Staff in Municipalities." As part of this initiative, three workshops were conducted in Amman, Irbid, and Aqaba in December 2024. The project aimed to strengthen municipalities' roles in promoting ESD by equipping staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement sustainability-focused initiatives. It also facilitated the integration of Jordanian municipalities into UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities, which plays a vital role in advancing sustainable development goals. This initiative emphasized education as a cornerstone of sustainability, fostering innovation and creativity in local communities while raising awareness about the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Awareness Workshop on UNESCO's Anniversaries Programme ©Jordan National Commission

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The National Commission will continue its efforts to achieve SDG4 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and other relevant stakeholders. Plans for 2025 include organizing awareness workshops and specialized meetings with all stakeholders to promote the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as well as other UNESCO programs. In addition, the National Commission will implement a project titled "Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Creativity in Jordanian Universities," supported by UNESCO within the framework of the Participation Program for 2024–2025. This project aims to educate youth on the importance of entrepreneurship, innovation, and creativity in addressing current challenges and advancing the SDGs.

MAROC

Commission nationale pour l'Education, les Sciences et la Culture du Royaume du Maroc

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Résumé des activités de 2024

En 2024, la Commission nationale pour l'Éducation, les Sciences et la Culture du Royaume du Maroc a renforcé sa coopération avec ses partenaires nationaux et internationaux et coordonné les actions entre ministères, instances nationales et société civile pour assurer leur participation aux événements UNESCO, tout en suivant et évaluant ces activités. Parmi ses initiatives structurantes, la Commission a lancé la Fondation Africaine pour l'Apprentissage Tout au Long de la Vie (FA-

ATLV), soutenu l'Alliance des Commissions nationales et des Villes apprenantes en Afrique, et participé à la première réunion régionale des villes créatives de l'UNESCO pour la région arabe. Elle a également organisé la deuxième édition du programme des Prix de la Commission nationale, valorisant les initiatives innovantes dans les pays arabes avec quatre lauréats distingués.

La Commission a poursuivi son engagement dans divers réseaux UNESCO (Villes créatives, Villes apprenantes, Réserves de biosphère, Géoparcs mondiaux), accompagnant les candidatures marocaines et facilitant l'élaboration de plans d'action, tout en favorisant la réintégration du Maroc dans le Réseau des écoles associées. Malgré les défis financiers, elle a optimisé la gestion de ses ressources et mobilisé efficacement ses équipes. La coordination avec le Bureau régional de l'UNESCO pour le Maghreb, basé à Rabat, a été continue, assurant un soutien important au Secrétariat général. Grâce à ces actions, la Commission nationale a pleinement rempli son mandat en 2024, contribuant activement aux objectifs de l'UNESCO et renforçant sa visibilité et son impact au niveau international.

Une activité réussie

En 2024, la Commission nationale a marqué une avancée majeure dans ses réalisations, avec notamment le lancement officiel en mois de mai 2024 à Rabat, sous le Haut Patronage de Sa Majesté le Roi Mohammed VI, de la Fondation Africaine pour l'Apprentissage Tout au Long de la Vie créée le 29 février 2024. Cet événement majeur s'inscrit dans la continuité des recommandations de la 7^e Conférence internationale de l'UNESCO sur l'Education des Adultes (CONFINTEA VII à Marrakech en 2022) et marque une avancée significative pour le renforcement des capacités éducatives en Afrique. Réunissant 15 ministres et plus de 100 participants issus de 38 pays africains, cet événement a bénéficié du soutien de l'UNESCO, l'ICESCO et l'AECOSO.

Les discussions ont mis en lumière le rôle central de l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie pour atteindre l'ODD 4, en favorisant une éducation inclusive et équitable. La Déclaration de Rabat, adoptée à l'issue de cet événement, engage les États et partenaires africains à promouvoir des solutions innovantes, notamment à travers l'apprentissage

numérique et des modèles de formation adaptés aux réalités du continent. Cette initiative constitue une avancée majeure pour le développement de politiques éducatives durables en Afrique.



Lancement officiel de la Fondation Africaine pour l'Apprentissage Tout au Long de la Vie
©Commission nationale du Royaume du Maroc

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

En plus de sa participation aux programmes et actions de l'UNESCO et de ses partenaires (ICESCO et AECOSO), la Commission nationale prévoit d'organiser et de co-organiser des événements régionaux et continentaux avec d'autres Commissions nationales et partenaires stratégiques. Deux axes majeurs structurent son action. Le premier concerne la mise en œuvre de la Fondation Africaine pour l'Apprentissage Tout au Long de la Vie, à travers la mise en place d'un dispositif de formation et d'un système de certification, l'élaboration et le déploiement des premières formations en ligne, ainsi que la soumission du dossier visant la désignation de la Fondation en tant que centre de catégorie 2 de l'UNESCO, renforçant son rayonnement régional.

Le second axe concerne l'opérationnalisation de l'Alliance des Commissions nationales et Villes apprenantes en Afrique, à travers la production de documents stratégiques pour structurer et accompagner les initiatives locales et nationales. Trois documents sont recommandés : un guide d'appui à la mise en œuvre du plan d'action de l'Alliance, un guide d'accompagnement destiné aux villes candidates au Réseau des villes apprenantes africaines, et une brochure de présentation de l'Alliance visant à mieux informer les acteurs et à en promouvoir l'adhésion aux niveaux national et international.

En parallèle, la Commission a identifié plusieurs domaines nécessitant un renforcement des capacités et une mobilisation accrue des ressources, notamment le développement de formations adaptées aux besoins des acteurs de l'Apprentissage Tout au Long de la Vie, la mise en place de dispositifs de suivi et d'évaluation des politiques éducatives régionales, ainsi que la consolidation des réseaux éducatifs et culturels pour favoriser les échanges d'expertise et de bonnes pratiques.

OMAN

Oman National Commission for Education, Culture, and Science

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Summary of activities during 2024

The Oman National Commission implemented numerous activities and programmes in 2024 in cooperation with UNESCO and its regional offices, achieving several accomplishments within the framework of UNESCO. The Commission participated in forums and conferences organized by UNESCO, both at the Organization's Headquarters and in Member States. These included participation in the Conference on Educational Data and Statistics at UNESCO Headquarters, the Global Forum on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, and Omani school students participating in the 5th World Cultural Heritage Youth Symposium in Greece.

Additionally, the National Coordinator for UNESCO Associated Schools participated in the first meeting of the Governing Board of the International Center for UNESCO ASPnet (ICUA) in China. Oman also participated in the International Forum on Policy for Additional Education at the Organization's Headquarters, the Global Education Meeting in Brazil, the 19th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Paraguay, and the International Forum on the Futures of Education in Suwon, South Korea.

At the local level, the Commission organized a cultural evening to celebrate the annual recognition of influential Omani figures included in the list of the celebration of anniversaries with which UNESCO is associated. It also hosted the international conference "Heritage Opportunities: Enhancing Safeguarding, Innovation, and Sustainability," organized by the UNESCO Chair for World Heritage Management and Sustainable Tourism in the Arab region, and celebrated World Diversity Day for Dialogue and Development. Key achievements in 2024 included the inscription of Oman Youth Sail Training Ship (Safinat Shabab Oman) programme for peace and sustainable cultural dialogue as the first national file in UNESCO Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. Additionally, three Omani cities were admitted to UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities.

Success story

On May 1–2, 2024, Oman hosted the Regional Consultation Meeting for the Secretaries-General of Arab National Commissions for UNESCO. The meeting was attended in person by the Secretaries-General of Arab National Commissions, representatives of UNESCO Field Offices in the Arab region, and representatives of national entities related to UNESCO's work. Staff from the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture, and Science were also in attendance. Meanwhile, officials from UNESCO Headquarters and representatives from its Field Offices in the Arab states participated remotely via videoconference.

The meeting's main goal was to discuss the contribution of Arab countries to the preparation of UNESCO Programme and Budget for the 2026–2029 period. It also aimed to involve Arab countries in shaping UNESCO's future strategies and ensuring these plans align with the aspirations and development goals of Arab states. The 42nd General Conference instructed the Director-General to prepare the draft UNESCO Programme and Budget for 2026–2029, in line with the established timeline. This process ensures the active participation of the Member States, including Arab countries, in shaping the Organization's budget and programmes.



Regional Consultation Meeting for the Secretaries-General of Arab National Commissions for UNESCO, hosted by the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science
©Oman National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Oman National Commission for Education, Culture, and Science aims to strengthen its presence in international and regional organizations focused on education, culture, and science. This will help align their programmes with Oman's development plans and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Oman Vision 2040. The Commission is preparing to implement several plans and programmes for 2025–2026 in collaboration with relevant organizations, especially UNESCO.

Planned initiatives include a workshop on vocational education and entrepreneurship incubators in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour under the education sector; a workshop to prepare projects for the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD), marking the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) under the culture sector; and hosting the first regional meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council and Yemen for National Commissions of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Water Resources under the science sector.

In the communication and information sector, the Media and Information Sector will organize a media literacy forum in collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Office in Doha. Additionally, Oman will host the regional meeting for the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), organized by UNESCO Associated Schools and Youth Clubs, with participation from all Arab countries.

PALESTINE (STATE OF)

Palestinian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Palestinian National Commission for Education, Culture, and Science implemented several impactful projects to address the challenges faced by the Palestinian people, particularly under the difficult circumstances they endure. These initiatives underscore the Commission's commitment to UNESCO's mandate and its strategic priorities in education, cultural preservation, and sustainable development.

The first programme is the Emergency Support Programme for Palestinian Students in Egypt. The Commission secured financial aid from the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) to support Palestinian students from Gaza studying at Egyptian universities and institutes. This programme aimed to address their urgent needs in the face of extraordinary challenges. Additionally, under the "Emergency Assistance" Participation Programme 2024-2025 funded by UNESCO, the Commission requested temporary school tents to ensure the continuity of education for Palestinian students during crises.

The second programme is the National Initiative for Education for Sustainable Development, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the UNESCO Office in Palestine. This initiative brought together multiple stakeholders through a consultative process to develop a comprehensive national strategy for integrating education and sustainable development. Several workshops and meetings were held to finalize the framework of this initiative, aligning it with national and global sustainability goals.

Success story

The Digital Bridges Project was launched as a response to the social and economic challenges facing Gaza, which have disproportionately impacted women. These challenges include poverty, unemployment, limited educational opportunities, movement restrictions, domestic violence, and the ongoing effects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project aims to combat unemployment by providing women with remote work opportunities, promote community entrepreneurship by fostering local projects, encourage creativity and innovation to address urgent issues through digital solutions, and empower women economically and socially, contributing to sustainable development. Achievements include delivering 50 hours of training to 25 women in 21st-century skills, remote work, and entrepreneurship; organizing a hackathon that selected five entrepreneurial projects led by women; establishing a database for graduates to share experiences and solutions to daily challenges; and addressing unemployment and encouraging local entrepreneurship through digital innovation.



Participants of the Digital Bridges Project celebrating the completion of training and showcasing their entrepreneurial initiatives
©Palestinian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The State of Palestine actively participated in the regional conference "Memory in Heritage: Enhancing Cooperation on Documentary Heritage in the Arab Region," held on 21–22 January 2025 in Qatar. During the event, Palestine was elected Vice Chair of the Memory of the World Committee for the Arab Region, focusing on issues related to conflicts and natural disasters. This reflects Palestine's role in fostering Arab and international cooperation to protect documentary heritage.

As part of this effort, the Palestinian National Commission delivered a presentation on Palestinian documentary heritage, emphasizing the importance of cooperation in safeguarding heritage in conflict zones. The committee also recommended establishing a regional registry for documenting Arab documentary heritage. In line with national initiatives, the Commission is currently working on establishing the National Memory of the World Committee, aligning with the recommendation of the Palestinian National Committee for Tangible and Intangible Heritage established by presidential decree in July 2023.

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

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Summary of activities during 2024

Throughout 2024, the Saudi National Commission for Education, Culture, and Science operated in a pivotal environment focused on strengthening local and international cooperation in the fields of education, culture, and science. The Commission actively contributed to organizing numerous activities and events that supported the national vision for education, culture, and science, in collaboration with various ministries and government agencies, in addition to forming strong partnerships with international organizations, including UNESCO.

Success story

One of the most notable success stories implemented by the National Commission in 2024 was organizing the first edition of Arab Cultural Week, with the participation of 23 Arab countries. This unique event featured musical performances, dedicated pavilions for each country, as well as traditional foods and fashion shows representing each

Among the most prominent activities led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during 2024 were: leadership in the First Arab Week, bringing together Arab talents and honoring innovators in programming and digital innovation; UNESCO accreditation of "Harfa" Association as a non-profit organization, strengthening its role in preserving cultural and artistic heritage; and registration of cultural and educational initiatives, including the establishment of the UNESCO Chair in Translating Cultures (2024), admission of the three cities Madinah, King Abdullah Economic City, and Al-Ahsa to the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, nomination of North Riyadh and Salma sites for the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network, and submission of Imam Turki bin Abdullah Reserve for the Man and the Biosphere Programme.

Cultural inscriptions registered on the UNESCO lists in 2024 included Al-Faw Archaeological Area (World Heritage - Individual), Cultural practices of Taif roses (Intangible Heritage - Individual), Henna: Rituals & Aesthetic Practices (Intangible Heritage - Arab Collaboration), and Sesame Machine (Intangible Heritage - Arab Collaboration). Through new partnerships, the Commission was able to implement training programmes and develop projects that contribute to enhancing competitiveness in the fields of education, culture and science.

participating nation. The event served as an excellent platform for cultural exchange among Arab countries, providing participants with the opportunity to explore the diverse heritage and customs of the Arab peoples. The closing ceremony was attended by the UNESCO Director General, who delivered a speech on the role of culture in strengthening Arab cooperation and fostering ties between nations.

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In the near future, the Saudi National Commission for Education, Culture, and Science will focus on enhancing cooperation and joint action with both international and regional organizations to achieve national and global goals in the fields of education, culture, and science. Among the Commission's key future priorities is hosting the Conference of Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organizations. This conference seeks to strengthen cooperation among Member States, facilitate the exchange of expertise, and discuss collaborative initiatives that support sustainable development in these areas. The event will serve as a platform for exploring ways to promote education, safeguard cultural heritage, and advance science and technology regionally and globally.

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

Syrian National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, within the framework of cooperation between the Syrian Arab Republic and UNESCO, the National Commission, in coordination with the ministries concerned with UNESCO's specializations, focused on building national capacities and implementing activities aimed at developing educational, scientific, and technical skills. Syria participated in key international events, including the first conference on Educational Statistics in Paris (7–9 February 2024), the World Conference on Culture and Arts Education in the UAE

(13–15 February 2024), the thirteenth Global Media and Information Literacy Week in Jordan (30–31 October 2024), and the World Education Meeting in Fortaleza, Brazil (31 October–1 November 2024).

At the national level, and in cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Office in Beirut, the project "Supporting and Enhancing Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments in Syria by Developing a Document for Minimum Standards for Safe Schools" was initiated. This involved consultative sessions with stakeholders in the Ministry of Education to review the document and related guidelines, training of trainers for 30 educational supervisors from earthquake-affected governorates (Aleppo, Lattakia, and Hama), capacity-building of 400 educational practitioners, testing the document in 50 schools, and preparing a comprehensive report on the pilot project. The first two steps were completed in 2024, with the next stages scheduled for 2025.

Virtual participation also included a seminar on "Water for Peace and Prosperity," a seminar on "Effective Use of Learning Data," and a regional workshop on "Engaging the Local Community in Informal Education and Lifelong Learning in the Arab Region."

Success story

National efforts succeeded in inscribing Aleppo's laurel soap-making on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity during the nineteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in Paraguay from 4 to 12 December 2024. This recognition honors the traditional art of soap makers in Aleppo throughout the ages, highlighting the ongoing importance of the laurel soap-making craft, which has roots extending over 4,000 years. It reflects a part of Syrian cultural identity and the ingenuity of its people, as this craft has been passed down through generations in Aleppo. The people of Aleppo have preserved their national identity and provided a legacy that testifies to the values of sustainability and solidarity. This inscription marks a new achievement and a success story for Syria, emphasizing the importance of national efforts and the deep relationship with UNESCO in establishing measures to sustain this element and pass it on to future generations.



Aleppo's Laurel Soap-making
©Ministry of Education of Syrian Arab Republic

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Syrian National Commission for UNESCO is keen to continue cooperation with UNESCO and develop its future prospects in policy-making and capacity-building across all areas of expertise, ensuring a balance and harmony between UNESCO's priorities and national needs. In the field of education, the Ministry of Education reaffirms its commitment to work towards ensuring a bright future for students. It intends to launch a review and evaluation process for curricula to meet the needs of each educational stage and in a way that reflects values of freedom and dignity. This includes emphasizing the priority of implementing educational transformation measures, developing systems, investing more equitably and efficiently, activating the Green Education Partnership initiative, and improving the circumstances of teachers' work. It also addresses the requirements for preserving and protecting Syrian cultural heritage in tangible and intangible fields, promoting a culture of dialogue, raising awareness within the individual and the local community, engaging youth, and developing their educational, scientific, cultural, technological and media skills to ensure the achievement of sustainable development goals.

TUNISIE

Commission nationale tunisienne pour l'éducation, la science et la culture

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Résumé des activités de 2024

En 2024, la Commission nationale tunisienne pour l'Éducation, la Science et la Culture a continué à coordonner et à suivre la réalisation des programmes de l'UNESCO en harmonie avec les objectifs nationaux. Elle a veillé à assurer l'intégration de la Tunisie au sein du Groupe de coopération technique sur les indicateurs de l'ODD4 (TCG) en 2024-2026. Dans le cadre de la création du premier Géoparc dans le Sud-Est tunisien « Dhahar », la Commission nationale a exhorté les instances concernées à mettre en place le cadre juridique nécessaire

pour la création dudit Géoparc et a joué un rôle crucial dans la soumission de la demande officielle auprès de l'UNESCO. Elle a également accompagné les différents points focaux et institutions nationales concernées dans la préparation et le dépôt des dossiers de candidature pour l'inscription des éléments tunisiens sur les listes du patrimoine immatériel et documentaire de l'UNESCO.

La Commission nationale a organisé une série de réunions avec les responsables des Chaires tunisiennes membres du réseau UNITWIN afin d'examiner leurs besoins et leurs stratégies pour développer leurs activités sur le plan national et garantir une bonne représentation du réseau tunisien. La Tunisie a déposé cette année deux nouvelles candidatures. Dans le cadre du projet « Autonomiser le système éducatif et les communautés scolaires par la promotion des droits de l'homme, l'éducation à la citoyenneté mondiale et l'éducation aux médias et à l'information » lancé en 2020 grâce à l'appui financier des Pays-Bas et en partenariat avec le HCDH, quatre guides ont été élaborés avec la coordination du Bureau de l'UNESCO pour le Maghreb, en collaboration avec les ministères de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche scientifique, de la Formation professionnelle et de l'Emploi, ainsi que la Commission nationale.

Une activité réussie

En février 2024, la Tunisie a accueilli le séminaire régional de haut niveau pour le Maghreb sur la transformation numérique et le suivi des progrès vers l'ODD4, organisé en collaboration entre le ministère de l'Éducation et le Bureau de l'UNESCO pour le Maghreb. La Commission nationale a coordonné les efforts des différentes parties prenantes afin de veiller au bon déroulement de l'événement. Cet engagement s'inscrit dans la mise en œuvre des décisions issues du Sommet sur la transformation de l'éducation des Nations Unies, invitant à créer un monde fondé sur la durabilité et à défendre les principes de justice et d'égalité, sans exclusion ni marginalisation. À la suite de cette première rencontre, un comité de rédaction régional a travaillé à l'élaboration d'un rapport détaillant l'avancement des États de la région dans la réalisation de la transformation numérique. La Commission nationale a participé activement au lancement de ce rapport en Tunisie en novembre 2024.



Séminaire régional de haut niveau pour le Maghreb
sur la transformation numérique et le suivi des progrès vers l'ODD4
©Commission nationale tunisienne pour l'éducation, la science et la culture

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

En 2025, la Commission nationale poursuivra son rôle de garant de la présence tunisienne dans les événements et de facilitateur dans l'exécution des programmes et projets dans le cadre de la collaboration entre la Tunisie et l'UNESCO. Elle souhaite approfondir les échanges et les collaborations avec les Commissions nationales de la région Maghreb et Arabe, ainsi qu'avec les organisations internationales partenaires (ALECSO et ICESCO), afin de synchroniser les efforts régionaux, notamment dans les secteurs des sciences exactes et naturelles et de la culture. Elle projette d'organiser un forum régional pour les Chaires UNITWIN de la région Maghreb en collaboration avec le Bureau régional de l'UNESCO à Rabat. La Commission prévoit également une collaboration étroite avec les instances nationales pour garantir une meilleure représentation de la Tunisie dans les réseaux UNESCO (villes créatives, villes apprenantes, géoparcs, etc.) et pour développer davantage le réseau national des écoles associées récemment mis à jour. Enfin, elle souhaite encourager le renforcement de la collaboration internationale en favorisant des actions conjointes et en créant des opportunités de coopération, profitant de la richesse et de la diversité des expériences des États dans les domaines de compétence de l'UNESCO.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

United Arab Emirates National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the National Commission participated in the workshop "Subsequent Process for Nomination Forms and Periodic Reports of the Arab MAB Programme," organized by the Fujairah Environment Authority in collaboration with UNESCO, reflecting the UAE's role in the Arab MAB Network's Executive Committee following the 2023 elections. The UNESCO World Conference on Culture and Arts Education 2024 took place in Abu Dhabi, marking a significant contribution to global arts education and bringing together Culture and Education Ministers from around the world, who adopted a UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education.

Success story

During 2024, the National Commission played a key role alongside the Permanent Delegation of the UAE to UNESCO in the election of the United Arab Emirates to UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage for the 2024–2028 term. This marked the UAE's second term on the Committee and reflected the country's continued dedication to preserving intangible cultural heritage and its growing influence on the global cultural stage. Throughout the year, the UAE, in collaboration with various stakeholders, further strengthened its leadership by inscribing 16 elements on UNESCO's Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage, showcasing the richness and diversity of its cultural heritage. A notable achievement was successfully leading the multinational nomination "Falconry," involving 24 countries, which demonstrated the UAE's ability to foster international collaboration and protect shared cultural heritage.

The UAE was elected a member of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage during the 10th session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention. The 8th UNESCO-Hamdan Prize for Teacher Development ceremony honored three innovators for their contributions to enhancing teacher performance and transforming education. The first Arab Week at UNESCO Headquarters featured interactive sessions, showcasing the UAE's cultural heritage, with the opening ceremony attended by H.E. Dr. Ali bin Tamim, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre. The UAE's cultural heritage was also recognized with the inclusion of "Henna" in UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

As part of the Reviving the Spirit of Mosul initiative, the Monastery of the Clock was reconstructed and handed over to the Dominican Order on 31 May 2024, while Al-Tahera Church underwent full reconstruction and was handed over to the Christian Endowment Office in September 2024. The UAE also participated in the 19th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Paraguay in December 2024 and submitted its Quadrennial Periodic Report within the 2005 Convention in September 2024, highlighting 255 cultural initiatives and 140 stakeholder collaborations.



UAE Wins Bid for Membership of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage ©United Arab Emirates National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The National Commission prioritizes the establishment of strategic partnerships locally to support its active engagement with UNESCO and will collaborate with local and global partners to achieve its goals.

The National Commission aims to explore available training and employment opportunities at UNESCO. This effort focuses on identifying key opportunities for UAE nationals to engage in UNESCO's initiatives and contribute to global cultural and educational advancements, participating in international efforts to secure quality education, culture and science, enhancing innovative and sustainable initiatives linking science and AI, sharing the best practices and new ideas in cultural education, supporting dialogue and creative industries at UNESCO.

The UAE seeks to strengthen collaboration in the Natural Sciences sector and enhance participation in major related events.

Joint efforts will be undertaken to preserve intangible and tangible cultural heritage, including new technologies for digitizing artifacts, and promoting cross-cultural understanding through educational programmes.

The National Commission will be working on the following nominations for inscription on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists: Arabic Kohl (2025), Zaffa in traditional marriage (2025), Bisht (men's Abaya) : skills and practices (2025), Al Ahalla, a living performing arts in the United Arab Emirates, national file (2025), Al Saafiyat, national file (2026), The Oud instrument : "The Oud Instrument : Practices, Skills, and Performing Arts" (2026).



Asia and the Pacific

The Great Wall - China – World Heritage
List - inscribed in 1987
©Dana Andreea Gheorghe/Unsplash

AUSTRALIA

Australian National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Australian National Commission for UNESCO supported a range of initiatives that reflected its commitment to UNESCO's mission across education, culture, and science.

Success story

The Australian National Commission for UNESCO proudly supported the successful nomination of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau for the UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize. The Bureau has a longstanding mission aligned with the Memory of the World programme, working to preserve Pacific countries' history, heritage, and culture from the severe effects of climate change, such as rising sea levels and extreme weather conditions. Through copying archives, rare, printed materials, photographs, and manuscripts, the Bureau ensures that Pacific documentary heritage is safeguarded and made accessible to a wider audience.

These included community engagement in various UNESCO initiatives, such as the UNESCO Chair/UNITWIN programme and UNESCO awards. The Commission supported the webinar Culture in Emergencies in the Pacific Region, convened by the University of Technology Sydney's UNESCO Chair in International Law and Cultural Heritage and the UNESCO-UNITWIN Network on Culture in Emergencies. It also oversaw Australia's periodic report on the implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999). Other significant highlights of the year included the 2024 UNESCO Creative Cities of Crafts and Folk Art Annual Meeting held in Ballarat, as well as the successful nomination of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau for the UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize.

Their efforts have had a global impact, making Pacific cultural and historical records available to universities, libraries, academics, researchers, and students across the world. Importantly, the Bureau has also emphasized bringing this heritage back to Pacific communities through fieldwork, allowing villagers to access archives and view photographs of their ancestors, even in cases where internet access is unavailable. This initiative has strengthened both local knowledge and cultural continuity, while amplifying global awareness of Pacific heritage.

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking forward, the Australian National Commission has identified several areas of priority. These include supporting Australia's term on the UNESCO Executive Board 2023–2027, engaging and collaborating with Pacific National Commissions on shared priorities, and facilitating community access to UNESCO awards, Creative Cities, and UNITWIN/Chairs programmes. Another important focus is to continue convening and supporting government departments and agencies responsible for developing policy on UNESCO matters, ensuring that Australia's contributions remain aligned with both national strategies and UNESCO's global goals.

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO (BNCU)

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO (BNCU), attached to the Ministry of Education, continued to play its central liaison role among concerned ministries, UNESCO Paris, UNESCO Dhaka, and other National Commissions. As part of government provisions, the National Commission signed an Annual Performance Agreement (APA) with the Ministry of Education, committing to specific targets and goals. Each desk within the Commission worked diligently to ensure these commitments were met.

The Commission remained consistent in its efforts to advertise, review, and select projects under the UNESCO Participation Programme. Under the 2024–2025 cycle, seven impactful projects are ongoing. In addition, BNCU mobilized an emergency fund from UNESCO to respond to severe flooding in Feni district, one of the worst in recent history. As part of this initiative, awareness training was delivered to 1,000 people on tackling sudden flood-attacks, representing a landmark contribution to safeguarding lives and assets.

In the field of education, the International Day of Education 2024 was celebrated jointly with the UNESCO Dhaka Office. The Commission also supported the selection of Dhaka University and Independent University for the 2024 UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme. It facilitated the dissemination of awards, prizes, and fellowships, including processing nominations for the UNESCO/Poland Co-Sponsored Fellowships Programme in Engineering and the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes.

Aligned with the UN-declared Ocean Literacy Action Plan, which calls for the inclusion of ocean literacy in school curricula by 2025, the Commission organized meetings and workshops throughout the year with stakeholders. Recommendations emerging from these sessions are now being finalized for integration into Bangladesh's national curriculum.

Success story

On 8 May 2024, *Sultana's Dream* by Rokeya S. Hossain was inscribed as the first-ever documentary heritage from Bangladesh on the MOWCAP Regional Register. The Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO played a pivotal role by providing consultation, secretarial support, and oversight in establishing a Memory of the World National Committee, while also preparing and presenting the Committee's biennial activity report for 2022–2024.

This inscription is not only a milestone for Bangladesh but also a significant contribution to UNESCO's global objectives, highlighting women's achievements and gender equality. Rokeya, a pioneer of women's empowerment in the early 20th century, challenged entrenched patriarchy and envisioned a utopian society led by women through her literary work. Her story continues to inspire generations, and UNESCO's recognition underscores both its historic importance and its enduring relevance.



Mr Mofidul Hoque, Trustee of the Liberation War Museum, and Ms Zubaida Mannan, Deputy Secretary-General of BNCU, receiving a certificate from the Chairperson and Secretary-General of MOWCAP
©Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Future priorities for the Commission include the integration of eight key activities under the CapED programme into a consolidated project. The Implementation Partnership Agreement (IPA) draft has been finalized and will soon be signed, enabling a year-round plan to begin. Key activities include the Greening Education Partnership consultation, the APMED 6 workshop, orientation on UNESCO–UNICEF Gateways for Public Digital Learning, discussions on teachers' roles and the 1966 Recommendation, celebration of the International Day of Education, dissemination of GEM Report 2023 findings, updating the SDG 4 Strategic Framework, and development of the Right to Education Study Report.

Preparations are also underway for IDE 2025, which has already been successfully observed, and facilitation is ongoing for the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme 2025. Strengthening the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPNet) is another major focus, particularly to support UNESCO's Greening Education Concept. The Commission will prioritize capacity-building and school exchanges, creating opportunities for officials, teachers, and students to work collaboratively toward building a more sustainable future.

BHUTAN

Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Yeezang De Thapa, Minister of Education and Skills Development

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO, serving as a Secretariat under the Ministry of Education and Skills Development of the Royal Government of Bhutan, successfully fulfilled its mandate and further strengthened its visibility at national, regional, and global levels. With the support of UNESCO and other National Commissions, the Commission oversaw several important projects and initiatives.

One of the most notable achievements was the conclusion of the 2024 Bridge Bhutan Project, supported by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, which focused on adult literacy, lifelong learning, and skills development through

Community Learning Centres. Additionally, under the Social and Emotional Learning for Decision Makers (SEL4DM) initiative, the Commission partnered with UNESCO MGIEP to deliver SEL training for ministry officials, Dzongkhag Education Officers, and school leaders, enhancing leadership and public service delivery.

Other significant initiatives included the installation of 28 Climate Science Literacy posters at Lampelri Recreational Park, Royal Botanical Park, and raise awareness about climate change. This project was led by Green Bhutan Corporation Limited in collaboration with the Nature Conservation Division, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, and UNESCO New Delhi Office. The Commission also received approval for four projects under UNESCO's 2024–2025 Participation Programme, though their implementation began in 2025 due to delayed funding.

The GCED Curriculum Development and Integration Project (2022–2024) was successfully concluded, resulting in the creation of a curriculum framework, integration guide, lesson exemplars for grades IV–VIII, and resources promoting whole-school and teacher-parent collaboration. A monitoring guide was also developed, and all resources were published in both online and offline formats for broad accessibility.

Success story

A key success story in 2024 was the piloting of the Global Citizenship Education (GCED) curriculum integration project. Conducted with technical and financial support from APCEIU, the piloting ran from August to October 2024 across 15 schools, involving 230 teachers. The GCED Integration Guide, lesson exemplars, and TEAM approach were tested and demonstrated strong alignment with subject competencies while being practical for classroom use.

Teachers effectively modeled GCED values such as respect and empathy, which had a positive influence on students. Feedback collected during the pilot emphasized the importance of parental involvement, prompting schools to organize workshops and family events to engage parents more directly. The pilot laid a solid foundation for mainstreaming GCED into the national Value Education initiative, a central pillar of Bhutan's education system.



Training workshop for teachers and school leaders during the piloting of the Global Citizenship Education (GCED) integration project
©Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking ahead, the Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO is eager to pursue collaborative opportunities aligned with UNESCO's mandate. Following the recent Civil Service Transformation, a new Secretary has been appointed to the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD), also serving as the Secretary-General of the National Commission, while a new Education Minister, following the 4th Parliamentary Election, has assumed the role of Chairperson. These changes in leadership position the Commission to advance UNESCO's goals in Bhutan more effectively.

Among the Commission's top priorities is strengthening the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) and Clubs for UNESCO across the country, with a focus on quality education, cultural understanding, sustainability, SDGs, and values education, aligned with Bhutan's philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH). The Commission also seeks to foster collaboration at subregional, regional, and interregional levels within the Asia-Pacific region to strengthen support for the SDGs.

In addition, the Commission continues to implement initiatives from UNESCO Headquarters, Regional Offices, and Field Offices, including the Participation Programme 2024–2025, while strengthening coordination with government and non-government agencies to ensure alignment with UNESCO's areas of competence. Future efforts will prioritize capacity building and mobilizing resources to address inclusive and equitable quality education in rural and underserved areas, advancing scientific literacy and innovation for sustainable development, preserving cultural heritage, promoting intercultural dialogue, and enhancing media literacy and access to information. Preparations are also underway for Bhutan's active participation in the upcoming UNESCO General Conference.

CAMBODIA

Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO, with the support of the UNESCO Phnom Penh Office, successfully implemented several initiatives across education, culture, and heritage. A consultative workshop was conducted to gather input from ministries, institutions, and stakeholders in preparation for the periodic reporting on the 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

In partnership with the Directorate General of Techniques for Cultural Affairs of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, the

Commission worked on preparing the periodic report on the status of Chapei Dang Veng, which was inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2016. This effort contributed directly to the implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

In October, the Commission organized a workshop to update the tentative list of potential sites for World Heritage inscription, focusing on the importance of existing sites and exploring new candidates. In November, it hosted a temporary exhibition on traditional ceramics making in Cambodia, aiming to preserve and promote intangible cultural heritage at risk of being lost. This exhibition engaged students and the younger generation, encouraging appreciation of traditional craftsmanship.

Under the 2024–2025 Participation Programme, Cambodia received funding for four projects: fossil and stratigraphy identification; research, compilation, and exhibition of intangible heritage focusing on traditional festivals around Sambor Prei Kuk in Kampong Thom Province; digital cultural heritage education for children; and the development of a management model for tourist attractions in Angkor Borei, Takeo Province.

Success story

A notable success story was the organization of a consultative workshop in 2023 on the development of application forms and instructions for listing heritage documents in the National Memory of the World Register. This initiative, carried out with the working group of the Secretariat of the National Committee for the Memory of the World, aimed to establish clear guidelines and forms for registering heritage documents.

The workshop brought together national and international experts, including Ms Linh Anh Moreau, Consultant on Documentary Heritage at UNESCO Bangkok, and Acting Secretary-General of MOWCAP, and H.E. Dr Helen Jarvis, Adviser to the Royal Government of Cambodia and Chair of the MOWCAP Register Sub-Committee. By creating a space for dialogue and collaboration, the event enabled participants to gain a deeper understanding of the registration process while contributing to the development of standardized forms and instructions.

This collaborative effort enhanced Cambodia's ability to safeguard its documentary heritage while strengthening its participation in the global Memory of the World

Programme. It also reinforced the importance of memory institutions in preserving cultural heritage for future generations.



The consultative workshop on "Developing an application form and guidelines for nominating documentary heritage to the National Memory of the World Register." ©Cambodia National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

For the years 2025–2026, the Cambodian National Commission has outlined several priority areas in alignment with UNESCO's mandate. It plans to co-organize subregional and regional activities focusing on capacity building, youth empowerment, and advancing education, science, and culture. Proposed initiatives include regional workshops to enhance educators' digital competencies and reduce disparities in access to education, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

The Commission also aims to support cultural heritage preservation through strengthened partnerships with neighboring National Commissions, emphasizing community-led heritage preservation efforts, especially in intangible cultural heritage and its transmission to younger generations. Youth engagement will be central, with interregional initiatives planned to empower young people with skills for climate action and sustainable environmental practices.

In addition, the Commission plans to co-organize subregional capacity-building workshops with other National Commissions to strengthen collective expertise and ensure more effective implementation of shared initiatives. By focusing on these areas, the Cambodian National Commission seeks to enhance collaboration within the UNESCO network, foster multi-stakeholder partnerships, and achieve sustainable outcomes that align with UNESCO's strategic objectives.

CHINA (PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF)

National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, cooperation between China and UNESCO reached new milestones through several high-level exchanges and initiatives. Madame Peng Liyuan, Wife of Chinese President Xi Jinping and UNESCO Special Envoy for the Advancement of Girls' and Women's Education, visited UNESCO Headquarters alongside Madame Azoulay, delivering a congratulatory message to the UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education.

To mark the 10th anniversary of President Xi Jinping's visit to UNESCO, the Chinese National Commission and UNESCO co-organized an exhibition showcasing ten years of achievements

in cooperation at UNESCO Headquarters, which was visited by Madame Peng Liyuan.

China continued its commitment to UNESCO's two global priorities by maintaining support for the UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education and renewing the agreement for the Great Wall Fellowship Programme. China also hosted the China-Africa-UNESCO High-Level Dialogue on Cooperation in Education and Cultural Heritage Protection in Beijing, attended by Chinese Vice-Premier H.E. Mr. Ding Xuexiang. Additionally, the International Youth Forum on Creativity and Heritage 2024 took place in Changsha.

Senior Chinese education officials actively participated in global forums, including the High-level Steering Committee for Education 2030, the Global Education Meeting in Brazil, and the Global Forum on the Ethics of AI in Slovenia.

In 2024, new inscriptions included the Beijing Central Axis, the Badain Jaran Desert: Towers of Sand and Lakes, and the Migratory Bird Sanctuaries (Phase II) on the World Heritage List, and the Spring Festival on the Intangible Heritage List. To further strengthen cooperation, the first China-UNESCO Partnership Dialogue was held during the 219th Executive Board session.

Success story

On 6 September 2024, Beijing hosted the China-Africa-UNESCO High-Level Dialogue on Cooperation in Education and Cultural Heritage Protection, attended by around 460 participants, including government officials, academic leaders, experts, and representatives of international organizations.

Chinese Vice-Premier H.E. Mr Ding Xuexiang emphasized China's readiness to work with African countries and UNESCO in three areas: accelerating the implementation of Education 2030 through digital exchanges and teacher training; deepening cooperation in vocational education to empower youth employment and entrepreneurship; and strengthening protection of cultural heritage through joint work in archaeology, restoration, and professional training.

High-level representatives from African countries and UNESCO expressed their willingness to enhance cooperation. Outcomes included the establishment of the Research Center for China-Africa Dialogue among Civilizations, the China-Africa Teacher Education Center, and the China-Africa Regional Center for Digital Education Cooperation.



China-Africa-UNESCO High-Level Dialogue on Cooperation in Education and Cultural Heritage Protection ©National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In 2025, the Chinese National Commission will continue focusing on UNESCO's global priorities and priority groups. It will maintain support for the UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education, the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy, and the Great Wall Fellowship Programme. Planned projects include the CFIT Funds-in-Trust to strengthen STEM education in Africa and Small Island Developing States, as well as a capacity-building project supporting African countries in World Heritage protection.

China will support UNESCO in launching the International Institute for STEM Education (IISTEM) in Shanghai and will co-host the 5th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves.

INDIA

Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO (INCCU)

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Indian National Commission advanced UNESCO's priorities in Education, Science, Culture, and Information through a series of impactful initiatives. A major highlight was the International Yoga Day celebration at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, organized by India's Permanent Delegation in collaboration with the Heartfulness Foundation.

Attended by more than 1,000 people, the event showcased India's cultural diplomacy.

India hosted the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee in New Delhi in July 2024, marking the first time the country hosted this event. The session inscribed the Moidams, the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty, as India's 43rd World Heritage Site.

On June 24, 2024, the Ministry of Mines established the National Geoparks Committee to identify and develop UNESCO Global Geoparks in India. In partnership with UNESCO, the Geological Survey of India and Ministry of Mines held a Training Workshop on UNESCO Global Geoparks in September 2024 in New Delhi.

India also contributed to regional research collaboration through UNESCO and the Association of Asian Social Science Research Councils (AASSREC). Furthermore, ICSSR, nominated by India's Permanent Delegation, participated in the UNESCO Global Forum on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence in Slovenia, highlighting the progress in implementing UNESCO's Recommendation on AI Ethics.

Success story

Indian researcher Brinda Kashyap received the UNESCO MAB Young Scientist Award in 2024 for her innovative research on rhinoceros' conservation in Manas National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Her use of GIS mapping and habitat modeling provided vital insights into preserving rhinoceros populations and offered a model for integrating technology into biodiversity conservation globally.

Additionally, three significant works of Indian literature—*Ramcharitmanas*, *Panchatantra*, and *Sahridayāloka-Locana*—were inscribed on the MOWCAP Regional Register during its 10th General Meeting in May 2024, held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Indian National Commission will emphasize capacity-building initiatives to enhance research quality, promote interdisciplinary approaches, and address challenges of resource mobilization. It aims to strengthen Social Sciences research aligned with local community needs through transparent evaluation, extended funding durations, and practical outcomes.

India will also focus on advancing collaboration, capacity building, and dissemination of research findings. These efforts aim to foster a resilient social sciences research community and further align India's contributions with UNESCO's global objectives.

IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)

Iranian National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO undertook a wide range of initiatives in line with UNESCO's mandate. Given the critical importance of museums in preserving cultural heritage and fostering social cohesion, the International Conference on Museums was organized by Mohaghegh Ardabili University and the Commission in cooperation with other organizations on 24 May 2023. The event featured distinguished speakers from national and international organizations, and a video message from Ernesto

Ottone, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Culture, was screened, underscoring the significance of the conference.

A commemorative ceremony was held on 22 January 2024, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Iranian National Commission and other organizations, to celebrate the registration of three significant Iranian works on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register. The registered works include letters exchanged between global leaders and the Qajar kings; the complete collection of works by Mowlana; and the document collection of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili Shrine. During the ceremony, a video message from Tawfik Jelassi, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General of Communication and Information, was also broadcast.

The third phase of the Afghan Women Teachers Empowerment Project was successfully conducted by the Education Department of the National Commission, the UNESCO Office in Tehran, and Kharazmi University, with financial support from the Japanese Embassy. This phase, running from March to July 2024, provided training to 280 Afghan women teachers across two main sections. Building on the success of its previous phases, the project aims to enhance the professional capacities of Afghan educators and foster their effective role in training the migrant communities in Iran.

Success story

The Sport-Cultural Festival of Indigenous-Local Games of Mazandaran Province took place on 15 May 2024. The event was organized jointly by the Iranian National Commission and Shomal University, in collaboration with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, the Ministry of Sport and Youth, and Amol Municipality. The primary objective of the festival was to raise awareness of the importance of indigenous-local games, preserve these traditional games as an integral part of intangible cultural heritage, and highlight their role in cultural diversity and creative expression.

The festival also aimed to foster intercultural and intercommunity dialogue, empower individuals to contribute to peaceful societies, promote ethical values through traditional games and sports, and unite the governmental sector, academic community, and NGOs. A total of seven captivating local games were featured in the festival, with enthusiastic participants competing in teams. The diverse range of games included Dodgeball, Seven Stones, Chub Keshi (a game with wooden sticks), Chelik-Maare-Kaa (a game involving wood and brick), Tug of War, and Aghuzka (a walnut game). At the conclusion of the festival, the winners of each game were honored

with certificates presented by the Iranian National Commission. By preserving and celebrating these games, the event promotes social cohesion, cultural diversity, and ensures the continuation of these invaluable forms of creative expression.



Cultural parade showcasing indigenous and local games during the Sport-Cultural Festival in Mazandaran Province ©Iranian National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The National Commission plans to launch a Joint Project on Youth and Climate Change to empower young people as agents of change in addressing environmental challenges. This initiative will include capacity-building programs, climate education workshops, and innovation competitions to equip youth with the knowledge and skills needed to combat climate change.

A Regional Project on Water Management will be developed to address shared challenges related to water conservation, resource allocation, and climate resilience. By fostering partnerships among experts, policymakers, and local communities, this project will contribute to improving water resource management, ensuring access to clean water, and promoting environmental sustainability across the region.

The National Commission plans to develop a project focused on achieving UNESCO's global priority of women's empowerment, with a particular emphasis on Information and Communication Technology. In collaboration with the Technical and Vocational Organization, this initiative will offer skill-based training to enhance women's digital literacy, employment opportunities, and participation in technology-driven sectors.

An event will also be organized to promote the development of sports and physical education to foster peace and sustainable development, emphasizing the role of sports in strengthening social cohesion, encouraging healthy lifestyles, and building inclusive communities.

Finally, to promote inclusion and empathy, a programme will be implemented aimed at improving societal attitudes toward individuals with disabilities through workshops, seminars, and interactive activities.

JAPAN

Japanese National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO pursued numerous initiatives reflecting UNESCO's priorities and responding to global challenges. In March, the Commission formulated the "Proposal on the Promotion of UNESCO-Related Activities in Light of the Current International Situation." Bearing in mind the current international situation, the National Commission reaffirmed UNESCO's universal mission and made proposals to the Japanese Government to demonstrate its leadership through strategic and proactive involvement in UNESCO, while also presenting proposals to the general public to activate the UNESCO-related activities network and strengthen public outreach in Japan.

The Youth Committee of the Japanese National Commission, which comprises 20 members, organized the 1st Youth Forum in Tokyo in January 2024 and formulated the "Declaration

for the Future" with young participants. Furthermore, the activities of each member in Japan and their participation in international conferences were described in the Youth Note. An article on the 2nd Youth Forum, held in December 2024, will be posted there soon.

In the field of education, the Japanese National Commission supported a project to create guidance tools in collaboration with ASPnet schools and researchers to assist educational practitioners in implementing the "ESD for 2030" Roadmap. It also supported a project to create target-specific guides to assist Member States in implementing the Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development.

In the field of science, the Japanese National Commission supported public awareness activities for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the Vision 2030 Process, the MAB and IHP networks in the Asia-Pacific region, and the formulation of the Recommendations on the Ethics of Neurotechnology.

In the field of communication and information, the Japanese National Commission supported the holding of the 4th Memory of the World Global Policy Forum, which aimed at building partnerships on preserving documentary heritage. The Commission also provided support to various regions through funding initiatives to protect documentary heritage at risk.

Success story

In November 2023, UNESCO and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the Sponsored Traineeship Programme. This Programme allows for the dispatch of students belonging to organizations conducting UNESCO-related activities, including universities, to UNESCO Headquarters and field offices. The MoU aims to cultivate professional individuals who can bring new ideas, knowledge, experience, and dedication in support of UNESCO's programmes and activities.

