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Documentation of the Work of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) NMUN
Simulation*



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TOWARDS
TOMORROW**

Conference A

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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Committee Staff

Director

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Agenda

- I. Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Post-Conflict Areas
- II. Promoting Open Access to Scientific Information and Research
- III. Harnessing Emerging Technologies for the Achievement of SDG4

Resolutions adopted by the Committee

Code	Topic	Vote
UNESCO/1/1	Harnessing Emerging Technologies for the Achievement of SDG4	Adopted by Acclamation

Summary Report

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization held its annual session to consider the following agenda items:

- I. Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Post-Conflict Areas
- II. Promoting Open Access to Scientific Information and Research
- III. Harnessing Emerging Technologies for the Achievement of SDG4

The session was attended by representatives of 25 Member States.

On Sunday, the committee adopted the agenda of III, II, I, beginning discussion on the topic of “Harnessing Emerging Technologies for the Achievement of SDG4”. By Tuesday, the Dais received a total of four proposals covering a wide range of sub-topics such as internet access, equity, artificial intelligence, and teachers’ training. The atmosphere in the committee was one of collaboration and inclusiveness; delegates worked to collect their ideas, specifically debating on how to bring their ideas together. By Wednesday, all working papers merged to form one collective proposal.

On Wednesday, one draft resolution had been approved by the Dais, which had no amendments. The committee adopted the resolution by acclamation, following voting procedure. The resolution represented a wide range of issues, including strengthening efforts towards inclusivity and equality in emerging technologies and education, providing assistance to teachers through the establishment of an online Intelligent Teachers Hub, and the expansion of the Global Education Coalition. Inclusivity, transparency, and cooperation were shown by the committee in their approach to resolution writing and their commitment to harness emerging technologies to achieve SDG4 was illustrated by their hard work and willingness to compromise and collaborate.



Code: UNESCO/1/1

Committee: The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

Topic: Harnessing Emerging Technologies for the Achievement of SDG 4

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Reaffirming Article 26 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and the *UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education* (1960), which set out that access to education should be ensured for everyone without any form of discrimination,

Having considered the fact that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure) is aimed at achieving universal and affordable access to the Internet by 2030,

Noting the ambition of SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) to reduce inequality within and among countries with an emphasis on inclusion, equal opportunity, and enhanced representation, underlining the exacerbated need to support vulnerable groups and communities such as women, ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, refugees and displaced persons, persons with disabilities, and the elderly,

Emphasizing SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals) and the importance of cooperation and partnerships in order to ensure that everyone enjoys open access to quality education and learning opportunities,

Affirming the 2015 *Incheon Declaration*, the 2015 *Education 2030 Framework for Action*, and the importance of sufficient funding to enhance technological development and implementation of software in the educational process,

Bearing in mind the UNESCO Constitution (1945) and its core aim to foster international dialogue between all Member States regardless of culture and political status or isolation,

Mindful that worldwide, 1 in 4 girls aged 15-19 are neither employed nor have access to education, as stressed in UNICEF's *A New Era for Girls* report (2020),

Recognizing current global inequalities in access to both software and hardware and that access to them is a basic necessity for future education and access to scientific information,

Considering the existing digital divide, significantly worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, and its obstruction of educational equity, as well as the need to both support less developed education systems and advance developing technologies,

Observing that children with disabilities are less likely to benefit from digital learning solutions than children without disabilities, as pointed out by the 2020 United Nations Sustainable Development Group's *Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Children*,

Fully believing in the Global Education Coalition established by UNESCO in March 2020, which engages multiple partners to provide the necessary tools to support national efforts that ensure the continuity of learning, such as providing financial commitments, technical assistance, and capacity-building support,

Recalling the Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (2019) based on the *Cape Town Open Education Declaration* (2007) and the *Paris Open Educational Resources Declaration* (2012) that aims for an equitable, inclusive, and effective accessibility of valuable Open Educational Resources,

Further recalling the Final Report of 5th session of the IFAP Council (2008) that supports Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS) solutions, including documentation and training,

