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## United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Background Guide 2019

Written by: Analeigh Willett and Salima B. Mahamoudou, Directors;  
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# NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS



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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2019 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to welcome you to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This year's staff are: Directors Analeigh Willett (Conference A) and Salima B. Mahamoudou (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Pearle Nwaezeigwe (Conference A) and Youssef Sabek (Conference B). Ana received her BAs in International Relations and World Languages in 2016 and is finishing her MA in non-profit management and International Marine Conservation Policy at American University. Salima is an Analyst at the World Resources Institute working on forest management and land restoration. She is completing her MA in Climate Change Development from the University of London SOAS. Pearle, a practicing attorney, received her JD from the University of Lagos, Nigeria. She is currently studying at the University of California, Berkeley for her MA in International Human Rights Law. Youssef Sabek is a student-athlete pursuing an BA in Finance and Mathematics at the American University in Cairo, Egypt.

The topics under discussion for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization are:

1. Protecting Cultural Heritage in Conflict Zones
2. Education as a Tool to Prevent Extremism
3. Ensuring Freedom of Information for All

UNESCO is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) responsible for fostering the cooperation of the international community in the fields of education, science, culture, and communication. To fulfill this mandate, UNESCO evolves its fields of studies based on future change, through the advancement, transfer and sharing of knowledge of research, training and teaching activities, setting international standards and recommendations. In the spirit of UNESCO's work, working in cooperation will be key for delegates to hold at front and center throughout all negotiations and discussions.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a [Position Paper](#) by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 March 2019 in accordance with the guidelines in the [NMUN Position Paper Guide](#).

Two resources, available to download from the [NMUN website](#), that serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions are the:

1. [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#) - explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) - include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the Development Department, Aiskell Roman (Conference A) and Marleen Schreier (Conference B), at [usg.dev@nmun.org](mailto:usg.dev@nmun.org).

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

## Conference A

Analeigh Willett, Director  
Pearle Nwaezeigwe, Assistant Director

## Conference B

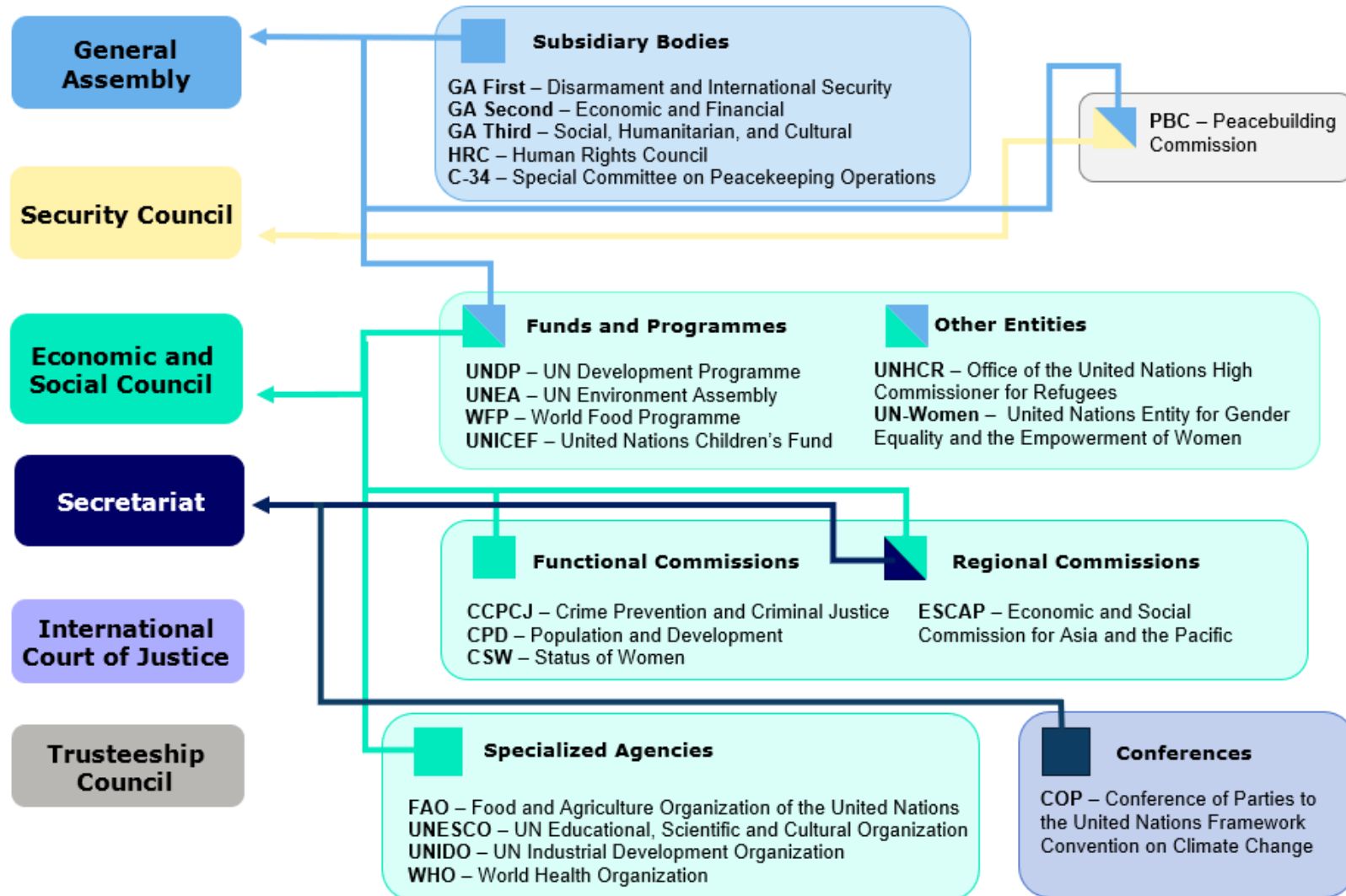
Salima B. Mahamoudou, Director  
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## United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN system simulated at NMUN•NY and demonstrates the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose, and powers within the UN system.





## Committee Overview

### Introduction

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN).<sup>1</sup> Although it is financially and structurally independent from the primary organs of the UN, UNESCO works with the UN to pursue common interests.<sup>2</sup> UNESCO originated in the 1942 Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME), a group of government representatives seeking to restore education systems in the wake of World War II; CAME was preceded by the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation and the International Bureau of Education.<sup>3</sup> In November 1945, CAME organized a conference in London to establish an Educational and Cultural Organization.<sup>4</sup> Representatives from 37 countries agreed to found UNESCO; a formal constitution was signed on 16 November 1945 and came into force on 4 November 1946.<sup>5</sup>

Since 1946, UNESCO has coordinated and produced several international standards for the promotion of peace through collaboration in the fields of education, science, and culture.<sup>6</sup> Chief among these are the *Universal Copyright Convention* (1952), the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (1972), the *Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice* (1978), the *Memory of the World Programme* (1992), the *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights* (1998), the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (2001), and the *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003).<sup>7</sup> Additionally, UNESCO organized the first intergovernmental conference on sustainable development in 1968, resulting in the creation of its Man and the Biosphere program.<sup>8</sup> In 1969, the UNESCO Secretariat took on the work of the International Bureau of Education.<sup>9</sup> Since 2015, UNESCO has significantly contributed to UN reform initiatives and to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with key inputs to several SDGs, such as SDG 4 on education and SDGs relating to natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, communication and information, and ocean conservation.<sup>10</sup> UNESCO supports the fulfillment of the SDGs through its mission to achieve universal education, promoting the contribution of science and technology in sustainable development, and by promoting cultural diversity in the development policies.<sup>11</sup>

At NMUN•NY 2019, we are simulating the Executive Board of UNESCO in terms of composition and size; however, delegates are not limited to the strict mandate of the Executive Board, as a budgetary and administrative body, during the conference. For the purposes of NMUN•NY 2019, and corresponding with the educational mission of the conference, the committee has the ability to make programmatic and policy decisions on issues within the mandate of UNESCO in line with the overall function of the organization.

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<sup>1</sup> New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2018-19*, 2018, p. 328.

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, *Relations with the organizations of the UN System*, 2012; *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 63.

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO, *The Organization's History*, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> UNESCO, *Basic Texts: 2016 Edition*, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO at a glance (ERI/2010/WS/2)*, 2010, p. 37.

<sup>8</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO at a glance (ERI/2010/WS/2)*, 2010, p. 32; UNESCO, *Man and the Biosphere Programme*, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO, *The Organization's History*, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO and the UN Reform*, 2017; UNESCO, *UNESCO and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2018.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

## **Governance, Structure, and Membership**

UNESCO's headquarters are located in Paris.<sup>12</sup> The General Conference and an Executive Board govern the work of UNESCO.<sup>13</sup> The Director-General oversees the different intergovernmental organizations of UNESCO.<sup>14</sup> There are currently 195 Member States and 11 Associate Members of UNESCO.<sup>15</sup> The Constitution affords membership to all UN Member States; non-Member States may be upon the recommendation of the Executive Board with the approval of two thirds of the General Conference.<sup>16</sup> Associate Members, political or territorial entities that do not constitute independent Member States, can be admitted upon recommendation of the General Conference, and are recognized some rights and obligations.<sup>17</sup> Members suspended or expelled from the UN may be suspended or expelled from UNESCO, and members may also voluntarily withdraw from the organization.<sup>18</sup> UNESCO operates on a two-year budget supported by voluntary contributions from Member States.<sup>19</sup>

### *General Conference and Executive Board*

The General Conference, which consists of all UNESCO Member States, meets every two years.<sup>20</sup> Every four years, the General Conference appoints a Director-General who is responsible for coordinating the work of the Secretariat.<sup>21</sup> The General Conference may hold additional meetings as summoned by the Executive Board or upon request by at least one third of its Member States.<sup>22</sup> The General Conference is primarily responsible for electing members of the Executive Board, deliberating upon and approving recommendations from the Executive Board, summoning international conferences, considering reports from Member States, and advising UN organizations on matters of education, science, and culture.<sup>23</sup> The General Conference may establish special and technical committees, create subsidiary organs, and invite observers on the recommendation of the Executive Board.<sup>24</sup> UNESCO currently directs the work of several intergovernmental bodies, including the Intergovernmental Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.<sup>25</sup> These sub-organs provide expert research and policy recommendations to the General Conference.<sup>26</sup> The Executive Board consists of 58 UNESCO Member States serving four-year terms.<sup>27</sup> The Executive Board prepares the biennial agenda for the General Conference, submits policy recommendations to the General Conference, implements decisions adopted by the General Conference, recommends the admission of new Members, nominates the Director-General, and reviews the budget.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the Executive Board may advise primary organs of the UN on issues relevant to its mandate, consult with representatives of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and independent experts, and request advisory opinions from the International Court of Justice (ICJ).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2018-19*, 2018, p. 328.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328.

<sup>14</sup> UNESCO, *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, 1945, Arts. III-VI.

<sup>15</sup> UNESCO, *Member States*, 2018.

<sup>16</sup> UNESCO, *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, 1945, Art. II.

<sup>17</sup> UNESCO, *Member States*, 2018.

<sup>18</sup> UNESCO, *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, 1945, Art. II.

<sup>19</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO at a glance (ERI/2010/WS/2)*, 2010, p. 36.

<sup>20</sup> New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2018-19*, 2018, p. 328.

<sup>21</sup> UNESCO, *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, 1945, Arts. III-VI.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. IV, para. 8.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. IV, VIII; UNESCO, *List of Members of the Executive Board*, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. IV, paras. 11-14.

<sup>25</sup> UNESCO, *Intergovernmental Committees*, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> UNESCO, *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, 1945, Art. IV, paras. 11-14.

<sup>27</sup> UNESCO, *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, 1945, Art. V.

<sup>28</sup> UNESCO Executive Board, *Executive Board in Brief*, 2018; UNESCO, *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, 1945, Art. V.

<sup>29</sup> UNESCO, *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, 1945, Art. V; UNESCO, *High-level Political Forum*, 2017.

## ***Mandate, Functions, and Powers***

The mandate for UNESCO is formally defined in Article 1, paragraph 3 of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), and Article 1 of the *UNESCO Constitution* (1945).<sup>30</sup> UNESCO is charged with promoting collaboration among Member States in the fields of education, science, and culture in order to develop and maintain peace, rule of law, and mutual respect.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, UNESCO is responsible for coordinating and supporting the development of knowledge and culture for “economic stability, political security, and general well-being of the peoples of the world.”<sup>32</sup> In accordance with this mandate, UNESCO works directly with Member States, UN organs, IGOs, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to support peace through the collaborative exchange of knowledge, culture, and sustainable development strategies.<sup>33</sup> Finally, UNESCO plays a major role in coordinating international conventions and setting standards on topics of education, culture, and science such, as its recent role in drafting the future Global Convention of Higher Education.<sup>34</sup>

To fulfill its mandate, UNESCO summons international conferences to deliberate issues and set standards, provides expert research and consultation to the primary organs of the UN system through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and coordinates with other entities to implement programs in the field.<sup>35</sup> UNESCO’s *Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021* has identified five specific functions at the national, regional, and international levels: fostering and generating innovation, supporting and monitoring global policy efforts, setting norms and standards, strengthening networks for cooperation and knowledge sharing, and providing capacity-building expertise for institutions and personnel.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, UNESCO’s Institute for Statistics serves as the primary platform for collecting and distributing data on education, science, culture, and communication from over 200 countries, regions, and territories.<sup>37</sup>

### *Relations with the United Nations*

ECOSOC is the primary mechanism for coordinating the operations and programs of specialized agencies; thus it serves as UNESCO’s first point of contact with the UN system.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, UNESCO relies on the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (UNSCEB) for guidance and strategic direction through its High-Level Committee for Programmes (HLCP), High-Level Committee for Management (HLCM), and the UN Development Group (UNDG).<sup>39</sup> UNESCO maintains memorandums of understanding with 16 UN system partners that underline roles of cooperation to prevent the duplication of work.<sup>40</sup> UNESCO’s relationship with the UN is governed by an agreement ratified by the General Assembly on 14 December 1946.<sup>41</sup> Representatives of the UN are invited to attend meetings of UNESCO’s General Conference and Executive Board, as well as special meetings convened by UNESCO; similarly, UNESCO is entitled to send representatives to the meetings of ECOSOC and the General Assembly when agenda matters relate to educational, scientific, or cultural matters.<sup>42</sup> UNESCO is empowered, in turn, to initiate studies and reports for consideration by ECOSOC.<sup>43</sup> UNESCO may also

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<sup>30</sup> *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 1; UNESCO, *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, 1945, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> UNESCO, *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, 1945, Art V, I.

<sup>32</sup> Conference of Allied Ministers of Education, *Conference for the establishment of UNESCO (ECO/CONF./29)*, 1945, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> UNESCO, *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, 1945, Arts. X-XI.

<sup>34</sup> UNESCO, *General introduction to the standard-setting instruments of UNESCO*, 2017; UNESCO, *Drafting of the future Global Convention of Higher Education concludes*, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO at a glance (ERI/2010/WS/2)*, 2010, p. 32.

