

U.S. National Commission for UNESCO Update, Volume 4, Issue 2, July/August/September/October/November/December 2008, plus January 2009

In This Issue:

- Comments from the Executive Director
 - Mrs. Bush Hosts other First Ladies from Around the World at White House Symposium on Advancing Global Literacy: Building a Foundation for Freedom
 - United States Contributes Another \$500,000 to the UNLD Fund at Mid-Decade Review
 - U.S. National Commission for UNESCO Laura W. Bush Traveling Fellowship Recipients Hosted at White House
 - Ohio State University, State Department, Education Department Join Together to Host CONFINTEA Preparation Forum in Columbus, Ohio
 - “Picturing America” Exhibition Opens During American History and Culture Week at UNESCO
 - American Schools Receive UNESCO Mondialogo Prize
 - American Expert Appointed to UNESCO COMEST Committee
 - UNESCO-Patroned Junior Ambassadors Tennis Event Hosted in Washington, DC
 - Iowa City Crowned UNESCO Creative City for Literature
 - Parks Service Displays Photo Exhibit Honoring 30th Anniversary of First U.S. World Heritage Site and UN Foundation Hosts World Heritage Alliance event
 - President Bush Announces Two U.S. Nominations to Join UNESCO World Heritage List
 - UNESCO Job Vacancies
-

Comments from the Executive Director

The range of issues covered in this edition should give a sense of the many UNESCO events and activities that have occurred during the second half of the year.

Fittingly, just prior to the opening of the [Games of the 29th Olympiad in Beijing](#), [President Bush signed](#) the instrument of ratification of the UNESCO led [International Convention Against Doping In Sport](#).

U.S. National Commission for UNESCO member recommended during the [May 2007 Annual Meeting](#) recommended that the U.S. become party to the [1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict](#), and on September 25, 2008, Congress voted to become party.

Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura has asked Mrs. Bush to remain on as the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012) Honorary Ambassador, and she gladly accepted. The Director-General has also named U.S. tennis legend [Billy Jean King as a UNESCO Global Mentor for Gender Education](#).



Commission members Alan Moghissi and Marc Scorca review UNESCO Young Professional Program applications. (Source: Alex Zemek, State Department)

The Commission also has recently been engaged with provided advice on programs such as UNESCO's Young Professionals Program, Associated Schools Project Network, and the Commission's Laura W. Bush Traveling Fellowship. Over the next couple months, we envision the various international conferences of 2009 to be on the forefront of our work. 2009 will culminate with the 35th UNESCO General

Conference in October 2009 and the election of a new Director General. With the transition taking place within our own government, we will also be working on continuing the momentum of our successful reengagement with UNESCO in initiated by President Bush in 2002.

As this will be my last newsletter before departing the Commission, I am honored to have been with the

Commission since its reestablishment, am pleased with the progress achieved over the past four and a half years, and thankful for our Commission members and colleagues whose efforts have made our reengagement with UNESCO successful. I am confident that a great foundation has been laid for the future. – Alex Zemek

Mrs. Bush Hosts other First Ladies from Around the World at White House Symposium on Advancing Global Literacy: Building a Foundation for Freedom



Mrs. Laura Bush delivers remarks at the White House Symposium on Advancing Global Literacy. (Source: Chris Greenberg, White House)

The [White House Symposium on Advancing Global Literacy](#) was held 22 September at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The symposium, entitled *Building a Foundation for Freedom*, served as a follow up to the [White House Conference on Advancing Global Literacy](#) held in 2006 and highlighted the ways in which literacy builds a strong foundation for freedom.

First Lady Laura Bush hosted the event and emphasized the need for global participation in achieving global literacy. In her [opening remarks she announced the establishment of the United Nations Literacy Decade \(UNLD\) Fund to Advance Global Literacy](#) and was proud to announce the United States as the first

contributor to this new fund with a commitment of [over \\$2 million](#).



