



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



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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Committee Staff

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Director | Kieran Leigh |
| Assistant Director | Hana Matsushita |
| Chair | Alexander Edsell |

Agenda

1. Promoting Restitution or the Return of Cultural Property to its Country of Origin
2. Promoting Freedom of Expression and Access to Information

Resolutions adopted by the Committee

| Code | Topic | Vote (For-Against-Abstain) |
|-------------------|---|--|
| UNESCO/1/1 | Promoting Restitution or the Return of Cultural Property to its Country of Origin | Adopted without a recorded vote |
| UNESCO/1/2 | Promoting Restitution or the Return of Cultural Property to its Country of Origin | Adopted without a recorded vote |
| UNESCO/1/3 | Promoting Restitution or the Return of Cultural Property to its Country of Origin | 28 in favor, 2 against, 11 abstentions |
| UNESCO/1/4 | Promoting Restitution or the Return of Cultural Property to its Country of Origin | Adopted without a recorded vote |
| UNESCO/2/1 | Promoting Freedom of Expression and Access to Information | 22 in favor, 5 against, 14 abstentions |

| Code | Topic | Vote (For-Against-Abstain) |
|-------------------|---|--|
| UNESCO/2/2 | Promoting Freedom of Expression and Access to Information | 17 in favor, 6 against, 18 abstentions |
| UNESCO/2/3 | Promoting Freedom of Expression and Access to Information | 20 in favor, 9 against, 12 abstentions |
| UNESCO/2/4 | Promoting Freedom of Expression and Access to Information | 22 in favor, 7 against, 12 abstentions |

Summary Report

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

1. Promoting Restitution or the Return of Cultural Property to its Country of Origin
2. Promoting Freedom of Expression and Access to Information

The session was attended by representatives of 39 Member States. On Monday, the committee adopted its agenda and began discussion on the topic of “Promoting Restitution or the Return of Cultural Property to its Country of Origin.”

By Tuesday, the Dais received a total of 5 proposals covering a wide range of sub-topics including border control, educational programs, and the inclusion of modern technologies in the protection of cultural property. Delegates embraced the collaborative spirit of the United Nations, finding areas of agreement whilst having difficult but diplomatic conversations on areas where they did not agree.

By Thursday, 4 draft resolutions had been approved by the Dais, 1 of which had amendments. The committee adopted 4 resolutions following voting procedure, 3 of which were adopted without a recorded vote. The resolutions represented a wide range of issues, including the education of border officials, facilitating the return of displaced artifacts, safeguarding cultural objects at risk during conflict, and encouragement of dialogue between former colonial powers and former colonies.

The committee then discussed the topic of “Freedom of Expression and Access to Information.” Working at an applaudable pace, a total of 4 draft resolutions were approved. The committee adopted all four as resolutions, each with a recorded vote. The resolutions addressed a range of issues including the safety of journalists, improving global media literacy, combating misinformation and disinformation, particularly on social media, and facilitating access to a variety of reliable information sources.



Code: UNESCO/1/1

Committee: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Topic: Promoting Restitution or the Return of Cultural Property to its Country of Origin

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Recalling the 1948 United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Constitution, declaring the advancement of sustainable development and the protection of cultural heritage to be key missions of the UNESCO mandate,

Reaffirming the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, requiring Member States to return previously lost or stolen cultural property to competent authorities in their country of origin during times of peace and war,

Guided by Article 17 of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970 UNESCO Convention) declaring that UNESCO may conduct its own research and publish studies concerning matters relevant to the illicit trafficking of cultural artifacts and that UNESCO should extend its good offices to settle any disputes that may arise between two Member States,

Further guided by Article 9 of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and the negative impact looting has on people's traditions and customs and the importance of creating laws to help return cultural property to its nation of origin and ensure the adherence of Member States and their citizens to these laws and regulations,

Further recalling the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its active Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Fostering Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), which promotes the inclusion and protection of world cultures,

Recognizing Security Council Resolution 2347 of 2017 condemning the unlawful destruction of cultural heritage such as religious sites and artifacts and the looting and smuggling of cultural property from archaeological sites, museums, libraries, archives, and other sites, especially in the context of armed conflicts including the current situation in Gaza,

Cognizant of Human Rights Council resolution 49/7 of 2022 urging for all parties of armed conflicts to refrain from the targeting of cultural property,

Looking towards requesting non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as the Polish Center for International Aid (PCPM) to assist in the preservation and protection of artifacts of cultural significance as well as heritage sites during times of conflict,

Emphasizing the successes of the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section Unit (MFAA) in protecting cultural property in war areas during and after World War II,

Acknowledging that nations become vulnerable and are unable to protect their cultural heritage during times of conflict due to lack of security for private institutions and residents fleeing their homes, opening

easy access to looters that then sell cultural property to fund and terrorism, giving easy access to private collectors to acquire cultural property through the black market,

Deeply alarmed by the current conflict in Gaza and the threat posed to human life as well as UNESCO World Heritage Sites and cultural property in the West Bank and Gaza,

Concerned by the air strike affecting the Church of St. Porphyrius, Gaza's oldest active church, which had served as a shelter for the displaced,

Deeply disturbed by the 2024 preliminary UNESCO-published Gaza Strip: Damage Assessment Report that discloses 41 verified damaged sites since October 2023 in the Gaza Strip,

Fully aware of the role of terrorism in the looting, smuggling, and destruction of cultural property, affecting not only the Middle East but all Member States across borders, leading to significant financial gains for terrorist groups,

Further aware of the link between terrorist groups and organized crime in Member States, leading to increased looting and smuggling of cultural artifacts during the conflict,

Mindful of the role private collections of cultural goods play in the accumulation of cultural objects outside of their country of origin and their subsequent looting during times of conflict, with an estimated 85-90% of classical and other types of artifacts not having documented provenance in a collection of a recognized institution according to the Archeological Institute of America,

Noting with deep concern the prevalence of ongoing and future conflicts as well as other threats to cultural heritage property that have affected, currently threaten, and will cause future concern for the cultural heritage of all nations,

Calling attention to the existing ICOM International Council of Museums) Emergency Red Lists for Member States in conflict, including Ukraine, Egypt, and Iraq, and the absence of one pertaining to Gaza and the West Bank,

1. *Recommends* collaboration with ICOM to produce an Emergency Red List for Cultural Property at Risk in Gaza and the West Bank:
 - a. Featuring cultural objects at risk in Gaza and the West Bank due to the ongoing conflict in the region, including inventoried objects of cultural importance within the collections of recognized institutions that are most vulnerable to illicit traffic rather than objects that are currently stolen or lost;
 - b. Developing categorial sections that address cultural objects owned by private institutions facing neglect and lack of proper funding and security;
 - c. Being distributed to law enforcement groups, museums, private collectors, art markets, and auction houses of all Member States to ensure awareness of cultural property at risk;
 - d. Including translations into all United Nations official languages with the eventual goal of translation into national and local languages of all Member States;
2. *Requests* that Member States enact laws within their own governments to ensure that artifacts are legally obtained and that their provenance is established on documentation and:

