

U.S. NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO Monthly Update

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Comments from the Executive Director

This month the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO established a fifth subject area committee - Social and Human Science. The commission now reflects the organizational subject area structure of UNESCO. In addition, the commission has been preparing for UNESCO's 171st executive board and the commission's first annual meeting since re-establishment.



Education

University Networks and EFA

The UNESCO Division of Higher Education is establishing four new university networks to leverage the expertise of universities in achieving Education for All. The four networks are:

- 1) Teacher Education
- 2) HIV/AIDS
- 3) Literacy
- 4) Use of technology in education

These networks will be part of the [UNESCO Chairs/UNITWIN program](#). UNESCO is currently looking for a limited number of universities to participate. If you are aware of universities that have particular expertise in these areas, please contact the National Commission office at dcunesco@state.gov.

Academics Across Borders – looking for expatriate academics living in the U.S.

A new UNESCO program in higher education, [Academics Across Borders](#), will be launched in November 2005. This program seeks to match the demands of higher education in developing and transitioning countries with volunteer academics from industrially developed nations.

Expatriate academics, in particular, are encouraged to return to their countries of origin to assist in strengthening universities and research institutions. Presently, UNESCO is currently developing a database of academics and researchers from developing countries who have distinguished themselves in the fields of medicine, engineering and natural sciences, and computer engineering/sciences who may be willing to return to their home country to participate in the program. Individuals who wish to have their information included in the database should email their name, address, and area of expertise to the National Commission office.

Academics Across Borders will also assist in capacity building through other activities, including by making teaching and learning materials freely available on the web and using the UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN networks as tools to provide assistance in transitioning countries.



Social and Human Science

The first intergovernmental meeting of experts was held April 4-6 in Paris to discuss development of a Declaration on Bioethics. Member States used the [Preliminary Draft](#) developed by experts groups as the starting point for discussions. This document is available on the UNESCO [bioethics website](#), along with more information on the meeting and the recommendations made by the intergovernmental experts. A second intergovernmental negotiation is scheduled for June 2005.



Natural Science

Natarajan Ishwaran, director of UNESCO's recently merged [Ecological and Earth Sciences](#) Division visited Washington, D.C. and met informally with local members of the Natural Science Committee of the U.S. National Commission and representatives of several government agencies. The activities related to the [International Geoscience Programme \(IGCP\)](#), capacity building in Earth Sciences, and Earth Observation have all been transferred to this Division, where they will be maintained as a separate section. Dr. Robert Missotten will be responsible for these activities within the new Division. Programs related to natural disaster reduction that are outside the IGCP and the [Geological Application of Remote Sensing \(GARS\)](#) Programmes will remain in the Basic and Engineering Science Division and will continue be headed by Dr. Badaoui Roubhban.

Dr. Ishwaran noted that the reorganization occurred in the context of budgetary constraints related to increased expenditures for security and Headquarters site renovation. However, he also indicated that regrouping into a single Division provides new opportunities for expanded participation in interdisciplinary activities in areas such as climate change, earth observation, and biodiversity. Under the newly restructured Division, Dr. Ishwaran indicated his support for strengthening the IGCP, particularly through its collaboration with the [International Hydrological Programme \(IHP\)](#) in development of projects related to hydrogeology and groundwater research.



L'Oreal USA for Women in Science Fellowship and Awards Program

The [For Women in Science](#) program is a partnership of international stature, which aims to improve the position of women in science by recognizing, every year, outstanding women researchers who have contributed to scientific progress (L'Oreal-UNESCO Awards), and young women scientists engaged in exemplary and promising projects (UNESCO-L'Oreal Fellowships). This is the only award to honor eminent women scientists at the international level which touches women scientists in every region of the world.

At UNESCO Headquarters on March 3, 2005, L'Oreal and UNESCO Awards were given to five women researchers representing the five continents: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and North America in recognition of their contribution to research in Material Sciences. This Award highlights their achievements and holds them up as role models for an entire generation of young women. Each Award is worth \$100,000.

Also at UNESCO Headquarters on March 2, 2005, UNESCO-L'Oreal Fellowships were awarded to 15 young women researchers from 5 regions of the world. encourage young scientists to pursue their research in Life Sciences in the laboratory of their choice. By fostering these young researchers and their hopes, the program is helping reinforce the role of women in scientific disciplines. Each fellowship is worth a maximum of \$20,000.



