

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Introduction

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), has a dynamic role within the United Nations (UN) system as it works closely with other UN agencies and maintains a strong relationship with as with civil society. In recent months, UNESCO has engaged in two high-level international meetings, *1st Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly* and the *UNESCO World Conference for Sustainable Development*. Additionally, 2014 saw the end of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, where UNESCO and its partners highlighted the importance of education in the post-2015 development agenda. Thus, UNESCO has been called to work in close coordination with other UN bodies and the diverse stakeholders involved in this process. In this regard, education is one of the core components of the process towards a more sustainable future, since the transformation of the educational system is highly related with the transformation of several areas of human life.

Recent activities

UNESCO is an active member of the UN system, as it coordinates a series of events and programs with primary objective to promote advancement in culture and education as common and shared good.¹ One such event was that took place in November 2014 was the *1st Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly* of the World Heritage Committee.² This meeting finalized a series of sessions held over the year to amend the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly of the World Heritage Committee with the aim of ensuring “more equitable geographical and cultural representation.”³ The General Assembly adopted the recommendations of the Open-Working Group to create a sub-group for election to the World Heritage Committee process, creating two distinct groups for African and Arab States.⁴ Further, as a result of this meeting and after several debates, the General Assembly approved a election model for the Member States of the World Heritage Committee.⁵ One of the major changes is that a part of the General Assembly, specifically 5 seats, will be openly elected.⁶ This new election model will be applied in 2015 at the World Heritage Committee.⁷

At the end of 2014 UNESCO focused on the promotion equity and diversity and the UN General Assembly launch of the *International Decade for People of African Descent*.⁸ Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General, highlighted the work carried out by UNESCO projects including those raising awareness on the history of the African slave trade.⁹ In addition, UNESCO developed educational programs, such as “Teaching Respect for All,” developed in collaboration with the Government of Brazil and the United States.¹⁰ Further, UNESCO has also participated in the elaboration of the report on “Migration and Youth” which was published in December 2014 by the Global Migration Group (GMG), one of the 17 inter-agencies of the UN and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).¹¹

Further, the *UNESCO World Conference for Sustainable Development* took place in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan in November 2014. The aforementioned conference responds to a world with limited natural resources where “the need for holistic, transformational education systems is urgent.”¹² The Conference underlined the current conditions of the world today with scarce natural resources in the need of the development of more and better means of production, all related with the enhancement and further implementation of an education based upon sustainable principles.¹³

¹ Frey, *Making world heritage truly global: the culture certificate scheme*, 2009.

² UNESCO, *1st Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly*, 2014.

³ Ibid.

⁴ UNESCO, *Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention at its 1st extraordinary session*, 2014, p. 3.

⁵ UNESCO, *Results of the 1st extraordinary session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention*, 2014.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ UNESCO, *UNESCO joins its voice to the launch of the International Decade for People of African Descent in New York*, 2014.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ UNESCO, *UNESCO contributes to new report on “Migration and Youth”*, 2014.

¹² UNESCO, *ESD and the World Education Forum 2015*, 2014.

¹³ Ibid.

Therefore, UNESCO as well as the international community has recognized that ensuring access to education is only the first step, since the content and purpose of such education is equally important.¹⁴ In this vein, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has grown in importance since it has been recognized as “an integral element of quality education and a key enabler for sustainable development.”¹⁵ The Conference’s goal was to create a path towards a post-2015 strategy and launch the Global Action Programme (GAP).¹⁶ The main objectives of GAP are to integrate the multidimensional component of sustainable development into education.¹⁷ At this conference, UNESCO introduced the *Final Report for the Decade of Education on Sustainable Development “Shaping the Future We Want,”* which underlines the vital importance of education towards achieving sustainability.¹⁸ Within this context, other bodies of the UN such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) highlighted the development and further implementation of the 10-Year Framework of Programme (10TFP) Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme that aims to uphold more sustainable lifestyles by educating young people and promoting environmental awareness based in the principle of sustainability.¹⁹ Overall, the conference brought greater attention to the role of education in the restructuring of the current international and national policies on environmental sustainability.

Recent Policy Outcomes

The *World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development 2014 “Learning Today for a Sustainable Future”* took place as the next step after the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development came to an end.²⁰ Within this context, a variety of stakeholders from around the world gathered to review the implementation of the Decade at the Conference which will determine the new strategies for ESD policies and further future activities post-2015.²¹ The World Conference gained a high-level of attention due to the proximity of the 2015 objectives of the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All (EFA), thus highlighting the key role that ESD has in the development of an inclusive and sustainable global education system.²²

Further, the GAP underlines the role of education towards achieving a sustainable development, specifically by implementing ESD principles into teaching and learning processes.²³ As a result of the World Conference the *Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development* was presented.²⁴ Through this declaration, the participants of the Conference called upon the international community for immediate actions to guarantee a coherent and solid ESD, with the main objective of assuring current generations to meet their needs without compromising future generations.²⁵ In this regard, the Declaration underlines the importance of tackling the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.²⁶

The Declaration is the starting point for future strategies to develop and further implement in regards to a more sustainable future.²⁷ Significantly, the statement served as a key reference for the Ministerial Declaration on Education and Awareness-raising adopted at the UN Climate Change Conference in December 2014.²⁸ The Declaration “recognizes that people are at the center of sustainable development and builds on the achievements of the United Nations (UN) Decade of ESD (2005-2014 [...])”²⁹

¹⁴ UNESCO, *ESD and the World Education Forum 2015*, 2014.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ IISD, *UN Decade of ESD Concludes; Launches Global Action Programme*, 2014.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ UNESCO, *UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development 2014*, 2014.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ UNESCO, *Proposal for a Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development as Follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development after 2014*, 2013.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ UNESCO, *Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development*, 2014, Preamble.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ UNESCO, *Ministerial Declaration on Education and Awareness-raising adopted at UN Climate Change Conference*, 2014.

²⁹ UNESCO, *Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development*, 2014, Preamble.