- a. Requiring authorizations from the authorities for the export and import of works of art exceeding a specific value threshold;
 - b. Performing better risk analysis when issuing export or import authorizations through:
 - i. Analyzing the risk of certain types of art pieces that are more likely to be involved and sought after in illicit trafficking;
 - ii. Analysis of export and import authorizations for countries where art traffic is highest;
 - c. Adopting harmonized administrative documents for exports and imports of works of art for practical investigative purposes;
3. *Further requests* that Member States form national-level agencies dedicated to and with authority over preventing, investigating, and monitoring illicit antiquity trafficking within their borders through:
 - a. Developing agencies modeled after entities such as the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), which provides for local, provincial, and national authorities to manage both domestic and foreign cultural heritage property, including sites, artifacts, traditions, and ideas;
 - b. Establishing agencies similar to the Civil Guard of Spain, which led Operation Pandora, recovering trafficked cultural property from sites such as auction houses, museums, borders, airports, and private homes;
 - c. Creating Ministries or Departments of Antiquities that will partner with relevant border authorities to thwart illicit importation and enforce repatriation efforts, such as Jordan's Ministry of Antiquities, dedicated to returning stolen and plundered cultural artifacts smuggled into the country as well as protecting those of Jordanian origin;
 - d. Requiring aforementioned national-level agencies to require documentation to establish the provenance records for all cultural property under the 1970 UNESCO Convention, which gives Member States the ability to formally request the implementation of restrictions on the sale of cultural property across borders;
4. *Recommends* that the UN Security Council establish a task force modeled after the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section Unit (MFAA), with the goal being to recover, identify, and protect cultural property in the midst of armed conflicts facilitated by the use of databases such as the ICOM Red Lists;
5. *Encourages* the adoption of standardization of operational receipts for international imports and exports of currently identified works of art and cultural objects for documentation purposes through:
 - a. The origin of specific pieces of cultural significance;
 - b. Provenance researchers, relevant scholars such as but not limited to certified historians, archeologists, geologists, anthropologists, and chemists, NGOs such as AURORA that analyzes deep-level chemical composition of art objects, and CSOs verifying the authenticity of identified works of art to decrease forgery of cultural property;

- c. The digitalization and filing of “passports” for listed cultural property to better regulate and track the movement of cultural property across international borders in partnership with the World Customs Organization (WCO);
- 6. *Further suggests* Member States to further expand upon the proposed and existing ICOM Emergency Red Lists in future sessions to develop a worldwide ICOM artifact red list to catalog and afford protections to the cultural heritage of all nations and their peoples in the face of future armed conflicts and other threats to cultural heritage, through:
 - a. Maintaining existing Emergency Red Lists to be as up-to-date as possible through existing definitions of;
 - b. Supporting the development of Emergency Red Lists for regions of conflict in the future.



Code: UNESCO/1/2

Committee: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Topic: Promoting Restitution or the Return of Cultural Property to its Country of Origin

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Emphasizing Article 17 Section 1 of the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which states, “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of [their] property,” along with Article 27, which specifies the need to preserve cultural goods that represent the history and identity of a country,

Observing efforts to raise awareness of illicit trading of important cultural artifacts of the International Day against Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property of United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which takes place on 14 November annually with the goal of strengthening connections advocacy on the impact trafficking has on the greater global community reinforcing the capacities of restitution of Member States,

Reflecting on the success of the national legislature enacted by the Fundamental Principles of Legislation of the Russian Federation on Culture, ensuring the righteous process of identification, preservation, and protection of cultural property, and the Republic of Türkiye’s Law No. 2863, which forbids the illegal transportation of cultural objects outside of the sovereign borders,

Guided by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) Target 4, which aims to “strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime,”

Recalling the 1995 Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects by the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT), which states that stolen cultural property must be returned to its place of origin under international law,

Acknowledging the value of education regarding cultural heritage, in accordance with SDG 4 (quality education) Target 7 to “ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development,” including “appreciation of cultural diversity and recognizes culture’s contribution to sustainable development”,

Aware of the Italian Ministry Initiative Domenica al Museo, which offers free admission to museums in Italy on every first Sunday of the month,

Having examined the rules and procedures described in Article 2 of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property (ICPRCP)’s statute to promote global cooperation which seeks to improve communications between Member States looking to reclaim artifacts of cultural significance,

Reiterating Article 11 Section 1 of the 2007 Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), which emphasizes the right for minority communities to be reconnected and revitalize the connection to cultural artifacts and objects also aligning with SDG 10 (reducing inequalities),

Noting with satisfaction the progress made by programs such as The European Fine Art Fair (TEFAF) and the Netherlands’s Minister of Education, Science, and Culture for pre-conflict and post-conflict safeguarding of cultural heritage sites and objects,

Stresses the need for accountability for stolen cultural property by private and public organizations by exercising UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029, which emphasizes the committee's responsibility for monitoring cultural and natural heritage in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources,

Fully aware that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) values the art black market at approximately \$6 billion US dollars annually, which includes revenue from selling counterfeit objects and illicitly trafficked objects,

Inspired by the scope of and success of the World Customs Organization (WCO)'s Preventing Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Heritage (PITCH) project has been implemented in multiple regions such as Middle East and North Africa since 2017,

Commending the efforts by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in combating illicit trafficking of cultural goods through projects such as Co-Action Against Trafficking in Cultural Heritage (CATCH) currently working in the Mediterranean region,

Noting with appreciation the partnerships between UNESCO and UN Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) regional offices that utilize geospatial technologies, such as satellite images, for the monitoring of tangible cultural objects in areas affected by conflicts,

Drawing attention to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)'s Heritage at Risk Register (Heritage@Risk) program that publishes periodical reports identifying cultural objects at risk due to conflict and environmental effects in an effort to suggest relevant preservation techniques promptly,

Reviewing the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property as an essential tool for protecting cultural property worldwide, in particular Articles 7 and 13, which establish rules for restitution, and Article 9 that requires Member States to participate in any international operation,

Recognizing the significance of the Stolen Works of Art database created by the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) aimed at providing descriptions and pictures of more than 52,000 stolen and missing objects,

Acknowledging the transformative power of emerging technologies in shaping the future of digital interactions, and creativity, emphasizing the significant potential of Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) as a groundbreaking advancement,

Drawing attention to the work of multiple Member States through UNESCO, ICPRCP, as well as collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGO) such as the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which has led to the return of many artifacts of cultural significance and strengthened international relations,

1. *Advises* Member States to collaborate with regional and international NGOs to promote the preservation of cultural artifacts after restitution by:
 - a. Providing resources, including training and funding to Member States on how to take care of the artifacts properly, such as climate-controlled storage facilities, properly maintained public exhibition spaces, and specialized laboratories that meet international standards for artifact preservation;

- b. Holding informational conferences promoting International against Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property with important actors such as border officials to establish long-term security measures by educating relevant actors such as Member States, and those entrusted with maintaining cultural artifacts, on how to implement measures such as video surveillance and security guards that develop safeguards to prevent future damages, theft, or loss;
2. *Encourages* Member States to integrate national legislature to protect cultural assets and forbid the illicit trafficking of cultural artifacts outside of their country of origin by:
 - a. Collaborating with INTERPOL on protecting cultural assets from clandestine excavation and unregulated dealing of cultural artifacts;
 - b. Facilitating the improvement of States' national border security by providing framework for all Member States to enable the protection of cultural objects from being illicitly exported and importing by modeling INTERPOL Integrated Border Management Task Forces;
 - c. Holding conventions to discuss the international benefits of Member States' creating national laws suggesting that Member States hold all individuals and organizations accountable for the destruction or damage to cultural property;
 - d. Encouraging Member States to utilize INTERPOL's capacity-building training programs, such as the Policing Capabilities Programme, which involves highly interactive workshops on INTERPOL systems and emphasizes the importance of maintaining national law enforcement units tasked with enforcing national legislature that prevents the illicit trafficking of cultural items;
3. *Intends* Member States to develop new systems to further the knowledge of the civil population, prioritizing previously not involved communities on the value of cultural objects and artifacts, which would improve the appreciation of cultural goods and therefore create recognition amongst the public for the relevance of their protection; this could further society's contributions towards preventing illicit trafficking and would be done through improving access and implementing educational programs and initiatives on national levels by:
 - a. Increasing public awareness of lost or stolen cultural property, through campaigns run by national police departments, reflecting comprehensive data available on illicit trafficking and the number of artifacts held outside of their country of origin;
 - b. Providing affordable cultural experiences offered by establishments like museums or galleries modeled after the Italian Ministry Initiative *Domenica al Museo* (Sunday at the Museum) for the general public to increase accessibility to all members of society;
 - c. Hosting exhibitions in private museums centered around the restitution process with photographs, background detailing, and explanation of the process in which they were returned in order to educate museum visitors;
 - d. Fostering connections through resource allocation for public reach workshops and local events between governments, art communities, and previously unreached communities within civil populations, reflected in the work of ICOM Italy's *The Museum That Will Come*

