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IMPLEMENTATION OF 34 C/RESOLUTION 58 AND 177 EX/DECISION 62 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

SUMMARY

This document is presented in compliance with 34 C/Resolution 58 and 177 EX/Decision 62. It summarizes progress made by UNESCO, since the 177th session of the Executive Board, in providing assistance to the Palestinian people and their educational and cultural institutions, as well as to such institutions in the occupied Syrian Golan. The Director-General intends to submit an addendum to the present document before the 179th session of the Board.

Introduction

1. The present document reports on assistance provided by UNESCO, since the 177th session of the Executive Board, to the Palestinian people and their educational and cultural institutions, as well as to the educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Syrian Golan.

2. The period under review witnessed several important developments in the Palestinian Territories. During the autumn of 2007, the Palestinian Authority (PA) engaged in the preparation of a "Palestinian Reform and Development Plan" (PRDP) for 2008-2010 – a three-year reform agenda focusing on capacity development of PA institutions in the areas of good governance, law and order and the delivery of basic public services.

3. Shortly after the Annapolis Conference (27 November 2007) where agreement was reached on the reactivation of the peace process, including negotiations on core issues, the PRDP was presented at the Paris Donor Conference (17 December 2007), where the donor community committed a substantial budget and development support for its implementation. Of particular interest to UNESCO is the emphasis the PRDP puts on quality education, in particular teacher training, curriculum development and technical and vocational training. The PRDP also identifies tourism, including cultural tourism, as a priority for Palestinian economic and private-sector development.

4. Despite the hope and opportunities generated both by the strong donor support for the PRDP and by the Annapolis process, the sharp deterioration of the situation in Gaza has been a source of major concern. Furthermore, lack of access by the population of Gaza to basic goods and services has become highly critical and these services are increasingly secured by United Nations humanitarian operations. In this context, the United Nations launched its annual Consolidated Appeal (CAP), led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in January 2008. UNESCO took part in the Appeal with a project proposal aimed at teacher training in psychosocial support. The aim of this project is to contribute to the mitigation of the psychological impact of the increased levels of tension and violence to which children and young people in Gaza are exposed.

5. Part I of the present document reports on UNESCO's efforts to support the reform process launched by the Palestinian Authority and successfully endorsed by the international community at the Paris Donor Conference. It also reports on progress achieved in providing assistance, in the Organization's fields of competence, to the Palestinian people and their institutions. Part II provides information on the situation of educational and cultural institutions in the Occupied Syrian Golan and UNESCO's assistance in that context. Finally, Part III reports on activities to foster Israeli-Palestinian dialogue in UNESCO's fields of competence.

PART I – UNESCO RESPONSE TO THE REFORM PROCESS AND PROGRESS OF ACTIVITIES IN THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

I. UNESCO response to the PRDP process

6. In December 2007, an intersectoral mission led by the Deputy Director-General visited the West Bank with a view to reactivating a high-level dialogue between UNESCO and the Palestinian Authority and, in particular, to consult line ministers charged with strategic cooperation priorities within UNESCO's fields of competence in the new context of the PRDP. During this visit, meetings were held with: H.E. President Mahmoud Abbas, the Minister of Planning, the Minister of Education and Higher Education, the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities (also serving as Minister of Women's Affairs), and the Minister of Youth and Sports. Meetings were also held with the Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office, with the Director-General of the Ministry of Culture and with a group of members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). The mission had the opportunity to visit Bethlehem in order to see the training and documentation activities carried out under the project "Bethlehem Area Conservation and Management Plan". Finally, the intersectoral mission met with

Mr R. Bandler, the Head of Mission of the Office of the Quartet Representative in Jerusalem, and Mr Maxwell Gaylard, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator.

7. As a result of the above-mentioned consultations, it was agreed that the next meeting of the UNESCO/PA Joint Committee would be held at UNESCO Headquarters in early March 2008. This meeting will serve to identify priorities of cooperation and new UNESCO/PA flagship projects in support of the PRDP, which would address gaps where UNESCO may concentrate its assistance.