Implementation of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Outcomes

UNESCO's work on migration and youth manifested in substantial contribution in the chapter of "Migration and Tertiary Education," which focuses on improving not only on the quality of higher education that migrants are receiving in host countries, but also on the importance of acknowledging the need of strengthening the participation of young migrants at their respective societies.³⁰ On a more technical note, UNESCO suggested the negotiation among Member countries in terms of regulatory agreements to assure the proper assessment of higher education quality and the establishment of accreditation networks at an international and regional level.³¹

UNESCO is highly involved with promotion of equity and the respect of human rights. In this regard, during December 2014, UNESCO reiterated its commitment to promote an inclusive education system worldwide.³² Thus, during the 2015-2025 decade the UNESCO will actively participate with the UN system will to promote *The International Decade for People with African Descent*.³³ In addition, UNESCO will also promote other educational programmes that encourage awareness on the efforts to combat racism in accordance to *Durban Declaration and Programme of Action*, adopted in 2001 at the *World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance*.³⁴ Further, UNESCO activities focus on collaboration with civil society to advance implementation of the *Muscat Agreement* signed May 2014, which established seven targets for education post-2015.³⁵ The *Muscat Agreement* emphasizes the importance of understanding education as a crosscutting theme in a more inclusive a broader development agenda.³⁶ UNESCO's Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education for All, held in Santiago de Chile, was the perfect forum where civil society voiced its opinions and ideas for the drafting of a new education agenda.³⁷ Among these other international conferences and meetings, UNESCO will continue to build the road towards the inclusion of education as a core component of change for a more sustainable world.³⁸

Conclusions

UNESCO serves as a key platform for the advancement of a more holistic and inclusive educational and cultural system. In order to achieve a sustainable future, education has been recognized with a high-level role in response to its linkage with the training of people around the world. In this regard, the international community has acknowledged the importance to develop quality education that reflects the principles of sustainability that will be transmitted among generations. Thus, UNESCO plays a highly important role in the transformation of society towards achieving a sustainable future. It is important to notice that the GAP, the *Aichi-Nagoya Declaration* as well as other documents and strategies will be further analyzed and discussed in the context of the World Education Forum that will be held in May 2015 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, where participants will work together to agree upon a new education agenda post-2015.³⁹ Among upcoming international events, UNESCO celebrates its 70th Anniversary, which will bring along several public events celebrating some successes and also remembering other pending goals.⁴⁰

³⁰ UNESCO, *UNESCO contributes to new report on "Migration and Youth"*, 2014.

³¹ Ibid.

³² UNESCO, *UNESCO joins its voice to the launch of the International Decade for People of African Descent in New York*, 2014.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ ICDE, *UNESCO prepares for the post-2015 education agenda*, 2014.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ UNESCO, *Continuing ESD after 2014*, 2014.

⁴⁰ UNESCO, *70th Anniversary*, 2015.

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2014). *1st Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly* [Website]. Retrieved 13 January 2015 from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/1EXTGA>

This website offers a brief look into the structural changes conducted within the World Heritage Committee in terms of promoting and further assuring a more equitable distribution of seats beyond regional representation. This change responds to the multi-dimensional effort of UNESCO to achieve equity and the respect of diversity across its committees and the UN system in general. The website is useful for the consultation of specific changes carried out within the structure of one of the most important bodies of UNESCO that is the World Heritage Committee.

United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2014). *UNESCO contributes to new report on "Migration and Youth"* [Website]. Retrieved 13 January 2015 from: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/unesco_contributes_to_new_report_on_migration_and_youth/back/9597/#.VLw320fF-So

UNESCO has been permanently committed to the development of interagency reports, and during the last semester of 2014 the Migration and Youth report was published in order to raise awareness on the role migrants in their respective host countries. In this regard, UNESCO's contribution to the Report mainly focused on the pressing need to not only assure the access to education but also guarantee high-quality educational contents. This Website provides a summary on the role of UNESCO in the drafting of a report that shows the current living conditions of young people around the world along the role of education as a mean of creating opportunities.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2014). *ESD and the World Education Forum 2015* [Website]. Retrieved 17 January 2015 from: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco-world-conference-on-esd-2014/esd-after-2014/esd-and-world-education-forum-2015/>

This Website provides an interesting concentration of information on ESD as the framework of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development. Thus, it presents information on the basis of ESD, a review of the results and the challenges ahead. In addition, it contains a brief analysis of the current situation and sustainability problems that the international community faces. It also provides information about the upcoming World Education Forum that will take place in the Republic Of Korea in May 2015.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2014). *Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development*. Retrieved 17 January 2015 from:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002310/231074e.pdf>

The declaration provides a clear look at the decision of the international community to work towards a more sustainable future for the implementing an education system more responsive to the pressing needs of the current international system. It has had a major impact on climate change and environmental sustainability discussion and strategy on other international discussions including the Ministerial Declaration on Education and Awareness -raising adopted at the UN Climate Change Conference in December 2014. This document also puts UNESCO's role and mandate in the UN system at the front of sustainable development initiatives and programs.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2013, November 4). *Proposal for a Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development as Follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development after 2014*. Retrieved 17 January 2015 from:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002243/224368e.pdf>

The Proposal for a Global Action Programme on Education (GAP) for Sustainable Development as Follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development was elaborated in the 37th session of UNESCO. The GAP has been extensively discussed since 2013 and it was analyzed once again at the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development. The GAP contains strategies for modifying teaching and learning processes in response of the urgent need to strive towards an education with contents that strongly addresses sustainability principles.

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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2014). *Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention at its 1st extraordinary session*. Retrieved 5 February 2015 from: <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2014/whc14-1EXTGA-4-en.pdf>

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I. Empowering Youth through Access to Information and Communication Technology and Media

Introduction

Access to information and communication technology (ICT) is essential for promoting and developing social and political awareness; the availability of ICT empowers citizens and decision-makers to learn about, engage with, and implement policies and practices that affect their daily lives.⁴¹ Youth are major stakeholders in the development of ICT policies, representing one of the fastest growing user groups for ICT and an increasing majority of the population in developing countries.⁴² As a venue for education, communication, political participation, and economic improvement, ICT is a vital tool for the empowerment of youth.⁴³ On the issues of development and education, the concerns of young people frequently intersect with the concerns of other traditionally marginalized groups, such as women and persons with disabilities.⁴⁴ The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) continues to play an important role in promoting access to ICT through the provision of information and resource services, particularly in the developing world.⁴⁵