project that encourages the youth to develop their own ideas with respect to their future vision of museums;

4. *Suggests* that UNESCO holds an annual conference on the topic of inclusivity, diversity, and the return of cultural property to origin states that will provide a forum for any Member State wanting to participate to show support toward communities that wish to reclaim artifacts;
5. *Recommends* Living Artist Programs such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Civic Practice Partnership and Swiss International Artists-in-Residence, which have helped facilitate reunification by partnering with countries of origin and exchange displaced artifacts for a new piece of art from a living artist from countries by:
 - a. Preserving representation of countries of origin in these spaces of high visibility and prestige such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in regards to promoting inclusivity of community of origin;
 - b. Allowing individuals of communities of origin knowledgeable about historical relevance to restore identity and properly defining untrue narratives commonly perpetrated surrounding these objects, aligning with SDG 10 (Reducing Inequalities);
 - c. Considering multilateral agreement that explicit states ownership to country of origin creating agreements of extended loan of cultural artifacts allowing them to remain on display while protecting communities ownership rights;
6. *Trusts* INTERPOL to provide local law enforcement with the knowledge and sustainable tools, the World Heritage Fund for the financial assistance to culturally significant sites and objects, and the United Nations Environmental Program's (UNEP) to identify natural sites with cultural aspects cultural heritage protection techniques in pre- and post-conflict by:
 - a. Increasing national security for sites and objects of cultural significance;
 - b. Acknowledging regional institutions that act on behalf of citizens;
 - c. Creating investigative regional tribunal courts for the destruction of sites of cultural heritage;
7. *Calls for* the fortification of security and border control through:
 - a. Implementing training courses, workshops, seminars, and exercises for customs officers, modeling after the WCO's PITCH initiative that trains customs officers on effective and prompt identification and handling of documentation of cultural objects aiming to prevent their illicit trafficking via a training handbook developed by experts such as international customs authorities, museum community and national Ministries of Cultures;
 - b. Offering protection through security transport units for cultural property that is transferred across international borders, including the quick return of cultural property that has been seized from illegal traffickers and placed in temporary storage until its original country is reached;
 - c. Assist all border, customs, and security agencies with the resources they need to access databases and data collections that are internationally recognized which will aid in the

better understanding of all artifacts that are currently missing or at risk by nation-state agencies;

8. *Further suggests* Member States expand to other regions the UNODC's CATCH project, which aims to strengthening detection, investigation and prosecution of criminal groups involved in illicit transportation of objects via providing data on trafficking routes, operational methods and involvement of organized crime groups;
9. *Welcomes* Member States to contribute to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)'s Heritage at Risk Register (Heritage@Risk) program that aims to foster the preservation of tangible cultural property by publishing reports identifying cultural objects at risk due to conflict and environmental effects in the form of a case study followed by solutions on their preservation;
10. *Invites* Member States to utilize the technologies developed by the regional partnerships between UNESCO and UNOSAT for identifying damaged cultural objects in case of emergence of an armed conflict;
11. *Strongly encourages* the creation of a new international database, that will be named, Original Exchange of Cultural Property Database (OECPD), this will model after the current INTERPOL Stolen Works of Art database:
 - a. Promoting the establishment a new standardized process of identification providing documented provenance to cultural objects;
 - b. Collaborating with experts tasked with the diversification of sources;
 - c. Providing registered claims, ongoing negotiations, and restitution procedures;
 - d. Utilizing blockchain technology ensuring immutability, transparency, and decentralization;
 - e. Ensuring access to all stakeholders, especially museums, private collectors, and Member States in the OECPD;
 - f. Copying data and all existing information from internationally recognized databases such as INTERPOL's Stolen Works of Art to provide the utmost accurate data;
12. *Advocates* for the integration of cutting-edge technologies in combating illicit trafficking of cultural artifacts by:
 - a. Integrating a transparent and trustful artificial intelligence within the ICPCR sub-committee with a "red flag" system allowing buyers to verify the provenance of artifacts online;
 - b. Proactively addressing that NFT could become artifacts in the future by modeling after regulations inspired by the 1970 and 1995 Convention;
 - c. Integrating a machine learning program within the ICPCR sub-committee that would train people to identify suspicious transactions linked to illegal trafficking;

13. *Suggests* the creation of a digital passport for all cultural objects of art to discourage the illicit trafficking of cultural goods, with:
- a. The digital passport can be useful for all States to keep track of worldwide movements of cultural goods. When a State recognizes a cultural object, all the information related to its origin, the history of possession, and its identity are inserted in software that automatically generates a unique code (digital passport of the work);
 - b. Encouragement of the collaboration with the INTERPOL Innovation Centre to develop a digital platform to store information about artworks, including provenance, ownership, and history, in an effort to implement security measures such as blockchain technology to provide transparent data and accountability;
 - c. Tracking identified art with the digital passport will be done with Global Positioning Technology (GPS) and a third-party storage site accessible by customs offices and local officials who will be given the option to act on information at their discretion within the framework of regulations for combating illicit trafficking;
 - d. This code is then stored on a national database. When the work is put into circulation the microchip contained in the work will follow the movements of the same and all its steps of ownership;
 - e. This digital system has been proposed by some countries such as Italy but UNESCO can help developing countries allocate funds for the preservation of cultural heritage;
 - f. Tracking identified art with the digital passport will be done with Global Positioning Technology (GPS) and a third-party storage site accessible by customs offices and local officials who are entitled to control can consult the data without using and disseminate them to third parties;
 - g. Utilizing microchip technology being used for all digital passports created, allowing for the trace of all the cultural assets;
14. *Calls for* Member States to improve international collaboration to increase the likelihood of cultural property being returned to their country of origin in accordance with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).