<sup>36</sup> UNESCO, *2014-2021: Medium-Term Strategy (37 C/4)*, 2014, p. 14.

<sup>37</sup> UNESCO UIS, *UNESCO Institute for Statistics*, 2017.

<sup>38</sup> *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 63; UNESCO, *Agreement between the United Nations and UNESCO*, 1946.

<sup>39</sup> UNSCEB, *What We Do*; UNSCEB, *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, 2016.

<sup>40</sup> UNESCO Bureau of Strategic Planning, *Partnering with UN Agencies*, 2017.

<sup>41</sup> UNESCO, *Agreement between the United Nations and UNESCO*, 1946.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. II.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. IV.



work with ECOSOC to provide assistance to the Security Council as requested “for the maintenance or restoration of international peace and security.”<sup>44</sup> Finally, UNESCO may furnish information to and request legal advisory opinions from the ICJ.<sup>45</sup>

#### *Civil Society, Intergovernmental Organizations, and the Private Sector*

UNESCO primarily coordinates with civil society through its 199 National Commissions, agencies set up by the governments of UNESCO Member States and Associated Members.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, the organization maintains direct partnerships with 370 international NGOs and 20 civil society organizations (CSOs).<sup>47</sup> UNESCO maintains formal agreements with 87 IGOs and several institutions in the private sector.<sup>48</sup> UNESCO must provide ECOSOC information about any formal agreements with UN specialized agencies, IGOs, or NGOs before the agreements are enacted.<sup>49</sup> The organization maintains separate strategic objectives for various categories of partnerships, outlined in its *Comprehensive Partnership Strategy (192 EX/5.INF)* of 6 September 2013.<sup>50</sup> These partnerships provide critical information and implementation support for UNESCO’s various programs and initiatives.<sup>51</sup> Partners help UNESCO form policies, make decisions, and produce research materials by providing resources, operational support, and technical expertise.<sup>52</sup> Partners in the field, including bilateral government partners, NGOs, and private sector institutions, help mobilize financial and in-kind contributions resources from UNESCO for program implementation and meetings.<sup>53</sup>

#### **Recent Sessions and Current Priorities**

UNESCO is actively engaged with events and activities supporting its programmatic work around the world, with 2018 being a focus year for education, climate change, and cultural heritage protections.<sup>54</sup> Key activities include the implementation of UNESCO’s program of work and budget for 2018-2021, adopted during the 39<sup>th</sup> session of the General Conference.<sup>55</sup> The program of work aligns with UNESCO’s *Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021*.<sup>56</sup> The 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference also considered a progress report on the preparation of a global Convention on the recognition of higher education qualifications and preparations toward a declaration of ethical principles on climate change.<sup>57</sup>

At the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference in 2018, the budget and quadrennial program adopted during the 39<sup>th</sup> Session were set to continue to be the delegates considered UNESCO initiatives in Africa, gender equality, UN system reform, and climate change.<sup>58</sup> From 10-11 September 2018, the Ocean and Climate Platform and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO)

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Art. VII.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., Art. X.

<sup>46</sup> UNESCO, *National Commissions*, 2018; UNESCO, *Partnerships*, 2018.

<sup>47</sup> UNESCO, *Non-Governmental Organizations*, 2018; UNESCO, *Partnerships*, 2018.

<sup>48</sup> UNESCO, *Intergovernmental Organizations*, 2018; UNESCO, *Private Sector*, 2018; UNESCO, *Partnerships*, 2018.

<sup>49</sup> UNESCO, *Relations with the organizations of the UN System*, 2017; *Charter of the United Nations*, Art. 63; UNESCO, *Partnerships*, 2018.

<sup>50</sup> UNESCO, *Comprehensive Partnership Strategy (192 EX/5,INF)*, 2013; UNESCO, *Partnerships*, 2018.

<sup>51</sup> UNESCO, *Comprehensive Partnership Strategy (192 EX/5,INF)*, 2013, p. 3; UNESCO, *Partnerships*, 2018.

<sup>52</sup> UNESCO, *Comprehensive Partnership Strategy (192 EX/5,INF)*, 2013, pp. 3-4; UNESCO, *Partnerships*, 2018.

<sup>53</sup> UNESCO, *Comprehensive Partnership Strategy (192 EX/5,INF)*, 2013, p. 8; UNESCO, *Partnerships*, 2018.

<sup>54</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO*, 2018.

<sup>55</sup> UNESCO, *Draft Resolutions: First biennium 2018-2019 (39 C/5)*, 2017; UNESCO, *Preliminary Proposals by the Director-General Concerning the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5)*, 2016; UNESCO, *Preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5)*, 2015.

<sup>56</sup> UNESCO, *Consultation of Member States and Associate Members, including their National Commissions for UNESCO, as well as of intergovernmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations, on the preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5)*, 2016; UNESCO, *Strategic Results Report (SSR) 2015*, 2016.

<sup>57</sup> UNESCO, *Provisional Agenda of the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference*, 2017.

<sup>58</sup> UNESCO, *Preliminary Proposals by the Director-General Concerning the Draft Budget for 2020-2021 (40 C/5)*, 2018.



organized the High-Level Scientific Conference to discuss the UN Decade of Ocean Science of Sustainable Development.<sup>59</sup>

IOC-UNESCO also addressed education, noting that education for sustainable development (ESD) enables Member States to fully tackle present and future challenges in regards to climate change as well as create “more sustainable and resilient societies.”<sup>60</sup> The 204<sup>th</sup> session of UNESCO’s Executive Board focused on the need for UNESCO to improve efficiency within the organization in its efforts toward the 2030 Agenda.<sup>61</sup> Upcoming Executive Board sessions in 2019 will discuss indigenous languages, education improvements, and climate change actions.<sup>62</sup> UNESCO declared 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages.<sup>63</sup> In October 2018, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) launched its 2019 Survey of Formal Education to measure country-level and regional progress toward SDG 4.<sup>64</sup>

### **Conclusion**

UNESCO continues to play a key role in the protection of cultures as well as the promotion of education and improved learning practices through the inclusion of new technologies to better enhance cultural protection and education.<sup>65</sup> By creating and maintaining partnerships, UNESCO is able to better mainstream initiatives such as the 2030 Agenda into its work.<sup>66</sup> Information sharing and collaboration between actors and agencies remain key in this effort.<sup>67</sup> As UNESCO works towards implementing the 2030 Agenda, it will continue to lead global efforts on SDG 4, protect the world’s cultural heritage and foster cultural expression, and promote continual climate action to help preserve and protect the Earth.<sup>68</sup>

### **Annotated Bibliography**

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2014). *2014-2021: Medium-Term Strategy (37 C/4)*. Retrieved 12 August 2018 from:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002278/227860e.pdf>

*This resource complements the approved program and budget document highlighted above. It provides a comprehensive overview of the Executive Board and Secretariat’s joint vision for UNESCO from 2014-2021, as approved by the 37<sup>th</sup> General Conference. The document provides unique insights into the changing international development landscape as well as the principles guiding UNESCO’s work for the near future. It highlights UNESCO’s overarching objectives and global priorities. Most significantly, the document defines UNESCO’s nine strategic objectives for 2014-2021. Delegates should look into this document to ensure that their proposals support these strategic objectives. Finally, the document provides guidance for partnerships and collaborative efforts within the UN system and beyond.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2017). *Draft Resolutions: First biennium 2018-2019 (39 C/5)*. Retrieved 10 August 2018 from:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002477/247747e.pdf>

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<sup>59</sup> UNESCO, *From COP21 towards the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)*, 2018.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> UNESCO, *Follow-Up to Decisions and Resolutions Adopted by the Executive Board and General Conference at Their Previous Sessions*, 2018.

<sup>62</sup> UNESCO, *Dates of the 205th Session and Provisional List of Matters to be Examined by the Executive Board at its 205th Session*, 2018.

<sup>63</sup> UNESCO, *Africa Department*, 2018.

<sup>64</sup> UNESCO UIS, *The UIS Launches 2019 Education Survey*, 2018; UNESCO UIS, *SDG 4 Data at Your Fingertips with New Tools from the UIS*, 2018.

<sup>65</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO*, 2018.

<sup>66</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2018.

<sup>67</sup> UNESCO, *Partnerships*, 2018.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.



*This document was presented at the General Conference 39<sup>th</sup> Session in order to be approved. The draft program and budget for 2018-2021 represents the second half of implementation of the Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021. These draft resolutions will also complement efforts made in the approved Programme and Budget 2014-2017 while also including the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Delegates should become familiar with these draft resolutions as they will most likely be approved for the program and budget for 2018-2021.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2017). *General Conference 39<sup>th</sup> Session* [Website]. Retrieved 11 August 2018 from: <https://en.unesco.org/generalconference/39>  
*The General Conference will be a key event monitor for any decisions and actions taken, as it is where UNESCO's budget and program of work will be discussed and approved. Delegates should preview the provisional agenda and the organization of the work to get a sense of what are the documents and reports being reviewed and if there are any extraordinary meetings taking place. Delegates will also find that the General Conference contains follow-ups and action points that will guide activities UNESCO will undertake until the next General Conference.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2018). *Follow-Up to Decisions and Resolutions Adopted by the Executive Board and General Conference at Their Previous Sessions* [Concept Note]. Retrieved 9 July 2018 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002643/264362e.pdf>  
*This concept paper helps to summarize the decisions and resolutions adopted by the Executive Board and General Conference of UNESCO. This document outlines UNESCO's efforts to strengthen the organization's capacity to implement the 2030 Agenda. A key objective for UNESCO is to focus on strategic transformation, which includes improving operational efficiency, communication, partnerships and global presence. Delegates will benefit from this document as it discusses UNESCO's Strategic Transformation Process by explaining that it is not just an end-result, but also a process to better transform UNESCO to meet the changing world.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2018). *Partnerships* [Website]. Retrieved 11 August 2018 from: <https://en.unesco.org/partnerships/>  
*This website provides an overview of UNESCO's efforts to partner with relevant public and private stakeholders of all levels to further the objectives of the organization. To achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda, UNESCO relies on global partnerships to support, work and finance various global and local programs to promote education for all, gender equality, cultural heritage, youth empowerment, climate action and other important goals. Delegates will find this source useful as they familiarize themselves with the way UNESCO works to achieve its goals and they learn more about international cooperation, capacity-building and information sharing.*

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## I. Protecting Cultural Heritage in Conflict Zones

*"World Heritage is the foundation of people's existence and cohesion. It is the wellspring of social identity."<sup>69</sup>*

### **Introduction**

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) leads global initiatives to safeguard cultural and natural heritage in conflict zones.<sup>70</sup> Cultural heritage is defined by the 1972 *World Heritage Convention* as "monuments, groups of buildings, or sites that hold outstanding universal value."<sup>71</sup> Natural heritage includes naturally occurring formations, while mixed sites satisfy characteristics of both cultural and natural heritage.<sup>72</sup> With the adoption of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003), the international community also recognized the intangible aspect of cultural heritage such as practices, representations, and expressions of a group or society.<sup>73</sup> Heritage provides societies with tangible manifestations of history and contributes to a variety of fields such as archaeology, architecture, and science and technology of a specific culture.<sup>74</sup> The *New Urban Agenda*, which was adopted at the United Nations (UN) Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in 2016, underscored cultural heritage as a key enabler for sustainable development emphasizing its role in making human settlements more habitable by strengthening the social participation and inclusion of people.<sup>75</sup>

According to the World Heritage List (WHL) established through the 1972 Convention, there are currently 845 cultural sites, 209 natural sites, and 38 mixed sites.<sup>76</sup> The WHL marked 54 of those sites as being in danger from pollution, natural disasters, poaching, uncontrolled urbanization, and in some cases armed conflict and war.<sup>77</sup> Damages to tangible cultural heritage in conflict stem from shelling, gunfire, looting, illegal construction, and robbery.<sup>78</sup> During conflict, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) faces increased risk of disappearance or deterioration.<sup>79</sup> Between 1979 and 2013, 22% of world heritage properties in Africa were affected by conflict.<sup>80</sup> As of March 2016, all six of Syria's official heritage sites have been reported damaged.<sup>81</sup>

Damages to cultural heritage are often a byproduct of proximity to conflict zones.<sup>82</sup> However, intentional destruction of cultural heritage has also become a method of victimizing certain groups based on their cultural and ethnic identities.<sup>83</sup> The shared sense of belonging to a community is often deeply rooted in cultural heritage.<sup>84</sup> Non-state armed groups exploit this cultural connection to dominate local historical narratives and suppress particular communities.<sup>85</sup> During a March 2016 colloquium hosted by the

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<sup>69</sup> UN DPI, *As World Heritage Committee opens session, UNESCO urges protection of sites targeted for destruction*, 2015.

<sup>70</sup> UNESCO, *About World Heritage*.

<sup>71</sup> UNESCO, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, 1972.

<sup>72</sup> UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, 2012, pp. 13-14.

<sup>73</sup> UNESCO, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2003.

<sup>74</sup> UNESCO, *Tangible Cultural Heritage*, 2017.

<sup>75</sup> UN General Assembly, *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*, 2017, p. 3.

<sup>76</sup> UNESCO, *World Heritage List Statistics*.

<sup>77</sup> UNESCO, *World Heritage in Danger*; UNESCO, *World Heritage List Statistics*.

<sup>78</sup> Heritage for Peace, *Conflict, Heritage and Damage*.

<sup>79</sup> University of Cambridge, *Cultural Heritage after Conflict*, 2010.

<sup>80</sup> UNESCO, *State of Conservation of World Heritage Properties*, 2014, p. 97.

<sup>81</sup> UNESCO, *Syrian Heritage: Built Heritage*.

<sup>82</sup> University of Cambridge, *Cultural Heritage after Conflict*, 2010.

<sup>83</sup> UN DPI, *Alarmed at destruction in Palmyra, Security Council reiterates need to stamp out hatred espoused by ISIL*, 2017.

<sup>84</sup> University of Cambridge, *Cultural Heritage after Conflict*, 2010.

<sup>85</sup> Parker, *The Impact of Armed Conflict on Cultural Heritage*, 2015.