On 5 December 2014, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/96 on “Questions relating to information and information in the service of humanity,” which called upon Member States to reaffirm past commitments to freedom of information and access to ICT.⁴⁶ On 19 December 2014, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/204 on “Information and communications technologies for development,” which outlined several key areas related to the empowerment of youth through access to ICT that the United Nations (UN) is seeking to address.⁴⁷ Notable areas of emphasis include development in the context of globalization and the need for more robust distribution of ICT in the developing world.⁴⁸ In July 2014, UNESCO published the *Model Policy for Inclusive ICTs in Education for Persons with Disabilities*, which highlights strategies to expand access to learners with disabilities at all levels of education.⁴⁹ Other organizations that considered ICT issues in recent months include the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the International Institute for Sustainable Development, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).⁵⁰

Key documents that continue to underpin this topic include General Assembly resolution 50/81 on the “World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond” (WPAY) and the Outcome Documents of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), including Phases I, II, and the Ten Year Review.⁵¹ The main coordinating structure in the UN system for ICT issues is the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS).⁵² UNESCO acts as Vice Chair of UNGIS, which includes a total of 30 member organizations that coordinate work on various aspects of these issues, including implementation of the WSIS and getting ICT-related

⁴¹ UN DESA, *Youth and ICTs*, 2013.

⁴² UN DESA, *Youth and ICTs*, 2013; United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Policies and programmes involving youth: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.5/2014/5)*, 2013.

⁴³ UN DESA, *Youth and ICTs*, 2013.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ International Telecommunications Union, *ICT Facts and Figures*, 2013.

⁴⁶ UN General Assembly, *Questions relating to information and information in the service of humanity (A/RES/69/96)*, 2014.

⁴⁷ UN DPI, *Acting upon Recommendation by Second Committee, General Assembly Adopts 43 Texts, Defers Action on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Framework Draft*, 2014; UN General Assembly, *Information and communications technologies for development (A/RES/69/204)*, 2014.

⁴⁸ UN General Assembly, *Information and communications technologies for development (A/RES/69/204)*, 2014.

⁴⁹ UNESCO, *Model Policy for Inclusive ICTs in Education for Persons with Disabilities*, 2014.

⁵⁰ International Telecommunications Union, *Outcome Document: Forum Track*, 2014; International Institute for Sustainable Development, *Hidden Assets: Young Professionals in Knowledge Networks*, 2001; UNDP, *ICTs and MDGs: New opportunities on the development horizon*, 2013.

⁵¹ UN General Assembly, *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (A/RES/50/81)*, 1996; International Telecommunications Union, *World Summit on the Information Society: Outcome Documents*, 2005; International Telecommunications Union, *WSIS+10 Outcome Documents*, 2014.

⁵² United Nations Group on the Information Society, *About UNGIS*.

issues on the UN agenda.⁵³ Funding for ICT-related work generally comes from Member States contributing directly to specific coordinating projects or UNESCO.⁵⁴

Several relevant events took place at the regional and international level in recent months. In December 2014, the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) of Nigeria outlined a new framework for promoting the use and adoption of ICT among youths and women, emphasizing how ICT can facilitate the central role that women play in developing Nigeria.⁵⁵ The Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization (CTO) held a conference from 6 to 10 October to discuss the role of ICT in development, including relevant youth issues such as broadband access and education.⁵⁶ UNESCO and the Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization (TAG-Org) held a regional workshop discussing ICT and education issues for schools in the Middle East, particularly in Qatar, Jordan, Egypt, Oman, and Palestine.⁵⁷ ITU held a competition entitled “ITU Telecom World Young Innovators Competition” from 7 to 10 December in Doha, where youth innovators were able to meet with academics and experts in the communications field to compete for an opportunity to expand their projects with the possibility of funding.⁵⁸

Recent Developments

Increasing Availability of ICT for Rights and Development

On 24 November 2014, UNESCO held an international conference with the overarching theme of “From Exclusion to Empowerment – The Role of Information and Communications Technologies for Persons with Disabilities,” which sought to highlight several ICT-related issues intertwined with access for both youth and women.⁵⁹ The conference built upon prior work by UNESCO and the WSIS to highlight the importance of ICT in health and education, with emphasis on ICT as a means of empowering persons with disabilities.⁶⁰ “From Exclusion to Empowerment” also further integrated gender and youth issues into discussions initiated by the WSIS+10 review process.⁶¹

The conference considered several topics related to empowerment through expanded access to ICT, including three primary thematic areas: partnerships and sustainable development, accessibility, and access to information and knowledge.⁶² The conference reinforced several policy recommendations found in UNESCO’s *Model Policy for Inclusive ICTs in Education for Persons with Disabilities* as well as General Assembly resolution 69/204 on “Information and Communications Technologies for Development,” which was adopted on the report of the Second Committee.⁶³ The conference also highlighted UNESCO’s ongoing work to improve links between education providers and the private sector through employment-track apprenticeships.⁶⁴ UNESCO has noted that more resources should be dedicated towards gaining a better understanding of what disabled youth need within education and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions.⁶⁵ As few Member States have dedicated ministries for issues relating to youth with disabilities, UNESCO provides significant assistance through capacity building, knowledge sharing, and policy development initiatives.⁶⁶

⁵³ United Nations Group on the Information Society, *About UNGIS*.

⁵⁴ UNESCO, *Sweden grants US\$4.5 million to empower local radios with ICT in Africa, 2012*; UNESCO, *5 new African countries receive funding from China for improving teacher education through ICT, 2013*.

⁵⁵ National Information Technology Development Agency, *About Us, 2014*; Nkechi, *Nigeria: NITDA Targets Women, Youths in Knowledge-Based Economy, 2014*.

⁵⁶ Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization, *ICT Regulation: Understanding the Big Picture of ICTs for Development, 2014*.

⁵⁷ UNESCO and TAG-Org *Launch ICT in Education Report in the Arab Countries, Zawya, 2014*.

⁵⁸ International Telecommunications Union, *ITU Telecom World - Young Innovators Competition, 2014*.

⁵⁹ UNESCO, *International Conference “From Exclusion to Empowerment – The Role of Information and Communication Technologies for Persons with Disabilities”*, 2014.

⁶⁰ UNESCO, *WSIS+10: Review and Strategic Directions for Building Inclusive Knowledge Societies for Persons with Disabilities, 2013*.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² UNESCO, *Role of ICTs for persons with Disabilities: Concept Note, 2014*, p. 8.

⁶³ UN General Assembly, *Information and communications technologies for development (A/RES/69/204)*, 2014; UNESCO, *Model Policy for Inclusive ICTs in Education for Persons with Disabilities, 2014*.

