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Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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IMPLEMENTATION OF 40 C/RESOLUTION 67 AND 210 EX/DECISION 37 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

SUMMARY

The present document is submitted pursuant to 210 EX/Decision 37 and 40 C/Resolution 67.

It reports on assistance provided to the Palestinian Authority and to relevant Palestinian stakeholders, and on developments since the 210th session of the Executive Board.

There are no financial or administrative implications.

Decision required: paragraph 37.



3001 2021/01160

Educational and Cultural Institutions in the Occupied Arab Territories' (Follow-up to 210 EX/Decision 37)

Introduction

1. The reporting period is from September 2020 to February 2021.
2. Detailed information on UNESCO's activities in Gaza is provided in document 211 EX/33 "Occupied Palestine" and is therefore not reported on in the present document.

EDUCATION

3. Around 5.2 million Palestinians live under protracted occupation, which limits their access to education and thereby threatens their right to education. In 2019, the economic and humanitarian situations sharply deteriorated in Palestine and the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the situation. In Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, settlement expansion, settler violence, the demolition and confiscation of properties, and evictions are intensifying pressure on the most vulnerable Palestinians, including Bedouin refugees who are at risk of being forcibly displaced from their homes¹. Many children in Palestine have seen or experienced traumatic events and subsequently suffer from nightmares, which affect their ability to learn and thrive².

4. The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a negative shock to Palestinian socio-economic development, including putting at risk education, public welfare, employment and livelihoods. The pandemic threatens progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG4 on inclusive and quality education, in the occupied Palestinian territory and is exacerbating and deepening pre-existing inequalities, discrimination, and inequities³.

5. In this context, UNESCO continues to ensure its support to the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research with a focus on inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all Palestinians, through the provision of policy advice and field interventions as well as through its role as technical advisor to the Education Sector Working Group.

6. Moreover, in line with the implementation of the COVID-19 response plan of the MoE and within the Education Cluster, UNESCO provided support to ensure safe reopening of schools where a blended learning approach was adopted to ensure the safety of students and education staff. The opening and closure of schools during the reporting period was highly dependent on the increase of COVID-19 cases, which obliged the government to enforce closures of schools for different grades for a certain period and re-open again, based on improvements on the ground. Following the support to the immediate emergency response to COVID-19, UNESCO is providing policy advice to the Ministry of Education on its education reform in four priority areas – distance learning, monitoring system performance, quality assurance and governance. In addition, on the occasion of the World Teachers Day 2020, UNESCO organized a policy dialogue on teachers' leadership in the crisis response. The discussions addressed the role of principals, teachers, Ministries, civil society and parents in building resilience, shaping the future of education and the teaching profession, and also provided some policy recommendations.

7. During the reporting period, UNESCO worked closely with the MoE and partners to strengthen distance learning in Palestine by co-leading the Distance Learning Task Force to ensure the alignment of partners' response plans to COVID-19 with the strategic vision and needs of the MoE. Within this task force, UNESCO has upgraded the Ministry's official website

¹ <https://www.nrc.no/countries/middle-east/palestine/>

² <https://www.nrc.no/countries/middle-east/palestine/>

³ https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PSE_Socioeconomic-Response-Pan_2020%20%281%29.pdf

to allow greater interaction with the community and partners and also upgraded its E-platform “Tammal” to provide a more collaborative platform for students. To complement these efforts, the Capacity Development for Education Programme (CapED) will support the E-platform’s operationalization and provide teacher training to mainstream transversal and ICT competencies. It has also conducted an assessment to support the development of the Educational TV Channel to bridge the digital divide, which increased during the COVID-19 era. Among distance learning activities, it also supported the Ministry to implement the Global Digital Library project, where books were translated into Arabic to benefit home schooling and self-learning.