Based on this agreement, since June 2024, MEXT has been dispatching Japanese graduate students to the UNESCO Headquarters and regional offices as trainees. As of December 2024, six master's and doctoral students studying at UNESCO Chairs started their training, with a period ranging from six months to a maximum of one year. These trainees utilized their expertise in a wide range of fields, including education, natural sciences, humanities and social sciences, and information and communication, while working at UNESCO. Through this training, young participants are expected to deepen their understanding of UNESCO-related activities, become human resources capable of playing active roles globally, including as staff members of international organizations, and contribute to regional revitalization through UNESCO-related activities.



Trainees at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris with the Secretary-General and staff of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO ©MEXT

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking ahead, the Japanese National Commission will expand the UNESCO Future Co-Creation Platform Project, which has been implemented since 2020, and begin implementing the UNESCO Future Co-Creation Platform for 2030 Project from 2025. This new project will contribute to achieving the SDGs by broadening UNESCO-related activities throughout society, creating opportunities for diverse stakeholders to collaborate, and strengthening the active involvement of young people as new leaders in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

By encouraging youth participation through youth forums, training sessions, and support for their engagement in international conferences, the Commission will enhance youth networks and reflect their voices in UNESCO-related activities. In the field of science, Japan, as an IOC Executive Council member, will continue to contribute to the promotion of the UN Decade of Ocean Science through its support to the IOC via J-FIT and in-kind contributions. As part of its contributions to the IOC, Japan will host the 15th IOC/WESTPAC Intergovernmental Session in Tokyo in March 2025.

In addition, the IHP 50th Anniversary Symposium will be held in Tokyo in March 2025 as a preparatory meeting leading up to the IHP 50th Anniversary Global Pivot Event at UNESCO Headquarters in June 2025. Through these future priorities, Japan reaffirms its commitment to advancing UNESCO's mandate across education, science, culture, and communication, while positioning itself as a proactive and strategic partner in building sustainable and inclusive global cooperation.

KAZAKHSTAN

The National Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Erlan Karin, State Counsellor

Secretary-General: Ms Zhanar Shaimenova

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the National Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan for UNESCO and ICESCO continued its activities with a strong emphasis on the preservation and international promotion of Kazakhstan's cultural and natural heritage, alongside the advancement of science and education in the interest of climate conservation. Among the most significant achievements of the year was effective participation of Kazakhstan in the 46th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee as its member. Together with other members of the Committee, the Kazakhstan delegation thoroughly reviewed the State of Conservation reports of the UNESCO cultural and natural sites and assessed new nominations for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List. For the first time Kazakhstan hosted the UNESCO's Reactive Monitoring Mission to evaluate the conservation status and compliance of the Sairam-Ugam, Karatau, and Aksu-Zhabagly nature reserves – components

of the transnational Western Tien Shan nomination – with UNESCO's preservation requirements. As a result, Kazakhstan submitted its comprehensive State of Conservation report to the UNESCO World Heritage Center.

The Kazakhstan National Commission was also engaged in preparation of the State of Conservation report on Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi; and key sites along the Chang'an-Tian Shan Corridor of the Great Silk Road, including the ancient settlements, as well as the Altyn-Emel National Park and the Barsakelmes Nature Reserve, which form part of the Cold Winter Deserts of Turan nomination. A periodic review of the Akzhayik Biosphere Reserve was also submitted.

A key milestone in the realm of intangible cultural heritage was the successful inscription of the traditional Kazakh wedding ritual "Betashar" on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. "Betashar", along with 13 other nominations, reinforced the country's commitment to safeguarding its rich cultural traditions. In fulfillment of its international obligations under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Kazakhstan conducted a comprehensive revision of its National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage Elements and submitted a Periodic Report on the implementation of the ICH Convention over the past six years. Kazakhstan also played a leading role in cultural diplomacy by initiating and hosting celebratory events at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, marking Metrology Day, Dombra Day, Nauryz and many others.

Success story

One of the major international events was the 5th World Nomad Games in Astana, held under UNESCO's patronage in September 2024. The Games attracted over 2,500 athletes from 89 nations across all regions of the world, celebrating the rich and enduring heritage of nomadic cultures of Central Asia and beyond. The opening ceremony was attended by H.E. Ms Simona-Mirela Miculescu, President of the 42nd session of the UNESCO General Conference, underscoring the event's global significance. The Games played a crucial role in promoting the values of peace, resilience and cooperation across diverse ethnic and cultural landscapes, representing a common humanity with a shared destiny.



Archery competition during the 5th World Nomad Games ©Kazakhstan National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The mandate of the UNESCO Category II Regional Glaciological Center in Almaty has been extended, and a corresponding agreement with UNESCO will be signed soon. Looking ahead to 2025, the National Commission will continue its work on new nominations for UNESCO's Lists, while also advancing Kazakhstan's interests across all domains of UNESCO and ICESCO's mandate – education, science, culture, information, and communications. As the current Chair of the World Federation of Clubs and Associations for UNESCO, Kazakhstan is preparing to co-host, in collaboration with UNESCO, the First Global Youth Forum of Associations and Clubs for UNESCO in Almaty on 19–20 February 2025. The event is expected to bring together youth representatives from over 50 countries, high-ranking UNESCO officials, and a diverse range of international experts.

KIRIBATI

Kiribati National Commission to UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the activities of the Kiribati National Commission were limited as they only involved the dissemination of emails to line Ministries. Additionally, the National Commission must be revived so that it is active and, more importantly, able to achieve its mandate.

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The priority at the moment is to revive and strengthen the Kiribati National Commission. To achieve this, a Cabinet submission will be prepared to seek approval. Moreover, capacity building will be required for the functions and responsibilities of the National Commission, to enable it to fulfill its mandate.

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Lao National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Phout Simmalavong

Secretary-General: Ms Silinthone Sacklakham

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Lao National Commission for UNESCO promoted numerous activities closely aligned with UNESCO priorities, particularly those linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. Strong emphasis was placed on ensuring quality and equity in education, promoting gender equality in education, and supporting inclusive education for all. Alongside education, the National Commission also collaborated with international and local organizations to implement activities related to culture, communication, and information.

Major activities included a workshop to strengthen the committee responsible for implementing the Geopark in Laos, supported by the Participation Programme 2022–2023, and the training course "Amplifying Girls' and Young Women's

Education through the Village Loudspeakers," held in Luang Prabang, Xayabouli, and Savannakhet provinces under the 2023 Bridge Laos Project and the Participation Programme 2024–2025. The annual meeting of the Lao National Sub-Commission for UNESCO was successfully convened. The National Commission also organized the consultation meeting to select Lao primary and secondary school teachers to participate in the exchange programme in the Republic of Korea and conducted an orientation meeting to prepare for the implementation of activities of the Lao–Korean Teacher Exchange Programme 2024.

The 2023 Bridge Laos Project Implementation Summary and 2024 Project Plan Meeting was carried out under the Lao–Korean National Commission for UNESCO Cooperation Project "Promoting Sustainable Development Goals – Goal 4" within the framework of the Bridge Laos Project. As part of this initiative, computers and printers were officially handed over to Provincial Education and Sports Services and District Education and Sports Offices, while a Capacity-Building Workshop was organized for the Implementation Committee of the Bridge Laos Project. In addition, the National Commission organized the Research Results Recognition Meeting on "Short-term and Medium-term Results on Gender Education" in Vientiane Capital, a meeting to summarize the implementation of the ASPnet programme in Laos, and a Cultural Learning Workshop in cooperation with UNESCO. Finally, the Lao–Korean Teacher Exchange Programme 2024 concluded with a summary meeting to reflect on the achievements of the initiative.

Success story

One of the most significant achievements in 2024 was the successful implementation of the project "Amplifying Girls' and Young Women's Education through the Village Loudspeakers." This initiative responded directly to the educational disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a particularly severe impact on girls in rural and disadvantaged areas. Due to cultural beliefs, economic hardship, and persistent gender biases, many girls faced heightened pressure to abandon their studies in favor of household responsibilities, leaving them at risk of permanent dropout.

To address this challenge, the Lao National Commission organized workshops across Luang Prabang, Xayabouli, and Savannakhet provinces, supported by the Bridge Laos Project and the UNESCO Participation Programme 2024–2025. A total of 189 participants, including 100 women, were trained on gender issues, national education policies, and communication skills. Participants learned how to use village loudspeakers as tools to advocate for girls' education and gender equality. The workshops also guided participants in producing creative content, including dramas, stories, and songs, to broadcast in their communities, while some were also encouraged to host radio and television programmes.

By equipping local actors with communication skills and raising awareness at the community level, this project mobilized broad-based support for girls' education and fostered cultural change in favor of gender equality. The initiative also created new

opportunities for young people to become advocates for education, ensuring systemic transformation while inspiring future generations of female leaders in Lao PDR.



Training session under the project 'Amplifying Girls' and Young Women's Education through the Village Loudspeakers
©Lao National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking ahead, the Lao National Commission will continue its collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU) in implementing the Asia-Pacific Teacher Exchange for Global Education (2023–2027).

The second phase of the Bridge Laos Project will also be advanced, in partnership with the Korean National Commission, with a focus on improving non-formal education in disadvantaged areas and strengthening the skills of the staff of the Lao National Commission.

The Lao National Commission will continue to request technical and financial support from UNESCO and other partners to build institutional capacity and develop innovative approaches for programme delivery.

Additionally, the National Commission seeks continued support from UNESCO and other relevant sectors to enhance staff capacity, equipping them with essential skills and innovative approaches for the effective implementation of UNESCO's initiatives.

MALAYSIA

Malaysian National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Malaysian National Commission for UNESCO concentrated its efforts on strengthening strategic collaborations, encouraging cross-sectoral approaches, and promoting holistic methods that integrate both top-down and grassroots initiatives. Its guiding principles of Sustainability, Inclusivity, Global Peace, and Opportunity underpinned its programmes and actions, ensuring innovative and sustainable solutions were adopted while encouraging broad participation from all relevant stakeholders.

The National Commission worked in close cooperation with UNESCO Field Offices in Jakarta and Bangkok, Malaysian ministries and agencies, state governments, universities, UNESCO Chairs, NGOs, ASPnet schools, and private sector partners. Among the major activities undertaken was the 3rd Edition of the MNCU Network Dialogue 2024, themed "Cultivating Peace, Celebrating Diversity." This dialogue brought together participants from 17 countries and included contributions from UNESCO Chairs, journalists, NGOs, cultural practitioners, students, and teachers.

The National Commission also organized the UNESCO Heritage Programmes, which focused on promoting awareness of Malaysia's rich cultural and natural heritage recognized by UNESCO. These were implemented in partnership with state governments, site managers, teachers, students, and NGOs. Another innovative collaboration was forged with OPPO Malaysia and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture to produce the series "Malaysia Through the Lens." This initiative highlighted Malaysia's cultural heritage through photography and documentaries shot on OPPO smartphones, which were later compiled into coffee table books to be shared with other National Commissions.

Success story

The National Commission has organized the UNESCO Heritage Programme series, launched in Melaka in February 2024 and followed in Penang Island in April 2024. Officiated by H.E. Fadhlina Sidek, Minister of Education Malaysia, as the President of the National Commission, these programmes were designed to enhance public awareness and cultivate a sense of pride and appreciation for Malaysia's cultural and natural heritages recognized by UNESCO. Additionally, the programme aims to integrate educational elements into the conservation efforts of these heritages, contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDG 2030) and aligning with the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025), including its successor plan, the National Cultural Policy 2021 (DAKEN), and the National Biological Diversity Policy (DKBK) 2022-2030. These programmes also support the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Through these programmes, the National Commission promotes strategic partnerships between State Governments, cultural practitioners, environmentalists, schools, and students to empower younger generations to uphold their heritages. The modality of these programmes will involve close coordination of activities with students from the surrounding UNESCO sites and will be expanded nationwide.



Guided walk through Penang Hill Biosphere Reserve
©Malaysian National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In August, the MNCU Network Dialogue 2025, an international programme, will be the fourth interactive discussion organized since 2022. This programme will highlight exemplary practices and key initiatives undertaken by Malaysia, UNESCO, affiliated institutions, students, and global partners. Panelists and participants will engage in a dialogue to explore optimal mechanisms and frameworks to Build Forward Differently, focusing on maximizing existing resources, embracing inclusive and holistic approaches, and fostering creativity to drive innovation.

In May, the National Commission and UNESCO Office in Jakarta plan to organize the Media and Information Literacy Training for ASPnet Schools in Malaysia. The National Commission is eager to learn about the best practices from other ASPnet schools in the region, which can be facilitated through a virtual platform.

A significant focus for 2025 will be the expansion and empowerment of ASPnet schools in Malaysia. The National Commission is determined to increase the number of participating schools while enhancing the impact of existing ones. Through structured engagement activities, capacity-building workshops, and establishing regional ASPnet networks, the National Commission aims to provide schools with the necessary support and resources to integrate UNESCO's principles into their educational frameworks. By reinforcing the role of ASPnet schools, the National Commission aspires to create a dynamic and engaged network of institutions that contribute meaningfully to UNESCO's mission in education, culture, social sciences, and communication.

MALDIVES

UNESCO National Commission of the Maldives

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Maldives participated in international forums such as the 10th MOWCAP General Meeting in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, contributing to discussions on preserving documentary heritage in the Asia-Pacific region and the 6th Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED 6) in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Maldives is preparing its ICT in Education Master Plan 3 (ICT MP 3) following workshops with stakeholders. This initiative

aims to enhance digital learning and lifelong education, aligning the country's digital education agenda with global standards.

The Maldives engaged in the Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on implementing UNESCO's 2019 OER Recommendation. This online meeting emphasized the importance of OER in achieving quality education and highlighted the need for inclusive practices and international cooperation.

Four participants from the Maldives attended a Lifelong Learning workshop in Shanghai, China, and an international conference held at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). These events provided opportunities for knowledge sharing and collaboration on lifelong learning strategies.

The National Commission developed partnerships with UNESCO Field Offices and other international organizations, leveraging funding opportunities to support its initiatives. Collaborations with Swiss agencies on disaster preparedness and education also contributed to the National Commission's success.

Success story

In 2024, a notable success for the UNESCO National Commission in the Maldives was the country's participation in the Asia-Pacific Network of National Information Centres (APNNIC) as a non-voting member. This involvement was facilitated through the Maldives Qualifications Authority (MQA), which serves as the National Information Centre. The MQA's role in APNNIC has proven beneficial, enabling the Maldives to gain insights into recognition structures and practices across Member States.

This participation aligns with UNESCO's goals by enhancing international cooperation in higher education and promoting the recognition of qualifications, thereby supporting student mobility and academic exchange. The success of this initiative is underscored by the Maldives' ongoing efforts to ratify the Tokyo and Global Conventions, which are expected to further strengthen its position in international higher education networks.



The UNESCO team met with Dr. Ali Haidar, Minister of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development, regarding the national assessment of the Tokyo and Global Conventions ©Maldives Qualification Authority

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Building on the success of the Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on implementing UNESCO's 2019 OER Recommendation, the Maldives aims to host workshops or conferences focusing on integrating OER into national curricula and enhancing digital literacy.

The Maldives is interested in collaborating with regional partners to organize capacity-building programs for the preservation of documentary heritage, leveraging the expertise of the Memory of the World Committee for Asia and the Pacific (MOWCAP).

Initially, the Maldives plans to endorse and promote lifelong learning within the country, focusing on developing a national framework that supports lifelong learning strategies. This will involve engaging stakeholders and policymakers to integrate lifelong learning into the national education agenda.

The National Commission recognizes the need for comprehensive training and workshops for teachers to enhance their digital literacy and pedagogical skills, particularly in integrating ICT and OER into teaching practices. Enhancing digital infrastructure to support online education platforms and OER accessibility remains a priority.

Strengthening partnerships with UNESCO Field Offices and other international organizations is crucial for securing funding and technical support for these initiatives.

There will be a second phase of UNESCO-UNICEF activity on integrating health and wellbeing into education sector planning, and other Green Education (Education for sustainable development) initiatives.

MONGOLIA

The Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, in the education sector, the Mongolian National Commission, with UNESCO's support, launched a Dzud emergency recovery project to mitigate the disaster's impact on students, schools, and communities. The initiative focuses on ensuring educational continuity, strengthening disaster resilience, and raising awareness. Additionally, a pilot project to enhance teachers' ICT skills was implemented in collaboration with ICDL and UNESCO.

In the natural sciences sector, the National Commission organized a training workshop at the Onon-Balj Biosphere Reserve to enhance residents' awareness of sustainable natural resource use and began implementing the initiative in

Biosphere Reserves and protected areas of Mongolia to help reduce ecological footprints.

In social and human sciences, the National Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Mongolia and with the support of the UNESCO Beijing Office, organized a training session titled "Advancing the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Mongolia."

In the culture sector, "The Roles and Risks of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Face of Climate Change," the 2024 Sub-Regional Meeting on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in East Asia, took place in Mongolia. The meeting marked a significant milestone in safeguarding the invaluable cultural traditions of East Asia's communities, ensuring that these practices continue to foster climate adaptation and strengthen community resilience in the face of an unpredictable environmental future.

Finally, in the communication and information sector, the National Commission with the support of UNESCO Beijing, delivered UNESCO's Practical Manual and Master Class on Disability Equality in the Media. This initiative aimed to enhance the capacity of media organizations in promoting gender equality, upholding the rights of people with disabilities, and fostering their inclusive participation.

Success story

The National Commission hosted the 10th "Memory of the World" Regional Committee for Asia-Pacific (MOWCAP) General Meeting from 6–10 May 2024, with the support of UNESCO's Bangkok Office and the Ministry of Culture of Mongolia. The meeting brought together over 70 representatives from 24 countries and saw the addition of 20 new inscriptions to the MOWCAP Regional Register, marking it as the event with the highest number of documentary heritage items registered to date.

During this meeting, Mongolia proudly registered two new inscriptions: "The Family Chart of Hereditary Lords of the Khalkha Mongols, the House of Genghis Khan" and "Mongolia's First Postage Stamps, Eldev Ochir."

The successful organization of this conference not only facilitated the registration of these important heritage items but also played a crucial role in strengthening regional cooperation in the field of documentary heritage. Moreover, the event contributed significantly to expanding research on these items and promoting public access to documentary heritage. It also provided an exceptional platform for sharing best practices in preserving and safeguarding heritage, highlighting its essential role in transmitting knowledge and culture from the past to future generations.



The 10th General Meeting of the Memory of the World Regional Committee for Asia and the Pacific (MOWCAP) ©Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The National Commission is interested in collaborating with other National Commissions to launch an exchange program aimed at fostering capacity building, sharing best practices, and enhancing resource mobilization. This initiative seeks to facilitate the exchange of officials between organizations, promoting mutual learning and strengthening institutional partnerships.

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the National Commission carried out a wide range of activities guided by four priority areas: Indigenous Knowledge; Oceans for the Wellbeing of People and the Planet; Sustainable, Resilient and Regenerative Communities; and Free Flow of Information. These initiatives focused on fostering knowledge-sharing, building capability, and supporting sustainable, healthy, and peaceful outcomes for communities across Aotearoa New Zealand and the wider Pacific region.

The Commission maintained its commitment to the UN Ocean Decade, launching a paper on traditional Pacific navigation at the UN Oceans Decade Conference in Barcelona. It also

continued to coordinate the New Zealand National Decade Committee, which plays a central role in supporting the Decade's goals in New Zealand.

The Activity Grants programme supported diverse community-led projects aligned with its priorities, driving change and innovation. A significant area of focus this year was engaging with youth through the UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leaders programme, which provided opportunities for young leaders to strengthen their voices nationally and globally.

The Commission collaborated closely with Pacific partners and the UNESCO Pacific Office, working together to enhance the region's engagement with UNESCO and highlight the contributions of the Pacific on the global stage. It also continued to support the work of UNESCO programmes and designations in New Zealand, as they connected with international partners, and carried out initiatives to promote UNESCO's values and support local communities. Through these efforts, the Commission advanced its mission to deepen connections between the people of Aotearoa New Zealand and UNESCO globally, building capability for a sustainable, healthy, and more peaceful future.

Success story

The National Commission played an active role in the 2024 UN Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona, where its delegation highlighted the importance of indigenous knowledge in ocean science. Master Navigator Jack Thatcher gave a kōrero/speech on Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge), emphasising the role of indigenous knowledges in sustainable ocean practices. During his plenary, he launched Te Aramahiti, The Morning Star Guides Eastward, a paper celebrating Pacific navigation heritage and the knowledge of waka voyaging navigators.

Natural Sciences Commissioner Linda Faulkner joined a panel discussion on Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Community-Engaged Ocean Science, moderated by Culture Commissioner Daniel Hikuroa. The panel, a collaboration between the National Commission, the Pacific Community (SPC), the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, set the groundwork for future collaborations on promoting indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) in ocean research. The Commission's contribution to the conference amplified the role of indigenous knowledge in achieving sustainable practices, laying foundations for continued work in 2025.

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The National Commission remains dedicated to the UN Ocean Decade, with a focus on weaving knowledge systems together and advancing sustainable ocean practices. As a member of the Pacific Islands Decade Collaborative Centre, it will strengthen relationships with Pacific partners to work towards shared goals. The Commission will support initiatives that draw from diverse knowledges, including indigenous knowledge of the Pacific and te ao Māori, ensuring these perspectives are central to its work.

The Commission will also support the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL), working with indigenous communities and representatives to preserve and revitalise te reo Māori, recognising its role in safeguarding cultural identity and generational knowledge. Youth engagement remains a priority, with continued support for the UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leaders to connect youth in New Zealand and across borders for dialogue on global challenges and collective action. The Commission will also support UNESCO designations in New Zealand, amplifying their contributions to local communities and global UNESCO priorities.

By strengthening international collaborations with UNESCO networks, Pacific partners, and global stakeholders, the Commission seeks to ensure collective efforts contribute to a sustainable, healthy, and peaceful future for all.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Pakistan National Commission was actively involved in initiatives advancing education, culture, and international collaboration. On 27 December 2024, it participated in Enikki Festa 2024 in collaboration with the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) and the National College of Arts (NCA), conducting the artwork selection process for children's submissions. A distinguished jury shortlisted eight artworks, which were then forwarded to the Festa Secretariat for further international evaluation.

On 11 December, the Secretary-General of the Commission attended the 4th International Conference on Distance Education and E-Learning, hosted by the International Islamic University in Islamabad. This conference explored innovative

e-learning methods and the future of education in the digital age. On 10 December, the Commission hosted H.E. Dr. Khaled El-Enany and H.E. Dr. Ihab Abdel Hamid, Ambassador of Egypt, fostering stronger bilateral ties and opportunities for cultural and educational collaboration.

In education and health, the Commission collaborated with ICESCO to organize a three-day Workshop on Health and Hygiene for Basic Education Community Schools (BECS) teachers from 3–5 December 2024. The workshop promoted essential health practices to help teachers integrate hygiene and health education into classrooms. On 19 November 2024, the Secretary-General met with Dr. Mukhtar, Vice-Chancellor of the National Skill University Islamabad, to discuss future cooperation in skills development and vocational education.

The Commission also participated in the UNESCO Regional Workshop on Fighting the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 30 October to 1 November 2024. The workshop addressed illegal trafficking of cultural artifacts and explored protective strategies for cultural heritage.

In line with its mission, numerous projects on education, culture, science, and communications are underway, demonstrating Pakistan's commitment to fostering international cooperation and aligning with UNESCO's global initiatives.

Success story

The Enikki Festa 2024, held on 27 December, was a notable success for the Commission. In collaboration with PNCA and NCA, it conducted the artwork selection process for children's submissions. Eight artworks were shortlisted by a jury and submitted to the Festa Secretariat for international screening. This initiative reflects Pakistan's commitment to showcasing young talent on the global stage and contributing to intercultural dialogue.



Artwork selection process for Enikki Festa 2024 conducted by the Pakistan National Commission in collaboration with the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) and the National College of Arts (NCA) ©Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Commission is committed to advancing UNESCO's objectives in Pakistan and globally, with future priorities focused on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), preservation of cultural heritage, and capacity building. Employee development will be a central focus, with plans for an exchange programme to provide staff with international exposure and enhance cross-cultural learning. Proposals will also be submitted for participation in UNESCO training and capacity-building programmes, equipping staff to implement UNESCO's global policies in Pakistan.

Active participation in UNESCO's international programmes, particularly in sustainable development, cultural preservation, and scientific cooperation, will also be prioritized. This will ensure Pakistan's leadership in shaping global initiatives and contributing to international dialogue on pressing challenges.

Through these initiatives, the PNCU seeks to strengthen its role in advancing UNESCO's mission, ensuring that Pakistan plays an active and influential part in global peace building, cultural dialogue, and sustainable development efforts. Building stronger partnerships, both locally and internationally, will be key to realizing these goals. By investing in its people and fostering international cooperation, the PNCU aims to continue its important work in promoting UNESCO's values across Pakistan.

PHILIPPINES

Philippine National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Philippine National Commission for UNESCO facilitated the inscription of new UNESCO designations such as Apayao Biosphere Reserve, Legazpi Learning City, and the Hinilawod Epic Chant Recordings, as well as Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Española y Tagala under the Memory of the World Programme – Asia-Pacific Register.

During the same period, the Commission ratified the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which recognizes the distinctive nature of culture as an important contributor to

economic and social development and in ensuring the welfare of artists and creatives.

The Commission also co-organized the exhibit on Aklan Handloom Piña Weaving and Schools of Living Traditions (SLT) at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France, in collaboration with the Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), and the National Museum of the Philippines (NMP).

In the field of science and sustainability, the Philippine National Commission for UNESCO organized the Philippine Ocean Decade Initiatives Expo to highlight ocean-related initiatives in the country and engage younger generations in ocean conservation and protection. The Ocean Decade is a global initiative, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2017, that seeks to unite ocean stakeholders under a common framework to ensure that ocean science can fully support countries in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In addition, the Commission supported the installation of updated markers for the Baroque Churches in the Philippines, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Success story

With the support and guidance of Philippine Senator Loren Legarda, the Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, the Philippine National Commission for UNESCO, National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the National Museum of the Philippines or NMP implemented a collaborative project that was open to the public at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 14 to 18 October 2024. The exhibit, "Aklan Piña Handloom Weaving and the Schools of Living Traditions of the Philippines," featured Aklan piña handloom weaving tradition, inscribed in 2023 in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity. It also featured the School of Living Traditions (SLT) in the Philippines, that was inscribed in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Register of Good Safeguarding Practices in 2021.

Among the items on display at the Salle de Pas Perdus at the UNESCO Headquarters are the fabrics weaved by the cultural masters themselves and items made in the Schools of Living Traditions. During those five days, more than 300 people were able to visit the exhibit which coincided with the UNESCO's Executive Board sessions, attended by representatives of at least 58 Member States. The distinct moment during the week-long exhibit was the visit of the UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay on 15 October where she engaged with the resource person, Ms Anna India Legaspi, the pina weavers, Ms Raquel Eliserio and Ms Ursulita dela Cruz. Director-General Ms Audrey Azoulay examined each and every item displayed in the exhibit and listened intently to the stories shared by the weavers. Ms Azoulay also spent considerable

time to look at the items displayed at the SLT portion of the exhibit and interacted with the cultural masters.



Demonstration of Aklan piña handloom weaving at the exhibit "Aklan Piña Handloom Weaving and the Schools of Living Traditions of the Philippines" at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, October 2024
© Philippine National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

From 2025 to 2026, the Philippine National Commission for UNESCO is poised to celebrate its 75th year as the country's principal bridge to UNESCO by deepening its commitment to peace, cultural preservation, and sustainable development. Central to this milestone is the goal of increasing nominations and successful inscriptions under UNESCO's Culture and Sciences Programmes. The Commission also aims to lead and support multinational nominations in key initiatives such as the World Heritage, Intangible Cultural Heritage, and Memory of the World Programmes—reinforcing solidarity with other Member States and elevating the Philippines' presence on the global stage.

To ensure a whole-of-country approach, the Commission will support inter-agency coordination to enhance institutional mechanisms and streamline national processes for nominating sites and implementing UNESCO programmes. In advancing capacity-building efforts, the Commission will work with local and international experts to conduct regional training sessions focused on heritage conservation and site management. It will also host regional, national, and local fora to promote the Ocean Decade and other UNESCO conventions, while expanding its digital platforms to serve as a comprehensive knowledge hub. This includes an enhanced website with repositories of studies on the ocean and UNESCO designated and inscribed sites in the Philippines.

The Commission will also prioritize inclusive research collaboration and the development of women- and youth-led knowledge platforms to support the mainstreaming of UNESCO's core values into national policies, school curricula, and local development plans. As it marks its 75th anniversary, the Commission seeks not only to commemorate past achievements but to strategically shape the country's future through shared heritage, education, and science-driven action—anchored on a strong vision of inclusive, sustainable progress aligned.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU)

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO marked another year of advancing UNESCO's mandate through global cooperation and innovative initiatives. In June, the Commission hosted the International Forum on Korea–Africa UNESCO Education Nexus in Seoul under the theme "For Our Africa: Empowering Futures through Education." Supported by the Ministry of Education, the event brought together representatives from 14 African countries, alongside educators, experts, and youth delegates, to exchange perspectives on education's role in shaping Africa's future.

Success story

A major highlight of 2024 was the UNESCO International Forum on the Futures of Education, held in Suwon from 2 to 4 December 2024. Jointly organized by UNESCO, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea, and the Gyeonggi-do Office of Education, the forum gathered over 2,800 participants from 56 countries. Notable attendees included Sahle-Work Zewde, former President of Ethiopia and Chairperson of the International Commission on the Futures of Education, and Stefania Giannini, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education.

Under the theme "Renewing the Social Contract for Education", the forum addressed global challenges in education and explored innovative solutions. Discussions were structured around plenaries and thematic workshops, where participants shared policy recommendations and best practices to reimagine the education systems.

One of the significant outcomes was UNESCO's proposal to establish the Global Observatory on the Future of Education and to hold the 2026 International Forum on the Futures of Education. This reinforced the role of the Republic of Korea as a committed partner in advancing inclusive and forward-looking education worldwide.

In August, the Commission, together with the Ghana Commission, co-organized the 2024 UNESCO Memory of the World International Workshop in Accra. This workshop supported under-represented countries in identifying documentary heritage and preparing nominations for the International Register, with participation from delegates across Africa.

The Commission also continued expanding the Bridge Programme, its flagship initiative to provide non-formal education to marginalized communities. In 2024, the programme extended its reach across Asia and Africa, with active participation in Bhutan, Lao PDR, Jordan, Malawi, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, and Tanzania.

To commemorate its 70th anniversary, the Commission launched the 70GETHER Campaign, which included the Walk Together for Futures of Education event that attracted more than 1,000 participants. The proceeds from this initiative were dedicated to supporting the Bridge Programme.

In December, the Commission invited staff from nine African National Commissions to participate in the Korean National Commission Staff Exchange Programme, designed to promote peer learning, cross-regional collaboration, and capacity building.



UNESCO International Forum on the Futures of Education 2024
©Korean National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Korean National Commission remains committed to supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). Through its Education Development Cooperation Programme, particularly the Bridge Programme, the National Commission has been actively providing non-formal education opportunities tailored to the diverse learning needs of marginalized groups in partner countries. Recognizing the power of collaboration in advancing global education goals, the National Commission is dedicated to expanding the programme in the coming years by engaging with more countries.

The National Commission implements the Transnational Heritage Joint Research Grant Programme. This initiative promotes intercultural dialogue, collaboration, and mutual understanding among diverse communities.

Furthermore, as part of its ongoing efforts to safeguard and promote access to documentary heritage, the National Commission will organize the 2025 UNESCO Memory of the World International Training Workshop for the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region in Panama. This workshop will strengthen the technical capacities of professionals and institutions involved in the nomination of documentary heritage for the Memory of the World International and Regional Registers.

Finally, to advance its meaningful initiatives, the National Commission is focusing on expanding both public and private resources, a core mandate stipulated in the Act on UNESCO Activities of the Republic of Korea.

In this regard, the active cooperation of fellow National Commissions for UNESCO is invited in supporting and engaging with the 2025 projects, in pursuit of shared goals.

SINGAPORE

Singapore National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, Singapore continued its active engagement with UNESCO and advanced its contributions in the fields of culture, education, and bioethics. A key highlight was the successful multinational inscription of "Kebaya: Knowledge, Skills, Traditions and Practices" onto the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in December 2024, together with Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. That same month, Singapore also submitted

its Periodic Report to UNESCO on safeguarding efforts for Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). Prior to the report submission, officers from the National Heritage Board participated in a UNESCO-ICHCAP training workshop and follow-up sessions designed for focal points preparing the report.

In the education sector, Singapore played a substantial role as a "Gateway country" under the UNESCO/UNICEF "Gateways to Public Digital Learning" initiative. In October 2024, the Ministry of Education represented Singapore at the Gateways Study Visit in Bali, Indonesia, where it shared experiences on building and enhancing digital platforms to improve quality and equity in education.

Singapore also remained actively engaged in UNESCO's Bioethics Programme. Emeritus Professor Lee Eng Hin, serving on the International Bioethics Committee (IBC), was involved in advancing work on the ethics of synthetic biology and delivered a presentation during the joint session of the IBC and the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC). Singapore's IGBC representative, Mr Charles Lim, also contributed actively during the joint session.

Success story

Singapore undertook various initiatives to sustain interest in the multinational nomination of *kebaya* with Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, and to promote *kebaya* as a form of shared heritage.

One highlight was the *Love, Kebaya* travelling exhibition which showcased various *kebaya* designs from six local craftspersons. It featured the different types of *kebaya* from Singapore and the region worn in contemporary times, and including those worn by the Malay, Peranakan and Eurasian communities. Since April 2023, the exhibition had travelled to 10 locations across the island, including the National Museum of Singapore, Gardens by the Bay, integrated public spaces such as Our Tampines Hub and Wisma Geylang Serai, as well as shopping malls like Bugis Junction, and i12 Katong, attracting more than 400,000 visitors to date. Talks and workshops related to *kebaya* and featuring the *kebaya* community were also conducted at some of these locations.

Some of these *kebayas* were also displayed in a joint showcase with the four other nominating countries in Asuncion, Paraguay, on the side of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee session where *kebaya* was successfully inscribed onto UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.



Highlights of Singapore's kebaya initiatives
©National Heritage Board Singapore 2024

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In the cultural domain, Singapore will continue building its inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage elements and work with Malaysia on the joint nomination of "Chingay: a street parade that showcases multiculturalism, traditions, and artistic displays of communities" for inscription on the UNESCO Representative List, with the file to be submitted by the end of March 2025.

On the education front, Singapore's Ministry of Education will continue to support UNESCO's education programmes and activities and will work with UNESCO via regional platforms such as ASEAN and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO), alongside other member countries, to collectively improve education in the region.

In the sciences, Singapore's Bioethics Advisory Committee (BAC) will continue to support UNESCO's Bioethics Programme through its participation in the IBC and IGBC. These engagements allow BAC to contribute to global discussions on standards setting and emerging bioethical issues and share Singapore's expertise and perspectives on bioethical issues specific to the region. BAC will also explore opportunities to collaborate with and support UNESCO's capacity-building programmes through its Asian Bioethics Network. Through these efforts, BAC seeks to advance ethical frameworks that align with global developments while addressing regional needs.

THAILAND

The Thai National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

Throughout 2024, the Thai National Commission operated in a dynamic environment marked by strong collaborations with national and regional partners, as well as UNESCO Field Offices. These partnerships played a pivotal role in advancing the Commission's mandate to promote inclusive, sustainable, and peaceful development through education, culture, and science.

A highlight of the year was the Regional Policy Dialogue and Launch of the "Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development" in Asia-Pacific, co-hosted with the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok from 5-7 June 2024. This event fostered a shared commitment among stakeholders to achieve a healthier, more inclusive, and peaceful Asia-Pacific region, guided by UNESCO's principles.

The National Commission's engagement with the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) demonstrated its dedication to lifelong learning. In 2024, Bangkok, Khon Kaen, and Yala were successfully nominated and selected as new GNLC members, emphasizing Thailand's readiness to champion education and sustainable development at the city level.

Furthering regional cooperation, the Workshop for Education Officials of Southeast Asian Ministries of Education on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy for Education (SEP-ED) was held in Chiang Rai from 18-21 June 2024. Co-organized with SEAMEO SEPS, it introduced the SEP framework and highlighted best practices, aligning Thai education with the SDGs.

Relating to the international participation, the National Commission participated in the UNESCO International Forum on the Future of Education 2024, held from 2-4 December 2024 in Suwon, Republic of Korea, to share ideas and perspectives on developing a new social contract for future education under the theme "Renewing the Social Contract for Education".

In addition to supporting the visibility of global projects, the National Commission is partnering with UNESCO and Huawei through the UNESCO-Huawei Funds-in-Trust project on Technology-enabled Open Schools for All (Phase 2). This initiative supports Thailand's education through policy development, digital platforms, teacher training, and learning equipment.

Success story

A major cultural achievement was the inscription of "Tom Yum Kung" on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity on 3 December 2024, during the 19th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Asunción, Paraguay. This recognition underscores the global importance of Thailand's culinary heritage and highlights its deep cultural roots in agricultural traditions along rivers and canals. Tom Yum Kung exemplifies simplicity, harmony with nature, and health-conscious food practices, making it a distinctive representation of Thai cultural identity. This achievement is a source of pride and enhances international awareness of Thailand's intangible cultural heritage.

Additionally, on 4 December 2024, Thailand joined Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore in the successful multinational inscription of "Kebaya: Knowledge, Skills, Traditions and Practices" on UNESCO's Representative List. This cooperative nomination highlights shared heritage and demonstrates Thailand's active role in promoting regional cultural cooperation.



Delegates participating in a field visit during the Regional Policy Dialogue and Launch of the "Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development" in Asia-Pacific
©Thai National Commission and UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking ahead, the Thai National Commission has planned the "Learning, Sharing, and Networking for the UNESCO GNLC and UCCN Membership" workshop under the Participation Programme 2024-2025. This initiative aims to enhance understanding of UNESCO membership criteria, build capacity among potential candidates, and foster knowledge-sharing and networking.

The National Commission will host a two-day seminar and workshop to support city representatives and provincial education officers in understanding membership requirements, assessing readiness, and preparing strong applications for the Creative Cities Network (UCCN) and Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC). Participants will gain insights from case studies, share experiences, and engage in peer reviews to improve their applications' success rate.

This initiative aligns with UNESCO's mandate to promote education, culture, and sustainable development while addressing capacity-building needs in Thailand. To ensure its success, the National Commission will collaborate with the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok and other relevant agencies, leveraging their expertise and resources to enhance the effectiveness of the workshop.

The National Commission is dedicated to co-organizing activities that strengthen partnerships and support sustainable development goals in collaboration with UNESCO programme sectors and stakeholders.

TIMOR-LESTE

Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO (TLNCU)

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Summary of activities during 2024

In 2024, the Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO advanced its mission in education, science, culture, and communication through collaborative initiatives and resource mobilization. Partnerships with government institutions, civil society, and the UNESCO Jakarta Office played an essential role in implementing projects. Key achievements included the Workshop on the Tentative List of World Heritage of Timor-Leste,

which engaged stakeholders in cultural heritage preservation, and the workshop for nominating Nino Konis Santana National Park to UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, reinforcing national priorities for conservation and sustainable development.

The Commission also implemented projects to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, notably the ICH Fund for Tais, Timor-Leste's traditional textile. Work with ICHCAP further supported documentation and preservation. In education, collaboration with the Korean National Commission through the Bridge Project enhanced literacy and life skills. Additionally, the World Science Day Camping Event, supported by SANTOS, promoted STEM education, while an Astronomy Workshop for Teachers, in partnership with IAU-OAD, expanded science teaching capacity. Funding was secured through the national budget, UNESCO Participation Programme, and donor support, ensuring successful implementation of projects across sectors.

Success story

One of the most impactful initiatives in 2024 was the workshop for the nomination of Nino Konis Santana National Park as a UNESCO biosphere reserve, held from 7–9 August in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and UNESCO Jakarta. This workshop produced a concrete action plan for nomination, highlighting the government's dedication to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. UNESCO's eventual recognition will enhance the park's ecological value and international visibility.

Another significant achievement was the Urgent Safeguarding Plan for Tais. Over two and a half years, this project boosted community engagement and appreciation for Tais weaving traditions, while also expanding its economic potential. Recognized as Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, Tais has become central to cultural promotion through fairs, exhibitions, and national celebrations, and is now widely used in formal ceremonies. Beyond heritage preservation, the initiative has transformed Tais into a growing industry, providing livelihoods and supporting rural economies.



Workshop participants gathered for the nomination of Nino Konis Santana National Park as a UNESCO biosphere reserve, organized by the Timor-Leste National Commission in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and UNESCO Jakarta ©Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Timor-Leste National Commission aims to continue its work in education, science, and culture by strengthening regional and international cooperation. Although fiscal constraints prevent major activities in 2025, the Commission intends to co-organize subregional, regional, and interregional initiatives in 2026 and 2027. Key goals include fostering knowledge exchange, advancing cultural preservation, and enhancing capacity building.

Collaboration with UNESCO, international partners, and other National Commissions will be central to these priorities. By aligning national development goals with UNESCO's mandate, the Commission seeks to further Timor-Leste's role within the global UNESCO community, ensuring sustainable development and stronger regional dialogue.



Europe and North America

Hierapolis-Pamukkale –
Türkiye – World Heritage List
- inscribed in 1988
©Hamza Samil Yavuz/
Unsplash

ARMENIA

Armenian National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the National Commission continued its operation in a challenging environment characterized by the promotion of identity-based hate, xenophobia, destruction, desecration, and alteration of the identity of cultural and religious heritage.

The Commission facilitated the successful implementation of the project on the inclusion of forcibly displaced refugee children in the education process through promoting their psycho-social resilience, implemented in the framework of the UNESCO Participation Programme.

On 15-17 June 2025, Armenia welcomed the delegation headed by UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, Stefania Giannini. The delegation was received by the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Armenia, and an extensive range of programmes in the field of higher education and vocational education, including issues related to the right to education of refugees, were discussed.

From 16 to 22 June 2025, Armenia hosted the UNESCO expert mission in the framework of which two workshops were held: one on providing technical guidance on the management and funding of vocational education and training in the field of information and communication technologies, and another on implementing a technical tool for skills profiling and job-seeking intended for forcibly displaced people and citizens seeking employment. In parallel, VET-related bilateral meetings with stakeholders were organized. tradition," nominated by the Republic of Armenia, on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

In March, the National Commission facilitated the mission of experts from Matenadaran, the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, to the Center for the Digitization of Oriental Manuscripts in Erbil, within the framework of the UNESCO flagship programme *Revive the Spirit of Mosul*.

In April, cultural events dedicated to the centennial birthday of Sergey Parajanov, eminent Armenian film director, were organized at UNESCO Headquarters.

As part of The Birth of Crafts project, dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, six short animation films were created depicting the crafts practiced in Armenia from ancient times to the present day.

As part of *The Birth of Crafts* project, dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, six short animation films were created depicting the crafts practiced in Armenia from ancient times to the present day.

Success story

On 28-29 October 2025, Armenia hosted the International Meeting on the Protection and Restoration of Cultural Heritage with New and Emerging Technologies, dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the 25th anniversary of its 1999 Second Protocol.

The meeting brought together nearly 40 eminent international experts, together with representatives of international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, including senior officials from UNESCO, ICOMOS, the Blue Shield, ALIPH, Europa Nostra, WMF, UNOSAT, and UNESCO HIST.

The meeting was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, the Armenian National Commission for UNESCO, and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Armenia, in cooperation with UNESCO.

During two days of interactive discussions, participants addressed perspectives in the field of cultural heritage protection through emerging technologies and innovative solutions. They showcased practical possibilities and recorded achievements of the application of advanced technologies for the preservation of cultural values.

Participants also had the opportunity to become acquainted with the latest technological opportunities available in Matenadaran, the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, and the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies for cultural heritage preservation, highlighting the best practices of Armenian specialists.



Showcasing of new technologies application in safeguarding and restoration of cultural heritage, TUMO Center ©Davtyan Olga (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia)

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The National Commission will continue to prioritize the educational needs and the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage of refugees, as well as the protection of Armenia's millennia-old heritage in the region. To address these urgent issues, Armenia will work closely with UNESCO, seeking effective solutions and support.

Another priority field will be the reinforcement of the protection, monitoring, and restoration of cultural heritage through advanced technologies such as digitization, 3D scanning, satellite imaging, and AI.

In this context, the National Commission will facilitate the new mission of the Matenadaran Restoration Department team to the Center for the Digitization of Oriental Manuscripts in Erbil within the framework of the UNESCO programme *Revive the Spirit of Mosul* and will explore the possibility of providing similar assistance to other countries in conflict or post-conflict situations.

Armenia, as a member of the Executive Board of UNESCO, remains committed to the promotion of global peace, development, and effective multilateralism through the pillars of the Organization—education, science, and culture. In its capacity as co-chair of the UNESCO Group of Friends of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Armenia will also continue to promote the further strengthening of programmes in favour of SIDS.

AUSTRIA

Austrian Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO continued to operate as an independent association advising federal, regional, and local authorities as well as NGOs on the implementation of UNESCO's objectives. It served as a link between UNESCO and national partner institutions while informing the public about UNESCO's programmes.

The Commission placed particular focus on culture, strengthening strategic partnerships to enhance the visibility of intangible cultural heritage and fostering new collaborations, with special emphasis on highlighting the diversity of ICH in Austria. Initiatives for the digitalization of ICH were advanced, while challenges of preferential treatment for the Global South and artistic freedom within the context of the 2005 Convention were addressed. As the acting office of the Conference of Austrian World Heritage Sites, the Commission also maintained close exchanges with site managements, national stakeholders, and civil society.

In the field of education, the Commission concentrated on SDG 10 through workshops, lectures, and teacher and adult education training. A publication on the intersection of transformative education, global citizenship education, and education for sustainable development was prepared by the Advisory Committee *Transformative Education/Global Citizenship Education*. The Commission also coordinated the Austrian ASPnet, including its annual conference, student workshops, and the provision of educational materials on the SDGs, human rights, and AI literacy.

In science, the Commission strengthened the national UNESCO Chairs Network by holding its annual meeting and producing a podcast series. It managed the Advisory Committee on the Ethics of AI and organized awareness-raising events on AI in the context of migration as well as AI and journalism. The Commission also strengthened UNESCO Global Geoparks and Biosphere Reserves in Austria.

With regard to youth, the Commission coordinated the Youth Advisory Committee, focusing on education for sustainable development with the aim of reflecting on developments in the context of SDG 4.7 from a youth perspective. A new youth representative was selected for the 2024–2026 term.

In communication and information, the Commission organized events and workshop series on "Journalism and AI" as well as AI literacy, and hosted expert discussions on media diversity, media freedom, and media viability in Austria.

Success story

During 2024, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO notably strengthened its activities in the field of communication and information. In cooperation with the science and education departments, two series of public events—*Rethinking Media and Information Literacy: A Focus on Artificial Intelligence and (Quality) Media, Journalism and Algorithms*—addressed current challenges for media and information literacy on the one hand, and the changes in media landscapes and journalistic work brought about by artificial intelligence on the other.