8. It should be noted that in a context of increased integration of United Nations activities in the Palestinian Territories, the relevant UNESCO programmes and activities will be part of an overall United Nations work plan in support of the PRDP. The work plan is to be developed in Spring 2008 by the United Nations Country Team on the ground, with the full participation of UNESCO through its Ramallah Office. This process creates new opportunities for inter-agency cooperation, and in this context the UNESCO Ramallah Office intends to build on existing positive experiences gained from United Nations joint programming on activities benefiting Palestinian institutions and communities.

II. Progress and major achievements in UNESCO assistance to the Palestinian Territories

EDUCATION

9. During the period under review, assistance in the field of education primarily focused on technical advice and capacity-building activities aimed at providing upstream support to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) in its strategy and planning efforts to further enhance quality standards of education. In addition, in a context of increased internal tensions within the Palestinian Territories, UNESCO continued giving special attention to the educational needs of vulnerable groups.

10. Major progress was achieved in the implementation of the project **Development of a National Comprehensive Teacher Education Strategy in the OPT**, funded by Norway. The project aims at the participatory development of a comprehensive national teacher education strategy for 2008 to 2017, and, in a complementary manner, at exposing Palestinian teaching education professionals to innovative strategies and methods for teacher education. The strategy is now in its final stages of development. As for the capacity-building component, study tours to Norway and Finland were organized for 33 teaching professionals in November 2007. The study visits presented the participants with new curricula and pedagogies used in teacher education programmes abroad. An initial workshop on “Academic Standards and the Quality of Learning Opportunities of Teacher Education Programmes” was held in Ramallah from 17 to 20 January 2008. It brought together key education officers from the West Bank and Gaza – via videoconference – to discuss aims, intended learning outcomes, curricula, and assessment in teacher education programmes. The workshop was assisted by international and local expertise in the field of comparative education.

11. **Further technical assistance was provided to the Higher Education Accreditation and Quality Assurance System.** Field benchmarks (FBs) in two main disciplines of higher education, namely electrical engineering and information technology (IT), were developed in cooperation with Al-Quds University. The document focused on curriculum and graduates’ specifications. A national workshop was held on 4 December 2007, in which representatives of higher education institutions, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission, and the private sector, both from the West Bank and Gaza, participated. The workshop presented the final outcomes of the project and distributed the IT and engineering benchmark document to the participants.

12. In the area of early childhood education, a **diagnostic analysis of ECCE policies** was completed. The process involved key stakeholders in charge of ECCE policy at the Ministries of Education and Higher Education, of Social Affairs, and of Health. The review focused on specific

thematic issues, particularly quality, access, equity and resources in the current ECCE policy documents. In early November, two national workshops were conducted in Gaza and the West Bank, in which relevant stakeholders participated. During these workshops, an overview of the ECCE Policy Review Framework and the outcomes of the study were presented.

13. Within the **United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) Framework** and following the formulation of a Task Team for UNGEI, with the participation of UNICEF, MoEHE and the Palestinian Women's Research and Development Centre (PWRDC), new modalities for the scaling up of girls' education were identified and a related plan of action was produced. Key issues addressed pertained to the curriculum, gender disparity in education, and the labour market and its needs.

14. UNESCO participated in the newly launched **2008 OCHA-led Consolidated Appeal (CAP)** with a project aiming at building the capacity of Palestinian teachers and counsellors in psychological support and crisis management.

