



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Two hundred and fifth session

205 EX/29

PARIS, 7 September 2018

Original: English

Item 29 of the provisional agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF 39 C/RESOLUTION 55 AND 204 EX/DECISION 26 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

SUMMARY

The present document is submitted pursuant to 39 C/Resolution 55 and 204 EX/Decision 26. It provides a progress report on developments since the 204th session of the Executive Board.

There are no financial or administrative implications.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 23.

1. The reporting period is from February to July 2018.

Education

2. UNESCO continues to advocate for the right to education of all students in Palestine and is tailoring programmes to ensure that quality education is provided within the current political climate. As reported at previous Executive Board sessions, students' rights to access quality education and a safe learning environment remain highly vulnerable. On 3 July 2018, the Khan El Ahmar-Abu Bedouin area was declared a closed military zone, following the beginning of the demolition process, and on 6 July the Israeli High Court suspended the planned demolitions. The Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education decided to advance the start of the school year in the Khan El Ahmar from 29 August to 16 July. The international community and several UN agencies, including UNESCO, visited the community as an advocacy initiative aiming to protect Palestinian children's right to education and prevent their schools from being demolished. Currently, 36 other schools are under threat of demolition in Area C of the West Bank.



Job: 201801669

3. Despite the recent achievements of the education sector, namely in the field of digitalization and higher education through the adoption in March 2018 of a new law aimed at mainstreaming quality higher education, access to quality education in Palestine remains particularly challenging. UNESCO continues to promote the achievement of SDG 4 targets in Palestine and the enhancement of access to inclusive and quality education. It does so through providing technical advice to the Inclusive Education Thematic Working Group, as well as by supporting the implementation of inclusive education policy through capacity building and awareness raising efforts. To that effect, UNESCO is currently conducting a national case study on inclusive education in Palestine, which will further support the implementation of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's (MoEHE) Inclusive Education Policy and further contribute to achieving SDG 4 targets.

4. Unemployment in Palestine, especially among graduates, remains a pervasive issue. The unemployment rate of persons aged 15 years and above is 22.5% for males and 39.2% for females.¹ Youth and women are undoubtedly the hardest hit: two out of five young persons in the labour force are without a job, and unemployment among women is even higher. The closed marketplace and the gap between supply and demand in the labour market are only few of the main causes of unemployment. To address this issue, the yearly Annual Sector Review (ASR), chaired by MoEHE and co-chaired by the Government of Finland with UNESCO as a technical advisor, took place in April 2018, gathering all education stakeholders in Palestine and highlighting the theme “*from education to work*”. MoEHE and the Ministry of Labour (MoL) consider technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as a high priority, as this is key for improving the economic situation in Palestine. Considerable achievements have already been made to this effect, such as the revision of the structure of the Higher Council of TVET and the establishment of a TVET Development Centre. However, one of the biggest challenges remains bridging the gap between learning outcomes and the labour market needs through TVET. To address the critical nexus of entering the labour market and finding employment, UNESCO is currently finalizing a labour market review of the TVET sector in Palestine with the aim to strengthen employment systems.

5. UNESCO has convened a wide range of stakeholders (ministries, private sector, youth NGOs) in March 2018 to discuss the details of a new EU-funded TVET regional project: “Youth Employment in the Mediterranean (YEM)”. The overall objective of the project is to support national authorities together with the private sector, TVET providers and youth organizations in the region, including in Palestine, in the design, implementation and evaluation of relevant technical and vocational education and training policies, strategies and programmes, to increase youth employment and entrepreneurship in the region. In Palestine, YEM will capitalize on NET-MED Youth project's achievements – e.g. employment projections produced by industry and occupational field, as well as supply side projections and platform of stakeholders gathered for national dialogue on future skills needs and related policy actions required –, with a focus on integrating entrepreneurship, work-based and digital skills into the curricula.

6. MoEHE has achieved substantial progress with the endorsement of the Higher Education Law earlier this year. Still, the higher education sector still faces many challenges in terms of ensuring access to quality higher education for all Palestinians, especially the most vulnerable groups. The most pressing issues concern the relevance of higher education programmes to the labour market, management and financing, quality assurance and governance. These challenges were highlighted in a study conducted by UNESCO in May 2018, in consultation with various stakeholders, which provides policy recommendations to support the reform of higher education and the development of higher education institutions programmes. It was conducted through the review of existing higher education policies and an analysis of the shortcomings in the transition from higher education to proper jobs aligned with labour market needs. Key recommendations relate to increasing financial support for higher education institutions and empowering the

¹ See ILO, *The situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories*, Geneva 2017.

Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC) in order to ensure the quality of the programmes taught at universities and to strengthen scientific research.

7. UNESCO is participating as a key partner in the elaboration of the new programme to be funded through “Education Cannot Wait: Fund for education in emergencies”, which is a multi-year resilience programme with responsibility for teacher training and system strengthening in the West Bank.

Culture

8. On 3 June 2018, the Decree Law no. 11/2018 on Tangible Cultural Heritage² entered into force as the first comprehensive law that provides Palestinian cultural heritage with the necessary legislative protection, in line with international standards and in compliance with the provisions of four UNESCO Conventions³ ratified by Palestine. The endorsement of the Decree Law came after a four-year process, with the technical and financial support of UNESCO to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) and in consultation with civil society organizations specialized in cultural heritage preservation.

9. Since the last reporting period, UNESCO finished the rehabilitation of 9 out of 12 planned historic sites in historic cities and rural localities within the framework of 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). Over this period, the project generated 10,000 working days as temporary job opportunities. Three other historic sites in the old towns of Hebron, Bethlehem and Nablus are still under rehabilitation and expected to be delivered by the end of August 2018.⁴

10. Through the International Assistance under the World Heritage Fund, UNESCO provided technical expertise to the 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. The 42nd session of the World Heritage Committee (Manama, 2018) was informed that two management plans have been finalized as part of the corrective measures requested by the Committee for the sites.

11. UNESCO continues to supervise the rehabilitation works of the *Riwaya Museum* in Bethlehem, funded by the Government of Norway, with the objective to open a permanent multimedia exhibition on Palestinian culture. However, in January 2018, the Peace Centre building, which hosts the museum, was severely damaged due to a fire incident. This new challenge delayed the smooth implementation of the projects and, subsequently, the project was extended until the end of 2018.

² To read more about this law please consult the UNESCO/MOTA joint press release at http://www.unesco.org/new/en/ramallah/about-this-office/single-view/news/joint_statement_the_palestinian_ministry_of_tourism_and_anti/

³ Namely, the 1972 *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, the 1954 *Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two protocols*, the 1970 *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*, and the 2001 *Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage*.

⁴ For more information about the rehabilitation project in the old town of Hebron, please read: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/ramallah/about-this-office/single-view/news/unesco_consulate_general_of_sweden_in_jerusalem_and_the_mun/

Communication and Information

12. The month of April 2018 was marked by intensified violations of freedom of expression in Palestine, including the detention of journalists in the West Bank and the killing of two journalists in Gaza. Press photographer Yaser Murtaja and community radio journalist Ahmed Abu Hussein were killed during their coverage of the Gaza border protests, while a number of other media workers were injured. UNESCO's Director-General issued two statements in this regard, on 10 and 30 April 2018, respectively. This context justifies the continued prioritization by UNESCO of activities that address journalists' safety, in its capacity as coordinator of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.

13. Under the global theme *Keeping Power in Check: Media, Justice and the Rule of Law*, UNESCO and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) celebrated the 25th edition of World Press Freedom Day 2018 on 2 May 2018, through a series of debates organized in Ramallah and in Gaza around two major themes: "Protection and violations" and "Governance and Human Rights".

14. UNESCO has reinforced its work with universities towards the integration of its Model Course on Safety of Journalists into their regular journalism education curricula. UNESCO and the International Federation of Journalists, represented by the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate, officially launched the Model Course on 26 February 2018, in the presence of all media faculties and higher education institutions. Palestine is the first country to pilot the Model Course, which will help build a new generation of media professionals that is better equipped to face security threats, which are imminent in the everyday work of Palestinian journalists.

15. On 6 February 2018, UNESCO launched the Arabic version of the executive summary of the 2017/2018 *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development Report*. The launch was hosted by An-Najah University in Nablus, in cooperation with Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences.

Gender Equality

16. As also highlighted in the United Nations Common Country Analysis for Palestine (CCA), still prevailing patriarchal norms lead to asymmetrical gender roles.⁵ New legislation as well as amendments to outdated or unavailing laws and better legal provisions for the protection of women and girls are needed, particularly in the context of harmonization of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)* accessed by Palestine in 2014 into its national legislation.