Additionally, the Commission organized three expert roundtables designed to strengthen media policies in Austria. The roundtables focused on "Media Diversity and Democracy," "Media Financing and Journalism Funding," and "Media Policy in the Context of Emerging Technologies." These formats met with strong interest from both the public and experts. In total, more than 300 people from civil society, academia, and public administration participated. Within the framework of these projects, the Commission established new cooperations and partnerships, which in the medium and long term hold great potential for strengthening UNESCO's visibility and contributing to its goals, particularly in the areas of media diversity, plurality, and media and information literacy.



Panel Discussion: Loss of trust in media – what role does AI play? December 11, 2024, joint event of Austrian, German and Swiss National Commissions ©OEUK/APA-Fotoservice/Rudolph

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Together with the Netherlands National Commission, the Austrian Commission is initiating a networking project among European National Commissions to strengthen exchange and cooperation at the expert level in the field of World Heritage. The main goal is to create an experts' network, learn from success stories in promoting the implementation of the World Heritage Convention at national and regional levels, and identify potential fields of collaboration. If feasible, the network may be expanded to other regions. A first online meeting is scheduled for February 2025, and a side event on National Commission engagement in World Heritage is envisaged for the 48th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Sofia, Bulgaria.

In cooperation with the German and Swiss National Commissions, the Austrian Commission will also mark the 20th anniversary of the 2005 Convention by producing an animated video, to be released in autumn 2025.

The Education Department will focus in 2025 and 2026 on linguistic diversity, with particular attention to national minority languages. In line with UNESCO's World Atlas of Languages, publications and events are planned in cooperation with other National Commissions.

AZERBAIJAN

National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO celebrated its 30th anniversary. In this regard, a number of projects were implemented during the year both in Azerbaijan and abroad.

On May 1, a meeting was held at the Baku Congress Center between the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chairperson of the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov, and UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, Ms. Gabriela Ramos, within the framework of the 6th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue.

On 16 May 2024, the 10th meeting of the National Commissions for UNESCO of the member countries of TURKSOY was held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. During the event, Azerbaijan handed over the presidency of the National Commissions for UNESCO of the TURKSOY member countries to Turkmenistan.

The National Commission supported the 2nd edition of the Regional Meeting of African National Commissions for UNESCO, entitled Challenges and Opportunities of Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Development and the Promotion of Peace in Africa, held in Luanda, Angola, from 18 to 20 June 2024.

On December 13, the international conference Mapping the World in Lexicography: The 950th Anniversary of Diwan Lughat al-Turk was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. This conference was organized by the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation on the initiative of the National Commissions of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Türkiye, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Hungary for UNESCO, together with the Permanent Delegations of these countries.

The National Commission, with the support of the Embassy of Azerbaijan in the Kingdom of Belgium and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Representation of Azerbaijan to the European Union, donated rare exhibits of tar, kamancha, and gaval to the Museum of Musical Instruments under the auspices of the Royal Museums of Art and History of Belgium. These instruments are integral to the performance of Azerbaijani mugham, a genre recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

During 2024, with the Commission's support, Swedish photographer and filmmaker Mikael Silkeberg presented documentaries titled *Odin Code* and *In the Footsteps of Noah*. In addition, the book *Intercultural Dialogue, Pluralism, and Cultural Diversity: The Azerbaijani Model*, published with the joint support of the National Commission for UNESCO and the Baku International Multiculturalism Center, was released in Arabic.

Success story

The International Conference on Studying and Preserving the Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Turkic World – From the Perspective of UNESCO was co-organized by the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO, the International Turkic Academy, the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation, the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO, and ADA University. It was held on 14–15 March 2024, in Baku.

The President of the UNESCO General Conference, Simona-Mirela Miculescu, greeted the participants via video message. Later, participants visited an exhibition organized by the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences on the occasion of the 950th anniversary of Diwān Lughāt al-Turk, which is considered cultural heritage of the entire Turkic world.

Four sessions were held during the first day of the conference, covering national strategies and approaches for preserving cultural heritage in the Turkic world, cooperation among Turkic organizations in the preservation, documentation, and dissemination of cultural heritage, innovative approaches and essential tasks for preservation, and cooperation of National Commissions in cultural heritage preservation. On the second day, roundtable discussions further advanced collaboration among National Commissions.



The international conference on "Studying and Preserving the Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Turkic World - From the Perspective of UNESCO"
©Azerbaijan National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The National Commission will co-host the third phase of the Capacity-Building Programme for General Secretaries and Representatives of National Commissions for UNESCO in African countries, to be held in Baku together with UNESCO and the Institute of Diplomacy and Development of ADA University.

The Commission also intends to continue its cooperation with National Commissions of respective Member States, strengthening international dialogue and joint initiatives in UNESCO's fields of competence.

BELARUS

National Commission of the Republic of Belarus for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Maxim Ryzhenkov, Minister of Foreign Affairs

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the National Commission of the Republic of Belarus for UNESCO actively contributed to ensuring the country's participation in UNESCO's programmes and projects across its areas of competence and implemented a wide range of activities.

This year marked the 70th anniversary of Belarus's membership in UNESCO, celebrated with a series of commemorative events. The Commission strengthened the implementation of UNESCO Culture Conventions through meetings and trainings. In December 2024, a solemn event was held to celebrate the inclusion of Vytsinanka, the traditional art of paper cutting in Belarus, in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Under the Commission's patronage, active work was undertaken to monitor the conservation of the transboundary World Heritage Site Bialowieza Forest (Belarus/Poland). Together with the Ministry of Education, the Commission coordinated the activities of Belarusian ASPnet schools, including the annual conference and events aimed at promoting Education for Sustainable Development.

A meeting of UNESCO Chairs was also held with the goal of fostering greater cooperation among Chairs to advance education in a sustainable manner. Cooperation with the Belarusian Association of Clubs for UNESCO remained fruitful. In December 2024, the Winter University of Clubs for UNESCO celebrated the 35th anniversary of the Belarusian Association. The University's aim was to enhance the skills of club members in management and programme planning in accordance with UNESCO ideals.

The innovative project *Implementing a Model for Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle and Socially Responsible and Safe Student Behavior in the Modern Educational Environment* was carried out with the support of the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education. Additionally, the Commission coordinated the implementation of four projects approved under the Participation Programme for 2024–2025.

Success story

In February 2024, the National Commission organized a significant event to mark International Mother Language Day. This celebration, which has become an annual tradition, gathered diplomats, youth, representatives of cultural and educational institutions, and media professionals. The event promoted linguistic and cultural diversity, facilitated the exchange of views, and strengthened solidarity based on mutual understanding, tolerance, and dialogue.



"The International Mother Language Day, February 2024" ©National Commission of the Republic of Belarus for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In 2025, Belarus will host a number of events to mark the 80th anniversary of UNESCO, including concerts, workshops, and exhibitions. The Commission will also organize activities celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Efforts will continue to protect and conserve the Bialowieza Forest World Heritage Site. Experts under the Commission's coordination will also prepare applications for joining the Global Geoparks Network, as well as nomination files for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and the World Heritage List.

Belarus will further advance UNESCO's science agenda, with a particular focus on AI and open science. The 100th anniversary of the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve will also be marked with public events to raise awareness about environmental protection and the responsible use of natural resources, while enhancing environmental education for children and youth.

In addition, the Spring Academy for Clubs will bring together participants from across Belarus and abroad, and in July 2025 the International Volunteer Camp Castles of Belarus will involve archaeological and ecological work at the World Heritage Site Architectural, Residential and Cultural Complex of the Radziwill Family at Nesvizh.

Finally, the Commission will strengthen cooperation with other National Commissions to promote partnerships and joint initiatives in 2025 and beyond.

BELGIUM

Flemish Commission for UNESCO in Belgium

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Flemish Commission for UNESCO maintained its commitment to fostering education in the region. It continued its support to the Flemish ASP network, promoting UNESCO's ideals within associated schools. In collaboration with partners, the Commission also developed educational material to accompany the award-winning documentary *Long Live the Dead!*, further enhancing learning opportunities. Additionally, the Commission announced plans to strengthen its collaboration with UNESCO Chairs in the Flemish region by organizing a seminar with chair holders.

A major highlight was the region of Flanders welcoming its first UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve and its first Geopark, both transboundary areas shared with the Netherlands. These designations underscore the Commission's success in supporting UNESCO applications and promoting environmental sustainability. Additionally, the European Presidency conference *Ocean Decade Meets Mission Ocean* focused on the need for blue skills in moving towards a sustainable blue economy. The Commission reinforced its dedication to scientific advancement by supporting the For Women in Science Belgium Programme. This initiative, a collaboration between UNESCO and L'Oréal, promotes women in science by rendering them more visible, showcasing their talent, and inspiring future vocations.

To enhance cultural appreciation, the Commission developed a series of informative videos about UNESCO heritage sites in Flanders, raising public awareness of cultural heritage. The annual UNESCO Network Day in May was another significant event, attracting hundreds of participants and strengthening partnerships. Furthermore, the Commission published a new policy memorandum, setting a hopeful direction for its mandate over the next four years.

Success story

As part of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the conference *Ocean Decade Meets Mission Ocean: Blue Skills for a Sustainable Economy* was held in Ostend on 25 April 2024. It was organized by the Flemish Commission for UNESCO, the Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ), and the Liaison Agency Flanders-Europe (VLEVA), with the support of the Provincial Development Agency (POMWVL) and Blue Cluster.

The conference brought together academic experts, policymakers, industry leaders, and civil society actors to exchange knowledge and explore opportunities for collaboration on blue skills. Discussions highlighted how capabilities, talents, and expertise can be used more effectively to achieve a successful transition towards a sustainable blue economy. Together, the experts laid the foundations for a cross-sectoral future path. These efforts culminated in a shared commitment to better understand the ocean, an essential step towards developing a sustainable blue economy.

The Flemish Commission for UNESCO and its partners also launched *The Oceancast*, a three-part podcast series on building a blue economy driven by technological innovation. The series explored the challenges and opportunities of moving towards a sustainable blue economy, as well as the role UNESCO, Europe, and Flanders can play in that transition.



Mr Petr Cupa, from the UNESCO Earth Network, leading a series of consultations to create a Coordination Council for the management of the Central Balkan Biosphere Reserve (CBBR)
© National Commission of the Republic of Bulgaria for UNESCO

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

In 2025, the Flemish Commission for UNESCO will support the Flemish ASP network in its collaboration with Enabel, the Belgian development agency, within the framework of the BE-RELIEVE project. This initiative centers on Belgium's support for the reconstruction of Ukraine in various areas. Specifically, Flemish and Ukrainian ASPnet schools will organize visits to exchange knowledge and build capacity in the context of the ongoing war. Through direct contact, the project seeks to reconnect principals and teachers with meaningful educational opportunities, promote peace and solidarity through shared values and mutual understanding, and strengthen Ukraine's integration into the broader European educational landscape.

During the nineteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee on the UNESCO 2003 Convention in Paraguay, the Belgian delegation officially announced plans to establish a UNESCO Category 2 Centre in Belgium. This will be the first of its kind in UNESCO's Group I region. Belgium looks forward to collaborating with interested governmental and non-governmental partners in the region.

The Flemish Commission is also conducting a study to redefine its strategic goals and identify future initiatives. Two key areas where capacity building and resource mobilization are most urgently needed are the development of a communication strategy and the establishment of sustainable partnerships.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

National Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the National Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina for UNESCO was reappointed after a four-year hiatus, re-establishing the work of this advisory body to the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Presided over by the Minister of Civil Affairs, the Commission is composed of nineteen members appointed on the proposal of the competent state and entity ministries.

The Commission's main task is to review all issues related to cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and UNESCO in the fields of education, science, culture, and information.

Success story

A five-day capacity-building workshop within the EU-UNESCO project Fighting against the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property in the Western Balkans was held in Mostar in June 2024. The workshop was organized by the UNESCO Antenna Office in Sarajevo in cooperation with the Agency for Education and Professional Training in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Ministry of Civil Affairs. It gathered more than eighty participants, including representatives of police institutions, ministries of culture and cultural institutions, the Indirect Taxation Authority, and the judicial system.

The project aimed to raise awareness and build professional capacity to combat theft, robbery, and illegal trade in cultural property through enhanced inter-agency and cross-border cooperation. The EU-UNESCO toolkit Fighting against the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property for Law Enforcement and Judiciary has since been translated into Bosnia and Herzegovina's three official languages and will be distributed in 2025.

As a follow-up to the workshop, experts proposed improvements to create a more effective system for protecting and preserving cultural property. Selected sites will also benefit from improved security measures within the framework of this effort.

It also exchanges experiences and knowledge in these areas and introduces institutions and organizations in the country to the goals and activities of UNESCO.

Special attention has been devoted to preserving and promoting UNESCO heritage sites and properties, as well as preparing nominations for UNESCO Lists and Registers.

At its 46th session, the World Heritage Committee inscribed Vjetrenica Cave in Ravno on the World Heritage List, recognizing it as one of the world's most important biodiversity hotspots for cave-dwelling fauna. Additionally, Sevdalinka – Traditional Urban Folk Song was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in December 2024.

The Commission also reported that the Verlab Research Institute for Biomedical Engineering, Medical Devices, and Artificial Intelligence in Sarajevo joined the UNESCO initiative to provide remote access to laboratory equipment for African researchers.

The successful implementation of UNESCO programmes and activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been facilitated by close cooperation between the National Commission, the UNESCO Antenna Office in Sarajevo, and the Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe in Venice, which continue to provide support and implement numerous projects in the country.



Workshop participants visiting World Heritage site Old bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar ©Jelena Džomba

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

During the implementation of the project Fighting against the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property in the Western Balkans, significant cooperation was established between the Agency for Education and Professional Development of Personnel at the Ministry of Security and UNESCO in developing a new curriculum for training police officers in combating illicit trafficking in cultural property, with particular focus on online trafficking.

This collaboration has led to the proposal of transforming the Agency into a regional training centre for combatting illicit trafficking of cultural property. The process of formal adoption is underway, with plans for a training-of-trainers programme to be held in April 2025.

BULGARIA

National Commission of the Republic of Bulgaria for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Elena Shekerletova, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General: Ms Zornitza Grekova

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, UNESCO's global and primary priorities took a leading role in the work of the Bulgarian National Commission. Bulgaria's active participation as a member of the World Heritage Committee during the 46th session in New Delhi, India, was supported through expert opinions, proposals, and initiatives provided by the National Commission. The Bulgarian delegation presented the country's underwater heritage, as well as efforts for its conservation and research. Bulgaria is among the first countries in the world to actively apply the synergy between the 1972 and 2001 Conventions, making consistent efforts to preserve its underwater world cultural heritage. The country is also applying to establish a UNESCO Category 2 Institute in this field.

On the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the publication of the first modern Bulgarian textbook The Fish Primer, written by Petar Beron in 1824—a landmark of the Bulgarian Revival period and the first Bulgarian textbook in colloquial language with secular content—the National Commission organized a photo exhibition entitled The Beginning of Bulgarian Literature – European Cultural Projections. This exhibition was presented at UNESCO Headquarters in December.

Moreover, the National Commission continued its engagement in the annual programme For Women in Science. During 2024, this initiative marked its fourteenth edition in partnership with L'Oréal Bulgaria and Sofia University, recognizing and supporting women scientists.

Success story

On 18 December 2024, the Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences organized the first national consultations on the draft UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Neurotechnologies. The opening session featured high-level representatives, including the Deputy Minister of Education, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Vice-President of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. A special video message was also delivered by Ms Gabriela Ramos, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences.

During the sessions, participants engaged in in-depth discussions on various dimensions of neurotechnologies. Associate Professor Dimitar Prodanov, member of the ad-hoc working group for the draft Recommendation, addressed the challenges of developing, implementing, and managing neurotechnologies. Health economist Arkadi Sharkov examined economic and ethical implications. Bulgarian representatives in UNESCO committees, such as Associate Professor Dr. Valentina Kaneva, Dr. Alexandra Traykova (IGBC), and Associate Professor Dr. Lyuba Spasova (MOST), highlighted philosophical and ethical dilemmas. Associate Professor Dr. Mariana Todorova, Bulgaria's representative in the drafting of the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, provided comparative insights between the two processes. Elena Marinova, co-organizer of the first International Olympiad on AI, discussed the impact of neurotechnologies in education, while Martina Malcheva and lawyer Maria Petrova outlined the legal and human rights dimensions.

The consultations concluded with Bulgaria preparing a national position on the proposed Recommendation, grounded in the wide-ranging perspectives presented.



First national consultations on the draft UNESCO Recommendation on ethics of neurotechnologies ©Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The main priorities of the Bulgarian National Commission for 2025 include active participation in the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee, the implementation of projects funded under the Participation Programme, and continued engagement in the General Conference, including work towards the establishment of a Category 2 Centre under UNESCO auspices for underwater archaeology. The Commission will also organize national consultations on various aspects of bioethics, with particular attention to the ethics of artificial intelligence.

CANADA

Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO)

Chairperson: Mr Richard Kistabish

Secretary-General: Mr Yves-Gérard Méhou-Loko

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO) strengthened its engagement across education, culture, and heritage. In February, Dr. Benjamin Bolden, UNESCO Chair in Arts and Learning at Queen's University, participated in the World Conference on Culture and Arts Education, where he launched Arts for Transformative Education: A Guide for Teachers from the UNESCO Associated Schools Network. Written by Dr. Bolden and published by CCUNESCO in collaboration with UNESCO, the guide recognizes the transformative power of the arts in education. It offers teachers practical tools for designing arts-based learning experiences that enrich students' capacities and inspire them to contribute to a more peaceful and sustainable world. The publication was informed by input from more than 600 teachers across 39 countries and includes examples of

classroom practices that engage learners meaningfully in and through the arts.

In April, students and teachers from across Canada gathered in Toronto for the National Conference of ASPNet members. The event featured interactive workshops on fast fashion, Indigenous knowledge and reconciliation, access to water, citizen science, and other key issues. Students participated in a makerspace with 3D printing, performed in cultural showcases, and presented innovative ideas for action. Parallel professional development sessions provided educators with strategies for transformative teaching and for integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into curricula.

In October, Africville, a historic site in Halifax, was designated as Canada's first UNESCO Place of History and Memory linked to Enslavement and the Slave Trade. Established in the 1800s as a community of sanctuary and cultural expression by diasporic Africans, Africville was later destroyed, and its residents were forcibly displaced. The designation, announced in alignment with the 30th anniversary of UNESCO's Routes of Enslaved Peoples Programme, has increased public awareness of Africville and its legacy. It has also strengthened support for the Africville Heritage Trust, which operates the Africville Museum and educates Canadians about the community's history and the lasting impact of anti-Black racism.

Success story

London (Ontario), a UNESCO Creative City of Music since 2021, hosted the Annual Meeting of Creative Cities of Music from 26 February to 1 March 2024, in collaboration with Tourism London and CCUNESCO. The gathering was attended by representatives from more than 30 cities. It showcased local talent and partners, included presentations by various international creative cities, and offered space for discussions and exchange among participants. CCUNESCO presented on the role of cities and culture in advancing the SDGs. The programming was held in 14 venues across the city, deepening participants' understanding of the wide range of cultural venues and partners that support London's UNESCO City of Music designation and contribute to sustainable economic and social development.



Cory Crossman - London UNESCO City of Music ©Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO)

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

As part of its contribution to the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, CCUNESCO published Safeguarding Your Language Through Documentation: A Toolkit for Beginners. Designed for individuals without formal training in linguistics, documentation, or technology, the toolkit provides step-by-step guidance on preserving endangered languages. It covers equipment options, ethical considerations, setting up recording sessions, elicitation strategies, and more. CCUNESCO is open to collaboration with other National Commissions to translate and distribute the toolkit, thereby expanding its reach and supporting language documentation and revitalization efforts worldwide.

CYPRUS

Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Marina Solomidou Ieronymidou

Secretary-General: Ms Ioanna Hadjicosti

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO promoted interdisciplinary collaborations, youth engagement, and partnerships with academic institutions and NGOs. Particular emphasis was placed on the advancing of two newly adopted UNESCO instruments: the Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development, and the Framework on Arts and Culture Education. At the same time, the Commission worked on strengthening its internal structure by modifying its statutes and appointing a new Board of Directors.

The annual UNESCO ASPnet Forum, held in Limassol on April 4–5, focused on cultivating a culture of peace in everyday life. The forum included student presentations, expert panel discussions, and hands-on workshops designed to promote skills and attitudes such as conflict resolution, negotiation, teamwork, and empathy.

The Commission participated as an Associated Partner in Cultural Bees (2024–2027), a project funded under the Creative Europe Programme. Its aim is to promote entrepreneurship skills in the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) among youth, through the development of an interactive training programme and a digital toolkit. As part of this project, the Commission joined the kick-off meeting in Cyprus and co-organized, in collaboration with JA Cyprus and Innoeuphere, the National Ecosystem Forum on Cultural Heritage and Entrepreneurship, which addressed challenges and opportunities in the cultural and creative industries of Cyprus.

The Commission also funded and co-organized the CINEducation Programme, which has been implemented annually since 2018 in collaboration with AEI Audiovisual Forum, under the framework of the Cyprus Archaeological, Ethnographic, and Historical Film Festival. The programme includes capacity-building workshops on visual storytelling about cultural heritage and local history, as well as a festival featuring public screenings of students' films. The Commission sponsors a special award for the best student film on the cultural and/or natural heritage of Cyprus.

Success story

The CINEducation workshops gave students the opportunity to develop creative and innovative thinking, strengthen business and communication skills, practice teamwork and problem-solving, and connect with professionals in the cultural sector. Topics included the sustainability of traditional crafts and the links between culture and health.

Building on this experience, the Commission co-organized a side event at the UNESCO World Conference on Culture and Arts Education in Abu Dhabi entitled Cultivating Creativity: Empowering and Nurturing Innovators in Cultural and Creative Industries. Organized with the UNESCO Regional Office in Havana, JA Cyprus, JA Europe, Istituto Marangoni, and Lasalle | University of the Arts Singapore, the panel explored the role of education in CCIs in unlocking young people's potential and fostering a generation of artists and innovators who combine creativity with entrepreneurship and ethical values.



Innovation Camp on Cultural and Creative Industries ©JA Cyprus and Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Following the appointment of its new Board of Directors in January 2025 for the period 2025–2030, the Commission is drafting a revised strategy and action plan. The goal is to maximize the benefits of UNESCO's mission and programmes in Cyprus, strengthen synergies with diverse stakeholders, and foster interdisciplinary collaborations. The Commission also aims to optimize its engagement with UNESCO designations and networks at the national level.

CZECHIA

Czech Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Stanislav Štech

Secretary-General: Ms Lenka Konšelová

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Czech Commission for UNESCO began its new mandate, which will run until 2027, continuing its role as the Government's advisory and coordinating body on UNESCO-related matters. During the spring, the Czech Republic continued exercising its four-year mandate on the UNESCO Executive Board. Together with the Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, the members of the Commission contributed expertise and supported the country's interventions at the Board meetings. Also in the spring, the Czech Republic announced its candidacy for the World Heritage Committee for the 2025–2029 term.

The Commission was actively involved in numerous initiatives aligned with UNESCO's priorities. These included the annual For Women in Science scholarships, celebrated in cooperation with partners in civil society and public administration. The year 2024 also marked the 200th anniversary of the birth of composer Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884), a milestone commemorated nationally and internationally with UNESCO's support. Throughout the year, the Commission granted patronage to 20 non-profit projects in the cultural, educational, and environmental fields.

In education, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports worked with the Commission and the Ministry of Environment to develop a national initiative on Education for Sustainable Development, reflecting the priority of SDG 4. With UNESCO, OSCE, and the European Commission, the Ministry also organized the seminar Educating against Antisemitism, Intolerance and Discrimination in the Czech Republic: Essential Elements for Teacher Training.

The Czech Commission also continued to coordinate the Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), which currently includes 54 Czech primary, vocational, and secondary schools. During 2024, the ASPnet held its 30th General Assembly, highlighting the network's longstanding engagement.

Success story

Each year, the Secretariat of the Czech Commission organizes a national contest for ASPnet schools. During 2024, the competition was dedicated to the 200th anniversary of Bedřich Smetana's birth, a theme recognized both nationally and by UNESCO. Students submitted 211 works in the form of collages and comics

across three age categories. A jury of five experts from diverse fields evaluated the entries, awarding prizes for first to third place in each category, as well as a special jury prize. The winning pupils were invited to attend the award ceremony at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, making the celebration both a cultural and educational milestone.



My Bedřich Smetana contest ©Pavlína Gjurič

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

A major focus in 2025 will be the Czech Republic's campaign for election to the World Heritage Committee for 2025–2029. With 17 World Heritage Sites, including three transnational properties, Czechia aims to demonstrate its longstanding commitment to heritage preservation.

The Commission's 2025 agenda will also highlight the public service media sector, the Czech List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the development of cultural statistics, and the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. For ASPnet, schools will work in the first half of the year on themes such as the International Year of Glacier Preservation, Holocaust Remembrance Day, and the World Day for Audiovisual Heritage. In the second half, topics will include the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, International Geodiversity Day, and the promotion of sport, physical activity, and mental health.

The Czech Commission will continue to identify relevant UNESCO themes for the Czech context, providing opportunities to translate UNESCO's ethical principles into national strategies and activities.

DENMARK

The Danish National Commission to UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Christine Antorini

Secretary-General: Mr Rasmus Biering-Sørensen

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, around half of the fifteen members of the Danish National Commission were newly appointed, including the Chair. This renewal brought a shift in positioning on several issues, most notably in communications and in the prioritization of education, particularly the Danish schools that are part of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet).

The Commission finalized a new strategy, scheduled for publication in early spring 2025, which emphasizes several key areas. In addition to education, it highlights the continued development of UNESCO designations in Denmark and the importance of strengthening cooperation among them. The strategy also underscores the central role of journalists, scientists, and artists in sustaining a well-functioning democracy, exploring ways to support their work. Another major priority is biodiversity, with the Commission intending to use Denmark's membership of the MAB Council to advance this goal.

Success story

During 2024, the Commission significantly expanded its communication efforts, both about its own work and about UNESCO designations in Denmark. These efforts included the launch of a regular newsletter and a strengthened presence on three major social platforms—Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn—successfully reaching a broader and more diverse audience.



Aarsmoede-kolding ©Rasmus Sørensen

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking ahead, the Commission intends to prioritize working conditions and freedom of speech for journalists, scientists, and artists, recognizing their essential role in democratic life. Biodiversity will remain a strategic focus, particularly through the MAB Programme, and the Commission also plans to engage more deeply with the challenges and opportunities presented by artificial intelligence, with the precise focus yet to be determined.

ESTONIA

Estonian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Kristin Kuutma

Secretary-General: Ms Kerli Gutman-Normak

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Estonian National Commission for UNESCO focused on active participation in statutory meetings, advising organizations in Estonia on UNESCO-related matters, and supporting Estonian experts elected to different UNESCO bodies, including the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) and the Subsidiary Body (STAB). The Commission also advanced cooperation with the African region, particularly Namibia and Botswana, and prepared Estonia's mandatory reports to UNESCO.

Success story

A notable achievement in 2024 was the organization of a three-day international training workshop on the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict. The event, held in January, was organized by UNESCO in collaboration with the Estonian Defence Forces, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Culture, the National Heritage Board, and the Estonian National Commission for UNESCO. It brought together military and civilian personnel from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

The workshop provided participants with essential knowledge on international legal obligations regarding the protection of cultural property during armed conflict and fostered cooperation between military and civilian structures. Topics included strategies to protect state-protected objects, prevent damage or theft, and record and document destruction of cultural sites. Estonian authorities underlined the value of involving cultural heritage experts in the military-focused component of the course. Importantly, the workshop helped establish cross-disciplinary contacts and a network of military and civilian personnel that continues to operate effectively.



UNESCO training workshop in Estonia ©Liina Jänes - Kerli Gutman

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In 2025, Estonia plans to continue its cooperation with the Namibia National Commission in the field of creative entrepreneurship. Together with NGO Creative Estonia and colleagues from Botswana and Namibia, efforts are underway to add a subregional perspective to this partnership, including a pilot creative economy workshop in Gaborone and a joint project proposal for funding for 2025–2026. Inspired by this cooperation, the Secretary General of the Estonian Ministry of Culture will visit Gaborone and Windhoek in March 2025.

In addition, collaboration with the Botswana National Commission will continue in the field of Education for Sustainable Development, with a focus on ASPnet schools. Cooperation with African countries remains grounded in strong and trustworthy relationships between National Commissions, as well as the active engagement of stakeholders and experts from academia, government, and the private sector.

At the same time, the Estonian National Commission for UNESCO will maintain its active role in regional cooperation through the European network of National Commissions, contributing to joint initiatives and knowledge sharing.

FINLAND

Finnish National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Teivo Teivainen

Secretary-General: Ms Piia Immonen-Seuguenot,

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Finnish National Commission for UNESCO continued its mandate, which runs from 2023 to 2026. The Commission consists of a Chairperson and eleven members nominated by the Government, representing high-level expertise across UNESCO's fields of competence. Members advise the Ministry of Education and Culture and contribute to the work and visibility of UNESCO in Finland, while also being able to call on additional experts when necessary.

Over the year, the Commission was convened six times and consulted on a range of topical issues, including Finland's positions for key UN processes such as the UN Summit of the Future. It also held discussions with national focal points and coordinators for UNESCO-related programmes and

networks, including World Heritage experts, and maintained active cooperation with the National Commission of the Åland Islands, an Associate Member of UNESCO.

In Finland, 2024 was celebrated as the thematic year of Sivistys (bildung/enlightenment), coordinated by the Lifelong Learning Foundation, which is represented on the Commission. The National Commission co-organized several national events, including a seminar on World Press Freedom Day hosted at the Finnish Parliament, titled "Can polarization be stopped?"

Youth engagement remained central. Two Finnish UNESCO youth delegates, appointed by the National Youth Council and Youth Sector for two years, participated as permanent experts in Commission activities. They worked closely with other Nordic youth delegates, drafting a Nordic youth paper on UNESCO's work in the youth sector and preparing for the Youth Forum at the General Conference. At the end of the year, the Finnish youth delegates also undertook a study visit to UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

Success story



A highlight of 2024 was the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the 1954 Hague Convention and the 25th anniversary of its Second Protocol. The Commission, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Culture, the University of Helsinki, and the Finnish Heritage Agency, organized a national jubilee seminar on 3 October in Helsinki. The seminar emphasized cultural heritage as a crucial aspect of national resilience and brought together experts in cultural heritage, defense forces, crisis management, public administration, and civil society. The event not only highlighted UNESCO's significant role in safeguarding both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, but also reinforced the relevance of cultural heritage to Finland's broader societal resilience.

The jubilee seminar in Helsinki on the Hague Convention ©Finnish National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Finnish National Commission places high value on both global and regional cooperation. Nordic cooperation remained strong, with the Nordic National Commissions meeting in Iceland in 2024 to prepare for UNESCO's next Programme and Budget (draft 43 C/5). The next Nordic meeting will take place in the Faroe Islands in 2025. The Secretary-General also participated in the annual meeting of European National Commissions in Türkiye, and Finland continues to benefit from global National Commission meetings held alongside the General Conference and Executive Board sessions.

FRANCE

Commission nationale française pour l'UNESCO

Présidente : Mme Michèle Ramis
Secrétaire général : M. Alexandre Navarro

Secrétaire général : M. Alexandre Navarro

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Résumé des activités de 2024

En 2024, la Commission nationale française pour l'UNESCO (CNFU) a engagé 89 actions éducatives, culturelles et scientifiques en France et à l'international.

L'appui au réseau mondial des Commissions nationales s'est traduit par un soutien aux consultations des Commissions nationales des PEID des Caraïbes, des consultations tripartites avec les Commissions d'Allemagne et de Pologne, ainsi qu'un appui au réseau mondial des chaires et partenaires lors du Forum mondial pour la transformation des savoirs à Addis-Abeba. La CNFU s'est également impliquée dans la conférence de l'UNESCO célébrant le centenaire de l'IICI, créé à Paris.

En France, la CNFU coordonne 380 membres de réseaux, 120 désignations et 35 comités de programmes. Elle a poursuivi l'élargissement des réseaux nationaux, atteignant 145 écoles associées, 53 chaires et 9 réseaux UNITWIN, 64 clubs, 84 ONG en partenariat officiel, 8 villes apprenantes, 10 villes créatives et 3 centres de catégorie 2.

Dans le secteur de la culture, la CNFU a porté la première désignation de Strasbourg Capitale mondiale du livre, accompagné l'opérationnalisation du projet PACTE, lancé la Charte Culture Équitable en lien avec l'agenda de MONDIACULT, et consulté les ONG accréditées dans le cadre des Conventions de 2003 et 2005. Dans le domaine scientifique, elle a développé des études-actions sur la chaleur humide, les zones de libre évolution, et a contribué à la création de l'Académie franco-latino-américaine de bioéthique.

Dans le domaine de l'éducation, la CNFU s'est mobilisée pour la bourse de stage des bibliothécaires d'Alexandrie, pour la coopération avec l'IPE et pour le programme Écoles heureuses. Avec six conférences organisées sur les droits des femmes, elle a réaffirmé son engagement en faveur de l'égalité des genres. La CNFU a également publié dix documents, incluant rapports d'activités, actes de colloques et publications thématiques.

Une activité réussie

DU 16 AU 18 AVRIL 2024 À CURAÇAO, LA CNFU A APPORTÉ UN SOUTIEN ESSENTIEL À LA CONSULTATION DES COMMISSIONS NATIONALES POUR L'UNESCO DES PEID DES CARAÏBES, ORGANISÉE PAR L'UNESCO ET LA COMMISSION NATIONALE DE CURAÇAO, AVEC L'APPUI DU MINISTÈRE FRANÇAIS DE L'EUROPE ET DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES. CETTE RENCONTRE A RÉUNI DES REPRÉSENTANTS D'ENVIRON 25 COMMISSIONS NATIONALES DES PAYS ET MEMBRES ASSOCIÉS DE LA RÉGION, AINSI QUE LES DIRECTRICES DES BUREAUX DE L'UNESCO DE KINGSTON ET DE LA HAVANE. ELLE A MARQUÉ UNE ÉTAPE IMPORTANTE POUR LE RENFORCEMENT DES ÉCHANGES ET DE LA COOPÉRATION RÉGIONALE ENTRE LES PEID



Consultation des Commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO des PEID des Caraïbes ©Juliette Sardet

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

En 2025, la CNFU poursuivra l'organisation des journées nationales des réseaux français (réSEAU, clubs, MOW, villes créatives, chaires). Elle développera également la coopération internationale, notamment lors de la 9^e réunion informelle des Commissions européennes à Dublin, de la rencontre tripartite avec les commissions d'Allemagne et de Pologne (triangle de Weimar), et par l'invitation de Commissions étrangères aux journées nationales françaises.

Dans le domaine culturel, la CNFU appuiera la célébration des 20 ans de la Convention de 2005 sur la diversité culturelle et portera le projet de side event "Culture équitable" en marge de Mondiacult 2025. L'année 2025 verra aussi le lancement de la seconde édition du *Dictionnaire comparé de droit du patrimoine culturel*.

La jeunesse sera une priorité avec l'appui au 1^{er} Forum mondial de la jeunesse des associations et clubs pour l'UNESCO (Almaty) et l'organisation d'une série de cinq ateliers de renforcement des capacités pour les jeunes. La CNFU coorganisera également des conférences avec l'AFNU, portant sur les droits des femmes, la liberté d'expression et la protection du patrimoine en zones de conflit.

Enfin, la CNFU contribuera à la préparation du 80^e anniversaire de l'UNESCO et de la CNFU, en mettant notamment à jour la brochure sur le rôle et les missions des Commissions nationales. Dans le domaine scientifique, elle sera engagée dans le 10^e anniversaire du Programme international pour les géosciences et les géoparc (mars 2025) et dans les travaux de l'UNOC.

GERMANY

German Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Maria Böhmer

Secretary-General: Mr Roman Luckscheiter

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the German Commission for UNESCO advanced its international role with the publication of two landmark documents: the Fair Culture Charter (www.fair-culture.org), and position paper promoting more equitable scientific cooperation between High-Income and Low- and Middle-Income countries. To support the implementation of UNESCO Recommendations, the Commission hosted three online seminars for National Commissions worldwide, providing opportunities to exchange experiences. It also played an active role in the development of 41 C/5 by coordinating the process through which more than fifty National Commissions reached consensus on the position paper National Commissions for a Renewed Multilateralism.

The Commission's Annual Assembly in June adopted a strong declaration to defend democracy against its enemies. Another important milestone was the complete relaunch of its website www.unesco.de.

The year also featured major events such as the EuroMAB meeting of European and North American Biosphere Reserves, attended by over 300 participants from thirty countries, who adopted the "Message from EuroMAB." Additional highlights included the third international conference of German UNESCO Chairs with their global partners, the celebration of German World Heritage Day with 350 events nationwide, and conferences on civil society's role in World Heritage sites and on UNESCO's new Policy Paper on World Heritage Climate Action.

The Commission continued its tradition of awarding recognition to dozens of successful Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) initiatives and contributed actively to the World Conferences on OER and Arts Education, as well as to the African Meeting of National Commissions in Angola, also through financial support. Its youth volunteering programme *kulturweit* celebrated its 15th anniversary in August. A study on former participants showed that 88 percent felt the programme had changed their worldview. During 2024, 260 German volunteers were sent abroad and 44 volunteers from Asia and the Middle East worked in Germany.

Success story

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the German and Ukrainian National Commissions for UNESCO have worked closely together. A major focus has been supporting Ukrainian youth through the "Recreation" project, which provided temporary relief and strengthened resilience during wartime. During 2024, more than 500 Ukrainian students and teachers from Kyiv, Odesa, Kharkiv, and other cities under attack spent up to three weeks in Germany. Over thirty German UNESCO ASPnet schools hosted the groups, and many Ukrainian students

stayed with German families. These visits often led to new school partnerships or reinforced existing city twinning arrangements.

The programme emphasized arts, cultural education, and joint creative work, offering both a safe space and an opportunity to build international solidarity. Supported by the German Federal Foreign Office in 2023 and 2024 and by the Hertie Foundation in 2023, the project grew out of a pilot launched in 2022. In both 2023 and 2024, fifteen groups were hosted. The initiative represents a clear example of how UNESCO networks can support young people in crisis.

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In 2025, the Commission will continue its cooperation with the National Commissions of the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, and Uruguay, as well as with the US Biosphere Network, to develop innovative sustainability learning materials at more than ten UNESCO-designated sites. The partnership is funded by the Fritz Henkel Foundation.

Planned publications for 2025 include German-language editions of the Executive Summaries of the GEMR and WWDR, the *Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0*, and the UNESCO Global Culture Report, produced jointly with the three other German-speaking National Commissions. They will also publish official translations of UNESCO normative instruments.

The Commission will continue to support African National Commissions, Biosphere Reserves in Southern Africa, and youth volunteering through *kulturweit*. It also aims to again host groups of Ukrainian students. Germany will remain active in the European Network of National Commissions and support transborder cooperation across UNESCO designations. It will expand promotion of the *Fair Culture* initiative, equitable scientific cooperation, and actively participate in *Mondiacult* and the anniversaries of the 2005 Convention, the UGGP Programme, and the IHP. A major highlight will be the Global OERcamp in November 2025.

The Commission also hopes to successfully complete its first EMAS audit for sustainable development in early 2025, setting an example that could be shared with other National Commissions.

GREECE

Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Aikaterini Tzitzikosta

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO promoted UNESCO's programmes and priorities across all five sectors of the Organization.

In education, the Commission co-organized the 22nd Annual Symposium of Lyceum ASPnet Schools and the 9th Annual Symposium of Gymnasium ASPnet Schools of Attica. It also supported the 5th World Cultural Youth Symposium, where UNESCO launched the publication Arts for Transformative Education. This event brought together 380 participants from fourteen countries to promote UNESCO's concept of Living Heritage.

In culture, the Commission, together with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, organized the conference Intangible Cultural Heritage: a Vehicle for Cultural Diplomacy, and placed under its patronage the exhibition Refugees of the East, Immigrants to the West, hosted by the Ethnological Museum of Thrace. Both initiatives fostered intercultural dialogue and the rapprochement of civilizations.

In sciences, Meteora-Pyli was designated as a UNESCO Global Geopark, raising Greece's total to nine. The Commission also co-organized the 13th Greek L'Oréal-UNESCO Awards for Women in Science, supported the International Conference of UNESCO Global Geoparks in Greece and Cyprus, and organized the conference Building a Future without Gender Violence with the UNESCO Centre for Women and Peace in the Balkan Countries. The Commission also partnered in the 3rd International Forum on Water, organized by the UNESCO Chair Con-E-Act of Democritus University of Thrace.

In communication and information, the Commission collaborated with the Region of Crete and the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe to map UNESCO designations and networks in Greece to strengthen synergies. It also placed under its patronage two international conferences on Media and Information Literacy and the role of UNESCO and the EU, organized by the UNESCO Chair on Intercultural Policy of the University of Macedonia.

Success story

A unique musical homage to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage, entitled *Rebetika, Fado, Tango and Blues*, was held in 2024 under the patronage of the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO. The concert, introduced by UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Culture, Ernesto Ottone, brought together heritage elements from four countries across different continents—Greece, Portugal, Argentina, and the United States. Organized in collaboration with one of Greece's most renowned record labels, the event created a rich and diverse musical mosaic portraying themes of love, loss, displacement, hope, and resilience. Held at the ancient theatre of Herodus Atticus, the concert reached thousands of Greek and international spectators, transcending borders and highlighting shared human experiences through music.

Intangible Heritage Concert 2024
©Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO

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Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking forward, the Commission plans to organize a Regional Conference of UNESCO Chairs of Southeastern Europe and the Mediterranean, in cooperation with Greece's seventeen UNESCO Chairs. The conference will focus on sustainability, climate diplomacy, innovation, and artificial intelligence, encouraging interdisciplinary and intersectoral approaches to regional and international challenges.

To accelerate progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 4, the Commission also plans to organize an International Conference on UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities, with the participation of Greece's eight members and European representatives. This event will provide a forum for sharing challenges, solutions, and best practices in promoting lifelong learning. Mayors and stakeholders will also be invited to discuss strategies for enhancing the role of Learning Cities in addressing global challenges, particularly climate action through lifelong learning.

HUNGARY

Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Miklós Réthelyi

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO continued to act as a vital link between UNESCO, national authorities, civil society, and academic and professional communities, ensuring that UNESCO's ideals were translated into practical action. A key highlight was the two-day autumn Pedagogical Workshop for ASPnet school coordinators in the Balaton Uplands, which combined site visits to UNESCO designations, including a Tentative World Heritage Site and a UNESCO Global Geopark, with a workshop on "Rural Tourism, Gentrification and Fractured Realities."

Success story

The Commission has promoted the innovative Magic Mitten toolkit, designed to support refugee children through a combination of storytelling, interactive exercises, and illustrations rooted in cognitive behavioral therapy. Developed around a Ukrainian fairy tale, it helps children aged 8–12 process trauma related to war, loss, and displacement. The toolkit is available as both an app and a printable book, offered free of charge in multiple languages, including Ukrainian, English, Arabic, Hungarian, and Norwegian. It can be used independently by children, together with parents, or in group sessions led by facilitators.

Pilots with Ukrainian refugee children in Norway and Syrian refugee children in Lebanon demonstrated remarkable improvements in children's ability to relax, focus, and problem-solve. Parents, educators, and children all reported positive effects, confirming its value as a scalable tool for emotional resilience and healing.

The year also marked the 22nd edition of the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Awards in Hungary, recognizing three outstanding female researchers. The Women in Science Association, in collaboration with the National Commission, once again presented the Women in Science and Technology Award of Excellence for International Women's Day.

In the sciences, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences hosted the Xth World Science Forum in Budapest, in partnership with UNESCO and other organizations. Deputy Director-General Xing Qu and Assistant Director-General Lidia Brito attended, with Ms. Brito also delivering a lecture at the Hungarian Diplomatic Academy on the intersections of science and diplomacy. International Geodiversity Day was celebrated at the Hungarian Natural History Museum. The Hungarian Open-Air Museum advanced the project Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ukrainian Displaced Persons in Hungary: Inclusive Community Practices. The city of Szombathely joined the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, while a new UNESCO Chair in Water Conflict Management was established at Ludovika University of Public Service.



Magic Mitten ©Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Commission is preparing initiatives to address the global challenges posed by rapidly evolving disruptive technologies, adopting a "blue-team" approach across education, culture, and science. Plans include the first National Partners' Forum of UNESCO Designations in Hungary, with strong youth involvement, preceded by an "AI with UNESCO Challenge" for secondary school students. The competition will encourage AI literacy and ethical reflection, producing narrative videos and archival materials that will eventually form part of an open learning platform enhanced by machine learning.

Further priorities include engaging academia in discussions on AI's impact on education, science, and culture, and advancing a project to bridge the 2003 and 2005 Conventions under the title *Dance and Community: Intercultural Bridges for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Promotion of Cultural Diversity – Latin America and Europe*. This initiative will bring together practitioners, community representatives, and experts to celebrate dance-related intangible heritage.

The Commission will also commemorate two major anniversaries in 2025: the bicentenary of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the 250th anniversary of Teréz Brunszvik, founder of Hungary's first kindergartens.

ICELAND

Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO maintained its role as a coordinating and advisory body, bringing together government ministries, national institutions, and civil society to advance UNESCO's mandate and the

SDGs. The Commission, composed of a president and six expert members, met regularly and provided intellectual and professional input to ministries and national stakeholders. It also coordinated responses to UNESCO surveys and reporting obligations on standard-setting instruments.

The members of the Commission were actively involved in preparing Iceland's participation in sessions of the Executive Board, as the country is currently a Board member. The Commission also engaged in international dialogue by participating in the UNESCO World Conference on Culture and Arts Education in Abu Dhabi.

Success story

The Icelandic National Commission hosted the 2024 Nordic Meeting of National Commissions and Permanent Delegations for UNESCO in Hveragerði, renowned for its sustainable geothermal practices. The meeting opened with an address by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Ms Áslaug Arna Sigurbjörnsdóttir, highlighting UNESCO's role in fostering cooperation and dialogue in times of global challenges.

Over three days, plenary sessions and nine working groups addressed themes including education, culture, science, communication and information, climate, gender equality, crises and conflicts, and sustainable development at UNESCO sites. Participants emphasized Nordic countries' shared commitment to sustainability, human rights, and the promotion of UNESCO's values.

The meeting closed with a speech by the President of Iceland, Ms Halla Tómasdóttir, who underscored the importance of cultural cooperation, the unique contributions of the Nordic region, and the global mission of UNESCO. The exchange of ideas reinforced collaboration and solidarity among Nordic National Commissions and Delegations.