Thirty-six other First Lady's join Mrs. Bush at the Symposium. (Source: Chris Greenberg, White House)

Present at the event were First Ladies from over thirty countries, various Ministers of Education, leaders of non-governmental organizations, and other distinguished guests. Participating in the symposium's panel discussion were representatives from the six UNESCO Regional Literacy Conferences hosted in Qatar, China, Mali, India,

Azerbaijan, and Mexico. The discussion, moderated by U.S. Ambassador to UNESCO - Louis Oliver, gave the representatives an opportunity to converse on the outcomes of their

conferences and to reaffirm international commitments.



Henrietta Fore elaborates on the contributions made by USAID to advance literacy abroad. (Source: USAID)

Also speaking at the event was Henrietta Fore, Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance and Administrator of USAID. Talking on the United States' commitment to advancing global literacy, Director Fore described many of the education activities that USAID currently supports in more than fifty-five countries and briefly spoke of the President's Initiative to Expand Education, which is helping to provide quality education in six initial targeted countries (Ethiopia, Mali, Ghana, Liberia, Honduras, and Yemen).

Speaking on the topic of UNESCO's commitment to advancing global literacy were Adama Ouane, Ph.D., Director of the Institute for Lifelong Learning (LIFE), César Guadalupe, Director of the Literacy and Assessment Monitoring Program (LAMP), and [Director-General of UNESCO, Koïchiro Matsuura](#). The Director-General was pleased to announce that Mrs. Bush had accepted his invitation to continue as Honorary Ambassador for the UNLD through its 2012 completion. Mrs. Bush thanked the Director-General and everyone who participated in the symposium and closed the discussion. Immediately following the symposium was a luncheon with entertainment from the Broadway musical, *In the Heights*, including a song about education and achieving dreams.

United States Contributes Another \$500,000 to the UNLD Fund at Mid-Decade Review



Mrs. Laura Bush addresses the United Nations Literacy Decade Mid-Decade Review Report group at the United Nations in New York City, Oct. 7, 2009. (Source: J. Boghosian, White House)

Two weeks after hosting the [White House Symposium on Advancing Global Literacy](#), First Lady Laura Bush spoke at UNESCO's mid-Decade Review of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), 7 October. In [her address](#), Mrs. Bush highlighted the actions that UNESCO, its programs, and its member states have taken over the last five years to achieve the Decade's goals, but stressed that there is still much work to be done. To help in this effort, Mrs. Bush announced an additional U.S. commitment of \$500,000 to the UNLD Fund (from the original \$2 million announced on 22 September).

The event also consisted of a lunch discussion that focused on "The Interface between Literacy and Development". It included Ahlin Byll-Cataria, Executive Secretary of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, Enkhsetseg Ochir, Permanent Representative to the United Nations for Mongolia, and Patrick Gaston, President of Verizon Foundation as panelists and Mark Richmond, Director of UNESCO's Division for the Coordination of UN Priorities in Education as moderator. The purpose of the discussion was to evaluate the Mid-Decade Review Report, which helped to link literacy with sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals as well as with issues such as peace and globalization.

U.S. National Commission for UNESCO Laura W. Bush Traveling Fellowship Recipients Hosted at White House



Mrs. Laura Bush congratulates four of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO Laura W. Bush Traveling Fellows. (Source: J. Boghosian, White House)

Mrs. Bush hosted the first recipients of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO Laura W. Bush Traveling Fellowship at the White House on October 21, 2008. Four of the five fellows awarded during its inaugural year had the opportunity to explain their projects; the fifth fellow was on conducting her work in India at the time. The privately funded fellowships enabled these university students to conduct brief work abroad within the mandate of UNESCO that helped to bridge nations, enlarge freedoms, and promote democracy. The following are the list of fellow from Summer 2008 and Fall/Winter 2008, including their project titles and location of travel:

- Michael Aguilar, “Culture, Peace & Conflict Resolution in Central America” who traveled to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador
- Laura E. Olsen, “Ethnographic Study to Develop Sustainable Access to Clean Drinking Water” who traveled to the Dominican Republic
- Marika Shioiri-Clark, “Designing for Airborne Diseases in India” who traveled to India
- David Hee Lee, “Stinky Peace: Bringing Sustainable Income and Energy Source to Kabul” who traveled to Afghanistan
- Heather LaRue McGee, “The Conflict Mitigation Potential of Water Users’ Associations in Southern Kyrgyzstan” who traveled to Kyrgyzstan

The Commission will soon open the call for the [Summer 2009](#) round of applications.