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), participants debated whether world heritage could retain its historic identity after being destroyed and later reconstructed.<sup>86</sup>

### ***International and Regional Framework***

At the 1899 Hague Peace Conference, the *Convention with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land* was adopted and became the first multilateral treaty to establish the principle of protecting cultural property, calling on the international community to prosecute acts of vandalism or theft against cultural property.<sup>87</sup> As a result of the destruction of cultural heritage during the Second World War, the *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* (Hague Convention) was adopted in 1954, focusing exclusively on the protection of cultural heritage in times of conflict.<sup>88</sup> The *First Protocol to the Hague Convention* was adopted at the same time with a focus on criminalizing the export of cultural heritage from an occupied territory during armed conflict.<sup>89</sup> In 1999, the *Second Protocol to the Hague Convention* was adopted, creating an additional layer of protection for cultural heritage of the greatest importance to humanity.<sup>90</sup> Under this protocol, parties to a conflict are required to refrain from making cultural heritage properties the object of attack or from using these properties for military means.<sup>91</sup> States parties to the Hague Convention and its Protocols are called upon to implement the provisions into domestic law with appropriate measures to punish such offenses.<sup>92</sup>

In 1972, during UNESCO's 17<sup>th</sup> session, the committee adopted the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (World Heritage Convention) to address the threat that cultural and natural heritage face from natural decay and intentional damage or destruction.<sup>93</sup> The World Heritage Convention outlines the duties of Member States in identifying vulnerable sites and safeguarding them.<sup>94</sup> In 2003, UNESCO adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, emphasizing the role of ICH as a main source for cultural diversity and a primary enabler for sustainable development, as well as the need to protect it.<sup>95</sup>

In 2015, the States parties to the World Heritage Convention adopted the *Bonn Declaration on World Heritage* addressing concerns about physical damages and illicit trafficking of cultural property in areas exposed to armed conflict.<sup>96</sup> The Bonn Declaration denounces vandalism and looting of cultural property both as a tactic of war and as a revenue source for terrorist groups; it further emphasizes the importance of Member States coming together and ratifying the cultural conventions to ensure more effective implementation.<sup>97</sup> The Declaration also recommends that the UN Security Council add heritage protection to the mandates of peacekeeping missions during all stages of conflict.<sup>98</sup>

In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a global plan of action to fulfill

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<sup>86</sup> Khalaf, *A viewpoint on the reconstruction of destroyed UNESCO Cultural World Heritage Sites*, 2016, pp. 261-274.

<sup>87</sup> International Peace Conference, *Convention (II) with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land*, 1899.

<sup>88</sup> Intergovernmental Conference on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*, 1954.

<sup>89</sup> Intergovernmental Conference on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, *Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*, 1954.

<sup>90</sup> Hague Diplomatic Conference, *Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* (1999), 1999.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> UNESCO, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, 1972.

<sup>94</sup> UNESCO, *The World Heritage Convention*.

<sup>95</sup> UNESCO, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2003, p. 1.

<sup>96</sup> WHC, *Bonn Declaration on World Heritage*, 2015.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.



people's potential and create a safer and more habitable planet.<sup>99</sup> SDG target 11.4 calls on the international community to protect cultural heritage through increased public and private expenditure on the maintenance and conservation of all types of heritage.<sup>100</sup> The *New Urban Agenda* acknowledges the vital role that culture plays in promoting sustainable developments of people and cities.<sup>101</sup> It highlights culture and cultural diversity as wellsprings for the enrichment of people and emphasizes cultural heritage as a priority component during the planning stages of human settlements.<sup>102</sup>

Regional organizations have also contributed to global efforts of safeguarding cultural heritage during conflict; in 2006, the African Union Commission adopted the *Charter for African Cultural Renaissance* to mobilize Member States protecting cultural heritage and diversity.<sup>103</sup> The charter emphasizes cultural diversity, unity, and the voices of traditional leaders and elders as keys to successful peacebuilding.<sup>104</sup> In 2017, the Council of Europe adopted the *Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property* dealing exclusively with the illicit trafficking of cultural property and establishing criminal offenses such as "theft, unlawful excavation or acquisition, and the intentional destruction of cultural property."<sup>105</sup>

### **Role of the International System**

One of UNESCO's channels for distributing material and technical assistance for Member States to protect their cultural heritage during conflict is the Fund for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which was established through the *Second Protocol for the Hague Convention* in 1999.<sup>106</sup> Member States can submit a request to receive financial assistance based on a number of criteria, including the recipient's legislative and administrative commitment to the issue and the cost-effectiveness of the proposed activity.<sup>107</sup> Recent examples of financial assistance from UNESCO to Member States include a \$50,000 grant to Libya in 2016 for emergency protective measures to their cultural heritage and a \$40,000 grant to Mali in 2016 for enhanced protection for the Tomb of Askia.<sup>108</sup> UNESCO also employs Rapid Assessment Missions (RAM) to quickly visit endangered heritage sites, assess their overall level of damage and publish damage assessment reports.<sup>109</sup> RAMs also identify emergency measures that need to be undertaken by relevant institutions to mitigate the danger to which the assessed cultural heritage is exposed.<sup>110</sup>

UNESCO also assists States parties in ratifying and effectively implementing the Hague Convention and its Protocols, while encouraging Member States to become signatories and to create the conditions conducive to the implementation of the Convention.<sup>111</sup> UNESCO supports governments and civil society with capacity-building and awareness-raising programs, including a variety of publications such as manuals, information kits, and brochures.<sup>112</sup> UNESCO also delivers technical and professional assistance to heritage sites in immediate danger.<sup>113</sup> In 2016, UNESCO published the *Military Manual on the*

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<sup>99</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

<sup>100</sup> UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 11*.

<sup>101</sup> UN General Assembly, *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*, 2017, p. 4.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>103</sup> AU, *Charter for African Cultural Renaissance*, 2006.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Council of Europe, *Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property*, 2017; Council of Europe, *Details of Treaty No.221*, 2018.

<sup>106</sup> UNESCO, *Second Protocol (1999) to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*, 1999, p. 14.

<sup>107</sup> UNESCO, *The Fund for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*, 2017.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO rapid assessment mission to Palmyra*, 2016.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> UNESCO, *Armed Conflict and Heritage: Capacity-Building*, 2017.

<sup>112</sup> UNESCO, *Armed Conflict and Heritage: Awareness-Raising*, 2017; UNESCO, *Protect cultural property in the event of armed conflict*.

<sup>113</sup> UNESCO, *About World Heritage*.

*Protection of Cultural Property* to assist military forces with the protection of cultural property during armed conflict.<sup>114</sup>

The World Heritage Committee (WHC) is the primary body tasked with coordinating with Member States on the effective implementation of the World Heritage Convention.<sup>115</sup> It assists the signatories of the Hague Convention to conserve their cultural and national heritage within their territory.<sup>116</sup> Member States are encouraged to set up, for instance, security or tourist services at their sites and to undertake technical conservation research to preserve their national heritage.<sup>117</sup> The Convention also founded the World Heritage Fund (WHF) under the auspices of UNESCO.<sup>118</sup> WHF, which is managed through WHC, allocates financial assistance and provides expert personnel for protection and reporting activities to Member States on the basis of the level of danger that their cultural heritage is subjected to, whether through natural or human causes.<sup>119</sup>

During UNESCO's 2015 General Conference, the organization took note of heightened levels of deliberate attacks on cultural heritage as a strategy used by violent extremists.<sup>120</sup> UNESCO recognizes this systematic destruction of culture as a means to "destabilize populations and hurt societies at their core over the very long term."<sup>121</sup> As a result, UNESCO created the *Strategy for Reinforcing UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict* (2015) with the overall goal of "reducing the vulnerability of cultural heritage and diversity before, during, and in the aftermath of conflict in a context where destruction and threats are unprecedented."<sup>122</sup> The six-year strategy outlines different mechanisms that UNESCO aims to implement to preserve cultural heritage at the three different stages of conflict.<sup>123</sup> These activities include assisting governments in developing institutional capacities to protect culture and developing strategic partnerships between national authorities and other UN entities to successfully implement all relevant conventions.<sup>124</sup>

Furthermore, UNESCO's Director-General, Irina Bokova, highlighted the vital role that civil society, particularly youth, plays in safeguarding culture with the launch of the #Unite4Heritage campaign to celebrate and safeguard global heritage.<sup>125</sup> The #Unite4Heritage campaign was created in response to the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage in conflict zones, particularly in Iraq.<sup>126</sup> The campaign utilizes social networks to mobilize youth across the world for the protection of heritage.<sup>127</sup> In December 2016, 40 countries in addition to international organizations such as UNESCO, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and several museums convened in Abu Dhabi to discuss the safeguarding of endangered cultural heritage.<sup>128</sup> In its final declaration, the conference called for the creation of a new fund, the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas.<sup>129</sup> The

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<sup>114</sup> UNESCO, *Protection of Cultural Property - Military Manual*, 2016.

<sup>115</sup> UNESCO, *The World Heritage Committee*.

<sup>116</sup> UNESCO, *The World Heritage Convention*.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> UNESCO, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, 1972.

<sup>119</sup> UNESCO, *World Heritage Fund*.

<sup>120</sup> UNESCO, *Reinforcement of UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict (38 C/49)*, 2015, p. 2.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> UNESCO, *#Unite4Heritage*.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO, France and the Emirates launch an International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage*, 2017; UNESCO, *Director-General opens Conference for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage in Conflict Areas in Abu Dhabi*, 2016.

<sup>129</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO, France and the Emirates launch an International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage*, 2017.

fund aims to raise \$100 million by 2019.<sup>130</sup> Members have already pledged \$75 million in contributions while some countries committed to sharing expertise and offered political support.<sup>131</sup> The fund's objectives are prevention of destruction, restoration of destroyed sites, countering trafficking, and the establishment of safe havens for endangered cultural property including, if necessary, in other countries.<sup>132</sup>

In 2015, the Permanent Missions of Italy and Jordan to the UN, along with UNESCO, INTERPOL, and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), launched the initiative "Protecting Cultural Heritage - An Imperative for Humanity."<sup>133</sup> At the national level, the initiative calls for the establishment and training of specialized police units dedicated to responding to immediate threats to cultural heritage as well as the creation of national databases connected to INTERPOL's Stolen Works of Art Database, a global database accessible to all holding records of missing cultural property.<sup>134</sup> UNESCO also signed an agreement in 2015 with the UN Institute for Training and Research's Operational Satellite Applications Program (UNOSAT) to utilize the latest aerial geographical mapping technologies in the protection of cultural and natural heritage.<sup>135</sup>

The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) is an intergovernmental organization that works to promote all forms of conservation of cultural heritage.<sup>136</sup> ICCROM engages with Member States to provide support and technical expertise to on-ground professionals and institutions that work toward the protection of heritage.<sup>137</sup> The International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness (ICORP), a subsidiary of ICOMOS, enhances the state of preparedness of institutions and professionals dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage in addition to promoting the integration of heritage protection into local and international disaster prevention and response mechanisms.<sup>138</sup>

In 2017, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2347 on "Maintenance of international peace and security," supplementing UNESCO's activities by creating provisions in international law that criminalize the destruction of cultural heritage.<sup>139</sup> The resolution condemns the unlawful damage and trafficking of cultural property and classifies attacks against sites of cultural or historic value as war crimes.<sup>140</sup> The UNODC has also been a key player in protecting heritage during conflict.<sup>141</sup> UNODC works closely with Member States on enhancing domestic legislation, improving investigations and prosecutions, and fostering international cooperation between Member States on combatting destruction of heritage.<sup>142</sup> UNODC maintains an online database with cases from Member States to allow the sharing of information and best practices.<sup>143</sup> Similarly, UNESCO maintains an online database that offers access to national and

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Security Council Report, *Protection of Cultural Heritage in Armed Conflict*, 2017; UNESCO, *UNESCO, France and the Emirates launch an International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage*, 2017.

<sup>133</sup> UNODC, *Global initiative launched to counter the destruction and trafficking of cultural property by terrorist and organized crime groups*, 2015.

<sup>134</sup> INTERPOL, *Creating a National Cultural Heritage Unit*, 2017, p. 7.

<sup>135</sup> UNITAR, *UNESCO and UNITAR-UNOSAT Team Up to Protect Cultural Heritage with the Latest Geo-Spatial Technologies*, 2015.

<sup>136</sup> ICCROM, *What is ICCROM*, 2018.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> ICORP, *About*.

<sup>139</sup> UN DPI, *Security Council Members Decry Ruin of Cultural Heritage to Fuel Armed Conflict amid Calls for Greater Cooperation in Holding Profiteers Accountable (SC/13100)*, 2017.

<sup>140</sup> UN DPI, *Security Council Condemns Destruction, Smuggling of Cultural Heritage by Terrorist Groups, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2347 (2017)*, 2017; UN Security Council, *Maintenance of international peace and security (S/RES/2347 (2017))*, 2017, p. 3.

<sup>141</sup> UNODC, *Remarks at the high-level side event on the subject of cultural rights and the protection of cultural heritage especially in armed conflict situations*, 2016.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> UNODC, *Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime*.

international legislation concerning cultural or natural heritage.<sup>144</sup> In the field of safeguarding cultural heritage in conflict zones, INTERPOL focuses on streamlining reporting channels to effectively receive information from different members in society about attacks and robberies against cultural property.<sup>145</sup> In collaboration with UNESCO and UNODC, INTERPOL has also been spearheading the global initiative to create national specialized police force units dedicated to responding to threats to cultural heritage.<sup>146</sup>

The International Criminal Court (ICC) classifies the destruction of cultural heritage as an international crime.<sup>147</sup> Article 8 of the ICC's Rome Statute of 1998 categorizes intentionally directed attacks against buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, and other cultural expressions as war crimes.<sup>148</sup> ICC's first conviction under this provision came in September 2016, when militant Islamist group member Ahmed Al Faqi Al Mahdi confessed to attacking buildings of religious and historic significance in Mali.<sup>149</sup> The ICC has been unable to make further convictions due to limited jurisdiction.<sup>150</sup>

### **Reporting Mechanisms for Endangered Cultural Heritage**

The capacities of Member States and international organizations to respond to reports of destruction or theft of cultural heritage during conflict are weakened by the absence of specialized units dedicated to responding to reports of threatened cultural heritage.<sup>151</sup> When human life is at risk during times of conflict, protecting cultural heritage becomes of lesser priority to governments and law enforcement units.<sup>152</sup> The timeliness of response and assessment of damaged cultural heritage thus presents a critical challenge for the international community.<sup>153</sup> Rapid damage assessment (RDA) is essential to the protection of cultural sites because it can be used as grounds for requesting immediate assistance and prioritization of resources from relevant authorities.<sup>154</sup> The international bodies that are responsible for initial assessments such as ICCROM, ICORP, or RAM are often unable to access damaged sites to assess risks and save cultural property due to ongoing conflict or the presence of debris, particularly during the absence of specialized police units.<sup>155</sup>

RDA can be supplemented by investments in technology-based monitoring and reporting systems such as aerial photography drones and advanced software for archiving.<sup>156</sup> In conflict zones, aerial satellite imagery is often the only safe method of obtaining information about heritage sites and can assist relevant authorities in planning emergency measures.<sup>157</sup> UNOSAT offers technical expertise in obtaining timely satellite imagery of areas inaccessible to the international community, while UNESCO's network of experts on cultural heritage help interpret the satellite imagery obtained.<sup>158</sup> By 2016, the UNESCO-UNOSAT collaboration had played key roles in obtaining timely imagery and technical analysis on the extent of damage to cultural heritage sites in Syria, Yemen, Nepal, and Iraq.<sup>159</sup> The creation of a national

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<sup>144</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws*, 2017.

<sup>145</sup> INTERPOL, *Creating a National Cultural Heritage Unit*, 2017, p. 6.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>147</sup> Ellis, *The ICC's Role in Combatting the Destruction of Cultural Heritage*, 2017, p. 24.

<sup>148</sup> UN Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an ICC, *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (A/CONF.183/9)*, 1998.