Visit to Kála UNESCO Global Geopark during the meeting of Nordic National Commissions and Delegations ©Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking ahead, Iceland will take part in the 9th Meeting of the Informal European Network of National Commissions for UNESCO, to be hosted in Ireland, contributing to knowledge sharing and cooperative planning. The Commission is also actively preparing for the Nordic Network meeting in the Faroe Islands in September 2025, which will bring together all Nordic stakeholders, including ministries and delegations in Paris.

These gatherings will include plenary and working group sessions across UNESCO's fields of competence, with discussions focused on expanding cooperation, deepening the UNESCO agenda, and sharing best practices for regional and global impact.

ITALY

Italian National Commission for UNESCO (CNIU)

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Italian National Commission for UNESCO promoted UNESCO's programmes and priorities in collaboration with national stakeholders and partner institutions, maintaining a strong focus on civil society and academic engagement. A key achievement was the translation into Italian and dissemination of major UNESCO documents, including the *Recommendation concerning Education for*

International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, together with materials on UNESCO's work in gender equality and education.

The Commission also co-organized ArtCamp. Intercultural Dialogue, an initiative created by the Andorran National Commission, in collaboration with Temple University in Rome and the Dialogue Institute of Philadelphia, which highlighted art as a powerful tool for peacebuilding and mutual respect. It further supported an art residency programme for refugees, combining artistic practice with intercultural dialogue for peace, culminating in a public exhibition in a Roman library.

In addition, the photographic exhibition *Close/Far. A Journey of Discovery Exploring the Cultural and Natural Heritage of Immigration in Italy* was displayed at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. An online gallery of this exhibition is now accessible on the National Commission's website, ensuring its wider reach.

Success story

The Italian National Commission participated in the Ocean Literacy World Conference, held in Venice and organized by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe together with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. Inspired by the *Venice Declaration for Ocean Literacy*, the Commission financed the translation of the Ocean Decade webpage into English and French to improve global accessibility. This initiative directly supported the Mediterranean Programme for the Ocean Decade, which contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, with particular emphasis on Goal 14: *Life Below Water*.



Ocean Literacy World Conference in Venice, Italy ©Italian National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Italian National Commission will continue to play an active role in the evaluation and selection of candidatures for UNESCO designations, as well as in promoting the implementation of UNESCO's goals at the national level. It plans to contribute to events organized by universities, cultural associations, Clubs for UNESCO and ASPnet schools, fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and mobilizing the various UNESCO designations.

Translation and dissemination of UNESCO publications into Italian will remain a key priority, alongside collaboration with the Italian World Heritage Association to provide training for local administrators and civil society in the safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage. Looking ahead, the Commission will support the preparation of the UNESCO Conference to be held in Naples in 2025, following the one organized in 2023, dedicated to the 1972 and 2003 Conventions. This event will further promote the safeguarding of heritage and the interconnection between tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

LATVIA

Latvian National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO remained committed to advancing UNESCO's values and priorities through a stronger emphasis on the effective use of UNESCO's documents and frameworks. Advisory board meetings with ministries were held, enriched by the

participation of international UNESCO experts, allowing for in-depth discussions on aligning Latvia's policies with global frameworks and enhancing national implementation.

The Commission organized a series of conferences and seminars that engaged a broad spectrum of stakeholders, from teachers and schools to high-level policymakers. These events created a platform for dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and the exchange of best practices, ensuring that UNESCO's work was understood and integrated across different sectors of society. Complementing this outreach, the Commission launched targeted social media campaigns to raise public awareness of UNESCO's reports, highlight their significance, and encourage wider community engagement.

Throughout the year, the Commission also convened stakeholder meetings to strengthen cooperation with local institutions, government bodies, and educators. This inclusive approach ensured that UNESCO's objectives were embedded in Latvia's broader cultural, educational, and policy landscape.

Success story

The 2024 UNESCO Week in Latvia, dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Hague Convention, was a major highlight. Educational activities engaged diverse audiences and included an online information campaign, an art competition for students, and a quiz for adults. The centrepiece was the international conference Cultural Heritage and Security, held on 14 October at the Latvian Parliament and streamed online.

The event was jointly organized by the National Commission, the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Defence, and partners such as ICOMOS Latvia, the French Institute in Latvia, and the embassies of Canada and the Netherlands. The conference brought together policymakers and heritage specialists to explore the role of cultural heritage in peacebuilding and to strengthen cooperation between the culture and defence sectors for the protection of cultural values in times of crisis.



Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In 2025, with the support of the UNESCO Participation Programme, the Latvian National Commission will lead a project titled Fostering Peaceful and Resilient Communities through Museums and Libraries, in collaboration with National Commissions and associations in Estonia, Lithuania, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Building on a shared history and heritage, the project recognizes museums and libraries as essential local agents of sustainable development.

The central theme for 2025 will be peace, explored through the third conference of the partnership, Localizing SDGs through Museums and Libraries III, to be held in May at the Lviv Culture Hub in Ukraine. The event will be complemented by a series of webinars based on the guide Localizing the SDGs through Museums and Libraries, helping professionals design and implement heritage-based peacebuilding initiatives.

By supporting local projects and strengthening regional collaboration, the initiative will promote a shared understanding of peace while building long-term partnerships around the role of museums and libraries in achieving the SDGs.

LITHUANIA

Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Agnė Jasinavičiūtė

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the UNESCO/UNITWIN family officially welcomed a new member in Lithuania: the UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence, Emerging Technologies and Innovations for Society at Mykolas Romeris University. The Chair has become an important partner in training young professionals, raising public awareness, forecasting innovations, and modelling solutions, and in communicating UNESCO's values on the ethics of AI to stakeholders and the wider public. The National Commission initiated a series of discussions and meetings to communicate UNESCO's recommendations in the field of science, explore new challenges, and highlight the need for regulatory changes and inclusive policy development. Long-term partnerships were built with national science and research institutions and with the state ombudsmen on academic ethics, with the aim of promoting UNESCO's approach to the regulation of scientific and technological development.

Success story

On 6–7 June 2024, the Commission, in partnership with UNESCO, Ukraine and the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture, organized the international conference *Towards the Recovery of the Culture Sector of Ukraine in Vilnius*. The event, called for by President Volodymyr Zelensky during his meeting with UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay, sought to increase awareness of the war's impact on Ukraine's cultural sector, highlight the role of culture in national recovery, and consolidate international support for stabilization and reconstruction.

The conference featured the updated *Action Plan for Culture in Ukraine*, prepared by UNESCO and international experts, and concluded with the Vilnius Call for Action, a joint commitment by nearly 30 States from North America, Asia and Europe. More than 200 participants attended from around the world. The results of the conference were subsequently presented at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Berlin on 11–12 June 2024.

Lithuania continued active participation in the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme, supported by a consolidated national committee and international cooperation. The committee actively contributed to EuroMAB 2024 with a seminar on renewable energy in protected territories. It also issued consolidated positions on pressing national issues, such as balancing the interests of farmers with the safeguarding of natural resources.

The Commission, together with its Estonian and Latvian counterparts, organized a competition for young female scientists. Nine scientists—three from each state—received scholarships to pursue ambitious research careers. The programme was supported by national ministries and science academies.

The forum *Vision for Systematic Cultural Education in Lithuania* promoted UNESCO's Framework on Arts and Culture Education, stimulated dialogue on the value of cultural literacy, and resulted in written recommendations for the new government programme. The document was endorsed by more than 40 organizations and institutions.

The Commission was also actively engaged in preparing management plans for the World Heritage sites Vilnius Historic Centre and the Curonian Spit. In collaboration with international and national partners, it developed projects dedicated to heritage interpretation, planning, and a climate change vulnerability assessment for the Curonian Spit, using the Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI).



Towards the Recovery of the Culture Sector of Ukraine ©Domas Rimeika

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The newly appointed Lithuanian National Commission for 2025–2028 will define future priorities. In 2025, Lithuania will join the global celebration of the 20th anniversary of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions by organizing the 10th Creativity Festival in Vilnius, showcasing the role of creativity in building inclusive urban environments. Also, the Commission will contribute to the activities associated with the Lithuania's mandate in the Subsidiary Committee of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on Measures for the Prohibition of the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

Responding to UNESCO's global policy on climate change mitigation and adaptation, the Commission will also work to draw policymakers' attention to climate impacts on cultural heritage. In cooperation with the Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Lithuania, it is preparing a capacity-building project to share Nordic practices on heritage preservation and strengthen specialists' skills in assessing climate impacts.

The Commission will also partner with the Lithuanian Jazz Federation to celebrate International Jazz Day and the 150th birth anniversary of painter and composer Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, through an open concert at the National M. K. Čiurlionis School of Art. Additionally, in collaboration with the Centre for Civil Education of the Office of the President of the Republic of Lithuania, it will present a special programme during Culture Night dedicated to Lithuania's intangible cultural heritage elements inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List.

LUXEMBOURG

Commission luxembourgeoise pour l'UNESCO

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Secrétaire générale : Mme Anouk Bernard

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Résumé des activités de 2024

En 2024, la Commission luxembourgeoise pour l'UNESCO a tenu ses quatre réunions annuelles, portant sur des thématiques pertinentes tant pour l'UNESCO que pour le Luxembourg : l'éducation aux médias, les retombées des Jeux olympiques et paralympiques de Paris sur le sport luxembourgeois, ainsi que les projets pédagogiques de nouvelles écoles UNESCO. Accueillie par la Grande-Duchesse, Ambassadrice de bonne volonté de l'UNESCO depuis 1977, les membres de la Commission ont pu discuter des projets qu'elle soutient dans la lutte contre la violence faite aux femmes, en présence de Madame Nadia Ernzer, Ambassadeur du Luxembourg

auprès de l'UNESCO. Un accent particulier a été mis sur la candidature du Luxembourg au Conseil exécutif de l'UNESCO (2025–2029), que la Commission soutient activement.

La Commission a accueilli la réunion annuelle des Commissions germanophones (Allemagne, Autriche, Suisse) au Luxembourg, et a coordonné des activités communes des désignations UNESCO du pays et de plusieurs musées nationaux dans le cadre de la Journée de la géodiversité de l'UNESCO 2024. Elle a également contribué à des projets culturels liés au 150^e anniversaire de la naissance d'Aline Mayrisch-de Saint-Hubert (1874–1947), inscrits aux célébrations officielles de l'UNESCO à l'initiative de la Commission, avec le soutien des Commissions française et allemande.

Une autre réalisation fut l'inscription de « l'Art de la construction en pierre sèche » sur la Liste représentative du patrimoine culturel immatériel, grâce à une candidature multinationale validée le 5 décembre 2024. Enfin, la Commission a célébré les 30 ans de l'inscription de « Lëtzebuerg, Patrimoine mondial » le 17 décembre 2024, en proposant notamment une visite numérique immersive permettant de découvrir des fortifications difficilement accessibles.

Une activité réussie

Le 25^e anniversaire du réseau luxembourgeois des écoles associées à l'UNESCO fut célébré le 28 novembre 2024 à Mondorf-les-Bains, lors d'une séance académique en présence de Son Altesse Royale la Grande-Duchesse Maria Teresa, du ministre de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse Claude Meisch, et du ministre de la Culture Eric Thill.

Les élèves des écoles associées à l'UNESCO ont animé la séance et illustré, par des spectacles et des présentations variées, leur engagement en faveur des valeurs humanistes promues par l'UNESCO. La présence de Madame Lydia Ruprecht, coordinatrice internationale du réseau des écoles associées et chef de l'unité ASPnet au siège de l'UNESCO, a rehaussé l'événement. Elle a également visité l'Athénée de Luxembourg, un lycée membre du réseau, et s'est entretenue avec les élèves des classes terminales du système international autour des défis d'un monde en constante évolution.



Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse, Luxembourg
©Commission luxembourgeoise pour l'UNESCO

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

La Commission luxembourgeoise poursuivra son rôle de sensibilisation à l'UNESCO auprès du grand public à travers conférences, tables rondes et expositions. Au printemps 2025, elle organisera, en partenariat avec l'ALIPH, une exposition et des symposiums sur le rôle des femmes dans la reconstruction du patrimoine détruit par des conflits ou des catastrophes naturelles.

Le budget pluriannuel 2025–2027 prévoit un soutien accru aux récentes désignations UNESCO au Luxembourg, afin de mieux faire connaître la Minett UNESCO Biosphère, le Natur- & Geopark Mëllerdall et les quatre nouvelles inscriptions au Registre du patrimoine culturel immatériel. Un projet pédagogique, développé avec le ministère de l'Éducation, visera à présenter l'UNESCO, ses visions et programmes à la jeunesse et au grand public.

Concernant le site du patrimoine mondial « Luxembourg : vieux quartiers et fortifications », l'accent est mis sur des projets inclusifs et durables, dont une visite numérique immersive en 3D de la citadelle du Saint-Esprit. Enfin, la Commission nationale poursuivra son soutien à la Représentation permanente du Luxembourg auprès de l'UNESCO à Paris dans le cadre de la candidature du pays au Conseil exécutif pour 2025–2029.

MALTA

Maltese National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Kristian Zarb Adami

Secretary-General: Ms Luisana D'Amato

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Maltese National Commission underwent restructuring, marked by the replacement of its members, the appointment of a new Secretary-General, Ms Luisana D'Amato, and a new Chairperson, Mr Kristian Zarb Adami. The restructuring also resulted in the allocation of more adequate premises for the Commission to perform its duties professionally and in line with UNESCO expectations. The new offices are located in Valletta, the capital city of Malta and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Success story

During 2024, Malta signed and acceded to two major UNESCO conventions: the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. This important milestone was led by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, the national regulator of cultural heritage in Malta, with the support of the Maltese Permanent Delegation to UNESCO.

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The newly appointed Maltese National Commission for UNESCO is working with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage on the signing of the two protocols of the 1954 Hague Convention. The Commission is also planning to host an Art Camp in spring 2026, with a focus on the Mediterranean region and its neighbouring areas. In the immediate future, the Commission will prioritize the expansion of its national network by organizing networking events and workshops with different stakeholders. These initiatives aim to strengthen collaboration and enhance the country's engagement with UNESCO's goals.

MONACO

Commission nationale monégasque pour l'UNESCO

Présidente : Mme Geneviève Vatrican

Secrétaire générale : Mme Françoise Gämmerdinger

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Résumé des activités de 2024

En 2024, Monaco a accueilli, les 7 et 8 mars, la douzième édition des Rencontres internationales Monaco et la Méditerranée, soutenues par la Commission nationale monégasque. Ces rencontres, consacrées au thème des « Jardins en Méditerranée », se sont articulées autour de trois tables rondes intitulées « Le temps de l'abondance », « Le temps des vertus » et « Le temps du merveilleux ». Elles ont réuni des philosophes, historiens de l'art et experts de sept pays.

Le Comité national monégasque de l'Association internationale des arts plastiques auprès de l'UNESCO a par ailleurs organisé l'exposition *Nouvelles Perspectives*, au cours de laquelle les artistes membres ont interrogé les réalités contemporaines. Un projet de *Metaverse* a été créé parallèlement, permettant à douze artistes internationaux d'exposer leurs œuvres.

La Commission a également poursuivi ses efforts en matière d'éducation et de sensibilisation de la jeunesse à la recherche, au patrimoine, à l'histoire et à la culture. Le Musée d'Anthropologie préhistorique a proposé visites guidées, ateliers éducatifs et événements comme l'Agora des métiers et les Journées européennes de l'archéologie. Le Musée océanographique a poursuivi son opération *Océano* pour tous, visant à accompagner les classes dans la découverte et la protection du monde marin. Enfin, le Nouveau Musée national de Monaco a poursuivi le programme pédagogique des *Apprentis Collectionneurs*, destiné à familiariser les adolescents à l'art contemporain.

En octobre 2024, la Fête de la science, soutenue par la Commission, a réuni plusieurs institutions, dont le Musée d'Anthropologie et le Centre scientifique de Monaco, pour présenter leurs recherches et métiers.

Une activité réussie

L'année 2024 a marqué les 75 ans de l'adhésion de Monaco à l'UNESCO. À cette occasion, la Principauté a réaffirmé son attachement aux valeurs de l'Organisation à travers une série d'événements.

Dans le domaine de l'éducation et de la gastronomie, une quarantaine d'élèves du Lycée technique Rainier III ont préparé et servi un dîner de gala à Paris, en présence de S.A.S. le Prince Albert II, réunissant plus de 150 convives. Côté culture, le Chœur de l'Opéra de Monte-Carlo, accompagné de Cécilia Bartoli, John Malkovich et des Musiciens du Prince, a présenté le spectacle *Their Master's Voice* au Château de Versailles. Le volet scientifique a été mis en valeur par une exposition de photographies issues du Prix de photographie environnementale de la Fondation Prince Albert II, organisée au siège de l'UNESCO, mettant en avant l'engagement de Monaco pour la protection de l'environnement. Enfin, un ouvrage commémoratif, fruit d'une collaboration entre Monaco et l'UNESCO, paraîtra début 2025 afin de retracer et illustrer ce partenariat de longue date.

Priorités futures et possibilité de travail conjoint

En 2025, la Commission nationale monégasque poursuivra ses actions en faveur de l'accès à la culture pour tous et de la sensibilisation de la jeunesse aux enjeux du développement durable, du patrimoine et de la recherche scientifique.

La Fédération monégasque des clubs et associations pour l'UNESCO a préparé un projet intitulé *Agir ensemble pour les océans*, à l'occasion de la Conférence des Nations Unies sur les océans qui se tiendra à Nice en juin 2025. Seize classes de Monaco, de France et des communes limitrophes y participent. Les élèves présenteront des dessins sur la protection des océans et de leur biodiversité, qui seront exposés lors de la Conférence et ensuite dans leurs écoles.

En parallèle, la Direction des affaires culturelles continuera de proposer aux jeunes des ateliers et activités pédagogiques, notamment autour de l'exposition *Demain l'océan ?* Afin de renforcer le lien entre jeunesse et patrimoine, d'autres actions créatives sont également prévues pour sensibiliser à l'importance de la préservation du patrimoine culturel.

MONTENEGRO

Montenegrin National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Tamara Vujošić, Minister of Culture and Media

Website: www.gov.me/mkm

Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Montenegrin National Commission for UNESCO pursued its mission of promoting education, culture, science, and information in line with UNESCO's mandate and values. The Commission concentrated on strengthening cross-institutional cooperation and fulfilling its statutory obligations, including the payment of annual contributions for ratified conventions and the delivery of the Quadrennial Report for the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. A key focus was placed on the preparation of a national strategy for strengthening the management, promotion and sustainable use of cultural heritage for development in Montenegro. This initiative was carried out in close cooperation with UNESCO and the Instead Heritage team.

Throughout the year, Montenegro marked all UNESCO International Days with national events, underlining the importance of awareness-raising and education on global themes. The National Commission also launched activities aimed at extending the existing World Heritage nomination "Venetian Works of Defence from the 16th and 17th Century" to include the Forte Mare fortress, a site of great historic and

cultural importance. At the same time, the Commission renewed the Agreement on the development of thematic indicators for culture, demonstrating Montenegro's commitment to better cultural policy planning and data-driven decision making.

Montenegro also played an active role in regional and international cooperation. The Minister of Culture and Media, Tamara Vujošić, signed the Agreement of Cooperation among the former Yugoslav republics for the renovation of Block 17 of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, underscoring the country's dedication to Holocaust remembrance. She also represented Montenegro at the commemoration of the UNESCO International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust and at the World Conference on Culture and Arts Education, held in Abu Dhabi in February 2024. In December, Montenegro held the ministerial meeting of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South-East Europe (CoMoCoSEE) under its presidency. This meeting, attended by ministers and high-level representatives from across the region, concluded with the adoption of the "Herceg Novi Declaration – Culture and Arts for Sustainable Development," a significant commitment to advancing culture as a driver of sustainable development in South-East Europe.

In addition, the Antenna Office of UNESCO in Bosnia and Herzegovina implemented the regional project "Fighting Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Goods in the Western Balkans," with activities hosted in Zabljak, Montenegro, in June 2024 and supported by the Ministry of Culture and Media. This engagement reaffirmed Montenegro's role in contributing to regional stability and cooperation through heritage protection and culture.

Success story

Among the many initiatives carried out in 2024, Montenegro's participation in the regional project "Fighting Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Goods in the Western Balkans" stands out as a success story. Funded by the European Commission and implemented by UNESCO, the project aimed to reinforce regional cooperation, foster reconciliation and build strong professional capacities to combat the illegal trade in cultural property. Montenegro supported the project by hosting part of its activities in Zabljak, which gathered a wide range of stakeholders and professionals from across the Western Balkans.

The programme provided training and awareness-raising for employees of Montenegrin institutions and state administration bodies involved in the protection of cultural goods. Participants included representatives from the Ministry of Culture and Media, the Ministry of Justice and the State Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Internal Affairs with the Police Directorate, and the Customs Directorate. Through this multi-sectoral participation, the workshop promoted dialogue, mutual respect and regional cooperation, while equipping professionals with knowledge and tools to better address theft, robbery, and illicit trafficking of cultural property. It also emphasized how safeguarding cultural heritage can contribute to reconciliation, stability, and sustainable development. The capacity-building process reinforced Montenegro's commitment to protecting cultural diversity and heritage while strengthening its role within the broader regional framework.



Fighting Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Goods in the Western Balkans
©Montenegro National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking ahead to 2025 and 2026, Montenegro intends to intensify cooperation across culture, education, science, and media both nationally and internationally. A key step in this direction will be the signing of a Protocol on Cooperation between the Ministry of Culture and Media and the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation. This protocol will ensure the design and implementation of a joint programme aligned with UNESCO's Framework for Culture and Arts Education, adopted in February 2024 in Abu Dhabi.

Another important future priority is the management and protection of the World Heritage property "Natural and Cultural-Historical Region of Kotor." To this end, the Ministry of Culture and Media has invited a UNESCO advisory mission to help identify the key challenges faced by Montenegrin institutions in this process. The mission will provide recommendations, meet with representatives of state authorities and cultural institutions, and engage with local non-governmental actors. It will also include field visits to locations within the Kotor region. The outcome will be a set of expert opinions and practical guidance to strengthen the long-term preservation of this World Heritage site.

NETHERLANDS (KINGDOM OF THE)

Netherlands Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Kathleen Ferrier

Secretary-General: Ms Marielies Schelhaas

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Netherlands Commission for UNESCO focused its work on global citizenship, cultural protection, heritage, and education across both Europe and the Caribbean territories of the Kingdom. A revised edition of its handbook on global citizenship education was published and freely distributed to schools, helping teachers integrate UNESCO's transformative approaches to learning in classrooms. To ensure ongoing exchange, schools across the Kingdom actively shared projects and teaching materials on an open educational platform dedicated to global citizenship.

The Dutch UNESCO Chairs Network was another major priority. The Commission organised a dialogue session with the country's fifteen Chairs, during which participants examined ways to expand their collective impact. The Chairs proposed more open cooperation with communities, stronger connections between individual research networks, and greater visibility of achievements across the UNESCO family. The Commission emphasised the importance of showcasing the success of the Chairs to a wider public.

In May, the international conference "Cultural Heritage and Peace: Building on 70 Years of The Hague Convention" was held in The Hague. Organised by UNESCO in cooperation with the Commission and the Dutch ministries of Education, Culture and Science, Foreign Affairs, and Defence, it brought together international experts and partners to reflect on the continuing importance of protecting cultural heritage in times of armed conflict.

The Commission also guided the application submitted by inhabitants of Sint Eustatius to recognise two eighteenth-century African burial grounds as Places of History and Memory linked to Enslavement and the Slave Trade under UNESCO's Routes of Enslaved Peoples Programme. The proposal was officially acknowledged in October 2024 during the programme's 30th anniversary ceremony at UNESCO Headquarters, representing a milestone for the Caribbean territories of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Success story

One notable success of 2024 was the launch of a groundbreaking report on adult education by UNESCO Chair Maurice de Greef, coordinated by the Commission. The Netherlands is unusual among north-western European countries in neglecting the large number of adults in need of education—estimated at 2.5 million, or one in seven residents. De Greef's report addressed this gap, documenting systemic weaknesses, outcomes, and specific challenges faced by adult learners. He stressed that literacy is the essential gateway to opportunities and participation, urging policymakers to link education more closely to practical needs such as understanding workplace health and safety regulations, reading medicine labels, or monitoring children's use of social media. His recommendations emphasised a strengths-based approach, partnerships between vocational schools and industry, and recognition of vocational training as a forward-looking path. The Commission facilitated high-level dialogue around these findings, positioning UNESCO expertise within the national education debate.



2.5 million adult residents of the Netherlands (approximately one in seven Dutch people) are in need of education
©Portuguese Gravity | Unsplash.com

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking ahead, the Commission's 2024–2025 work programme is based on five strategic aims: strengthening cooperation with UNESCO designations across the Kingdom, advancing global citizenship education, promoting safe and inclusive knowledge communities, enhancing the unifying role of culture, and safeguarding free and independent media. In addition to its work in the Netherlands, the Commission continues to act as the coordinating body for the Caribbean public entities of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba, with a mission planned to the islands in January 2025. Collaboration with the National Commissions of Aruba, Curaçao, and Saint Maarten also remains a priority, particularly around education, intangible heritage, and disaster preparedness. The Commission confirmed its readiness to deepen cooperation with National Commissions worldwide, especially in the fields of global citizenship, artificial intelligence, Small Island Developing States, and cultural protection in times of crisis.

NORTH MACEDONIA

National Commission for UNESCO of the Republic of North Macedonia

Chairperson: Mr Zoran Ljutkov, Minister of Culture and Tourism

Secretary-General: Ms Tatjana Kraljevska - Lazarova

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the National Commission of North Macedonia for UNESCO coordinated the country's participation in a wide range of UNESCO programmes and statutory processes. As the central governmental advisory body, it worked closely with ministries, cultural institutions, universities, and civil society stakeholders. The continued support of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe in Venice and its Antenna Office in Sarajevo was invaluable in strengthening North Macedonia's engagement with the Organization's priorities.

Particular attention was devoted to the implementation of the 1972 World Heritage Convention. From 25 to 29 March 2024, a Joint Reactive Monitoring Mission to the transnational World Heritage property "Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid

Region" was carried out by experts from the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, and IUCN. The mission brought together national and local authorities, institutions, and representatives of civil society to discuss the conservation challenges facing the site. The findings informed the preparation of the State of Conservation Progress Report, reinforcing the country's commitment to preserving the integrity of this unique property.

The year was also marked by the global celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Following the decision of the UNESCO General Conference to designate 17 October as the International Day of Intangible Cultural Heritage, North Macedonia marked the occasion with activities across the country. The Parliamentarian Culture and Tourism Commission led commemorative events, while cultural institutions organised programmes designed to raise awareness about the importance of safeguarding living heritage at both the national and international levels.

In addition, North Macedonia played a prominent role in the European Commission-funded project "Fighting Against the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property in the Western Balkans," implemented by the UNESCO Regional Bureau in Venice and its Sarajevo Antenna. From 8 to 12 July 2024, a five-day workshop was held in Skopje to strengthen the capacities of ministries, customs officials, prosecutors, judges, and museum professionals to combat illicit trafficking. Building on this success, a follow-up workshop entitled "Leveraging Legislation in North Macedonia to Enhance the Fight against Illicit Activities Targeting Cultural Heritage" took place from 27 to 29 November, fostering dialogue among justice, law enforcement, and cultural heritage stakeholders.

Success story

At the nineteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in Asunción, Paraguay, in December 2024, the element "Traditional bagpipe (Gayda/Tulum) making and performing" was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity as a joint nomination of North Macedonia and Türkiye. This inscription represented the culmination of close coordination between national institutions, experts, and above all, the community of practitioners who have transmitted and safeguarded this musical tradition for centuries. The successful nomination was warmly welcomed by both countries, highlighting the power of regional cooperation and the role of intangible heritage in strengthening cultural identity.



Nineteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage ©National Commission for UNESCO of the Republic of North Macedonia

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking forward, the National Commission will continue to work closely with the UNESCO Regional Bureau in Venice and its Antenna Office in Sarajevo, as well as with the World Heritage Centre on the conservation of the Ohrid Region. It plans to develop new nominations for inscription on UNESCO's Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage, expand participation in intergovernmental committees, and promote greater youth involvement in UNESCO programmes. Regional collaboration will be strengthened, particularly through capacity-building initiatives designed to support cultural professionals, law enforcement officials, and educators. The Commission has also reaffirmed its commitment to advancing the implementation of UNESCO's normative instruments, including the 1970 and 2005 Conventions, thereby reinforcing North Macedonia's active role in international cultural cooperation.

NORWAY

Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Kyrre Lekve

Secretary-General: Mr Svein Hullstein

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO had an exceptionally active year, building on its role as a national facilitator of UNESCO's values across the country. The Commission managed its annual grant scheme, which is one of its most important instruments for promoting UNESCO's work in Norway. A record number of 112 applications were received, demonstrating the increasing interest of civil society, schools, cultural institutions and scientific organisations in contributing to UNESCO's mission. In total, NOK 4,078,000 was awarded to 34 projects across all four of UNESCO's main programme areas, ensuring that activities reached all regions of Norway and that the impact of UNESCO's values was felt nationwide.

The Commission also celebrated significant achievements in the field of intangible cultural heritage. During 2024, Norway successfully inscribed two new living heritage elements on UNESCO's Representative List: "Summer farming at fäbod and seter: knowledge, traditions and practices related to the grazing of outlying lands and artisan food production," and "Traditional costumes in Norway, craftsmanship and social practice." These recognitions reflected the importance of community practices that preserve both identity and knowledge, while also reinforcing the broader Norwegian commitment to UNESCO's heritage safeguarding framework.

Nordic cooperation also played a central role in 2024. Norway actively participated in the annual Nordic meeting of National Commissions, hosted in Iceland, which brought together a wide range of stakeholders working with UNESCO across the region. This meeting deepened dialogue and partnerships, aligning the Nordic countries more closely on issues such as education, heritage, science, and communication.

The year concluded with a highlight event: a two-day national gathering of the Norwegian "UNESCO family." This tradition, which brings together stakeholders from designations, networks, schools, and institutions, provided an inspiring platform for exchange and future planning. Participants reflected on achievements, shared new ideas, and built stronger national networks in support of UNESCO's work.

Success story

During 2024, the Norwegian "seter" culture and tradition, and the use of the Norwegian national costume called "bunad" were inscribed on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO is pleased to welcome seter culture and bunad to the UNESCO family.

This was a first meeting including discussions on challenges and opportunities. One conclusion is that there is a need to continue the discussion and the co-operation, and The Commission is planning to do so in 2024.



Osteglad ©Ingrid Skrede

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

As the newly appointed National Commission assumed office on 1 January 2024, strategic planning for future activities was still underway at the close of the year. While priorities are being finalized, the Commission has indicated that it will continue to place emphasis on regional and subregional cooperation, particularly within the Nordic context.

POLAND

Polish National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Michał Kleiber

Secretary-General: Ms Alicja Jagielska-Burdak

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Polish National Commission for UNESCO advanced a broad agenda across education, culture, science and heritage protection. In March, Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, visited Warsaw and met with Polish and Ukrainian students and teachers in an ASPnet school. The visit was marked by strong expressions of solidarity with Ukraine and coincided with the celebration of the centenary of the birth of Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert. It also tied into UNESCO's "Gift a Poem" campaign, with the 2024 World Poetry Day edition involving schools from 22 countries.

Poland continued to host two of UNESCO's most important fellowship programmes: the UNESCO/Poland Co-Sponsored Fellowships Programme in Engineering, which supported 30 fellows, and the Co-Sponsored Programme in Archaeology and Conservation, which benefited 5 fellows. These programmes, implemented in cooperation with UNESCO's Secretariat, reinforced Poland's long-standing commitment to capacity-building and international scientific cooperation.

The Commission also strengthened collaboration with other National Commissions, reflecting Poland's active role in regional and international cooperation. A meeting with the French and German Commissions in Warsaw focused on new modalities of collaboration between the three states of the Weimar Triangle. A separate workshop, held in cooperation with the Lithuanian Commission and joined by Estonian and Latvian colleagues, explored how National Commissions and UNESCO Chairs could contribute more effectively to UNESCO's priorities. The annual conference of Polish ASPnet also hosted an international component, welcoming national coordinators from Germany, the UK, Slovenia and UNESCO's ASPnet International Coordinator.

In the field of documentary heritage, 2024 marked the tenth anniversary of the Polish National Register of UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme. Its fifth edition saw the inscription of 17 new items, celebrated with a public campaign in cooperation with the Polish MoW Committee.

The 70th anniversary of the 1954 Hague Convention was commemorated through a major international conference on "Cultural Property Protection in Military Operations," held in Wrocław in November. In May, Poland co-organised the conference "The Power of Culture and Education in Times of War" in Lviv with the Austrian, German, and Ukrainian National Commissions, highlighting the resilience of cultural and educational systems during crisis and the impact of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in such contexts.

Success story

On 14–15 May 2024, the Polish Commission organised an international conference in Bydgoszcz to celebrate both the twentieth anniversary of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and the tenth anniversary of Poland's participation in the programme. Bydgoszcz, which joined as a UNESCO City of Music in 2023, hosted the event alongside the Polish National Commission. The conference addressed the evolving challenges and opportunities facing creative cities, with discussions on cultural policy anchored in recent UNESCO documents such as the MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration, the 2024 Framework on Culture and Arts Education, and the 2021 Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. Representatives from Poland's six UNESCO Creative Cities—Kraków and Wrocław (Literature), Katowice and Bydgoszcz (Music), Łódź (Film), and Gdynia (Film)—presented their programmes and shared experiences. The event not only celebrated milestones but also strengthened cooperation between creative cities and other UNESCO networks, showcasing how culture contributes to resilience, innovation, and sustainable development.



10th anniversary of the presence of Polish cities in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network ©Alicja Jagielska-Burdak

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking to 2025, the Polish National Commission is preparing a range of initiatives that will further integrate UNESCO's priorities into national and regional contexts. In April 2025, it will co-organise the webinar "Archaeological Cultural Heritage in the UNESCO Mandate" with UNITWIN's Culture in Emergencies Network, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, and UNESCO. The Commission is also planning, together with international partners, an event to contribute to the preparatory process for MONDIACULT 2025, focusing on the role of National Commissions in implementing cultural policies.

The ASPnet will remain a strong priority, with a series of expert webinars for schools to be delivered in 2025, involving UNESCO Chairs and World Heritage site managers. Polish ASPnet schools will also be encouraged to join UNESCO competitions that foster reflection on peace, heritage conservation, and creativity. The Commission will continue its national essay competition on heritage conservation for secondary students, with a third edition scheduled for 2025.

PORTUGAL

Commission nationale portugaise pour l'UNESCO

Président : M. José Filipe Moraes Cabral

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Résumé des activités de 2024

En 2024, le Portugal a continué à dynamiser les réseaux UNESCO, par la diffusion d'informations et la réalisation des réunions semestrielles ou annuelles. Nous soulignons la réalisation du 3ème Forum national des réseaux UNESCO qui a eu lieu à l'Institut d'éducation de Lisbonne en partenariat avec la Chaire UNESCO "Les futurs de l'éducation". Ce Forum a pu compter sur les interventions, entre autres, de M. António Nôvoa, ancien Délégué permanent du Portugal auprès de l'UNESCO et du Sous-Directeur général pour la Priorité Afrique et les Relations extérieures. La séance inaugurale a été proférée par M. Augusto Santos Silva, ancien ministre des Affaires étrangères, qui a inspiré l'auditoire par son extraordinaire leçon de sagesse, soulignant la valeur, la pertinence et le caractère unique du travail quotidien des réseaux de l'UNESCO.

Une activité réussie

Le 20 janvier 2024, la Commission nationale portugaise pour l'UNESCO a organisé la 2^{ème} édition de « Graines de paix », un spectacle mémorable de musique et de danse qui s'est tenu à Santarém et qui a rassemblé plus de 400 spectateurs. Cet événement a réuni des performances vibrantes provenant de plusieurs écoles associées, villes créatives et clubs pour l'UNESCO à travers le pays, mettant en lumière la richesse et la diversité des expressions artistiques locales.

La musique et la danse, en tant que langages universels, ont joué un rôle central dans cet événement, créant des ponts entre les régions et les communautés. Chaque performance, qu'elle soit enracinée dans les traditions ou inspirée par des créations contemporaines, a offert un aperçu unique de la culture et de l'identité locales. En réunissant des participants de différents horizons, « Graines de paix » a permis de renforcer les liens entre les citoyens, en favorisant le respect mutuel et le dialogue interculturel. Cet échange artistique a également contribué à la sensibilisation aux valeurs fondamentales de l'UNESCO, telles que la paix, la solidarité et la diversité culturelle. Cette journée a démontré que l'art, dans sa pluralité, est un vecteur puissant de rapprochement et d'inspiration, unissant les cœurs et les esprits au-delà des différentes régions.



Cante ©Commission nationale portugaise pour l'UNESCO

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

En 2025, la Commission nationale portugaise pour l'UNESCO continuera à renforcer son travail avec les réseaux nationaux au niveau de leur dynamisation, de l'organisation de réunions, de conférences et de débats. Partenaires privilégiés de la Commission, les réseaux sont de véritables moteurs et agents de transformation, d'application et de réalisation du mandat de l'UNESCO dans les domaines de l'éducation, de la science, de la culture et de la communication et information.

Dans le cadre du V^{ème} centenaire de la naissance du poète portugais Luís Vaz de Camões, à laquelle l'UNESCO s'est associée sur proposition du Portugal, et avec le soutien de l'Angola, du Brésil, du Cap-Vert et du Mozambique, une exposition a eu lieu au mois d'avril au siège de l'UNESCO, plus précisément dans le Hall Sécur. L'année 2025 sera également marquée par le 20^{ème} anniversaire de la Convention de 2005 sur la protection et la promotion de la diversité des expressions culturelles. Plusieurs événements sont prévus dans ce cadre, notamment le 3^{ème} Spectacle « Graines de Paix », réalisé en partenariat avec les villes créatives portugaises, le réseau des clubs, des écoles associées et les géoparcs, entre autres.

Le Prix de Journalisme Droits Humains et Intégration, promu par la Commission nationale en partenariat avec la Structure de mission pour les médias #PortugalMediaLab, fêtera aussi ses 20 ans, une occasion de célébrer les journalistes qui promeuvent ces importantes valeurs à travers leurs articles. La Commission nationale portugaise est ouverte à la collaboration avec ses pairs, le Secrétariat et les Bureaux Hors Siège dans les domaines mentionnés ci-dessus mais aussi dans d'autres domaines d'action de l'UNESCO.

Deux écoles ont été distinguées par une mention spéciale dans le cadre des Concours internationaux "Quand le son crée l'image" et "La jeunesse au service de la Paix". Pour marquer les anniversaires de la Charte de Venise, du document sur l'authenticité de Nara et de la Déclaration de Florence, un cycle de webinaires a été organisé, suivi de la 9^{ème} Rencontre Ibérique de gestionnaires du Patrimoine Mondial.

La version portugaise du kit « Le patrimoine mondial dans les mains des jeunes » a été diffusée par les gestionnaires du patrimoine mondial et les écoles associées. La Semaine d'éducation artistique a également été célébrée en mai. Le thème de l'opération « 7 jours avec le média », dédié à l'intelligence artificielle et à la pensée critique, a été rendu public durant la Semaine mondiale de l'éducation aux médias et à l'information. Le V^{le} Congrès Alphabétisation, Médias et Citoyenneté a eu lieu à Lisbonne, deux événements réalisés en partenariat avec le GILM - Groupe informel sur l'éducation aux médias. Enfin, un rapprochement a été promu entre les réseaux nationaux de réserves de biosphère et les géoparcs mondiaux de l'UNESCO, notamment par l'organisation d'un événement conjoint.

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

National Commission of the Republic of Moldova for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Sergiu Prodan, Minister of Culture of the Republic of Moldova

Secretary-General: Mr Sergiu Musteata

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the National Commission for UNESCO in the Republic of Moldova focused on aligning national priorities with UNESCO's mandate in education, science, culture, and

gender equality, while paying particular attention to the needs of Ukrainian refugees. Several studies and consultations were carried out to assess the country's most pressing challenges, leading to priority areas in inclusive education, cultural heritage promotion, scientific engagement among youth, the advancement of gender equality, and psychosocial support for refugees. A landmark partnership was launched with UNICEF to integrate children with special educational needs into mainstream schools, with a particular emphasis on those with cognitive delays. The Commission revitalized UNESCO initiatives in Moldova by strengthening the ASPnet and building new links with Romanian and French networks, offering technical support to Chisinau's application to join the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, and putting forward two anniversaries for UNESCO's 2026–2027 calendar. It also established four new Clubs for UNESCO, which led to the creation of a national Federation, and promoted international collaboration through forums in Kazakhstan and Greece.

Success story

A highlight of the year was the launch of a joint project with UNICEF to promote inclusive education for children with special educational needs. Findings revealed that parents of children with cognitive delays struggled to access adequate services and to involve their children in the educational process. In response, the Commission worked with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education and local NGOs to produce methodological materials for teachers and parents, which were tested with 50 children. Each child benefited from tailored therapies and personalized development plans, including speech therapy, neuro-motor training, language classes and psychological support. The results showed visible progress in children's social and learning capacities and strengthened the confidence of parents and educators. The initiative culminated in a music festival that showcased the artistic talents of these children alongside their peers, sending a powerful message of inclusion and equality. Plans are now underway to publish the methodologies and integrate them into official curricula under UNESCO's participation programme.



Inclusive education for children with special educational needs in Moldova
©National Commission of the Republic of Moldova for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking ahead, the National Commission will continue to align its work with UNESCO's global strategies and Moldova's national development goals. Education remains at the core of its agenda, with contributions to curricular reform that emphasize equal opportunities, tolerance, and modern teaching approaches. In culture, the Commission will work with the Ministry of Culture to implement the National Strategy for Culture and Heritage 2035, focusing on heritage, arts and creative industries. In science, it will prioritize artificial intelligence, including the establishment of a UNESCO Chair in AI at the Technical University of Moldova in cooperation with international partners. The Commission also intends to advance Moldova's first UNESCO Geopark in collaboration with Romania and to pursue new nominations for both tangible and intangible heritage. At the international level, it will expand Moldova's involvement in networks such as Creative Cities and Learning Cities and strengthen the role of ASPnet schools as hubs of global collaboration.

ROMANIA

National Commission of Romania for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Ligia Deca, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Madlen Serban

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO organized a series of events envisioning the world in 2050 within the framework of the induction of youth representatives to the Summit of the Future agenda. The programme engaged students from ASPNet schools, members of youth boards, representatives of the SNSPA UNESCO Chair, and Romanian delegates to the United Nations in discussions on pressing global challenges such as inequality, education, conflict, climate change, and technological transformations.

The year also marked the fiftieth anniversary of Ana Aslan's admittance to the Romanian Academy, an anniversary inscribed in UNESCO's 2024 calendar. In partnership with the Romanian Academy, "Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy, and the Ana Aslan International Foundation, the Commission organized celebratory events highlighting women in science and scientific diplomacy. A scholarship

sponsored by the Farmec company, the successor to Aslan's scientific work, was also announced to further her legacy.

Within the field of education, the Commission contributed examples of good practice in Education for Sustainable Development to the Ministry of Education's national report for UNESCO. In collaboration with the UNESCO Chair and the Research Center in Applied Ethics at the University of Bucharest, it organized a sub-regional online consultation on the draft Recommendation on the Ethics of Neurotechnology, with participation from representatives of 14 countries.

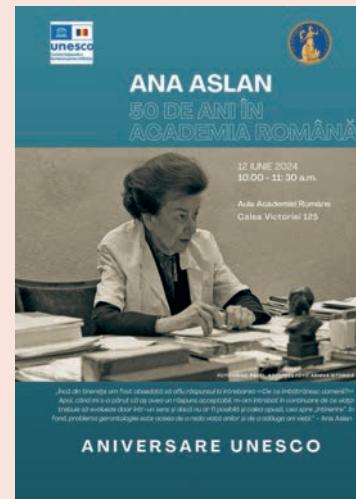
The Commission also obtained the patronage of UNESCO's Director-General for the International Student Week in Timișoara. To celebrate Romania's newly inscribed World Heritage sites, the Commission partnered with ASPNet schools to produce a digital comic book dedicated to Constantin Brâncuși, created by Romanian students. Moreover, Romanian cities deepened their participation in UNESCO networks: Galați and Cugir joined the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, while Reșița, the first Romanian member, hosted the national meeting of UNESCO Learning Cities. Romanian designations further secured two STEM education projects through the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, based in Venice. The Commission also actively engaged with the implementation of the Framework on Culture and Arts Education, contributing to the World Conference in Abu Dhabi and supporting national cultural initiatives such as the Shakespeare Theatre Festival in Craiova, the International Theatre Festival in Sibiu, concerts of the Madrigal National Chamber Choir, and the De-a Arhitectura project.

Success story

On 13 September 2024, the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO co-organized the international conference "Celebrating a Century of International Intellectual Cooperation: From Legacy to Future Actions" at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. The event commemorated the 100th anniversary of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IICI), UNESCO's precursor, and was initiated by Simona-Mirela Miculescu, President of UNESCO's 42nd General Conference.

The conference highlighted Romania's longstanding contributions to intellectual cooperation. The publication Romanian Contributions to International Intellectual Cooperation: Historical and Diplomatic Landmarks (Pro-Universitaria, 2024) was launched, and a roundtable moderated by Alexandre Navarro, Secretary-General of the French Commission for UNESCO, featured prominent speakers including Ana María Cetto (Mexico), Amal El Fallah Seghrouchni (Morocco), Gloria Origgi (France), and Ernesto Montequín (Argentina). This event was the culmination of a four-year effort by Romania to advance intellectual cooperation within UNESCO, following earlier milestones such as the 2021 roundtable "A Century of Romanian Intellectual Cooperation," the 2022 publication A Century of Romanian Intellectual Cooperation, and the 2023 tribute to Valentin Lipatti, Romania's former Permanent Delegate to UNESCO. Collectively, these initiatives underscored Romania's commitment to advancing dialogue and international cooperation in the spirit of UNESCO's founding ideals.

Inclusive education for children with special educational needs in Moldova
©National Commission of the Republic of Moldova for UNESCO



Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In 2025, the Romanian National Commission will focus on sustaining the active participation of UNESCO designations as knowledge hubs for action, particularly Global Geoparks and aspiring sites, positioning them as laboratories for the conservation and promotion of cultural and natural heritage. The year will also be dedicated to implementing UNESCO's recent Recommendations, especially those concerning the ethics of artificial intelligence, open science, and the 1974 Recommendation on education for international understanding, cooperation, peace, and human rights.

ASPNet members will continue to participate in UNESCO events and contribute to Education for Sustainable Development initiatives, while UNESCO Chairs will be engaged in global debates such as those linked to the second World Summit on Social Development. Clubs and Associations for UNESCO will expand their activities to involve more youth, and cooperation with L'Oréal will ensure a continued focus on advancing women and girls in science.