15. Within the Human Security Trust Fund, the project **Isolated and Disenfranchised Communities in the occupied Palestinian territory (UNHSTF)**, funded by Japan, and jointly implemented by eight United Nations agencies, including UNESCO, was completed. Aiming at improving the quality of education in schools with special needs, remedial courses in basic subjects (Arabic, English, Mathematics, and Physics) were offered for the first time in an institutionalized and structured manner in 16 beneficiary communities in the Nablus area. While contributing to improving vulnerable school children's knowledge and skills and helping them to better cope psychologically with the prevailing situation, the project also supported the renovation of a sanitary unit at Yaseed's Girls' School that serves around 350 female students, teaching, and administrative staff. In Bizzaria village, UNESCO supported the paving of a school yard that provided a space for school girls to practise sports activities, as well as the organization of two youth summer camps in the village.

CULTURE

16. UNESCO assistance in the field of culture continued to focus on the **safeguarding and enhancement of tangible and intangible cultural heritage**. It involved extensive cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), the Ministry of Culture (MoC) and specialized civil society organizations (CSOs). Attention was also given to the **promotion of living cultures**, both at the policy level and through the implementation of community-based initiatives. Finally, it should be noted that the period under review was characterized by the prospect of intensified cooperation on culture and development between the Palestinian Authority, UNESCO and other United Nations agencies, notably in the context of a future project under the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund.

17. Efforts towards the protection of moveable cultural heritage included training to prevent **looting and illicit trafficking of cultural artefacts**, notably through enhanced police networking. In December 2007, a 30-hour training course for 38 officers from various police forces was organized by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Ministry of the Interior, and the mapping of the most endangered cultural sites in the West Bank, carried out in cooperation with the International Observatory for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (ISFORM).

18. The drafting of a document for the development of a **National Policy for Museums** was completed in January 2008 by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, with the assistance of two museum specialists from University College, London University, which mobilized various Palestinian museum institutions and local experts through a participatory approach. This activity complements on-the-ground assistance in Bethlehem for the establishment of the **Palestinian Riwaya Museum** (Museum of Palestinian stories/narratives) at the Bethlehem Peace Centre, thanks to assistance from the Government of Norway. Further to discussions held among international consultants, members of the Steering Committee, an ad-hoc Scientific Committee and

the UNESCO Ramallah Office, the design of the museum was completed in December 2007. In January 2008, the tender for the rehabilitation work on the museum space was prepared, taking into account the additional funding (\$300,000) generously provided by Norway.

19. Regarding intangible cultural heritage, field research in the Governorates of Nablus, Hebron and Gaza, and archiving of relevant data related to the **Palestinian Hikaye** (folktales proclaimed as a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity), was completed in January 2008.

20. In the field of the safeguarding of tangible cultural heritage, capacity-building activities and the exchange of professional experiences were encouraged. Support was brought, in particular, to:

- an **International Symposium on Conservation of Cultural Heritage and other related disciplines as Urban Planning and Architecture in Historic Centres** within the framework of the second RIWAQ Biennale (October 2007). This conference was an opportunity to discuss key issues relevant to the preservation of Palestinian cultural heritage;
- an **International Conference on Landscape Conservation and Planning** (November-December 2007), organized by the Department of Architecture and Spatial Planning at Birzeit University.

21. Emphasis was also put on technical assistance and preservation efforts for the safeguarding of cultural monuments and sites in Bethlehem, Jericho and Nablus:

- **Jericho** – with a view to the establishment of an Archaeological Park at Qasr Hisham in Jericho, a four-day workshop, including site visits, resulted in the definition of a plan for visitors' facilities. A fully fledged proposal for the implementation of this plan is under preparation.
- **Bethlehem** – Within the framework of the **Bethlehem Area Conservation and Management Plan**, funded by the Government of Italy, the first phase of the 1:500 detailed survey of the urban fabric of the three historic towns of Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour, was completed, based on newly acquired aerial photos, the establishment of a database of all available archival materials on the Bethlehem area and the collection of key documentation, including the mapping of all rehabilitation projects carried out in the three historic towns. It should be noted that such a detailed up-to-date survey of the urban fabric had not been conducted since the period of the British Mandate. The capacity-development component of the project included on-the-job training for 10 young Palestinian professionals in Bethlehem, supervised by a team of international consultants through a web-based office. A participatory strategy, designed to actively involve the local communities in the protection of their cities, has been set up and its implementation begun.
- Norway also announced its decision to support a new project in Bethlehem entitled **Safeguarding Historical and Environmental Resources Towards Sustainable Development in the Bethlehem Governorate**. This project is part of an overall framework programme for the promotion of cultural tourism in the Palestinian Territories, supported by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and UNESCO.
- **Nablus** – Within the framework of the **Revitalization Plan of the Old City of Nablus**, sponsored by the Munir Sukhtian Group of Jordan, and further to the results of the "National Open Design Competition for 'Architects Under 40' and 'Students in Architecture and Urban Planning' to design public spaces and urban facilities in the Old City of Nablus", the UNESCO Ramallah Office, in October and November 2007, conducted three consultative meetings with the 10 winning groups (including a group from Gaza participating via video-conference) and the local authorities concerned, namely the Municipality of Nablus and the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage, to initiate the implementation of the

proposals. The proposals for three sites out of six – Ras al-Ain, al Qarion and Habalah – were selected for immediate implementation.

- Regarding the European Commission-funded **Restoration and adaptive re-use of the Khan al-Wakala in Nablus**, the provision of technical assistance to the Municipality of Nablus for the rehabilitation of the caravanserai was completed. The second phase of the project was effectively launched in December 2007.
- As already mentioned, the **Human Security Trust Fund project: Isolated and disenfranchised communities in the Nablus Governorate**, sponsored by the Government of Japan, was completed. Activities aiming at the reduction of violence through dialogue and psychosocial support, with the participation of children, parents, teachers and local decision-makers, were conducted in Salem, Deir al Hatab and Azmout, three villages characterized by growing violence. In addition, teacher training on cultural heritage education benefited 30 teachers from various communities. Also, cultural activities and festivals in nine villages were organized, including educational field trips, theatre plays implemented in Askar Refugee Camp, repair of educational facilities in Jammain to be used as storytelling spaces, and the establishment of a basic cultural centre in Ein Shibli.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

22. Given the prevailing situation in both the West Bank and Gaza, the **safety and protection of Palestinian media professionals** remained a priority for UNESCO during the period under review. In November 2007, a safety and security training course for 33 journalists, photographers and cameramen working both in public and private media was organized. The training was undertaken in cooperation with Ma'an News Network and a British safety training company. Training topics included personal safety, first aid, pre-deployment planning and risk assessment, and conflict management.

23. As a follow-up to the World Press Freedom Day activities in May 2007, UNESCO provided financial support for the production of two one-hour long televised talk shows on **professional ethics and incitement in the media**. Palestinian media professionals and members of civil society participated on that occasion in an open discussion on the use and development of professional reporting guidelines.

24. **Citizen Journalism: People's Participation in Blogging:** AMIN Media Network/Internews expanded its website in August 2007 to establish the first Palestinian web portal for blogs at <http://blog.amin.org> with the support of UNESCO. Training has been provided to 80 Palestinian media professionals and members of civil society in the West Bank on blog journalism and the use of modern communication technologies. The pilot project and training focused on using Internet blogging as a new platform to interact with readers and to generate a greater engagement in collecting, reporting and analysing news and information. Over 200 blogs have been created on the website, covering numerous cultural, economic, political and social issues.

25. **Reconstructing and Strengthening the News Agency Wafa:** six months of professional in-house, on-the-job training has begun in the West Bank in Wafa's main and branch offices. Based on a needs assessment and on consultations with Wafa management and professional staff, a training plan was prepared by Birzeit University Media Institute and AMIN Media Networks/Internews, with support from UNESCO. Training is ongoing and foreseen to last until July 2008. The aim is to further develop the editorial news desk, Wafa's website, the photography department, radio production, and to enhance professional reporting skills. It should be noted that Wafa's headquarters in Gaza has remained closed since June 2007.