<sup>149</sup> ICC, *Situation in the Republic of Mali: In the Case of the Prosecutor v. Ahmed Al Faqi Al Mahdi*, 2016.

<sup>150</sup> Ellis, *The ICC's Role in Combatting the Destruction of Cultural Heritage*, 2017, p. 24.

<sup>151</sup> INTERPOL, *Creating a National Cultural Heritage Unit*, 2017.

<sup>152</sup> ICCROM, *Protecting Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict*, 2012, p. 97.

<sup>153</sup> ICOM-CC, *Post-disaster damage assessment of cultural heritage: Are we prepared?*, 2017, p. 1.

<sup>154</sup> Vafadari et al., *Damage Assessment and Monitoring of Cultural Heritage Places in a Disaster and Post-Disaster Event – A Case Study of Syria*, 2017.

<sup>155</sup> ICCROM, *Protecting Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict*, 2012, p. 97.

<sup>156</sup> ICOM-CC, *Post-disaster damage assessment of cultural heritage: Are we prepared?*, 2017, p. 2.

<sup>157</sup> UNITAR, *UNESCO and UNITAR-UNOSAT Team Up to Protect Cultural Heritage with the Latest Geo-Spatial Technologies*, 2015.

<sup>158</sup> UNESCO, *Satellite-Based Damage Assessment of Cultural Heritage Sites 2015 Summary Report of Iraq, Nepal, Syria & Yemen*, 2016.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

law enforcement unit that specializes in responding to threats to culture heritage can also assist in streamlining reporting mechanisms for endangered cultural heritage.<sup>160</sup> Specialized units also allow for more effective information sharing at both the local and international level and can assist in creating public policy as well as prosecuting crimes against cultural heritage.<sup>161</sup> In Argentina, the Department for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, established in 2002, successfully carried out several investigations resulting in the return of stolen cultural artefacts to their owners.<sup>162</sup>

Reporting damages to ICH presents yet another challenge, as the disappearance of cultural structures or rituals is not always visible and therefore much more difficult to assess and report.<sup>163</sup> In later stages of conflict, destruction of ICH can also prove more difficult to reverse and heal.<sup>164</sup> While the physical destruction of the Timbuktu mausoleums was well documented during the Northern Mali conflict of 2012, less visible damage was inflicted on ICH being practiced at these sites.<sup>165</sup> Rituals and practices such as religious ceremonies, theatre performances, or handmade embroideries have largely disappeared and can no longer be safely conducted in their original settings due to conflict.<sup>166</sup> ICCROM emphasizes improving peace-time documentation mechanisms such as creating electronic repositories for information about cultural heritage as a possible solution for streamlining assessment and recovery efforts during conflict.<sup>167</sup>

### ***Suppressing the Financing of Terrorism Through Protecting Cultural Heritage***

The intentional destruction and illicit trafficking of cultural heritage by terrorist groups during conflict is a growing challenge for the international community.<sup>168</sup> The deliberate destruction of cultural heritage by terrorist groups is a means of hindering post-conflict recovery and sustainable development, and is part of a wider effort to erase particular groups and their histories.<sup>169</sup> The rise in this illegal trade is due to increased mobility of cultural property, a growing market for cultural objects, and the easy use and access of Internet transactions and auction houses.<sup>170</sup> A 2015 survey conducted by INTERPOL in 56 Member States confirmed that the illicit trade of cultural property over the Internet is a growing issue.<sup>171</sup> Terrorist groups additionally engage in money laundering through the trafficking of cultural property, buying cultural objects with illegally obtained money and legally selling these items later at a high cost.<sup>172</sup> As a result, the protection of cultural heritage by Member States and international organizations becomes imperative to curb an important revenue stream for terrorist groups.<sup>173</sup>

The criminalization of the illegal trade and trafficking of cultural property was established by UNESCO in 1970 through the *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*.<sup>174</sup> However, the Convention has not yet been universally

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<sup>160</sup> INTERPOL, *Creating a National Cultural Heritage Unit*, 2017.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Bräuchler, *Intangible Cultural Heritage and Peace Building in Indonesia and East Timor*, 2011, pp. 153-167.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., pp. 153-167.

<sup>165</sup> Johannot-Gradis, *Protecting the past for the future: How does law protect tangible and intangible cultural heritage in armed conflict?*, 2015, p. 1260.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p. 1260.

<sup>167</sup> ICCROM, *Protecting Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict*, 2012, p. 10.

<sup>168</sup> INTERPOL, *Creating a National Cultural Heritage Unit*, 2017.

<sup>169</sup> UNESCO, *Our responsibility to protect cultural heritage from terrorism and mass atrocities*, 2017.

<sup>170</sup> INTERPOL et al., *Protecting Cultural Heritage: An Imperative for Humanity*, 2016, p. 7; The Joint Polish-Norwegian Project on Legal and Illicit Trade with Cultural Heritage, *Stop heritage crime: Good practices and recommendations*, 2011.

<sup>171</sup> UNESCO et al., *Basic Actions concerning Cultural Objects being offered for Sale over the Internet*, 2006.

<sup>172</sup> Renold, *The legal and illegal trade in cultural property to and throughout Europe: facts, findings and legal analysis*, 2018; INTERPOL et al., *Protecting Cultural Heritage: An Imperative for Humanity*, 2016, p. 7.

<sup>173</sup> INTERPOL, *Creating a National Cultural Heritage Unit*, 2017.

<sup>174</sup> UNESCO, *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*, 1970.

ratified in all countries.<sup>175</sup> The UN Security Council built on the 1970 Convention and recognized the link between the illicit trafficking of cultural property and the financing of terrorism in resolution 2199 of 2015 on “Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.”<sup>176</sup> Article 16 of the resolution recognizes that terrorist entities such as Al Qaida and Daesh are generating income to support their recruitment activities and to strengthen the effectiveness of their attacks through the looting and smuggling of cultural property from Iraq and Syria.<sup>177</sup>

The European Commission identified the lack of consistent legislation pertaining to the importing and exporting of cultural property among its Member States as a root cause of the illicit trafficking of cultural goods.<sup>178</sup> While the *Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects* (1995) is concerned with the illicit trafficking of cultural property, it exclusively focuses on combatting it through establishing common legislation for the restitution of stolen cultural property.<sup>179</sup> In 2014, UNODC developed the *Guidelines for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses with Respect to Trafficking in Cultural Property and other Related Offences* as a conclusive toolkit detailing the role that governmental institutions and members from civil society can perform in eliminating the trafficking of cultural property.<sup>180</sup> The guidelines underscore the need for monitoring and data collection mechanisms, in addition to educational and awareness raising programs concerned with safeguarding cultural heritage as pillars for successful prevention strategies.<sup>181</sup> Moreover, the guidelines encourage Member States to criminalize the trafficking or looting of cultural property and to better train customs authorities, public prosecutors, as well as police forces to combat the illegal trade of cultural goods.<sup>182</sup> High levels of corruption enable the illegal trade in cultural property.<sup>183</sup> Member States need to build stronger institutional capacity, develop policy frameworks, and foster closer cooperation with all relevant stakeholders to address the illicit trafficking of cultural heritage.<sup>184</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Cultural heritage continues to be targeted during conflict as a means of weakening a community's social fabric and erasing their collective identities.<sup>185</sup> UNESCO remains at the forefront of global efforts to monitor, prevent, and respond to the destruction of cultural heritage around the world.<sup>186</sup> Through its recent initiative #Unite4Heritage, UNESCO is promoting a global culture of inclusivity for all people, particularly youth, in the battle against deliberate destruction of cultural heritage by violent extremists.<sup>187</sup>

### **Further Research**

In their further research on protecting cultural heritage in conflict zones, delegates could explore the following questions: What are existing limitations within the frameworks that call for the protection of cultural heritage? What are effective plans of action to overcome those limitations? Does cultural heritage still have the same value after undergoing reconstruction and recovery? How can partnerships between UNESCO and other relevant actors be further developed, and which new ones could be established?

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<sup>175</sup> UNESCO, *Save culture, end trafficking*.

<sup>176</sup> UN Security Council, *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts (S/RES/2199 (2015))*, 2015.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> European Commission, *Fight against trafficking of cultural goods*, 2018.

<sup>179</sup> UNIDROIT, *Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects*, 1995.

<sup>180</sup> UN CCPCJ, *Report on the meeting of the expert group on protection against trafficking in cultural property*, 2014.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Renold, *The legal and illegal trade in cultural property to and throughout Europe: facts, findings and legal analysis*, 2018, p. 14.

<sup>184</sup> UNESCO, *Save culture, end trafficking*.

<sup>185</sup> UNESCO, *Irina Bokova: Culture and heritage are powerful tools for dialogue and social cohesion*.

<sup>186</sup> UNESCO, #Unite4Heritage.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

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*The 1954 Hague Convention is the earliest international framework which exclusively focuses on the protection of heritage in times of conflict. The Convention includes conclusive definitions for all types of heritage and the safeguarding of cultural heritage. The Convention also specifies UNESCO's role in providing technical assistance to Member States on the protection of cultural property. This document can help delegates identify what obligations their Member States are required to fulfill in regard to their cultural heritage and what sanctions they could be facing upon breach of the Convention.*

International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property. (2012). *Protecting Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict*. Retrieved 2 August 2018 from: [https://www.iccrom.org/sites/default/files/ICCROM\\_18\\_ProtectingHeritageConflict\\_en.pdf](https://www.iccrom.org/sites/default/files/ICCROM_18_ProtectingHeritageConflict_en.pdf)

*The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property's guide delivers insight on the effects of armed conflict on cultural heritage during all stages of conflict. The guide brings together a variety of case studies such as The Effects of Conflict on the Lost City in Colombia and The Fate of the Oron Museum during the Nigerian Civil War. Delegates can use this as further reading to reinforce their understanding of the topic with past case studies.*

International Criminal Court. (2016). *Situation in the Republic of Mali: In the Case of the Prosecutor V. Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi (ICC-01/12-01/15 A)*. Retrieved 8 August 2018 from: [https://www.icc-cpi.int/CourtRecords/CR2016\\_07244.PDF](https://www.icc-cpi.int/CourtRecords/CR2016_07244.PDF)

*The trial of Ahmed Al Faqi Al Mahdi is the first and only instance where an individual was tried internationally for a crime against cultural heritage. Al Mahdi was part of an armed group known as Ansar Dine and was charged with intentional destruction of buildings dedicated for religious and cultural purposes during July 2012 in Timbuktu, Mali. Under Article 8 of the ICC's Rome Statute, intentional attacks directed against buildings dedicated to history, education, art, or science are classified as a war crime, provided they are not part of military objectives. Delegates can look at different sections of the case document such as the judgement or sentence sections to get a firmer understanding of the procedures ICC can adopt in the future against perpetrators of cultural heritage damage.*

Johannot-Gradis, C. (2015). Protecting the past for the future: How does law protect tangible and intangible cultural heritage in armed conflict? *International Review of the Red Cross*, 97 (900): 1253-1275. Retrieved 26 September 2018 from: <https://www.icrc.org/en/international-review/article/protecting-past-future-how-does-law-protect-tangible-and-intangible>

*The International Review of the Red Cross is published jointly by the ICRC and Cambridge University Press and focuses on humanitarian law and policy during armed conflict. This journal article analyses cultural heritage during armed conflict through the four fundamental principles of the conduct of hostilities. The ICJ defines these four principles as military necessity, distinction, proportionality, and precaution. This source additionally presents the cases of both tangible and intangible heritage falling into enemy hands during conflict. Technical rulings of international law instruments on the topic of cultural heritage during conflict can be sought out through this publication.*

Khalaf, R. (2016). A viewpoint on the reconstruction of destroyed UNESCO Cultural World Heritage Sites. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 23 (3): 261-274. Retrieved 26 September 2018 from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13527258.2016.1269239>

*The question of "if world heritage is destroyed and later reconstructed, could it still be recognized as world heritage?" is explored within this journal article. The article presents the frequent issue of modernization versus restoration of damaged cultural heritage. This*



source is of increased value for discussions of cultural heritage during latter stages of conflict or post-conflict situations. As further research, delegates can explore why restoration may not always be the optimal solution for damaged heritage through this article.

United Nations, Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. (2014, January 24). *Report on the meeting of the expert group on protection against trafficking in cultural property (UNODC/CCPCJ/EG.1/2014/3)* [Meeting Record]. Retrieved 21 October 2018 from: [http://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CCPCJ/CCPCJ\\_Sessions/CCPCJ\\_23/\\_UNODC-CCPCJ-EG1-2014-3/UNODC-CCPCJ-EG1-2014-3\\_E.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CCPCJ/CCPCJ_Sessions/CCPCJ_23/_UNODC-CCPCJ-EG1-2014-3/UNODC-CCPCJ-EG1-2014-3_E.pdf)

*UNODC's Guidelines for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses with Respect to Trafficking in Cultural Property and other Related Offences is a comprehensive reference for national policymakers and a toolkit for capacity-building and awareness raising with regards to the trafficking of cultural property. The guidelines explore crime prevention strategies, criminal justice response mechanisms, and international cooperation. The guidelines additionally outline the role that each member in society, such as governmental authorities or cultural institutions, can perform to contribute to eliminating the illicit trade in cultural goods. Within these guidelines, delegates can find a clear structure that they can choose to implement in their working papers.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (n.d.). *#Unite4Heritage* [Website]. Retrieved 10 August 2018 from: <http://www.unite4heritage.org>

*The #Unite4Heritage initiative is UNESCO's main program to encourage contributions primarily from civil society. These contributions include financial assistance, social media awareness activities, and volunteer work in the field of heritage preservation. Created by UNESCO's Director-General in 2015, #Unite4Heritage is part of Irina Bokova's strategy to unify all levels of society under the common goal of safeguarding cultural heritage. Delegates that wish to become proactive in the field of safeguarding heritage should interact with this link.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (n.d.). *Partnerships* [Website]. Retrieved 9 August 2018 from: <https://en.unesco.org/partnerships>

*UNESCO engages with a wide array of partners toward the fulfillment of their mandate and identifies these partnerships as primary enablers for ensuring sustainable and long-lasting impact. These partners include other UN bodies, governments, non-governmental organizations, IGOs, the private sector, goodwill ambassadors, and civil society. This website briefly outlines the different ways that UNESCO interacts with its partners, such as financial and personnel contributions, expertise-sharing on the implementation of a regional or local program, or the provision of technical assistance and consultation services. Delegates can refer to this source in developing working papers that accurately reflect the mechanisms under which UNESCO enters into partnerships.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (n.d.). *World Heritage List Statistics* [Website]. Retrieved 24 July 2018 from: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/stat>

*The UNESCO World Heritage Convention website provides a breakdown of World Heritage Sites according to country, region, and type. The website moreover provides information about world heritage in danger such as World Heritage in Danger by Year. Graphs that show historical trends of world heritage such as Number of Mixed Heritage Sites by Year are also included. Delegates should consult the breakdowns by region included in this website to gauge the likely foreign policies of other Member States.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2016). *Protection of Cultural Property - Military Manual*. Retrieved 10 August 2018 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002466/246633e.pdf>