Communications and Information

International Program for the Development of Communication

UNESCO's [International Program for the Development of Communication \(IPDC\)](#) met March 7-9 in Paris and agreed to allocate over \$1,500,000 for media projects and radio stations in Indonesia's tsunami-devastated province of Aceh. Most radio facilities there were swept away by the tidal waves.

The IPDC also approved 13 grants totaling \$319,000 for its traditional priority region of Africa. Three Palestinian projects were approved for a total of \$61,000. The 51 approved projects were selected from among 112 proposals submitted from 88 developing countries and regional organizations. More information and [project details](#) can be found online.

The IPDC was first proposed in 1978 by then-Director of the United States Information Agency John Reinhardt, both in response to Third World demands for help in developing communication and in an attempt to depoliticize debates over communication.

Last year, the United States made a voluntary contribution of \$60,000 to the IPDC for the first private television station in Afghanistan, the [Voice of Afghan Women in Global Media](#).



Afghan women on the air. Source: UNESCO

It is headed by Jamila Mujahid, the first journalist on the air in November 2001 to announce on TV that the capital of Kabul had been freed from the Taliban. The station is expected to start broadcasting soon from Kabul.

Information for All Program

The Bureau of the Intergovernmental Council for [UNESCO's Information for All Program](#), met April 4-6 at Paris HQ to consider how to allocate \$750,000 in a Special Fund made up of voluntary contributions for projects to help overcome the digital divide. The group had over 500 projects from which to choose and [approved twenty-three](#).



The annual [UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize](#) was awarded this year to Chinese editor Cheng Yizhong, of the Southern Metropolis Daily (Nanfang Dushi Bao) in Canton. The World Association of Newspapers nominated Mr. Yizhong whose paper is one of China's most daring, prompting the authorities to harass its editors after the paper's aggressive reporting on SARS and an exposé of a police beating. Mr. Yizhong was arrested and held for five months without charge before being released late last August on suspicion of corruption. Authorities stripped him of his title of editor-in-chief.



Mr. Matsuura will give the prize to Mr. Yizhong at UNESCO's annual [World Press Freedom Day](#) commemoration, May 3, to be held this year in Dakar, Senegal. A two-day seminar on "Media and Good Governance" will precede the commemoration.



Culture

Preservation of cultural artifacts is one of the priorities of the U.S. government and of its involvement in UNESCO. The United States and El Salvador recently exchanged diplomatic notes extending a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) imposing U.S. import restrictions on Pre-Columbian archaeological objects originating in El Salvador. Archaeological sites dating from 1700 B.C. to 1550 A.D. throughout El Salvador have been severely damaged by looting. The MOU is in response to a Salvadoran request, submitted under [Article 9 of the 1970 UNESCO Convention](#), for U.S. assistance in curbing pillaging and illicit trade in objects that represent its Pre-Columbian heritage. The [newly amended MOU](#) sets out new benchmarks for achieving improvements in the protection and preservation of El Salvador's cultural heritage and will expire in 2010.



News from Paris

Ambassador Louise V. Oliver visited the [UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education at Delft](#) in the Netherlands on March 23 and 24. She was accompanied by Ambassador Charlotte van Schaik-Zaaijer, the Permanent Delegate to UNESCO of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The visit included a luncheon with Prince Willem Alexander of the Netherlands (Prince of Orange). The Prince of Orange played an active role in establishing the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education and continues to be active in the institute's activities.



Established on November 5, 2001 during UNESCO's 31st General Conference, the institute, often referred to as "UNESCO-IHE," is owned by all UNESCO Member States. It provides postgraduate courses and tailor-made training programs in the fields of water, environment and infrastructure. For example, last fall sixteen Iraqi professionals, selected by the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#) and the [Iraqi Ministry of Water Resources](#), began Masters degree programs at UNESCO-IHE in Hydraulic Engineering and River Basin Development, Environmental Planning and Management, Environmental Science and Technology, Water Resources Management, Surface Water Hydrology, Water Supply Engineering, and Water Quality Management.