Ohio State University, State Department, Education Department Join Together to Host CONFINTEA Preparation Forum in Columbus, Ohio



In late September, some of the nation’s top individuals and organizations relating to adult education gathered in the Midwest at [Ohio State University’s Center for Education Training and Employment \(CETE\)](#), which is the site of the first U.S.-based member of the [UNESCO-UNEVOC network](#) that focuses on technical and vocational education. Ohio State in conjunction with the U.S. Departments of State and Education in collaboration with the Executive Director of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO held a forum in preparation for the [6th UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education \(CONFINTEA VI\)](#).

The 1-day forum sought to present to stakeholders the findings of the U.S. national report for CONFINTEA VI and to engage a panel of CONFINTEA V delegates to share information and experiences from the previous conference in Hamburg in 1997, as this information may be relevant to the U.S. Government current planning for CONFINTEA VI in 2009. The forum helped to foster a national dialogue among stakeholders about this critical topic within the federal context and build off comments received by the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO during the NGO portion of the U.S. [national report](#) on developments in adult education since [1997 \(CONFINTEA V\)](#). The report requested by UNESCO was submitted to them in April 2008 and represents the state of federally-supported adult literacy, adult vocational training, and postsecondary education programs, and a small sampling of the wide spectrum of non-federal adult learning opportunities in the United States.

CONFINTEA VI is a UNESCO-led intergovernmental conference for policy dialogue and assessment on adult learning and education. The conference will take place in Belém, Brazil in May 2009. It will be preceded by regional preparatory conferences

during 2008-09. The aim of CONFINTEA VI is to discuss the role of adult learning and education among UNESCO member states and highlight exemplary programs and initiatives.

“Picturing America” Exhibition Opens During American History and Culture Week at UNESCO



Bruce Cole, Louise Oliver, Koichiro Matsuura and Anne Radice pose for a photo with iconic pictures from the exhibit in the background. (Source: Michel Ravassard, UNESCO)

Commission members Dr. Bruce Cole of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Dr. Anne-Imelda Radice of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and Adair Margo of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities joined UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura and Ambassador Louise Oliver to inaugurate [American History and Cultural Week](#) (30 September to 7 October) by opening a symposium on [“Picturing America.”](#) Chairman Cole and Director Radice’s organizations cosponsored the exhibit. Picturing America is an acclaimed program of that National Endowment for

the Humanities (NEH) and one of Cole’s major initiatives as Chairman of NEH.



Attendees square-dance during the Dixieland Band performance. (Source: Sophie Calmettes, US Mission to UNESCO)

After opening remarks from [Ambassador Oliver](#) and [Director General Matsuura](#), the 30 September celebration continued with a performance by Native American chant group “Tha Boyz,” a discussion led by [Dr. Cole](#) and [Dr. Radice](#), and a reception with traditional American refreshments accompanied by another performance by Disneyland’s “Dixieland Band.”

The weeklong “Picturing America” exhibited was

comprised of forty works of classic American art including paintings, sculpture, photography, architecture, and other decorative arts. The purpose and goal of this collection,

according to the NEH, is to enhance the teaching, study, and understanding of U.S. history and culture. Earlier this year, Chairman Cole spoke on the importance of art in teaching American history and culture saying that these works are “primary documents of a civilization” and that “our... citizens



Once of iconic posted in the exhibit. (Source: “Freedom of Speech”, Norman Rockwell)

deserve to see American art that shows us where we have come from, what we have endured, and where we are headed.” Picturing America brings masterpieces of American art into classrooms and libraries nationwide. The nation’s artistic heritage - paintings, sculpture, architecture, fine crafts, and photography - offers unique insights into the character, ideals, and aspirations of our country. While these pictures are only 40 in number, the lessons mentioned in the accompanying resource book relate these images to important themes for Americans, including leadership, freedom and equality, democracy, courage, and creativity and ingenuity.



