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### IMPLEMENTATION OF 37 C/RESOLUTION 67 AND 196 EX/DECISION 27 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

#### SUMMARY

This document summarizes progress by UNESCO since the 196th session of the Executive Board in providing assistance to the Palestinian people and their educational and cultural institutions, as well as to such institutions in the occupied Syrian Golan. Further detailed information on UNESCO assistance in Gaza, is provided in document [197 EX/32](#) ("Occupied Palestine") and is not reported in the present document.

There are no financial or administrative implications.

No decision is proposed in the present document.

#### Implementation of 37 C/Resolution 67 and 196 EX/Decision 27 concerning educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories (February 2015 — June 2015)

#### EDUCATION

1. During the period under review, UNESCO Ramallah Office continued providing support to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) in Palestine, through technical assistance, building capacities of national institutions, implementing projects in the West Bank and Gaza, and providing support in the areas of planning, management and coordination of the Education Sector.
2. Following the ongoing reform and the reactivation of the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) in late 2014, UNESCO, in its capacity as technical adviser of ESWG, has been very active in supporting the work of the group in the preparation for the meetings (quarterly) and the preparation of the Annual Sector Review (scheduled to be held in September 2015). A main task of the group has been the proposed integration of the Education Cluster into the ESWG. UNESCO led the analysis and proposed Terms of Reference for this work. A technical thematic sub-group focusing on emergency would be established under the ESWG (while a sub-cluster specifically focussing on Gaza would be maintained as an autonomous entity). UNESCO also chairs the thematic sub-working group on inclusive education, which met several times to review and finalize the draft inclusive education policy.
3. In close liaison with relevant sister United Nations agencies, UNESCO has been preparing to provide support role and technical assistance to the Palestinian Government in reporting on the right to education in the context of the various international human rights normative instruments recently accessed by Palestine, most notably the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*; the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC); the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW); and, the *Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities* (CRPD), with special focus on the educational components of the legal obligations to the United Nations Treaty Bodies arising from the accession to such treaties.
4. With support from UNESCO, the MoEHE actively participated in the Arab States Regional Conference on Education Post-2015: Towards Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All in Egypt (27-29 January 2015). On the basis of the national EFA reviews conducted by the Member States, the scope of this conference was to yield lessons learnt for the future and examine issues, trends, challenges and future priorities that need to be addressed regionally for education post-2015 and to develop regional recommendations on education beyond 2015 to feed into the post-2015 education agenda. Similarly, UNESCO supported the participation of the Minister of Education and Higher Education and a member of her Cabinet at the World Education Forum in Incheon, Korea (19-22 May 2015). The Minister actively participated in a panel on the role of civil society in promoting EFA, and delivered a statement on behalf of all the Ministers of Education of the Arab States.

5. With technical support from UNESCO, the MoEHE finalized its National Assessment for Education for All (EFA) Report (2000-2015) in December 2014. (See further details in document [197 EX/32](#), paragraph 9).

6. UNESCO has continued to successfully coordinate the EFA Package in Palestine. In support of the EFA agenda in Palestine, and within the United Nations/MoEHE EFA Package (comprised of nine United Nations agencies: FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNRWA, UNESCO, WFP and WHO — and coordinated by UNESCO, see document 195 EX/28), special focus was given to inclusive and child-friendly education, through pilot child-led activities/innovative teaching and learning in 70 schools (58 Government, 12 UNRWA), both in the West Bank and in Gaza. The second phase of this project was funded by the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), with further support by AGFUND, and is jointly implemented with MoEHE and UNRWA, in partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). The current phase of the project started in August 2014 and will finish in September 2015. This project already benefited more than 27,000 students and 1,265 teachers. Building on the successes achieved, all partners agreed on the importance of expanding those trainings to a possible phase II of the project, to include another 200 schools both in West Bank and Gaza.

7. UNESCO continues to support vulnerable university students in Palestine. (See further details in document [197 EX/32](#), paragraph 10).

## **CULTURE**

8. During the period under review UNESCO continued its cooperation with Palestine in the field of culture, providing technical assistance, building national capacities of relevant Palestinian institutions, and implementing projects on the ground.

9. The third year of the ongoing project "Local Development through the rehabilitation and revitalization of the historic built environment in Palestine", funded by the Government of Sweden through its Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), was successfully achieved. The project helped to strengthen technical capacities of local architects, engineers and young professionals in the field of cultural heritage preservation through the renovation of historic sites in the Palestinian cities and rural localities: the rehabilitation of 13 historic sites was completed and handed over for public use in addition to the 27 historic sites previously rehabilitated through the project (2012-2014) as well as another three historic sites in the process of rehabilitation. These interventions in the historic environment in Palestine facilitated accessibility to cultural heritage assets and contributed to the socioeconomic development of the targeted communities. 37 architects and engineers completed internships and on job training programmes, added to 150 professionals and technicians already trained in the previous phases of the project. UNESCO through this project fosters the coordination between civil society and Palestinian governmental institutions, towards State-building and achieving more comprehensive institutional development. The project was extended for a fourth year in January 2015, thus allowing for the continuation of rehabilitation and training, which are effectively contributing to the preservation and promotion of the Palestinian cultural heritage and to strengthening the capacities of relevant Palestinian institutions and professionals.

