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IMPLEMENTATION OF 36 C/RESOLUTION 81 AND 189 EX/DECISION 19 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

SUMMARY

This document is presented in compliance with 36 C/Resolution 81 and 189 EX/Decision 19. It summarizes progress made by UNESCO since the 189th session of the Executive Board in providing assistance to the Palestinian people and the educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories.

There are no financial or administrative implications.

No decision is proposed.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present document reports on progress UNESCO achieved in providing assistance to the Palestinian Authority and to relevant stakeholders in the occupied Arab territories, from January to July 2012.

II. UNESCO'S ASSISTANCE IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

EDUCATION

2. During the period under review, UNESCO continued its assistance to the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education in areas such as teacher education, educational planning and management, inclusive and child-friendly education and early childhood development. UNESCO also strengthened its emergency education programmes for both West Bank and Gaza (more information is contained in document 190 EX/39 – Report by the Director-General on the reconstruction and development of Gaza).

3. Within the programme on “Quality Systems for Quality Teachers” funded by the European Union (€3.6 million), technical assistance was provided for developing systems and operational frameworks needed for the implementation of the Teacher Education Strategy, particularly through support to the Commission for Developing the Teaching Profession (CDTP). Professional Standards for Teachers have been developed and disseminated at Ministry of Education level. Dissemination workshops have been organized at directorate levels, and will be followed-up by dissemination among school principals and teachers (2,200 schools). A teacher guide related to the new standards has also been developed as a pocket book for each and every teacher in Palestine. Same process has been followed for the newly developed Standards for new teachers. Standards for School Principals have been developed and the development of the admission policy has been initiated during this reporting period. The licensing scheme has been developed as well as new job descriptions. A unit is under establishment within the CDTP for specific follow-up. A technical team including the Supervision, Planning and Field Follow-up Departments, as well as the National Institute for Educational Training, will participate in the consultation meetings. Computerization of the licensing scheme will also start in the second half of 2012. Regarding data collection on teachers, cooperation has been strengthened with UNRWA to ensure full collection of data and technical support to the MoEHE regarding Education Management Information System (EMIS). As concerns the development of pre-service teacher courses, UNESCO support has been strengthened by the appointment of a Norwegian Refugee Council secondee to the project. The postgraduate study programme in Jordan and Egypt remain one of the most important and successful results of the project with seven new graduates during the reporting period defending their thesis and supporting the implementation of the Teacher Education Strategy. Some of the students have graduated in 2012 and are being re-injected in the Ministry of Education structure, which will have a concrete impact on the implementation of the Teacher Education Strategy.

4. UNESCO continued effective coordination of the United Nations Education Group and particularly the implementation of the United Nations/Ministry of Education package on inclusive and child-friendly education and early childhood development with the Ministry of Education and eight other United Nations agencies. The purpose of the package is to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to promote access to quality education for all Palestinian children, particularly for those who are most vulnerable to exclusion. Awareness has been raised on EFA, inclusive education, and early childhood development among partners through a presentation to the Education Sector Working Group, consultation workshops in Ramallah and Gaza with Universities, United Nations agencies and civil society organizations, and presentations to different Member States. Thirty-two pilot schools in West Bank and 14 in Gaza have been selected together with the Ministry of Education and a more detailed needs assessment of each school will be completed. Extensive consultations have been conducted with universities to focus on and assess the gaps in existing teacher education programmes. Joint activities will be implemented to train master trainers and improve quality of teaching in the pilot schools. A team of

resource people has been established to develop capacity development programmes for Ministry of Education staff. In this regard, linkages with the Quality Systems for Quality Teachers project will be created. This package has been instrumental in strengthening United Nations coordination in the education sector; and will be at the heart of the education part of the upcoming UNDAF for Palestine.