⁶⁴ UNESCO, *Opening New Avenues of Empowerment, 2013*, p. 28.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Youth Priorities in the WSIS+10: WSIS and Post-2015

ITU held its 2014 Plenipotentiary Conference (PP14) from 20 October to 7 November 2014 in Busan, Republic of Korea.⁶⁷ One aim of the PP14 was to evaluate the future of ITU, the WSIS, and the role of Member States in ICT development.⁶⁸ Additionally, the PP14 explored developing ICT with an eye towards national development agendas, including setting strategic action plans in anticipation of the next conference.⁶⁹ The PP14 adopted a resolution on “Empowerment of youth through telecommunication/information and communication technology,” which reiterates the goals of the WSIS on youth ICT issues and challenges Member States to address the issue at a local level.⁷⁰ In its key recommendations, the PP14 asks Member States to share best practices targeting economic development of youth; to pursue inclusive programs that encourage the participation of youth delegates in major conferences on ICT issues; and to encourage youth to pursue studies in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).⁷¹

Conclusion

Empowering youth through increased access to ICT intersects with several aspects of UNESCO’s work to build diverse and inclusive knowledge societies.⁷² In May 2015, UNESCO will partner with ITU, UNDP, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to organize the WSIS Forum 2015; building upon the work of the WSIS+10 open consultation process, this forum will present a significant opportunity for progress on the issue of empowering youth through enhanced access to ICT.⁷³ Education will be addressed more specifically in May 2015 when the World Education Forum 2015 is held in the Republic of Korea.⁷⁴ Finally, with work on the post-2015 development agenda taking shape in 2015, the ESCAP Asian Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) will be held in Bangkok, Thailand from 21 to 22 May 2015.⁷⁵ As similar topics were discussed during the 2014 conference, there will likely be opportunities to facilitate work on youth ICT access further at the 2015 meeting.⁷⁶

⁶⁷ International Telecommunications Union, *ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2014 (PP-14)*, 2014.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ International Telecommunications Union, *Final Acts of the Plenipotentiary Conference*, 2014, p. 315.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 318.

⁷² UNESCO, *Building Knowledge Societies*.

⁷³ International Telecommunications Union, *World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2015*, 2014.

⁷⁴ UNESCO, *World Education Forum 2015*, 2015.

⁷⁵ ECOSOC, ESCAP Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD), 2015.

⁷⁶ ECOSOC, *Chair’s summary of the inaugural meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development*, 2014.

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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2014). *Model Policy for Inclusive ICTs in Education for Persons with Disabilities*. Retrieved 2 January 2015 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002272/227229e.pdf>

The Model Policy for Inclusive ICTs in Education for Persons with Disabilities is one of UNESCO's most recently published reports on the issue of ICT access. It predates the November conference on ICT for persons with disabilities, but provides a much more in-depth look at the issue. This document will be of interest to delegates seeking to further engage with the topics and themes covered at the November conference.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2014). *Role of ICTs for persons with Disabilities: Concept Note*. Retrieved 2 January 2015 from: http://www.hbb4all.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/From-Exclusion-to-Empowerment_24-26-November_2014_Concept-paper.pdf

The Concept Note for UNESCO's November conference on ICT and persons with disabilities provides a fantastic overview for what the conference discussed, including major thematic areas of concern. As this November conference constitutes UNESCO's most recent work on ICT access and empowerment, it is important that delegates get a sense of what the conference covered. Additionally, reviewing documents for this event will help delegates identify the relationship between issues affecting youth access to ICT and issues affecting related marginalized groups.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-ninth session. (2014). *Information and communications technologies for development (A/RES/69/204)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/69/465). Retrieved 2 January 2015 from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/204

This document is the most recent resolution passed by the UN General Assembly on ICT. Delegates should refer to this resolution and its statements on youth access to ICT, as well as gender- and education-related ICT issues. The resolution particularly emphasizes the challenges posed by high youth unemployment and the opportunities available to youth in a world marked by increased globalized communication.

United Nations, International Telecommunications Union. (2014). *Final Acts of the Plenipotentiary Conference* [Report]. Retrieved 2 January 2015 from: <http://www.itu.int/en/plenipotentiary/2014/Documents/final-acts/pp14-final-acts-en.pdf>

This document represents the outcome of one of the most recent international conferences on ICT-related issues and includes all resolutions passed by the International Telecommunications Union Member States. Not only does it provide a resolution specific to the empowerment of youth, but it also contains over a dozen other resolutions related to ICT in the international community. This provides a great source for creative thinking on recent ICT issues, including greater integration of youth in ITU events, greater integration of youth and academic perspectives in programs, and monitoring of such programs.

United Nations, International Telecommunications Union. (2014). *ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2014 (PP-14)* [Website]. Retrieved 2 January 2015 from: <http://www.itu.int/en/plenipotentiary/2014/Pages/default.aspx>

This site offers an overview of the 2014 ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, but it also provides an array of information related to the event itself. The annual conference was established in 2011 and will be a central component of endeavors related to ICT, including ITU's role in developing technical standards, policy standards, and promoting youth empowerment in the future. This resources helps illustrate how UNESCO's work on the topic fits into the work of the broader international community.

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II. Improving Water Security through Natural Resource Management

Introduction

Water is an essential resource that permeates nearly all areas of global affairs, from peacebuilding and economic development to environmental sustainability and human rights. As an active member of UN-Water, the United Nations (UN) inter-agency mechanism on freshwater and sanitation issues, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) coordinates education and capacity-developing initiatives in communities whose water security is at risk.⁷⁷ UNESCO works closely with other UN entities, such as the UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC), to equip individuals and institutions to address issues of water scarcity, transboundary resource management, gender equity in access and sanitation, integrated water resources management (IWRM), and disaster risk reduction.⁷⁸ The UN system achieved advancements in several aspects of water security over the past year.