Ambassador Louise Oliver and Commission member Adair Margo survey the cake. (Source: Sophie Calmettes, US Mission to UNESCO)

On 7 October, Ambassador Oliver, together with Adair Margo, Chairman of the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, hosted a closing reception during which guests were treated to performances by jazz group Jeanot Rabeson Trio and country musician Carlton Moody as well as more America-style refreshments.

Following American History and Culture Week, the National Endowment for the Humanities plans to further bring its

“Picturing America” program to schools and libraries around the United States. They hope that the program will give young kids a chance to experience some of their country’s finest works of art, especially for those who would otherwise not have the chance to experience them. Already starting its tour throughout the country, “Picturing America” is scheduled to show at 26,320 schools and public libraries.

American Schools Receive UNESCO Mondialogo Prize at International Symposium



The U.S. and Syria team pose after the awards ceremony. (Source: UNESCO)

The [Third International Symposium of the Mondialogo School Contest was held in Beijing](#) this year (25 – 28 September) where [a team from the United States, partnered with a team from Syria, took third place](#). Two other American schools were among the twenty-five finalists teams. The contest, created through the joint effort of UNESCO and Daimler, pairs teams together

from different countries to promote intercultural dialogue and emphasize the importance of cultural diversity. The symposium also included several workshops, a panel discussion on intercultural dialogue, and a Chinese Cultural night.

Fifty schools from thirty-six countries were selected as finalists by the UNESCO-Daimler Joint Committee and invited to Beijing to meet their partnered teams and present their projects in an exhibition. The Lebanon-Serbia team received the First Prize for their design of a playground for special needs children and the Indonesia-Ukraine team received the Second Prize for their idea of a mobile bike library. The Third Prize was shared by the Syria-USA team and the Germany-Mexico team.



The winning display from the Conserve School team. (Source: Conserve School Team)

The winning Syria-USA team consisted of students from Al Enawi Secondary School in Yabroud and students from Conserve School in Land O’Lakes, Wisconsin ([a UNESCO ASPnet school](#)). The two schools worked together to create a book that contains drawings done by Iraqi children. The children were asked to draw pictures of memories and hopes, but what they drew were death, bombs, and violence. Titled *Through the Eyes of Children: The Iraqi Refugee Crisis 2008*, the Syria-USA teams hopes the book will raise awareness of the Iraqi refugee crisis that has resulted from the war in Iraq. Note cards

and books may be purchased online.

As the teams from the two schools worked together, communicating through email and phone calls, a friendship developed. As the book conveys in a short explanation of their work, this friendship has allowed the students to understand one another and open their minds and hearts to each other. When asked about the importance of communication, cooperation, and understanding, the Syrian team responded by saying, “Teamwork can be effective, useful and productive and the future will be more beautiful and peaceful if we continue collaborating.” The USA also responded by saying, “These understandings between people can unite the world. By slowly making friends with people around the world we build a worldwide community. We must be open to know others. We are all the same on the inside and want similar things.”

Although the Mondialogo Contest is only in its third edition, the Conserve School is not new to the contest. Being selected as a finalist in each of the three editions, the Conserve team has gone to Barcelona in 2004, then paired with Pakistan, and to Rome in 2006, then paired with Iran, where it received the Unity in Diversity Award.

[Another U.S. team](#) from Lewisburg, West Virginia, which partnered with Benin, also achieved recognition at this year’s contest for its work with in cultural diversity.

American Expert Appointed to UNESCO COMEST Committee

The World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) is an advisory body and forum of reflection composed of 18 independent experts appointed by the UNESCO Director-General. The Commission is mandated to formulate ethical principles that could provide decision-makers with criteria other than purely economic. Robert George, who is an American and McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence as well as Director of James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, was recently appointed to serve on COMEST.