Code: UNESCO/1/3

Committee: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Topic: Return and Restitution of Cultural Property to their Country of Origin

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Defining cultural property as moveable and immovable objects which include buildings, archaeological and natural heritage sites, works of art, written documents, library materials, expressions, traditions, and practices,

Realizing that the era of colonization, which spans from the early 1500s to recent years, has resulted in a significant loss of cultural identity, and thus the opportunity for economic growth among formerly colonized Member States,

Referencing the United Nations (UN) definition of colonization as a process through which a State acquires or maintains full or partial political control over another sovereign nation or subjugation of groups or entities over others, including terms such as economic, cultural, or ideological colonialism,

Acknowledging that the historical, illegal, and discrete movement of memorabilia throughout the colonial era violates Article 27 of the *1947 Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, which explains the need for cultural preservation, supports the principle of artistic autonomy, and furthers the notion of creating and contributing to one's own culture,

Noting the lack of consistent cooperation among actors to facilitate cultural heritage tracking highlighted by the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Tunisia,

Seeking the promotion of the socio-economic status of developing countries through the process of returning their cultural property in order to stimulate the expansion of museum galleries, job opportunities, tourism, national GDP, civil society, and sovereignty amongst sustainable nation states,

Deeply concerned with the transportation of cultural objects, most prevalently from Member States that attained stolen property during colonization, which may result in further damage and a significant loss in value,

Emphasizing the importance of advocating for the often overlooked developing countries who face an inequitable level of national growth when compared to other already developed nations,

Troubled by existing laws which prohibit the legal return of cultural property to their countries of origin,

Recommending Member States expand and invest in requesting regional training programs during and prior to excavation and industrialization in order to educate and target the danger of stolen and disregarded property,

Mindful of the fact that younger generations have a right to education about their cultural heritage as is enshrined in the *2003 Convention on Intangible Heritage*,

Deeply concerned that the preservation of cultural heritage has been in decline since the COVID-19 pandemic as highlighted by the UNESCO COVID-19 and Cultural report,

Recalling the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 of providing quality education that is inclusive and equitable and its implications on educating about and protecting the dignity of world cultures,

Further recalling the United Nations 2030 Agenda SDG 16 of cultivating peace, justice, and strong institutions that promotes the inclusion and understanding of cultural heritage and thus the vital inclusion of certain items and ideas as cultural property,

Noting with regret that destroying heritage has been used as a tactic of war in recent history as a means to erase cultural identities and history in general,

Suggesting the implementation of an initiative based on the occupier-occupied, German-Polish Cooperation which focuses on improving cultural goals worldwide,

Celebrating the success of the United States-Thailand Communique on Strategic Alliance and Partnership that has exemplified the collectivist approach to peaceful return of stolen artifacts to its state of origin,

Acknowledging the emphasis that the United Nations has placed upon making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable falling inline with SDG 11.4,

Recognizing the lasting effects that colonization has left in regard to the lack of connection to culturally significant items in formerly colonized Member States,

Welcoming education for a nation's civil society on their cultural heritage indefinitely promotes resolution, intrinsic ownership, and an overwhelming acknowledgment of what shapes their identity,

Emphasizing the return of artifacts and stolen items from the colonial era to their native lands and developing nation-states to help them promote their cultural and heritage,

1. *Welcomes* the creation of the quinquennial United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization Conference on Colonial Reconciliation and Cultural Preservation (UNESCO CCRCP) beginning which aims to:
 - a. Encourage peaceful dialogue between former colonial powers and formerly colonized states, where states may choose to speak in a neutral environment directly between former colonial powers and their former colonies;
 - b. Collect voluntary funding by UN Member States to finance efforts on the return and restitution of cultural property acquired during the colonial period through developmental funding programs that model aspects of the Cultural Protection Fund Programme between the British Council and Egypt which assists in the documentation, protection, and conservation of cultural heritage;
 - c. Work with the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) to mediate multilateral discussions on the repatriation of cultural artifacts acquired during colonial rule;
 - d. Provide a neutral setting for former colonial powers and their formerly colonized states to meet one on one for the purpose of bilateral discussion;

2. *Recommends* that all future UN resolutions and conventions on the Return and Restitution of Cultural Property use verbiage to acknowledge the global colonial past and its ramifications on the development of formerly colonized states;
3. *Reiterates* the importance of the future expansion of galleries, museums, cultural preservation sites, and geographical locations in previously colonized states, in line with SDG 11.4, through voluntary contributions from developed countries;
4. *Invites* Member States to draft or modify legislation structured after the National Institute of Latin American Anthropology and Thought (INAPL) introduced by the government of Argentina and directs:
 - a. Legislation that encourages Member States to train officials to identify archaeological and paleontological remnants;
 - b. The prompt return of cultural property to their place of origin in order to preserve the nation's cultural and archaeological legacy;
5. *Creates* an online program alongside the quinquennial conferences where formerly colonized Member States can be proactive in raising their concerns regarding misinformation and lost identity, as can be identified in:
 - a. The lack of historical documentation of illicitly smuggled artifacts have not been seen or represented due to the restraints which are still embedded in systematic governmental structures, leading to a lack of accountability;
 - b. The systematic and foundational issues which have led many countries to feel a disconnect to their cultural identity and a lack of generational intertwinement to their ancestors and historical experiences;
 - c. The online program can be utilized in schools, homelife, and in the workplace to normalize and celebrate the unique cultures of different nations around the world;
6. *Further recommends* the implementation of educational workshops through regional bodies, frameworks, and an expansion within UNESCO field offices providing educational opportunities that pertain to cultural objects and their heritage by:
 - a. Instructing law enforcement, archeologists, historians, state employees, and the general public to acquire extensive knowledge and increased educational resources on cultural artifacts, locations, and descriptions of memorabilia is vital in aiding the crisis;
 - b. Emphasizing the role of workshops, seminars, and courses as a pedestal in leading an encompassing comprehension of shared culture as well as the transportation of illegally stolen artifacts;
 - c. Drawing on funding from the CCRCP to help fund this initiative;
 - d. Being implemented in UNESCO Field Offices in collaboration with local governments and Non-Governmental Organizations, including workshops for the International Day for Monuments and Sites;

- e. Advising Member States to implement government agencies similar to the South African Heritage Resources Agency which both protects cultural property through local and provincial authorities as well as promotes education and training to encourage public involvement in the identification and preservation of heritage resources;
7. *Educates* the populations of former colonial countries on how stolen artifacts have affected colonized countries both economically and culturally for decades and into the current age while expanding the current UNESCO framework to become more supportive of universal education by:
 - a. Encouraging former colonial Member States to emphasize accurate colonial-era history and its effects on colonized Member States within the educational curriculum;
 - b. Encouraging museums to have educational materials next to artifacts on how colonization hurt countries and how they had to rebuild both their cultures and ways of life;
 - c. Working with countries to promote education on social media to share the stories of colonized countries and how these artifacts are important to their culture and their history;
8. *Appeals to* INTERPOL to serve as an intermediary body to improve relations between former occupiers and formerly occupied Member States where returns and restitutions are unlikely;
9. *Invites* other Member States to implement aspects of the Dutch World Cultural development mechanisms which includes:
 - a. Establishment of Institutions to develop grants that can be used to research best practices for the restitution of cultural property;
 - b. Further increase of knowledge-sharing abilities across institutions to in line with SDG 16;
10. *Recommends* that Member States sign onto the UNESCO Plan of Action on Youth Policy to indicate support for the implementation of educational programs that invest in the further understanding of cultural heritage in younger generations;
11. *Suggests* that Member States develop training standards that aim to safeguard cultural education in previously colonized Member States by following the standards outlined in the *1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention*;
12. *Endorses* advising developing Member States on capacity-building efforts similar to the conjoined endeavor of the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage with the National Heritage Institute of Tunisia to develop a series of training programs on the preparation of site management;
13. *Encourages* developed Member States to look to the Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Tunisia which:
 - a. Facilitates technical cooperation between law enforcement, customs officials, and archaeologists between countries to identify, interdict, and return trafficked cultural heritage;
 - b. Promotes active dialogues between Member States at forums such as the UNESCO CCRCP.