UNESCO-IHE is governed by a thirteen-member Governing Board appointed by the Director General of UNESCO. The IHE Delft Foundation provides all staff (apart from the Director and Deputy Director) and facilities. In addition, UNESCO-IHE has at its disposal a pool of more than 350 national and international guest lecturers from government agencies, partner universities and research institutes, private consultancy firms and other organizations.



171st UNESCO Executive Board

Reform

Management reform continues to be a top priority at UNESCO and will be on the agenda at the upcoming [171st Executive Board](#) meeting from April 12 to April 28. The 2003 General Counsel established an ad hoc working group to review the management and effectiveness of the organization, and has submitted a report to Director General Matsuura for consideration. The ad hoc group was comprised of

appointed representatives, including Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs R. Terrell Miller, and has met several times in the past two years.

In their [final report](#), which was publicly released in March, the working group focused not only on the management structure of the organization but also made recommendations on the preparation of UNESCO's budget and strategy documents. The group's most significant recommendation suggests that the organization should transition from a two-year to a four-year budget and program management cycle. It is argued that a four-year program cycle will allow for increased participation from member states, and will enable the UNESCO secretariat to focus on program development and evaluation. In turn, these changes will allow the organization to shift resources to effective programs in line with key priorities.

Other recommendations include better integration of the Executive Board and the General Conference in decisions related to extrabudgetary activities, and introducing more interactive dialogue among members of the Executive Board and the secretariat on the Director General's report on program implementation.

Budget

Every two years, UNESCO drafts a new budget and program for debate and adoption at the General Conference. As with all major agenda items for the General Conference, the Executive Board will deliberate on the proposal and provide a recommendation to the General Conference. The budget document guides the work of the organization and outlines the key issues and priorities of the organization.

During each budgeting cycle, the UNESCO secretariat reaches out to member state's National Commissions to gather comments and suggestions on programs and priorities. This outreach occurred during the spring and summer of 2004, prior to the establishment of a U.S. National Commission. The [U.S. State Department Bureau of International Organizations](#) ensured U.S. participation in this process by submitting comments and suggestions developed through an inter-agency consultation. Once the Director General's proposed budget became

public in March 2005, commission members were sent a copy for comments and suggestions.

This year, the Director General is submitting a \$635 million budget for consideration to the 171st Executive Board, which is \$25 million more than the amount recommended by the 170th Executive Board. The budget is organized by sector, with each section outlining key priorities and the organization's main lines of action (or main programs) to achieve each priority. In the [current proposed budget](#), education receives the largest share of funding by sector at approximately \$117,000,000; this is followed by, in descending order, Natural Sciences, Culture, Communication and Information and the Social and Human Sciences. The budget also includes a list of expected results for each program, but there is, as of now, no clear link to past program evaluation or performance information.

Resolution

The U.S. will introduce a resolution to the 171st Executive Board seeking creation of a cross-sectoral program in technical capacity building focused on educational activities in basic science, mathematics, and engineering to address elements of the goals for sustainable development outlined in the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations, including safe drinking water and poverty reduction. Activities of the proposed program would include a) development of training materials in basic sciences, mathematics, and engineering and training of teachers from developing countries in their use b) support of workshops for engineering educators in curriculum development, best practices, and quality assurance, and c) development of appropriate collaborations with industry. The resolution also seeks support for enhancement of the current hydrology effort as it relates to capacity building efforts in engineering and water sciences to address water-related needs.



UNESCO Chair/UNITWIN

The U.S. application process for 2005 UNESCO chairs has closed. The National Commission received ten proposals this year, on topics ranging from bioethics to Education for All. Over thirty Commission Members are assisting in the review process and will submit their review of the proposals by mid-April. Outstanding proposals will be submitted to UNESCO by April 30.



Job Vacancies

There are a variety of positions open in the UNESCO organization including: translators, general service, and professional posts. 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.

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

- Director of office and UNESCO representative in Lebanon and Syria; regional bureau for Education in Arab states (AR/RP/LEB/BFC/0001) - (D-2) (Beirut, Lebanon) (closing date: 27 May. '05)
- Program specialist in technical and vocational education (AS/RP/THA/ED/0016) - (P-4) (Bangkok, Thailand) (closing date: 1 Jun. '05)
- Program specialist in culture (AS/RP/IND/CLT/0001) (P-3) (New Delhi, India) (closing date: 23 May '05)