The General Assembly considered several reports and resolutions on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, including resolution 69/215 of 3 December 2014 on the “International Decade for Action, ‘Water for Life’, 2005-2015, and further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources.”⁷⁹ The resolution summarizes 15 years of progress towards realizing the sustainable development of water resources and calls for a multilateral discussion and comprehensive review of the implementation of the Decade.⁸⁰ Highlighting recent achievements of the UN System, the resolution points to the implementation of the International Year of Water Cooperation in 2013, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals’ proposal to establish a global goal for water, and efforts by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council to define the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation.⁸¹ The General Assembly also drew attention to the unique water security concerns faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with respect to sanitation and access to freshwater in resolution 69/15 of 15 December 2014 on “SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.”⁸² UNESCO was appointed by UN-Water to lead a review of the International Year of Water Cooperation (2013), resulting in a report that was presented to the General Assembly in August 2014 (A/69/326).⁸³ In December 2014, the Secretary-General submitted a final synthesis report on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, which includes a global goal to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.”⁸⁴ The report highlighted the centrality of water security concerns in the realms of healthcare, economic prosperity, sustainable development, and sustainable resource management.⁸⁵

In September 2014, Special Rapporteur Catarina de Albuquerque launched “Realizing the human rights to water and sanitation: A handbook,” which presented implementation strategies for developing national frameworks, securing financing, and monitoring progress.⁸⁶ The Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted resolution 27/7 of 2 October 2014 on “The human right to safe drinking water and sanitation.”⁸⁷ The 2014 report of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation found that the global community is unlikely to realize the sanitation target established in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); furthermore, although the MDG drinking water target has already been exceeded, nearly 748 million people still lack access to an improved drinking water supply.⁸⁸ The JMP also draws attention to “stark disparities across regions, between urban and rural areas, and between the rich and the poor and

⁷⁷ UNESCO, *IHP-VIII: Water Security, Responses to Local, Regional, and Global Challenges*, 2014.

⁷⁸ UN-Water, *About UNW-DPC*.

⁷⁹ UN General Assembly, *International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005-2015, and further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources (A/RES/69/215)*, 2014.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² UN General Assembly, *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (A/RES/69/15)*, 2014.

⁸³ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary-General on the International Year of Water Cooperation (A/69/326)*, 2014.

⁸⁴ UN General Assembly, *The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet: Synthesis report of the Secretary-General on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda (A/69/700)*, 2014, p. 14.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

⁸⁶ OHCHR, *Realizing the human rights to water and sanitation: a handbook*, 2014.

⁸⁷ UN Human Rights Council, *The human right to safe drinking water and sanitation (A/HRC/RES/27/7)*, 2014.

⁸⁸ WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, *2014 Report*, 2014, pp. 7-9.

marginalized.”⁸⁹ UN-Water released its biannual Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) on 19 November 2014, entitled “Investing in Water and Sanitation: Increasing Access, Reducing Inequalities.”⁹⁰ The report noted a significant increase in political commitment at the national level and growing levels of international aid for water and sanitation, but cautioned that funding remains insufficient in other areas; implementation is further hindered by weak national capacity and a lack of reliable monitoring frameworks.⁹¹ Finally, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) launched a book in October 2014 entitled “On target for people and Planet: Setting and Achieving Water-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),” which highlighted how evidence-based policies supported by strong monitoring systems can achieve SDG targets at the national level.⁹² The UN system has not developed new coordinating frameworks or funding mechanisms on the topic of water security through natural resource management. Key instruments at the international level continue to include the *Mar del Plata Action Plan* (1977), *Agenda 21* (1992), the *United Nations Millennium Declaration* (2000), and General Assembly resolution 64/292 recognizing access to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right.⁹³

Commemorative days hosted by the UN and its partners included Global Handwashing Day on 15 October 2014 and World Toilet Day, which focused on gender equity in sanitation access, on 19 November 2014.⁹⁴ In conjunction with the upcoming 2015 World Water Day on 22 March, UN-Water will release a report on “Water and Sustainable Development.”⁹⁵ Several regional events took place from November to January, including an e-conference on Water and Food Security in the Asia-Pacific from 16 December 2014 to 9 January 2015; the International Gender, Water, and Development Conference in South Africa from 3-7 November 2014; and the Third Arab Water Week, hosted by the Arab Countries Water Utilities Association from 11-15 January 2015.⁹⁶ The World Water Summit, a forum hosted by The Economist to unite the public sector, private sector, and civil society, convened in London on 6 November 2014.⁹⁷ In his keynote address, UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson emphasized the centrality of water security to global peace and development while calling upon the private sector to increase its engagement with the UN Global Compact.⁹⁸

Recent Developments

Education for Water Security

From 10-12 November 2014, UNESCO hosted the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan.⁹⁹ The comprehensive conference, which marked the conclusion of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), included a session by UNESCO’s International Hydrological Programme (IHP) on “Water education and capacity building: a key for water security and sustainable development.”¹⁰⁰ UNESCO also announced the launch of a new network for interdisciplinary cooperation and knowledge exchange, known as “Food, Energy, Environment and Water” (FE²W).¹⁰¹

Water Resource and Waste Management

⁸⁹ Joint Monitoring Programme, *2014 Report*, 2014, p. 6.

⁹⁰ UN-Water, *UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS 2014)*, 2014.

⁹¹ WHO, *UN reveals major gaps in water and sanitation – especially in rural areas*, 2014.

⁹² IWMI, *On target for people and Planet: Setting and Achieving Water-related Sustainable Development Goals*, 2014.

⁹³ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Water Conference (A/RES/32/158)*, 1977; United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, *Agenda 21*, 1992; UN General Assembly, *The human right to water and sanitation (A/RES/64/292)*, 2010.

⁹⁴ UN-Water, *World Water Day*, 2014; UN DPI, *On World Day, UN Spotlights handwashing as vital tool in fight against Ebola*, 2014; United Nations, *World Toilet Day*, 2014; OHCHR, *Three UN experts, one common view on equality and dignity when it comes to sanitation, UN World Toilet Day*, 2014.

⁹⁵ UN-Water, *The World Water Development Report*, 2014; World Water Week in Stockholm, *World Water Day 2015: Water and Sustainable Development*, 2014.

⁹⁶ FAO Asia-Water, *e-conference*, 2015; African Ministers Council on Water, *Gender, Water & Development – the untapped connection*, 2014; Arab Countries Water Utilities Association, *Third Arab Water Week*, 2015.

⁹⁷ The Economist, *2014 World Water Summit: Time For Action*, 2014.

⁹⁸ UN DPI, *Water central to global peace, development, UN deputy chief tells London summit*, 2014.

⁹⁹ UNESCO, *World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development*, 2014.

¹⁰⁰ UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, *Draft Programme*, 2014, p. 10.

¹⁰¹ UNESCO, *Launch of the Food, Energy, Environment and Water (FE²W) Network*, 2014.