Acknowledging that the use of ICTs should be further implemented in the global expansion of education through collaboration with Information Technology (IT) firms, in order to broadcast educational material across television networks, social media, and online streaming services,

Calling attention to the significant technological requirements for the implementation and application of AI technologies in education as well as barriers for developing states, such as capacity building and access to data, as stressed in the 2019 UNESCO 40 C/Resolution 67,

Conscious of the challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI), including protecting data privacy and freedom of choice, which are particularly imperative in educational applications of AI due to their disproportionate and significant impact on children and young adults,

Underlining the importance of harnessing emerging technologies in the achievement of SDG 4, as outlined in target 4.c and the 2015 *Incheon Declaration*, with the ability to increase the supply of qualified teachers, in order to both advance the aim of establishing inclusive and equitable quality education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,

Re-emphasizing the importance of the *Education 2030 Framework for Action* (2015) and the 2019 UNESCO *Beijing Consensus on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Education*, which call for the empowerment of teachers through the integration and implementation of innovative AI technologies as well as the declaration of AI as a key technology for innovative forms of education,

Having studied the principles of the 2015 *Qingdao Declaration* on the implementation of information and communications technology (ICTs), and the successes of the 2013 UNESCO *ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (ICT-CFT)* in assisting Member States in the development of national ICT competency standards for teachers and the application of ICT to enhance and transform learning, but also noting remaining deficiencies in employing AI technologies for the innovative provision of tailored support that addresses teachers' individual needs and proficiency gaps,

Understanding that open educational resources (OER) include materials that are freely accessible for public re-use, copying, and adaptation of this open license material as stated in UNESCO's 2016 *Study on International Collaboration on OER* and its ICT-integrated teacher education workshops,

Appreciating the importance of the *International Pedagogy Congress*, which aims to provide a space for reflection and debate of good educational practices, taking into account the experiences of educators and researchers, and is financially supported by UNESCO,

Deeply concerned by the problem of teachers lacking online resources to effectively use technologies and the educational disruption experienced by 94 percent of the total global student population according to the *2020 Policy Brief: Education during Covid-19 and beyond*, caused by the recent COVID-19 pandemic,

Aware of the high illiteracy rate in lesser developed countries, particularly in rural areas as indicated by the 2019 UNESCO Institute of Statistics Global Database, where expanding funding for and access to existing training courses for literacy and working skills are necessary,

1. *Promotes* cooperation within Member States in regard to accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals, primarily SDG 4 (quality education) by:
 - a. Encouraging cooperation between academic institutions and Member States to conduct the research on the impact that emerging technologies would have on rural areas between countries where international partnerships can share responsibilities of their people;

- b. Recommending research partnerships with Member States, research institutions, and High-Tech industries to produce the kind of AI professional the industry needs;
2. *Intends* to advance its efforts in providing software and educational resources among member states and institutions in need by:
 - a. Expanding its current Free and Open-Source Software (FOOS) solutions by a specific “UNESCO digital learning bundle” combining open source software with massive open online courses for high-quality digital learning;
 - b. Encouraging and promoting citizens, corporations, and Member States to donate and sponsor gently used, refurbished, or new software and technologies;
 - c. Suggesting that Member States collaborate with NGOs and IGOs in accordance with SDG 17 to develop programs that allow students without access to technology to be provided with the proper materials and resources;
3. *Further intends* to collaborate with NGOs, multinational corporations, experts, and Member States to create and implement the Plan for Supporting Educational Technology (PSET) in order to oversee and coordinate all initiatives, projects, sponsorships, and donations (open for elaboration) to support less developed educational systems and continue developing emergent educational technology, to bridge the digital divide and increase quality and accessibility of education;
4. *Acknowledges* that production of education-focused technologies involves economic investment and spending:
 - a. Upholds the *Education 2030 Framework for Action* in continuing to recommend at least 15% of public spending be allocated to education;
 - i. Further encourages that a sufficient amount of this 15% is spent on emerging education-focused technology development;
 - ii. Directs attention to supporting facilities like International Finance Facility for Education for the financial support of least developed countries;
 - b. Encourages Member States to start grant programs to support start-ups and companies that are involved in the process of education-focused software development:
 - i. Recommends Member States to set up funds for education-focused emerging technology on a national level to differentiate this type of technology from other emerging technologies;
 - ii. Suggests forming an advisory board for the funds the members of which are representatives from such fields of occupation as teachers, students, technological developers, and government representatives;
 - iii. Further suggests to provide support in a way of sharing knowledge from advisory board members for companies and startups;
5. *Encourages* Member States to focus on inclusivity and equality in emerging technologies by:

- a. Ensuring adaptability of technologies for all levels of education and literacy, including primary, secondary, and tertiary;
 - b. Setting standards for the selection of programs and software to be appropriate for people of different education levels, learning abilities, and backgrounds;
6. *Expresses its hope* that Member States will promote and facilitate access to technologically innovative secondary and tertiary education for all people, especially women, enabling all students to train in emerging technologies regardless of gender or regional background;
7. *Invites* Member States to spread digital literacy knowledge to local communities through classes taught by students, allowing them to utilize the knowledge they gain in their own formal education, solidify it through teaching others, and empower themselves as leaders within their community through:
 - a. Working closely with local digital technology professionals to plan for and teach these classes;
 - b. Conducting outreach to historically disadvantaged populations, including women, minority communities, persons with disabilities, and the elderly, in order to furnish them with valuable skills that promote economic opportunity;
 - c. Serving as ambassadors of digital literacy to rural, remote, indigenous, and other communities that may lack regular access to Internet infrastructure;
8. *Further Invites* Member States to utilize AI technology to launch programs such as those featured in the 2019 UNESCO Compendium of Promising Initiatives that are geared towards the needs of disadvantaged groups that provide safe, non-violent, and inclusive learning environments for all;
9. *Requests* the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development to create a mesh network that allows a single device to share internet connectivity with nearby devices and bringing the technology to developing communities, in order to establish connectivity and access to the network by implementing the network into primary and secondary education establishments, through the Giga connect project that is currently working with 11 countries to connect over 86,000 schools and more than 25.8M students and teachers, by sharing their data and initiatives;
10. *Recommends* that Member States support the Digital Moonshot for Africa Initiative, created by the World Bank Group and the African Union, to increase internet access in Africa for more people to profit from quality education through emerging technologies;
11. *Asks* the Global Education Coalition to keep collaborating with communities on an international scale to provide digital devices to all through the process of applications in proportion to each community's population by:
 - a. Implementing a program which would allow each Member State's school districts to apply according to their specific needs and demands, in collaboration with the Coalition and country-specific programs willing to donate new as well as second-hand functioning devices, such as computers, notebooks, tablets, and mobile phones;
 - b. Strengthening the impact of these devices by allowing each community to incorporate pre-downloaded educational content respecting their regional curriculum in collaboration with local universities and school boards;