8. Within the context of the UNESCO Arab Regional Strategic Framework for Education in Emergencies (2018-2021), UNESCO continues providing technical guidance to the MoE on ensuring inclusive education, including through teacher training on inclusive education and child-centered teaching methods. Within the Multi-Resilience Programme for the State of Palestine (MYRP) (2019-2021), funded by the Education Cannot Wait (ECW), UNESCO, the MoE and key partners have finalized a manual on the training of trainers on inclusive education and started the training of a group of supervisors and counselors, which will be scaled up to around 3,000 teachers in the most vulnerable schools in Palestine.

9. With the reprogrammed ECW funds, UNESCO, as a member of the Psychosocial Support Task Force, has also developed 16 videos and is developing a short video game on healthy lifestyles and psychosocial support to raise awareness through social media and educational online platforms. Applying the blended learning approach, activities related to sport, theater and storytelling will be conducted in selected schools in Palestine to provide psychosocial support and mitigate the harmful impact of the pandemic.

10. Within the EU-funded Youth Employment in the Mediterranean Project (YEM) project, UNESCO, as part of its response to the COVID-19 crisis, identified skills needed in the tourism sector, one of the hardest hit during the pandemic. It conducted a mapping of the tourism curriculum to identify the skills needed in this sector. In December 2020, capacity development for the technical staff of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Higher Education on the development of the skills forecasting model was conducted with the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) to ensure its sustainability. To further benefit the skill forecasting analysis, data from online job search platform (jobs.ps), the largest employment website in Palestine, was analyzed in order to identify the most needed skills in the different occupations. The project has also supported the development of capacities of national actors to assess and develop digital skills in the field of TVET. To ensure the sustainability of these TVET interventions, UNESCO submitted a successful funding proposal on TVET and distance learning to Japan and is finalizing a similar one to the Belgium Development Agency (ENABEL).

11. Within the reporting period, UNESCO also provided support to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in revising its sector strategy to integrate SDG4 related indicators and new developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the political situation.

CULTURE

12. In the second half of 2020, the implementation of cultural activities, including physical rehabilitation projects, performances, exhibitions and cinema activities, continued to be significantly affected by the crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. The continued safety measures imposed by the Palestinian Authority had an impact on several field work activities for built heritage while also affecting the collection of data and information on the culture sector in Palestine. However, overall, improved preparedness of both UNESCO Ramallah Office and its main partners, allowed for a smoother implementation of scheduled activities, despite the additional measures restricting movements and gatherings. An overview of all ongoing

activities in the field of culture and how they have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic is provided below.

13. Some concrete initiatives are being implemented in coordination with relevant national stakeholders (Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, among others) in the framework of the broader UNCT COVID-19 Development System Response Plan. These include the digitization of the Traveling Museum to provide online public access to its objects during the lockdown periods; the production of four online videos of living heritage storytelling in support of children’s education and entertainment as well as recreation within their families during lockdown. Beyond these activities, described in more details below, UNESCO is supporting the Ministry of Culture (MoC) to assess the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on culture and creative industries, with a view to elaborate a full-fledged COVID-19 crisis response action plan to continue enhancing and promoting the resilience of the Palestinian culture during time of emergencies.

14. In December 2020, UNESCO obtained the approval for the no-cost extension until 30 June 2021 of the project “Local development through the rehabilitation and revitalization of historic built environment in Palestine” funded by Sweden. The extension will enable the completion of project activities and especially those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and hence the closure of the project by the end of June 2021. Since the last reporting period, UNESCO completed activities related to the rehabilitation, conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage. Such activities included:

- The rehabilitation of one cultural heritage site in the Old City of Jerusalem used as a vocational school.
- The preparation of the Conservation and Management Plan (CMP) of [Sebastia](#), which is included on the tentative List of Palestine, in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA).
- Six online sessions on Impact Assessment for World Heritage were held by international experts and broadcasted live on [UNESCO Ramallah Facebook page](#) to expand its outreach and impact beyond heritage professionals. This training aimed at strengthening the capacities of 30 Palestinian professionals from a range of disciplines following the most updated international methodology on this topic. This training was organized in light of the situation in Palestine, where several development projects are proposed in World Heritage or Tentative List sites. It is worth noting that Heritage Impact Assessment is required by the Palestinian Tangible Cultural Heritage Decree Law adopted in 2018.
- Four by-laws (on museums, excavations, inventory instructions, conservation and protection of built cultural heritage), which were developed in support of the implementation of the 2018 Decree Law Concerning Tangible Cultural Heritage, have been finalized. The different by-laws went through rounds of consultation with civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the respective fields, to ensure that the aspirations of the different entities are met. The by-laws were shared with the relevant authorities for further consultation and will then be submitted to the cabinet of the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities for final endorsement.

Furthermore, UNESCO continued working on the following activities:

- Finalizing the publication on the project experience, success stories and best practices. It includes technical and community engagement aspects. Nine sites representing success stories as part of the project achievements have been selected, and their stories are narrated along with a brief on the policy support

provided in the framework of the project. The publication is expected to be published in English and Arabic by June 2021.

- Supporting the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in inventorying archaeological artifacts and for their proper documentation and storage at the Ministry's premises.
- Supporting the operationalization of the Hebron Old Town museum, which was rehabilitated by UNESCO. The design of the first exhibition is ongoing with support from UNESCO and in consultation with the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, the entity which will run the museum. Furthermore, UNESCO will provide the equipment and furniture required for the functioning of the museum.

15. Through the International Assistance under the World Heritage Fund, UNESCO is supporting the elaboration of the Conservation and Management Plan (CMP) for the World Heritage site of "[Hebron/AI-Khalil Old Town](#)" as well as the preparation of a Nomination Dossier for the cultural heritage site '[Jericho Millenary City, Archaeological and Historical Urban Development](#)' which is currently on the Tentative List of Palestine. For the latter, the draft preparatory studies needed for the preparation of the nomination dossier were compiled and presented virtually to local stakeholders during January 2021. The studies are expected to be finalized during March 2021 and the Nomination Dossier is expected to be ready by September 2021. UNESCO will continue providing its technical support to MoTA throughout the lifespan of the projects.

16. UNESCO, with its regular budget resources, is working with MoTA to develop technical guidelines and detailed urban planning codes to manage the growing urban transformation in the World Heritage Property '[Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir](#)', in line with the endorsed Management and Conservation Plan of the site. Technical meetings with MoTA, the Municipality of Battir and the Ministry of Local Government allowed to demarcate the target area for developing building by-laws with the purpose to reduce the impact of new development interventions on the cultural landscape. Delays in implementation were encountered in 2020 due to the COVID-19-related restrictions on movement, but work is expected to commence early March 2021.

17. UNESCO continues to supervise the renovation works in the Riwaya Museum in Bethlehem, funded by Norway, to open a multimedia interactive museum on Palestinian culture. The project has been extended until December 2021 with a generous additional contribution which will help UNESCO to complete the renovation works in the museum and address all the challenges of the project, especially those related to the repair of damages caused by a fire accident that took place in 2018 in the site as well as to integrate the Civil Defense safety requirements. The COVID-19 crisis delayed the implementation of the renovation and the damage repair works. However, UNESCO managed to get the approval of the Palestinian Civil Defense on its upgraded technical drawings for the museum, which enabled good progress in the renovation works on site.

18. The extension until the end of 2020 of the project "[Strengthening National Capacities for Safeguarding Palestinian Intangible Cultural Heritage](#)" funded by the Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism allowed UNESCO to continue supporting the Ministry of Culture (MoC) in the elaboration of an Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Law. The draft ICH Law has been presented to the Ministers' cabinet for the first reading and received a number of comments which have been integrated. UNESCO is supporting the consultations on the content of the new law with civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders, in parallel with the second reading, in view of the Law's final approval in spring 2021.

