



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Two hundred and fifth session

205 EX/28

PARIS, 7 September 2018

Original: English

Item 28 of the provisional agenda

OCCUPIED PALESTINE

SUMMARY

This document is submitted pursuant to 204 EX/Decision 25, by which the Executive Board decided to include the item entitled “Occupied Palestine” in the agenda of the 205th session. The present document 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 18.



Jub. 2018/0018

Sub-item I: “Jerusalem”

1. The Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, a site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List and on the List of World Heritage in Danger, is the sacred city of the three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The historical, cultural and spiritual significance of Jerusalem, as a microcosm of humanity’s diversity is, in itself, an appeal for dialogue.
2. Pursuant to relevant decisions of the Executive Board and the World Heritage Committee, which are adopted without debate on a consensual basis by the two governing bodies since October 2017, UNESCO sought to facilitate exchanges between Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian and Waqf experts regarding the protection of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, including to facilitate the UNESCO Reactive Monitoring Mission to the Old City and a UNESCO experts meeting on the Mughrabi Ascent. At the time of the preparation of this document, the monitoring mission and experts meeting could not be undertaken.
3. Following the agreement signed between UNESCO and the Norwegian Government in December 2011 on the project entitled “Ensuring the Sustainability of the Centre for Restoration of Islamic Manuscripts of the Haram al Sharif in Jerusalem”, UNESCO has deployed its assistance to build the Centre’s staff capacities in the preservation of Islamic manuscripts. Since the outset of the project, 10 staff of the Centre have been granted permanent staff positions and 14 learning modules were implemented, with over 1,538 hours of training on conservation and restoration techniques, in addition to study tours to restoration centres in Paris and Florence in 2013. The project also provided the Centre with conservation equipment and materials. UNESCO conducted seven monitoring and consultation missions during the project implementation period. The stakeholders are currently discussing a possible new phase of the project.
4. The project entitled “The Safeguarding, Refurbishment and Revitalization of the Islamic Museum of Haram al Sharif and its Collection”, funded by Saudi Arabia, is currently on hold pending additional funding to complete the proposed museographical and scenographical planning, which was approved in March 2015 by the Awqaf authorities. A follow-up mission took place in June 2015. The re-opening of the Museum will depend on the availability of additional funds, and is foreseen beyond 2018.

Sub-item II: “Reconstruction and development of Gaza”

Education

5. The beginning of 2018 marked the start of an unprecedented financial crisis for UNRWA, which provides schooling to over 240,400 children through 252 UNRWA schools in the Gaza Strip. This seriously jeopardizes the delivery of both basic services, such as education and health assistance, and urgent humanitarian assistance to almost one million people in the Gaza Strip. While sufficient funding has been secured to complete the 2017-2018 school year and delivery of other core services into the summer, the severe funding gaps in the UNRWA budget might affect the smooth running of the 2018-2019 school year.
6. As a result of the recent ongoing events, the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip has been deteriorating gradually, with a significant increase in humanitarian and developmental needs. The 10-year blockade, intra-Palestinian political divide and lack of energy supply, with electricity outages of 16 hours a day, seriously impede the provision of basic services in the Gaza Strip, including education service delivery. Access to education of some 450,000 children in Gaza is currently at risk, the electricity shortage is limiting the study time of students, and the dropout rate is subsequently rising. This also affects a number of vulnerable higher education students who are deprived from studies due to the deteriorating economic situation and the lack of a safe learning environment.
7. In order to ensure SDG 4-related targets on inclusive and quality education during pre- and post-emergency situations, UNESCO, in its capacity as technical advisor to the Ministry of Education

and Higher Education (MoEHE), contributes to safer learning environments by developing inclusive, responsive and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children and youth in the Gaza Strip.

8. During the reporting period, UNESCO continued to provide support to MoEHE by strengthening the capacities of 451 teachers and supervisors in 14 public schools in Gaza on the use of inclusive education approach at school-level contributing to delivery of quality education in time of emergency.

9. Currently, UNESCO is tailoring interventions that meet the socio-economic needs of vulnerable higher education students in Gaza, including the provision of fee-waivers and capacity development on ICT and inclusive education. However, these interventions depend on the availability of extrabudgetary funds that UNESCO is seeking to mobilize, in an overall context of steady decrease in international aid fund to Palestine over the last few years.

Culture

10. Within the framework of the International Fund for Promotion of Culture (IFPC), UNESCO supported a series of performing arts and writing workshops and contemporary dance and theatre productions focusing on the resilience of the Gazan population during the on-going protracted conflict. Over 40 youth benefitted from the workshops and approximately 100 youth attended the rehearsals as observers in order to exchange their views on the issues addressed. Showcased in over 40 locations in Gaza before thousands of spectators as well as in a live-streamed production in Amsterdam, the performances were followed by lively discussions with youth audiences, which opened the door for dialogue and reflection. One of the main objectives of this activity, which was completed in March 2018, was to highlight gender-related stereotypes and prejudices through dance and theatre as an innovative form of artistic expression.