The Commission also intends to strengthen its implementation of the Framework on Culture and Arts Education, working closely with Romania's Creative Cities and Learning Cities to host cultural initiatives, including the Shakespeare Theatre Festival, the International Theatre Festival in Sibiu, the concerts of the Madrigal Chamber Choir, the George Enescu International Festival, and the De-a Arhitectura project. In addition, the Commission will celebrate the centenary of mathematician and academic Solomon Marcus, included in UNESCO's anniversaries for 2025, thus paying tribute to a key Romanian intellectual figure whose work bridged science, education, and culture.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the working environment for the Commission continued to deteriorate due to cases of ill-timed visa issuance for the activities at UNESCO HQ. Nevertheless, the Commission continues to be fruitful in its endeavours. An international conference involving leading foreign experts was held at Yangan-Tau UNESCO Global Geopark in the Republic of Bashkortostan. The panel discussion on the role of UNESCO World Heritage in the sustainable development of regions was held on the margins of the XV International Economic Forum

"Russia-Islamic World: Kazan Forum" (Kazan, May 14-17). The participants discussed the best practices of world heritage conservation, sustainable tourism, and investment attractiveness of regions with world heritage sites, astronomical heritage and others.

During 2024, the 46th WHC session in New Delhi included the cultural landscape Testament of Kenozero in the List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The Kenozero area is not only a protected natural area but also an outstanding example of a cultural landscape that was formed in the 12th-16th centuries, preserving to this day archaic forms of folk art, peasant life, husbandry, and nature management. Two major conferences on multilingualism were held in June-July in Saint Petersburg and Hanty-Mansiysk with contribution of experts representing 40 states. In February and June, the Secretary-General of the Commission spoke during two press-conferences in Moscow on multilingualism and Russia's vast experience in supporting native languages. On 20 November, the Higher School of Economics and the Russian Information for All Programme Committee organized a forum on media and information literacy in Moscow. Russian experts took part in the drafting of the first global Recommendation on the Ethics of Neurotechnology.

Success story

During 2024, Russia marked the 70th anniversary of its accession to UNESCO. The National Commission set a plan of major festive events to celebrate this important jubilee. These were held under the special Anniversary logo designed at the National Commission's order. The Commission together with the Russian News Agency TASS scrutinized the archives to find historical photographs and documents and form a large retrospective exhibition demonstrated in Moscow at the MFA's premises for the diplomatic corps and media, as well as in the city center for the general public. The exposition was later brought to UNESCO Headquarters. The National Commission initiated the elaboration of jubilee postal blocks reflecting two UNESCO World Heritage Sites – Lake Baikal and Petroglyphs of Lake Onega. During a grand ceremony, the Commission's President, H.E. S. Lavrov, canceled the envelopes, and an exhibition of other existing stamps depicting UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Russia was organized. These important events can be found in the National Commission's Newsletter dedicated to the Anniversary.



Historical photographs and documents and form a large retrospective exhibition demonstrated in Moscow, later at the UNESCO HQ
©The Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The year 2025 marks the 80th Anniversary of the creation of UNESCO and the UN. In 2025, the Commission will celebrate the 70th anniversary of its creation. A representative delegation from Russia will contribute to the 43rd session of UNESCO's General Conference in Samarkand, Uzbekistan in November. As part of the major contribution of the Russian Federation to the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, the My Mother Tongue Programme will be further implemented with support of the regions of Russia. The initiative is based on the advanced approaches developed within the Information for All Programme with a view to foster development of indigenous languages in Russia and introduce cutting-edge language preservation technologies. The Russian side will present a new cultural nomination "Rock Painting of Shulgan-Tash Cave" to the List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites at the 47th WHC session in Sofia. Situated in the South Urals, the cave was inhabited in the Paleolithic age, with its painting exemplifying one of the most ancient cultures in the history of mankind. The Commission plans to coordinate the organization of the third Award Ceremony of the UNESCO-Russia Mendeleev International Prize in the Basic Sciences. The most prominent award in the Organization, it was created to foster scientific progress, science popularization and international cooperation.

SLOVAKIA

Slovak National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the work of the Slovak National Commission revolved around education as the main theme for its activities on every level. The objective was not only to enhance inclusive and equitable quality education for all and thus accelerate progress towards effective implementation of SDGs, but also to bring the work of UNESCO into the forefront of the educational process. Other prominent themes included protection of cultural heritage during conflict, gender equality, responsible use of IT as well as raising awareness about national UNESCO designations. Special attention was given to increasing Slovakia's participation in Learning Cities and Associated Schools Networks. This resulted in the capital city of Bratislava joining the town of Trnava in the Learning

Cities Network. The Commission welcomed new managers in both its Education Section and ASPnet, who brought renewed enthusiasm and a fresh perspective. It is notable that the Slovak ASPnet schools rank on top of the list of the most successful schools in Slovakia, compiled by the Institute for Economic and Social Reforms.

Throughout the year, the Commission actively supported all its members and partners across the country. Among the most prominent activities with a wide public outreach were L'Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science in Slovakia, Slovak Women in Tech, the UNITE to End Violence against Women Campaign, the International Conference on Learning Cities in Bratislava, the Conference "Education as Key to Happy City" in Trnava, the Street Fair promoting lifelong education "Learning Trnava", the International Conference "Chemistry in Cultural Heritage", the Conference "Digital Technologies and their Role in Education" that featured a new immersive story-based video game which helps children understand the rich history of the Roman Empire in the Danube Limes region inscribed on the World Heritage List, and the promotion of The School of Crafts ÚĽUV inscription on UNESCO's Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. The Commission issued a quarterly newspaper and has been maintaining an active social media presence. Its experts participated in numerous events and conferences.

Success story

Partners Forum is the National Commission's signature event that brings together a growing community of actors and partners from government, academia and civil society. The 2024 Forum revolved around education with a particular focus on the use of IT, its pros and cons underpinning the mental health of both students and teachers. It also provided a great opportunity to present practically all national UNESCO designations showcasing their potential in the education process as well as in after-school activities as an alternative to excessive use of IT. Good examples are the School of Crafts or Falconry, which is a compulsory subject in one of the Slovak ASPnet schools. The Forum raises awareness of UNESCO's objectives and values and highlights the indispensable role of the National Commission in global endeavors to create peace and prosperity for all. It equally provides opportunities for networking and fostering mutual understanding of every aspect of UNESCO's mission. Having one main theme allows for a unique perspective and opens up new avenues for implementing UNESCO's mandate on national level and drawing more actors to join UNESCO's mission in Slovakia. As the National Commission is also an advisory body of the Government, the unprecedented presence of politicians and high-ranking government officials was instrumental in getting the decision-makers on board.



Partners Forum ©Slovak National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

While education remains the common denominator in all activities, the Slovak Commission chose environment and climate change as the main topic for the year 2025. Given the growing interest in joint activities of the UNESCO National Commission actors and the proven benefits such gatherings bring also for public awareness about UNESCO, the National Commission has decided to expand this format in 2025 and bring UNESCO through the Partners Forum into the regions. Therefore, the Forum will take place in the Polana Biosphere Reserve of UNESCO marking also its 35th anniversary. This will provide an excellent opportunity for awareness raising not just among interested partners, but also the public with a special focus on schools and the young generation.

The Slovak National Commission will also assist in organizing the meeting of the International Association of Falconry in Slovakia. Falconry is on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage designations and the IAF provides advisory services to UNESCO. The National Commission will also be working with the town of Trenčín on its project of the European Capital of Culture for 2026 by assisting in becoming a UNESCO Creative City and thus strengthening its cultural focus for long-term benefits of its citizens. A particular focus will be paid to improving education standards in Slovakia also through fostering partnership among various actors nationally and internationally via UNESCO projects like Learning Cities and inspiring children and young people to learn about and uphold UNESCO values and principles through ASPnet.

The Commission also wants to foster partnerships with other National Commissions and explore options of joint activities. Implementation of SDGs is on top of the agenda also in 2025 as UNESCO has led not only in SDG 4 but practically all 17 SDGs. The Slovak National Commission wants to continue being a relevant national actor in implementing SDGs.

SLOVENIA

Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO (SNCU) successfully carried out its planned activities and projects, operating in a dynamic environment marked by strong partnerships and international cooperation. A Fact-Finding Mission on Science Education took place in Ljubljana, on 12–13 June 2024, organized by the UNESCO Office

Slovenia. Representatives from UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Venice visited several institutions, including primary and secondary schools, a kindergarten, and the House of Experiments, to gain insight into Slovenia's science education practices. Another milestone was the Establishment of the UNESCO Chair on Teacher Education for Sustainable Development (Ljubljana, 25 September) at the University of Ljubljana's Faculty of Education. The key event of the Commission was the "UNESCO Day 2024" (Idrija, 27 September), bringing together over 80 participants from across Slovenia, including representatives of all UNESCO designations, programmes and networks in Slovenia. The event especially highlighted the work of UNESCO Chairs in Slovenia and showcased Idrija as a UNESCO City. Through these initiatives, SNCU strengthened its cooperation with UNESCO Field Offices and expanded its partnerships, enhancing its role in promoting UNESCO's values across Slovenia.

Success story

The Second Global Forum on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, held under the auspices and in partnership with UNESCO, brought together over 600 representatives from governments, international organizations, public institutions, academia, research, NGOs, and businesses from 67 countries. The Forum was officially hosted by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia and the Minister for Digital Transformation. The high global significance of the Forum was underscored by the presence of key UNESCO leadership, including the Director-General, the Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, and the President of the UNESCO General Conference. The Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO played a leading role as a partner in organizing the Forum. Additionally, the Secretary-General organized a special programme for UNESCO's leading representatives. The event highlighted the importance of international cooperation in ensuring the ethical development and use of artificial intelligence, emphasizing the role of global partnerships in shaping responsible AI policies.



Second Global Forum on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence ©Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO will continue to strengthen regional and joint initiatives that foster cultural heritage preservation, environmental sustainability, and education for all. Future priorities include expanding cross-border collaborations in science and research, promoting digital transformation in education, and supporting youth engagement in UNESCO programs. By deepening partnerships with neighboring countries and regional organizations, Slovenia aims to enhance sustainable development, intercultural dialogue, and the protection of natural and cultural heritage in alignment with UNESCO's global mission. The Commission will deepen its collaboration with UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Venice in order to enhance common engagements in the fields of education, science and culture in the region. It also intends to strengthen its cooperation with National Commissions on a bilateral level in the future. The Slovenian National Commission aims to revive the regional project on "World Heritage in Young Hands," possibly extending to the African region.

SWEDEN

Swedish National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO maintained and deepened collaborations with a wide range of networks in Sweden connected to UNESCO's mandate areas. These include numerous government agencies, civil society organizations, experts and UN bodies in Sweden. The National Commission has worked in close cooperation with ministries and authorities in developing positions and instructions regarding UNESCO initiatives such as on the programme and budget 43 C/5, the periodic report on the Convention against Discrimination in Education and the draft Recommendation on Ethics and Neurotechnology. Collaboration between the National Commissions of various countries remains a valuable component of the Swedish National Commission's

work, contributing to monitoring global developments, building expertise, and strengthening advocacy efforts. During 2024, the Swedish National Commission participated in the Nordic National Commissions meeting in Iceland. Sweden introduced a well-received initiative involving cross-sectoral working groups to discuss sustainable development, crises and conflict, gender equality, and climate.

The Swedish National Commission further advanced its efforts to streamline processes and strengthen collaboration among UNESCO-related stakeholders in Sweden. By organizing a national conference for all actors involved in UNESCO's concepts and programs in Sweden, the Commission facilitated an exchange of experiences and inspiration among over 100 participants in March 2024. Attendees included representatives from World Heritage sites, Memory of the World, geoparks, biosphere reserves, UNESCO Chairs, intangible cultural heritage, and creative cities. High-level participation at the conference underscored UNESCO's core values and highlighted the significance of its concepts for international cooperation and dialogue. The conference had a ripple effect with many representatives of Sweden's UNESCO initiatives expressing a deeper understanding of how their organizations can act in line with UNESCO's values and a stronger sense of belonging to UNESCO as a unifying global organization.

Success story

The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO has continued to bring together representatives for journalists, researchers, and cultural practitioners within the project "Voicebearers of Democracy," based on UNESCO's work with scientific freedom, artistic freedom and press freedom. Discussions focused on fostering the exchange of experiences among these groups and identifying synergies for collaboration, recognizing the unique role these professional fields play in democratic discourse. In March 2024, the now over 20 participating organizations decided to establish a committee for the network, which was officially launched during the Almedalen Week, an annual political and societal event which serves as a forum for dialogue and debate in Sweden, bringing together politicians, organizations, businesses, media, and the public. Under the name "The Committee for the Voicebearers of Democracy," the network will address issues related to professional freedom and strategies for managing threats and harassment. During 2024, the committee participated in several panel discussions, co-wrote opinion pieces, and organized a webinar together with the Swedish police to educate participating organizations about managing threats. A website was launched in December.



Committee presidium ©Swedish National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO has been actively involved and will continue to support the participation of Sweden's Creative Cities in the new Nordic-Baltic UCCN network. The initiative aims to bring together the Nordic-Baltic Creative Cities to highlight both the network itself and the work being done for sustainable urban development through UCCN in the Nordic region. Additionally, the network will explore ways to strengthen connections between the Nordic Creative Cities, for example through a UNESCO trail. In Sweden, the process of forming the Nordic-Baltic network has been underway since 2016, when Östersund, a City of Gastronomy, initiated discussions about Nordic collaboration. Since then, the Swedish National Commission has explored the topic through bilateral dialogues with various Nordic Creative Cities. During 2024, Norrköping, a City of Music, invited the Nordic-Baltic cities to the Swedish Annual Meeting to further explore the possibility of advancing this initiative. Progress continued during the annual UCCN conference in Braga in July 2024, where a meeting with all participating Nordic-Baltic cities was held. The Swedish National Commission participated, emphasizing the importance of cross-border collaboration. As a result, Viborg, Denmark's Creative City of Media Arts, will host the third Nordic-Baltic network meeting in April 2025. The Swedish National Commission will also take part in this interregional meeting.

SUISSE

Commission suisse pour l'UNESCO

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Résumé des activités de 2024

En 2024, la Commission suisse pour l'UNESCO a débuté une nouvelle législature de 4 ans avec une composition renouvelée de ses membres, dont le nombre est passé de 20 à 15, conformément aux règles des commissions fédérales extraparlementaires. Il a été veillé à maintenir un spectre d'expertise suffisant pour couvrir tous les secteurs de l'UNESCO. La Commission a établi des orientations programmatiques pour 2024-2027, assorties d'un plan de travail de deux ans qui sera adapté pour le reste de la législature. La Commission entend associer de manière

renforcée les réseaux labellisés et les partenaires du monde académique, de la recherche et du secteur privé à son travail. Les rendez-vous annuels se sont déroulés avec succès : la réunion des Chaires UNESCO sises en Suisse, la rencontre annuelle des écoles associées en Suisse, et la Plateforme suisse éducation 2030. Ces deux dernières ont traité du thème « Éducation et santé mentale » à l'appui des recommandations du Conseil du futur U24, un projet de participation citoyenne réalisé lors de la précédente législature. La Commission a organisé avec le OHCHR, l'UNESCO et l'Université de Genève un 4^{ème} Dialogue de Genève sur les droits de l'homme dans le mandat de l'UNESCO qui s'est tenu au Bureau international d'éducation ; plus de 50 participants ont discuter du droit à l'éducation, avec la participation de Farida Shaheed, Rapporteuse spéciale de l'ONU sur ce sujet. Les débats ont porté sur la privatisation, la numérisation, les situations de crise et les mécanismes multilatéraux. La Commission a organisé avec l'EPFL la réunion d'experts régionale pour l'élaboration de la recommandation sur l'éthique des neurotechnologies. Elle s'est aussi consacrée à activer un réseau Mémoire du Monde en Suisse et a noué un partenariat pour promouvoir le programme des villes apprenantes.

Une activité réussie

Le 70^e anniversaire de la Convention de La Haye pour la protection des biens culturels en cas de conflit armé a marqué l'année 2024. Plusieurs événements ont été organisés en Suisse, visant à sensibiliser le public et les institutions culturelles à l'importance de préserver le patrimoine en période de crise. Nous mentionnons ici notamment la conférence « Protection des biens culturels : expériences pratiques et défis » organisée à Berne conjointement par la Commission fédérale pour la protection des biens culturels, la Commission suisse pour l'UNESCO, le Département fédéral des affaires étrangères et le Département fédéral de la défense, de la protection de la population et des sports. L'événement a rassemblé des professionnels du patrimoine, des représentants d'institutions culturelles et des spécialistes de la protection civile. Il a mis en lumière la contribution de la Convention de La Haye à la préservation du patrimoine et son rôle dans le maintien de la paix et pour la résilience sociale. Les échanges qui ont eu lieu lors de la table ronde ont abordé des questions pratiques, comme la préparation des institutions suisses face à des crises potentielles et ont mis en avant la nécessité de renforcer les exercices d'urgence et les collaborations interinstitutionnelles.



Evènement du 18 novembre 2024 - Daniel Jordi (Vice-directeur de l'Office fédéral de la protection de la population) ©Sara Affolter

Priorités futures et possibilités de travail conjoint

La série de Dialogues de Genève sur les droits de l'homme dans les domaines de l'UNESCO s'est conclue en 2024 avec un dialogue sur le droit à l'éducation, après un dialogue sur la liberté d'expression en 2021, sur le droit à la science en 2022, et les droits culturels en 2023. Les résultats de ce projet ont une vocation régionale ou internationale que la Commission souhaite valoriser dès 2025. La Commission suisse pour l'UNESCO s'est engagée dès 2024 à promouvoir la Recommandation de 2023 sur l'éducation à la paix, aux droits humains et au développement durable et ses valeurs en Suisse. Pour ce faire, elle a mandaté une étude visant à établir un état des lieux de la mise en œuvre des compétences à promouvoir et à fournir des pistes concrètes pour l'application de cette recommandation en Suisse. Parallèlement, un dépliant et un poster éducatifs présentant les principes fondamentaux de la recommandation est en élaboration avec les Commissions allemande, autrichienne et luxembourgeoise. Une publication de ce matériel dans les trois langues officielles est prévue. Il s'agira aussi d'associer les milieux concernés, y compris les réseaux labellisés, autour de cette recommandation. Enfin, la Commission travaille avec l'Oréal Suisse et l'Académie suisse des sciences techniques SATW en vue d'une relance au niveau national d'un programme L'Oréal-UNESCO pour les femmes et la science – programme jeunes talents, inspiré du programme international L'ORÉAL-UNESCO For Women in Science. La première édition de ce programme national est prévue pour 2025, avec un appel à candidatures et une remise des prix. Ce programme est déjà mis en œuvre au niveau national dans plusieurs autres pays, tels que l'Allemagne, l'Autriche et le Royaume-Uni.

TÜRKİYE

Turkish National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO advanced its activities in line with UNESCO's ideals. On 5 UNESCO HQ, providing an opportunity for the North American and European National Commissions to share their views on the 43 C/5. The 7th Grand Gathering, its major biennial national meeting, was held on 19 December 2024. Bringing together key stakeholders, the meeting aimed to evaluate the previous General Conference and prepare for the next one. This year's meeting also marked the 75th anniversary, reflecting on UNESCO's history in Türkiye and featuring thematic panels on disaster preparedness and AI. During 2024, the National Commission launched the "Cultural

Heritage Journey in the Trace of Our Roots" project with the Ministry of National Education. This initiative provides high school students with training on cultural heritage in selected schools across the country.

Within the scope of its growing cooperation with NGOs, the Commission organized the 6th ICH Winter School on 18-21 January 2024, in cooperation with the UNESCO-accredited ICH Association. The theme of this year's Winter School was to evaluate the contribution of graduate education in the protection, preservation, and transmission of intangible cultural heritage. Academics and graduate students in the field of ICH participated in the event. On 14 March 2024, it organized the workshop "Selection of Türkiye's 100 Most Important Geological Heritage Sites" together with the Association for the Protection of Geological Heritage. The outputs of this workshop will guide the nomination of geosites for international designations. On 3-4 October 2024, the Commission co-organized the congress "Philosophy Facing World Problems in the 21st Century" with the Philosophical Society of Türkiye, drawing participation from public institutions and academics. Its support and expertise for NGOs to apply for UNESCO awards and programs bore fruit when "Beats by Girlz Türkiye" was awarded the IFCD for its "Grow Local Grow Equal" project.

Success story

The Turkish National Commission for UNESCO hosted the "8th Meeting of the Informal Network of European National Commissions" in Istanbul on 25-26 April 2024, with the participation of 51 representatives from 36 National Commissions. Throughout the meeting, participants discussed cooperation among National Commissions and with UNESCO HQ, as well as UNESCO's priorities and key topics on the global agenda. Within the scope of Priority Africa, they exchanged views on strategies for knowledge sharing and capacity building with African stakeholders and explored ways to monitor and assess the positive impacts of collaborations. Participants also discussed areas for improvement in UNESCO's 2022-2029

Medium-Term Strategy within the context of global challenges and shared insights on their roles in supporting and implementing the proposed roadmap and strategy for the Draft 43 C/5 consultation process. They deliberated on their active participation in UNESCO's decision-making processes, addressed practical challenges encountered, and explored potential capacity-building opportunities among themselves. Discussions focused on contributions to the Summit of the Future, promoting UNESCO initiatives, and supporting the Pact's development and implementation. National Commissions also had the opportunity to share their best practices. The meeting provided a productive platform for discussions among European National Commissions, laying a solid foundation for future collaborations.



8th meeting of the Informal Network of European National Commissions
©Turkish National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

For 75 years, the National Commission has been a bridge between UNESCO and Türkiye, working tirelessly to sustain its dedicated efforts into the future. It plans to once again host regional meetings, held biennially with different UNESCO electoral groups. These meetings provide a platform to discuss current UNESCO issues and potential collaborations, yielding highly valuable outcomes. Aiming to extend its cooperation beyond regional meetings, particularly with National Commissions of the African region and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the National Commission will, for the first time in its history, implement an expert exchange program in 2025. As part of this officially initiated exchange, it will send an expert in cultural heritage to a Small Island Developing State and host an expert from an African country to engage in joint initiatives. This exchange, which can be considered a pilot practice, is expected to become a regular activity, contributing to capacity building in the National Commissions for Africa and SIDS, and promoting cultural rapprochement. One of its major plans for 2025-2026 is to organize the second "Consultative Meeting of the National Commissions of the Member States of the Executive Board of UNESCO," the first of which was hosted by the National Commission in 2019 serving as an example of good practice highlighting the role of National Commissions in UNESCO's decision-making mechanisms. Its longstanding collaborations with NGOs will continue to grow through joint events and by supporting them in relevant UNESCO processes. As part of these efforts, the National Commission is committed to connecting nationally accredited NGOs working on UNESCO-related issues with their international counterparts through National Commissions, fostering collaboration and shared initiatives.

UKRAINE

The National Commission of Ukraine for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, Ukraine's National Commission for UNESCO displayed strong activity in implementing both UNESCO principles and individual tasks related to Ukraine's presence and activities in the Organisation. For example, one should highlight the election of Ukraine to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage for the period of 2024-2028. As part of the celebration of the 70th anniversary of Ukraine's membership in UNESCO in 2024, the National Commission announced an illustration competition among UNESCO associated schools and the issuance of a stamp block with the winning drawing on the

occasion of this event. Representatives of the Secretariat of the National Commission participated in meetings of National Commissions for UNESCO on the sidelines of the 219th and 220th sessions of the UNESCO Executive Board, speaking in particular during the discussion of the presentation on the results of the Future Summit, and reporting the main signals regarding the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. At the 46th session of the UNESCO WHC, three decisions concerning the state of conservation of Ukrainian cultural properties in danger strongly condemned, for the first time, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and called on the Russian Federation to refrain from any actions that would cause direct or indirect damage to the properties and their buffer zones. Cultural milestones included the inscription of the Ukrainian-Estonian nomination "Pysanka, Ukrainian tradition and art of decorating eggs" on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, as well as the nomination "Safeguarding programme of kobza and wheel lyre tradition" on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. Two cultural heritage sites in Ukraine obtained enhanced protection. Under the patronage of UNESCO and with the direct participation of UNESCO Artist for Peace Mr Herman Makarenko, the world premiere of the opera "Creonte" took place in 2024.

Success story

Since 2022, the Ukrainian and German National Commissions have been implementing a recreation project for children from Ukrainian UNESCO Associated Schools (ASPnet). Funded by the German Federal Foreign Office, the initiative offers Ukrainian children the opportunity to visit Germany for three weeks, where they engage in educational and cultural activities in a safe and supportive environment alongside their German peers. By the end of 2024, over 700 children and 300 teachers had participated in the project. This initiative has fostered unprecedented twinning relationships between Ukrainian and German schools, reinforcing solidarity between the two nations. The success of this project has inspired other UNESCO National Commissions, including those of Portugal, Belgium, and France, to establish similar recreation exchanges for Ukrainian children in 2025. These efforts provide meaningful support during the ongoing war in Ukraine and are an epitome of UNESCO's ethos and mission of promoting cultural diplomacy and cooperation.



Joint group from schools from Kyiv, Odesa and Kharkiv in Berlin in December 2024
©The National Commission of Ukraine for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Ukrainian National Commission for UNESCO is committed to enhancing educational and cultural collaboration, particularly within UNESCO Associated Schools (ASPnet), in 2025-2026. Building on a successful partnership with the German National Commission, Ukraine plans to expand these exchanges. In 2025, the aim is to establish German and French literature libraries in selected ASPnet schools to foster an interest in languages and a deeper understanding of foreign cultures among Ukrainian students. Furthermore, Ukraine is focused on capacity-building initiatives for language teachers through internships in ASPnet schools of our partners, promoting professional development and cross-cultural exchange. Additionally, Ukraine is increasing its involvement in sports diplomacy, with students from ASPnet schools nominated for the U.S. State Department's Sports Visitor Program, marking the beginning of collaboration with the U.S. in this field. These initiatives align with Ukraine's Foreign Policy Strategy and Public Diplomacy Strategy, emphasizing educational and sports diplomacy.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The UK National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Anne Anderson

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the UK National Commission had a productive and successful year. 2024 saw two sites in the UK being inscribed onto the UNESCO World Heritage List (Flow Country and Moravian Church Settlements: Gracehill), the inscription of two cities (Manchester and Wakefield District) into the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, and the establishment of three new UNESCO Chairs (UNESCO Chair

in Silk Roads Studies at King's College Cambridge, led by Professor Peter Frankopan, UNESCO Chair in Masculinities and Gender Equality at Queen's University Belfast, led by Professor Maria Lohan, and UNESCO Chair in Energy Technologies for a Sustainable World at Swansea University, led by Professor Matthew Davies).

On 12 April 2024, the United Kingdom ratified the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Following a UK General Election in July 2024, the Commission developed relationships with new UK government officials. Following his election as President of the National Commissions Meeting on the occasion of the UNESCO Executive Board, the Secretary-General of the Commission was invited as a guest speaker at the regional consultation of Small Island Developing States, co-organised by UNESCO and the Curaçao and French National Commissions for UNESCO, and actively contributed to discussions with fellow Secretary-Generals on how best to capture the role of National Commissions in UNESCO's draft programme and budget.

The UK Commission also commenced its major 'Climate Change and UNESCO Heritage' project, undertaken with the UK's Department for Culture, Media and Sport, which received £1.8million funding from the UK Government's HM Treasury department. The UK National Commission also collaborated with the German Commission, to successfully deliver a funding programme for UNESCO designated sites to build future skills, financially supported by Henkel Ltd.

Success story

During 2024, the UK National Commission completed the first phase of its flagship 'Local to Global' programme, aimed at strengthening and connecting UNESCO Designated Sites across the UK. Funded by The UK National Lottery Heritage Fund, Local to Global connects local heritage to global goals and demonstrates the power of UNESCO sites to inspire change, test new approaches, and amplify their impact. Throughout 2024, key achievements of the programme included six regional 'Resilience Workshops' attended by all UNESCO Designated Sites in the UK, delivery of monthly 'talkshops' for site coordinators, creation of a set of toolkits to support Designated Sites in the areas of Audience Development & Mapping, Digital Transformation, and Fundraising, and the development of a new website for the UK National Commission (www.unesco.org.uk). In May, members of the project team presented the Local to Global programme to colleagues at a UNESCO Regional Workshop in Florence, Italy. In September, they were invited by the Estonian National Commission to deliver a 'Resilience Workshop' for Estonian UNESCO Designated Sites. The UK National Commission has successfully bid for a further £250,000 funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver a phase 2 of the Local to Global Programme in 2025/6.



Local to Global Workshop - Scotland May 2022
©UK National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In 2025, the UK National Commission will further develop its innovative 'Climate Change and UNESCO Heritage' pilot project. The project aims to enable the development of cross-cutting solutions to the impacts of climate change and to develop shareable tools and models for natural and heritage sites worldwide. The Commission would be keen to work with the global National Commission network to use the sharable tools and models within their own national networks: <https://unesco.org.uk/projects/climate-change-and-unesco-heritage>. The UK National Commission is also keen to encourage the bringing together of the global network of National Commissions to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the founding of UNESCO, from 16 November 2025 to November 2026, in order to celebrate and highlight the remarkable work the National Commissions and UNESCO Designations do to achieve UNESCO's and Member States' goals.



Latin America and the Caribbean

Galapagos – Ecuador – Biosphere Reserve –
nominated in 1984
©Karen Solorzano/Unsplash

ARUBA

National Commission for UNESCO Aruba

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Summary of activities during 2024

The year 2024 has been defined by a strong focus on building and strengthening partnerships across sectors, fostering greater collaboration and aligning local, regional, and global priorities.

In education, the ASPnet was significantly strengthened through joint activities, while ties with the University of Aruba and the Teacher Institute IPA were reinforced.

In natural sciences, partnerships were enhanced to promote blue and green education, emphasizing sustainable and forward-thinking initiatives addressing the specific challenges in Aruba and the region. In social sciences, the National Compliance Platform Aruba (Anti-Doping) developed a comprehensive roadmap through strategic meetings supported by an intern, while Futures Literacy Labs expanded, introducing innovative approaches to societal challenges.

Success story

During 2024, Aruba National Commission organized, with the active participation of local partners such as UNOCA, EducationUSA, the National Library, the National Archive, the National Archaeological Museum, the UNESCO School Educampus Aruba, and with the support of the UNESCO Caribbean Office in Jamaica, the "Travelling Poster Exhibition: Slavery. Ten True Stories of Dutch Colonial Slavery & Aruba's Stories" created by the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. This exhibition was notably enriched by Aruba-specific content, including a unique poster of the slave 'Thomas' based on archival information. The exhibition also included the documentary "Eugenio and Francisca," a documentary about the Ecury family, which traced back seven generations to shed light on their historical and social impact. Additionally, the poster "Enslavement & Strength in Aruba" was exhibited which provided insights into the experiences of indigenous peoples during the early colonial period, particularly focusing on their enslavement and transportation. This poster helped illustrate Aruba's specific historical context within the broader transatlantic slave trade narrative.

The exhibition succeeded in achieving its objectives, engaging diverse audiences and sparking meaningful discussions about the legacies of slavery and colonialism.

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Aruba National Commission will focus on advancing its mission to foster sustainable development, inclusivity, and innovation. By addressing both organization-wide goals and sector-specific initiatives, UNESCO Aruba continues to promote impactful collaboration and long-term transformation.

Strengthening the UNESCO Family has been a key priority, fostering collaboration and increasing visibility within Aruba's networks. Meaningful youth participation stands at the heart of these efforts, emphasizing the active involvement of young people in policy development and programme implementation. Gender equality and inclusivity are equally central, with a focus on creating opportunities and representation across all initiatives.

Recognizing the transformative power of technology, the impact of digital transformation, including artificial intelligence (AI), has become a focus area. UNESCO Aruba prioritizes the responsible use of digital tools and AI, advocating for ethical frameworks that ensure equitable access and societal benefit. Lastly, sustainability and climate action underpin all initiatives, with active measures to combat climate change and promote environmental responsibility.

Education is a key priority for the Aruba National Commission. The Commission focuses on four cross-sectoral themes within education. One major focus is the greening and blue-ing of education, which integrates environmental awareness, ocean literacy, and sustainability into schools. This prepares students and their relevant communities to address ecological challenges and fosters a deeper understanding of sustainability.

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) has also been prioritized, aiming to foster critical thinking and combat misinformation. Through discussions and initiatives, UNESCO Aruba is working to promote MIL in formal, non-formal, and informal education, equipping individuals with the tools to navigate today's media landscape effectively.

Finally, culture and arts education highlight the value of cultural participation and heritage preservation. These elements are seen as essential for building strong communities and providing a holistic approach to education that connects students with their cultural roots.

In communication and information, platforms were established with journalists to encourage collaboration, and efforts were made to discuss the integration of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) into education through various activities. The Memory of the World Committee Aruba deepened its collaboration, and discussions on digital transformation and AI ethics were initiated to align perspectives on these critical topics.

In culture, a highlight was the conference on Culture and Arts Education on Aruba, organized with Dutch Kingdom partners, which fostered dialogue, knowledge sharing, and strategic planning. Meaningful youth engagement remained a priority, with active collaboration with youth-led organizations, internships, job shadowing and participation in internship markets to provide professional development opportunities.

The Aruba National Commission also strengthened its international presence through participation in key meetings, including the Caribbean SIDS meeting in Curaçao, the Press Freedom Conference in Chile, sessions of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, and the inaugural ASP network meeting in the Caribbean. Overall, 2024 has been a year of growth, connection, and collaboration, showcasing the transformative power of partnerships, meaningful youth engagement, and collective action across diverse sectors.

Future collaborations with academic and cultural institutions hold the potential to amplify the project's reach and impact, ensuring its continued relevance and success.



Opening exhibition by students of Educampus Aruba ©Rob Vermeer

BAHAMAS

The Bahamas National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

The year 2024 was once again an active one for the Bahamas National Commission for UNESCO. A number of projects were executed, and new partnerships were formed and enhanced with various government ministries and NGOs.

A National Memory of the World Committee was formed. The World Heritage Committee was restructured and has begun the process of preparing a nomination for a site currently on the Tentative List.

Two officials from the Ministry of Education and the Division of Cultural Affairs represented the country at the World Conference on Culture and Arts Education in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, and contributed to the examination and adoption of the UNESCO Draft Framework for Culture and Arts Education. Their participation was funded by the Government of The Bahamas.

The Bahamas was also represented at several UNESCO meetings, such as the Regional Consultation in preparation for GEM 2024; the 2nd Ordinary Meeting of the SDG4

Regional Steering Committee; the UNESCO Regional Meeting on National Cultural Laws in Antigua and Barbuda; the High-Level Regional Meeting for the Contribution of Comprehensive Education in Preventing and Addressing Violence in Educational Settings in Latin America and the Caribbean in Bogotá, Colombia; UNESCO Teacher Training on Gender Equality – The Road to Gender Transformative Education in the Caribbean in Kingston, Jamaica; and the World Tourism Event in Genoa, Italy.

The Secretary-General participated in the Consultation Meeting of the Caribbean SIDS National Commissions for UNESCO in Willemstad, Curaçao. At the invitation of the Secretaries-General of Curaçao and Sint Maarten, the Secretary-General collaborated with them and two other Caribbean countries to organize the UNESCO Caribbean Poetry Competition 2024.

Mutually beneficial cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Office for the Caribbean continued. At the request of the National Commission, Education Programme Specialist Dr. Nicole Bella organized a High-Level Meeting on Curriculum Reform. The meeting, attended by the Minister of Education, the Hon. Glenys Hanna-Martin, and other executives of the Ministry of Education, provided valuable insight as The Bahamas advances its curriculum reform initiatives. Dr Paul Hector, Advisor for Communication and Information at UNESCO's Regional Office for the Caribbean in Kingston, met with the Minister of Education and other officials to discuss the establishment of the National Library of The Bahamas and to assist the country with this project. The Caribbean Office has been timely in its responses and in the information shared.

Success story

The Bahamas National Commission for UNESCO partnered with the Visual Arts Unit of the Ministry of Education and Technical and Vocational Training and the Chinese Embassy in The Bahamas to host an art competition for public school students in New Providence and the Family Islands in celebration of World Art Day under the theme "Cultural Harmony: Cultivating Community through Art." The competition was divided into two categories, New Providence and the Family Islands, with first, second, and third place prizes of \$800, \$500, and \$300 respectively being awarded in each category.

In the New Providence category, Ciara Major of C.V. Bethel Senior High School won first place, Christen Lois of Doris Johnson Senior High School placed second, and Kaylee Valcin of C.C. Sweeting Senior High School placed third. In the Family Island category, Samuel Guy Pinder All-Age School won first, second, and third place.

The Minister of Education, the Director of Education, and the chargé d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy in The Bahamas all delivered remarks. The Permanent Secretary read the Director-General of UNESCO's World Art Day message, while The Bahamas Ambassador to UNESCO, H.E. Jamaal Rolle—an artist by profession—was the keynote speaker. Public school students studying art in New Providence attended the event, and Family Island students participated via livestream. The art supplies and prizes were donated by the Chinese Embassy. World Art Day, celebrated globally

on April 15 in honor of Leonardo da Vinci, recognizes the importance of art and its contribution to cultural and economic growth.



Officials from The Bahamas and the Chinese Embassy, together with partners, at the World Art Day 2024 celebration and student art competition event ©Bahamas National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Looking ahead, the National Commission's priorities for the upcoming year include continuing the preparation of the nomination of a site for the World Heritage List and assisting with the establishment of the National Library of The Bahamas. Youth engagement will remain central, while ongoing projects with the Division of Cultural Affairs will be executed to further advance culture locally. In addition, the National Commission will emphasize capacity building and resource mobilization, with particular needs identified in technical and vocational education and training (TVET), artificial intelligence in education, the upgrading of teachers, and science.

BRAZIL

Brazilian National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Brazilian National Commission acted in several areas of UNESCO's mandate. In the field of education, the Brazilian National Commission concluded the process of restructuring ASPnet in the country, which involved drafting a new Regulatory Framework aligned with the UNESCO Guide for National Coordinators and Guide for Members. The adoption of this framework is expected to bring greater consistency, diversity, and representativeness to ASPnet in Brazil. The National Commission also provided orientation and guidance to institutions interested in applying for UNESCO

prizes in education. Notably, three of the ten finalists of the UNESCO-Hamdan Prize for Teacher Development were from Brazil, and one of these projects was awarded the prize.

In the field of culture, the Brazilian National Commission supported the organization of an international seminar on underwater archaeology, held in Rio de Janeiro in collaboration with the UNESCO Secretariat, the Brazilian Marine Corps, and the Institute for the National Artistic and Historical Heritage. The seminar brought together experts from multiple fields and nationalities to discuss key issues such as combatting illicit trafficking of underwater heritage; developing scientific underwater archaeology; accessing underwater cultural heritage; the impact of climate change on underwater cultural heritage; and the current state of the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

The Brazilian National Commission is also in the process of reformulating its structure and reassessing its main goals, with a view to strengthening its national and international role and becoming more accessible to Brazilians. In November 2024, a new dedicated website was launched, providing updated information on its work and ongoing calls for prizes, scholarships, and programmes.

Success story

During 2024, the Brazilian National Commission worked closely with the National Archives of Brazil to reestablish the Brazilian National Committee for the UNESCO Memory of the World (MoW) Programme. This initiative reinforces the country's commitment to the preservation and promotion of its vast documentary heritage, while encouraging institutions and communities to play an active role in safeguarding historical memory.

The newly recreated Committee is fully institutionalized within the federal administration and includes diverse membership that represents different branches of government and civil society. This new structure and legal basis are expected to strengthen Brazil's participation in the Memory of the World Programme, including the inscription of relevant collections in the national, regional, and global registers.

Signature of the law recreating the Brazilian National Committee for the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme ©Carlos Cruz/MRE



Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

As of 2025, Brazil holds 37 UNESCO Chairs in several fields of research. With growing interest from Brazilian institutions in the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, the National Commission plans to organize a workshop for candidate institutions, with the cooperation of existing Brazilian Chairs. The goal is to provide a platform for sharing experiences, best practices, and opportunities within the network, while promoting closer collaboration among Chairs.

The Brazilian National Commission has also observed increasing interest from national institutions in issues relating to the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. To this end, Brazil intends to work closely with other National Commissions, particularly in Latin America and Africa, as well as with researchers and experts, to explore initiatives in capacity-building, where UNESCO's support would be highly appreciated.

Finally, the Brazilian National Commission is eager to learn more about the Secretariat's plans for the 80th anniversary of UNESCO and its relationship with National Commissions. This milestone offers an important opportunity to reflect decades of work, assess progress, and consider how National Commissions can be better equipped to meet their objectives in an increasingly digital global environment.

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

BVI National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the general environment of the British Virgin Islands (BVI) National Commission was shaped by strategic partnerships, local innovation, and ongoing efforts to foster sustainable development in schools throughout the Territory. The Commission focused on promoting social, economic, and cultural well-being through collaborative efforts with both local and regional stakeholders, particularly through UNESCO days.

Forging partnerships with schools, government agencies, and NGOs was central to the Commission's work, ensuring a more coordinated approach to challenges such as climate change, economic diversification, education, and community resilience. In line with global trends, the Commission integrated the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its mandate, prioritizing gender equality, quality education, and climate action. Partnerships with educational institutions also led to enhanced skill-building programmes for youth and strengthened efforts to safeguard cultural heritage, both critical to the BVI's economy and culture.

The Commission also prioritized community engagement by working closely with leaders, businesses, and civil society, ensuring that residents' voices were included in decision-making. In an increasingly digital world, the Commission supported innovation and digital solutions in education, most notably through STEAM education initiatives. The BVI also partnered with the UNESCO Regional Office for the Caribbean to provide science kits to schools across the Territory.

Through these partnerships, community involvement, and its focus on sustainability and resilience, the BVI National Commission for UNESCO successfully advanced its mandate in 2024.

Success story

On November 8, 2024, during Exhibition Day of Innovation Week, the BVI National Commission for UNESCO handed over 120 science kits to the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports. The Innovation Week engaged students across the Territory in workshops, games, and challenges designed to test critical thinking and problem-solving skills in all aspects of STEAM.

This initiative reflects the Commission's ongoing commitment to advancing STEAM education, an interdisciplinary approach combining Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. The goal is to foster creativity, innovation, and problem-solving while equipping students with global skills. While the BVI is geographically small, the emphasis on STEAM demonstrates its determination to prepare students for a world where technological literacy and interdisciplinary thinking are essential.



Science Kits Handover Ceremony ©Allison Flax-Archer

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

For 2025, the British Virgin Islands (BVI) National Commission for UNESCO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs, and Sports, will likely focus on several key priorities that align with both the global goals set by UNESCO and the local developmental needs of the BVI. This joint work will emphasize a holistic approach that blends education, youth development, sports, culture, and sustainable practices.

A major priority for joint work in 2025, with the hope of engaging regional partnerships, is expanding access to quality education. The Commission and the Ministry will continue efforts to ensure that every child in the BVI has access to quality education, with a focus on both academic and vocational training. This includes expanding digital education tools, improving online learning platforms, and providing greater access to education. The theme "Moving Full STEAM Ahead" for the British Virgin Islands reflects the Territory's focus on progress, resilience, and forward momentum. It suggests a determination to continue advancing and building upon existing successes, despite obstacles.

A great regional partnership opportunity would be a regional STEAM competition in the British Virgin Islands aimed at encouraging students and young people to engage in STEAM. The competition would be designed to inspire innovation, problem-solving, and collaboration, helping develop the skills needed for future careers in these fields. Participants would be expected to design and build engineering prototypes or technological innovations, present scientific research or environmental sustainability projects, explore artistic applications of technology or engineering, and use mathematics to solve real-world problems or create data-driven models. Such a competition would foster collaboration in the region, build a spirit of community and learning, and identify and nurture young talent in the STEAM fields. The ultimate aim is to increase the number of skilled professionals in industries that are vital for the region's future.

CHILE

National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO of Chile

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, two UNESCO Chairs were presented, and work was carried out on reactivating the UNESCO Associated Schools Network, updating the list of establishments and reestablishing contact. In September, 13 schools participated

in a virtual meeting to define three priority axes, with a second meeting being held in December.

At the beginning of 2024, SUBESUP contacted UNESCO to request support in the creation of a gender "seal" for higher education institutions, based on the work carried out at the University of Chile. Together with CUECH, they promoted a project financed by SUBESUP, whose feasibility study was presented in December. UNESCO suggested working with other agencies or with the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality.

The National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO of Chile also participated actively on the Regional Steering Committee of SDG-4, led by Chile and Brazil, which the UNESCO Office in Santiago coordinates. Progress is being made on the mandates of the Santiago Declaration, especially on policies for educational reactivation and transformation, and on a proposal for sustainable financing with ECLAC.

Success story

The Extraordinary Meeting of Ministers of Education of Latin America and the Caribbean was held on the 25th and 26th of January 2024. The Ministers of Education met in Santiago, Chile, together with authorities from Latin America and the Caribbean. They reaffirmed their commitment to the agreements established in previous meetings (Buenos Aires 2017, Cochabamba 2018, and Buenos Aires 2022) and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), in particular SDG 4, which focuses on education. They highlighted the importance of educational quality, equity, inclusion, and teacher development, as well as lifelong learning. Finally, they welcomed the approval of the Roadmap of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for SDG 4 and its Work Plan for the period 2022–2025.

The Santiago 2024 Declaration was issued, highlighting the commitment to the reactivation, recovery, and transformation of education in the region, recognizing the negative impact of the pandemic and other crises. The ministers reaffirmed their commitment to previous agreements, particularly SDG 4, which seek to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education. The meeting also welcomed progress such as the SDG 4 Roadmap and the election of new regional representatives.



The Extraordinary Meeting of Ministers of Education of Latin America and the Caribbean ©Sergio Andres Eduardo (Ministry of Education)

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In 2025, the National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO of Chile will help coordinate the 11th International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks, which will be held from September 8th to 12th, 2025, in the Küttralkura UNESCO Global Geopark. Chile will also host the International Teachers' Day with special emphasis on the teachers' deficit during the "Global Teachers Summit 2025" and the High-Level Steering Committee meeting, both in October. Efforts to reactivate the ASP Network will continue, as will the efforts to submit two new Chairs to the UNITWIN/Chairs Programme.

CURAÇAO

Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the annual recurring award ceremony of the "Premio Idioma Papiamentu UNESCO Curaçao" was held on International Mother Language Day (21 February), honouring a youth and an adult writer for their dedication in writing in Papiamentu. The first-ever Caribbean Poetry Contest for the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean was celebrated online with the participation of Associate Members and Member States of the Caribbean. Projects through the Participation Programme on the empowerment of women in and through sports, a youth-led initiative on restoring ecological balance, shaping the lives of youth, and a digital platform on cultural heritage for the Dutch Caribbean were approved.