19. UNESCO identified four cultural institutions in the West Bank and Gaza in order to continue with ICH pilot-inventorying and further develop the skills of those who participated in the ICH capacity-building trainings. To date, 13 pilot-inventorying exercises have been conducted on different dimensions of ICH including food processing-date culture, traditional

songs, Hikaye, and the Bedouins Dehyya dance and Nabati poetry. Sample videos of these pilot-inventories have been published on [UNESCO Ramallah Facebook page](#) to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding ICH and transmitting it to future generations. In the framework of the same project, as part of the efforts to build capacities in implementing the 2003 Convention, for the first time within the project implementation cycle, a five-day online training session was organized for Gaza participants on the effective implementation of the 2003 Convention, between October and November 2020. More details regarding this activity are provided in document 211 EX/33 “Occupied Palestine”.

20. UNESCO produced a [video to commemorate the World Olive Tree Day](#) on 26 November 2020, with a particular focus on the intangible cultural heritage practices linked to the olive tree, from traditional olive-picking to food-consumption and cherished popular songs celebrating olives as a symbol of identity and generosity. This video has been showcased in the [UNESCO’s main webpage](#) commemorating this international day.

21. Continued support was provided to the MoC through the project “[Re|Shaping Cultural Policies](#) for the Promotion of Fundamental Freedoms and the Diversity of Cultural Expressions” funded by Sweden under the 2005 Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Additionally, in the framework of the same project, three ResiliArt debates were organized during the months of September and October 2020, focusing on [youth and emerging technologies](#) in times of COVID-19, the [status of women](#) in culture, and the [resilience of Palestinian cultural institutions](#) and future prospects for the independent cultural scene in Palestine during times of crisis. The debates were livestreamed on MoC’s official electronic platforms.

22. Since the last reporting period, the Quadrennial Periodic Report (QPR) on the Convention was [officially submitted](#) by Palestine on 13 October 2020, integrating the feedback and comments received from the different concerned stakeholders.

23. In coordination with the MoC and with the support of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), UNESCO in partnership and with co-financing from the Drosos Foundation, conducted a study based on the Culture|2030 Indicators methodology that aims at measuring and assessing the transversal contribution of the culture sector to SDGs. The first draft report was submitted in August 2020, focusing on 17 indicators out of the 22 indicators specified in the Culture|2030 Indicators methodology. An endorsement meeting of the draft report took place on 31 August 2020, following which several revisions by the different line ministries and partners were proposed. The second draft is currently under review and the final report is expected to be delivered in spring 2021.

24. After the successful submission by the MoC of a project proposal to the [EU/UNESCO programme](#) on Supporting new regulatory frameworks to strengthen the cultural and creative industries, UNESCO was able to establish an agreement with MoC, aiming at improving the Palestinian film infrastructure by developing film policies and guidelines, as well as the operational manual of a dedicated national institution. Through this project, MoC plans to establish an electronic platform that shall include all relevant materials on the Palestinian film industry and production. UNESCO will continue providing its technical support to MoC and concerned entities for the successful implementation of the project.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

25. During the reporting period, journalists in Palestine have continued to face a range of violations. Between September and January 2021, the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA) recorded 176 cases of violations of media freedom, including physical assault, seizure of equipment, detentions, and prohibition of coverage. According to

MADA, in the month of October 2020 alone, at least 21 journalists were arrested while covering field events and five were injured with rubber bullets reportedly fired by Israeli soldiers.⁴

26. The UNESCO Ramallah Office has continued to hold awareness-raising initiatives/events on press freedom and journalists' safety, including:

- In December 2020, UNESCO Ramallah Office organized a high-level webinar titled "Freedom of expression online and offline / Press Freedom / Human Rights Defenders" jointly with the Netherlands Representative Office, the Sweden Representative Office and OHCHR to commemorate Human Rights Day / World Press Freedom Conference 2020 in Palestine. The webinar opened space for discussion and the sharing of experiences among national counterparts. As a follow-up to the webinar, collaborations are being explored to further support human rights and in particular the rights of journalists.
- UNESCO organized a one-day discussion commemorating the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI) titled "The Palestinian reality and International Comparisons of Freedom and Violations Against Journalists", providing an opportunity to exchange perspectives on domestic and international laws and treaties regarding freedom of expression, including online, and the safety of journalists. The event was attended by journalists, activists, academics and media representatives.