10. Contributing to strengthening the Palestinian institutions and the development of policies and legal frameworks, jointly with the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) and in cooperation with relevant civil society organizations working in the field of cultural heritage, UNESCO organized on 7 and 8 June 2015, a final workshop on the revision of the draft Palestinian Cultural Heritage Law, following a broad invitation to provide written comments on the draft law. The active participation of more than 40 experts participated from both the West Bank and from Gaza led to an in-depth revision of the draft law and drew the way forward to a final consolidated draft of the law, aligned to the international practice and standards and with the international normative instruments in the field of culture ratified by Palestine, which will be submitted to the relevant national institutions for their endorsement and approval.

11. UNESCO also successfully accomplished the first phase of the assessment of needs on the implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Palestine, with funds from the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority (ADTCA). The assessment was carried out from 2 to 7 March 2015, through interviews to a number of key actors working in the field of cultural practices, representations, expressions and traditional knowledge in Palestine and through field visits. The assessment focuses on the needs for the safeguarding of ICH in terms of existing initiatives, institutional framework, challenges and respective roles and relations between government and civil society actors and is being finalized in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture (MoC).

12. On 18 and 19 May 2015, and jointly with MoC, UNESCO organized a two-day specialized workshop on the final revision of the draft law for the safeguarding of the Palestinian Intangible Heritage to ensure the elaboration of a comprehensive and context-specific draft law aligned with the 2003 UNESCO Convention.

## **COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION**

13. With the support of the Swedish Cooperation Agency for Development (Sida), UNESCO organized a training seminar for journalists and media professionals on Journalism Ethics and Code of Ethics and Conduct Training, held from 15 to 17 May 2015 in Gaza and from 27 May to 2 June 2015 in Ramallah. (See further details in document [197 EX/32](#), paragraph 15).

14. A project supporting Palestinian media professionals entitled "Enhancing the professional capacity of independent Palestinian media", funded through the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), has been launched. The project seeks to improve the Palestinian media environment by fostering professional capacity of independent journalists and raising the overall standards of media quality, through intensive media training of journalists and editors and a review of editorial policies and procedures, building upon UNESCO's key recommendations for developing media in Palestine (MDI). Training activities will focus on community broadcasting, and updating the audiovisual media; strengthen objective analyses of State offices; broaden media coverage to include equal and nuanced portrayals of men and women; and promotion of a self-regulation system.

## **GENDER EQUALITY**

15. Activities to support mainstreaming of gender equality in Palestine are implemented by UNESCO through its Palestinian Women Research and Documentation Centre (PWRDC), funded by the Government of Norway.

(See further details in document [197 EX/32](#), paragraphs 16-22). **YOUTH**

16. The NET-MED Youth Project (funded by the European Union) was launched in both the West Bank and Gaza on 27 April 2015 with a view to contributing to the creation of an enabling environment for young women and men in Palestine to develop their competencies, exercise their rights and duties, and meaningfully engage as active citizens, particularly in decision-making relating to political, social, economic, educational and cultural policy and planning processes. The objective of this intersectoral flagship project (SHS, CI and CLT) is to strengthen the networking capacities of youth organizations in Palestine, particularly by increasing their interaction with decision-makers, social partners and media, as well as their use of ICTs based platforms, and also by enhancing their economic inclusion and access to the labour market.

17. Based on the previous mapping exercises and studies conducted in Palestine in 2014, a detailed online questionnaire has been

developed and distributed by UNESCO in order to gather missing information and fill in the gaps on the geographical and thematic scope of work of youth organizations active in the West Bank and Gaza (with 52 organizations, 25 in Gaza and 27 in the West Bank and in Jerusalem, having filled in the online questionnaire).

18. Two working groups, one in West Bank and one in Gaza, comprised of active youth organizations working in the fields of culture, education, and communication and media have been established and will be working together for the upcoming two years in the implementation of the NET-MED project, based on their ongoing projects and activities supporting youth employment, mainstreaming youth policies and advocacy, and youth representation in the media.

19. Three youth organizations from NET-MED working groups in Palestine participated in a subregional workshop on youth media monitoring methodologies, held in Beirut on in March 2015.

20. World Radio Day, World Press Freedom Day: Palestinian young women and men have been engaged in the celebration of the World Radio Day (held on 13 February 2015) and of the World Press Freedom Day (held on 3 May 2015). High school students produced and presented a two-hour live radio broadcast on youth priority issues. Young photographers have been the target focus of the celebration held by UNESCO Ramallah on World Press Freedom Day, and two major celebrations have taken place, one in West Bank and one in Gaza including a photography competition for young journalists.

21. Youth on Screen: two media civil organizations and television channels took part in the regional "Youth on Screen" launching workshop, held in Amman on 20-21 April 2015, in the framework of the partnership with BBC Media Action's MED-Media project. The workshop discussed the representation of young women and men in local and regional media outlets, specifically focusing on empowering youth representation in public TV.

22. Skills Forecasting for Youth: following the development of a Position Paper on Skills Forecasting in Palestine, and the transition of youth from school to work, a proposed simulation model for this transition has been presented at a regional workshop held in UNESCO Headquarters on 9-10 June 2015.

#### **OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN**

23. 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, UNESCO has not been so far in a capacity to continue providing this assistance.