In November 2014, the UNESCO office in Santiago, Chile hosted an international expert symposium on “Building a Community of Practice on Drought Management Tools.”¹⁰² In January 2015, UN-Water hosted its annual International Zaragoza Conference on “Water and Sustainable Development: From Vision to Action” where stakeholders representing the UN system, the private sector, Member States, and civil society met to exchange best practices, take stock of the international community’s progress in the International Decade for Action “Water for Life,” and plan initiatives for the next World Water Day in March 2015.¹⁰³ The international system also produced new tools and platforms to support capacity development and information sharing for water-related resource management. In October 2014, the IWMI announced that it had made significant progress towards the South Asia Drought Monitoring System (SA-DMS), a new tool for reducing drought-related water insecurity that will be launched sometime in 2015 and implemented jointly by the Global Water Partnership (GWP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).¹⁰⁴ In November 2014, UN-Water launched a new best practices platform for sanitation, lending special emphasis to gender equality in resource management.¹⁰⁵

Gender Equality and Access to Clean Water

In conjunction with the Stockholm World Water Week in September 2014, the GWP launched its strategy for mainstreaming gender equality in water security; entitled “GWP Gender Strategy,” the summary report highlights the unique and vital role of women in resource management for water security as emphasized in Principle 3 of the Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development.¹⁰⁶ Key initiatives featured in the report include gender-differentiated data collection, building partnerships with women’s civil society networks, and seeking greater participation of women’s organizations in national implementation efforts.¹⁰⁷ GWP also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UNESCO Institute for Water Education (UNESCO-IHE) to share expertise and collaborate on regional projects in capacity building.¹⁰⁸

Realizing the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation

On October 22, 2014, Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque, Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, presented her annual report to the General Assembly Third Committee.¹⁰⁹ In November 2014, the HRC appointed Mr. Léo Heller as the second Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation.¹¹⁰

Conclusion

In 2015, the UN system will consider water security in a multitude of high-level contexts, including a series of comprehensive reviews on the International Decade for Action “Water for Life” (2005-2015) and ongoing discussions on the SDGs and post-2015 development agenda.¹¹¹ UNESCO has a vital role to play in advancing the realization of existing frameworks through knowledge sharing, capacity development, and the pursuit of evidence-based research.¹¹² Additionally, UNESCO’s Regional and Cluster Offices will continue to work with Member States, NGOs, regional bodies, and private industry to implement strategies on the ground.¹¹³

¹⁰² UNESCO Office in Santiago, *Experts in Drought management gather in Chile to analyse new tools to face global water stress*, 2014.

¹⁰³ UN-Water, *2015 UN-Water Annual International Zaragoza Conference*, 2015.

¹⁰⁴ International Water Management Institute, *IWMI-developed tool to give Sri Lanka advance warning of drought*, 2014.

¹⁰⁵ UN-Water, *UN Water and Sanitation Best Practices Platform*, 2014.

¹⁰⁶ GWP, *GWP Brings Gender into Focus with New Strategy*, 2014; GWP, *GWP Gender Strategy*, 2014, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ GWP, *GWP Gender Strategy*, 2014, pp. 9-10.

¹⁰⁸ GWP, *Memorandum of Understanding between the Global Water Partnership Organisation and UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education*, 2014.

¹⁰⁹ OHCHR, *Statement by Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque, Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to safe drinking water and sanitation to the 69th session of the General Assembly Third Committee*, 2014.

¹¹⁰ OHCHR, *Mr. Léo Heller, Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation*, 2014.

¹¹¹ UN-Water, *Water in the post-2015 development agenda*, 2014; UN General Assembly, *International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005-2015, and further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources (A/RES/69/215)*, 2014.

¹¹² UNESCO-IHE, *The Water Community*, 2014.

¹¹³ UNESCO, *IHP-VIII: Water Security, Responses to Local, Regional, and Global Challenges*, 2014.

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http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/Publications/Books/PDF/setting_and_achieving_water-related_sustainable_development_goals.pdf

Launched in September 2014, this publication is a vital resource for delegates seeking to understand the role that water security plays in the 17 proposed SDGs. This book, the first in a planned series of annual flagship reports, features the theme of water security for sustainable food production; however, it also presents useful analysis and recommendations related to sustainable resources management and the implementation of SDGs at the national level. The IWMI concisely identifies systemic challenges and offers specific actions to overcome them.

United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organization. (2013). *Free Flow: Reaching Water Security Through Cooperation* [Report]. Tudor Rose. Retrieved 6 January 2014 from:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002228/222893e.pdf>

Produced as an initiative of the International Year of Water Cooperation (2013), this publication offers a comprehensive introduction to transboundary cooperation and the role of water in peacebuilding. The text includes analyses of international instruments; capacity-building strategies produced by the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme; and case studies from a diverse pool of national agencies, NGOs, and regional networks. Finally, the publication highlights funding mechanisms and strategies presented by international and regional development groups in collaboration with the private sector.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-ninth session. (2014). *Report of the Secretary-General on the International Year of Water Cooperation (A/69/326)*. Retrieved 6 January 2014 from:

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/326

The report was submitted to the General Assembly in August 2014. Drawing upon the findings and recommendations of UNESCO on behalf of UN-Water, the Secretary-General presents water cooperation as a fundamental strategy for promoting sustainable development, natural resource management, gender equality, and peacebuilding. The report outlines the strategic objectives of the International Year, measures the impact of advocacy and engagement efforts, and highlights several publications of interest. Finally, the report highlights how contributions of the International Year of Water Cooperation can be applied towards preparations for the post-2015 development agenda.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-ninth session. (2014). *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation (A/69/213)*. Retrieved 6 January 2014 from:

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=a/69/213

This document, presented by the Secretary-General on 31 July 2014, represents the most recent annual report of the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation. The report notes that Member States have both an obligation and a legal imperative to use participatory processes to develop and implement policies relating to water and sanitation. More importantly, the report defines how Member States can promote “active, free and meaningful” participation rather than “token forms of participation.” As they consider various frameworks and courses of action for the topic, delegates should look to this report for guidance on including diverse groups of stakeholders in the decision-making process.