Code: UNESCO/1/4

Committee: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Topic: Promoting Restitution or the Return of Cultural Property to its Country of Origin

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Expressing its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), particularly Article 27, which establishes the importance of cultural preservation,

Reaffirming Sustainable Development Goals 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 16 (promote just, peaceful, and inclusive societies), and 17 (partnerships for the goals) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially target 16.4 as it relates to criminal offenses in connection to cultural property,

Taking note of the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property as well as the UN General Assembly resolution 68/237 (2023) which identifies specific regions of high proliferation of illicit trafficking of cultural property,

Acknowledging that the return of cultural property is integral to the cohesion of the UNESCO member body and is the cornerstone of all further proposals on this subject,

Considering the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law as established in the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (1995) in employing combative principles contributing to the restitutive efforts in regard to artifacts belonging to indigenous communities,

Concerned with the International Criminal Police Organization's (INTERPOL) findings that the trafficking of cultural property increased by 32% in Africa, 187% in the Americas, and by 3,812% in Asia and South Pacific between 2019 and 2020,

Expressing its appreciation for the work of INTERPOL, particularly its ID-Art database created in collaboration with UNESCO, through which authorized users are able to identify and report stolen cultural property,

Underscoring the impact of advancements in technology and digitization on the definition of cultural property and the methods used to protect it,

Considering the importance of taking into account each partner NGOs' goals, priorities, and plans tailored to their unique missions while collaborating with them in order to promote meaningful cooperation without minimizing their individual perspectives and agendas,

Keeping in mind UNESCO's Recommendation on the International Exchange of Cultural Property, which calls on Member States to develop the circulation of cultural property and foster exchanges,

Noting with concern the lack of coordination between national law enforcement and border patrol agencies, particularly in relation to the trafficking of cultural property, and acknowledging the impact of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Practical Assistance Tool Kit,

Commending the work of museums engaged in increasingly proactive research to prevent the further purchasing of illegally obtained cultural artifacts to further understand the cultural origins of heritage

objects in their museums, and recognizing publicly and privately funded museums as key agents for heritage preservation,

Recognizing the negative impact of the trade in cultural artifacts on wildlife conservation, as underlined in the United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution 2013/40,

Noting the work of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation (ICPRCP) in facilitating bilateral negotiations for the restitution or return of cultural property to its country of origin,

Alarmed by the number of local citizens who participate in the looting of cultural goods and artifacts of their home state, as stated in the *National Reports on the Implementation of the Convention on Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*,

Convinced of the effectiveness of establishing databases for cataloging and protecting cultural property as outlined by Resolution 69/196 (2014),

1. *Confirms* further advances of its commitment to the *1970 Convention*, especially by strengthening the commitment of Member States with a notable share of global art sales to regulate and return unlawfully obtained cultural property through:
 - a. Encouraging the further development and introduction of individual sanctions in national legislatures if the possessor of an object that has been recognized as belonging to another nation is not returned to its country of origin within a reasonable period of time;
 - b. Suggesting that private purchasers and museums refrain from purchasing unprovenanced work;
 - c. Highlighting the work of the International Council of Museums' (ICOM) Red List as a tool to efficiently track and preserve illegally obtained cultural property as it moves across borders;
2. *Calls for* further cooperation by regional organizations including, but not limited to, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union (EU), and the African Union (AU), as well as bilateral cooperation between Member States on restitution efforts and trafficking prevention;
3. *Welcomes* the implementation of domestic research to identify cultural property and catalog it into domestic databases and encourages Member States to exchange data trends and best practices relating to the transportation and protection of cultural artifacts, with:
 - a. Supporting provenance research to provide information on the background of cultural property whose source is not assured;
 - b. Inviting Member States to create guidelines on how their cultural property should be properly displayed and loaned;
 - c. Strongly encouraging Member States to exchange data trends relating to the transportation of cultural artifacts within areas where trafficking of cultural artifacts occurs at a high rate;

4. *Recognizes* the global role of INTERPOL in the illicit trade of cultural goods and the importance of their collaboration with local law enforcement to combat international trafficking of cultural goods, as well as the need for connecting national databases for cultural property with the INTERPOL Stolen Works of Art database, as recommended in UN Security Council Resolution 2347 (2017);
5. *Encourages* the expansion of the already existing partnership with INTERPOL to create additional interfaces and security strategies within the ID-Art database targeted towards law enforcement by:
 - a. Ensuring that law enforcement and border patrol agencies are able to utilize reporting mechanisms to publish updated information related to ongoing investigations regarding cultural property, including but not limited to the last known location, potential suspects, and the current status of the investigation;
 - b. Creating a system that notifies the relevant law enforcement and border patrol agencies when cultural artifacts are stolen from or trafficked within their jurisdiction;
 - c. Suggesting that Member States implement mandatory minimum training hour requirements for border control staff to improve their ability to utilize INTERPOL databases in the refinement of artifact transportation processes, providing online, free resources to foster the accessibility of this goal;
 - d. Highlighting the implementation of blockchain technology within the ID-Art database to ensure the transparency, decentralization and security of the information provided by:
 - i. Calling for further collaboration with Member States border patrol agencies in accordance with Article I of the *Cooperation Agreement Between INTERPOL and UNESCO* (1999) to verify that law enforcement and border patrol agencies are legitimate and authorized by their respective national governments;
 - ii. Adapting the current authorization process for public users to a more rigorous system for government-affiliated users;
6. *Reiterates* the need for Member States to establish, in cooperation with INTERPOL, specialized police units to protect cultural heritage and handle theft cases, as recommended in UN Security Council Resolution 2347 (2017) in order to prevent the destruction or damage of valuable cultural sites and to collect regional and national data regarding the methods of stealing cultural property, categorizing crimes related to cultural property in each of the following three categories:
 - a. Theft, which refers to the robbing of cultural property from its original owners or caretakers;
 - b. Looting, which refers to the removal of ancient relics from archeological sites or old buildings;
 - c. Forgery, which refers to the illegal imitation of cultural property for some form of benefit;
7. *Emphasizes* the need for infrastructure development and financial support to facilitate the transfer of cultural property back to their nation of origin by:
 - a. Using rent-back programming between museums and non-state entities and nations that have a claim to the cultural property in those museums would facilitate a rental program

where entities in current possession of the property would pay a rental fee to the nations of origin, allowing them to develop infrastructure to support the eventual safekeeping of the objects, employing combative principles contributing to the restitutive efforts in regard to artifacts belonging to indigenous communities;

- b. Requesting that such programming be used to compensate Member States who have been victims of cultural property theft in order to develop their ability to display and protect their cultural property in the long term;
8. *Urges* Member States, individuals, and institutions to promote open discussions on museums' ability to confront their past, address present needs, and shape an equitable future through collaborative efforts, innovative ideas, and the sharing of knowledge and expertise by:
 - a. Encouraging museums to lend cultural objects to local communities that build social function from said properties, such as ritual practices and ceremonies;
 - b. Collaborating with World Heritage Sites and museums to implement educational workshops, especially in schools and universities, and build an understanding of cultural legacies through discussions involving citizens within the community, group work, and field visits;
 - c. Providing a forum for negotiations between museums and national governments to promote the return of property following the *Recommendation on the International Exchange of Cultural Property*;
9. *Establishes* the regionally managed Global Cultural Diversity Award for Digital Artistic Exchange to governmentally recognize galleries that demonstrate exceptional commitment to digitizing their inventory, utilized to promote inclusivity within the arts sector and leverage digital platforms to inspire and promote the work of artists to foster accessibility with the intent of diversifying the cultural exchange of artifacts;
10. *Recommends* Member States reassess and strengthen commitments to border security as it pertains to the trafficking of cultural property through measures including by:
 - a. Suggesting that Member States provide their customs officers with necessary materials to improve effectiveness in recognizing and tracking cultural property through cooperation with organizations, such as the Communications Coordination Committee for the United Nations (CCCUN);
 - b. Increasing the enforcement capacity of Member States regarding illicit trade of cultural property, through collaboration with organizations such as the World Customs Organization (WCO);
 - c. Inviting Member States utilize WCO's Customs Enforcement Network (CEN) in order to further assist customs organizations with gathering data on crimes related to cultural property through watch lists, assurance processes alerts and analytical reports;
11. *Promotes* cooperation between archeological research bodies of Member States and the law enforcement agencies of Member States with less enforcement capacity in order to facilitate the restitution of cultural property, considering the perspectives of indigenous communities by:

- a. Emphasizing the purpose of constant communication between customs officers and archeological communities in order to allow them to foster a greater understanding of their cultural property;
 - b. Developing a framework of communication that respects indigenous communities and their livelihoods to effectively promote their partnership with archeological communities;
12. *Recommends* Member States to work with the World Customs Organization (WCO) on the ARTWise program coordinated by UNESCO, aimed at increasing awareness on the consequences of art trafficking for Member States and capacity building on the specific features of this crime through collaboration with experts by:
 - a. Implementing national workshops aimed at custom officers on topics such as the different categories of illicit crime of cultural property trafficking and further learn about the types of cultural goods that are more vulnerable to looting;
 - b. Collaborating with intergovernmental organizations with a cultural property section, such as INTERPOL's Works of Art unit;
13. *Encourages* the UNESCO ICPRCP to assess, on a case-by-case basis, a fair allocation of expenses for the storage and exhibition of cultural artifacts in their respective countries of origin, while also determining a form of financial restitution to address the cultural damages caused by the illicit appropriation of artifacts by:
 - a. Encouraging all Member States to collaborate in sharing technologies and concepts for a safer infrastructure to display cultural property;
 - b. Requesting that Member States support Member States with less economic capacity in acquiring technological infrastructure such as RFID tracking systems, GPS devices, and blockchain technology to track and monitor the location and activity of cultural artifacts;
14. *Suggests* the establishment of a joint task force between UNESCO and relevant stakeholders such as United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), leveraging the principles outlined in the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Resolution 23/1 (2014), to develop and implement specific strategies as well as collaborate with relevant NGOs such as World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) to combat illicit trafficking of cultural artifacts that adversely affects wildlife by:
 - a. Encouraging the enforcement of existing law that prosecutes individuals convicted of trafficking cultural artifacts that harm wildlife, in accordance with the definition provided by the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;
 - b. Requesting that the joint task force report its progress to the relevant UNESCO committees such as the Fight Illicit Trafficking (1970 Convention) Committee on a yearly basis;
 - c. Requesting that the joint task force promotes public awareness and education campaigns to highlight the detrimental impact of illicit trafficking on cultural heritage and wildlife conservation;
15. *Advises* the cooperation between UNESCO, Member States, and NGOs such as the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the Living Artist Collective that shall serve to add cultural

exchange to repatriation efforts, thereby filling gaps in their catalogs and facilitating the showcasing of contemporary artists from that culture to promote cultural exchange by:

- a. Supporting private-public partnerships through utilizing an educational policy approach of cultural heritage items to enhance the capacity of states that are victims of cultural property theft, ensuring that they can receive that property and display it safely as well as inviting the ICOM Working Group on Decolonization to engage in dialogue between Member States to return stolen and appropriated items;
 - b. Suggesting the pursuit of funding from collaboration and grants from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as well as the World Bank by:
 - i. Noting that such funding should support the creation of programming in non-art market states, and in nations that are victims of cultural property theft;
 - ii. Intending that such funds would bolster creative economics in such states in order to ensure that all Member States have the capacity to house and display their own cultural property;
 - c. Fostering community engagement through communities being able to see their culture reflected in their communities by an artist of that culture in a non-traditional and immersive way to deepen connections and foster pride and a sense of belonging;
16. *Encourages* museums to utilize a DNA system based on the chemical analysis of cultural artifacts to improve tracking systems and authenticity of trading in cultural artifacts;
17. *Recommends* Member States adhere to the UNESCO *Ethics of Artificial Intelligence* (2024) when using artificial intelligence (AI) to identify high risk areas for the illicit trafficking of cultural property;
18. *Explores* the potential of non-fungible tokens (NFTs), which are data files stored on a blockchain and associated with a particular asset (digital or physical) such as an image, art, music, as unique digital identifiers of artifact ownership to be considered as cultural property and subsequently recognized for their artistic merit through the following action.



Code: UNESCO/2/1

Committee: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Topic: Promoting Freedom of Expression and Access to Information

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Recalling Article 19 of the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, declaring the right to freedom of opinion and expression, especially in the media,

Noting the successful incorporation of the Dutch Media Safety Protocol (PersVeilig mechanism) as reported on by the European Federation of Journalists,

Recalling United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1738 (2006) calling for the protection of civilians during armed conflict and condemning intentional attacks against journalists and media professionals,

Recalling UN General Assembly Resolution 78/215 (2023), condemning violence against journalists while acknowledging the rising role of technology in the access of information, and calling upon Member States to end impunity for crimes against journalists through means such as investigations and legislation,

Disturbed by the dire lack of accurate information during times of conflict and the crucial information that journalists in these times provide,

Noting the importance of the collaboration of Member States and NGOs in facilitating discussion about Freedom of Information (FoE) and Access to Information (ATI) between governmental agencies, civil society, and the public,

Recognizing the need to protect freedom of speech through journalism, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.10.1,

Alarmed by the killing of 88 journalists and media workers since the conflict in Gaza began as of February 15, 2024, according to the *Committee to Protect Journalists*,

Urging the tactical consideration of the intrinsic correlation between media transparency and the education index of a nation through initiatives that foster media literacy,

Fully believing that journalism is an essential facet of freedom of expression and access to information,

Supporting the ongoing efforts of *The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)* in speaking on behalf of journalists within the UN system in regards to the protection of journalism,

Recognizing the role of the worldwide organization, *Reporters Without Borders (RSF)* and the *IFJ*, in their collective promotion of access to free and reliable information,

Noting the existing efforts of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Communications and Information (CI) sector providing trainings for journalists to safely approach reporting in dangerous regions,

Acknowledging the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) and their existing International Journalists Network (IJNet) which provides communication and information sharing between journalists worldwide,

