

PARIS, 28 March 2018
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Item 26 of the provisional agenda

**IMPLEMENTATION OF 39 C/RESOLUTION 55 AND 202 EX/DECISION 39
CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS
IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES**

SUMMARY

This document is submitted pursuant to 39 C/Resolution 55 and 202 EX/Decision 39. It provides a progress report on developments since the 202nd session of the Executive Board.

There are no financial or administrative implications.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 37.

1. The reporting period is from July 2017 to January 2018.

Education

2. Education remains highly vulnerable, despite a steady educational reform, overall efficient management of the Palestinian education system and satisfactory progress towards targets related to basic education.
3. Challenges remain concerning the ability of children and youth to access quality education and a safe learning environment, with insufficient school buildings and inadequate school infrastructures in Gaza, Area C and in East Jerusalem. Additional difficulties include shortage of adequately trained teachers; lower attainment rates in secondary education; uneven transition from secondary to tertiary education and from education to work; and high unemployment rates among university graduates.¹
4. UNESCO works to address these challenges, both through the implementation of inclusive education related projects and by supporting the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) to achieve the targets related to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (to *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*) at all educational levels

¹ See UNESCO. *Global Education Monitoring Report 2017/8. Accountability in Education: Meeting our Commitment*. UNESCO 2017. Also see United Nations Country Team in the oPt. *Common Country Analysis 2016. Leave No One Behind: A Perspective on Vulnerability and Structural Disadvantage in Palestine*. UNCT 2017, available at the following web address: http://www.unesco.org/Documents/Special/UNCT/CCA_Report_En.pdf



(preschool, basic education, secondary academic and vocational education and higher education). An account of major recent activities and achievements are presented hereunder.

5. Between November and December 2017, UNESCO trained 608 teachers from 33 schools in the West Bank and 451 teachers from 14 schools in Gaza on inclusive education approaches and child-led centred teaching.

6. 70,000 vulnerable Palestinian higher education and university students benefitted from the activities and services (research facilities, textbooks and resource materials) of the ten “Prince Nayef bin Abdel Aziz” community libraries, through the four-year UNESCO-led project in support of higher education, funded by the Saudi Committee for the Relief of Palestinian People, which ended on 31 December 2017.

7. On 1 November 2017, the Minister of Education and Higher Education participated as key panelist in the high-level side event of the 39th session of UNESCO’s General Conference on Education “Strengthening accountability in the implementation of SDG 4-Education 2030.

8. On 23 November 2017, the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG), chaired by MoEHE and co-chaired by the Government of Finland with UNESCO as technical advisor, met in Gaza for the first time since its establishment, to discuss pressing needs and urgent priorities for an effective integration of the educational system between the West Bank and Gaza.

9. On 19 December 2018, jointly with MoEHE, UNESCO launched in Ramallah and in Gaza the 2017-2018 Global Education Monitoring Report under the theme “Accountability in Education: Meeting our commitments.

10. As part of the overall support by the United Nations Country Team for Palestine (UNCT)’ support to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNESCO continued to play a key role in the SDG task force led by the Prime Minister’s Office and in the National Committee for SDG 4 by MoEHE, providing policy advice for an effective alignment of the national “Education Development Strategic Plan (EDSP 2014/2019)” to SDG 4 targets and other associated goals.

11. UNESCO is conducting policy recommendations to support the reform of higher education and the development of higher education institutions programmes, through the review of existing higher education policies and the analysis of the shortcomings in the transition proper jobs aligned with labour-market needs.

12. Jointly with UNICEF, UNESCO is leading the United Nations agencies work under the Strategic Priority entitled “Leaving No One Behind: Social development and protection”, which includes all United Nations interventions in the field of Education, Health, Water and Sanitation, Social Protection, Clean Energy, of the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the State of Palestine (2018-2022), which formally began on 1 January 2018.

Culture

13. Since August 2017, UNESCO started the rehabilitation of 12 additional historic sites in historic cities and rural localities through a six-year project to support local development through the rehabilitation and revitalization of historic built environment, funded by the Government of Sweden through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Since the last reporting period, the project generated 20,000 working days as temporary job opportunities and enhanced the capacities of 16 engineers, architects and contractors through on-the-job training.