5. UNESCO took part in an Education cluster-led initiative to train Ministry of Education officials and UN and NGO partners on the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies. The trainers included experts from the INEE minimum standards community of practice established in Gaza as an outcome of UNESCO's programme of support to the reconstruction of the education system in Gaza supported by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser of Qatar. These experts shared their experience in Gaza where training at the central Ministry of Education level was complemented with training at the school/community level and the elaboration of school-based contingency plans. This training contributed to creating momentum for the generation of efforts for preparedness at community level, and will be instrumental to support efforts to integrate crisis-Disaster Risk Reduction thinking and methodology in educational planning which are being piloted by the IIEP.

6. On 10 July 2012, UNESCO Ramallah Office participated in the inauguration of the UNESCO Chair in Astronomy, Astrophysics and Space Sciences in Gaza, which was established in accordance with UNESCO's mandate to support collaborative research in science education for lasting peace and sustainable development through cooperation between higher education institutions. The event – gathering some 40 participants – was attended by the three Presidents of the universities associated with the Chair, i.e. the Islamic University of Gaza, the Al Aqsa University and the Al Azhar University, as well as by the chair holder, Dr Suleiman Baraka, a well-known scientist, member of the American Geophysical Union and currently associated with the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (USA). It is for his distinguished record to promote peace and education, and his consistent stand against violence and terrorism that Dr Baraka was designated as the chair holder by the three universities with a view to building bridges of dialogue and cooperation through science education.

CULTURE

7. UNESCO continued providing technical assistance and building national capacities of relevant Palestinian institutions during the period under review. The "Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route" in Bethlehem was inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger. The nomination dossier for the property was prepared through the technical assistance provided by UNESCO. Nomination dossiers of two sites enlisted in the Tentative List, notably the "Old town of Hebron/Ai-Khalil and its environs" and the "Jerusalem Southern Terraced Landscape" (as a pilot site of the serial nomination "Palestine: Land of olives and vines"), are completed, as concrete results of the institutional building activities undertaken by UNESCO.

8. Within the United Nations Country Team, UNESCO continued the mainstreaming of culture as a key factor for development, as well as contributing to the achievement of MDGs in the occupied Palestinian territory. Culture and cultural heritage were included in the Focus Analysis Themes of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the occupied Palestinian territory (UNDAF 2014-16).

9. The "Charter on the conservation of sites of cultural significance in Palestine" was completed, thanks to joint efforts of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, local cultural heritage organizations, ICCROM and UNESCO, supported by the MDG-Fund and the Government of Malta.

10. The Palestinian Heritage Law has been finalized in June 2012 through the assistance provided by the MDG-Fund. The drafting of the envisaged by-laws is progressing through cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

11. Within the framework of the MDG-Fund, the Sebastiya Integrated Conservation and Management Plan on the protection of archaeological sites and features, as well as integrating historic urban fabric and cultural landscape, has been finalized in June 2012.

12. The MDG-Fund partnership to support the Freedom Theatre Acting School in Jenin Refugee Camp was brought to completion. This three-year training programme of high professional standards covered all aspects of theatre and drama, with students trained to become actors, directors, producers, playwrights and drama teachers. The production of “Waiting for Godot” performed for three nights in the West Bank, two nights in New York, and two nights in Finland, totalled an audience of some 3,000 people. In the framework of the MDG-Fund partnership with Al-Housh, a premier e-commerce and social networking portal showcasing the works of artists and designers from across the Arab world, was also launched.

13. UNESCO conducted a training on cultural animation targeting 60 mid-level personnel at the Palestinian Authority and staff and leaders of community-based organizations active in the under-privileged areas of the occupied Palestinian territory. The training was held in three locations: Southern and Western West Bank, and Gaza. In June 2012, four Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities officials benefitted from training on cultural heritage documentation techniques at “Cultech for Heritage and Conservation” in Jordan. The training focused on documentation techniques in cultural heritage data collection and organization, image acquisition and treatment, 3D laser scanning, GPS and GIS.