United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health. (2014). *Strategic Plan 2015-2019: Envisioning a World Free of Water Problems*. Retrieved 7 January 2014 from: <http://inweh.unu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/UNU-INWEH-Strategic-Plan-2015-2019.pdf>

This strategic plan presents UNU-INWEH's strategic priorities and action items for the coming years. This framework may be particularly relevant to delegates since UNU-INWEH reports annually to the UN General Assembly, the UN Economic and Social Council, and the Executive Board of UNESCO. Conceived as the “UN Think Tank on Water,” UNU-INWEH supports the work of UNESCO in capacity development by providing scientific research and recommendations

in response to global water crises. UNESCO frequently collaborates with UNU-INWEH to produce scientific studies and strategy papers; one helpful example is the 2014 joint report on “Innovative Ways for A Sustainable Use of Drylands,” which is listed in the bibliography.

United Nations Inter-Agency Mechanism on all Freshwater Related Issues, Including Sanitation Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication. (2014). *UN Documentation Centre on Water and Sanitation (UNDCWS)* [Website]. Retrieved 5 January 2015 from: <http://www.zaragoza.es/ciudad/medioambiente/onu/en/about.htm>

This website is an excellent resource for delegates seeking current information about the UN system’s work on issues related to water and sanitation. The site hosts UN system publications from 2011-present, sortable by author, date, region, country, theme, and language. Delegates may also be interested in subscribing to the Bimonthly Publications Review, a newsletter released every two months that summarizes the most recent publications on the topic from across the UN system.

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III. Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage

Introduction

With the adoption of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* in 2003 by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), safeguarding ICH became a very important and rapidly developing topic.¹¹⁴ According to the Convention, ICH constitutes “practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.”¹¹⁵ The work of safeguarding ICH is mainly lead by UNESCO working with a variety of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).¹¹⁶ Most of the efforts in safeguarding ICH are still being established and the development of safeguarding practices is a primary task of the bodies created under the convention.¹¹⁷

In its duties as a body created by the convention, The ninth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (9.COM) met at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in November 2014.¹¹⁸ Over 900 delegates from 130 countries participating in the opening session.¹¹⁹ The *Report of the Secretariat on its activities* examined some of the most important aspects for safeguarding ICH and linking it to sustainable development.¹²⁰ The committee also examined the reports on the implementation of the convention and the status of elements on the Representative List of the ICH of Humanity, consisting of 314 elements and demonstrating the variety of ICH.¹²¹ The reports give an overview about the recent actions taken by states to protect ICH and also draw attention to common challenges.¹²² A common challenge to ICH is financing. It is important to notice that a large part of the budget invested for the safeguarding of ICH is mostly voluntary supplementary contributions.¹²³ During 2014 most of this voluntarily contributed money was spent on either capacity building programs or for additional staff for the secretariat.¹²⁴

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) also considered the issue of ICH in the past months in order to advance initiatives to safeguard ICH through education and promotion of heritage with other states.¹²⁵ The *First UNWTO Conference on Accessible Tourism in Europe* was held in San Marino in November and adopted the *San Marino Declaration on Accessible Tourism*.¹²⁶ The Declaration emphasizes the opportunities tourism offers for heritage cities, while also reminding of the dangers.¹²⁷ The *International Conference on Religious Heritage and Tourism* which was also partly organized by UNWTO focused on the important connection of ICH and tourism and emphasized that cultural heritage consists of tangible and intangible parts.¹²⁸

Finally, the International Council of Museums (CIDOC) also contributed to the advancement of ICH in the last quarter of 2014.¹²⁹ CIDOC held the first meeting of the CIDOC ICH Working Group in Dresden, Germany in September with the goal of defining vocabulary, standards and guidelines for the documentation of ICH.¹³⁰

¹¹⁴ UNESCO, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2003.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, art. 2.1.

¹¹⁶ UNESCO, *Non-Governmental Organizations accredited to provide advisory services to the Committee*.

¹¹⁷ UNESCO, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2003, art. 7.

¹¹⁸ UNESCO, *Opening of the ninth session of the Intangible Heritage Committee*, 2014

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, *Report by the Secretariat on its activities* (ITH/14/9.COM/6), 2014.

¹²¹ Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, *Examination of the reports of States Parties on the implementation of the Convention and on the current status of elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* (ITH/14/9.COM/5.a), 2014.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, *Voluntary supplementary contributions to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund* (ITH/14/9.COM/7 Rev.), 2014.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ UNWTO, *Tourism and Intangible Cultural Heritage*.

¹²⁶ UNWTO, *San Marino Declaration on Accessible Tourism*, 2014.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ UNWTO, *Tourism can protect and promote religious heritage*, 2014.

¹²⁹ CIDOC, *Intangible Cultural Heritage*.

Recent Developments

Protection and Preservation of ICH

During 9.COM the UNESCO Secretariat emphasized the importance of international cooperation mechanisms of the 2003 convention.¹³¹ The report pushed for new commitments support category 2 centers, or those organizations and centers associated with UNESCO without being a legal part. It further advocated for increasing technical assistance for strengthening the international assistance process, better visibility of ICH programs and events and documenting best practices for knowledge sharing.¹³² The report of the secretariat also focuses on the strengthening of the capacity-building program, which executed the decision of the last session and led to the implementation of the global strategy in 64 countries since the start of the project in 2009.¹³³

Members of the committee also added three more elements to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, which increased the total number to 38.¹³⁴ This list, which contains ICH in need of immediate actions to avoid the loss of the ICH, has been expanded by several items at every session of the Intergovernmental Committee since its introduction.¹³⁵ This increasing number of ICH on the list shows the importance of the issue and the need for further action to protect ICH under this designation.¹³⁶ Further, the collection of documented best practices was also expanded by one item proposed by Belgium concerning the Safeguarding of the Carillon culture raising the total of items on the list to 12.¹³⁷ These 12 projects exemplify the difficulty of ICH protection according to the convention and demonstrate the need of further activity in establishing these safeguarding practices.¹³⁸

The Eighth Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, established the need to develop an overall results framework for the convention, which would allow a better evaluation of the process of safeguarding ICH, however was unable to reach a consensus between all members.¹³⁹ Therefore, the ninth session participants created an open working group to report in 2016 with preliminary recommendations.¹⁴⁰ The working group will be open for all members of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH*, but limited to experts on ICH.¹⁴¹ The framework is considered necessary for drawing conclusions about the progress made towards the goals of the Convention.¹⁴²

UNESCO also continues emphasize cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in line with its approval of 22 additional NGOs accredited during the fifth session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which took place in June 2014.¹⁴³ These NGOs help the committee in identifying and defining intangible cultural heritage, because NGOs usually work in close partnership with heritage communities on the ground, and can provide context from this work where the committee does not have experiential knowledge of the community.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, *Report by the Secretariat on its activities* (ITH/14/9.COM/6), 2014.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ UNESCO, *Lists of intangible cultural heritage and Register of best safeguarding practices*, 2014.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, *Examination of proposals for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding* (ITH/14/9.COM/9.a+Add.2), 2014.