In the context of the 27th celebration of the inscription of the Historic Area of Willemstad, Inner City and Harbour on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the Curaçao National Commission organized a first-time Digital Scavenger Hunt in the four heritage areas, namely Scharloo, Pietermaai, Punda, and Otrabanda, with the intention of raising more awareness about this World Heritage site among the population, especially the youth.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (OWCS) set up a Steering Committee which, together with a local expert, developed a Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM) on the application of artificial intelligence (AI) within Curaçao's society and how to deal with the ethical issues that come with it.

The Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO, UNESCO, and the Ministry of Traffic, Transportation and Spatial Planning supported the Regulatory Authority of Curaçao (RAC) in delivering a Master Class on Upgrading Journalists. The primary goal of this initiative was to familiarize journalists with the latest trends and developments shaping their field through a series of specialized master classes.

Associated Schools focused this year on receiving workshops on tolerance and peace, aiming to build the defenses of peace among young people.

Success story

In the first half of 2024, the National Commission, together with UNESCO and with the support of the French National Commission for UNESCO, organized the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Caribbean Meeting for National Commissions to work on the Programme and Budget for 2026–2029 by consulting on the preliminary proposals on the draft of the 43 C/5.

A total of 20 Caribbean SIDS participated, representing the Dutch, English, and Spanish-speaking Caribbean. During this encounter, the official launch of the exhibition from the Rijksmuseum "10 True Stories" took place at Museo Tula. This was a collaboration with UNESCO, the Outreach Programme on the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Slavery, and the UN Information Centre for the Caribbean Area. The exhibition highlighted slavery in the Dutch colonial era (17th–19th centuries) across diverse regions, including Brazil, Suriname, the Caribbean, South Africa, Asia, and the Netherlands. It revealed the lives of enslaved individuals, those who profited from the system, and the brave figures who fought against it. For Curaçao, this included Tula, an important leader in the slave rebellion who called for resistance at the end of the 18th century, seeking to implement freedom, equality, and fraternity in Dutch colonial Curaçao.



SIDS Caribbean Meeting for National Commissions ©Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO/Smart City Media

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In 2025, the Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO plans to conduct a thorough review and refinement of the RAM implementation, identifying strengths, pinpointing areas for improvement, and establishing the next steps for finalizing the RAM. Support from UNESCO will be sought in co-facilitating the validation workshop and the publication and launch of the final document.

The Commission will also finalize its restructuring to make it more functional in a small society. Trainings will be provided for the National Commissions of Curaçao and St. Maarten, with support from UNESCO. Work will continue with HWPL for Peace in Education in collaboration with ASPnet schools to introduce this programme in Curaçao.

As a small National Commission, Curaçao recognizes the need to focus on a limited number of areas in order to be successful and counts on the support of UNESCO in this regard.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Dominican Republic National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the National Commission organized and participated in key initiatives promoting education, cultural heritage, and sustainable development. One of the most notable achievements was the declaration of Casabe as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in collaboration with Venezuela, Cuba, Honduras, and Haiti. This marked the first multinational dossier of its kind in Latin America and the

Caribbean and the first recognition for the Dominican Republic in the field of gastronomy.

Additionally, the Second Congress of the UNESCO Chairs Network in the Dominican Republic took place, focusing on human rights education as a foundation for peace. Experts discussed issues such as water as a social guarantee, the role of people with disabilities in peacebuilding, and post-pandemic education.

Environmental sustainability was also a priority. The Commission organized the Eco-Rally 2024, promoting climate action awareness among students. A beach cleanup event was also held for World Oceans Day, reinforcing youth engagement in environmental protection.

Moreover, the pilot programme for UNESCO Associated Schools was launched, assessing selected educational institutions for participation in global education initiatives. The Commission emphasized cultural awareness through events such as the "Celebrating Our Cultural and Natural Heritage" conference, a panel on human rights and the inclusion of people with disabilities, and the First Regional Meeting of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (RedPEA).

Success story

In 2024, the National Commission focused on strengthening education through various initiatives related to UNESCO Associated Schools (RedPEA). One of the key achievements was the pilot programme for UNESCO Associated Schools, which evaluated selected educational institutions for potential inclusion in global education projects. This initiative is aimed to align schools with UNESCO's values and expand opportunities for students to engage in international learning experiences.

Additionally, the Commission hosted the First Regional Meeting of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (RedPEA), bringing together educators and students to share best practices and strategies for integrating UNESCO's educational principles into their curricula.

The Commission also played a role in promoting sustainable education through initiatives like climate action awareness campaigns, including student participation in the Eco-Rally 2024 and a beach cleanup event for World Oceans Day, fostering environmental responsibility among young learners.



Students performing a traditional dance during the First Regional Meeting of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (RedPEA)
©Dominican Republic National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The National Commission is working on restructuring the Youth Club for UNESCO managed by the Commission in order to launch a national call and include new young members in the Club, as well as to hold workshops and seminars for them.

ECUADOR

Ecuadorian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO (COMINAL)

Chairperson: Ms Gabriela Sommerfeld, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the National Commission, which includes the participation of seven State Secretariats, carried out several successful initiatives. These included the process of dissemination, selection, and renewal of UNESCO 2024 UNITWIN/Chairs Programme. At present, Ecuador has ten UNESCO Chairs, and in 2024 UNESCO approved a Sustainability and Climate Change Chair proposed by Universidad de Cuenca.

The National Commission also oversaw the pre-selection and optimal execution of four Participation Programme projects approved by UNESCO. Additionally, the city of Cuenca's

candidacy to join the UNESCO Learning Cities Network was approved, joining three other Ecuadorian Learning Cities: Quito, Loja, and Azogues.

Within the global network of Geoparks, the Commission supported the Imbabura World Geopark and assisted the candidatures of the Tungurahua Volcano and Napo Sumaco Geoparks, which were selected as new members of the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network at the 9th meeting of the World Geoparks Council.

The Commission also worked with national institutions responsible for managing material and natural heritage, particularly in the preparation of national reports on Quito, the Galapagos Islands, and Qhapaq Ñan (Andean Road System), all UNESCO World Heritage Sites. A permanent working group was established to respond to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre's concerns regarding the alleged proliferation of illegal tourism establishments and the announcement of a new air route between Cuenca and the Galapagos Islands.

In collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Quito, the National Commission also carried out a national consultation process on the ethics of neurotechnology, contributing to UNESCO's efforts to develop robust international regulations in this emerging field.

Success story

During June 2024, the Ecuadorian National Commission, together with the UNESCO Office in Quito, carried out a national consultation on the draft UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Neurotechnology. The consultation was based on UNESCO's mandate to pursue reflection on the ethics of science and technology, highlighting the importance of developing international regulations in this field.

The national consultation, held on June 5, 2024, at the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, was participatory and brought together a diverse range of institutions. Participants included the Faculty of Health Sciences at UISEK, the University of the Americas (UDLA), the Secretariat of Science and Technology, the Legislative Assembly, the Ministry of Education and Labor, the Data Superintendence, the Medical Products Association (ASEDIM), the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), and the Polis Foundation, civil society organization. Senior officials from UNESCO's Bioethics and Ethics of Science and Technology Section in Paris provided online support.

After a rich debate, contributions were made to the Recommendation draft, especially regarding the definition of neurotechnology, ethical values and human rights, public policy action, research ethics, communication and information, work and economic aspects, and security, among others.



National consultation on the draft UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Neurotechnology, organized by the Ecuadorian National Commission with the support of the UNESCO Office in Quito
©Ecuadorian National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The National Commission will continue to develop projects across UNESCO's fields of competence, with a strong focus on education, culture, science, and communication. Priority efforts will include supporting the management of Ecuador's five UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Quito (1978), the Historic Center of Cuenca, the Galapagos Islands, Sangay National Park, and Qhapaq Ñan (shared with six countries).

The Commission will also promote new candidacies for the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme to further expand opportunities for Ecuadorian institutions. Support will continue for the new UNESCO Global Geoparks of Tungurahua Volcano and Napo Sumaco, helping them achieve their development goals.

Additionally, the Commission will accompany Ecuador's UNESCO Learning Cities—Quito, Cuenca, Loja, and Azogues—as well as the UNESCO Creative Cities—Portoviejo, Chordeleg, Durán, and Montecristi—to strengthen their contributions to sustainable development.

JAMAICA

Jamaica National Commission on UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Olivia Grange, Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, through strategic representation, active participation in key forums, and fruitful collaborations with regional and international partners, Jamaica made significant contributions to UNESCO's initiatives. A notable achievement was the inscription of Jamaica's Watt Town Pilgrimage, a testament to the country's rich intangible cultural heritage and safeguarding of cultural practices. Another achievement, made in collaboration, was the inscription of The Thomas Thistlewood Papers (1748–1786) on the MOWLAC registry as part of the preservation of the world's documentary heritage.

The country secured representation at key UNESCO committees such as the World Heritage Committee, the International Coordinating Council for MAB, CIGEPS, and reappointment to IFA. Jamaican representatives attended significant gatherings, including the Education Forum in Chile, the ICH Convention, and the ICOMOS Annual General Assembly.

Throughout the year, Jamaican representatives contributed to a series of important forums and assemblies, including the Education Forum in Chile (focused on global education strategies), the ASPnet LAC meeting (emphasizing education

for sustainable development), the 19th session for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (where Jamaica's cultural preservation efforts were recognized), and the 22nd Annual General Assembly of ICOMOS (focusing on heritage protection). Jamaica also played a key role in the Regional Consultation for Latin American and Caribbean States at MONDIACULT 2025, reinforcing its commitment to regional cultural dialogue.

Jamaica's collaborations with international and regional partners were pivotal in advancing UNESCO's goals. The country partnered with Aruba for a subregional project and with the University of the West Indies for a regional project under UNESCO's Participation Programme, where Jamaica successfully implemented four national projects. Through the Transcultura programme, a number of Jamaicans also attended training courses in Cuba in 2024.

The National Commission celebrated UNESCO observances such as World Radio Day (with Radio Abeng in Accompong), International Coastal Cleanup Day (with UNESCO clubs), and World Poetry Day (with local schools in St. Thomas, featuring poets Kacy Garvey and Britton Wright of JAIKU). These events highlighted Jamaica's role in promoting cultural exchange and environmental awareness. Other initiatives included participation in MIL Week, World Earth Day, International Literacy Day, and the International Day of Intangible Cultural Heritage, during which an exhibition on Jamaican Revivalism was hosted. Collaborations with organizations like the Jamaica Library Service, Institute of Jamaica, and University of the West Indies further amplified these efforts. Local observances such as the Children's Literacy Festival and World Philosophy Day also demonstrated Jamaica's contributions to UNESCO's objectives, as did collaboration with the Jamaica Language Unit, UWI, for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

Success story

A key success for JNC-UNESCO in 2024 was the training of over 200 women and youth in hydroponics, through the project Training Women and Youth in Innovative Agricultural Technologies for Food Security and Employment, supported by the UNESCO Participation Programme. Implemented in collaboration with Northern Caribbean University, the initiative aimed to provide sustainable farming skills to participants from high schools, churches, community groups, and the university.

A greenhouse was established at NCU, where trainees participated in three practical sessions covering seedling production, nursery management, hydroponic house setup, and the use of digital pH and EC meters. They also learned how to mix fertilizer solutions for optimal plant growth. This training sparked interest in hydroponic farming as a climate-resilient alternative to traditional agriculture, offering controlled conditions for growing crops.

By providing these innovative agricultural skills, the programme empowers individuals to contribute to food security and employment while addressing the challenges posed by climate change. It stands as a testament to the positive impact of UNESCO's collaboration with local institutions.



Participants engaged in hydroponics training under the UNESCO-supported programme "Training Women and Youth in Innovative Agricultural Technologies for Food Security and Employment"
©Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO proposes to continue recognizing and celebrating UNESCO International Days to increase visibility. Building on recent interactions, it intends to collaborate with the National Commissions of South Korea, Canada, and Turkey. It will participate in regional and subregional programmes, especially in the area of intangible heritage, including Caribbean collaboration on forts and Africa partnerships in music and dance. Online consultations, such as Geoparks, are seen as a means of enhancing work in various areas. Capacity building, especially in project writing, is also identified as a priority need.

MEXICO

Mexican Commission of Cooperation with UNESCO (CONALMEX)

Chairperson: Mr Mario Delgado Carrillo, Minister of Public Education

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, CONALMEX underwent structural changes due to the restructuring of the Ministry of Public Education and austerity policies. It now operates under the General Directorate of Education Policy, Best Practices, and Cooperation. After the government transition at the end of the year, contacts at federal and local institutions were updated to rebuild relationships and improve workflows.

CONALMEX manages the national coordination of ASPnet, which by the end of the year included 633 participating schools

(259 fully associated and 374 candidate members). Each school submitted reports on its activities and future projects, and funding was secured from the Participation Programme for the Annual National Meeting of the ASPnet.

Additionally, CONALMEX supported three candidates for the 2024 UNESCO Chairs call for applications and the application of Querétaro as a Creative City to host the Annual Meeting of the UCCN. In the renewal process of the revalidation of the MAB Biosphere Reserves, Mexico successfully presented the 10th-year report for Montes Azules, Sierra Gorda, Los Volcanes, and El Cielo.

Regarding the Memory of the World Programme, Mexico successfully inscribed two proposals: Preservation of Linguistic Memory: Manuscripts in Extinct Indigenous Languages Preserved in the National Library; and the Dr. Alfredo Dugès Collection, which contains scientific illustrations and more than 262 publications on natural sciences and medicine, preserved at the University of Guanajuato.

The National Commission has been in constant contact with UNESCO's Mexico Office to better understand programme operations, particularly for support with guidelines for the Participation Programme and the organization of the Annual National Meeting of ASPnet.

Success story

During 2024, CONALMEX emphasized its commitment to the ASPnet programme and its dissemination across the country. The network concluded the year with 633 participating schools (259 fully associated and 374 candidate members). For membership renewal, annual reports and project submissions were requested. The network spans 24 of Mexico's 32 states, each with a local coordinator affiliated with ministries or educational institutions, creating a broad and active structure.

Work is ongoing to expand the network into the remaining states. Following the updating of the ASPnet platform, schools are being invited to upload information to ensure alignment with both national and international records.

Another notable achievement was Querétaro receiving the UNESCO Learning City Award 2024. Through its Learning City initiative, Querétaro fosters collective learning for people of all ages, building a sustainable and equitable future.



Querétaro received the UNESCO Learning City Award 2024 ©Mexican Commission of Cooperation with UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The primary objective for ASPnet in 2025 is to expand the network to states not yet covered and to encourage all schools to update information on the ASPnet platform. The Annual Meeting of ASPnet will be held in March 2025.

CONALMEX also plans to organize an event including UNESCO programmes that closely coordinate with the Commission, such as ASPnet, UNESCO Chairs, Creative Cities, and Learning Cities, encouraging collaboration and joint activities. Participation from other National Commissions will be sought to share the best practices.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Public Education and the UNESCO Office in Mexico, the Commission is addressing the educational needs of deported migrants from Mexico and other countries, expected to increase due to recent U.S. policies, and intends to apply for UNESCO's Emergency Fund.

Additionally, CONALMEX plans to update its legal framework to align with changes in UNESCO programmes and national structures. The Ministry of Science, Humanities, and Technology and Innovation has also proposed hosting the Open Forum of CILAC in 2026, with CONALMEX supporting the initiative.

NICARAGUA

Nicaraguan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

Chairperson: Ms Mendi del Socorro Aráuz Silva, Minister of Education

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Nicaraguan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO played an important role in supporting national institutions that have links with UNESCO. Meetings, workshops and seminars were held on the Cities Platform (Learning Cities and Creative Cities); Education

for Sustainable Development; structures and procedures on the Sustainable Development Goals; documentary heritage proposal for the Memory of the World; protection and promotion of tangible and intangible heritage; UNESCO Prizes; UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators; and the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), among others.

Preparation of four projects by government institutions for the UNESCO Participation Programme for the 2024–2025 biennium was undertaken. Projects related to UNESCO themes such as Gender Equality, Sport and Culture were approved through the Programme.

Applications of two cities, in the fields of Music and of Crafts and Folk Art, were submitted for approval and integration into the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

The inter-institutional committee that prepared the application file for the nomination of Granada and its Natural Environment as a Mixed World Heritage Site will continue to follow up on the key results of the final preliminary evaluation report on the file.

Success story

The National Film Library of Nicaragua presented its candidacy for the Filmography of the Sandinista Popular Revolution, 1978–1985 collection, an audiovisual and cinematographic heritage, already declared Cultural Heritage of the Nation.

In November 2024, the XXIV Meeting of the Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean of the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme (MoWLAC) was held in Philipsburg, Saint Martin, where the members approved 27 new inscriptions

that are added to the MoWLAC Register, once again integrating Nicaragua into the approved list.

This collection portrays the hardships, achievements and fighting spirit of the Nicaraguan people, immortalizing key moments of a historical period that has left a deep mark on the national identity. It is a success for us as a country to be registered in the Regional Memory of the World Register (Latin America and the Caribbean) and that it allows us to promote the conservation of documentary heritage.

PERU

Peruvian National Commission of Cooperation for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Morgan Niccolo Quero Gaime, Minister of Education

Secretary-General: Ms Roxana Magly Mayorga García

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, educational institutions across Peru fully resumed in-person classes following the pandemic. A key priority was updating contact information for ASPnet schools to facilitate their UNESCO project development, with directors and coordinators actively engaging in these initiatives.

Throughout the year, Peru actively participated in the different areas of UNESCO's ecosystem. The National Commission shared UNESCO's calls for participation in events, forums, and conferences with different public institutions and organizations of civil society at both the local and national levels.

The Peruvian National Commission of Cooperation for UNESCO also distributed at the national level UNESCO materials and tools to ASPnet schools, received during the

pandemic closure. Materials published by UNESCO were shared with municipalities and public offices.

Significant progress was made in policy implementation. The UNESCO report on education for peace, human rights, and sustainable development was integrated into the Ministry of Education's plans for improving school management quality. Peru also participated in important consultations, notably contributing to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, with input from various educational directorates.

International engagement remained strong with Peru participating in several key events, such as the Global Education Meeting (Fortaleza, Brazil), led by Education Minister Morgan Quero, who participated in the high-level meeting for the construction of the proposal for the Regional Reference Framework on Public Policies for Educational Reactivation, Recovery and Transformation. Peru also participated in the virtual meetings within the Latin American and Caribbean Open Science Forum with the participation of the chairman of the National Council of Science, Technology and Innovation, and contributed to UNESCO's framework for Culture and Arts Education.

Professional development was prioritized, with Ministry of Education officials participating in virtual fellowships offered by the International Institute of Educational Planning. Peru submitted four candidates to IFCD and others, demonstrating its commitment to cultural development through education.

Success story

Teachers and students from the "Santiago Antúnez de Mayolo" School, situated in Junín, a department in the highlands of central Peru, collected recyclable materials from their houses as part of their UNESCO educational project on Science and Technology at the primary and secondary levels. This activity mobilized the school and its surroundings. Throughout the academic year, the community worked on the project at different times and from different approaches.

For the collecting activity, authorities of the Municipality of Pichanaqui were invited to join the combined efforts of the school and the community. The day before, many families cleaned their roofs and unusable items. The Mayor and municipal workers, with trucks and tools, helped collect the items at different concentration points. Meanwhile, school staff received recyclable materials from students organized by grade, section, and level. At the end of the day, the winning classroom was the one that accumulated the largest amount.

It was a significant achievement for both the school and the community. It is a replicable experience that combines institutional goals and the population's aspiration for improved living conditions and environmentally sustainable practices.



Students and teachers from "Santiago Antúnez de Mayolo" School in Junín, Peru, collecting recyclable materials as part of their UNESCO science and technology project
©Peruvian National Commission of Cooperation for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Since the pandemic, Peru and Argentina have been working to strengthen collaboration with ASPnet schools on cultural heritage, particularly intangible heritage in the Latin American region. In this part of the world, there are remnants of the great Inka Road network, Qhapaq Ñan. Each country identified schools located within five kilometers of the trail. ASPnet students will research, with their families and community members, the cultural relationship with Qhapaq Ñan.

An international seminar will provide an opportunity for these countries and their educational institutions to share their findings. To this end, the Peruvian National Commission of Cooperation for UNESCO coordinated with specialists from the Ministry of Culture and successfully identified ASPnet schools located near the trail using a geographic map. This activity is important for ASPnet because the Qhapaq Ñan links countries from south to north, allowing them to share history, dreams, improvements, and needs. Students from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela will benefit.

Another experience took place with the Eco-Biological Lyceum of the City of Arkhangelsk in Russia. Despite the time difference and language barrier, students exchanged knowledge on natural science and cultural heritage.

Despite these achievements, school coordinators and teachers responsible for UNESCO projects often face challenges in designing and organizing annual projects, particularly when collaboration across different subject specialties is required. The Commission has coordinated with professionals of the National Fund for the Development of Peruvian Education to address this challenge.

Finally, the Commission seeks UNESCO's support by sharing experiences from other regions to strengthen access and improve quality of life across all areas of work.

SAINT LUCIA

Saint Lucia National Commission of UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Shawn A. Edward, Minister of Education, Sustainable Development, Innovation, Science, Technology and Vocational Training

Secretary-General: Ms Marcia Symphorien

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Saint Lucia National Commission placed great emphasis on ensuring UNESCO's visibility through its engagement with schools, communities, and the Saint Lucian society in general. This objective was achieved through a series of activities and programmes organized solely or in partnership with other agencies.

In February 2024, seven project proposals were submitted under the UNESCO Participation Programme for the 2024–2025 biennium. Saint Lucia was able to secure approval for four requests, amounting to USD 78,000 that will contribute to the further development of the country.

The National Commission was also able to secure additional funding from UNESCO for Technical Assistance for the elaboration of the International Assistance requests from the

Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund of the 2003 Convention. These funds allowed the Commission to host a mission in August 2024 which featured a capacity-building workshop aimed at creating greater awareness of the 2003 Convention and its associated fund. Mr. David Brown, UNESCO Global Facilitator for the 2003 Convention, continues to assist Saint Lucia with the establishment of a national inventory and register of the country's Intangible Cultural Heritage and ultimately the submission of a Technical Assistance Request proposal under the ICH Fund.

Additionally, funding of USD 7,872 from the World Heritage Fund provided support to the work of the Pitons Management Area (PMA) Office in improving the visitor experience at Sulphur Springs Park.

Special Features and Newsletters provided insights into the Commission's activities and achievements and raised awareness of worldwide issues. Press releases, Facebook, and Instagram posts commemorated UNESCO International Days and disseminated information regarding UNESCO calls for participation, nominations, proposals, and employment opportunities.

Through timely provision of information and open communication with relevant stakeholders, the National Commission continued to facilitate the country's participation, both virtually and in person, in UNESCO events of both regional and international importance.

Success story

On 24 June 2024, Saint Lucia submitted its first ever Quadrennial Periodic Report (QPR), one of the main monitoring mechanisms of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

In October 2023, a sum of USD 10,000 was contributed by UNESCO for technical assistance for the elaboration of Saint Lucia's periodic report. A series of activities, consultations, and meetings played a key role in this year-long process. This included a four-day workshop and multi-stakeholder consultation in November 2023. These activities were coordinated by the office of the National Commission and moderated by the UNESCO-appointed international expert, Dr. Deborah Hickling Gordon, lecturer at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, and the national consultant, Mr. Embert Charles, Chairperson of the Monsignor Patrick Anthony Folk Research Center.

The dedication and effort of the members of the National Team, under the guidance of the National Expert, resulted in the submission of the report by Mrs. Raymona Henry-Wynne in her capacity as the Executive Director of the Cultural Development Foundation and Saint Lucia's focal point. The National Commission is very grateful to UNESCO for its contribution and continued support.



QPR team members at work ©Saint Lucia National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The Saint Lucia National Commission for UNESCO will focus on two main priority areas in 2025.

Since the establishment of the Saint Lucia ASPnet in 1982, many programmes and projects have been undertaken to create a better understanding of UNESCO's mission among students. Saint Lucia's membership has now plateaued as there are no more schools registering, and many have become inactive due to coordinators leaving, resulting in a lack of continuity. Despite this, the network continues to strive to achieve its mandate through the publication of a termly ASPnet Newsletter and an additional Kid's News, in order to cater to students at all levels.

In commemoration of its 44th anniversary on 2 February 2025, the National Commission will host a two-day workshop as part of a week of activities, aimed at fifty ASPnet coordinators. Through this activity, the National Commission aims to restore the once vibrant Associated Schools Project Network by renewing the interest of member schools and capturing the interest of non-member schools in an effort to increase membership and advance the work of the ASPnet in Saint Lucia.

The National Commission's commitment to the inscription of Saint Lucia's intangible cultural heritage on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has been unwavering. In this regard, the Commission has begun the application processes for the submission of an International Assistance Request, as well as Preparatory Assistance for preparation of its nomination dossier. This will be done in close collaboration with the Cultural Development Foundation, which is responsible for the promotion and preservation of Saint Lucia's cultural heritage, and with the assistance of experts from the Culture Sector of the UNESCO Office for the Caribbean.

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

St. Vincent and the Grenadines National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines National Commission for UNESCO (SVG NatCom) concentrated on aspects from its operational plan to become more engaging, relevant, and visible.

The National Commission revived membership with the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet). Borrowing from the strategic priorities of the Programme, the SVG NatCom adopted a strategic framework that prioritized Global

Citizenship and Climate Change Education. The Programme aims to provide young people with relevant skills to combat climate change and improve sustainable living, develop critical thinking, and foster a shared responsibility to address contemporary issues as active citizens.

Culture and science education are of national priority for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. As such, SVG NatCom continued cooperation with the relevant government ministries and stakeholders to implement programmes and initiatives that align with the 2003 and 2005 Conventions. Mention must be made of the continuous work to have a national inscription on the World Heritage List. Additionally, increased efforts have been made for mapping, inventorying, and documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the country.

The Commission has further strengthened its cooperation with respective national and other United Nations-affiliated groups to increase partnership, thereby enhancing capacity to continue work in disaster risk reduction (DRR), strengthening work in tsunami-ready programmes, and advancing the Recommendation on Open Science that aims to improve science policies and practices. The Commission also continues to raise its profile through partnerships and awareness campaigns on social media.

Success story

The National Commission continues to provide support to culture and education initiatives throughout Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and has a strong working relationship with the Ministries of Culture and Education, notably in the area of archives development.

The Commission was fortunate to receive support under the UNESCO Emergency Fund to purchase and install a digital scanner at the national archives. Additionally, the programme included training of ten staff members in the utilization of the machine and the digitization of the archives.

This project benefited users of the facility including researchers, students, and the general public. Moreover, the newly installed facility and training have assisted in devising strategies needed to support and update documentary heritage, preservation tools, and digital preservation of fragile records for future generations.

Workers of the National Archives involved in training
©SVG National Commission for UNESCO



Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The National Commission secured funding for its Intangible Cultural Heritage project. This will help propel work as the country moves forward with "Strengthening local capacities to Safeguard Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' Intangible Cultural Heritage: Mapping, Documenting, Sensitising."

There will also be a strong focus on registering more groups on the UNESCO ASPnet. It is the intention of the Commission to strengthen international cooperation and collaboration, knowledge sharing, and partnerships between countries and schools.

The catastrophic devastation caused by Hurricane Beryl of 2024 continues to highlight the country's vulnerability in the face of climate change. The response to this new climate regime must be robust, with education central to the national strategy. The Commission will continue to work with policymakers and other national and regional stakeholders to enhance strategies for increasing public understanding of the causes and impacts of climate change, while simultaneously inspiring action to adapt and mitigate against its debilitating effects.

SINT MAARTEN

Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO successfully executed several impactful initiatives that contributed to cultural preservation, youth empowerment, educational innovation, and regional collaboration.

One of the key achievements was the integration of the ICH Afterschool Wire Bending Programme into the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade curricula of four local elementary schools. This programme aims to preserve traditional craftsmanship while fostering creativity and developing students' craftsmanship skills, effectively promoting Sint Maarten's rich cultural heritage.

The National Commission also organized its 2nd Annual UNESCO Kite Flying Competition, which brought together students from various elementary schools to celebrate this traditional art form.

In a significant international endeavor, six students from ASPnet schools, alongside students from other high schools and youth organizations, participated in the 5th Annual World Cultural Heritage Youth Symposium in Olympia, Greece. The students engaged in various workshops and proudly showcased Sint Maarten's cultural heritage, earning praise for their active participation.

Additionally, the Caribbean World Poetry Day Competition, organized in collaboration with the National Commissions of Curaçao, the British Virgin Islands, The Bahamas, and Sint Maarten, encouraged ASPnet school students to submit poetry on the theme "The Impact of Climate Change in the Caribbean Region." This initiative raised awareness about critical environmental issues facing the region.

In the realm of ICT, two local specialists represented Sint Maarten at regional and international conferences. Mr. Marvio Cooks presented at the 2024 Open Educational Resources Congress in Dubai, while Ms. Sharleen Dickenson participated in the Third Regional Webinar on "Educational Innovation: Teaching Practices and Quality Public Digital Learning."

The National Commission also participated in important capacity-building meetings, including the ASPnet Regional Meeting for the Latin America and Caribbean region, the Caribbean CER Hub Inauguration Meeting, and hosted the Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Memory of the World Programme.

Success story

During 2024, Sint Maarten successfully hosted the XXIV Ordinary Meeting of the Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Memory of the World Programme (MoWLAC) from 25 to 28 November. Attended by documentary heritage experts from eighteen countries, the meeting resulted in the approval of twenty-seven new inscriptions to the MoWLAC Registry, further highlighting the region's cultural heritage on the global stage.

Following the review of the inscriptions, an international conference provided an invaluable platform for knowledge sharing, training, and familiarizing new members of National Memory of the World Committees with the objectives of the Programme. A key highlight of the conference was the address by Hon. Melissa Gumbs, Minister of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport, who underscored the importance of documentary heritage in preserving cultural identity amidst environmental and societal challenges. The event also honored the late Alfonso Blijden, a renowned documentary heritage expert from Sint Maarten, recognizing his significant contributions to heritage preservation. The meeting featured visits to local institutions such as the Sint Maarten National Heritage Museum, the Kadaster Office, and the Government Archives, emphasizing their crucial role in safeguarding historical records and Sint Maarten's documentary heritage.



XXIV Ordinary Meeting of the Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Memory of the World Programme
©Rodney Richardson, Department of Culture

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In 2025, the Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO will focus on hosting national and regional workshops across the fields of education, sciences, culture, communication, and information, both locally and regionally; advocating for capacity-building programmes for ASPnet National Coordinators, school coordinators, and teachers; cooperating with regional and international National Commissions to support capacity building and cross-cultural initiatives in areas such as Intangible Cultural Heritage, the MAB Programme, UNESCO Clubs, SDGs, disaster risk reduction, and climate change education; and revitalizing the National Man and Biosphere and National Memory of the World Committees.

The Commission also plans to engage in the subregional project marking the 30th anniversary of the Routes of Enslaved Peoples Programme, focusing on safeguarding, valorizing, and promoting the shared history and culture of the Caribbean related to the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Other priorities include collaboration with regional partners to execute the "Tailor-Made Heat Maps for Caribbean Island States" project, aimed at enhancing climate resilience; advocating and implementing programmes to enhance teacher capacity in STEAM education and AI integration; supporting plastic waste education and recycling through the "Perpetual Plastic" initiative; publishing a resource on Sint Maarten's cultural heritage sites to enhance local education; and prioritizing women and youth empowerment in all future projects.

ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

St. Kitts and Nevis National Commission for UNESCO

Chairperson: Mr Geoffrey Hanley

Secretary-General: Ms Nerys Dockery

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, St. Kitts and Nevis continued to benefit from UNESCO's interventions on high-level policy development advice and project implementation, covering several key initiatives. These included the Earth Network programme, the

Accreditation Enhancement Project Phase III, sensitization on the elimination of single-use plastic in the St. Mary's Biosphere Reserve, orientation for students and teachers for the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) bachelor's degree programme, and the development of a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework for the implementation of the National Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan.

Further activities included the identification of heritage sites eligible for the National Tentative List, comprising one potential site for nomination to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the completion of a structured National Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Policy Framework to safeguard the knowledge of tradition bearers. An application for UNESCO funding was made to cover Phase 3 of this initiative, to nominate and register ICH elements unique to St. Kitts and Nevis for inscription on the UNESCO Representative List of the ICH of Humanity.

Continuing efforts through the National Sport Council also saw significant progress towards achieving full compliance with the Anti-doping in Sport standards, now at 73.8 percent.

Success story

During 2024, St. Kitts and Nevis achieved a major milestone in safeguarding its rich cultural heritage with the successful completion of the first phase of the National Intangible Cultural Heritage campaign. This initiative led to the creation of the country's first-ever ICH framework. Through extensive consultations, the project engaged diverse stakeholders, some already aware of their role in preserving cultural traditions, while others gained newfound appreciation for their contributions.

As a result, previously disengaged individuals and institutions committed to safeguarding ICH, generating fresh ideas and collaborative initiatives. A key outcome was the development of the National ICH Policy, a government-endorsed framework that recognizes the value of local customs and traditions while addressing challenges and best practices. The project also trained individuals in ICH documentation, ensuring sustainability. With strong partnerships emerging between the public and private sectors, the campaign has laid a solid foundation for preserving the nation's cultural identity for generations to come.



Launch of the ICH project ©St Kitts and Nevis National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

In 2025, the National Commission will continue efforts under the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and the St. Mary's Biosphere Reserve, including installing greenhouses for new seed varieties, establishing a neem processing plant for organic pest management, developing an innovative fog collection system for sustainable agricultural water provision, and transforming the Reserve into a single-plastic-free zone.

The Commission will also secure funding for a one-day Ministerial Anti-doping in Sport Conference, apply for financial assistance for Phase 3 of the ICH initiative to support an ICH nomination, and further develop policy recommendations under Education for Sustainable Development. These efforts will include drafting a training and pedagogical manual, designing a framework for teachers' training in ESD, and revising the timeline for their completion.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, ASPnet Trinidad and Tobago made significant strides in promoting inclusive education through a structured Whole School Approach. Key achievements included the implementation of a cohort-based training model with fifteen schools at a time, the development of comprehensive handouts and toolkits to guide schools in adopting the Whole School Approach, and the creation of an inclusive education handbook

for teachers. The Commission also distributed the "Trinidad and Tobago Carnival – Festival of Peace, Inclusion and Mental Health" toolkit to all international ASPnet coordinators and showcased student projects featuring recycled and upcycled Carnival materials.

Trinidad and Tobago further participated in ASPnet training in Santo Domingo in November 2024, while the ASPnet Coordinator continued mentorship efforts with Jamaica, Aruba, and Saint Lucia. Monthly face-to-face training sessions with the fifteen participating schools were initiated in April 2025, supported by the implementation of a structured documentation system for school projects and annual reporting.

Additionally, the National Commission developed a sample lesson book integrating Sustainable Development Goals across subject areas to support broader implementation and set up meetings with the Secretary-General and Ministry of Education to ensure stronger communication and involvement of ministry support. ASPnet schools also observed International Women's Day and the International Day of Peace and participated in the CSW69 Conference on 17 March via live Zoom, where the "Trinidad and Tobago Carnival – Festival of Peace" toolkit was showcased.

Success story

The Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for UNESCO hosted the 2024 World Environment Day Celebrations on 28 April 2024. World Environment Day, celebrated annually on 5 June, is one of the most widely recognized international observances for the environment. The theme for 2024 was Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience.

Students from primary and secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago's Clubs for UNESCO and the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) actively participated in the celebrations. In collaboration with the Federation of Clubs for UNESCO, the National Commission organized "SandSplash," an initiative of The Mayaro Environmental Wave, a UNESCO Sandwatch Group.

SandSplash incorporated four environmentally friendly and engaging categories: a beach cleanup, a poster and slogan competition, a walk for the environment, and a sand sculpting competition. These activities raised awareness, empowered students and communities, and encouraged greater responsibility for building a sustainable future.



Poster Competition ©Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for UNESCO

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Presently, there are no confirmed collaborations for subregional, regional, or interregional activities in 2025–2026. The Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for UNESCO has yet to plan specific joint initiatives for this period.

URUGUAY

National Commission of Uruguay for UNESCO

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Uruguayan National Commission presented seven projects to the UNESCO Participation Programme, four of which received financial assistance, including one of the Commission's own: *Strengthening Sustainable Tourism Management of UNESCO Uruguay Routes*. Although this project will largely be implemented in 2025, progress was made during 2024, including the placement of QR plates in all UNESCO-designated sites that make up the route.

The Commission celebrated the approval of the project *Promotion of Cultural Entrepreneurship in the Digital Art Sector among Young People in Conditions of Social Vulnerability in Río Negro and Artigas*, which received financial assistance from UNESCO's International Fund for Cultural Diversity. In November, Uruguay also presented the candidacy of the Aspiring Geopark *Manantiales Serranos* located in Lavalleja.

Together with colleagues from the UNESCO Regional Office in Montevideo, the Commission organized a new national meeting of UNESCO Chairs, further fostering academic collaboration. Each year, the Commission also co-organizes the programme *In the Front Row: Rural Schools at SODRE*, which introduces rural schoolchildren to theatre and ballet performances for the first time.

Uruguay also celebrated the inscription of a new archive to the MoWLAC Regional Registry: the documentary collection of Gerardo Matos Rodríguez, the celebrated author of *La Cumparsita*.

Success story

Within the framework of the project *Building Future Skills at UNESCO Sites*, carried out by the German Commission for UNESCO with the support of Henkel AG & Co. KGaA and the Fritz Henkel Foundation, Uruguay's UNESCO Routes project benefited from funding of 22,000 euros in 2024.

This support enabled the implementation of a pilot educational programme designed by UTEC, the strategic partner executing the initiative, for the UNESCO Uruguay Routes Committee and the National Commission. The programme offered a Certificate in Innovation of the Visitor Experience in UNESCO Sites, aimed primarily at managers and other key actors involved in the management of Uruguay's UNESCO designations. These include three World Heritage Sites, two Biosphere Reserves, two Intangible Cultural Heritage traditions, one World Geopark, and a Creative City in the field of literature.

Thirty participants completed the certificate programme, and the lessons learned from the pilot are expected to provide a foundation for refining and expanding the initiative in the future.



Captura de Pantalla ©Marcello Figueredo

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

The National Commission will renew its leadership in March 2025, and a more comprehensive response will be developed by the new members. Nonetheless, a key priority remains the continued development of the UNESCO Uruguay Routes project, with the support of its committee partners and the UNESCO Regional Office in Montevideo.

VENEZUELA

National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO for Venezuela

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Summary of activities during 2024

During 2024, the Venezuelan National Commission focused on advancing projects that guarantee inclusive, emancipatory, and equitable education, contributing to the fulfillment of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, promoted by UNESCO and carried out in the country by the Ministry of People's Power for Education.

Among the most notable activities was the 1st International Forum *Educational Transformation and Digital Education* in Caracas, with the participation of seven Latin American countries and international organizations such as UNESCO and UNICEF. The event provided a platform to share experiences that strengthen education systems in the region. Venezuela also participated in the International Ministerial Meeting: *Reactivation, Recovery and Educational Transformation*, held

in Santiago de Chile, as well as the World Conference on Arts Education in Abu Dhabi, where best practices in Arts Education were presented. The country highlighted the experience of the "Simón Bolívar" System of Youth and Children's Orchestras and Choirs, known as "The System," as an example of social transformation through music.

At the national level, Venezuela implemented the ERCE Pilot Test (Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study), carried out with the participation of the UNESCO Latin American Laboratory for Educational Quality.

In the second half of the year, Venezuela celebrated the incorporation of fifty-three schools into the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet). The Commission also participated in the XVI Annual Conference of Creative Cities in Braga, Portugal, and in the International Memory of the World Conference and 4th Global Policy Forum on Documentary Heritage in Paris, France, where the country highlighted its advances in the protection of historical heritage collections.

Finally, Venezuela celebrated the recognition of "cassava," a native food, as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This inscription was shared with Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Honduras, and represented a significant step in safeguarding regional culinary traditions.

Success story

In October 2024, fifty-three Venezuelan schools officially joined the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), becoming learning centers of national and international reference. These schools promote collaboration among students, teachers, and communities, while advancing the values of quality education.

Through ASPnet, sustainable activities and projects are being developed that involve not only students and teachers but also families and local communities. These initiatives address both local and global issues, including sustainable development, peace, and citizen coexistence, and they are supported by action plans tailored to these themes. The network strengthens teamwork, reinforces national policies on educational quality, and empowers Venezuelan students to become active agents of change in their communities, making their participation in collective social processes meaningful and relevant.



RedPEA School Heritage Brigades in the city of Caracas on Poetry Day 2024
©Ciudad CCS - National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO for Venezuela

Future priorities and possibilities for joint work

Venezuela is interested in carrying out activities related to Media and Information Literacy, involving schools, universities, and national libraries at the regional level, in coordination with the UNESCO Regional Office in Havana. The Commission also plans to present the virtual platform Educate Yourself in Venezuela in UNESCO spaces as a means of exchanging experiences on Open Educational Resources.

Another priority is the activation of cooperation and mobilization of resources for the preservation and conservation of the country's documentary heritage. This would include the organization of technical and expert exchanges between Member States with similar contexts, to strengthen professional skills and knowledge in this field.

In addition, Venezuela seeks to mobilize resources for printing educational materials on Afro-descendant heritage within the framework of the Routes of Enslaved Peoples project, as well as for the preservation and revitalization of indigenous languages. Other planned initiatives will focus on regulating social media content, promoting the social inclusion of women and people with disabilities, and advancing areas in which Venezuela has experience and expertise to contribute.

UNESCO Field Network

Region/Office	Office type	Country coverage
Abuja	Multi Sectoral Regional Office (West Africa)	Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Togo
Abidjan	National Office	Côte d'Ivoire
Accra	National Office	Ghana
Dakar	Multi Sectoral Regional Office (West Africa – Sahel)	Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal
Bamako	National Office	Mali
Harare	Multi Sectoral Regional Office (Southern Africa)	Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Maputo	National Office	Mozambique
Windhoek	National Office	Namibia
Nairobi	Multi Sectoral Regional Office (East Africa)	Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania
Addis Ababa	National Office Liaison Office	Ethiopia Liaison Office to the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
Juba	National Office	South Sudan
Dares-Salaam	National Office	Tanzania
Yaoundé	Multi Sectoral Regional Office (Central Africa)	Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe
Brazzaville	National Office	Congo
Kinshasa	National Office	Democratic Republic of The Congo
Libreville	National Office	Gabon
Beirut	Regional and Cluster Office	Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States Cluster Office to Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine
Baghdad	National Office	Iraq
Amman	National Office	Jordan
Ramallah	National Office	Palestine
Cairo	Regional and Cluster Office	Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States Cluster Office for Egypt, Sudan
Khartoum	National Office	Sudan
Doha	Cluster Office	Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen
Rabat	Cluster Office	Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia
Almaty	Cluster Office	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
Tashkent	National Office	Uzbekistan
Apia	Cluster Office	Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Tokelau (Associate Member)
Bangkok	Regional and Cluster Office	Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific Cluster Office for Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Singapore, Viet Nam
Phnom Penh	National Office	Cambodia
Hanoi	National Office	Viet Nam
Beijing	Cluster Office	Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, China, Republic of Korea
Jakarta	Regional and Cluster Office	Regional Bureau for Sciences in Asia and the Pacific Cluster Office for Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Timor-Leste
New Delhi	Cluster Office	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka
Dhaka	National Office	Bangladesh
Kathmandu	National Office	Nepal
Tehran	Cluster Office	Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan, Turkmenistan
Kabul	National Office	Afghanistan

Region/Office	Office type	Country coverage
Islamabad	National Office	Pakistan
Havana	Regional and Cluster Office	Regional Bureau for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean Cluster Office for Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti
Port-au-Prince	National Office	Haiti
Montevideo	Regional and Cluster Office	Regional Bureau for Sciences in Latin America and the Caribbean; Cluster Office for Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay
Brasilia	National Office	Brazil
Santiago	Regional and National Office	Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean National Office to Chile
Kingston	Cluster Office	Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago as well as Anguilla, Aruba, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Montserrat and Sint Maarten (Associate Members)
Quito	Cluster Office	Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela
Lima	National Office	Peru
San José	Cluster Office	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama
Guatemala	National Office	Guatemala
Mexico	National Office	Mexico
Brussels	Liaison Office	European Union and its subsidiaries bodies in Brussels
Geneva	Liaison Office	United Nations in Geneva
New York	Liaison Office	United Nations in New York
Venice	Regional Bureau	Regional Bureau for Sciences and Culture in South-East Europe

Abbreviations list

Liste des abréviations

ACEIE	African Centre of Excellence for Ethics in Information
AHEG	Ad Hoc Experts Group
AI	<i>Artificial Intelligence</i>
ALECSO	Arab Leagues Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization
APCEIU	Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding
APFN	Asia Pacific Future Network
APGN	Asia Pacific Geopark Network
APX	Financial, administrative and general questions, programme support and external relations
ARCMoW	African Regional Committee of the Memory of the World Programme
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASPnet	UNESCO Associated Schools Network
BEAR II	<i>Fond « pour une meilleure éducation pour l'essor de l'Afrique »</i>
BIE	<i>Bureau International d'Education</i>
BIOPALT	Biosphère et Patrimoine du Lac Tchad
BMWHS	Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains World Heritage Site
BRESC	UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe
BSE	Basic School Education
CApED	Capacity Development for Education Programme
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CBLT	<i>Commission du Bassin du Lac Tchad</i>
CBSS	<i>Council of the Baltic Sea States</i>
CEBISA	Biotechnology Center for Training in Agamic Seed Production
CDIS	Culture for Development Indicators
CEDEAO	<i>Communauté Economique des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest</i>
CEDEUM	Centre for Drama in Education and Arts
CEEAC	Communauté Economique des Etats d'Afrique Centrale
CERLAC	Regional Centre for Book Development in Latin America and the Caribbean
CESA	<i>Stratégie Continentale de l'Education pour l'Afrique de l'Union Africaine 2016-2025</i>
CIB	<i>Comité International de la Bioéthique</i>
CIGB	<i>Comité intergouvernemental de Bioéthique</i>
CIGEPS	Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport
CIOFF	Council of Organizations of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CLC	Community Learning Centre
COMEST	World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology/ Commission Mondiale d'Ethique des Connaissances Scientifiques et des Technologies
CONANP	<i>Commission Nationale des Aires Naturelles Protégées</i>
CONCYTEC	Council for Science, Technology and Technological Innovation
CONFINTEA	International Conference on Adult Education
COPIL	<i>Comité de Pilotage</i>

CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DIKTAS Project	Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst Transboundary Aquifer System
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EARFAI	Eastern Africa sub-Regional Forum on Artificial Intelligence
EBLIDA	European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECM	<i>Éducation à la Citoyenneté Mondiale</i>
ED-ALIGN	Aligning curriculum/learning, teacher policies and practices, and assessment
EDD	Education au Développement Durable
EED	Education à l'Etat de droit
EEF	Equitable Education Fund
EFTP	<i>Enseignement et la Formation Technique et Professionnelle</i>
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ESVS	<i>Éducation à la Santé et à la Vie Saine</i>
FESPACO	<i>Festival Panafricain du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel de Ouagadougou</i>
FIDC	<i>Fond International pour la Diversité Culturelle</i>
FLL	Futures Literacy Laboratories
GA	General Assembly
GAP	Global Action Programme
GCED	Global Citizenship Education
GEMR	Global Education Monitoring Report
GOL	Gender Objective List
GOOS	Global Ocean Observing System
GO-SPIN	Global Observatory of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Instruments
GSGWMSA	Gender-Sensitive Guidelines for Women in Media in South Asia
GPND	<i>Grossesses précoces et non désirées</i>
IA	<i>Intelligence Artificielle</i>
IBC	International Bioethics Committee
IBE	International Bureau of Education
IBEROMAB	Ibero-American MAB Network
ICC	International Co-ordinating Council
ICCAR	International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICH	Intangible Cultural Heritage
ICHCAP	International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage
ICOM	International Council of Museums
ICOMOS	International Council of Monuments and Sites
ICPRCP	Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICT	Competency Standards for Teachers
IESALC	The UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
IFAP	Information For All Programme
IFCD	International Fund for Cultural Diversity
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
IGBC	Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee
IGC	Intergovernmental Committee
IGCP	International Geoscience Programme
IHP	Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme

IICBA	International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa
IICAS	International Institute for Central Asian Studies
IIPE	International Institute for Educational Planning
IITE	Institute for Information Technologies in Education
IJD	International Jazz Day
IKCEST	International Knowledge Centre for Engineering Sciences and Technology
IMP	Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museums Project
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
IOCARIBE	IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions
IOC-WESTPAC	IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific
IODE	International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange
IPDC	International Programme for the Development of Communication
IRCAI	International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence
IRCI	Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region
IRCTUD	International Research and Training Centre on Urban Drainage
ISESCO/ ICESCO	Islamic World Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
ISTIC	International Science, Technology and Innovation Centre for South-South Cooperation
IUPAC	International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry
IYGG	International Youth Green Games
JTF	Joint Task Force
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
LEG	Legal Committee
LINKS	Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems
LLECE	Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education
MAB	Man and the Biosphere programme
MAB-ICC	MAB International Co-ordinating Council
MGIEP	Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace
MIL	Media and Information Literacy
MIO ECSDE	Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development
MLC	Media Liaison Committee
MOST	Management of Social Transformations
MOST	<i>Programme de Gestion des transformations sociales</i>
MOW	Memory Of the World
MoWLAC	Memory Of the World in Latin America and the Caribbean
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
NADC	National Anti-Doping Center
NCHM	National Center for Hydrology and Meteorology
NEMO	Network of European Museum Organisations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NICHIC	National Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee
NSPD	National Strategic Development Plan
OAPN	<i>Organisme Autonome des Parcs Nationaux</i>
ODD	<i>Objectifs de Développement Durable</i>
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OER	Open Educational Resources
OREALC	UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
OSCE	Organization for Security of Co-operation in Europe
OTA	Online Tool for ASPnet

OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
PCI	<i>Patrimoine Culturel Immatériel</i>
PHI	<i>Programme Hydrologique Intergouvernemental</i>
PNDES	<i>Plan National de Développement Economique et Social</i>
PNUD	<i>Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement</i>
PP	Participation Programme / <i>Programme de Participation</i>
PVE-E	Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education/ <i>Prévention de l'extrémisme violent par l'éducation</i>
RÉSEAU	<i>Réseau des Écoles Associées de l'UNESCO</i>
ROSA	UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa
RTRC	Regional Training and Research Centre
SACTD	South Asian Centre for Teacher Development
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAEF	Southern Africa Editors' Forum
SARFAI	Southern Africa sub-Regional Forum on Artificial Intelligence
SARPCCO	Southern African Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization
SASSCAL	Southern African Science Service Centre for Climate Change and Adaptive Land Management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEL	Social Emotional Learning
SEMEP	South Eastern Mediterranean Sea Project
SIDA project	Swedish International Development Agency
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SRAJ	<i>Santé Reproductive des Adolescents et des Jeunes</i>
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STI	Science Technology and Innovation
SWAN	South Asia Women's Network
TBR	Transboundary Biosphere Reserve
TCC	Technology Consultancy Centre
TES	Transforming Education Summit/ <i>Sommet sur la Transformation de l'Education</i>
TICE	<i>Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication pour l'Enseignement</i>
TTF	Teacher Task Force
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCCN	UNESCO Creative Cities Network
UCH	Underwater Cultural Heritage
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEVOC	International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund / <i>Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'Enfance</i>
UNITWIN	University Twinning and Networking Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNRC	United Nations Convention of Rights of the Child
VGMS	<i>Violences de genre en milieu scolaire</i>
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WAAS	World Academy of Art and Science
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene Service

WESPAC	IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific
WHC	World Heritage Committee
WHV	World Heritage Volunteers
WHO	World Health Organization
WISE	World Innovation Summit for Education
WNBR	World Network of Biosphere Reserves
WPFD	World Press Freedom Day
YEM	Youth Employment in the Mediterranean

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Action plan for enhancing the cooperation of the UNESCO Secretariat with National Commissions for UNESCO

PREAMBLE

Guided by the desire to further enhance the cooperation between Member States, their National Commissions and the Secretariat,

Recognizing that the UNESCO Constitution (Article VII) sets the foundation and legal framework for the establishment of National Commissions,

Bearing in mind that the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO reaffirms that it is for each Member State to define the range of responsibilities and the nature of the function of its National Commission.

