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IMPLEMENTATION OF 36 C/RESOLUTION 81 AND 191 EX/DECISION 34 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

SUMMARY

This document summarizes the progress UNESCO made since the 191st 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.

Financial or administrative implications fall within the parameters of document 36 C/5.

No decision is proposed in the document.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present document reports on progress UNESCO achieved in providing assistance to the Palestinian Authority and to relevant stakeholders in Palestine and the occupied Syrian Golan, from January to July 2013.

II. UNESCO'S ASSISTANCE TO PALESTINE

EDUCATION

2. During the period under review, UNESCO continued its assistance to the Palestinian Ministry of Education in areas of priority agreed upon during the latest Joint UNESCO/Palestinian Authority Committee, such as teacher education and educational planning and management, and strengthened new assistance in the field of inclusive and child-friendly education and early childhood development. UNESCO also continued its support to emergency education programmes for both West Bank and Gaza (as reported in document 192 EX/34).

Supporting the implementation of the National Teacher Education Strategy

3. The programme on "Quality Systems for Quality Teachers", funded by the European Union, has been completed over the reporting period. This programme focused on providing technical assistance 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. The programme produced tangible results, particularly in the following areas: (i) Negotiation, delimitation and adoption of National Professional Standards for teachers, a full licensing scheme and a plan to ensure in-service teachers falling below the standards would be able to access adequate retraining schemes; (ii) Capacity development of a core group of educationalists in terms of innovative teaching methodologies in areas jointly determined with the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders, these areas being ICTs in education, special needs and inclusive education, and school leadership for change. This capacity development effort involved higher education institutions and included practical ideas and mechanisms for curricula reform, which have been discussed and are being implemented. After four years of implementation, the programme was concluded by a comprehensive evaluation, which highlights practical recommendations for the further implementation of the National Teacher Education Strategy.

4. The first Palestinian Conference on "Quality Teachers for Quality Education" took place in February 2013, organized by the Ministry of Education in partnership with UNESCO and with the support of the European Union. With more than 600 participants in the West Bank and Gaza, the conference explored the relationship between the teacher and the profession in an effort to enhance innovation, reflection and leadership. It also highlighted future challenges based on the local and international experiences and promoted collaborative excellence between academicians and professionals with cross-disciplinary interests related to teacher education.

Promoting EFA through coordination of the United Nations/Ministry of Education EFA package on inclusive education and early childhood development

5. Nine United Nations agencies, coordinated by UNESCO, continued to support the Ministry of Education in Palestine through the "Education for All Package" on inclusive and child-friendly education and early childhood development. The package aims at strengthening the capacities of the Ministry of Education and education personnel to promote quality basic education for all children, regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, backgrounds and circumstances. Pilot implementation continued through 33 schools in the West Bank and 14 schools in Gaza. These schools benefited from school feeding programme and different capacity development programmes focusing on ICTs in Education, inclusive and child-friendly education as well as special educational needs. Innovative education programmes on EFA and educational leadership

were designed and implemented as part of the development of pre-service teacher courses, benefiting more than 200 school principals, teachers and supervisors. Plans have been developed with partner universities in Gaza to improve the relevance of teacher education programmes in order to prepare student teachers to better address the diverse needs and abilities of children. In this regard and in cooperation with universities and the Norwegian Refugee Council, tools and questionnaires have been developed to assess the needs for psychosocial support through the sample of the Gaza pilot schools in view of improving teacher education programme. A survey through the 14 pilot schools of the EFA Package is being completed. For the first time in Palestine, the Ministry of Education opened Grade 0 classrooms (one year pre-school before grade 1) in eight of the pilot schools in the West Bank. In Gaza, the installation of 14 classrooms in the pilot schools is being finalized in order to mainstream inclusive education approaches to teaching and open a grade 0 from next school year (September 2013).

6. A new project funded by OPEC Fund for International Development has been approved to support the implementation of the EFA Package, in particular the components focusing on inclusive and child-friendly education and after-school programmes. In addition to the 47 pilot schools, this project will be implemented from September 2013 in an additional 20 pilot schools in the West Bank and Gaza (including 10 UNRWA schools). Furthermore, during the period under review the first United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Palestine has been finalized. The Education component of the UNDAF, coordinated by UNESCO, contributes largely to the implementation of the EFA Package for the next three years.

Support to vulnerable university students in the West bank and Gaza

7. Supported by the Saudi Committee for the Relief of Palestinian People, the planning phase of a new project has been initiated to support the right to education of Palestinian university students, particularly those from the most disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and living in marginalized areas. The project will provide needy university students with access to essential course materials and equipment such as key course texts, reference books, and computer and internet facilities. In partnership with the Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute, a Palestinian NGO, the project will establish or support libraries that contain vital course materials for students in 12 districts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: Tulkarem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Nablus, Qalqiliya, East Jerusalem, Jericho, Salfit, Gaza, Khan Younis. In the framework of this project, an advocacy strategy to promote the right to education will be also developed and disseminated through a national campaign.

Support to INEE Minimum Standards contextualization process in the West Bank and Gaza

8. UNESCO supported the Education Cluster in the process of contextualizing the INEE Minimum Standards. UNESCO helped facilitate consultation workshops in the West Bank and Gaza to prioritize and create the National Standards for Education in Emergencies. These standards will enhance the quality and accountability of education planning, management, implementation and evaluation; support coordination regarding legal rights, common principles and responsibilities; support disaster preparedness and mitigation; and strengthen capacity, as a tool for trainings and knowledge sharing at local and national levels. UNESCO is currently providing technical advice for the finalization of a handbook on the national INEE Minimum Standards.