¹³⁷ Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, *Examination of proposals for selection to the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices* (ITH/14/9.COM/9.b+Add), 2014.

¹³⁸ UNESCO, *Lists of intangible cultural heritage and Register of best safeguarding practices*, 2014.

¹³⁹ Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, *Developing an overall results framework for the Convention* (ITH/14/9.COM/13.e), 2014.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention, *Accreditation of non-governmental organizations to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee* (ITH/14/5.GA/6), 2014.

¹⁴⁴ UNESCO, *Non-governmental organizations, experts, centres of experts and research institutes*.

Sustainable Development and ICH

To strengthen cooperation in ICH and sustainable development initiatives, a category VI expert meeting was held in Istanbul, Turkey from 29 September to 1 October 2014.¹⁴⁵ This meeting served as response to recommendation of the Eighth Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, to establish an additional chapter of the *Operational Directives on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level*.¹⁴⁶ Following this expert meeting and including directives based on previous meetings of the committee, the secretariat elaborated a first draft for a new chapter, which will be on the agenda for the tenth session that will take place in 2015 in Namibia.¹⁴⁷ The draft focuses on four core dimensions, based on the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference - social development; environmental sustainability; inclusive economic development and peace and security.¹⁴⁸ It underlines the importance of involving as many communities, groups and individuals as possible and thereby allows them to benefit from the ICH, while simultaneously preserving ICH values.¹⁴⁹ ICH can be an important factor towards sustainable development, because “ICH constitutes the foundation of the spiritual values, lifestyles and livelihoods of communities” and therefore is “essential for social cohesion and peace.”¹⁵⁰ UNESCO continues to promote the link between ICH and sustainable development in order to evaluate and document the threats of unmonitored economic to cultural and environmental priorities.¹⁵¹

Conclusion

The decisions and progress in this topic during the Ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Committee shows how relevant safeguarding of ICH is to other key topics in the post-2015 development agenda.¹⁵² While standards and best practices are still in progress, the list of ICH is growing and the need for safeguarding has been proven imminent.¹⁵³ Therefore, it is necessary to support the work of the Intergovernmental Committee to further evaluate where ICH needs to be protected and establish measures for the protection of ICH.¹⁵⁴ The connection between ICH and sustainable development needs to be further established and fixed in the Operational Directives.¹⁵⁵ Improving the safeguarding of ICH is a process in which UNESCO Member States have and will continue to work closely with NGOs and other members of civil society to advance.¹⁵⁶ The protection and further safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage entails an understanding of the safeguarding of traditional knowledge and cultural heritage between generations. However, intangible cultural heritage is directly related and highly dependent of the protection and conservation of the different environments and their sustainability over time.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁵ Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, *Expert meeting on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development* (ITH/14/9.COM/13.b), 2014.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Expert meeting on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level, *Draft Operational Directives on ‘Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level’* (ITH/14/EXP/3), 2014.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Expert meeting on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level, *Background note and agenda* (ITH/14/EXP/1), 2014.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, *Report by the Secretariat on its activities* (ITH/14/9.COM/6), 2014.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, *Expert meeting on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development* (ITH/14/9.COM/13.b), 2014.

¹⁵⁶ UNESCO, Non-Governmental Organizations accredited to provide advisory services to the Committee.

¹⁵⁷ UNESCO, Ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Committee (9.COM), 2014.

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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Expert meeting on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level. (2014). *Draft Operational Directives on 'Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level'* (ITH/14/EXP/3). Retrieved 3 January 2015 from: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-EXP-3-EN.docx>

The importance of the link between ICH and sustainable development lead the committee to the decision to create a chapter of the Operational Directives focused on this issue. This draft is supposed to be discussed at the tenth session of the committee with a vote on it at the sixth session of the General Assembly. The draft shows the important synergies, which can be created between ICH and sustainable development, but also highlight some of the dangers that have to be taken into account. While the draft is not officially accepted, yet it already includes many directives, which have been given by committee members in past sessions and therefore can serve as a guideline during the current process on this question.

Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. (2014). *Examination of the reports of States Parties on the implementation of the Convention and on the current status of elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* (ITH/14/9.COM/5.a). Retrieved 3 January 2015 from: http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-5.a-EN_.doc

These reports, which have to be handed in by States Parties, are one of the most comprehensive ways of evaluation the progress made in safeguarding ICH. This overview focuses on different aspects. It covers measures taken to implement the convention on different levels and elaborates on the status of elements inscribed on the Representative List. This section shows how successful the measures already taken are and highlights problems and advantages of these measures.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. (2014). *Report by the Secretariat on its activities* (ITH/14/9.COM/6). Retrieved 2 January 2015 from: http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-6-EN_.doc

With the Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage being the most important institution in Safeguarding ICH this report about the work of the past two years is a great overview about the development of the issue as a whole. With the 2003 Convention as the foundation of the secretariats work a big part of the reports concerns the implementation of the convention. The second big part deals with questions related to capacity-building in many different aspects.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. (2014). *Voluntary supplementary contributions to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund* (ITH/14/9.COM/7 Rev.). Retrieved 2 January 2015 from: http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-7_Rev.-EN.doc

With financing of safeguarding of ICH being a current challenge, voluntary contributions of States Parties are an important and necessary. Most of these contributions are used for capacity-building but they are also used to enhance the human capacities of the secretariat. Seeing the necessity of these additional funds gives a better understanding of how difficult acquiring the necessary financial means for safeguarding ICH is.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. (2014). *Developing an overall results framework for the Convention* (ITH/14/9.COM/13.e). Retrieved 3 January 2015 from: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-13.e-EN.doc>

The need for an overall results framework has already been stated at the eighth session of the committee. To evaluate the results archived by the committee and the convention it is necessary to develop standardized norms. The working group, which will take place in 2016, will need preliminary recommendations to create a framework that is accepted by all States Parties. This document gives a good understanding about the needs and difficulties leading up to this framework.

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