Aware of the impunity of crimes against journalists during times of conflict,

1. *Proposes* collaboration with UNESCO's Global media and Information Literacy sector to empower individuals in their digital navigation of current affairs and to emphasize the necessity of informed technology usage by:
 - a. Promoting the accessibility to digitally available resources pertaining to global news and international relations to foster support for independent journalism agencies and their subsequent transparency;
 - b. Campaigning for advocacy support from local governmental bodies to protect the rights to expression within local journalistic bodies;
2. *Notes the successful* implementation of the PersVeilig mechanism that has incorporated avenues for journalists and local law enforcement officials to collaborate and combat violence in online spaces, Member States can:
 - a. Ensure that media employers allow for adequate time to prepare journalists for how to identify barriers to safely report media;
 - b. Ensure journalists, media partners, and freelancers have the ability to attend training courses to effectively protect against censorship and learn how to report incidents to law enforcement;
3. *Recommends* Member States work with NGOs that pertain to Freedom of Information (FoE) and Access to Information (ATI) including but not limited to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the International Press Institute (IPI), the African Union of Broadcasting (AUB), and should focus on:
 - a. Establishing public forums at the local level and encouraging journalists and press organizations to share their specific concerns about the safety of journalists;
 - b. Recognizing similarities among the concerns gathered during the forums in different localities to identify common themes among these worries and more effectively devise solutions to these problems;
4. *Encourages* Member States to pass legislation and further enforce pre-existing laws that persecute all perpetrators of violence against journalists, such as *Article 20 of the Spanish Constitution*, stating that citizens can communicate and receive information by writing or any other way;
5. *Encourages* further collaboration between Member States and NGOs in their support of journalists reporting in areas of armed conflict, such as:
 - a. *The Agency of International Development Cooperation* which is the largest Spanish foreign aid donor and has contributed to many NGOs in Gaza;
 - b. *The Ma'an Development Center*, which is an organization working to develop a democratic society in Gaza that would defend human rights such as freedom of expression;

6. *Further recommends* the UNESCO CI sector partner with the ICFJ, IFJ, and other NGOs focused on providing resources to Journalists to create and distribute trainings on safety measures for Journalists reporting in active war zones and regions experiencing armed conflict by:
 - a. Utilizing current UNESCO CI sector frameworks for creating digital and in-person safety courses and trainings in partnership with with NGOs such as the ICFJ, IJNET, and Pulitzer Center;
 - b. Distributing digital trainings and courses through international networks such as the IJNet and the IFJ providing free access to these trainings to participating journalists;
 - c. Encouraging Member States to facilitate local in person workshops educating Journalists using courses provided by this effort;
7. *Encourages* the recognition of political vindication against journalism bodies and the subsequent promotion the creation of an independent task force to support national and international Initiatives, and to rapidly investigate and prosecute such acts initiatives such as the International Day to End Impunity for journalists to support the freedom-oriented function of the industry;
8. *Suggests* the creation of an independent task force, entitled PACT-FREE (Prevent and Combat Crimes Against Journalists Task Force - Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists) to:
 - a. This group should be made up of experts in human rights, and in particular, on the issue of journalists and freedom of expression to support national and international initiatives, and to rapidly investigate and prosecute such act;
 - b. Inviting donor Member States to continue their donations and is urging other Member States to also contribute to the common fund.



Code: UNESCO/2/2

Committee: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Topic: Promoting Freedom of Expression and Access to Information

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Guided by the recommendations from the Council of Europe in their 2023 War in Europe and The Fight for the Right to Report which encourages Member States to create and commit to national action plans to protect media professionals within conflict zones and protect against violence and the commitment to the 2015 UN Plan of Action on the safety of journalist and the issue of impunity,

Recognizing Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which states “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression”,

Acknowledging the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) that commits nations to respect amongst others “freedom of speech” and “rights to due process and a fair trial”,

Referring to United Nations (UN) Training Programme (introduced in 2013) for security forces included in the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity (2012),

Reaffirming Article 79 of the Additional Protocol 1 of the Geneva Convention stating that journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions benefit from the full scope of protection granted to civilians,

Affirms UN Secretary General report A/76/285 (2020) that addresses the safety of journalists, and advocates for journalists’ freedom of expression, both online and offline,

Noting with appreciation the efforts and success done by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) aiming to enhance journalists’ safety through initiatives such as *iReport* that has been successfully implemented in multiple African countries,

Acknowledging the significant role of media literacy education in equipping individuals with the tools to critically analyze, evaluate, and responsibly engage with diverse media sources and platforms that promote true information rather than disinformation and misinformation which underlines the mission of the United Nations Global and Information Literacy Week (21-31 October) but on a vaster scale,

Recognizing the foundations built upon the passing of the Universal Declaration on Access to Information (UDAI) that holds governments accountable, establishes right to know laws, independent oversight bodies, and more,

Recalling Freedom of expression (FoE) in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) is the right of all people to hold and share opinions,

1. *Encourages* Member States to expand on the *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity's Training Programme* which aims to develop better understanding amongst security forces for the rights of the press to improve the working relationships amongst both parties by:

- a. Implementing standardized training on national levels modeled after the aforementioned program which aim to create more transparency amongst judicative and executive state bodies to form a safe environment for journalists which allows them to work freely with:
 - i. The expansion of the programme internationally should fall under the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity;
 - ii. National initiatives should be administered by the Member States themselves, optionally with the help of UNESCO model in Switzerland's Safety Of Media Professionals National Action Plan 2023 – 2027;
 - iii. The general progress should always be measured by an outside entity with access to past and current data, like UNESCO;
 - b. Including capacity-building activities for both parties, to improve professionalism, ethical standards and create a mutual understanding of the responsibilities their respective positions entail;
 - c. Conducting accountability measures such as data tracking of progress of implementation which include clear timelines of completion of goals outlined by Member States;
 - d. Tailoring plans to man agnation-specific concerns in regards to media that emphasize the fundamental human right to freedom of expression in regards to the UDHR;
2. *Welcomes* the development of knowledge-sharing programs between Member States to exchange methodologies, best practices, initiatives, and what has and has not worked which will foster global collaboration toward the promotion and protection of freedom of expression and access to authentic and trustworthy information rather than disinformation and misinformation for all people:
- a. Noting that Member States could have the expertise in this subject available by collaborating with Media organizations, journalists, technological companies, as well as NGOs such as The Groundtruth Project in order serve communities that are not served as well and to further support journalists so that communities have true and impactful journalism about their communities;
 - b. Emphasizing the need for continuous evaluation and refinement of media literacy to adapt to fast evolving technologies and media and also recognizing the challenges to keeping journalists safe;
3. *Deplores* the enactment of laws related to women's rights and the promotion of gender-sensitive safety;
4. *Further recommends* better compensation and offers sufficient protections such as providing more mental health counseling for women in journalism;
5. *Suggests* to create a research center to maintain an active interest in the issue of freedom of expression and enhancing training for the safety of journalists through:
- a. Creating a Vigilante Commission (OGN) for each country to monitor the situation of journalists in the conflict-affected countries;

- b. Provide journalists personal protection tools such as, for example, horticultural spray;
6. *Calls for* the establishment of an international access to information fellowship program which:
- a. Aim to bring together government officials, civil society leaders, journalists, and advocates from around the world for a period of intensive training, collaboration, and knowledge exchange on best practices and safety precautions for Journalists and promoting access to information;
 - b. Allow Participants would engage in workshops, seminars, and hands-on projects focused on topics of legal frameworks for access to information, digital transparency tools, and strategies for fostering a culture of openness, accountability, and safety for journalists and all;
 - c. Will be held amongst Member States voluntarily and Serbia is willing to host the program for the first year, leveraging our country's expertise in access to information reforms and providing an opportunity for participants to learn from its experiences.