11. As part of the implementation of the UNESCO 1972 World Heritage Convention in Palestine and as a concrete follow-up to the recovery plan of the Detailed Needs Assessment (DNA) conducted after the 2014 conflict in Gaza, UNESCO started the update of the national registry and inventory of the Palestinian cultural heritage sites in the Gaza Strip. The update is expected to be completed by the end of 2018.

Communication and information

12. Information on UNESCO's work in this area is reported in document 205 EX/29 "Implementation of 39 C/Resolution 55 and 204 EX/Decision 26 concerning educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories".

Gender Equality

13. Within the international one-week women's campaign (1-8 March 2018), international development partners in Palestine launched the joint *She Leads the Way campaign* to celebrate the 2018 International Women's Day (8 March). During this week, a variety of activities were carried out across the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. The theme for this year's International Women's Day was *Time is Now: Rural and urban activists transforming women's lives*. UNESCO and the Norwegian Representative Office to the Palestinian Authority jointly organized a visit to Ras Al Auja, a Bedouin community in the Jordan Valley. A parallel visit took place to Beith Lahia in the North-West of the Gaza Strip where the majority of residents are small farmers. In Ras AlAuja, where inhabitants depend mainly on livestock and produce as their source of income for the local Palestinian market, visitors had the opportunity to participate and engage in the daily activities of Bedouin women such as making bread, butter and cheese. In Beith Lahia, visitors were able to experience the strawberry harvest season and engage in picking strawberries with women farmers as the central activity.

14. Within the international one-week (joint *She Leads the Way* campaign mentioned above, UNESCO organized a theatre performance and art exhibition in Gaza. The two events gathered women and men from rural areas, universities, youth organizations and representatives from women's and international organizations. The performed women's stories showed the transformative power of Palestinian women rather than presenting women in the role of victims of violence. The performance show was followed by an open discussion on women's rights.

15. Further information on UNESCO's activities in favour of women and youth is reported in document 205 EX/29 "Implementation of 39 C/Resolution 55 and 204 EX/Decision 26 concerning educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories".

Sub-item III: "The two Palestinian sites of *Al-Haram al-Ibrāhīmī/Tomb of the Patriarchs in Al-Khalīl/Hebron* and *Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ Mosque/Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem*"

16. Following the inscription of Hebron/Al-Khalīl Old Town on the World Heritage List, as well as on the List of World Heritage in Danger, at the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee (July 2017), the Secretariat received an International Assistance request by Palestine on 30 October 2017. This request was approved by the Committee at its 42nd session in Manama, Bahrain (24 June-4 July 2018).

17. Furthermore, the state of conservation of the Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town was examined by the 42nd session of the World Heritage Committee, which adopted without debate and on a consensual basis Decision 42 COM 7A. 28 to retain Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Proposed decision

18. The Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling previous decisions concerning "Occupied Palestine",
2. Having examined document 205 EX/28,
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 |
|------------------|--|--|
| 12 July 2018 | Alternate Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO | Hebron/AI-Khalil Old Town |
| 5 September 2018 | Alternate Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO and Moh ammed S. Hindawi, Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Permanent Delegation of Jordan to UNESCO | The Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls |



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205 EX/28 Corr.

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OCCUPIED PALESTINE

CORRIGENDUM

Paragraph 18 should read as follows:

The Executive Board,

1. Having considered document 205 EX/28 as well as the Annexes attached to this decision,
2. Recalling its previous decisions concerning "Occupied Palestine",
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 I



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Two hundred and fifth session

205 EX/PX/DR.28.4
PARIS, 24 September 2018
Original: English

PROGRAMME AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMISSION

Item 28 OCCUPIED PALESTINE

DRAFT DECISION

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



Job: 201803231

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 205 EX/28,
2. Recalling the provisions of the four Geneva Conventions (1949) and their additional Protocols (1977), the 1907 Hague Regulations on Land Warfare, the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and its additional Protocols, the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970) and the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the inscription of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls at the request of Jordan on the World Heritage List (1981) and on the List of World Heritage in Danger (1982), and the recommendations, resolutions and decisions of UNESCO on the protection of cultural heritage, as well as resolutions and decisions of UNESCO relating to Jerusalem, also recalling previous UNESCO decisions relating to the reconstruction and development of Gaza as well as UNESCO decisions on the two Palestinian sites in Al-Khalil/Hebron and in Bethlehem,
3. Affirming that nothing in the current decision, which aims, *inter alia*, at the safeguarding of the cultural heritage of Palestine and the distinctive character of East Jerusalem, shall in any way affect the relevant Security Council and United Nations resolutions and decisions on the legal status of Palestine and Jerusalem, including United Nations Security Council resolution 2334 (2016),
4. Taking note of the letters addressed to the Director-General by the Permanent Delegations of Palestine and Jordan in 2018 concerning the sub-sections below,