14. UNESCO supervised the rehabilitation works of the “Riwaya Museum” in Bethlehem, funded by the Government of Norway, with a view to open a multi-media permanent exhibition on Palestinian culture.

15. UNESCO is strengthening national capacities for the safeguarding of Palestinian intangible cultural heritage for the effective implementation of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), with financial support of the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority.

16. Through the International Assistance under the World Heritage Fund, UNESCO is providing technical expertise to support the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) and other relevant stakeholders in the preparation of conservation and management plans for the World Heritage sites *“Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir”* and *“Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem”*, both included on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

17. In response to growing threats by poorly planned urban development in Nablus, UNESCO supported the MoTA in the preparation of conservation guidelines for the archaeological site of the “Hippodrome and Amphitheatre”, part of the broader site *“Old City of Nablus and its Environs”* included in the Tentative List of Palestine.

18. Through the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD) and the project “Promoting Startups in the Cultural and Creative Industries”, UNESCO supported a three-day “Start-up weekend” among entrepreneurs and pioneers in the field of cultural and creative industries, which was held in Ramallah from 2 to 4 November 2017. Out of the different participating teams, three winning ideas were selected for further support and business launch as an opportunity for young entrepreneurs to design viable business models in the field of creative industries.

Communication and information

19. Palestine is the first recipient of the Model Course on the Safety of Journalists developed by UNESCO and the International Federation of Journalists for universities in the Arab States region.

20. During the reporting period, UNESCO trained 32 teachers from ten Palestinian universities in the West Bank and Gaza on the teaching and use of the Model Course, which has been launched on 29 January 2018, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. These efforts were supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and the “Networks of Mediterranean Youth” project (NET-MED Youth), funded by the European Union.

21. Within its wider mandate to foster freedom of expression and within the framework of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, UNESCO has launched an initiative to foster dialogue between Palestinian police and security forces and journalists on freedom of expression and safety of journalists. The initiative, funded by Sida, was the first of its kind in Palestine and was organized, on the model of similar UNESCO-led activities successfully conducted in more than ten countries, among them Iraq, Libya, and Tunisia. It included two consecutive three-day dialogue and training sessions, held in Jericho in September 2017 and in Ramallah in November 2017, which benefitted around 50 law enforcement officers and 25 journalists. Selected participants from both security forces and media professionals have been further trained as future trainers on the same topic, with the overall aim to contributing to an environment more conducive to freedom of expression and to ensure safer working conditions for journalists.

22. On 28 September 2017, with the support of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the NET-MED Youth project funded by the EU, UNESCO Ramallah held a regional IPDCTalks event to celebrate the International Day for the Universal Access to Information (IDUAI). Through a public discussion organized in TEDx talks style in Ramallah, ten key speakers from media outlets, international organizations, civil society and academia, engaged on the right of access to quality information and on the need of strong and accountable media institutions and effective media legislation compliant with international standard settings and principles. The event built awareness, among governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, on the links between press freedom, media development, the right to information and sustainable development.

23. On 2 November 2017, UNESCO celebrated the *International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists* in Ramallah and in Gaza, through a policy debate among 80 journalists, editors-in-chief, policy-makers and relevant civil society organizations on the means to fight against impunity in Palestine. Sida and the EU-funded NET-MED Youth project supported the commemoration of this international date.

24. Since 1981, the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) has been supporting 24 projects, contributing to the development of local capacities in Palestine to improve media independence, promote the safety of journalists and mainstream gender equality in media.

Gender equality

25. In conformity with UNESCO's Priority Gender Equality Action Plan 2014 – 2021, UNESCO continued to promote the advancement of gender equality in Palestine, both through its stand-alone Gender Policy Institute (GPI), funded by the Government of Norway, and through the mainstreaming of gender in all UNESCO's programmes and projects implemented locally.

26. Palestine has ratified the *Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) in 2014 and developed a "Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy 2017-2022".