27. Within the framework of the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists, the UNESCO Ramallah Office organized follow-up visits to media outlets as part of its support to the established "Safety Officers Network" to ensure follow-up of the recommendations to strengthen safety policies and protocols, with special attention to women journalists. UNESCO continued to reinforce the capacities of the core team working on Safety Management through in-house trainings, which continued during the last quarter of 2020.

28. Throughout October 2020 UNESCO also held specialized training sessions introducing the Arabic version of its handbook titled "Journalism, 'Fake News' and Disinformation: A Handbook for Journalism Education and Training". The online training provided journalists and educators with tools to deal with disinformation, in particular in relation to the COVID-19 "disinfodemic". Public awareness materials were produced, including a handbook for reporters in high-risk environments.

29. UNESCO Ramallah Office continued the finalization of the first National Policy Background Document on Media and Information Literacy Policy in preparation of a National Strategy in Palestine, based on the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Policy Guidelines and the model MIL Curriculum, while considering the local realities in the country and reflecting on the government's response to COVID-19. The document is expected to be presented and discussed with stakeholders in early 2021.

30. Marking the International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI) and Global MIL Week 2020, UNESCO Ramallah participated in a series of webinars: "Media and Information Literate Youth - A cornerstone to implementing Access to Information policies and achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Arab region" organized on 7-9 December 2020 by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States and the Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy (GAPMIL).

31. Under the IPDC/ICESCO-funded project "Enhancing Media Research Field in Media Faculties", which was extended until March 2021, the Al-Quds Open University established a research centre, in close collaboration with other universities in the West Bank and Gaza. This research centre is a platform that provides opportunities for collaborative work and learning in

⁴ <https://www.madacenter.org/en/article/1327/>

areas including digital storytelling, financial reporting, data journalism, videography, and media and information literacy.

GENDER EQUALITY

32. UNESCO supports and promotes Gender Equality in Palestine through mainstreaming gender in all of its activities implemented in the field of culture, education as well as communication and information.

33. In the field of Gender Equality in Media, UNESCO Ramallah Office, in close cooperation with the CI Sector, is planning to train and raise awareness of Palestinian journalists about the coverage of issues related to violence against women and girls, as well as to enhance media's contribution to diversity, gender equality and youth empowerment.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

34. UNESCO Ramallah Office is actively engaged in the UN Thematic Group on Young People and particularly in the mapping exercise currently carried out in order to identify the best opportunity to build synergies and expand collaboration for 2021-2022 in support to youth related interventions in the following key areas "*Support civic engagement initiatives that provide youth (in particular females) with a great voice (i.e. Elections)*" as well as "*Economic empowerment*".

35. UNESCO Ramallah Office is also developing data collection tools to identify the skills needed to revive the tourism sector in Palestine. The analysis of those tools will inform policies and interventions that will increase youth employment opportunities as well as decrease the skill gap in order to meet the labour market needs.

Occupied Syrian Golan

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. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Having considered documents 211 EX/33 and 211 EX/34, as well as 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 212th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a follow-up report thereon.

ANNEX I



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board
Two hundred and eleventh session

211 EX/PX/DR.34.1
PARIS, 9 April 2021
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PROGRAMME AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMISSION (PX)

**Item 34 IMPLEMENTATION OF 40 C/RESOLUTION 67 AND 210 EX/DECISION 37
CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN
THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES**

DRAFT DECISION

The Executive Board,

I OCCUPIED PALESTINE

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 24, 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 211 EX/33 and 211 EX/34,
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;
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;

8. 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 212th session of the Executive Board;

III

12. Decides to include this item in the agenda of its 212th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a progress report thereon.