17. It is in this context and with the aim to contribute to the review of policies and practices hindering gender equality, that UNESCO, through its stand-alone Gender Policy Institute (GPI) funded by the Government of Norway, partnered with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and completed in May a mapping of gender equality and non-discrimination policies endorsed by the State of Palestine from 2010 to 2017. Main initial findings and recommendations were presented GPI' Advisory Board (comprised, among others, by MoWA, UN Women, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Independent Commission for Human Rights) as well as to the EU Gender Working Group as well as. The second phase of this process, namely the analysis of the mapping, which will contribute to identifying the main areas of work for the GPI for the coming five years, is presently in process.

⁵ United Nations Country Team oPt, Common Country Analysis, 2016, page 16. The full report is available at: https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/cca_report_en.pdf

18. Within the international one-week women's campaign from 1 to 8 March 2018, international development partners in Palestine together with UNESCO and UN Women launched the joint *She Leads the Way* campaign to celebrate the 2018 International Women's Day. A variety of activities were carried out during this week across the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. UNESCO supported the organization of a theatre performance and art exhibition in Gaza, in partnership with Ayam Al Masrah/Theatre Day Productions in Gaza, focusing on the transformative power of Palestinian women rather than presenting women merely in the role of victims of violence. The two events gathered women and men from rural areas, universities, youth organizations and representatives from women's organizations and international organizations, who engaged in a debate over the status of women's rights in Palestine and the role they can play on *leading the way* towards economic empowerment and the positive transformation of the society.

19. During the reporting period, UNESCO continued to collaborate with MoWA with a view to set up UNESCO/GPI as a national institution, with its own full legal capacity and governing bodies, to work as a think tank in the field of gender-related policy formulation, unique in its kind in Palestine and in the region. It is expected that the Palestinian Cabinet of Ministers will review and hopefully approve the file for GPI to become an autonomous national institution over the course of the next few months.

Youth

20. In order to address the economic empowerment and civic engagement of youth, UNESCO, within the framework of the NET-MED Youth Project funded by the European Union, continued to engage youth in participatory events related to media and sports. On the occasion of World Radio Day on 13 February 2018, UNESCO partnered with a national radio outlet and carried out a radio campaign with five key radio stations highlighting "Radio and Sports". The campaign focused on diversity, gender equality and the promotion of peace and development through sports media coverage. The event offered a platform for young athletes, reporters and decision makers to share their experiences. In addition, a video spot was produced highlighting the story of two female sport correspondents from Gaza, and will be used for advocacy purposes.

21. On 28 February 2018, UNESCO held a NET-MED Youth Day in Gaza in the form of parallel roundtable sessions, with the participation of the Minister of Education and Higher Education, representatives of international organizations and United Nations agencies, academics, youth experts, university students and youth organizations. The event was an opportunity to connect youth in Gaza with the national debate, recently supported by UNESCO/NET-MED Youth, over key issues such as the role of youth in the drafting and implementation of national youth policies and the portrayal of youth in Palestinian media.

Occupied Syrian Golan

22. 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

23. 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 205 EX/29,
3. Decides to include this item in the agenda of its 206th 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
10 April 2018	Deputy Minister of Information of Palestine	Educational Institution (Zanuta Co-Ed School/Dhahiriya)
16 April 2018	Alternate Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO	Educational Institution (Khirbet Zanuta)
29 April 2018	Alternate Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO	“Elia Association Youth Media”
9 July 2018	Alternate Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO	Educational Institution (El khan El Ahmar)
16 August 2018	Alternate Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO	Cultural institution (Gaza)



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Two hundred and fifth session

205 EX/29 Corr.

PARIS, 8 October 2018

Original: English

Item 29 of the agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF 39 C/RESOLUTION 55 AND 204 EX/DECISION 26 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

CORRIGENDUM

Paragraph 23 should read as follows:

The Executive Board,

1. Having considered documents 205 EX/29, 205 EX/28 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 206th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a follow-up report thereon.

ANNEX



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Two hundred and fifth session

205 EX/PX/DR.29.5

PARIS, 30 September 2018

Original: English

PROGRAMME AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMISSION (PX)

**Item 29: IMPLEMENTATION OF 39 C/RESOLUTION 55 AND 204 EX/DECISION 26 CONCERNING
EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES**

DRAFT DECISION

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



Doc. 2018/0022

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 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 205 EX/28, 205 EX/29,
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, takes note, in this regard, of the letter addressed to the Director General by the Permanent delegation of Palestine dated 16 August 2018 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;
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 206th session of the Executive Board;

III.

12. Decides to include this item in the agenda of the Executive Board at its 206th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a progress report thereon.