UNESCO-Patroned Junior Ambassadors Tennis Event Hosted in Washington, DC



Workshop participants examine a UNESCO exhibit at the tennis event. (Source: Alex Zemek, State Department)

The [World Class Tennis Tour](#) 14U (14 years and under), a tour that promotes the importance of fair play, respect, integrity, and solidarity among young players, held its first [Junior Ambassadors Tennis Cup](#), 1-4 November, at the William H. G. Fitzgerald Tennis Center in Washington, D.C. In addition to tournament play in which athletes from eight countries competed in singles and doubles,

workshops about cultural diversity, human rights, sustainable development, world heritage, and anti-doping tied the event with UNESCO's work. These "sport and

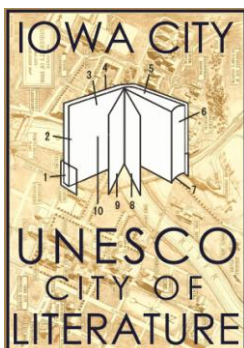
attitude" [educational workshops](#) were incorporated into the daily program. In years past UNESCO has provided its patronage to a similar tournament in Paris, the BNP Paribas Cup, which is also part of the World Class Tennis Tour 14U.

Alex Zemek, Executive Director of the U.S. National Commission, along with some staff members, attended the final day of the tournament to observe championship play as well as the award ceremony.



Event coordinator Jacques Laurant and Executive Director Alex Zemek pose with the boys finalists. (Source: Chad Franklin, U.S. Department of State)

Iowa City Crowned UNESCO Creative City for Literature



UNESCO has designated Iowa City, Iowa part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. Iowa City becomes the second U.S. city to join the network; [Santa Fe](#) was designated in 2005 as a Creative City of Folk Arts, Crafts, and Designs. Iowa City is recognized as a City of Literature, and joins Edinburgh, Scotland and Melbourne, Australia with that designation.

“This is at once a celebration of the literary riches and resources of Iowa City and a spur to action,” said [University of Iowa International Writing Program](#) Director Christopher Merrill, who led the UI Writing University committee that submitted the city's proposal. “We look forward to working with our new partners in the Creative Cities network -- to forging dynamic relationships with writers, artists and others committed to the life of discovery. This is a great day for Iowa City.” The catalyst for the University of Iowa’s literary activity was the Writers’ Workshop, the first creative writing degree program anywhere and the blueprint for many of the creative writing programs that now thrive on campuses worldwide. The stature of the city as a literary center has also been enhanced by recent Pulitzer Prize and Nobel Prize recipients.

The [Creative Cities Network](#) was designed to promote the social, economic and cultural development of cities in both the developed and the developing world. Other cities in the network include: Aswan, Egypt; Berlin, Germany; Montreal, Canada; Popayan, Colombia; Bologna, Italy; Shenzhen, China; and Seville, Spain. The cities that apply to join to the network seek to promote their local creative scene; they share interest in UNESCO's mission toward cultural diversity. Once the city is appointed to the network, it can share experiences and create new opportunities for itself and others on a global platform, notably for activities based on the notion of creative tourism.

Parks Service Displays Photo Exhibit Honoring 30th Anniversary of First U.S. World Heritage Site and UN Foundation Hosts World Heritage Alliance event



A view of Yellowstone Park’s Old Faithful. (Source: U.S. Park Service)

To commemorate the inscription of Yellowstone and Mesa Verde National Parks as the first U.S. sites on UNESCO’s World Heritage List (1978), the Department of the Interior, the National Park Service, and the National Geographic Society organized a photo exhibit celebrating the thirty year anniversary.

On 23 September, the Department of the Interior Museum opened *World Heritage Sites in the USA: A Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration*, an exhibit that included breathtaking photographs of all of World Heritage sites within the United States as well as candidates for future nominations, known as the “U.S. Tentative List.” The World Heritage Convention, adopted by UNESCO in 1972, named its first twelve sites to the World Heritage List in 1978 with Yellow and Mesa Verde National Parks among these first sites.