*This manual was published by UNESCO to assist military forces in implementing provisions in international law concerned with the protection of cultural property during*



*armed conflict. It offers suggestions and best practices at the different levels of command and during the different stages of armed conflict. This document can respond to more technical questions that delegates can ask about the implementation methods of international law regarding this topic.*

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## II. Education as a Tool to Prevent Extremism

*“Instead of sending tanks, send pens. Instead of sending soldiers, send teachers. This is the only way we can fight for education.”<sup>188</sup>*

### **Introduction**

According to the Global Terrorism Index, the Global Terrorism Database has recorded over 170,000 terrorist attacks since 2011.<sup>189</sup> In response to these trends, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) works with the international system to prevent and counter violent extremism, stressing that “no one is born a violent extremist.”<sup>190</sup> UNESCO reported that young people are trained by radical groups to inflict acts of terror on the society in response to socio-economic difficulties such as unemployment and poverty.<sup>191</sup> UNESCO’s objective is to prevent extremism and radicalization through education and empowerment of young men and women.<sup>192</sup> Extremism has led to staggering losses of life in multiple countries, making it a global phenomenon.<sup>193</sup> The 2015 report of the Secretary-General, “Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism” noted that the United Nations (UN) system has not established formal definitions for “terrorism” and “violent extremism,” primarily due to difficulties in translating terms across cultural settings.<sup>194</sup> However, there have been attempts to define these terms to shed more light on these definitions.<sup>195</sup> Extremism is the belief in and support for ideas that are dissimilar from what people consider correct or reasonable.<sup>196</sup> Violent extremism can be referred to as beliefs or ideas which motivate a person to carry out acts of violence to achieve a political or religious goal.<sup>197</sup> Terrorism can be defined as “a particular strategy adopted to achieve a political goal which is singularly the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear.”<sup>198</sup> Radicalization is the process of normalizing violence as the legitimate and desirable means of action by an individual or group.<sup>199</sup>

To combat terrorism with education, global approaches and instruments have been created and implemented by the UN and other international organizations.<sup>200</sup> General Assembly resolution 60/288 of 2006 on “The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy” calls for cross-sectorial cooperation to promote a culture of peace, tolerance, and respect.<sup>201</sup> As the leading entity for education policy in the international system, UNESCO has been instrumental in the implementation of education as a preventive strategy against radical extremism.<sup>202</sup> General Assembly resolution 60/288 of 2006 calls on Member States to take measures on national, regional and international levels to counter-terrorism.<sup>203</sup> This resolution further encourages UNESCO and Member States to play a key role in promoting a culture of peace, tolerance and respect for another’s beliefs.<sup>204</sup> To prevent extremism, the role of UNESCO’s

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<sup>188</sup> UN DPI, *Speech by Malala Yousafzai on The Role of Education to end Violence at the First Anniversary of the Global Education First Initiative at the ECOSOC Chamber on 25 September 2013, in New York, 2013.*

<sup>189</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2017, Measuring and Understanding the impact of terrorism, 2017, p. 2.*

<sup>190</sup> UNESCO, *Preventing Violent Extremism, 2018.*

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> UNESCO, *Education as a tool to prevent violent extremism, 2018.*

<sup>193</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2017, Measuring and Understanding the impact of terrorism, 2017.*

<sup>194</sup> UNESCO, *Preventing Violent Extremism through Education: A Guide for Policy-Makers, 2017, p. 18.*

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>196</sup> Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary, *Extremism.*

<sup>197</sup> Australian Government, *About Us, 2016.*

<sup>198</sup> UNESCO, *Preventing Violent Extremism through Education: A Guide for Policy-Makers, 2017, p. 13.*

<sup>199</sup> UNESCO, *A Teacher’s Guide on the Prevention of Extremism, 2016, p. 12.*

<sup>200</sup> UN General Assembly, *Global Counter-terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288), 2006.*

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> UN General Assembly, *United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism (A/RES/60/288), 2006, p. 4.*

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

mandate is to establish peaceful defenses in the mind of youth against extremist ideologies through learning.<sup>205</sup>

### ***International and Regional Framework***

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) (UDHR) lays the foundation for UNESCO's involvement in the prevention of extremism.<sup>206</sup> Every citizen has the right to life, liberty and security of person; terrorist attacks violate this right.<sup>207</sup> UNESCO has expressed its concerns that extremist recruitment of young people may also violate their right not to be compelled to belong to an association.<sup>208</sup>

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) established the UN's commitment to foster a peaceful society free from fear and violence through sustainable development, and it recognizes the significant role that education plays in this effort through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>209</sup> UNESCO has taken the lead to achieve SDG 4 by collaborating with United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) to adopt the *Incheon Declaration for Education 2030* (2015).<sup>210</sup> The Incheon Declaration outlines the need for education to focus on both the cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of learning.<sup>211</sup> This document highlights education as the main driver to achieve sustainable development and recognizes education as a fundamental human right, calling upon Member States to make primary education free and compulsory for all.<sup>212</sup> Furthermore, the Declaration called on national, regional, and global efforts to achieve inclusive partnerships for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs and its targets.<sup>213</sup> Under the 2015 *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development* (Addis Ababa Action Agenda), stakeholders committed to allocate at least 4%-6% gross domestic product or 15%-20% of public expenditures to education.<sup>214</sup> The Declaration also stresses the importance of education for sustainable development, which reflects the acquisition of knowledge and skills for making cognizant choices and assuming an active role in resolving global challenges.<sup>215</sup>

UNESCO's objective to prevent violent extremism through education is also recognized through a number of groundbreaking UN resolutions.<sup>216</sup> General Assembly resolution 60/288 of 2006 titled "United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy" recognizes the importance of education to prevent extremism and calls upon UNESCO to lead this cause.<sup>217</sup> Following this resolution, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2178 of 24 September 2014 on "Threats to International Peace and Security caused by Terrorist acts."<sup>218</sup> This resolution recognizes the role of education can play in countering terrorism by reducing recruitment and training of terrorist fighters.<sup>219</sup> In 2015, UN Security Council also adopted resolution 2250 (2015) on "Youth, Peace and Security" to emphasize the importance of teaching youth to

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<sup>205</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO in Action: Preventing Violent Extremism Worldwide*, 2017, p. 4.

<sup>206</sup> UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. 3.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. 3.

<sup>209</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

<sup>210</sup> UNESCO, *Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4*, 2015, p. 7.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>216</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO in Action: Preventing Violent Extremism Worldwide*, 2017, p. 4.

<sup>217</sup> UN General Assembly, *Global Counter-terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288)*, 2006.

<sup>218</sup> UN Security Council, *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts (S/RES/2178 (2014))*, 2014.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.



actively participate in civic and political structures to support peaceful societies.<sup>220</sup> The document calls on all educational stakeholders to establish programs that promote overall awareness of the world and its diversity.<sup>221</sup>

In light of these resolutions, UNESCO Executive Board on 7 October 2015 adopted Executive Decision 46 on “UNESCO’s role in promoting education as a tool to prevent violent extremism.”<sup>222</sup> The theme of the decision is the recognition of education as a medium to ensure sustainable peace and youth empowerment.<sup>223</sup> In addition, the decision is in line with UNESCO’s *Medium-Term Strategy, 2014-2021*, which was drafted in 2014 and proposes various strategies Member States can adopt for the improvement of UNESCO within a period of 7 years.<sup>224</sup> Strategic Objective 2 states that young learners should be empowered to be creative and responsible global citizens.<sup>225</sup> Further, the decision reiterates the importance of enhancing coordination across all UNESCO sectors and in identifying opportunities to collaborate with similar UN bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).<sup>226</sup> In addition, the Secretary-General’s 2016 review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy affirmed the need to prevent violent terrorism through education and recommended that Member States take the necessary steps to implement the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General’s *Plan of Action to Prevent Extremism*.<sup>227</sup> UN HRC resolution 30/15 of 2 October 2015 reiterated the importance of education in protecting human rights, emphasizing the need to foster unity among diversity of cultures to avoid the escalation of hatred.<sup>228</sup> It further calls on Member States to work to achieve the goals highlighted in the *Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training* (2011).<sup>229</sup> The Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 66/137 of 2011.<sup>230</sup> This instrument highlights the lifelong process of training citizens of all ages on human rights, which is essential to promote respect for all fundamental rights.<sup>231</sup>

### **Role of the International System**

UNESCO serves as the UN system leader on SDG 4, which focuses on making quality education available to all.<sup>232</sup> Target 4.7 states that learners should acquire the necessary skill set to promote sustainable development, non- violence, global citizenship and appreciating cultural diversity.<sup>233</sup> In 2015, UNESCO launched its an integrated framework of action titled “Empowering Youth to Build Peace” at a conference on countering violent extremism among young people.<sup>234</sup> The aim of the framework is to assist youth through development and empowerment to become responsible citizens of the world, which would deter them from being susceptible to violent extremist ideologies.<sup>235</sup> UNESCO is committed to achieving this goal by collaborating with other UN organizations such as the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) Working Group on Prevention of Violent Extremism, which was

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<sup>220</sup> UN Security Council, *Youth Peace and Security (S/RES/2250 (2015))*, 2015, p. 4.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>222</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO’s role in promoting education as a tool to prevent violent extremism (197 EX/Decision)*, 2015, p. 74.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>224</sup> UNESCO, *Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021*, 2014, p. 5.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>226</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO’s role in promoting education as a tool to prevent violent extremism (197 EX/Decision)*, 2015, p. 75.

<sup>227</sup> UN General Assembly, *Activities of the United Nations system in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/826)* 2016 p. 10.

<sup>228</sup> UN HRC, *Human Rights and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (A/HRC/RES/30/15)*, 2015.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>230</sup> UN General Assembly, *The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (A/RES/66/137)*, 2011, pp. 2-4.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-4.

<sup>232</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO in Action: Preventing Violent Extremism Worldwide*, 2017, p. 1.

<sup>233</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

<sup>234</sup> UNESCO, *Empowering Youth to Build Peace*, 2017.

<sup>235</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO in Action: Preventing Violent Extremism Worldwide*, 2017, p. 2.

revitalized in 2014.<sup>236</sup> This thematic working group is tasked with providing consultation to Member States on the impact of violent extremism and its drivers.<sup>237</sup>

In 2016, UNESCO organized the first-ever International Conference on the Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education.<sup>238</sup> The main objective of this conference was to assist policymakers identify all-inclusive educational responses to prevent extremist threats.<sup>239</sup> UNESCO's work extends to key education stakeholders to improve guidelines and strategies to help ensure that places of learning do not create an atmosphere that advocate violent extremism.<sup>240</sup> To this end, UNESCO published two comprehensive guides titled *A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism* and *Preventing Violent Extremism through Education: A guide for policymakers*.<sup>241</sup> The purpose of these guides is to aid teachers in discussing such topic in the classroom and to aid policymakers in implementing actions to ensure Global Citizenship Education (GCED).<sup>242</sup> Among other activities, in 2017, UNESCO, in collaboration with the African Union, organized the premiere capacity-building workshop on the "Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education in sub-Saharan Africa."<sup>243</sup> The event was attended by teachers and policymakers from Africa with the objective of understanding key concepts of extremism and educational measures to prevent it.<sup>244</sup> Further, UNESCO collaborated with the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCIEU) with the aim to expand its Clearinghouse on Global Citizenship Education, which serves as an online database with research guides on GCED.<sup>245</sup> The expansion includes resources on preventing violent extremism in various languages of the UN.<sup>246</sup> In response to the Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), UNESCO places youth as its main priority to prevent extremism from using youth as targets of extremist movements.<sup>247</sup> UNESCO is also a member of the Working Group on Youth and Peace building under the framework of the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development.<sup>248</sup>

Various civil societies and NGOs have taken lead on preventing violent extremism.<sup>249</sup> For example, the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education of Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) is the committee's Category 1 Research Institute for the achievement of SDG 4.7.<sup>250</sup> The MGIEP creates projects that are made to help equip young people with the social skills to address global issues as well as to aid teachers and policymakers.<sup>251</sup><sup>252</sup> One of the MGIEP's most recent projects is called #YouthWagingPeace, a project that is run by young people who are either working in the area of violent extremism or have been affected by violent extremism.<sup>253</sup> This youth-led guidebook was published in 2017 and it gives in-depth analysis and case studies on violent extremism by exploring the link between education and preventing violent extremism.<sup>254</sup> The guidebook has contributors worldwide sharing

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<sup>236</sup> UNOCT, *United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force*, 2018.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO in Action: Preventing Violent Extremism Worldwide*, 2017, p. 4.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>245</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO Clearinghouse on Global Citizenship Education*, 2015.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO in Action: Preventing Violent Extremism Worldwide*, 2017, p. 6.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>250</sup> UNESCO, *Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development*, 2009.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>253</sup> UNESCO-MGIEP, *#YouthWagingPeace: Youth Led Guide on Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education*, 2017.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*

experiences on the causes of extremism and presenting case studies, such as the genocide in Rwanda.<sup>255</sup>

UNESCO currently supports 222 ongoing and planned projects on preventing violent extremism at the international, regional, and national level led by 14 UN bodies.<sup>256</sup> UNESCO and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) maintain a joint project titled “Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: A Development Approach.”<sup>257</sup> UNDP created a four-year regional development plan designed to strengthen community capacity to prevent the growth of violent extremism in Africa.<sup>258</sup> The project identifies lack of adequate education as a root cause of radicalization and violent extremism, highlighting the importance of education for youth as a way to improve livelihoods.<sup>259</sup> Furthermore, it stresses the importance of providing education to equip African youth with skills and training to strengthen their contribution to their communities and build resilience.<sup>260</sup> In addition, UNDP published a toolkit policy framework to help identify areas of improvement to the global response.<sup>261</sup> The toolkit highlights that gender should also be considered when implementing policies for preventing violent extremism.<sup>262</sup> Further, UNESCO and UN-Women published a joint report titled *Global Guidance on School Related Gender Based Violence* to highlight that girls and women are also targets of violence extremism based on gender violence in schools and home.<sup>263</sup> Due to socio-economic challenges, women and girls are also at risk of joining extremist groups, so it is important for global efforts to be inclusive and provide the same opportunities to both men and women to positively contribute to their communities.<sup>264</sup>

### **Drivers of Violent Extremism**

Economic challenges and political instability make young people especially vulnerable to extremist propaganda.<sup>265</sup> The drivers of violent extremism are categorized into “push” and “pull” factors.<sup>266</sup> Push factors refer to the “conditions that are conducive to violent extremist groups.”<sup>267</sup> For instance, lack of socio-economic opportunities and the presence of discrimination can “push” certain young people to violence.<sup>268</sup> Pull factors refer to individual motivations that attract potential recruits and rationales.<sup>269</sup> These include teenage crises, a sense of mission or a search of identity, and purpose.<sup>270</sup> Some of these extremist groups “pull” their recruits by appearing to offer spiritual comfort or community.<sup>271</sup> These trends reflect processes of radicalization that can lead to extremism.<sup>272</sup> However, each factor considered in isolation cannot be said to be the sole cause of extremism.<sup>273</sup> The role of education in this context is not to identify these factors or traits in young people, but to create an avenue where youth develop resilience to violent extremism.<sup>274</sup> Resilience to violent extremism can be seen as the capacity to deter from views

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>256</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO in Action: Preventing Violent Extremism Worldwide*, 2017, p. 3.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>258</sup> UNDP Africa, *United Nations Development Program Africa*, 2018.