27. During the last quarter of 2017, UNESCO supported the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign to galvanize action to end violence against women and girls in Palestine, jointly with UN-Women and UNFPA and as an active member of the Gender Task-Force within the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). In particular, in the framework of the NET-MED Youth project, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence were marked in Palestine through a radio campaign implemented in partnership with a local radio station that promotes gender equality. Actions included youth-targeted live broadcast radio shows, debates, VOX Pops and awareness-raising radio spots aired between 27 November and 10 December 2017, which were also disseminated via social media and made available online on the partner's and NET-MED Youth's website.

28. In December 2017, through its GPI and in cooperation with UN-Women and MoWA, UNESCO started the mapping of gender equality-related public policies with a view to completing a comprehensive and wide-ranging evidence-based policy review.

Youth

29. UNESCO continued to support youth in the region through its intersectoral project "Networks of Mediterranean Youth Project" (NET-MED Youth), funded by the European Union. Within the framework of the project and during the reporting period, UNESCO disseminated the findings of media monitoring research that examined TV coverage and an online survey focused on radio, which highlighting a low representation of youth in the media.

30. Within the same framework, UNESCO also produced a discussion paper based on a survey on Youth and Media in Palestine – which, following a quantitative and qualitative approach, improves understanding of how Palestinian youth relate to and engage with media – as well as a mapping of the most active and relevant youth-led organizations.

31. The findings and relevance of these key reports were discussed at a high-level Youth Day ("NET-MED Youth Day"), organized in September 2017 at Bethlehem University, with the participation of the ministers of Education and Higher Education and of Culture, representatives of UNFPA and ILO, and a number of academics, policy and decision-makers. The event was attended by hundreds of university students.

32. From 12 to 25 September 2017, UNESCO supported the celebration of the International Youth Day under the theme “Youth Building Peace”, within the framework of the United Nations Thematic Group of Young People Campaign.

33. Two Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Summer Camps were held in August 2017, benefitting 200 young women and men in the West Bank and Gaza and young CSO practitioners. Building on the above experience, and thanks to NET-MED Youth and Sida funding, MIL capacity building was also delivered in January 2018 in four schools (two in West Bank and two in Gaza), reaching over 200 students, their teachers and school principals. In this framework, also benefiting from MIL trainings were 30 Public Relations Officers from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The NET-MED Youth project also facilitated the participation of a young Palestinian MIL expert in the regional celebration of Media and Information Literacy Week held in Rabat, Morocco, in November 2017.

34. NET-MED Youth sponsored the December 2017 issue of the youth-focused *Filistin Ashabab magazine*. It featured stories from across Arab States, through which young people expressed their opinions and displayed their talents and achievements. Four thousand copies of the magazine were distributed free of charge to no less than 110 locations in Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Nablus and Jericho. The magazine’s online version, as well as its dissemination through a Facebook ad, also gathered significant attention.

35. In line with UNESCO’s “Youth Strategy 2014-2021”, throughout November and December 2017, UNESCO supported 12 youth-led initiative grants in the West Bank and in Gaza, empowering young men and women through community level activities – ranging from the installation of proper visitors’ signs in cultural heritage sites, to waste recycling, rehabilitation of dry-stone terraces, theatre performance, and training in the production and hosting of youth-centered radio programmes.

36. The project for Syrian students in the occupied Syrian Golan launched in 2009 and financed by Japanese Funds-In-Trust ended in March 2013. Without further extrabudgetary resources, this assistance could not be provided over the reporting period.

Proposed decision

37. The Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling previous decisions concerning “Educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories”,
2. Having examined document 204 EX/26,
3. Decides to include this item in the agenda of its 205th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a follow-up report thereon.

ANNEX

During the reporting period, the following correspondence has been received by the Secretariat in relation to this Item:

Date	From	Subject
5 February 2018	Alternate Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO.	Educational Institutions (Abu Nuwar)
15 March 2018	Alternate Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO.	Educational Institutions (Birzeit)



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Two hundred and fourth session

204 EX/26 Corr.

PARIS, 10 April 2018
Original: English

Item 26 of the agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF 39 C/RESOLUTION 55 AND 202 EX/DECISION 39 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

CORRIGENDUM

Paragraph 37 should read as follows:

The Executive Board,

1. Having considered documents 204 EX/25, 204 EX/26 and the Annex to this decision,
2. Recalling its previous decisions concerning “Educational and Cultural Institutions in the Occupied Arab Territories”,
3. Decides to include this item in the agenda of its 205th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a follow-up report thereon.

