



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

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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

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

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

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

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28 June 2017

Dear Partners,

I am pleased to begin this letter by informing you that twenty-three new sites have been added to the **UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves**. As you know, biosphere reserves are learning places for sustainable development, whose aim is to reconcile biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources. Those of you interested in learning more about these new sites can consult this page: <http://en.unesco.org/news/23-new-sites-added-unesco-s-world-network-biosphere-reserves>.

On a separate note, I had the opportunity last week to meet with Mr Philippe Beaussant, Chairperson of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee, to discuss forthcoming activities. As you are aware, the next **International Forum of NGOs**, due to be held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris most probably on 7 and 8 December 2017, will focus on climate change. This is related to the fact that many UNESCO programmes in science, education, culture and communication contribute to creating knowledge about climate change and understanding its ethical implications for present and future generations.

In this respect, I wish to inform you that the updated UNESCO Strategy for Action on Climate Change (2018-2021) – available [under this link](#) - was approved by the Executive Board in April last and will be submitted to the General Conference for endorsement at its 39th session in November 2017. In its paragraph 82, the Strategy specifically states: "UNESCO, through its NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee, Youth Networks and the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), will engage with the global NGO community, youth and schools on issues of common interest linked to actions promoting the implementation of the UNESCO Strategy". I am therefore convinced that the Forum will be a unique opportunity to create the necessary synergy to contribute together to the global effort against climate change.

30 July 2017 - Deadline for nominations: Carlos J. Finlay UNESCO Prize for Microbiology

Funded by the Government of Cuba, the Prize aims to reward the efforts of an individual, or of an institution, non-governmental organization or other entity which, through research and development, has made an outstanding contribution to the field of microbiology (including immunology, molecular biology, genetics, etc.) and its applications.

The candidates can be nominated by governments of Member States, science institutions and associations, as well as by NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO active in the fields covered by the Prize.

Let me remind you that the nomination files should be filled in English or French only and submitted to the Director-General **no later than 30 July 2017**.

For more information and the application form of this Prize, please visit [this website](#).

Contact: carlosjfinlayprize@unesco.org

6-12 August 2017 – World Humanities Conference, Liège, Belgium

Co-organized by UNESCO, the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH), the “World Humanities Conference – Liège 2017 Foundation” and LiègeTogether, the Conference will gather participants from all over the world working in the fields of the humanities, the natural, social and formal sciences, politics, art and communication, as well as representatives of international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The Conference will strengthen the organization of the humanities, notably in its interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary dimensions, including all sciences. It will contribute to epistemological debate and convergence of scholarly and wider cultural approaches, with a view to bridging the gap that often exists with the rest of society and the design of research, education and territorial policies.

It will be structured around six main themes:

- Humans and the environment;
- Cultural identities, cultural diversity and intercultural relations;
- Cultural heritage;
- Boundaries and migrations;
- History, memory and politics;
- The humanities in a world in transition.

I encourage you to consult the [dedicated website](#) in order to register or get more information about the Conference.

Contact: Mr John Crowley (j.crowley@unesco.org)

12 August 2017 – International Youth Day

Emphasizing the potential of youth as partners in today’s global society, the 2017 International Youth Day will be celebrated on the theme “Youth Building Peace”. It will bring to the attention of the international community young people’s contributions to conflict prevention and transformation as well as inclusion, social justice and sustainable peace.

A variety of activities will take place across the world, organized by different partners and youth stakeholders. The official commemorative event will be held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 11 August 2017.

In line with the [UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security](#), UNESCO aims to create an environment where young women and men are empowered, heard and engaged as change-makers in their immediate communities to prevent violent extremism and build peace in conflict- or violence-affected areas.

This Day is directly in line with the spirit of our last International Forum of NGOs in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and we hope that you will join us in organizing activities around the world to celebrate this Day and promote young women and men as the leaders of today. Please feel free to send us any information on any activity you intend to coordinate and it shall be published on the website www.unesco.int.

If you want to know more about the UNESCO Youth Programme, I invite you to visit [this link](#).

Contact: Mr Alexander Schischlik (youth@unesco.org)

8 September 2017 – International Literacy Day (ILD)

This year's edition of the ILD will be placed under the theme 'Literacy in a Digital World'.

For this occasion, an international conference will be organized on 7 and 8 September 2017 at UNESCO's Headquarters in Paris. The overall objective is to reflect on what it means to be literate in increasingly digitally-mediated societies and to explore effective literacy policies and programmes that can leverage the opportunities of a digital world. As in previous editions, the 2017 UNESCO International Literacy Prizes Awards Ceremony will also take place and reward excellent literacy practices from around the world in connection with the theme of the year.

ILD will also be celebrated at regional and country levels, involving governments, NGOs, multilateral organizations, donors, teachers, learners, communities, the private sectors, parents and experts. (Please see activity examples from ILD2016 at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/index.php?id=131924>).

Annual celebrations of ILD have been held since 1967 to promote literacy as an essential and integral part of lifelong learning and efforts for creating more inclusive and sustainable societies.

I encourage our NGO partners to organize related activities, in collaboration with governments and key partners, including UNESCO Field Offices. Please feel free to send us information on any activity that you intend to organize or participate in, and we shall publish it on our website which will be made available soon within the UNESCO's literacy portal: <http://en.unesco.org/themes/literacy-all>.

Contact: Ms Mari Yasunaga (literacy@unesco.org)

UNESCO Publications

- Compiled by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the first status report on ocean sciences around the world, the *Global Ocean Science Report: The Current Status of Ocean Science around the World* offers a global record of who, how, and where ocean science is conducted: generating knowledge, helping to protect ocean health, and empowering society to support sustainable ocean management in the framework of the United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. The Executive Summary of this Report is now available in five languages ([English](#), [Spanish](#), [French](#), [Chinese](#), and [Arabic](#)). The Russian version is coming soon.
- The study entitled *Protecting Journalism Sources in the Digital Age*, the 9th in UNESCO's Internet Freedom Series, provides a comprehensive review of developments that can impact the legal frameworks that support protection of journalistic sources. Interviews, panel discussions, thematic studies and a review panel ensured the input of legal and media experts, journalists and scholars. This study thus seeks to assess the evolution of protective legal frameworks over eight years, from 2007-2015, and provides recommendations for the future of journalistic source protection. This publication is available in English via [this link](#).
- A new UNESCO policy paper, *Reducing global poverty through universal primary and secondary education*, is being released ahead of the UN High Level Political Forum (10-19 July), which will focus on poverty eradication in pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It shows that the global poverty rate could be more than halved if all adults completed secondary school. Yet, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) data show persistently that completion levels in education will remain well below that target for generations to come. The paper demonstrates the importance of recognizing education as a core lever for ending poverty in all its forms, everywhere. It is available in English via [this link](#).

Yours sincerely,



Eric Falt