<sup>259</sup> UNDP, *Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: A Development Approach*, 2015, p. 9.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., pp. 20-22.

<sup>261</sup> UNDP, *Improving the Impact of Preventing Violent Extremism Programming: A toolkit for design, monitoring and evaluation*, 2018, pp. 7-8.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>263</sup> UNESCO & UN-Women, *Global Guidance on School Related Gender Based Violence*, 2018.

<sup>264</sup> UNDP, *Improving the Impact of Preventing Violent Extremism Programming: A toolkit for design, monitoring and evaluation*, 2018, pp. 22-23.

<sup>265</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO in Action: Preventing Violent Extremism Worldwide*, 2017, p. 6.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>267</sup> UNESCO, *Preventing Violent Extremism through Education: A Guide for Policy-Makers*, 2017, p. 20.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>269</sup> UN General Assembly, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/674)*, 2015, p. 6.

<sup>270</sup> UNESCO, *A Teacher’s Guide on the Prevention of Extremism*, 2016, p. 12.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>272</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO in Action: Preventing Violent Extremism Worldwide*, 2017, p. 6.

<sup>273</sup> UNESCO, *Preventing Violent Extremism through Education: A Guide for Policy-Makers*, 2017, p. 20.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

and opinions that legitimize the use of violence through the portrayal of exclusive truths and ideologies of the world.<sup>275</sup> UNESCO challenges communities to see young people as contributors of solutions, rather than as the problem.<sup>276</sup> Hence, resilience is built by learning through inquiry and verifying facts set out by extremists.<sup>277</sup> UNESCO is committed to the empowerment of youth to aid in preventing them from becoming susceptible to extremism.<sup>278</sup> Guided by the *UNESCO Operational Term Strategy 2014-2021*, a document centered on ensuring that youth become a global priority, UNESCO is committed to the creation of mechanisms that encourage youth engagement in policy, program design and delivery.<sup>279</sup> Education empowers youth to better understand these societal drivers and develop the necessary resilience against it.<sup>280</sup>

### **Global Citizenship Education**

UNESCO's approach to GCED aims to create a sense of belonging and collective responsibility for the world.<sup>281</sup> Through UNESCO's GCED program, youth are empowered "to engage and assume active roles both locally and globally to face and resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world."<sup>282</sup> Assessment of the GCED's implementation is necessary to track the progress of learning in the community.<sup>283</sup> The Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDG) serves as global indicators that measures the progress of GCED by collecting data through a survey questionnaire.<sup>284</sup> The implementation of this program has been introduced to prevent extremism through class curricula in various schools.<sup>285</sup> GCED is grounded in the principles of non-violence, empathy, and solidarity for humanity.<sup>286</sup> In UNESCO's GCED program aims to teach students to think critically about local and global systems, respect diversity, and participate proactively in social and political processes.<sup>287</sup>

There are three dimensions and learning outcomes of GCED: the cognitive, the socio-emotional and the behavioral.<sup>288</sup> The cognitive is the acquisition of knowledge about global, regional and national issues.<sup>289</sup> The socio-emotional refers to the common humanity shared with other citizens respecting differences and diversity.<sup>290</sup> The behavioral refers to being an agent of change seeking a more peaceful and sustainable world.<sup>291</sup> These three dimensions combined create a holistic educational curriculum for GCED that is adaptable to local contexts.<sup>292</sup> Lastly, learners are taught to be ethically responsible and engage in communal development for a peaceful society.<sup>293</sup> UNESCO recognizes the difficulty in creating an international curriculum, so the GCED approach is designed to be included in existing subjects taught in school.<sup>294</sup> Member States are required to create curriculum that suits the needs of their students.<sup>295</sup> With this in mind, UNESCO published a guide titled *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning*

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>278</sup> UN Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>279</sup> UNESCO, *UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth- 2014-2021*, 2014, p. 7.

<sup>280</sup> UNESCO, *Preventing Violent Extremism through Education: A Guide for Policy-Makers*, 2017, p. 20.

<sup>281</sup> UNESCO, *The ABCs of Global Citizenship Education*, 2016, p. 2.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>283</sup> UNESCO, *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives*, 2015.

<sup>284</sup> UNESCO, *The ABCs of Global Citizenship Education*, 2016, p. 6.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>286</sup> UNESCO, *Global Citizenship Education*, 2018.

<sup>287</sup> UNESCO, *The ABCs of Global Citizenship Education*, 2016, p. 2.

<sup>288</sup> UNESCO, *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives*, 2015, p. 14.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>291</sup> UNESCO, *Global Citizenship Education*, 2018.

<sup>292</sup> UNESCO, *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives*, 2015, p. 15.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

*Objectives* in 2015 to aid in the creation of curriculum and assessment tools.<sup>296</sup> The guide also helps educators identify and prioritize learning objectives that reflect community requirements.<sup>297</sup> For example, in Colombia, the curriculum has been adapted to develop competencies in language, mathematics, scientific and citizen competencies.<sup>298</sup> The Philippines approach emphasizes effective communication skills and media and information literacy.<sup>299</sup> Existing delivery approaches to GCED include school-wide programming, cross-curricular integration, and knowledge sharing through information and communications technology.<sup>300</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The international community relies on global partnerships to mitigate violent acts of terrorism.<sup>301</sup> UNESCO has taken the lead to prevent extremism through education and community building campaigns, with an emphasis on GCED for the realization of SDG 4.7.<sup>302</sup> By identifying drivers of extremism, UNESCO and its partners have helped communities identify risk factors among youth populations and adapt strategies for resilience.<sup>303</sup> To build resilience against violent extremism, it is essential to provide basic education and develop critical thinkers who can civilly engage diverse communities.<sup>304</sup>

### **Further Research**

As delegates begin their research on this topic, they should consider the following questions: Some Member States have implemented allocation budgets for education; how can Member States effectively implement the UN Plan of Action on the Prevention of Extremism? With reference to the drivers of violent extremism, what can be put in place to ensure that push and pull factors are minimized? What are strategies that Member States can take at the global, regional, and national level to achieve SDG 4.7? How can the international community promote GCED? How can Member States and civil societies work together to promote GCED? How can UNESCO aid Member States to overcome the challenges they face in implementing the GCED?

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*Pages 74-76 include UNESCO's landmark decision by UNESCO highlights the importance of education in preventing extremism. The decision lists out ways education can be a resourceful tool. This includes education as a tool to create resilience in learners through acquisition of social skills. Various implementation methods were stated with countries cited as case studies. It further gives recommendation on how the funds of UNESCO should be spent to meet the needs of Member States in tackling extremism. This document is a useful tool for the delegates as it is the first document by UNESCO on preventing extremism outlining UNESCO's role in ensuring peace.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2016). *A Teacher's Guide in Preventing Violent Extremism*. Retrieved 6 July 2018 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002446/244676e.pdf>

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<sup>296</sup> Ibid.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> UNESCO, *Preventing Violent Extremism*, 2018.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

<sup>303</sup> UNESCO, *Preventing Violent Extremism through Education: A Guide for Policy-Makers*, 2017, p. 20.

<sup>304</sup> UNDP, *Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment*, 2017, p. 39.

*This publication created by UNESCO serves as a guide for teachers to discuss extremism in the classroom. It highlights the drivers of extremism with a bid to assist teachers identify them in their students. Subsequent chapters discuss key messages to deliver in class on solidarity, respect for diversity and human rights. Delegates would find this resourceful in trying to establish the link between education and violent extremism and what can be improved upon in teaching the concept in the classrooms.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2016). *The ABCs of Global Citizenship Education* [Backgrounder]. Retrieved 8 August 2018 from:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002482/248232e.pdf>

*GCED is the forefront program for preventing extremism through education. A lot of questions such as the implementation mechanism and mitigating the challenges have been raised about it and its implementation methods by Member States and civil societies. In a bid to answer these questions, this publication was released to give a simple but succinct information about GCED. It can be used by delegates to understand the basics of GCED before they pursue in-depth research on the program.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2017). *Preventing Violent Extremism through Education: A Guide for Policy-Makers*. Retrieved 9 July 2018 from:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002477/247764e.pdf>

*This publication created by UNESCO serves as a guide for education stakeholders, especially policymakers. This guide lists various drivers of extremism, which include socio-economic factors, marginalization and how to identify it. It further highlights various case studies by countries on their implementation methods to prevent extremism. The guide states various action areas and important stakeholders that can assist learners in developing resilience to extremism. Delegates would find this source useful as it is comprehensive with detailed methods to prevent extremism through education.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2017). *UNESCO in Action: Preventing Violent Extremism Worldwide* [Report]. Retrieved 28 July 2018 from:

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*Another resourceful document by UNESCO which highlights significant work done by the organization on preventing violent extremism. It gives a detailed account of all the working groups and partnerships designed to prevent extremism. The report is divided into its priority areas; education, media, youth participation, safeguarding cultural heritage, building inclusive sciences. The report highlights over 50 partnerships with various UN organizations and its implementation. This document gives the delegates a better understanding of what is in place in UNESCO and working groups to prevent extremism.*

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<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002605/260547e.pdf>

*This document was published by UNESCO in collaboration with the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP). The document serves as a guide for citizens to gain insight on the global phenomenon of extremism. The document is a collection from various authors on the issues of extremism such as the appeal of extremism; what attracts young people to do acts of terror. Case studies were highlighted on the Rwandan genocide, the Holocaust, and the recent Rohingya crises. It can be used by the delegates to have a deeper understanding of the concept of extremism from various authors with different cultural backgrounds.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2018). *Global Citizenship Education* [Website]. Retrieved 6 July 2018 from: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/gced/>

*This is UNESCO's official website on GCED. It serves as the main repository for information on the UNESCO's GECD program, as well as various publications and*



*knowledge resources on the program. It also addresses the cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral outcomes of the GCED. The delegates would find this resourceful as it provides a large database for research on the topic preventing extremism.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2018). *Preventing Violent Extremism* [Website]. Retrieved 6 July 2018 from: <https://en.unesco.org/preventing-violent-extremism>

*This is UNESCO's official website on preventing violent extremism, which links to informational resources, publications, and campaigns. The website lists initiatives on education, youth empowerment, media, and cultural diversity. Further, the site shows various civil societies that are in collaboration with UNESCO and their works to prevent extremism.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/674)*. Retrieved 6 July 2018 from: <http://undocs.org/A/70/674>

*This report by the Secretary-General gives a detailed plan by the Member States to combat extremism. It discusses in detail the impact of extremism in the society and the factors or drivers of extremism. It further mentions the process in which recruits are radicalized. The report lists seven priority areas that Member States need to take action on to prevent extremism; UNESCO is currently addressing four of those seven priorities. They include: empowering youth, gender equality and empowering women, education, and strategic communications. This resource provides a detailed context on the topic and underlines the importance of UNESCO work on education to prevent extremism.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixtieth session. (2016). *The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288)* [Resolution]. Without reference to the main committee (A/60/L.62). Retrieved 6 July 2018 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/60/288>

*This document provides the opportunity to reemphasize, among other objectives, the importance of prevention efforts and welcomes the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (released in December 2015). The UN General Assembly suggested that Member States consider the implementation of its relevant recommendations, as applicable to national contexts, with the support of the United Nations. Delegates will find this as a useful introduction into the basic issues such as socio-economic difficulties that arise in preventing extremism and what the international community has done so far.*

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### III. Ensuring Freedom of Information for All

*"Freedom of information is a fundamental human right and ... the touchstone of all freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated."*<sup>305</sup>

#### **Introduction**

Information is a fundamental right that forms the basis of functioning societies and has the ability to rapidly empower individuals.<sup>306</sup> Freedom of Information (FOI) is the Right to Know and/or to access information, especially information collected by public institutions and government agencies.<sup>307</sup> FOI was first recognized as a universal right with the adoption of United Nations (UN) General Assembly resolution 59 (1) in 1946 on "Calling of an International Conference on Freedom of Information" and was further introduced in Article 19 of the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948).<sup>308</sup> FOI is a pillar of human rights, as information plays an essential role in assisting individuals to make well-informed decisions.<sup>309</sup> FOI is part of freedom of expression (FOE), a fundamental right established in the UDHR which allows citizens to freely express their opinions orally, in writing, print, and through the Internet without restrictions.<sup>310</sup>

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is committed to creating a society where all individuals have access to information, and it aims at ensuring that laws and frameworks are put in place to prevent information censorship.<sup>311</sup> Access to information and FOI laws are also important to the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) adopted in 2015 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>312</sup> Access to information plays a pivotal role in achieving the SDGs by allowing citizens to participate more fully in their communities and society as a whole.<sup>313</sup> In turn, a restricted access to information limits peoples' ability to make well-informed decisions and may negatively impact peoples' ability to exercise other fundamental rights.<sup>314</sup> As of 2016, 113 Member States and local governments passed FOI laws across the world and an additional 40 states are currently in the process of enacting a law or initiative on FOI.<sup>315</sup> These laws promote FOI by mandating government institutions to publish information on their activities and establish adequate procedures allowing citizens to submit requests for information with a reasonable timeframe for return.<sup>316</sup>

FOI is increasingly recognized and incorporated in global agendas; however, many Member States and local governments are facing challenges implementing FOI principals at the national and local level.<sup>317</sup> Those challenges include lack of awareness of FOI laws by citizens, lack of knowledge on how to access information collected by public entities, lack of sufficient infrastructure capacity to store and ensure access to public records, insufficient resources by public entities to maintain the archives, and in some

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<sup>305</sup> UN General Assembly, *Calling of an International Conference on Freedom of Information (A/RES/59(I))*, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>306</sup> UNESCO, *About Freedom of Information*, 2017.

<sup>307</sup> Stein & Camaj, *Freedom of Information*, 2016, p. 1.

<sup>308</sup> UN General Assembly, *Calling of an International Conference on Freedom of Information (A/RES/59(I))*, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>309</sup> Whitton, *The United Nations Conference on Freedom of Information and the Movement Against International Propaganda*, 1949, p. 73.

<sup>310</sup> UN General Assembly, *United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (A/RES/66/137)*, 2011, p. 2.

<sup>311</sup> UNESCO, *About Freedom of Information*, 2017.

<sup>312</sup> ARTICLE 19, *Open Development: Access to Information and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017, p. 4.

<sup>313</sup> UNESCO, *Access to Information*, 2018.

<sup>314</sup> UNESCO, *Communication and Information: Freedom of Information and Sustainable Development Sealing the Links*.

<sup>315</sup> ARTICLE 19, *Open Development: Access to Information and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017, p. 14; NFOIC, *International FOI Laws*, 2017.