14. The Joint Programme “Livelihood Protection and Sustainable Empowerment of Vulnerable Rural and Refugee Communities in the Jordan Valley”, building on the advantages of earthen architecture through the use of mud-bricks produced locally, was inaugurated and handed over to the refugee community of Akbet Jaber in Jericho. UNESCO has mobilized its team of local architects and builders to design and construct other mud-brick structures for the benefit of local communities, notably in the marginalized villages of Douyuk al Fouka, Beit Hassan and Bardala. This project is financed through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, funded mainly by the Government of Japan.

15. Thanks to the support of the Italian Cooperation, UNESCO partnered with Building Green Futures, an international non-profit organization, to design and construct model structures focusing on: sustainable architecture, low-cost housing and self-construction.

16. Funded by the Dutch Government, the works for the construction of the visitors’ centre of the archaeological park of Tell Balata in Nablus have started and are expected to be completed by November 2012.

17. As a follow-up to the Melina Mercouri International prize to the cultural landscape of Battir, a ten-day workshop has been organized for the development of landscape-based tools for the safeguarding of cultural heritage and the livelihood of the local community in Battir. The workshop was held in cooperation with the French association L’Atelier Volant and the people of Battir, and resulted in updated cartographies and a genuine involvement of the local inhabitants, including children, youth and women.

18. The development of the Riwaya Museum in Bethlehem, first-of-its-kind interactive multimedia museum on Palestinian historical, traditional and contemporary narratives, is progressing, funded by the Government of Norway. The preliminary scientific framework has been developed, serving as a key reference to develop the structure of the museum and its interactive installations.

19. The three-year programme for “Local Development through the rehabilitation and revitalization of the historic built environment in Palestine”, funded by the Government of Sweden through Sida, has been launched in July 2012. The project represents a concrete step towards mainstreaming the work on cultural heritage preservation in Palestine to meet the national priorities and needs. UNESCO started its cooperation with four major players in the field of Cultural Heritage

Preservation: Riwaq Centre for Architectural Conservation, the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation, the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee and the Welfare Association, using cultural heritage preservation as a vector for socioeconomic development in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

COMMUNICATION and INFORMATION

20. The local commemoration of World Press Freedom Day was held, with the support of Canal France International. In partnership with Birzeit University Media Development Centre, UNESCO promoted freedom of expression in Palestine, as a basic human right instrumental to the full realization of all civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. A seminar was held in the West Bank, and a second one in Gaza, in support of media in post-conflict and transition settings, focused on the “Legal and Ethical Framework for Journalism in Palestine: Challenges in a New Media Environment”. The seminar benefitted from inputs received from a steering committee comprised of key actors in the field of media: WAFA (the Palestinian News & Info Agency), MA'AN News Network, Palestine TV, I'lam Media Centre in Nazareth, the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate in Ramallah and the Government Media Centre. In the West Bank, 70 participants representing different stakeholder groups (NGOs, government, academia, and media) joined the event. The seminar in Gaza brought together 80 participants, including Palestinian and Egyptian media professionals and experts.

21. The Bureau of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication approved two projects presented by UNESCO Ramallah and its counterparts in Palestine. The first project will develop the skills and knowledge of journalists and staff working in the news production and broadcasting department of Wattan TV. It aims to build their capacity to produce high quality reports based on information gathered from traditional sources, internet and social media. The second project approved by the IPDC will strengthen journalistic skills on conflict-sensitive reporting, coverage of elections and safety protection. (IPDC)

III. UNESCO's ASSISTANCE IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN

22. The Scholarship programme for Syrian students in the occupied Syrian Golan (\$113,000 from the Japanese Funds-in-Trust) was launched in July 2009 to grant 24 scholarships for four academic years to the students from the occupied Syrian Golan. A total of six scholarships have been granted for the academic year 2011-2012, in line with the agreed criteria. This programme is expected to end in 2013.