Code: UNESCO/2/3

Committee: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Topic: Promoting Freedom of Expression and Access to Information

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Distressed by the “Digital Divide” between developed and developing Member States,

Commending Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 9C and 16.10, and UNESCO’s Medium-Term Strategy’s Strategic Objectives 3 and 4,

Taking into consideration the growing digital divide in Least Developed Countries (LDC) and developing nations and the work done by Media and Information Literacy (MIL) program, which empowers individuals to engage with diverse media outlets and resist disinformation,

Being aware that misinformation is used as a tool to suppress the shared knowledge between the government and civil society,

Promoting civil society to obtain a platform to express their experiences, share their concerns, and unite amidst numerous perspectives,

Understanding the criticality for children and students who are in need of digital access through modern technology such as computers, laptops, and internet access in developing nations,

Conscious of the role of internet companies in the availability and cost of internet access,

Encouraging cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Polish Center for International Aid (PCPM) to further work with developing nations for the goal of improving access to the internet,

Acknowledging the 2013 collaboration between the Tunisian Ministry of the Interior with UNESCO in conjunction with the National Union of Tunisian Journalists and the Tunisian Centre for Freedom of the Press to institute training initiatives aimed at sensitizing regional security forces,

1. *Calls for* the creation of the annual UNESCO Convention on the Expansion of Digital Infrastructure, Technical Education, Media Literacy, and Censorship (UNESCO EDITEMLC), which:
 - a. Brings together developed and developing Member States for the sake of:
 - i. Collecting voluntary funds from Member States in order to support the expansion of digital infrastructure, technical education, media literacy, and an understanding of media censorship;
 - ii. Providing a forum for discussing global and regional issues related to the lack of digital infrastructure, technical education, media literacy, and an understanding of media censorship;
 - b. Promotes global standards on topics related to freedom of expression and access to information;

2. *Advises* the implementation of an independent globally accessible website, available for all journalists publications, evaluate media content by ensuring media platforms are diverse and fact-checked by:
 - a. Professional journalists, going through multiple rounds of unassociated voluntary fact-checking, with published written works on resisting disinformation and educating citizens on how the internet can propagate misinformation;
 - b. Working closely with UNESCO EDITEMLC to ensure a free and accessible website that is continuously maintained by the European Media and Information Fund (EMIF);
3. *Calls for* all citizens to receive information on political, economic, and international current events are not only salient in strengthening community knowledge at the different levels of government but also influence democratic principles on a societal level;
4. *Improves* the quality of Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) by training teachers in developing countries to teach basic computer skills or computing courses, funded by the UNESCOEDITEMLC;
5. *Applauds* the Digital Literacy Program (DLP) collaborating with organizations such as Kenya Power Rural Electrification Authority (REA) to electrify schools, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) providing training for teachers to lead their students through the use of laptops, tablets, and internet access to facilitate universal access to Information and Communication services for global communication services for global competitiveness;
6. *Appeals to* NGOs focused on international aid, such as the PCPM and the Grameen Bank, to assist communities by funding the construction of cell towers across developing nations, as well as providing devices that can access the internet;
7. *Invites* regional security forces to develop further understanding on the topic of censorship with an emphasis on freedom of expression, similar to partnerships bolstered by past UNESCO initiatives by:
 - a. Introducing regional partnerships between state ministries closely replicating the 2013 training of Tunisian police forces along with the input of Tunisian journalists fostered by UNESCO;
 - b. Introducing, including presentations of international and national freedom of expression standards and practical exercises on communication with media, will be provided by trainers from UNESCO and the Ministry of Interior;
 - c. Requesting regional entities, as embodied by state and local policing forces, to establish the value of freedom of expression by means of mitigating censorship that more accurately reflects the media and informational needs of the journalistic and citizen bodies;
8. *Recommends* collaborating with UN agencies and private companies to provide Member States with internet connection and allow an increased ability to connect online, particularly:
 - a. Including the International Telecommunication Union to bring broadband internet to countries that lack internet access and allowing tax breaks and lower import fees for companies willing to undertake this project;

- b. Working with SpaceX to bring Satellite internet to parts of the world that have limited broadband and internet access;
- c. Utilizing Viasat's pay per use model to lessen the cost on developing nations' access to the internet.



Code: UNESCO/2/4

Committee: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Topic: Promoting Freedom of Expression and Access to Information

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Acknowledging the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (1948) and the *International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights* (1976), especially Article 19 (Freedom of Expression and Access to Information), this right includes “freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”,

Emphasizing UN 2030 Agenda’s Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) Target 10, which seeks to “Ensure access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements,” and SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure) Target C to “Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in the least developed countries by 2020”,

Referring to the tremendous digital divide that lies between Member States on the grounds of infrastructure and access to the World Wide Web,

Recalling Article 20 Section 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which establishes any advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence shall be prohibited by law,

Highlighting the increasingly worrying spread of misinformation and disinformation on internet platforms,

Recognizing the duty of Member States to protect their citizens from misinformation,

Noting with concern of national processes by disinformation campaigns,

Highlighting the role of Sustainable Development Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals),

Emphasizing the benefits of strengthening national oversight bodies to monitor public and social media speech and the effect it can have on significantly to creating a safer environment for citizens,

Acknowledging that about 3 billion across the globe do not have access to broadband internet access, hindering their access to information, undermining the contributing UDHR,

Recognizing social media use doubled from 2016 to 2018 and the impact of digitalization has permanently changed the nature of personal and political expression,

Noting with concern that according to the United Nation, over 7,000 data breaches were recorded in 2019 alone, and exposed more than 15 billion records,

Acknowledging the importance of cybersecurity in providing a secure internet space,

1. *Encourages* strategic partnerships between Member States and social media outlets in the fight against misinformation by restricting users and accounts that have repeatedly been flagged as sharing false information;
2. *Calls for* collaboration with telecommunication companies such as the United Nations Specialized Agency for Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to fund the creation or improvement of telecommunication infrastructures in developing nations to help close the digital divide;
3. *Supports* the development of more robust disinformation reduction frameworks across regions and the further expansion of UNESCO's disinformation programming;
4. *Advises* the condemnation of any platforms allowing the dissemination of national, racial, or religious hatred or hostility;
5. *Highlights* Member States' commitments to safeguarding leaders and government officials from slander and hate speech in both public and private settings by encouraging Member States to utilize their national observatory organs and law enforcement to establish teams focusing on protecting leaders and government officials by:
 - a. Protecting from hate speech;
 - b. Protecting public images;
 - c. Protecting the public from misinformation about those leaders and government officials;
6. *Calls Upon* the implementation of state-sponsored Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Programs for students and the general public to build foundational information dissemination skills and thwart misinformation and disinformation by:
 - a. Collaborating with Member States to develop comprehensive educational curricula;
 - b. Integrating teachings on cultural, religious, and traditional diversity alongside the principles of freedom of speech and expression;
 - c. Organizing intercultural dialogues, workshops, and seminars to promote understanding and tolerance among individuals from different cultural, religious, and traditional backgrounds;
 - d. Aiming to foster respectful discourse and mutual appreciation;
7. *Ensures* an inclusive environment and combating the silencing effect on social media platforms, countering hate speech on social media platforms through collaboration between Member States;
8. *Suggests* the creation of a partnership between UNESCO and Regional Banks to help countries to develop the Freedom of Expression and Access to Information;
9. *Calls for* the development of sovereign media institutions within member states, fostering independence from external influences and ensuring the preservation of cultural identity;
10. *Suggests* the creation of an Educational Religion Subcommittee (ERS) within UNESCO, tasked with facilitating global access to religious texts such as the Bible, Quran, and other significant religious scriptures, irrespective of geographical location or cultural context;

11. *Encourages* the development of a UNESCO annual convention organizing cybersecurity professionals across the world to compete in an international cybersecurity championship to practice detecting, preventing, and mitigating cyber attacks;
12. *Notes* the great need for the creation of apps and technological platforms that can teach people how to read and write in remote areas where access to formal primary education is limited; literacy allows individuals to become more informed by reading books, newspapers, websites, and other sources of information, providing them access to a diverse array of perspectives and knowledge.