<sup>316</sup> Kaye, *Challenges to Freedom of Information in the Digital Age*, 2016, pp. 131-132

<sup>317</sup> ARTICLE 19, *Open Development: Access to Information and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017, p. 16.

cases media censorship to limit information flow.<sup>318</sup> Additionally, the implementation of FOI principles must adjust to align with the advancements and challenges of emerging information and communications technology (ICTs).<sup>319</sup> ICTs are communication tools, systems, software, infrastructure, and devices used to communicate, receive, manage, and store information.<sup>320</sup>

### ***International and Regional Framework***

In 1946, the UN General Assembly recognized FOI with the adoption of resolution 59 (1), “Calling of an International Conference on Freedom of Information.”<sup>321</sup> Resolution 59 (1) states that FOI is a fundamental right “to gather, transmit and publish news anywhere and everywhere.”<sup>322</sup> It also mandated the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to organize an International Conference on Freedom of Information to formulate measures on implementation of FOI.<sup>323</sup> In addition, Article 19 of the UDHR defines FOI as an integral part of FOE, highlighting the right to request, receive, and impart information.<sup>324</sup> FOI is a precondition of FOE because the information obtained by public institutions are fundamental in the exercise of FOE.<sup>325</sup>

In 1966, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Right* (ICCPR) further specified that FOI as part of FOE can be sought orally, in writing, print, and other media.<sup>326</sup> However, Article 19(3) of the ICCPR establishes limitations to FOI by highlighting that its implementation can be limited to maintain individual privacy and ensure national security.<sup>327</sup> It underlines that these limitations must be in alignment with the law and proven to be necessary.<sup>328</sup> During the World Summits on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva and Tunis, which resulted in the *Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action* (2003) and the *Tunis Commitment and Agenda for the Information Society* (2005) respectively, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to “build a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge.”<sup>329</sup>

During World Press Freedom Day in 2008, participants of UNESCO’s Conference on Freedom of Expression, Access to Information and Empowerment of People adopted the *Maputo Declaration*.<sup>330</sup> The Declaration calls upon UNESCO to gather and disseminate information on best practices regarding access to information and to encourage government authorities to make their public data easily accessible to the public.<sup>331</sup> With the 2010 *Brisbane Declaration on Freedom of Information: The Right to Know*, the international community defines FOI as “the right of everyone to access information held by public bodies at all levels, local, national and international.”<sup>332</sup> The Brisbane Declaration endorses FOI’s role in the protection of freedom of speech and democracy and recommends using the Internet as a tool to foster the open flow of information and access for all.<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Kaye, *Challenges to Freedom of Information in the Digital Age*, 2016, p. 133; UNESCO, *About Freedom of Information*, 2017.

<sup>319</sup> Kundishora, *The Role of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) in Enhancing Local Economic Development and Poverty Reduction*, 2008, p. 1.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>321</sup> UN General Assembly, *Calling of an International Conference on Freedom of Information (A/RES/59(I))*, 1946.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>324</sup> UNESCO, *About Freedom of Information*, 2017.

<sup>325</sup> McGonagle & Donders, *The United Nations and Freedom of Expression and Information: Critical Perspectives*, 2015, p. 59.

<sup>326</sup> UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966, p. 55, Art. 19.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55, Art. 19.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55, Art. 19.

<sup>329</sup> WSIS, *Declaration of Principles - Building the Information Society: a global challenge in the new Millennium*, 2003; WSIS, *Tunis Agenda for the Information Society*, 2005.

<sup>330</sup> UNESCO, *World Press Freedom Day*, 2018.

<sup>331</sup> UNESCO, *Access to Information*, 2018.

<sup>332</sup> UNESCO, *Brisbane Declaration*, 2017.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*

The shift from information secrecy to full transparency and openness regarding information flow is, in part, influenced by the recent 2030 Agenda.<sup>334</sup> The 2030 Agenda underlines the importance of access to information in achieving the SDGs.<sup>335</sup> In fact, the adoption of the SDGs was a historic advancement in the promotion of the free flow of information, as for the first time access to information was explicitly included in a global agenda.<sup>336</sup> Current global discussions are moving toward the strengthening of FOI with SDG 16 on creating strong institutions, and target 16.10 mandating Member States to actively protect, respect, and ensure access to information.<sup>337</sup> Greater access to information is also mentioned in SDG 9 target 9.c, promoting access to ICTs, while highlighting that increased use of ICTs can support Member States in providing the public with greater and easier access to information.<sup>338</sup> Furthermore, SDG 5 on gender equality and women and girls empowerment, target 5.b promotes the use of ICTs as a means for empowerment.<sup>339</sup> Greater access to information can help individuals, especially women, to bridge the knowledge gap and participate in the development of a society.<sup>340</sup>

Enhancing FOI has also been a priority for many regional bodies, ensuring the implementation of adopted global FOI principles at the regional level.<sup>341</sup> The Council of Europe as well as the African Union Commission (AUC), among others, have enacted regional standards in alignment with international principals.<sup>342</sup> The *European Convention on Human Rights* of 1950 was the first international treaty to promote access to information and advocate for FOE.<sup>343</sup> Its recommendations inspired the adoption of the *Convention on Access to Official Documents* by the Council of Europe in 2009, which further promoted FOI laws across Europe and allowed for greater visibility for FOI.<sup>344</sup> On the African and American continents, efforts around FOI were led by the 1981 *African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights* and the 1969 *American Convention on Human Rights* (ACHR).<sup>345</sup> Both reaffirm the right of citizens to request and receive information from public entities, as well as to formulate and express their opinions.<sup>346</sup> ACHR solidified the ICCPR's Article 19(3) regionally and limited government control over the free flow of information and media censorship.<sup>347</sup>

### **Role of the International System**

UNESCO promotes FOI by sharing knowledge and facilitating dialogues and exchange of expertise at different levels of society and between relevant international and regional actors.<sup>348</sup> UNESCO has played an essential role in the promotion of access to and the FOI since its creation in 1945.<sup>349</sup> Its mandate focuses on assisting Member States in the development of national and local laws fostering access to information, as well as the dissemination of research on FOI laws and the drafting of guiding principles.<sup>350</sup> In collaboration with UNESCO, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) appointed a Special Rapporteur in

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<sup>334</sup> ARTICLE 19, *Open Development: Access to Information and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017, p. 15.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>336</sup> UNDP, *Freedom of Information and Sustainable Development*, 2016.

<sup>337</sup> UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 16*, 2018.

<sup>338</sup> UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 9*, 2018.

<sup>339</sup> UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 5*, 2018.

<sup>340</sup> FEMNET, *Freedom of Information (FOI) & Women's Rights in Africa*, 2009, p. 12.

<sup>341</sup> Blanton, *The world's right to know*, *Foreign Policy*, 2009.

<sup>342</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Civil and Political Rights Including the Question of: Freedom of Expression - Report of the Special Rapporteur (E/CN.4/2000/63)*, 2000, p. 15.

<sup>343</sup> ECHR, *European Convention on Human Rights*, 1950, Art. 10.

<sup>344</sup> Council of Europe, *Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents (Treaty No. 205)*, 2009.

<sup>345</sup> AUC, *African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*, 1981, Art. 9.

<sup>346</sup> OAS, *American Convention on Human Rights "Pact of San Jose, Costa Rica,"* 1969; AUC, *African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*, 1981, Art. 9.

<sup>347</sup> OAS, *American Convention on Human Rights "Pact of San Jose, Costa Rica,"* 1969.

<sup>348</sup> UNESCO, *About Freedom of Information*, 2017.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>350</sup> Mendel, *Freedom of information: a comparative legal survey*, 2008, p. 3; UNESCO, *About Freedom of Information*, 2017.

1993 to ensure the protection of FOI.<sup>351</sup> The Special Rapporteur works together with other appointed independent experts such as the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa and the Organization of American States (OAS) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, on ensuring alignment of global principles at the regional level.<sup>352</sup> The Special Rapporteur analyses national legislation and monitors their compliance, undertakes investigation when needed or when violation occurred, and publishes an annual report on the progress and challenges on access to information.<sup>353</sup>

In 2000, UNESCO created the Information for All Programme (IFAP) to foster information flow among citizens hosting discussions on international policies on FOI and to work on a solution to solve the challenges created by unequal access to technology around the world.<sup>354</sup> For instance, IFAP has addressed the challenge of unequal access to ICTs in Ghana by creating opportunities for women and girls to further their ICTs skills and join the workforce.<sup>355</sup> More recently, UNESCO has taken the lead in the dissemination of research on the status of FOI laws as well as the establishment of global standards and principles on the topic with publications such as *Freedom of Information: A Comparative Legal Survey*.<sup>356</sup> In its *Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021*, UNESCO solidified its commitment to peace, equity, and sustainable development with a particular focus on its global priorities of gender equality and Africa.<sup>357</sup> As one of the nine strategic objectives, UNESCO looks to “[promote] freedom of expression, media development and access to information and knowledge.”<sup>358</sup> In 2015, UNESCO adopted resolution 38 C/70 which declared 28 September as the International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI) in an effort to raise public awareness for this topic.<sup>359</sup> IDUAI is linked to the 2030 Agenda and SDG target 16.10 on access to information, highlighting its crucial role in peaceful and democratic governance.<sup>360</sup>

Other UN bodies have also contributed to the enhancement of FOI; the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) supports the recognition of FOI as a fundamental human right and works closely with UN Member States, civil society groups, and research centers to promote its implementation.<sup>361</sup> Moreover, during the Conference of States to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2016, in New York, discussions between UNESCO, OHCHR and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs took place on the use of ICTs to promote universal access to information to citizens with disabilities.<sup>362</sup> The discussion resulted in disability-inclusive policy recommendations and training materials, to be included in all curricula promoted by UNESCO.<sup>363</sup>

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank Group have also played a leadership role in the promotion of the free flow of information through policies and instruments such as the Public Information Disclosure Policy and the Publication Information and Documentation Oversight Panel encouraging intergovernmental organizations to adopt FOI principals.<sup>364</sup> In 2004, through the adoption of resolution 71 in Dakar, Senegal, the AUC created a Special Rapporteur position on Freedom

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<sup>351</sup> UN HRC, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression (A/HRC/17/27)*, 2018.

<sup>352</sup> UN HRC, *25<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council (3-28 March 2014)*, 2018.

<sup>353</sup> ACHPR, *Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information*, 2018.

<sup>354</sup> UNESCO, *Information for all programme*, 2017, p. 3.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>356</sup> Mendel, *Freedom of information: a comparative legal survey*, 2008, p. 3.

<sup>357</sup> UNESCO, *Medium-term Strategy 2014-2021*, 2014, p. 26.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>359</sup> UNESCO, *Proclamation of 28 September as the International Day for the Universal Access to Information Resolution (38 C/70)*, 2015.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>361</sup> OHCHR, *Freedom of Information: The Right to Know*, 2010.

<sup>362</sup> UN DESA, *Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>364</sup> UNDP, *Freedom of Information and Sustainable Development*, 2016.

of Expression and Access to Information in Africa.<sup>365</sup> The latter is mandated to collaborate with the UN on the development of monitoring systems and implementation principals to facilitate the enactment of FOI in African countries.<sup>366</sup> In 2013, the Special Rapporteur in collaboration with the AUC and UNESCO created the African Platform on Access to Information to support African countries in the development, adoption, and implementation of FOI laws by sharing best practices, as well as advising on policy development and implementation mechanisms.<sup>367</sup>

Civil society and organized groups of experts have also significantly influenced the implementation of the Right to Know. For instance, the civil society organizations ARTICLE 19 and Global Transparency Initiative were endorsed by the UN and play a pivotal role in supporting the development of guiding principles, including the Johannesburg Principles and the Global Principles on National Security and the Right to Information, which help government authorities enact FOI legislation.<sup>368</sup>

### ***Implementation Challenges of Freedom of Information***

Although more than 100 countries have passed some form of FOI legislation or policies, many challenges in implementing these policies remain.<sup>369</sup> One significant obstacle is the lack of awareness among citizens of their right to access public information.<sup>370</sup> For instance, a 2013 survey by the Open Democratic Advice Center in South Africa showed that over 50% of South Africans were not aware of the existence of legislation on the Right to Know.<sup>371</sup> Another challenge to the implementation of FOI is the lack of efficient record-keeping and information management by Member States.<sup>372</sup> Reasons for this lack of capacity include lack of training of government staff to adequately archive the information, lack of funding to continuously archive the information and enable access by the public, as well as lack of a centralized management system.<sup>373</sup> ARTICLE 19 also reported that although countries enact FOI laws, some of their public entities lack the existence of precise measures and procedures on the submission of FOI requests and application processes.<sup>374</sup> In many countries FOI laws are mostly enforced in the capitals and administrative cities and, in turn, poorly implemented at the local level.<sup>375</sup>

Another critical challenge concerning FOI laws is the misuse of exemptions and restrictions of the law under the pretext of privacy concerns and national security.<sup>376</sup> The latter is the result of continuous bureaucratic and political resistance against national FOI laws.<sup>377</sup> Government restrictions limit media and public access to specific information and the ability to share information and ideas.<sup>378</sup> In *World Trends on Freedom of Expression and Media Development*, UNESCO reported an increase in information filtering and censorship across the globe with over 56 Internet shutdowns recorded in 2016.<sup>379</sup> Nonetheless,

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<sup>365</sup> ACHPR, *Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information*, 2018.

<sup>366</sup> African Women's Development and Communication Network, *Freedom of Information (FOI) & Women's Rights in Africa*, 2009, p. 5.

<sup>367</sup> African Platform on Access to Information, *Campaign Milestone*, 2017.

<sup>368</sup> ARTICLE 19, *Freedom of Information: Training Manual for Public Officials*, p. 17.

<sup>369</sup> Open Society Justice Initiative, *List of Countries with Access to Information (ATI) Provisions in their National/Federal Laws or Actionable Decrees, and Dates of Adoption & Significant Amendments*, 2006.

<sup>370</sup> McMasters, FOIA: It's Always There. Debated, Disliked, Sometimes Scorned, it Remains the Cornerstone of Openness, *Society of Professional Journalists*, 1996.

<sup>371</sup> Dimba & Calland, *Freedom of Information Law in South Africa: A Country Study*, p. 18.

<sup>372</sup> Akussah & Asamoah, *Management of public sector records in Ghana: a descriptive survey*, 2015.

<sup>373</sup> ARTICLE 19, *Open Development: Access to Information and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017, p. 15.

<sup>374</sup> ARTICLE 19, *Freedom of Information: Training Manual for Public Officials*, p. 19.

<sup>375</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Civil and Political Rights Including the Question of: Freedom of Expression - Report of the Special Rapporteur (E/CN.4/2000/63)*, 2000, p. 22.

<sup>376</sup> UNESCO, *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development: Global Report 2017/2018*, 2017, p. 13.

<sup>377</sup> ARTICLE 19, *Open Development: Access to Information and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017, p. 15.

<sup>378</sup> UNESCO, *Safety of Journalists*, 2018.