Considering the need to promote exchanges and networking among National Commissions in the context of their diversity in organization and status by sharing information and best practices in a transparent and cooperative manner,

Emphasizing the responsibility of the Secretariat, including all programme sectors and field offices, to work with Member States and their National Commissions

The open-ended tripartite working group composed of representatives of the Permanent Delegations, National Commissions and UNESCO Secretariat adopts the following findings and recommendations:

I. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND STRUCTURAL ISSUES

Finding and Recommendation 1

The UNESCO Constitution (Article VII) and the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO set the foundations and legal framework for the establishment and functioning of National Commissions. They specify basic roles and responsibilities of the UNESCO Secretariat, Member State Governments and National Commissions in this regard. Certain additional responsibilities have been given to National Commissions (for example, in the fields of decentralization, public information, partnerships with civil society, and use of UNESCO's name and logo) by subsequent resolutions and decisions of the General Conference and the Executive Board (Ref. Resolutions 27 C/13.12, 28 C/13.5, 29 C/60, 30 C/83, 34 C/86 and 36 C/104, and 174 EX/ Decision 34).

As regards the responsibilities of the National Commissions, the Working Group does not at this stage consider that it is a priority to revise or update either UNESCO's Constitution or the Charter of National Commissions. The guiding principles laid out in these documents – and relevant above-mentioned resolutions and decisions taken subsequently by the General Conference and the Executive Board – should however be drawn to the attention of all Member State governments and National Commissions.

It is recommended that, where they have not already done so, Member States adopt legal or administrative instruments specifying the role and the organization of their National Commission within the national context.

Other Member States could review as appropriate their existing provisions to ensure that full account is taken of the relevant legal documents and recent decisions of the Governing Bodies (Ref. Resolutions 27 C/ 13.12, 28 C/13.5, 29 C/60, 30 C/83, 34 C/86, 36 C/104 and 174 EX/ Decision 34) as well as international best practice.

All Member States are invited to provide information to the Secretariat on the legal status (with a copy of the legal text establishing its National Commission where possible) and organization of their National Commission (with a copy of its organizational chart where possible).

Finding and Recommendation 2

Each Member State has developed its own way of operating its National Commission, as provided for in UNESCO's Constitution. It is important that each Member State's National Commission should reflect its particular political, legal and administrative context. The Working Group is agreed that, although there are certain features in common to all National Commissions and a measure of standardization can be helpful, no single model can or should be adopted for all National Commissions. Each National Commission's mandate, organizational structure, working modalities and programme priorities, even though guided by the UNESCO Constitution and the Charter of National Commissions, should be decided on its own.

The Working Group recommends that the principle of the diversity of National Commissions continue to be respected.

II. ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBER STATES, INCLUDING PERMANENT DELEGATIONS AND NATIONAL COMMISSIONS

Finding and Recommendation 3

Member States have primary responsibility for providing their Commissions with appropriate status and authority as well as the human and financial resources needed to carry out the work of their National Commission in accordance with UNESCO's Constitution and the Charter of National Commissions.

The Working Group recommends that all Member States review the status and structure of their National Commissions and their secretariats to ensure that they have the authority, the capacity and the expertise to work effectively in

UNESCO's areas of competence, with their governments, government agencies, as well as intellectual communities, civil society partners, UNESCO Secretariat at Headquarters and field offices and other National Commissions, and fulfil their advisory function.

Member States are requested to ensure that the Secretariat has up-to-date information on the status, organization and resourcing levels of their National Commission.

Finding and Recommendation 4

The high turnover of appointees to the positions of President/Chair and Secretary-General in a large number of National Commissions creates instability and discontinuity in their National Commission's work. Moreover the mandates of these appointees are in some cases not well defined.

The Working Group recommends that each Member State consider appointing the Secretary-General of its National Commission for a reasonable period of time and that each appointee be issued with a clear and well defined mandate. In view of common practices, the Working Group recommends Member States to consider appropriate measures to ensure continuity.

Member States are requested to ensure that the Secretariat has up-to-date information on their approach to the appointment of President/Chair and Secretary-General of their National Commission.

Finding and Recommendation 5

With the recent adoption of the Comprehensive Partnership Strategy, UNESCO is increasing its engagement with the government donors, private sector and other funding partners. National Commissions are considered by the Working Group to have the potential to benefit from public and private partnerships. Value is seen in National Commissions engaging more closely and extensively with public and private partners in order to support their own programmes as well as to encourage support and contributions to UNESCO.

The Working Group recommends that National Commissions be encouraged to establish and/or expand the network of partners in their countries and that they may seek sponsorship in accordance with clearly established principles and procedures which are consistent with national legislation and UNESCO's comprehensive partnership strategy.

Member States are invited to report to the Secretariat on actions taken pursuant to this recommendation, and on any lessons learned or experience gained that might be useful to other National Commissions.

Finding and Recommendation 6

A number of National Commissions have recently started to work more closely with the various UNESCO networks and civil society partners in their respective countries. These networks include UNESCO Chairs, National Committees of Intergovernmental Programmes, networks such as ASPnet, UNESCO Clubs and Associations, category 2 centres and non-governmental organizations. Given the large number and great diversity of these networks, coordination and governance are often needed to better monitor and facilitate their activities. National Commissions are well placed to play such a facilitating, coordinating and monitoring role.

The Working Group recommends that National Commissions and Secretariat consider ways of engaging more closely with the larger UNESCO family, partners and networks, with a view to exchange advice, guidance and, as appropriate, coordination and support. National Commissions have a particular role to play (under the relevant Directives) on the use of UNESCO's name, acronym, logo and internet domain names. Member States are invited to report to the Secretariat on steps taken to create synergies and work more closely with the UNESCO-related bodies in their country.

The Working Group also recommends that National Commissions actively work with civil society and NGOs based in their respective countries, including legally established national branches of those international NGOs which have established official relations with UNESCO in line with the new "Directives concerning UNESCO's partnership with non-governmental organizations". They should contribute to the fostering of UNESCO's partnership with NGOs by identifying and helping new interested non-governmental partners to join the UNESCO-NGO network.

Finally the Working Group calls upon National Commissions to accredit, monitor and assess as appropriate the Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO in their respective countries so as to ensure that activities implemented by Clubs and Centres for UNESCO will be in line with the mission and objectives of UNESCO and the name and logo of UNESCO be properly used by them. The National Commissions may withdraw the accreditation of Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO which are not meeting the required standards, including the "Directives concerning the use of the name, acronym, Logo and internet domain names of UNESCO".

Finding and Recommendation 7

Most National Commissions report regularly to their government and partners. Some Commissions communicate also with their counterparts within – and even outside – the region to which they belong. Regular communication and reporting mechanisms such as newsletters contribute to the visibility and public awareness of the activities they undertake, to the profile of UNESCO and to the promotion of effective working partnerships and best practices.

The Working Group recommends that each National Commission report on a regular basis to its government as well as to its members and partners. These activity reports should as a rule be done on an annual basis and on a commonly agreed template.

The Working Group also believes that regular newsletters should be encouraged. All such reports should be shared with other interested National Commissions, Permanent Delegations and the Secretariat, which collects and posts them on UNESCO's website.

III. STRENGTHENING INTERACTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS AMONG NATIONAL COMMISSIONS

Finding and Recommendation 8

Regional and subregional consultations and meetings, as well as informal gatherings of National Commissions during the sessions of the Executive Board and the General Conference, are critical not just for enhancing communication with the Secretariat but for strengthening collaboration among National Commissions and deriving maximum benefit from this global network of like-minded agencies.

The Working Group recommends to maintain biennial regional meetings of the National Commissions. In this regard, the Working Group calls on Member States and other funding partners to co-fund and/or host regional meetings of National Commissions every two years, one of which would include every four years consultations of Member States and their National Commissions on the upcoming programme cycle.

The Working Group recommends that the informal meetings held on the margins of the Governing Bodies meetings be prepared in a manner that will optimize the possibilities for exchanging information and sharing experiences. In particular, the working group recommends that the Secretariat implement structured participatory events with clearly defined outcomes, which will improve both effectiveness and the exchange of best practice. These meetings will be prepared with appropriate advance consultation regarding the needs and wishes of the participants.

Finding and Recommendation 9

It is clear that a number of National Commissions, particularly those from developing countries or more recently established, would benefit from the opportunity to work more closely with other National Commissions and to receive assistance from them in the form of training, knowledge and experience sharing and occasional secondments or funding grants. This can be done within the same regional grouping, on a North/South or South/South basis or wherever a need on the part of one National Commission can be matched with the ability and readiness of another National Commission to help out. A number of examples have been drawn to the Working Group's attention of where such arrangements have been very successful.

The Working Group recommends that each National Commission which is in a position to assist other less well-equipped National Commissions take steps to make its position known and actively explore avenues for lending a hand in this way. Twinning system, staff exchange programme and cooperative network among National Commissions are most welcome and encouraged.

It is further recommended that National Commissions be invited to report to the Secretariat on their experience with such arrangements from time to time, so that their experience can be used by others.

IV. IMPROVING COOPERATION BETWEEN NATIONAL COMMISSIONS AND THE SECRETARIAT, BOTH AT HEADQUARTERS AND AT FIELD OFFICE LEVEL

Finding and Recommendation 10

Although established with different status and structures, assigned different responsibilities and tasks and operating in different ways with distinct audiences and partners, National Commissions and UNESCO field offices have a common mandate to advocate the mission and carry out the work of UNESCO.

They are called upon to work together and to complement each other's effort in promoting UNESCO's activities, partnerships and visibility at country and regional levels.

The respective roles of these two networks are not clearly defined, and in some cases there is considerable confusion and misunderstanding about their respective responsibilities and roles. Inadequate communication and consultation between the two entities is widespread.

The Working Group recommends that the "Guidelines for interface and cooperation between UNESCO field offices and National Commissions for UNESCO" endorsed by the Executive Board in April 2006 (174 EX/34, Annex) be reviewed and updated to take stock of current situation to enhance the collaboration between UNESCO field offices and National Commissions. It also recommends that Field Offices be reminded of the obligation to work in close cooperation with National Commissions as well as Member States in their region. Similarly, National Commissions should be reminded of the importance of keeping in touch with the field offices and keep them informed and consulted about any programmes of relevance at a regional level.

Finding and Recommendation 11

Information and knowledge sharing between the Secretariat Headquarters and National Commissions is an important way of enhancing the capacity of National Commissions to engage in various activities of UNESCO. Significant improvements in communication have taken place recently through monthly newsletters, online posting and e-Forum discussions.

Further efforts must be made to enhance two-way communication, using the new ICTs as well as the more traditional methods of communication. Biennial meetings of regional National Commissions remain an important element in this.

The Working Group recommends that the UNESCO Secretariat facilitate the networking of National Commissions by gathering, highlighting and sharing information, knowledge and good practices with National Commissions on a more regular basis. This requires National Commissions to submit, in timely manner and preferably in electronic format, relevant information, newsletters, activity reports and proposals to facilitate the Secretariat's work.

□ Finding and Recommendation 12

Member States' Governments, Permanent Delegations and National Commissions are not always kept informed of activities being undertaken by the UNESCO Secretariat (Headquarters and field offices) in their respective countries.

They occasionally learn about them only through the media. Bypassing National Commissions while conducting a project or implementing an activity in their country is neither courteous nor in conformity with the UNESCO Constitution (Article VII) and Charter of National Commissions.

The Working Group recommends that the UNESCO Secretariat ensure that Permanent Delegations and National Commissions be consulted about, informed in advance and involved where appropriate in every activity UNESCO is planning to implement in their countries, including staff missions and meetings with officials and partners; and subsequently be informed of the outcome of these missions and meetings.

□ Finding and Recommendation 13

All National Commissions need to constantly build and adapt their capacities and methods of work to effectively and efficiently play their role. Present training modalities and ways of seeking funding are in many cases no longer suited to current needs. There is an urgent need to explore and develop new ways of training by the Secretariat, drawing on the experience of both the Secretariat and National Commissions.

The Working Group recommends that the Secretariat develop training programmes to satisfy the various needs of different National Commissions. While face-to-face training can continue to be organized where needed and when funding sources are available, alternative cost-effective and targeted training modules should be further explored and developed, such as

- video conferences
- online training
- study visits or learning stays of members of Commissions at Headquarters or in field offices.

Initiatives of networking, partnership and cooperation among National Commissions for capacity-building purposes should be supported by the Secretariat.

□ Finding and Recommendation 14

As principal beneficiaries of the Participation Programme, National Commissions rely on Participation Programme grants both to implement projects and to build their capacities and partnerships. The delay in approving requests for such items as equipment, celebration of anniversaries, training workshops and the publication of reports/news bulletins have triggered some concern.

Due to the incomplete presentation of a number of Participation Programme requests and the unsatisfactory quality of financial and evaluation reports on past grants, the whole evaluation and approval process has become problematic. It is understood that the Executive Board may be considering rules of eligibility and criteria for Participation Programme funding on the basis of the External Auditor's report.

The Working Group recommends that National Commissions and the Secretariat, including the Field Offices, work closely together to further improve the Participation Programme process. Special efforts need to be made in preparing the financial and evaluation reports.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIME-LINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned above, Permanent Delegations, National Commissions (both are in liaison with their government) and UNESCO Secretariat have the direct responsibilities to implement the respective recommendations.

Any reports by Member States on the implementation of the recommendations of findings 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9 are expected by 30 June 2014.

The Secretariat should submit a progress report on the implementation of all these recommendations to the Executive Board at its 196th Session (Spring 2015). The review of the "Guidelines for interface and cooperation between UNESCO field offices and National Commissions for UNESCO" (recommendation 9) could also be done on this occasion.

PLAN D'ACTION VISANT À AMÉLIORER LA COOPÉRATION DU SECRÉTARIAT DE L'UNESCO AVEC LES COMMISSIONS NATIONALES POUR L'UNESCO¹

PRÉAMBULE

Guidé par la volonté d'améliorer encore la coopération entre les États membres, leurs commissions nationales et le Secrétariat, Reconnaissant que l'Acte constitutif de l'UNESCO (article VII) définit les principes fondamentaux et le cadre juridique qui régissent l'établissement des commissions nationales,

Ayant à l'esprit que la Charte des commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO réaffirme qu'il appartient à chaque État membre de définir l'éventail des responsabilités et la nature des fonctions de sa commission nationale,

Considérant la nécessité de promouvoir les échanges entre commissions nationales et leur mise en réseau compte tenu de leur diversité sur le plan de l'organisation et du statut par un partage transparent et coopératif de l'information et des meilleures pratiques,

Soulignant que le Secrétariat, y compris l'ensemble des secteurs du programme et des bureaux hors Siège, a la responsabilité de travailler avec les États membres et leurs commissions nationales,

Le Groupe de travail tripartite à participation non limitée, composé de représentants des délégations permanentes, des commissions nationales et du Secrétariat de l'UNESCO, adopte les conclusions et recommandations suivantes :

I. CADRE JURIDIQUE ET ASPECTS STRUCTURELS

Conclusion et recommandation 1

L'Acte constitutif de l'UNESCO (article VII) et la Charte des commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO définissent les principes fondamentaux et le cadre juridique qui régissent l'établissement et le fonctionnement des commissions nationales. Ces textes précisent les rôles et responsabilités essentiels du Secrétariat de l'UNESCO, des gouvernements des États membres et des commissions nationales à cet égard. La Conférence générale et le Conseil exécutif ont assigné certaines responsabilités additionnelles aux commissions nationales (pour ce qui est par exemple de la décentralisation, de l'information du public, des partenariats avec la société civile et de l'utilisation du nom et de l'emblème de l'UNESCO) dans des résolutions et décisions ultérieures (voir résolutions 27 C/13.12, 28 C/13.5, 29 C/60, 30 C/83, 34 C/86 et 36 C/104, et la décision 174 EX/34).

En ce qui concerne les responsabilités des commissions nationales, le Groupe de travail est d'avis que la révision ou actualisation de l'Acte constitutif de l'UNESCO ou de la Charte des commissions nationales n'est pas une priorité à ce stade. Les principes directeurs qui y sont formulés – et les résolutions et décisions pertinentes adoptées ultérieurement par la Conférence générale et le Conseil exécutif susmentionnées – devraient néanmoins être portés à l'attention des gouvernements et des commissions nationales de tous les États membres.

Il est recommandé aux États membres qui ne l'ont pas encore fait d'adopter un instrument administratif ou juridique précisant le rôle et l'organisation de leur commission nationale dans le contexte national.

Les autres États membres pourraient réexaminer selon qu'il convient les dispositions qu'ils ont déjà adoptées pour s'assurer qu'il y est pleinement tenu compte des documents juridiques pertinents et des récentes décisions des organes directeurs en la matière (voir les résolutions 27 C/13.12, 28 C/13.5, 29 C/60, 30 C/83, 34 C/86 et 36 C/104, et la décision 174 EX/34), ainsi que les meilleures pratiques internationales.

Tous les États membres sont invités à fournir au Secrétariat des informations sur le statut juridique de leur commission nationale (avec, si possible, copie du texte juridique portant établissement de la commission nationale) et sur son organisation (avec, si possible, copie de l'organigramme).

Conclusion et recommandation 2

Chaque État membre a déterminé sa manière propre de gérer sa commission nationale, comme le prévoit l'Acte constitutif de l'UNESCO. Il importe que la commission nationale de chaque État membre soit adaptée à sa situation politique, juridique et administrative particulière. Le Groupe de travail a été d'accord pour considérer que, même si toutes les commissions nationales possédaient certains traits en commun et si un certain degré d'uniformisation pouvait être utile, aucun modèle unique ne pouvait ni ne devait être adopté pour la totalité d'entre elles. Le mandat de chaque commission nationale, sa structure organisationnelle, ses modalités de travail et ses priorités de programme, bien que conçus à la lumière de l'Acte constitutif de l'UNESCO et de la Charte des commissions nationales, devraient être décidés de manière indépendante.

Le Groupe de travail recommande que le principe de la diversité des commissions nationales continue d'être respecté.

¹ Ce Plan d'action a été adopté par la Conférence générale à sa 37^e session en 2013 (37C/Résolution 97).

II. MESURES À PRENDRE PAR CHAQUE ÉTAT MEMBRE, Y COMPRIS LES DÉLÉGATIONS PERMANENTES ET LES COMMISSIONS NATIONALES

□ Conclusion et recommandation 3

Les États membres ont la responsabilité principale de doter leur commission d'un statut et de pouvoirs appropriés, ainsi que des ressources humaines et financières qui leur sont nécessaires pour s'acquitter de leur tâche conformément à l'Acte constitutif de l'UNESCO et à la Charte des commissions nationales.

Le Groupe de travail recommande que tous les États membres réexaminent le statut de leur commission nationale et de son secrétariat afin de s'assurer que ceux-ci ont les pouvoirs, les capacités et l'expertise nécessaires pour travailler de manière efficace, dans les domaines de compétence de l'UNESCO, avec le gouvernement et les organismes gouvernementaux, ainsi qu'avec les communautés intellectuelles, les partenaires de la société civile, le Secrétariat de l'UNESCO au Siège et hors Siège et les autres commissions nationales, et pour s'acquitter de leur fonction consultative.

Les États membres sont invités à s'assurer que le Secrétariat dispose d'informations actualisées sur le statut, l'organisation et les niveaux de ressources de leur commission nationale.

□ Conclusion et recommandation 4

Le taux de rotation élevé des titulaires des postes de président et de secrétaire général dans bon nombre de commissions nationales est un facteur d'instabilité et de discontinuité des travaux de ces commissions. De plus, le mandat de ces titulaires n'est parfois pas clairement défini.

Le Groupe de travail recommande que chaque État membre envisage de nommer le secrétaire général de sa commission nationale pour une période raisonnablement longue et que les personnes nommées à chacun de ces postes aient un mandat clair et bien défini. Compte tenu des pratiques courantes, le Groupe de travail recommande aux États membres de réfléchir aux mesures appropriées pour garantir la continuité.

Les États membres sont invités à s'assurer que le Secrétariat dispose d'informations actualisées sur les modalités de la nomination du président et du secrétaire général de leur commission nationale.

□ Conclusion et recommandation 5

Depuis l'adoption récente de la Stratégie globale pour les partenariats, l'UNESCO s'emploie à intensifier ses liens avec les donateurs gouvernementaux, le secteur privé et d'autres partenaires de financement. Le Groupe de travail considère que les commissions nationales pourraient tirer avantage de partenariats avec des acteurs publics et privés. Il apparaît utile que les commissions nationales nouent des relations plus étroites et plus larges avec des partenaires publics et privés afin de renforcer leurs propres programmes et d'encourager les soutiens et les contributions à l'UNESCO.

Le Groupe de travail recommande que les commissions nationales soient encouragées à créer un réseau de leurs partenaires dans leur pays et/ou à développer le réseau existant et qu'elles recherchent éventuellement des parrainages conformément à des principes et procédures clairement établis et compatibles avec la législation nationale et la stratégie globale pour les partenariats de l'UNESCO.

Les États membres sont invités à présenter au Secrétariat un rapport sur les mesures prises pour donner suite à cette recommandation, et sur tous les enseignements ou l'expérience accumulés par eux qui pourraient être utiles aux autres commissions nationales.

□ Conclusion et recommandation 6

Un certain nombre de commissions nationales ont récemment entrepris de travailler en liaison plus étroite avec les divers réseaux et les partenaires membres de la société civile de l'UNESCO dans leurs pays respectifs. Au nombre de ces réseaux figurent les Chaires UNESCO, les comités nationaux des programmes intergouvernementaux, des réseaux tels que le réSEAU des écoles associées, les clubs et associations UNESCO, les centres de catégorie 2 et les organisations non gouvernementales. Étant donné le nombre élevé et la grande diversité de ces réseaux, des mécanismes de coordination et de gouvernance sont souvent nécessaires pour mieux suivre et faciliter leurs activités. Les commissions nationales sont bien placées pour jouer un tel rôle de facilitation, de coordination et de suivi.

Le Groupe de travail recommande que les commissions nationales et le Secrétariat envisagent des moyens de resserrer encore leurs liens avec la famille élargie, les partenaires et les réseaux de l'UNESCO, en vue d'échanger conseils et avis et, en tant que de besoin, de participer à leur coordination et de les soutenir. Les commissions nationales ont un rôle particulier à jouer (dans le cadre des directives pertinentes) dans l'utilisation du nom, de l'acronyme, de l'emblème et des noms de domaine Internet de l'UNESCO. Les États membres sont invités à présenter au Secrétariat un rapport sur les mesures qu'ils ont prises pour créer des synergies et travailler en liaison plus étroite avec les organismes liés à l'UNESCO qui sont présents dans leur pays.

Le Groupe de travail recommande également que les commissions nationales travaillent activement avec la société civile et les ONG basées dans leurs pays respectifs, y compris les branches nationales ayant une existence légale des ONG internationales qui ont établi des relations officielles avec l'UNESCO conformément aux nouvelles « Directives concernant le partenariat de l'UNESCO avec les organisations non gouvernementales ». Elles devraient

contribuer à favoriser les partenariats de l'UNESCO avec les ONG en identifiant et aidant les nouveaux partenaires non gouvernementaux intéressés par la perspective de rejoindre le réseau UNESCO-ONG.

Enfin, le Groupe de travail appelle les commissions nationales à accréditer les associations, centres et clubs UNESCO présents dans leurs pays respectifs et à en suivre et évaluer les activités selon que de besoin de façon à s'assurer que ces activités sont conformes à la mission et aux objectifs de l'Organisation et que ces entités font un usage approprié du nom et de l'emblème de l'UNESCO. Les commissions nationales pourraient retirer leur accréditation aux associations, centres et clubs UNESCO qui ne satisfont pas aux normes établies, y compris les « Directives concernant l'utilisation du nom, de l'acronyme, de l'emblème et des noms de domaine Internet de l'UNESCO ».

Conclusion et recommandation 7

La plupart des commissions nationales font régulièrement rapport à leur gouvernement et à leurs partenaires. Certaines communiquent aussi avec leurs homologues à l'intérieur – voire à l'extérieur – de la région à laquelle elles appartiennent. Des mécanismes de communication et de compte rendu réguliers tels que lettres d'information ou bulletins contribuent à améliorer la visibilité et la connaissance par le public des activités entreprises par elles, à renforcer l'image de l'UNESCO et à promouvoir les partenariats de travail efficaces et les meilleures pratiques.

Le Groupe de travail recommande que chaque commission nationale fasse rapport à intervalles réguliers à son gouvernement, ainsi qu'à ses membres et à ses partenaires. Ces rapports devraient en principe être rédigés une fois par an et selon un modèle convenu d'un commun accord.

Le Groupe de travail est également d'avis qu'il conviendrait d'encourager la publication régulière de lettres d'information. Tous ces rapports devraient être communiqués aux autres commissions nationales intéressées, aux délégations permanentes et au Secrétariat, qui les regrouperait et les publierait sur le site Web de l'UNESCO.

III. RENFORCEMENT DES INTERACTIONS ET DES PARTENARIATS ENTRE LES COMMISSIONS NATIONALES

Conclusion et recommandation 8

Les consultations et réunions régionales et sous-régionales, ainsi que les rencontres informelles des commissions nationales pendant les sessions du Conseil exécutif et de la Conférence générale sont essentielles, non pas seulement pour accroître la communication avec le Secrétariat, mais aussi pour renforcer la collaboration entre les commissions nationales et tirer un bénéfice maximal de ce réseau mondial d'agences partageant une même vision.

Le Groupe de travail recommande de maintenir la pratique des réunions régionales biennales des commissions nationales. À cet égard, le Groupe de travail demande aux États membres et aux autres partenaires de financement de cofinancer et/ou d'accueillir ces réunions régionales biennales, dont l'une comprendrait tous les quatre ans la consultation des États membres et de leurs commissions nationales sur le cycle de programmation à venir.

Le Groupe de travail recommande que les réunions informelles tenues en marge des réunions des organes directeurs soient préparées de manière à optimiser les possibilités d'échanger des informations et de partager les données d'expérience. En particulier, il recommande que le Secrétariat organise des événements participatifs structurés, avec des résultats attendus clairement définis, afin d'améliorer à la fois leur efficacité et l'échange des meilleures pratiques. Ces réunions seront préparées en organisant une consultation préalable appropriée pour connaître les besoins et les souhaits des participants.

Conclusion et recommandation 9

Il est clair qu'un certain nombre de commissions nationales, en particulier celles des pays en développement ou établies de plus fraîche date, tireraient avantage de la possibilité de travailler en liaison plus étroite avec d'autres commissions nationales et de recevoir leur assistance sous la forme d'un partage des activités de formation, des connaissances et des expériences et de détachements ou de dons financiers occasionnels. Cela peut être fait au sein d'un même groupement régional ou dans le cadre d'échanges Nord-Sud ou Sud-Sud, ou chaque fois qu'au besoin d'une commission nationale peut répondre la capacité ou la disposition d'une autre commission nationale à lui venir en aide. Un certain nombre d'exemples de tels arrangements ayant donné des résultats très positifs ont été portés à l'attention du Groupe de travail.

Le Groupe de travail recommande que chaque commission nationale qui est à même de venir en aide à d'autres commissions nationales moins bien équipées prenne des dispositions pour le faire savoir et étudie activement les moyens de prêter ainsi son assistance. Les systèmes de jumelage, les programmes d'échange de personnel et les réseaux de coopération entre commissions nationales sont les bienvenus et sont fortement encouragés.

Il est en outre recommandé que les commissions nationales soient invitées à présenter de temps à autres au Secrétariat un rapport sur leur expérience de ce type d'arrangements, de manière que d'autres puissent mettre à profit cette expérience.

IV. AMÉLIORATION DE LA COOPÉRATION ENTRE LES COMMISSIONS NATIONALES ET LE SECRÉTARIAT, AU SIÈGE ET AU NIVEAU DES BUREAUX HORS SIÈGE

□ Conclusion et recommandation 10

Malgré les différences dans leurs statuts et leur structure, les responsabilités et les tâches qui leur sont assignées et leur manière d'opérer avec des publics et des partenaires distincts, les commissions nationales et les bureaux hors Siège de l'UNESCO ont pour mandat commun de faire avancer la mission et l'action de l'UNESCO.

Ils sont appelés à travailler de concert et à se compléter dans leurs efforts pour promouvoir les activités, les partenariats et la visibilité de l'UNESCO aux niveaux national et régional.

Les rôles respectifs de ces deux réseaux ne sont pas clairement définis et, dans certains cas, on note une confusion et des malentendus considérables quant aux rôles et aux responsabilités de chacun. La communication et les consultations entre ces deux entités laissent souvent à désirer.

Le Groupe de travail recommande que les « Directives pour les relations et la coopération entre les bureaux hors Siège de l'UNESCO et les commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO » approuvées par le Conseil exécutif en avril 2006 (174 EX/34 Annexe) soient révisées et actualisées en vue de faire le point de la situation présente de façon à améliorer la collaboration entre les bureaux hors Siège de l'UNESCO et les commissions nationales. Il recommande aussi de rappeler aux bureaux hors Siège leur obligation de travailler en étroite coopération avec les commissions nationales ainsi qu'avec les États membres de la région desservie par eux. De même, il convient de rappeler aux commissions nationales qu'il importe de rester en contact avec les bureaux hors Siège les concernant et de tenir ceux-ci informés de tout programme pertinent au niveau régional et de les consulter à ce sujet.

□ Conclusion et recommandation 11

Le partage de l'information et des connaissances entre le Secrétariat au Siège et les commissions nationales est un moyen important d'accroître la capacité des commissions nationales de s'engager dans diverses activités de l'UNESCO. D'importants progrès ont été réalisés récemment dans le domaine de la communication sous la forme de lettres d'information mensuelles, de messages en ligne et de discussions sur des forums électroniques.

De plus amples efforts sont nécessaires pour intensifier la communication dans les deux sens, en mettant à profit les nouvelles TIC de même que les méthodes de communication plus traditionnelles. Les réunions biennales des commissions nationales d'une même région demeurent un élément important à cet égard.

Le Groupe de travail recommande que le Secrétariat de l'UNESCO facilite la mise en réseau des commissions nationales en assurant de manière plus régulière la collecte et le signalement de l'information, des connaissances et des bonnes pratiques et leur partage avec les commissions nationales. Cela implique que les commissions nationales soumettent les informations, bulletins et rapports d'activité pertinents, ainsi que leurs propositions, en temps voulu et de préférence sous forme électronique de façon à faciliter la tâche du Secrétariat.

□ Conclusion et recommandation 12

Les gouvernements, les délégations permanentes et les commissions nationales des États membres ne sont pas toujours tenus informés des activités entreprises par le Secrétariat de l'UNESCO (Siège et bureaux hors Siège) dans leurs pays respectifs.

Il arrive qu'ils n'en prennent connaissance qu'à travers les médias. Laisser les commissions nationales dans l'ignorance d'un projet ou d'une activité mis en œuvre dans leur pays n'est ni courtois ni conforme à l'Acte constitutif de l'UNESCO (article VII) et à la Charte des commissions nationales.

Le Groupe de travail recommande que le Secrétariat de l'UNESCO veille à ce que les délégations permanentes et les commissions nationales soient consultées et préalablement informées pour chaque activité que l'UNESCO prévoit de mettre en œuvre dans leur pays, y compris les missions de membres du personnel et les réunions avec les fonctionnaires et les partenaires, et associées le cas échéant à ces activités, et à ce qu'elles soient par la suite informées des résultats de ces missions et réunions.

□ Conclusion et recommandation 13

Toutes les commissions nationales ont besoin de renforcer et d'adapter en permanence leurs capacités et leurs méthodes de travail afin de jouer leur rôle avec efficacité et efficience. Dans bien des cas, les modalités de formation et de recherche de financements qui ont cours aujourd'hui ne sont plus adaptées aux besoins actuels. Le Secrétariat doit d'urgence explorer et élaborer de nouvelles modalités de formation, à la lumière de sa propre expérience et de celle des commissions nationales.

Le Groupe de travail recommande que le Secrétariat élabore des programmes de formation pour répondre aux besoins variés des différentes commissions nationales. Une formation face-à-face peut continuer à être organisée lorsque cela est nécessaire et que des sources de financement sont disponibles, mais il conviendrait d'explorer et d'élaborer plus avant d'autres modalités de formation ciblées et d'un bon rapport coût-efficacité, telles que

- visioconférences
- formation en ligne
- visites d'étude ou stages effectués par des membres des commissions au Siège ou dans les bureaux hors Siège.

Le Secrétariat devrait apporter son soutien aux initiatives de mise en réseau, de partenariat et de coopération entre les commissions nationales à des fins de renforcement des capacités.

□ Conclusion et recommandation 14

En tant que principales bénéficiaires du Programme de participation, les commissions nationales s'appuient sur les aides fournies au titre de ce programme aussi bien pour mettre en œuvre des projets que pour renforcer leurs capacités et leurs partenariats. Les délais d'approbation des demandes dans des domaines tels que l'achat de matériel, la célébration d'anniversaires, les ateliers de formation et la publication de rapports ou de lettres d'information ont suscité certaines préoccupations.

Le caractère incomplet d'un certain nombre de demandes d'aide au titre du Programme de participation et la qualité insuffisante des rapports financiers et d'évaluation au sujet des aides antérieures ont rendu problématique l'ensemble du processus d'examen et d'approbation des demandes. Il est entendu que le Conseil exécutif pourrait réfléchir aux règles et critères régissant l'attribution de fonds au titre du Programme de participation à la lumière du rapport du Commissaire aux comptes.

Le Groupe de travail recommande que les commissions nationales et le Secrétariat, y compris les bureaux hors Siège, travaillent en étroite liaison pour améliorer encore le processus du Programme de participation. Des efforts particuliers devront être faits lors de l'établissement des rapports financiers et d'évaluation.

V. RESPONSABILITÉS ET ÉCHÉANCES CONCERNANT LA MISE EN ŒUVRE DES RECOMMANDATIONS

Comme indiqué plus haut, les délégations permanentes, les commissions nationales (les unes et les autres en liaison avec leur gouvernement) et le Secrétariat de l'UNESCO ont des responsabilités directes dans la mise en œuvre des recommandations les intéressant.

Tout rapport présenté par les États membres sur la mise en œuvre des recommandations relatives aux conclusions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 et 9 devra être reçu au plus tard le 30 juin 2014.

Le Secrétariat devrait soumettre un rapport d'étape sur la mise en œuvre de toutes ces recommandations au Conseil exécutif à sa 196e session (printemps 2015). L'examen du « Guide de la coopération entre les bureaux hors Siège de l'UNESCO et les commissions nationales » (recommandation 9) pourrait avoir lieu à cette occasion.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERFACE AND COOPERATION BETWEEN UNESCO FIELD OFFICES AND NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO²

FOREWORD

The [Member States and their] National Commissions for UNESCO and the UNESCO Secretariat pursue the same purpose under the Constitution of UNESCO, namely “to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations”.

These constituent elements of the common purpose, all unifying by nature, primarily require *intellectual and moral solidarity* on the part of all those who work to achieve it.

UNESCO’s strategy for the reform of the field network is aimed at optimizing UNESCO’s operations and improving the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, quality and visibility of the field network, thus providing more effective support for the efforts that Member States have undertaken by ratifying the Constitution of UNESCO “to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other’s lives”.

The Organization’s unity of action must remain a key concern of the National Commissions for UNESCO and the Secretariat, at Headquarters and in the field. All work together to accomplish UNESCO’s mandate. Such unity is all the more important in the light of the concerted pursuit of post-2015 development agenda through ever closer cooperation among the organizations of the United Nations system and, even more broadly, with the international community.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERFACE AND COOPERATION BETWEEN UNESCO FIELD OFFICES AND NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO

Mission statement

National Commissions and field offices together promote UNESCO’s ideals and principles.

Introduction

The following guidelines have been developed in response to a need expressed repeatedly by National Commissions for UNESCO and were discussed by an informal Working Group of Secretaries-General and Directors/Heads of UNESCO field offices from all regions who met at UNESCO Headquarters on 28 and 29 January 2004. They were reviewed and amended at the first interregional meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO which was held in Astana, Kazakhstan from 22 to 24 July 2014, in accordance with UNESCO’s recent field reform and in the light of the Action Plan for enhancing UNESCO’s cooperation with the worldwide National Commissions network, adopted by the General Conference (37 C/Resolution 97).

These Guidelines outline the main areas of interface and cooperation between the UNESCO field network and the National Commissions for UNESCO: definition of each entity, their respective responsibilities and roles, and the modalities for planning and implementing UNESCO’s programme within the framework of the field network reform. They are based on legal texts of the Organization and decisions of its governing bodies in this respect. Furthermore, they were widely circulated for comments and suggestions and agreed upon by all concerned.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

National Commissions and field offices have differentiated but sometimes joint and/or common activities. National Commissions report first and foremost to their Governments. Field offices report first and foremost to the Director-General of UNESCO.

² These Guidelines were approved by the Executive Board at its 196th session in 2015 (196 EX/Decisions 5 III).

National Commissions

• Advisory function

- Advise representatives of their government on the Executive Board and their alternates as well as their delegations to the General Conference and other meetings convened by UNESCO;
- Advise the respective governmental bodies/line Ministries to ensure that UNESCO mandates are represented/positioned in the development of new National Development Plans, and in the roll out of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), in particular ahead of the UNDAF consultations with Government;
- Advise national institutions and partners on UNESCO-related matters;
- At the request of the UNESCO Secretariat, provide advice on possible linkages with national partners;
- Advise UNESCO's Secretariat on other relevant issues, either on request or on their own initiative, including through international and interregional consultations among National Commissions.

• Contribution to UNESCO's planning/programming processes

- Conduct timely national consultations with relevant governmental bodies and other stakeholders in order to identify and develop national priorities and strategies for cooperation with UNESCO, taking into account UNESCO's mandates and priorities;
- Contribute where appropriate to the development of the UNESCO Country Programming Document (UCPD);
- Participate and contribute to consultations meetings as appropriate with field offices and other National Commissions at the subregional, regional and interregional levels.

• Liaison and outreach function

- Foster the linkage with and involvement in UNESCO's activities of relevant governmental bodies, national institutions and other civil society stakeholders and individuals in order to obtain intellectual and professional inputs useful to the Organization, encouraging interdisciplinary dialogue and cooperation in the process;
- Forge with the support of the field offices new partnerships with national civil society organizations – grass-roots and volunteer groups, NGOs, the academic and professional communities, parliamentarians, local authorities, trade unions and the private sector – and promote UNESCO's various networks and programmes;
- Accredit, monitor and assess as appropriate the Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO in their respective countries so as to ensure that activities implemented by Clubs and Centres for UNESCO are in line with the mission and objectives of UNESCO, and the name and logo of UNESCO are properly used by them. The National Commissions may withdraw the accreditation of Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO which are not meeting the required standards, including the "Directives concerning the use of the name, acronym, logo and internet domain names of UNESCO";
- Play a proactive role in encouraging national entities to propose candidates for UNESCO prizes, participating in searching for candidates for vacant posts at UNESCO and placing UNESCO fellowship holders;
- Reach out to other National Commissions in the region and beyond and strengthen cooperation, in particular South-South and North-South-South cooperation.

• Implementation function

- In accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Conference, submit to UNESCO every biennium, after consulting with the relevant constituents, including with the field offices, Participation Programme requests in alignment with UNESCO's programme priorities ;

- Monitor, evaluate and report to the Organization on the implementation of the approved Participation Programme Requests;
- May contribute on a contractual basis to activities funded under UNESCO's regular programme budget and through extrabudgetary resources, ensuring that requirements for efficiency, effectiveness and accountability are observed;
- Provide, upon request, relevant information for facilitating programme execution, including on the most appropriate national contractors, experts and partners;
- Coordinate national responses to UNESCO-conducted surveys and reports on national implementation of UNESCO's standard-setting instruments;
- Seek support from potential donors at the national level for their own activities and where appropriate for supporting field office initiatives in this respect;
- Assume responsibility for the proper use of the Organization's name and emblem in their respective country and consult the field office as appropriate.

• **Information and advocacy function**

- Promote UNESCO's ideals and disseminate information on the Organization's activities and achievements, in order to strengthen UNESCO's impact at the national level;
- Contribute to the visibility of UNESCO;
- Work actively with the national media in order to bring the above to the attention of the public at large;
- Organize national and awareness-raising events which come within UNESCO's fields of competence.

Field offices

• **Planning function**

- Analyse in close cooperation with National Commissions and relevant line Ministries trends in the Organization's fields of competence in the countries they cover in order to inform policy-making and action at national, subregional, regional and global level;
- Develop and coordinate in close cooperation with National Commissions national/cluster/ regional strategic frameworks, UCPD and operational plans, for both regular programme and extrabudgetary activities, as a major input to UNESCO's overall planning process;
- Ensure that national priorities in UNESCO's fields of competence are duly reflected in the United Nations Country Team's Common Country Assessment (CCA), in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), and in joint activities for the advancement of the Post-2015 Development Agenda as well as in the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP);
- Draw up work plans for regular programme activities in close cooperation with National Commissions and ensure coherence and complementarities with Participation Programme requests.

• **Implementation function**

- Provide, upon request, policy advice and technical support to Member States in the formulation and review of policies and strategies in UNESCO's areas of competence;
- Act as broker for good practice and expert services;
- Support cooperation among National Commissions in subregions and beyond;
- Develop, implement and monitor UNESCO's regular programme and extrabudgetary activities in the country/ies under their coverage, including by consulting the National Commissions concerned and keeping them informed of progress;

- Document successes, failures and lessons learned in the execution of activities.
- Within the framework of the approved programme and budget, respond to unforeseen challenges and opportunities arising in the field.