12. *Reiterates* its efforts in providing free and open-source software (FOSS) and to expand its current FOSS software solutions by a specific “UNESCO digital learning bundle” combining open-source software with massive open online courses to easily deploy them among educational institutions in need;
13. *Urges* Member States to establish a platform with examples of how Member States have integrated AI in their educational policies as recommended in the *Beijing Consensus on Artificial Intelligence and Education* to spur on the discussions of how best to draw on AI for the benefit of society and which will be in line with the universal design for learning;
14. *Calls for* the development, distribution, and ethical utilization of emerging technologies by:
 - a. Establishing UNESCO field offices to hold the online consultations of AI ethics, regarding the draft of the Recommendation of the Ethics of AI, regionally and nationally;
 - b. Inviting more educational stakeholders, including teachers and pedagogical researchers to contribute to raising awareness of AI ethics in education;
 - c. Reflecting the needs for utilizing of and possible discrimination;
 - d. Ensuring the final form of recommendation on Ethics of AI is a more inclusive and practical instrument;
15. *Proposes* the expansion of UNESCO’s role as a Global AI Help Desk, which is a base for governments to facilitate the expansion of distance learning and access to informal educational content and materials globally, via:
 - a. Suggesting annually hosting virtual seminars emanating from UNESCO field offices in order to increase information on the implementation of AI technologies for educational purposes for members of the public and private sectors;
 - b. Calling for Member States to provide biannual reports on the open implementation of AI technologies to ensure the technology remains open for all;
 - c. Offering guidance to governments in implementing policies in accordance with the establishment of AI and ICTs into their education plan; through inviting the Member States to send representatives of the government and from local market leaders: those who develop AI including engineers and researchers, to bring in their ideas on AI policies, applications and in the International Advisory Board;
 - d. Offering guidance through biannual local field training in the ethical implementation of AI technologies to appropriately address the challenges concerning privacy, freedom of choice, and other challenges, to meet the particular needs of children;
16. *Suggests* the creation of an online Intelligent Teacher Support Hub (ITSH), which shall be incorporated into the *UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers* (ICT-CFT) in order to both expand its virtual capacities and to advance the tailoring of educational support for teachers by:
 - a. Seeking additional administrative assistance from the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies and Education (IITE);
 - b. Strengthening existing ties and exploring new partnerships with external experts in the field, including the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) as well as the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE);

- c. Pursuing a three-step approach by firstly acquiring intelligent diagnostic testing techniques in order to evaluate teachers' subject-knowledge, secondly using AI to identify specific knowledge deficiencies of teachers, and finally addressing teachers' individual needs by providing individualized feedback and tailored support in the form of e-courses and training-workshops powered by AI;
 - d. Instructing teachers on a variety of identified issues such as the incorporation of relevant education software and equipment into virtual and analog classrooms and thus close related proficiency and knowledge gaps;
 - e. Employing the existing network of UNESCO project schools, as they provide a suitable testing ground for the initial installment of the AI hub and allow the equal inclusion of less developed Member States in the implementation of emerging educational technologies in order to bridge the digital divide;
 - f. Obtaining financial support for this harnessing of AI technologies for educational purposes from a wide variety of sources including the UNESCO education project fund, public-private partnerships, and voluntary government contributions;
17. *Calls upon* Member States to promote the use of the Teaching AI for K-12 Portal, a one-stop repository designed between a partnership with UNESCO and Ericsson, which provides youth with information in a variety of disciplines using AI educational tools to supplement school curriculums and their utilization;
18. *Further recommends* Member States to increase quality and accessibility to education by analyzing and updating the Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (OER) adopted in 2019 by UNESCO as well as promoting OER workshops in which hundreds of educators should prioritize the use of these free, openly accessible, online contents in teaching curriculums in order to promote the economic and technological openness required for innovative and equitable education by:
- a. Expressing the need for a universal open access educational platform, that is readily available for use in less developed countries, with specific teaching programs aimed at improving adult literacy rates and developing working skills;
 - b. Providing the equipment and resources necessary through partnering with organizations and initiatives such as the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030;
 - c. Incorporating OER that include comprehensive reading and writing materials in line with all regional languages of communities utilizing the platform;
19. *Welcomes* further innovations in the educational systems instead of meeting the basic needs, with promoting and investing in technological innovations by:
- a. Implementing the technical and vocational education and training institutions that will be coordinated and endorsed by UNESCO;
 - b. Cooperating with universities and colleges to increase open access information;
20. *Expresses its hope* that Member States will encourage more educators and researchers, such as Ministers of Education, to participate in the International Pedagogy Congress in order to:
- a. Discuss and share the information of situations of education and best practices of effective use of emerging technologies in digital education;

- b. Promote introducing the digital systems to digital learning to surely provide the same quality of education to all children;
 - c. Create a mobile unit of ICT experts provided by participant Member States to assist and supervise the Congress training activities;
21. *Further calls upon* Member States to include education on how to use technologies and develop digital competence as part of their routine curriculum, utilizing the knowledge already gained by teachers through the aforementioned programs.