In attendance at the anniversary event were members of the U.S. National Commission and representatives from the coordinating organizations. Deputy Assistant Secretary Gerald Anderson, International Organization Affairs at the Department of State, spoke at the event talking on the United States’ membership in the World Heritage

Convention and its Committee and dedication to the World Heritage global community. He also thanked the Commission and its members for their invaluable advice on World Heritage and other cultural issues. The exhibit concluded at the museum on 9 January 2009.

A few weeks later, on November 19, the Director of the National Museum of Natural History, Expedia, Inc. and the United Nations Foundation hosted a gathering for the [World Heritage Alliance for Sustainable Tourism](#) at the Museum of Natural History as part of the Alliances Annual Meeting. Timothy Wirth, President of the UN Foundation, and Steve Case, Chairman of Revolution LLC, were among those who gave remarks.

The World Heritage Alliance for Sustainable Tourism is an industry-based initiative launched by Expedia, Inc. and the United Nations Foundation to promote sustainable tourism for World Heritage sites and communities around the world. The Alliance was created in 2005 with the [agreement of the UNESCO World Heritage Center](#).

President Bush Announces Two U.S. Nominations to Join UNESCO World Heritage List



President George W. Bush delivers remarks on Conservation and the Environment Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2009, in Washington, D.C. where he announced the U.S. World Heritage Site Nominations. (Source: Chris Greenberg, White House)

On January 6, [President George W. Bush announced](#) the two sites that the United States will put forward this year to the UNESCO World Heritage Center for approval. The nomination of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument ([Papahānaumokuākea](#)) and the [Mount](#)

[Vernon](#) plantation will be considered by the World Heritage Committee in June 2010 to join the nearly 900 World Heritage sites; twenty of which are in the United States. These would be the first such additions since 1995, when [Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park](#) and [Carlsbad Caverns National Park](#) were added to the list. Both sites are among the fourteen sites on the [U.S. World Heritage Tentative List](#), which was announced on January 22, 2008.

UNESCO Job Vacancies

The United States continues to be underrepresented at UNESCO with respect to employment. Please circulate this list of vacancies within your organizations or to any highly qualified individuals to help us recruit the strongest possible American citizen candidates.

UNESCO has posted a number of open [positions](#). Professional posts (P) range from junior professionals P-1/P-2, to middle-ranking professionals P-3/P-4, to management professionals and directors P-5 and D-1/D-2. Should you or someone you know apply for a UNESCO position, please feel free to inform the Executive Secretariat of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO.

Current jobs listed on UNESCO's website <http://recrutweb.unesco.org/> include:

[EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF IOC](#), Natural Sciences – Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, SC 079 - (ADG); Paris, France; Application Deadline: 14 January 2009

[LEGAL ADVISER AND DIRECTOR](#), Central Services, LA 001 - (D2); Paris, France; Application Deadline: 5 February 2009

[SENIOR PROGRAMME SPECIALIST](#), Natural Sciences Sector, LA/RP/URU/SC/0001 - (P5); Montevideo, Uruguay; Application Deadline: 11 February 2009

[CHIEF, MATHEMATICS SECTION](#), Institutes and Centers, EU/TP/ITA/SC/0810 - (P5); Trieste, Italy; Application Deadline: 20 January 2009

[PROGRAMME SPECIALIST](#), Social and Human Sciences Sector, LA/RP/URU/SHS/0008 - (P4); Montevideo, Uruguay; Application Deadline: 4 February 2009

[PROGRAMME SPECIALIST \(EDUCATION\)](#); Education Sector; AF/RP/SEN/ED/0029 - (P4) Dakar, Senegal; Application Deadline: 2 February 2009

[ASSISTANT PROGRAMME SPECIALIST](#), Culture Sector; LA/RP/CUB/CLT/0008 - (P1P2); Havana, Cuba; Application Deadline: 5 March 2009