<sup>379</sup> UNESCO, *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development: Global Report 2017/2018*, 2017, p. 20.

progress has been made and many journalists have made use of FOI.<sup>380</sup> For instance, in 2015, the Iraqi Prime Minister withdrew a nationwide lawsuit against journalists and media outlets and enacted a national FOI law encouraging greater transparency and government accountability.<sup>381</sup> The Prime Minister added that greater FOI and press allows journalists to be the bridge between the administration and the population and thus, encourages better democratic governance.<sup>382</sup> Nonetheless, there are many places worldwide where journalists have been and continue to be subjected to censorship.<sup>383</sup>

### ***Freedom of Information as a Tool to Achieve Sustainable Development***

Allowing citizens to freely access and share information supports the 2030 Agenda by reducing unequal privileges in a community and empowering citizens to participate in their country's development.<sup>384</sup> In fact, timely access to information, especially for marginalized and impoverished communities, provides citizens with the opportunity to make informed decisions and participate in political, social, and economic processes.<sup>385</sup> The fulfillment of SDG target 16.10 tracks documented cases of violence against journalists and measures the adoption "constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information."<sup>386</sup> Greater access to public authorities' records does not only allow citizens to make an informed decision on issues impacting them but also promotes overall good governance and reduces corruption.<sup>387</sup> For instance, with better and greater information at hand, citizens can participate in decision-making processes, ensure government accountability, and track progress made regarding sustainable development efforts.<sup>388</sup>

Moreover, SDG 9 and its target 9.c promotes access to information by seeking to ensure availability of ICTs for all, including "affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020."<sup>389</sup> With the growing use of the Internet and the coverage of mobile networks, information flow across communities and within government institutions is mainly operated through ICTs.<sup>390</sup> This will reduce inequalities and foster participation in the country's socio-economic development, removing traditional obstacles to access information.<sup>391</sup> Finally, access to information can also contribute to the achievement of SDG 5 focusing on gender equality and women empowerment, reducing the knowledge divide between gender.<sup>392</sup> With the right systems and procedures in place, the free flow of information could support sustainable development objectives to foster inclusive societies, reduce inequality, empower citizens to play a role in the social life and economy of their community, and establish confidence in government authorities.<sup>393</sup>

### ***The Right to Know in the Digital Era***

The creation of the Internet has revolutionized information technology.<sup>394</sup> The development of the Internet and its usage across the world has facilitated the implementation of many rights including FOE, freedom of the press, and the free flow of information, three fundamental rights contributing to socio-economic development.<sup>395</sup> In fact, the Internet has become a unique platform for participatory information sharing

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<sup>380</sup> UNESCO, *Safety of Journalists*, 2018.

<sup>381</sup> Guo, 'What Influences Journalists' Attitudes Toward Freedom of Information', *The World Bank Group*, 2015.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid.

<sup>383</sup> UNESCO, *Safety of Journalists*, 2018.

<sup>384</sup> UNDP, *Freedom of Information and Sustainable Development*, 2016.

<sup>385</sup> African Platform on Access to Information, *The State of Access to Information in Africa 2017*, 2018, p. 22.

<sup>386</sup> UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 16*, 2018.

<sup>387</sup> UNESCO, *Media in Support of Sustainable Development and a Culture of Peace*, 2015, p. 45.

<sup>388</sup> ARTICLE 19, *Open Development: Access to Information and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017, p. 6.

<sup>389</sup> UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 9*, 2018.

<sup>390</sup> Kundishora, *The Role of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) in Enhancing Local Economic Development and Poverty Reduction*, 2008, p. 6.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>392</sup> UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 5*, 2018.

<sup>393</sup> Wahlen, UNESCO Reports on Trends in Media Freedom, *International Institute for Sustainable Development*, 2018.

<sup>394</sup> UNESCO, *Freedom of Expression on the Internet*, 2018.

<sup>395</sup> UNESCO, *Freedom of Expression on the Internet*, 2018.



and knowledge societies.<sup>396</sup> The digital era allows citizens to obtain and share information and ideas beyond their community boundaries, find objective information, and exchange critical views on diverse topics.<sup>397</sup> The digital era has also encouraged other stakeholders such as expert groups, non-governmental organizations, and community groups to also contribute to the implementation of Right to Know laws at the national and local level.<sup>398</sup>

Government authorities have capitalized on the Internet's transformative approach to media and information flow.<sup>399</sup> Some entities utilize it to reach more people, encourage more participation in public activities, enter into dialogue, and publish public records more efficiently and systematically.<sup>400</sup> However, the growing use of the Internet does not benefit all people equally.<sup>401</sup> The digital divide, which reflects disparities in access to ICTs, leaves certain individuals and communities marginalized.<sup>402</sup> Over 2 billion people do not have access to stable electricity, which considerably limits their access to ICTs and thus to certain information.<sup>403</sup> For Member States to fully utilize the functionalities of e-governance and achieve full information disclosure, infrastructure and capacity-building, as well as ICTs education and digital literacy are required.<sup>404</sup>

Accessing information and the freedom of speech are fundamental to the development of open and transparent debates.<sup>405</sup> Technological innovations are already allowing citizens to access a plurality of media providers, diversify their sources of information, and further their participation in political, social, environmental, and economic discussions.<sup>406</sup> Technological innovation is rapidly evolving and increasingly influencing citizens' lives; with the right tools and support in place, FOI in the digital era can empower citizens and help create an inclusive society.<sup>407</sup>

## Conclusion

The concept of FOI has evolved since its first appearance in UN documents in 1946.<sup>408</sup> As a fundamental human right directly linked to FOE, FOI has the capacity to empower communities by reducing knowledge gaps and keeping governments accountable and transparent.<sup>409</sup> There are many international, regional, and national frameworks that accommodate and protect the right to FOI, but many Member States still

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<sup>396</sup> ITU, *WSIS+10 Outcome Documents*, 2014, p. 13.

<sup>397</sup> UNESCO, *Sustainable Development Goals for Communication and Information*, 2018.

<sup>398</sup> ARTICLE 19, *Open Development: Access to Information and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017, p. 13.

<sup>399</sup> UNESCO, *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development: Global Report 2017/2018*, 2017, p. 20.

<sup>400</sup> UNESCO, *Media in Support of Sustainable Development and a Culture of Peace*, 2015, p. 45.

<sup>401</sup> Kundishora, *The Role of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) in Enhancing Local Economic Development and Poverty Reduction*, 2008, p. 8.

<sup>402</sup> World Bank, *The e-government handbook for developing countries: The e-government handbook for developing countries: a project of InfoDev and the Center for Democracy and Technology*, 2002, p. 17; McGonagle & Donders, *The United Nations and Freedom of Expression and Information: Critical Perspectives*, 2015, p. 53.

<sup>403</sup> World Bank, *Access to Electricity (% of population)*, 2018.

<sup>404</sup> World Bank, *The e-government handbook for developing countries: The e-government handbook for developing countries: a project of InfoDev and the Center for Democracy and Technology*, 2002, p. 17; McGonagle & Donders, *The United Nations and Freedom of Expression and Information: Critical Perspectives*, 2015, p. 53.

<sup>405</sup> UNESCO, *Communication and Information: Freedom of Information and Sustainable Development Sealing the Links*.

<sup>406</sup> UNESCO, *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development: Global Report 2017/2018*, 2017, p. 13.

<sup>407</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Civil and Political Rights Including the Question of: Freedom of Expression - Report of the Special Rapporteur (E/CN.4/2000/63)*, 2000, p. 15.

<sup>408</sup> Stein & Camaj, *Freedom of Information*, 2016, p. 1.

<sup>409</sup> UN General Assembly, *Calling of an International Conference on Freedom of Information (A/RES/59(I))*, 1946, p. 1.

face challenges to fully implement FOI laws.<sup>410</sup> UNESCO, along with other UN and regional bodies, as well as independent groups, plays a pivotal role in shaping the discussion around FOI, setting global principles, and formulating policies guiding their implementation.<sup>411</sup> The adoption of the 2030 Agenda significantly supported the promotion of the free flow of information by explicitly identifying access to information as a critical factor for good governance and to achieve sustainable development.<sup>412</sup>

### **Further Research**

Access to information continues to be at the center of international and regional discussions, especially as an increasing number of countries are adopting FOI laws. Moving forward, delegates should consider the following questions: What steps should UNESCO take to encourage countries that do not have FOI laws to make the shift toward a culture of transparency? What can UNESCO or other UN bodies do to address FOI implementation challenges, such as lack of access to technology and education, remoteness, or lack of capacity? What steps can be taken to encourage greater compliance with FOI law at the local level? What measures should be taken to ensure adequate monitoring and government accountability? How can journalists and media outlets promote greater use of FOI requests? How can UNESCO and other UN bodies promote effective implementation and enforcement of FOI laws for citizens with disability?

### **Annotated Bibliography**

African Women's Development and Communication Network. (2009). *Freedom of Information (FOI) & Women's Rights in Africa*. Retrieved 4 July 2018 from:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001871/187147e.pdf>

*The link between freedom of information and gender is presented in detail in this report. This report offers an overview of the link between FOI and gender in Africa and the challenges therein while making the case that there needs to be gender equity in the implementation of FOI. Examples of regional legal instruments and frameworks are also presented for better understanding of ongoing efforts.*

ARTICLE 19. (2017). *Open Development: Access to Information and the Sustainable Development Goals*. Retrieved 4 July 2018 from: <https://www.article19.org/data/files/medialibrary/38832/Open-Development--Access-to-Information-and-the-SDGs-2017.pdf>

*Published in 2017, this report presents an overview of the link between access to information and the SDGs. The authors also included sections on implementation limitations and policy challenges. Delegates could use this resource to shape their position paper around the issue of FOI in relation to the 2030 Agenda. The report also provides delegates with examples on how governments have been kept accountable for complying with FOI legislation.*

Kaye, D. (2018). Challenges to Freedom of Information in the Digital Age. *Journal of International Media & Entertainment Law*, 7(2): 129-135. Retrieved 6 November 2018 from:

[https://www.swlaw.edu/sites/default/files/2018-04/JIMEL\\_V7%2C\\_N2\\_-\\_Challenges\\_to\\_Freedom\\_of\\_Information\\_in\\_the\\_Digital\\_Age.pdf](https://www.swlaw.edu/sites/default/files/2018-04/JIMEL_V7%2C_N2_-_Challenges_to_Freedom_of_Information_in_the_Digital_Age.pdf)

*Written by the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Practice of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, this article addresses the mandate of the Special Rapporteur in the context of humanitarian law. Additionally, the author outlines the history of the position, the duties of the rapporteur, and contemporary challenges to the right of access to public information. The rapporteur's key concerns reflect the well-being of*

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<sup>410</sup> ARTICLE 19, *Open Development: Access to Information and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017, p. 16.

<sup>411</sup> Whitton, *The United Nations Conference on Freedom of Information and the Movement Against International Propaganda*, 1949, p. 78.

<sup>412</sup> UNESCO, *Sustainable Development Goals for Communication and Information*, 2018.



*government whistleblowers and other sources of information, who may face illegal or extra-legal retaliation for disclosing public information.*

McGonagle, T. & Y. Donders, (Eds.). (2015). *The United Nations and Freedom of Expression and Information: Critical Perspectives*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved 4 July 2018 from: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/united-nations-and-freedom-of-expression-and-information/B6A3883834535DBDE984EB30BCBEB589>

*Published in 2015, this book presents a comprehensive summary of all the existing UN legal instruments on the right to freedom of expression and information. It provides the history of both rights and explains the origin of FOI legislation. The book also presents the role of the UN Special Rapporteur on FOE by highlighting the challenges and conflicts of FOI with other human rights or public policy goals. The book also provides examples of actions that the Special Rapporteur could take in case of a conflict between FOI laws and other human rights. This book will allow delegates to map all the UN legal instruments on the topic with relevant case studies from UN Member States.*

Mendel, T. (2008). *Freedom of information: a comparative legal survey*. 2nd Edition. Paris, France: UNESCO. Retrieved 4 July 2018 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001584/158450e.pdf>

*In this report, Mendel presents a history of FOI as well as proposed standards for greater implementation. He illustrates the complexity and diversity of implementation processes around FOI with examples from 10 countries. Through this report, delegates will have the comparative analysis of existing FOI laws allowing them to identify common factors and differences.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2008, March 17-18). *Experts Group Meeting on: Freedom of Information and Sustainable Development, Sealing the Link (CI/FED/2008/FREE/INFO/1)* [Meeting Record]. Retrieved 4 July 2018 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001915/191517e.pdf>

*This meeting summary presents the key findings resulting from a series of discussions around the link between FOI and the SDGs. This document will offer delegates reflection points on freedom of information as well as challenges for advocacy and implementation of FOI laws. The document ends with a few case studies on how to implement FOI in a SDG campaign and how to facilitate access to information in post-conflict zones.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2014). *Building Inclusive Knowledge Societies: A Review of UNESCO's Action in Implementing the WSIS Outcomes* [Report]. Retrieved 4 July 2018 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002264/226425e.pdf>

*This report was published after the World Summit on the Information Society which introduced the concept of "knowledge societies" in Geneva, but with very little details on its characteristics. It also provided decision-makers with key elements of a knowledge society and its connection with development. The report also presents UNESCO's tools and instruments to support the concept of knowledge society which strongly advocates for the increased access to information for all. By reading this report, delegates further their understanding of the importance of knowledge societies and their relation to access to information.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2015). *Media in Support of Sustainable Development and a Culture of Peace* [Report]. Retrieved 4 July 2018 from:

[http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/San-Jose/pdf/Book\\_UNESCO\\_Media\\_and\\_Development\\_May\\_2015\\_01.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/San-Jose/pdf/Book_UNESCO_Media_and_Development_May_2015_01.pdf)

*This report presents, in a comprehensive manner, the role of media in the achievement of the SDGs and peace in the world. The report covers various subtopics, such as empowering people through media, journalism, technology, and good governance, which will enrich delegates' understanding of FOI in the digital era with the Internet and media at the center. The report also provides multiple case studies and perspective on the role*



of media which would benefit delegates in the development of their ideas and recommendations.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2017). *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development: Global Report 2017/2018*. Retrieved 4 July 2018 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002597/259756e.pdf>

*Published in early 2017, this report offers an international understanding of FOE and media with a specific focus on press freedom and media pluralism. This report will assist delegates in the identification of best practices in strengthening national frameworks favorable to FOI; as well as recognizing the ongoing efforts of UNESCO and its partners. It also offers an overview of the changes that occurred in media in regard to FOE between 2012 and 2017 while highlighting the existing legal structures across the world that protect journalists and media agents.*

United Nations, General Assembly, First session. (1946). *Calling of an International Conference on Freedom of Information (A/RES/59(I))* [Resolution]. Retrieved 4 July 2018 from: [http://undocs.org/A/RES/59\(I\)](http://undocs.org/A/RES/59(I))

*This resolution was the first time that the UN recognized FOI as a fundamental human right. It defined the concept of FOI and urged Member States to take further action in identifying the limits and practices of the FOI. This resolution will give delegates a clear definition of the discussed concept and allow them to identify the gaps and opportunities for potential changes.*

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