ANNEX

**Executive Board
Two hundred and fourth session**

204 EX/PX/DR.26.3
PARIS, 6 April 2018
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PROGRAMME AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMISSION (PX)

Item 26: IMPLEMENTATION OF 39 C/RESOLUTION 55 AND 202 EX/DECISION 39 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

DRAFT DECISION

Submitted by, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar and Sudan



Job: 201800970

I. OCCUPIED PALESTINE

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 185 EX/Decision 36 and 38 C/Resolution 72 as well as Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with regard to the right to education, Articles 4, 50 and 94 of the Fourth Geneva Convention with regard to the denial of the right of children to education, as well as the Hague Convention (1954) and its additional Protocols and the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), also recalling the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004 on the "Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory",
2. Having examined documents 204 EX/25, 204 EX/26,
3. Committed to the safeguarding of monuments, works of art, manuscripts, books and other historical and cultural properties to be protected in the event of conflict, as well as the safeguarding of schools and all educational facilities,
4. Deplores the damaging impact of the military confrontations on the fields of competence of UNESCO in the Gaza Strip, particularly education and cultural institutions and calls for ending measures that prevent the reconstruction and/or rehabilitation of schools in the Gaza Strip;
5. Deeply concerned by the Israeli army violations against Palestinian universities and schools, demands that the Israeli authorities immediately halt actions that violate UNESCO principles and the provisions of the world declaration for education for all (1990) and reaffirms, in this regard, that schools, universities and cultural heritage sites enjoy special protection and should not be targeted;
6. Expresses its growing concern about the harmful impact of the Wall on the activities of educational and cultural institutions, and demands, in this regard, that Israel, the occupying Power, cease all of its settlement activities, including the construction of the Wall and other measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem and the Cremisan Monastery in the Bethlehem Governorate, which harm the social fabric of Palestinian society and prevent Palestinian school children and students from exercising fully their right to education;
7. Notes with deep concern the Israeli censorship of the Palestinian curricula of schools and universities in East Jerusalem, and urges the Israeli authorities to immediately halt this censorship;
88. Expresses its appreciation for the substantial contributions of all concerned Member States and intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to UNESCO's action in Palestine as well as for building of schools for Palestinian children such as the school of Tana, near Nablus and the two schools in Khan Al-Ahmar and in Abu Nuwar near Jerusalem, and appeals to them to continue assisting UNESCO in this endeavour;
9. Deeply regrets the destruction by the Israeli authorities of schools, including the school in Abu Nuwar and the school in Tana, and calls on the Israeli authorities to halt plans for further demolition, including of the school in Khan Al-Ahmar;
10. Thanks the Director-General for the results that have been obtained in favour of the protection, reconstruction, rehabilitation and restoration of the Palestinian archaeological sites and cultural heritage, invites her to reinforce her action in this regard and to strengthen UNESCO's assistance to the Palestinian educational and cultural institutions in order to address the needs for capacity building in UNESCO's fields of competence by, *inter alia*, expanding the financial assistance programme for Palestinian students and school children, and requests her to organize, as soon as possible, the ninth meeting of the Joint UNESCO-Palestine Committee;

II. OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN

11. Also invites the Director-General:

- (a) to continue the efforts she is making to preserve the human, social and cultural fabric of the occupied Syrian Golan, in accordance with the relevant provisions of its decisions;
- (b) to undertake efforts to offer appropriate curricula, and to provide more grants and adequate assistance to the educational and cultural institutions of the occupied Syrian Golan;
- (c) to dispatch an expert to assess and evaluate the needs of the educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Syrian Golan and report to her before the 205th session of the Executive Board;

III.

12. Decides to include this item in the agenda of the Executive Board at its 205th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a progress report thereon.