



**The Assistant Director-General  
for External Relations and Public Information**

United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

**To Non-Governmental Organizations,  
Official partners of UNESCO**

Ref. : ERI/MSP/INO/2016/27

30 March 2016

Dear Partners,

I am pleased to begin this letter by informing you that twenty new sites have been added to the **UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves**, which now numbers 669 sites in 120 countries, including 16 transboundary sites. Those of you interested in learning more about these new sites can connect to [http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/about-us/single-view/news/thirteen\\_sites\\_added\\_to\\_unescos\\_world\\_network\\_of\\_biosphere\\_reserves/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/about-us/single-view/news/thirteen_sites_added_to_unescos_world_network_of_biosphere_reserves/).

On a separate note, I had the opportunity, this week, to meet with the Bureau of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee, led by Martine Levy, to discuss forthcoming activities. I have been very impressed by the large amount of work that has already been done for the preparation of the forthcoming international forums of NGOs, as well as for the 2016 International Conference of NGOs which will take place at the end of the year.

The preparatory work of the **International Forum on climate change**, to be held tentatively in Morocco next Fall, has attracted the interest of many of you in Paris and I am pleased to inform you that the Forum has registered a positive feedback.

I also wish to thank those of you who have positively responded to our call and are actively participating in the Internet platform of discussion on the **International Forum of NGOs on peace**. Based on the number of registrations (more than 140 people from 80 NGOs and foundations), this platform is proving to be successful in broadening our reflection and allowing many NGOs around the world to express their views and actively contributing to building this forum. As you are aware, the platform discussion is extended until 5 April (link <http://ngo-unesco-peace.forumactif.org>) and a working meeting will be held in Paris in May as a follow-up to the online discussions.

**Therefore, I hope that you will be numerous to attend the International Forum of NGOs on climate change we hope to organize within the framework of the preparations for COP-22 in September 2016, as well as the International Forum of NGOs on peace, which will be held at the beginning of November 2016 [in Mexico].** You will receive the official letter of invitation for these forums as soon as possible.

### **30 April 2016 – International Jazz Day**

Washington D.C. will serve as the Global Host City for the 2016 celebration of this Day. It will host a multitude of jazz performances, community service initiatives, and education programmes in schools, libraries, hospitals, community centers and arts venues across the city. Washington, D.C. is the birthplace of the great jazz pianist and bandleader Duke Ellington, and the city has enjoyed a thriving jazz scene for the past century.

Washington DC will join with towns, cities and villages in over 190 countries on all seven continents to observe International Jazz Day through thousands of performances and programmes.

This Day brings together nations and communities to celebrate the art of jazz, and to highlight its important role in encouraging dialogue among cultures and civilizations, eradicating discrimination and promoting human dignity.

As in the past five years, UNESCO's official partner in the organization of this Day is the *Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz*. The Institute is leading both the programme and outreach efforts on behalf of UNESCO.

I encourage you to join us for this celebration. You will find more information on how to get involved and start your own celebration on our dedicated website following [this link](#).

### **3 May 2016 - World Press Freedom Day, Helsinki, Finland**

UNESCO and the Government of Finland will co-host the World Press Freedom Day's main event which will take place in Helsinki from 2-4 May, as well as the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize Ceremony which will take place on 3 May. Under the theme "Access to Information and Fundamental Freedoms - This Is Your Right!" the 2016 celebration will highlight the links between press freedom, a culture of openness and the right to freedom of information, and sustainable development in the digital age.

Every year, the World Press Freedom Day celebrates the fundamental principles of press freedom; to evaluate press freedom around the world, to defend the media from attacks on their independence and to pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession. Hundreds of celebrations take place each year to commemorate this Day. You are therefore encouraged to join these celebrations around the world in favour of press freedom.

Named in honour of an assassinated Colombian journalist, the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano Prize is intended to honour a person, organization or institution that has made an outstanding contribution to the defense and/or promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world, especially when this has been achieved in the face of danger.

Please consult [our website](#) on the World Press Freedom Day and the [dedicated webpage](#) to the Prize to get more information.

Contact: Ms Sylvie Coudray ([s.coudray@unesco.org](mailto:s.coudray@unesco.org)) and Ms Flavie Romer ([f.romer@unesco.org](mailto:f.romer@unesco.org))

## **2-5 May 2016 – World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2016, Geneva, Switzerland**

Co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD, the WSIS Forum 2016 represents the world's largest annual gathering of the 'ICT for development' community and will provide structured opportunities to network, learn and participate in multi-stakeholder discussions and consultations on WSIS implementation.

The Agenda and Programme for the Forum is based on official submissions received during an Open Consultation Process aiming at actively engaging governments, civil society, the private sector and intergovernmental organizations in the preparatory process.

WSIS is a unique United Nations summit that was initiated in order to achieve a common vision, desire and commitment to build a people-centric, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information.

Our NGO partners wishing to attend the Forum shall first request accreditation following the procedure available online on the devoted website: <https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2016/>.

Contact: Mr Cédric Wachholz ([c.wachholz@unesco.org](mailto:c.wachholz@unesco.org))

## **UNESCO Publications**

- The 2016 edition of the World Water Development Report (WWDR, led by UNESCO and entitled "Water and Jobs", is now available in English, and for the first time in French and Spanish, under [this link](#). The Report illustrates that nearly three out of four jobs of the global workforce (3.2 billion people) are moderately or highly dependent upon access to water and water-related services. It seeks to inform decision-makers about the importance of the water and jobs nexus for the social and economic development and environmental sustainability of countries, rich and poor.
- Published by the UNESCO Amman Office, the study *Assessment of Media Development in Jordan*, based on the Organization's Media Development Indicators MDIs, is part of the 'Support to Media in Jordan' project aiming to increase media freedom, media independence and journalistic professionalism in the country. The UNESCO Media Development Indicators offer a comprehensive framework for assessing the contemporary media landscape in any country at any given time, but do not hold the ambition to compare countries with each other. You can download the study in English [under this link](#).

- The issue *World Heritage and Gender Equality – N°78* explore how gender plays a role in the management and conservation of World Heritage. Case studies include Mount Athos (Greece) – forbidden to women and children; Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range (Japan); Flemish Béguinages (Belgium) – *béguines* were women who dedicated their lives to God without retiring from the world; and Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi (Uganda). It is available in French, English and Spanish at the following address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/review/78/>

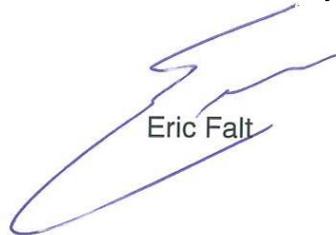
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Finally, I am pleased to announce the admission of two organizations, partners of UNESCO, namely:

- The [International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organisation \(IGLYO\)](#), an NGO based in Belgium, admitted to official partnership with UNESCO (consultative status); and
- The [Liberal Institute for Political Analysis \(LIPA\)](#), an NGO based in Bulgaria, admitted to official partnership with UNESCO (consultative status).

By clicking on their names, you will be redirected to their websites for more information. I welcome them and am happy to extend even further our network of partners.

Yours sincerely,



Eric Falt