• **Fundraising function**

- Cooperate with Member States in identifying and formulating development projects and mobilize funds for UNESCO activities;
- Ensure, with the help of National Commissions, that extrabudgetary activities and projects have received full endorsement by the respective Member State.
- Involve National Commissions in seeking opportunities for alignment and co-financing modalities via Government funded programmes.

• **Advocacy function**

- Promote and advocate UNESCO's ideals and objectives and disseminate them to governments, civil society, professional communities and the public at large with the support of National Commissions;
- Support governments, at their request, in the implementation of UNESCO's standard-setting instruments.

• **Contribute to the visibility of UNESCO**

- Promote international events which come within UNESCO's fields of competence including in cooperation with National Commissions;
- Maintain close relations with the media to ensure wide visibility, consulting National Commissions as appropriate to ensure complementarities;
- Develop communication strategies and reinforce on-line presence of the field offices with a view to enhance UNESCO's visibility within the national and international communities.

• **Clearing-house function**

- Gather, transfer, disseminate and share available information, knowledge and good practices on innovative solutions in UNESCO's fields of competence.

EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

- Directors/Heads of field offices regularly inform Secretaries-General of National Commissions of:
 - Visiting missions of UNESCO staff and consultants;
 - Activities and projects to be carried out at the national level or which involve national participation and the results thereof;
 - Significant developments at UNESCO.
- Secretaries-General of National Commissions regularly inform Heads/Directors of national/cluster offices of:
 - National issues, statements, events, developments, policies that may affect UNESCO's activities within its fields of competence;
 - Their interactions with other parts of UNESCO;
 - Their cooperation with regional IGOs and with NGOs active in UNESCO's domains.

Bilateral consultations

Directors/Heads of Multisectoral Regional Offices in Africa/Cluster/National Offices regularly consult the Secretaries-General of National Commissions on:

- The conceptualization of activities to be carried out at national level, within the cluster/national strategic frameworks agreed on at the sub-regional/cluster consultation;
- The identification of national partners.

Secretaries-General of National Commissions:

Consult as appropriate with Directors/Heads of field offices to ensure consistency with UNESCO's programmes.

PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS

National Commissions and field offices reciprocate invitations to events they organize at the national level.

CONSULTATION MECHANISM

Consultation for the C/4 and C/5 documents

The modality of consultation for the preparation of the C/4 and C/5 documents emphasizes building regional inputs to the process from a base in country-level consultations. Country-level consultations are within the purview of Member States, through their National Commissions. Management of the linkage between country, subregional/cluster and regional consultation falls under responsibility of the Secretariat.

The modalities of regional consultations are presently under review. Please refer to document 192 EX/5 Part IIIC and related decision 192 EX/decision 5 IIIC.

Country-level consultations

- *Who is in charge?*
 - The National Commission.
- *Who participates?*
 - All governmental and non-governmental stakeholders at country level and UNESCO field office covering the country in question.
- *When do they take place?*
 - Ideally, one meeting before the subregional/cluster and regional consultations.
- *What are the outcomes?*
 - The countries' input to the consultations on the C/4 and C/5 documents.

Subregional/Cluster-level consultations

- *Who is in charge?*
 - UNESCO cluster and regional offices, and in Africa, the Multisectoral Regional Offices.
- *Who participates?*
 - National Commissions and within budget available, other stakeholders and experts as appropriate, representatives of Regional Bureaux and UNESCO Institutes. UNESCO programme sectors and central services as well as other United Nations agencies and other partners may be invited to participate in these meetings, as relevant.
- *When do they take place?*
 - Ideally, at regular intervals and depending on budget availability during the four-year cycle. The meetings on the preparation of the C/4 and C/5 documents should be held, ideally in the spring/

summer of the third year of the quadrennium, as per 192 EX/Decision 5.III.C and subsequent follow-up. In between meetings, collective consultations may be conducted by email.

- *What are the possible outcomes? Depending on the purpose of the consultation these could include, at the appropriate times:*

- Regional/subregional/cluster/national strategic frameworks and operational plans to guide the implementation of the decentralized regular programme by field offices, the identification of projects for submission to extrabudgetary funding sources and advocacy and communication strategies;
- Assessment of results achieved and follow-up of the implementation of activities and projects;
- Review of management and coordination issues arising between the field offices and National Commissions;
- Agreement on joint activities and increased synergy among National Commissions.

PARTNERSHIPS

Role of National Commissions in encouraging partnerships

- **With the private sector**

UNESCO's National Commissions have a particular role to play in the engagement with a private partner. In addition to the mapping and identification of new partners at national and regional levels, and/or in the screening phase, the National Commissions are major stakeholders and UNESCO's natural interlocutors at the country level. It is of critical importance that any action be consulted, coordinated and sustained within the national development agenda. Partnering with the private sector in a given country should not be seen as purely opportunistic but rather embedded in a more long-term development perspective for the benefit of the country and the region at large.

- **With non-governmental organizations (NGOs)**

Relevant National Commissions for UNESCO are consulted during the admission process of NGOs into partnership with UNESCO, particularly when the request concerns a national or local NGO. Cooperation at country level is conducted in consultation and/or in partnership with the National Commission for UNESCO concerned.

National Commissions should identify NGOs that are relevant to the current work of UNESCO and support the admission of the Organization's non-governmental partners, both internationally and nationally, in order to increase the number of official NGO partners from all regions that actively cooperate with UNESCO.

USE OF UNESCO NAME AND LOGO

National Commissions and the use and authorization of the UNESCO name and logo

In addition to using the UNESCO name and logo themselves to promote UNESCO's visibility and outreach, National Commissions play an important role in the authorization of UNESCO's logo too.

National Commissions can authorize its own patronage, i.e. moral support, to civil society organizations' events at national level and grant the use of the UNESCO National Commission logo in this context. National Commissions can also authorize the use of their own logo when they organize joint events together with other national organizations in the framework of a partnership.

In addition, Nation Commissions are called to support the Secretariat by providing advice on logo use to members of UNESCO's vast networks, such as to managers of World Heritage sites and Biosphere Reserves, to UNESCO Associated Schools, as well as to the Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO, and UNESCO Chairs etc.

National Commissions are also called to support the Secretariat by providing recommendations when the Director-General's patronage is requested by civil society organizations in the relevant Member States.

DIRECTIVES POUR LES RELATIONS ET LA COOPÉRATION ENTRE LES BUREAUX HORS SIÈGE DE L'UNESCO ET LES COMMISSIONS NATIONALES POUR L'UNESCO³

AVANT-PROPOS

Mission

Les commissions nationales et les bureaux hors Siège travaillent ensemble à la promotion des principes et des idéaux de l'UNESCO

Aux termes de l'Acte constitutif de l'UNESCO, **les [États membres et leurs] commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO et le Secrétariat de l'UNESCO poursuivent le même but**, à savoir « contribuer au maintien de la paix et de la sécurité en resserrant, par l'éducation, la science et la culture, la collaboration entre nations, afin d'assurer le respect universel de la justice, de la loi, des droits de l'homme et des libertés fondamentales pour tous, sans distinction de race, de sexe, de langue ou de religion, que la Charte des Nations Unies reconnaît à tous les peuples ».

Ces éléments constitutifs du but commun, fédérateurs par nature, exigent au premier chef la solidarité intellectuelle et morale de tous ceux qui y concourent.

La stratégie de l'UNESCO pour la réforme du dispositif hors Siège vise à optimiser les opérations de l'UNESCO et à améliorer l'efficacité, l'efficience, la cohérence, la qualité et la visibilité du réseau hors Siège, de façon à mieux assister les États membres dans la réalisation des engagements qu'ils ont pris en ratifiant la Convention créant l'UNESCO « de développer et de multiplier les relations entre leurs peuples en vue de se mieux comprendre et d'acquérir une connaissance plus précise et plus vraie de leurs coutumes respectives ».

L'unité de l'action de l'Organisation, au Siège et hors Siège doit demeurer la préoccupation centrale des commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO et du Secrétariat, qui concourent à l'accomplissement du mandat de l'UNESCO. Cette unité est encore plus importante au regard de l'action concertée qu'exige la mise en œuvre du programme de développement pour l'après-2015, à travers une coopération toujours plus étroite entre les organisations du système des Nations Unies et, au-delà, avec la communauté internationale.

DIRECTIVES POUR LES RELATIONS ET LA COOPÉRATION ENTRE LES BUREAUX HORS SIÈGE DE L'UNESCO ET LES COMMISSIONS NATIONALES POUR L'UNESCO

Introduction

Les présentes directives ont été établies pour répondre à un besoin maintes fois exprimé des commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO et discutées par un groupe de travail informel de secrétaires généraux et de directeurs et chefs de bureau de toutes les régions qui s'étaient réunis au Siège de l'Organisation les 28 et 29 janvier 2004. Elles ont été révisées et amendées lors de la première Réunion interrégionale des commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO qui s'est tenue à Astana (Kazakhstan) du 22 au 24 juillet 2014, conformément à la récente réforme du dispositif hors Siège de l'UNESCO et à la lumière du Plan d'action visant à améliorer la coopération de l'UNESCO avec le réseau mondial des commissions nationales, adopté par la Conférence générale (résolution 37 C/97).

Elles décrivent succinctement les principaux domaines d'échange et de coopération entre le dispositif hors Siège de l'UNESCO et les commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO : définition de chaque entité, de son rôle et de ses attributions, ainsi que des modalités de planification et de mise en œuvre du programme de l'UNESCO dans le contexte de la réforme du dispositif hors Siège. Élaborées à partir des textes fondamentaux de l'Organisation et des décisions de ses organes directeurs en la matière, elles ont été largement diffusées pour observations et suggestions et approuvées par toutes les parties intéressées.

RÔLES ET RESPONSABILITÉS

Les commissions nationales et les bureaux hors Siège ont des activités différencierées mais parfois conjointes et/ou communes. Les commissions nationales rendent compte en premier ressort à leur gouvernement. Les bureaux hors Siège rendent compte en premier ressort au Directeur général de l'UNESCO.

³ Ces Directives ont été approuvées par le Conseil exécutif à sa 196e session en 2015 (196 EX/Décisions 5 III)

Commissions nationales

• Fonction de conseil

- Conseiller les représentants de leur gouvernement au Conseil exécutif (et leurs suppléants), ainsi que leurs délégations à la Conférence générale et aux autres réunions convoquées par l'UNESCO.
- Conseiller les organismes gouvernementaux/ministères d'exécution compétents de telle sorte que les mandats de l'UNESCO soient représentés/inscrits dans l'élaboration des nouveaux plans de développement nationaux, et dans la mise en place du Plan-cadre des Nations Unies pour l'aide au développement (PNUAD), en particulier en amont des consultations sur le Plan-cadre avec le gouvernement.
- Conseiller les institutions et partenaires nationaux sur les sujets intéressant l'UNESCO.
- À la demande du Secrétariat de l'UNESCO, donner des avis sur les liens possibles avec des partenaires nationaux.
 - Conseiller le Secrétariat de l'UNESCO sur d'autres sujets pertinents, soit à sa demande, soit de leur propre initiative, y compris dans le cadre de consultations internationales ou interrégionales entre commissions nationales.

• Contribution aux processus de planification/programmation de l'UNESCO

- Conduire, en temps opportun, des consultations nationales avec les entités gouvernementales et les autres acteurs intéressés, en vue de déterminer et définir les priorités nationales et les stratégies de coopération avec l'UNESCO, en tenant compte des mandats et des priorités de l'Organisation.
- Contribuer le cas échéant à l'élaboration des Documents de l'UNESCO relatifs à la programmation par pays (UCPD).
- Participer et contribuer selon que de besoin aux réunions de consultation avec les bureaux hors Siège et les autres commissions nationales aux niveaux sous-régional, régional et interrégional.

• Fonction de liaison et de sensibilisation

- Faciliter la liaison avec les entités gouvernementales, les institutions nationales et les autres acteurs de la société civile et les particuliers, ainsi que leur association aux activités de l'UNESCO, en vue d'obtenir des contributions intellectuelles et professionnelles utiles à l'Organisation et de promouvoir ainsi le dialogue et la collaboration interdisciplinaires.
- Forger avec le concours des bureaux hors Siège de nouveaux partenariats avec les organisations de la société civile au niveau national – groupes populaires et bénévoles sur le terrain, ONG, milieux universitaires et professionnels, parlementaires, autorités locales, syndicats et secteur privé – et promouvoir les divers réseaux et programmes de l'UNESCO.
- Accréditer les associations, centres et clubs UNESCO présents dans leurs pays respectifs, et suivre et évaluer leurs activités selon que de besoin afin de s'assurer que celles-ci sont conformes à la mission et aux objectifs de l'UNESCO, et qu'ils font un usage correct du nom et de l'emblème de l'UNESCO. Les commissions nationales peuvent retirer leur accréditation aux associations, centres et clubs UNESCO qui ne satisfont pas aux normes requises, y compris aux « Directives concernant l'utilisation du nom, de l'acronyme, de l'emblème et des noms de domaine Internet de l'UNESCO ».
- Jouer un rôle proactif en encourageant les entités nationales à proposer des candidats pour les prix UNESCO, en participant à la recherche de candidats pour les postes vacants à l'UNESCO et en aidant à placer les titulaires de bourses UNESCO.
- Prendre contact avec d'autres commissions nationales dans leur région et au-delà et renforcer la coopération, en particulier la coopération Sud-Sud et Nord-Sud-Sud.

• Fonction d'exécution

- Conformément aux résolutions pertinentes de la Conférence générale, soumettre tous les deux

ans à l'UNESCO, après consultation des parties concernées, y compris le bureau hors Siège, les demandes au titre du Programme de participation conformes aux priorités de programme de l'UNESCO.

- Suivre et évaluer la mise en œuvre des demandes approuvées et faire rapport à l'Organisation à ce sujet.
- Contribuer éventuellement, par voie de contrats, aux activités financées au titre du Programme ordinaire de l'UNESCO ou par des ressources extrabudgétaires, en veillant au respect des impératifs d'efficacité et d'efficience et de l'obligation redditionnelle.
- Fournir, sur demande, les renseignements voulus pour faciliter l'exécution du programme, y compris en ce qui concerne les contractants, experts et partenaires nationaux les plus indiqués.
- Coordonner les réponses nationales aux enquêtes menées par l'UNESCO et aux rapports sur la mise en œuvre de ses instruments normatifs au niveau national.
- Rechercher l'appui de donateurs potentiels au niveau national pour leurs propres activités et, s'il y a lieu, appuyer les initiatives des bureaux hors Siège à cet égard.
- Assumer la responsabilité de l'usage correct du nom et de l'emblème de l'Organisation dans leur pays et consulter le cas échéant le bureau hors Siège.

• Fonction d'information et de promotion

- Promouvoir les idéaux de l'UNESCO et diffuser l'information sur ses activités et ses réalisations en vue de renforcer son impact au niveau national.
- Contribuer à la visibilité de l'UNESCO.
- Collaborer activement avec les médias nationaux pour faire connaître ce qui précède à l'opinion publique.
- Organiser des événements nationaux et de sensibilisation entrant dans les domaines de compétence de l'UNESCO.

Bureaux hors Siège

• Fonction de planification

- Analyser en étroite coopération avec les commissions nationales et les ministères d'exécution les tendances relevant des domaines de compétence de l'Organisation observées dans les pays qu'ils desservent en vue d'éclairer la décision et l'action aux niveaux national, sous-régional, régional et mondial.
- Élaborer et coordonner en étroite coopération avec les commissions nationales des cadres stratégiques des UCPD et des plans d'opérations nationaux, multipays et régionaux, tant pour les activités extrabudgétaires que pour celles du Programme ordinaire, apportant ainsi une contribution capitale à l'ensemble du processus de planification de l'UNESCO.
- Veiller à ce que les priorités nationales relatives aux domaines de compétence de l'UNESCO soient dûment reprises dans le Bilan commun de pays (BCP) de l'Équipe de pays des Nations Unies, le Plan-cadre des Nations Unies pour l'aide au développement (PNUAD) et les activités conjointes visant à faire avancer le programme de développement pour l'après-2015, ainsi que dans les documents de stratégie pour la réduction de la pauvreté (DSRP) de la Banque mondiale.
- Établir les plans de travail relatifs aux activités du Programme ordinaire en étroite coopération avec les commissions nationales et veiller à leur cohérence et à leur complémentarité avec les demandes au titre du Programme de participation.

• Fonction d'exécution

- Fournir, à leur demande, aux États membres des conseils et une assistance technique pour la formulation et l'examen de leurs politiques et stratégies dans les domaines de compétence de l'UNESCO.

- Servir de relais pour les bonnes pratiques et les services d'experts.
- Soutenir la coopération entre les commissions nationales à l'échelle de la sous-région et au-delà.
- Élaborer, mettre en œuvre et suivre les activités de l'UNESCO (Programme ordinaire et activités extrabudgétaires) dans le ou les pays qu'ils desservent, y compris en consultant les commissions nationales concernées et en les tenant informées des progrès accomplis.
- Recenser les succès, les échecs et les enseignements tirés de la mise en œuvre des activités.
- Dans le cadre du Programme et budget approuvés, réagir aux difficultés comme aux occasions imprévues qui se présentent sur le terrain.

• **Fonction de mobilisation de ressources financières**

- Coopérer avec les États membres en vue de l'identification et de la formulation de projets de développement et mobiliser des fonds pour les activités de l'UNESCO.
- S'assurer, avec le concours des commissions nationales, que les activités et projets extrabudgétaires ont été pleinement approuvés par l'État membre concerné.
- Associer les commissions nationales à la recherche de possibilités d'alignement et de modalités de cofinancement sous la forme de programmes financés par le gouvernement.

• **Fonction de promotion**

- Promouvoir et défendre les idéaux et les objectifs de l'UNESCO et les diffuser auprès des gouvernements, de la société civile, des milieux professionnels et de l'opinion en général avec le concours des commissions nationales.
- Aider les gouvernements qui en font la demande dans la mise en œuvre des instruments normatifs de l'UNESCO.

• **Contribuer à la visibilité de l'UNESCO**

- Promouvoir les événements internationaux qui entrent dans les domaines de compétence de l'UNESCO, y compris en coopération avec les commissions nationales.
- Entretenir des relations étroites avec les médias pour assurer très généralement la visibilité de l'UNESCO, en consultation avec les commissions nationales dans la mesure où la complémentarité l'exige.
- Élaborer des stratégies de communication et renforcer la présence en ligne des bureaux hors Siège en vue d'accroître la visibilité de l'UNESCO au sein de la collectivité nationale comme de la communauté internationale.

• **Fonction de centre d'échange d'information**

- Rassembler, transférer, diffuser et mettre en commun les informations disponibles, les connaissances et les bonnes pratiques ou des solutions novatrices dans les domaines de compétence de l'UNESCO.

ÉCHANGE D'INFORMATION

- Les directeurs/chefs des bureaux hors Siège informent régulièrement les secrétaires généraux des commissions nationales des faits suivants :
 - visites de membres du personnel et consultants de l'UNESCO en mission;
 - activités et projets devant être menés au niveau national ou qui comportent une participation nationale, et résultats de ces activités et projets;
 - faits nouveaux ou événements importants survenus à l'UNESCO.
- Les secrétaires généraux des commissions nationales informent régulièrement les directeurs/chefs des bureaux nationaux et multipays des faits et points suivants :

- questions nationales, déclarations, événements, faits nouveaux, politiques qui peuvent influer sur les activités de l'UNESCO dans ses domaines de compétence;
- leurs interactions avec les autres branches de l'UNESCO;
- leur coopération avec les organisations intergouvernementales régionales et les ONG exerçant leurs activités dans les domaines de compétence de l'UNESCO.

Consultations bilatérales

Les directeurs/chefs des bureaux régionaux multisectoriels en Afrique et des bureaux multipays et nationaux consultent régulièrement les secrétaires généraux des commissions nationales sur les points suivants :

- La conceptualisation des activités à mener au niveau national, en les inscrivant dans les cadres stratégiques multipays et nationaux arrêtés d'un commun accord au cours de la consultation sous-régionale/multipays.
- La désignation des partenaires nationaux.

Les secrétaires généraux des commissions nationales :

Consultent, selon que de besoin, les directeurs/chefs des bureaux hors Siège, pour assurer la complémentarité avec les programmes de l'UNESCO.

PARTICIPATION À DES ÉVÉNEMENTS

Les commissions nationales et les bureaux hors Siège échangent des invitations aux événements qu'ils organisent respectivement au niveau national.

MÉCANISME DE CONSULTATION

Consultation pour les documents C/4 et C/5

La modalité de la consultation pour la préparation des documents C/4 et C/5 privilégie les contributions régionales au processus, constituées à partir des consultations conduites au niveau national. Ces consultations nationales relèvent des États membres, agissant par l'intermédiaire de leurs commissions nationales. C'est le Secrétariat qui assure et gère la liaison entre les consultations nationales, sous-régionales/multipays et régionales.

Les modalités des consultations régionales sont en cours d'examen. Prière de se reporter au document 192 EX/5 Partie III section B et à la décision 192 EX/5 (III.B) s'y rapportant.

Consultations au niveau national

- *Qui en est chargé ?*
 - La commission nationale.
- *Qui y participe ?*
 - Tous les partenaires, gouvernementaux et non gouvernementaux, au niveau national, et le bureau hors Siège de l'UNESCO desservant le pays concerné.
- *Quand ont-elles lieu ?*
 - Idéalement, il se tient une réunion avant les consultations sous-régionale/multipays et régionales.
- *Quels en sont les résultats ?*
 - La contribution des pays aux consultations sur les documents C/4 et C/5.

Consultations au niveau sous-régional/multipays

- *Qui en est chargé ?*

- Les bureaux multipays et régionaux de l'UNESCO et, en Afrique, les bureaux régionaux multisectoriels.
- *Qui y participe ?*

- Les commissions nationales et, dans les limites du budget disponible, les autres acteurs et experts requis, et les représentants des bureaux régionaux et des instituts de l'UNESCO. Les secteurs de programme et les services centraux de l'UNESCO ainsi que d'autres organismes des Nations Unies et d'autres partenaires peuvent être invités à participer à ces réunions, selon que de besoin.

- *Quand ont-elles lieu ?*

- Idéalement, à intervalles réguliers et selon les crédits disponibles pendant le cycle quadriennal. Les réunions sur la préparation des documents C/4 et C/5 devraient, dans l'idéal, se tenir au cours de l'automne/été de la troisième année du quadriennium, comme prescrit dans la décision 192 EX/5 (III.B) et les dispositions ultérieures. Dans l'intervalle, des consultations collectives pourraient avoir lieu par courrier électronique.

- *Quels en sont les résultats possibles ? Selon l'objet de la consultation, ce pourraient être, au moment voulu :*

- Les cadres stratégiques régionaux, sous-régionaux, multipays et nationaux et les plans d'opérations qui inspirent la mise en œuvre des activités du Programme ordinaire décentralisées par les bureaux hors Siège, l'identification des projets à soumettre aux sources de financement extrabudgétaires et des stratégies de sensibilisation et de communication.
- L'évaluation des résultats obtenus et le suivi de la mise en œuvre des activités et des projets.
- L'examen des questions de gestion et de coordination qui se posent entre les bureaux hors Siège et les commissions nationales.
- Un accord sur des activités conjointes et une plus grande synergie entre commissions nationales.

PARTENARIATS

Rôle des commissions nationales s'agissant d'encourager les partenariats

- **Avec le secteur privé**

Les commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO ont un rôle particulier à jouer dans la coopération avec un partenaire privé. En dehors de leur fonction de recensement et d'identification de nouveaux partenaires aux niveaux national et régional et/ou de leur intervention lors de la sélection, les commissions nationales sont des parties prenantes majeures et les interlocuteurs naturels de l'UNESCO au niveau du pays. Il est essentiel que toute action soit menée en consultation et en coordination constantes avec l'agenda de développement national. Le partenariat avec le secteur privé dans un pays donné ne doit pas être considéré comme une mesure opportuniste mais comme un ancrage dans une perspective de développement à plus long terme dans l'intérêt du pays et de la région tout entière.

- **Avec les organisations non gouvernementales (ONG)**

Les commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO concernées sont consultées pendant le processus d'admission d'ONG aux relations de partenariat avec l'UNESCO, en particulier lorsque la demande concerne une ONG nationale ou locale. La coopération au niveau national s'opère en consultation et/ou en partenariat avec la commission nationale pour l'UNESCO concernée.

Les commissions nationales devraient déterminer quelles sont les ONG qui présentent un intérêt au regard des activités courantes de l'UNESCO et soutenir l'admission de ses partenaires non gouvernementaux, aux niveaux tant international que national, en vue d'accroître le nombre d'ONG de toutes les régions qui coopèrent activement avec l'UNESCO en qualité de partenaire officiel.

UTILISATION DU NOM ET DE L'EMBLÈME DE L'UNESCO

Les commissions nationales, l'utilisation du nom et de l'emblème de l'UNESCO et le droit d'en autoriser l'utilisation.

Outre l'utilisation qu'elles font elles-mêmes du nom et de l'emblème de l'UNESCO pour promouvoir la visibilité et le rayonnement de l'UNESCO, les commissions nationales jouent aussi un rôle important en délivrant des autorisations d'utiliser l'emblème de l'Organisation.

Les commissions nationales peuvent autoriser à placer sous leur patronage, c'est-à-dire sous leur caution morale, les événements d'organisations de la société civile se tenant à l'échelon national, et accorder dans ce contexte le droit d'utiliser l'emblème de commission nationale de l'UNESCO. Elles peuvent aussi autoriser l'utilisation de leur propre emblème lorsqu'elles organisent des événements conjointement avec d'autres organisations nationales dans le cadre d'un partenariat.

En outre, les commissions nationales sont appelées à assister le Secrétariat en conseillant au sujet de l'utilisation de l'emblème les membres des vastes réseaux de l'UNESCO, comme les gestionnaires des sites du patrimoine mondial et des réserves de biosphère, les écoles associées de l'UNESCO, ainsi que les associations, centres et clubs UNESCO, les chaires UNESCO, etc.

Les commissions nationales sont également appelées à assister le Secrétariat en formulant des recommandations lorsque des organisations de la société civile des États membres concernés demandent à bénéficier du patronage du Directeur général.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK REGARDING ASSOCIATIONS AND CLUBS FOR UNESCO⁴

1. Background and rationale

1.1 Over the last 70 years, the “Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO” have made an important contribution to advancing UNESCO’s mandate and goals and increasing the Organization’s visibility. However, there is a need to better codify the relationship between the UNESCO Secretariat, National Commissions for UNESCO and Associations and Clubs for UNESCO, by strengthening an appropriate Regulatory Framework regarding the movement of Clubs for UNESCO.

1.2 In this context, a number of strategic documents were approved by UNESCO’s Governing Bodies, namely:

- Action Plan for Enhancing the Cooperation of UNESCO’s Secretariat with National Commissions for UNESCO, adopted by the General Conference at its 37th session (document 37 C/Resolution 97);
- “Clubs for UNESCO: A Practical Guide” (last published by the Organization in 2009); and
- the provisions outlined in Part F “Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO” of the Comprehensive Partnership Strategy, contained in document 192 EX/5.INF (2013).

1.3 All these strategic documents were aimed at clarifying the provisions related to the cooperation between UNESCO and National Commissions, Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO. The Consultation Meeting with National Commissions that was held in June 2017 called for the need to simplify the structure of the movement and clarify the role of “Centres for UNESCO” so as to avoid any confusion with the status of category 1 and category 2 centres under UNESCO’s auspices.

1.4 By 37 C/Resolution 93 (November 2013), the General Conference approved “the Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres” (which supersedes all relevant prior resolutions by the General Conference on this subject). These institutes/centres serve in their fields of specialization as international or regional centres and poles of expertise/experience to provide services and technical assistance to Member States and cooperation partners. On the other hand, there is no definition legally agreed by the General Conference for the “Centres for UNESCO”.

1.5 It was agreed at the Consultation Meeting that the use of “Centres” as being part of the Associations and Clubs for UNESCO movement should be seriously reconsidered and it was suggested that the “Centres for UNESCO” could continue to exist under this name for a transitional period of two years following the adoption of this Regulatory Framework by the General Conference at its 39th session, until such time as they either become a category 2 centre, or change their designation to become either a “Club” or “Association” for UNESCO.

1.6 Given the bureaucratic and operational complexity of changing the name “Centre for UNESCO” to “Association or Club for UNESCO”, the Centres for UNESCO should continue to exist under this name for an additional period of two years until the 41st session of the General Conference and the submission of the report by the Secretariat concerning this decision. At the end of this period, their status should be aligned on 39 C/Resolution 90, paragraph 1.5, of the 39th session of the General Conference. (*Amendment adopted on the report of the APX Commission at the 15th plenary meeting, on 25 November 2019*)

2. Definition and purpose

2.1 Definition of “Associations and Clubs for UNESCO”: They consist of groups of people from all ages, from all walks of life and every background who share a firm belief in UNESCO’s ideals as set out in its Constitution and who decide to realize them in their daily life (cf. Clubs for UNESCO: A Practical Guide of UNESCO).

2.2 Associations and Clubs for UNESCO are non-profit bodies. They operate on a voluntary basis and are legally and financially independent from UNESCO. They have close links to the general public and other professional and local authorities. “Associations and Clubs for UNESCO” can operate in any sphere of UNESCO’s competence (ref. major programmes of UNESCO).

2.3 Associations and Clubs for UNESCO are all different in size and financial and operational capacities.

2.4 The main purpose of the Associations and Clubs for UNESCO is to promote understanding of and support for UNESCO’s mission, priorities and programmes at the grassroots level. They thus contribute to

⁴ This Regulatory Framework was adopted by the General Conference at its 39th session in 2017 (39 C/Resolution 90) and amended by the General Conference at its 40th session in 2019 (40 C/Resolution 98)

the promotion of UNESCO's values, messages and actions and are instrumental for the realization of its objectives and goals.

2.5 With a view to strengthening this Regulatory Framework, it is decided that after a transitional period of two years only Associations and Clubs for UNESCO will be considered as the two categories of partners within the "Associations and Clubs for UNESCO" movement.

2.6 During that transitional period of two years, the provisions of this Regulatory Framework shall apply to Centres for UNESCO.

3. Strategic objectives of the partnership of the Associations and Clubs for UNESCO with the Organization

- foster the interest of the broader public in UNESCO's mission, programmes and activities;
- contribute to developing and promoting an understanding of UNESCO's goals and advocacy, including at grassroots level;
- contribute to the implementation of the Organization's programme at national and local levels, in coordination with the National Commission for UNESCO;
- promote the values of solidarity, tolerance and respect for cultural diversity, as well as the values of global citizenship education, human rights and sustainable development among peoples;
- promote the International days, weeks, years and decades proclaimed by UNESCO; and
- contribute to promoting UNESCO's messages by translating UNESCO Secretariat-generated documents and information into national and local languages, through all means of communication, including social media.

4. Role of National Commissions for UNESCO

4.1 The direct oversight of Associations and Clubs for UNESCO by their respective National Commissions is a prerequisite for ensuring the supervision of quality of these entities and their adherence to the provisions of the present Regulatory Framework.

4.2 National Commissions are responsible, among others, for:

- accrediting, supervising, assessing, and if necessary, removing accreditation from Associations and Clubs for UNESCO;
- keeping an updated directory of Associations and Clubs for UNESCO;
- providing supervision for the work of the National Federation of Associations and Clubs for UNESCO, if it exists;
- ensuring that Associations' and Clubs' goals and activities are inspired by UNESCO's current strategic objectives and programmatic priorities;
- ensuring the proper use of UNESCO's name, acronym and logo;
- encouraging cooperation with Associations and Clubs for UNESCO at the national, regional and international level;
- encouraging exploring avenues for cooperation with other UNESCO's networks in the country, such as UNESCO Chairs, UNESCO Associated Schools, UNESCO category 2 centres and institutes, and NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO; and
- National Commissions could be allowed to take any initiative, which might help Associations and Clubs for UNESCO to fulfil their mission.

5. Rules of engagement

5.1 Associations and Clubs for UNESCO share UNESCO's ideals, and must commit to compliance with the following basic rules:

- operate under the oversight of the National Commission for UNESCO of the country in which they are located;
- submit to the National Commission an action plan at the beginning of each year, as well as an activity report at the end of the year;
- ensure that their goals and activities are inspired by UNESCO's current strategic objectives and programmatic priorities;
- not to use the Association or Club for political purposes;
- not to make statements in the name of UNESCO or of their National Commission;
- not to use the Association or Club for any profit-making enterprise;
- not to take upon themselves to undertake the rights and prerogatives of UNESCO (for example, appointments of Goodwill Ambassadors, or awarding any other titles; awarding prizes, diplomas or any awards or certificates awarded by UNESCO);
- respect strictly the Directives Concerning the Use of the Name, Acronym, Logo and Internet Domain Names of UNESCO adopted by the General Conference at its 34th session (34 C/Resolution 86), in order to prevent any misuse;
- use the UNESCO name, acronym and logo only upon obtaining an authorisation from the National Commission for UNESCO, solely in the following form, which may be displayed in the languages of the country:



- to not use or no longer use the acronym "UNESCO" in the website address, email address or name of social network accounts of the association or club, or any other wording that could falsely suggest that they are part of UNESCO.

6. Provisions related to National Federations of Associations and Clubs for UNESCO

6.1 If there are several Associations/Clubs for UNESCO in a Member State, these Associations and/or Clubs may gather together to create a National Federation of Associations and Clubs for UNESCO under the aegis and with the authorization of their National Commission, which could fulfil the following main functions:

- guiding and advising individual Associations and Clubs on how to achieve the strategic objectives of the partnership outlined above;
- if needed, supporting their National Commission in its Clubs-related and coordination work, (including by collecting and compiling individual annual reports of Associations and Clubs and helping to train them);
- alerting their National Commission in case of individual Associations/Clubs non-compliance with the rules of engagement outlined above;
- encouraging contacts, common activities and collaboration between Associations/Clubs in the Member State; and
- organizing their activities based on an action plan validated by their National Commission.

6.2 There must be only one national federation for each Member State or Associate Member. The National Commission guarantees the legitimacy of the concerned National Federation of Associations and Clubs for UNESCO.

6.3 In implementing its activities, a national federation may be supported financially by its national authorities or partners, under the supervision of its National Commission for UNESCO. It can submit projects within the participation programme framework.

6.4 Each national federation undertakes to respect strictly the Directives Concerning the Use of the Name, Acronym, Logo and Internet Domain Names of UNESCO adopted by the General Conference at its 34th session (34 C/Resolution 86); and use the UNESCO logo only upon obtaining an authorization from their National Commission for UNESCO, and only in the following form, which may be displayed in appropriate translation in the languages of the country:



6.5 National federations do not have the authority to grant the right to use UNESCO's name, acronym, logo and Internet domain to any other entity.

6.6 They also undertake to not use or no longer use the acronym "UNESCO" in their website address, email address or name of social network accounts, or any other wording that could falsely suggest that they are part of UNESCO.

CADRE RÉGLEMENTAIRE RELATIF AUX ASSOCIATIONS ET CLUBS POUR L'UNESCO⁵

1. Contexte et justification

1.1 Depuis 70 ans, les associations, centres et clubs pour l'UNESCO apportent une importante contribution à la réalisation du mandat et des objectifs de l'Organisation ainsi qu'à l'amélioration de sa visibilité. Cependant, il est nécessaire de mieux codifier les relations entre le Secrétariat de l'Organisation, les commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO et les associations et clubs pour l'UNESCO, en renforçant un Cadre réglementaire approprié relatif au mouvement des clubs pour l'UNESCO.

1.2 Dans ce contexte, un certain nombre de documents stratégiques ont été approuvés par les organes directeurs de l'UNESCO, à savoir :

- Plan d'action visant à améliorer la coopération entre le Secrétariat de l'UNESCO et les commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO, adopté par la Conférence générale à sa 37e session (résolution 37 C/97) ;
- « Clubs pour l'UNESCO : guide pratique » (dernier ouvrage publié par l'UNESCO en 2009) ; et
- les dispositions de la partie F – « Associations, Centres et Clubs pour l'UNESCO » de la Stratégie globale pour les partenariats, contenue dans le document 192 EX/5.INF (2013).

1.3. Tous ces documents stratégiques avaient pour but de clarifier les dispositions relatives à la coopération entre l'UNESCO et les commissions nationales, les associations, les centres et les clubs pour l'UNESCO. La réunion de consultation avec les commissions nationales qui s'est tenue en juin 2017 a souligné la nécessité de simplifier la structure du mouvement et de préciser le rôle des « centres pour l'UNESCO » afin d'éviter toute confusion avec le statut des centres de catégories 1 et 2 placés sous l'égide de l'UNESCO.

1.4 Par sa résolution 37 C/93 (novembre 2013), la Conférence générale a approuvé « la Stratégie globale intégrée concernant les instituts et centres de catégorie 2 » (qui remplace toutes les résolutions précédemment adoptées par la Conférence générale à ce sujet). Dans leurs domaines de spécialisation, ces instituts/centres servent de pôles d'expertise internationaux ou régionaux qui offrent des services et une assistance technique aux États membres et aux partenaires de coopération. D'un autre côté, il n'existe aucune définition des « centres pour l'UNESCO » légalement admise par la Conférence générale.

1.5 À la réunion de consultation, il a été convenu que l'utilisation des « centres » dans le cadre du mouvement des associations et clubs pour l'UNESCO devrait être sérieusement réexaminée. Il a été suggéré que les « centres pour l'UNESCO » continueraient d'exister sous ce nom pour une période transitoire de deux ans suivant l'adoption du présent Cadre réglementaire par la Conférence générale à sa 39e session, jusqu'à ce qu'ils deviennent un centre de catégorie 2 ou qu'ils changent de statut pour devenir soit un « club », soit une « association » pour l'UNESCO.

1.6 Étant donné la complexité bureaucratique et opérationnelle du changement de l'appellation « centre pour l'UNESCO » en « association pour l'UNESCO » ou « club pour l'UNESCO », les centres pour l'UNESCO devraient continuer d'exister sous cette appellation pendant une période supplémentaire de deux ans jusqu'à la 41e session de la Conférence générale et la présentation par le Secrétariat du rapport concernant cette décision. À l'issue de cette période, leur statut devra être mis en conformité avec le paragraphe 1.5 du Cadre réglementaire adopté par la Conférence générale à sa 39e session (*Amendement adopté sur le rapport de la commission APX à la 15e séance plénière, le 25 novembre 2019*).

2. Définition et objet

2.1 Définition des « associations, centres et clubs pour l'UNESCO » : Il s'agit de groupes de personnes de tous âges, de tous horizons et de toutes conditions qui croient fermement aux idéaux de l'UNESCO tels qu'ils sont énoncés dans son Acte constitutif et qui décident de les réaliser dans leur vie quotidienne (voir « Clubs pour l'UNESCO : guide pratique »).

2.2 Les associations, centres et clubs pour l'UNESCO sont des organes à but non lucratif. Ils travaillent bénévolement et sont indépendants de l'Organisation sur les plans juridique et financier. Ils entretiennent des liens étroits avec le grand public et d'autres autorités professionnelles et locales. Les « associations, centres et clubs pour l'UNESCO » peuvent œuvrer dans n'importe quel domaine de compétence de l'Organisation (voir les grands programmes de l'UNESCO).

2.3 Les associations, centres et clubs pour l'UNESCO diffèrent par leur taille et leurs capacités financières et opérationnelles.

2.4 Les associations, centres et clubs pour l'UNESCO ont pour objectif principal de faire mieux connaître la mission, les priorités et les programmes de l'Organisation au niveau local. Ils contribuent ainsi à promouvoir

⁵ Ce Cadre réglementaire a été adopté par la Conférence générale à sa 39^e session en 2017 (39 C/Résolution 90) et modifié par la Conférence générale à sa 40^e session en 2019 (40 C/Résolution 98)

les valeurs, les messages et les actions de l'UNESCO, et jouent un rôle important pour la réalisation de ses buts et objectifs.

2.5 Afin de renforcer le présent Cadre réglementaire, il est proposé qu'à l'issue d'une période transitoire de deux ans, les associations et les clubs pour l'UNESCO seront considérés comme les deux seules catégories de partenaires au sein du mouvement des « Associations et clubs pour l'UNESCO ».

3. Objectifs stratégiques du partenariat des associations et clubs pour l'UNESCO avec l'Organisation

- Susciter l'intérêt du grand public pour la mission, les programmes et les activités de l'UNESCO ;
- faire mieux connaître et comprendre les buts de l'UNESCO et son action de sensibilisation, notamment au niveau local ;
- contribuer à la mise en **œuvre** des programmes de l'Organisation aux niveaux local et national, en coordination avec la commission nationale pour l'UNESCO concernée ;
- promouvoir auprès des individus les valeurs de solidarité, de tolérance et de respect de la diversité culturelle, ainsi que les valeurs de l'éducation à la citoyenneté mondiale, des droits de l'homme et du développement durable ;
- promouvoir les journées, semaines, années et décennies internationales proclamées par l'UNESCO ; et
- contribuer à la diffusion des messages de l'UNESCO en traduisant les documents et informations produits par le Secrétariat de l'Organisation dans les langues nationales et locales, à l'aide de tous les moyens de communication, notamment des réseaux sociaux.

4. Rôle des commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO

4.1 La supervision directe des associations, centres et clubs pour l'UNESCO par la commission nationale dont ils relèvent est une condition indispensable pour assurer le contrôle de la qualité de ces entités et le respect des dispositions du présent Cadre réglementaire par ces dernières.

4.2 Les commissions nationales sont chargées, entre autres, des tâches suivantes :

- accréditer, surveiller, évaluer les associations, centres et clubs pour l'UNESCO et, le cas échéant, retirer leur accréditation ;
- tenir à jour un répertoire des associations et clubs pour l'UNESCO ;
- assurer la supervision des travaux de la Fédération nationale des associations et clubs pour l'UNESCO, le cas échéant ;
- veiller à la conformité des objectifs et des activités des associations et clubs pour l'UNESCO avec les actuels objectifs stratégiques et priorités de programme de l'Organisation ;
- veiller à la bonne utilisation du nom, de l'acronyme et de l'emblème de l'UNESCO ;
- promouvoir la coopération avec les associations et clubs pour l'UNESCO au niveau national, régional et international ;
- encourager la recherche de pistes de coopération avec d'autres réseaux de l'UNESCO au niveau national (chaires UNESCO, écoles associées, instituts et centres de catégorie 2, ONG partenaires officiels de l'UNESCO) ; et
- les commissions nationales pourraient être autorisées à prendre toute initiative susceptible d'aider les associations et clubs pour l'UNESCO à remplir leur mission.

5. Règles d'engagement

5.1 Les associations, centres et clubs pour l'UNESCO partagent les idéaux de l'UNESCO et doivent s'engager à respecter les règles fondamentales suivantes :

- exercer leurs activités sous la supervision de la commission nationale pour l'UNESCO du pays dans lequel ils se situent ;
- présenter un plan d'action à la commission nationale au début de chaque année, ainsi qu'un rapport d'activité à la fin de l'année ;
- veiller à la conformité de leurs objectifs et activités avec les actuels objectifs stratégiques et priorités de programme de l'UNESCO ;
- ne pas utiliser l'association, le centre ou le club pour l'UNESCO à des fins politiques ;
- ne pas faire de déclaration au nom de l'UNESCO ou de leur commission nationale ;
- ne pas utiliser l'association, le centre ou le club pour l'UNESCO à des fins lucratives ;

- ne pas se permettre d'exercer les droits et prérogatives de l'UNESCO (par exemple, la désignation des ambassadeurs de bonne volonté, ou l'attribution d'autres titres ; la remise de prix, diplômes ou autres récompenses ou certificats délivrés par l'Organisation) ;
- respecter strictement les Directives concernant l'utilisation du nom, de l'acronyme, de l'emblème et des noms de domaine internet de l'UNESCO, adoptées par la Conférence générale à sa 34e session (résolution 34 C/86) ;
- utiliser le nom, l'acronyme et l'emblème de l'UNESCO sur autorisation de la commission nationale pour l'UNESCO et seulement sous la forme présentée ci-dessous, le texte pouvant apparaître dans la langue du pays :



- ne pas utiliser l'acronyme « UNESCO » dans l'adresse du site Web ou l'adresse électronique de l'association ou du club, ni aucune autre mention pouvant suggérer à tort qu'ils font partie de l'UNESCO.

6. Dispositions relatives aux fédérations nationales des associations et clubs pour l'UNESCO

6.1 S'il existe plusieurs associations/clubs pour l'UNESCO dans un État membre, ces associations et/ou clubs peuvent se regrouper pour créer une Fédération nationale des associations et clubs pour l'UNESCO sous l'égide et avec l'autorisation de leur commission nationale, qui remplirait les principales fonctions suivantes :

- fournir aux associations et aux clubs des orientations et des conseils sur la manière d'atteindre les objectifs stratégiques du partenariat exposés plus haut ;
- si nécessaire, aider la commission nationale concernée à s'acquitter de ses tâches relatives aux clubs et de coordination (notamment en recueillant et regroupant les rapports annuels des différentes associations et des différents clubs et en les aidant à se former) ;
- alerter la commission nationale concernée en cas de non-respect par les associations/clubs des règles d'engagement énoncées plus haut ;
- encourager les contacts, les activités communes et la collaboration entre les associations/clubs dans l'État membre ; et
- organiser leurs activités sur la base d'un plan d'action validé par leur commission nationale.

6.2 Il ne doit y avoir qu'une seule fédération nationale pour chaque État membre ou Membre associé. La commission nationale garantit la légitimité de la Fédération nationale des associations et clubs pour l'UNESCO concernée.

6.3 Pour mener leurs activités, les fédérations nationales peuvent recevoir un appui financier de la part des autorités nationales ou de leurs partenaires, sous la supervision de la commission nationale pour l'UNESCO. Elles peuvent présenter des projets dans le cadre du Programme de participation.

6.4 Les fédérations nationales s'engagent à respecter strictement les Directives concernant l'utilisation du nom, de l'acronyme, de l'emblème et des noms de domaine internet de l'UNESCO, adoptées par la Conférence générale à sa 34e session (résolution 34 C/86), ainsi qu'à utiliser l'emblème de l'UNESCO sur autorisation de la commission nationale pour l'UNESCO concernée et seulement sous la forme présentée ci-dessous, le texte pouvant apparaître dans les termes appropriés dans la langue du pays :



unesco

[nom du pays]
Fédération des associations
et clubs pour l'UNESCO

6.5 Les fédérations nationales ne peuvent pas donner le droit d'utiliser le nom, l'acronyme, l'emblème et les noms de domaine Internet de l'UNESCO à des tiers.

6.6 Elles s'engagent également à ne pas utiliser l'acronyme « UNESCO » dans l'adresse de leur site Web ou dans leur adresse électronique, ni aucune autre mention pouvant suggérer à tort qu'elles font partie de l'UNESCO.



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