I. Jerusalem

5. Reaffirming the importance of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls for the three monotheistic religions,
6. Bearing in mind that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and in particular the “basic law” on Jerusalem, are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith,
7. Also recalling the 14 decisions of the Executive Board: 185 EX/Decision 14, 187 EX/Decision 11, 189 EX/Decision 8, 190 EX/Decision 13, 192 EX/Decision 11, 194 EX/Decision 5.I.D, 195 EX/Decision 9, 196 EX/Decision 26, 197 EX/Decision 32, 199 EX/Dec.19.1, 200 EX/Decision 25, 201 EX/Decision 30, 202 EX/Decision 38 and 204 EX/Decision 25 and the nine World Heritage Committee decisions: 34 COM/7A.20, 35 COM/7A.22, 36 COM/7A.23, 37 COM/7A.26, 38 COM/7A.4, 39 COM/7A.27, 40 COM/7A.13, 41 COM/7A.36, and 42 COM/7A.21;
8. Regrets the failure of the Israeli occupying authorities to cease the persistent excavations, tunneling, works and projects in East Jerusalem, particularly in and around the Old City of Jerusalem which are illegal under international law, and reiterates its request to Israel, the occupying Power, to stop all violations which are not in conformity with the provisions of the relevant UNESCO conventions, resolutions and decisions;
9. Also regrets the Israeli refusal to implement the UNESCO request to the Director-General to appoint a permanent representative to be stationed in East Jerusalem to report on a regular basis about all aspects covering the fields of competence of UNESCO in East Jerusalem, and reiterates its request to the Director-General to appoint, as soon as possible, the above-mentioned representative;

II. Reconstruction and development of Gaza

10. Deeply deplores the ongoing military developments around the Gaza Strip and their heavy toll of civilian casualties as well as their continuous negative impact in the fields of competence of UNESCO;

11. Also deplores the continuous Israeli closure of the Gaza Strip, which harmfully affects the free and sustained movement of personnel, students and humanitarian relief items and requests Israel to immediately ease this closure;
 12. Thanks the Director-General for initiatives that have already been implemented in Gaza in the fields of education, culture and youth and for the safety of media professionals, calls upon her to continue her active involvement in the reconstruction of Gaza's damaged educational and cultural components and reiterates, in this regard, its request to her to upgrade the UNESCO Antenna in Gaza and to organize, as soon as possible, an information meeting on the current situation in Gaza in the fields of competence of UNESCO and on the outcome of the projects conducted by UNESCO;
- III. The two Palestinian sites of *Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi/Tomb of the Patriarchs* in Al-Khalil/Hebron and the *Bilal Ibn Rabah Mosque/Rachel's Tomb* in Bethlehem**
13. Reaffirms that the two concerned sites located in Al-Khalil/Hebron and in Bethlehem are an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and shares the conviction affirmed by the international community that the two sites are of religious significance for Judaism, Christianity and Islam;
 14. Deplores the ongoing Israeli excavations, works, construction of private roads for settlers and of a Wall inside the Old City of Al-Khalil/Hebron which are illegal under international law and harmfully affect the authenticity and integrity of the site, and the subsequent denial of freedom of movement and freedom of access to places of worship and asks Israel, the occupying Power, to end all violations which are not in conformity with the provisions of relevant UNESCO conventions, resolutions and decisions;
 15. Regrets the visual impact of the Wall on the site of Bilal Ibn Rabah Mosque/Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem as well as the strict ban on access of Palestinian Christian and Muslim worshippers to the site, and demands that the Israeli authorities restore the original character of the landscape around the site and lift the ban on access to it;
- IV.**
16. Decides to include these matters under an item entitled "Occupied Palestine" in the agenda at its 206th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a progress report thereon.

ANNEX II

THE REACTIVE MONITORING MISSION TO THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM AND ITS WALLS

The Executive Board,

1. Stresses the urgent need to implement the UNESCO reactive monitoring mission to the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls;
2. Invites the Director-General and the World Heritage Centre to exert, in line with their mandates and in conformity with the provisions of the relevant UNESCO conventions, decisions and resolutions, all efforts to ensure the prompt implementation of the mission and, in case of non-implementation, to propose effective measures in the report at the next 206th session
3. Expresses its commitment to exert its utmost efforts to resolve this issue at its next session.