CULTURE

9. 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.

10. The Archaeological Park of Tell Balata in Nablus, one of 13 sites on the Tentative list “Old Town of Nablus and its surroundings”, was inaugurated in June 2013. Funded by the Dutch Government, the project allowed the exchange of technical know-how between the staff of the

Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the University of Leiden, which contributed to the local technical and managerial capacities of site protection and management. The visitors' facility will attract more tourists to the site, thus contributing to the socioeconomic development of the area, particularly the Balata Refugee Camp within which the site is located. The project was extended until October in order to finalize publications of the project.

11. The project "Local Development through the rehabilitation and revitalization of the historic built environment in Palestine" helped build local technical capacities in the field of cultural heritage preservation through the renovation of historic sites in the Palestinian cities and localities, thereby contributing to the socio-economic development of the targeted areas (six buildings and spaces) and creating 19,621 working days. Funded by the Government of Sweden through Sida, the project is fully aligned with the national priorities, particularly the Palestinian National Plan (2011-2013) and the Sector Strategy for Cultural Heritage. The expected results of the first year were successfully achieved and the implementation of the second year started during the period under review.

12. Thanks to the active participation of UNESCO in the preparation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the occupied Palestinian territory (UNDAF 2014-16), culture was included in three proposed outcomes out of six.

13. Within the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS, mainly funded by the Government of Japan) Joint Programme "Livelihood Protection and Sustainable Empowerment of Vulnerable Rural and Refugee Communities in the Jordan Valley", a mission was conducted by UNTFHS representative to the projects sites in February, which commended the UNESCO achievements and modality of working, particularly the cooperation with UN Women, as a model for the Human Security Approach. The constructed buildings are used for public services mainly women centres for refugees and marginalized communities. The project contributes to enhancing skills and knowledge of men and women in traditional building techniques and environment-friendly construction methods increasing the communities' resilience through sustainable livelihoods and socio-economic empowerment. As a result, other local initiatives are emerging, reviving earthen architecture in the Jordan Valley by using mud-brick architecture. Due to some delays resulting from land ownership issues, the project had to be extended until December 2013.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

14. UNESCO is carrying out a comprehensive, in-depth assessment of Palestine's media landscape using UNESCO's Media Development Indicators, in partnership with the Birzeit University Media Development Centre. The project was launched in October 2012 at a national workshop attended by the main stakeholders of the Palestinian media landscape. Since January 2013, a 15-person Advisory Committee has been set up. Widespread consultations involving in-depth interviews have been conducted with media experts, academics, directors of media institutions and journalists. A survey involving 510 Palestinian journalists from all types of media has been completed and the results classified and analysed. The results of the interviews and surveys will complement the information gathered by the research team through legal and literature review. A multi-stakeholder national conference is being organized in Ramallah in July to present and discuss the initial findings of the assessment. The final report is planned to be published in December 2013. Its recommendations will feed into ongoing discussions on the definition of the national media strategy.

15. The two projects approved under the International Programme for the Development of Communication in March 2013 are currently being implemented:

- **Safety training for media students:** This project, implemented by the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms, offers five safety training courses for students in media departments in five universities. The week-long courses will include modules on first aid basics, stress management and professional safety procedures, as well as on the

legal framework and international standards pertaining to the safety of journalists and freedom of expression. The project is expected to improve the knowledge of students both on the practical aspects of being a journalist in a conflict zone and on more theoretical issues related to the international law.

- **Promotion of Palestinian women's views in the news:** Building on the results achieved within the framework of an IPDC-supported project implemented in 2011, this proposal has a dual objective: to train seven women reporters in producing and presenting news in a gender-sensitive manner, with a view to strengthening the representation of women's perspectives in the news; and to establish a newsroom at radio NISAA FM, the first commercial radio station for women in the Middle East, based in Ramallah.

Emergency funds – Collaboration with the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate on safety training

16. UNESCO has also established a contract with the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate (PJS) aimed at organizing six safety training courses targeting a total of 120 media students in six universities in Palestine in both the West Bank and Gaza. The training courses will be based on safety modules developed by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and will be carried out by IFJ-accredited local trainers, following a strategic approach on safety elaborated by IFJ for the Arab region. The project will complement the existing efforts in this area, which have to date been centred on safety training workshops for practicing media professionals, following a similar approach to the one now being proposed for media students. The project will also contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Inter-Agency Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity recently endorsed by the United Nations Chief Executives Board.

GENDER EQUALITY

17. As a follow-up to the external evaluation of the Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Centre, UNESCO developed a proposal in close consultation with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA), and other key stakeholders. This proposal builds on the previous work done by the PWRDC, providing clear strategic direction for restructuring and re-focusing of its activities so that the Centre can become a viable and sustainable resource to support the work of key stakeholders in policy and programming for gender equality in Palestine. The final phase of funding will thus be a transitional phase, managed by UNESCO in collaboration with MOWA, in order to create an independent structure both financially and intellectually. Three key functions of the PWRDC have been identified, namely: (1) Collecting, analysing and making available high quality research and data on gender equality and the situation of women in Palestine through a documentation centre and online library and database; (2) Building capacity through training for high quality research to inform policy-making and permit the evaluation of policy impact; and (3) Networking with gender equality research institutions both in Palestine and at a regional and global level to share experiences and best practices.

UNESCO'S ASSISTANCE IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN

18. 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. The project ended in March 2013.