26. The IPDC-funded project **Digital and Web Radio** of the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation (PBC), Voice of Palestine, aims to increase PBC's outreach, the efficient use of new media and digital technologies in radio broadcasting, and provide high-quality radio programming.

The design and content development of the website, as well as procurement for digital radio equipment, are ongoing. The capacity-building and training of PBC media professionals will start in February 2008, once the equipment has been installed.

27. As part of the **Human Security Trust Fund project** in the Nablus area, UNESCO supported the production and broadcasting of informative and participatory radio programming and training activities that aimed at encouraging public discussion and dialogue among marginalized communities and decision-makers. Activities included the production and broadcasting of four radio talk shows and 14 radio programmes on youth, women's empowerment, conflict resolution and environmental problems in the villages. A newsletter was established for two refugee camps, and conflict management training, with special emphasis on the fight against violence in schools, was conducted in three villages.

PART II – THE SITUATION OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN

28. During the period under review, the Organization continued its efforts to preserve the human, social and cultural fabric of the occupied Syrian Golan, as decided in 34 C/Resolution 58 and 177 EX/Decision 62. The desk study to collect relevant information on existing educational and cultural services made available both by public institutions and NGOs in the occupied Syrian Golan, reported in document 177 EX/62, is to be pursued. The expected output is a state-of-the-art report on existing educational and cultural services, which will be submitted to the Director-General, and he will inform the Executive Board thereon.

29. Further to his first official visit to the Syrian Arab Republic from 8 to 11 January 2008, the Director-General announced that he will secure under extrabudgetary funding \$100,000 of financial assistance to support scholarships for the Syrian students in the occupied Syrian Golan.

PART III – DIALOGUE BETWEEN PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI PROFESSIONALS AND ACADEMIA

30. The Organization continued to facilitate Israeli-Palestinian dialogue with the aim of strengthening mutual understanding and cooperation so as to foster peace in the region.

31. In the area of academic cooperation, UNESCO continued to provide assistance to the **Israeli-Palestinian Science Organization (IPSO)**. In particular, UNESCO supported the organization of the fourth IPSO International Scientific Council meeting, which took place in Budapest in November 2007. On this occasion, a session on "Science for Peace" was organized in cooperation with IPSO. In addition, UNESCO is co-financing three research projects for a total amount of \$130,000, to be jointly implemented by Israeli and Palestinian scientists on: genetic and agronomic analyses of high and low temperature stress in the chickpea; the genetic basis of congenital heart disease in a community with a high rate of consanguinity; and electrical transport in single molecules upon stretching: bilateral Palestinian-Israeli project in the field of nanotechnology.

32. In the field of **Israeli-Palestinian academic cooperation**, the Government of Italy approved the second phase of the "Programme of University Cooperation – Masters on Social Sciences and Humanitarian Affairs (second phase)" which will be launched in February 2008. This project aims at contributing to peace-building and intercultural understanding in the Middle East through academic exchange and cooperation among faculty and students from 10 Israeli, Palestinian and Italian universities and research institutes, under the coordination of UNESCO and in cooperation with the University of Rome "La Sapienza". Based on the results and evaluation of the previous phase of the project, the curriculum of the Masters course was revised in cooperation with IBE and now focuses on three selected pillars: humanitarian affairs, international relations and conflict resolution, and community development.

33. In the field of **dialogue between media professionals**, UNESCO organized a series of three workshops on conflict-sensitive reporting in September and October, at the Netanya Academic College Campus, near Tel Aviv. The workshops were attended by journalists from Israeli print and electronic media, and also by a small number of journalism researchers and students and representatives from peace NGOs. The general objective was to look at challenges related to conflict and war coverage in order to improve professional skills and unbiased reporting, and to review professional constraints and expectations. These workshops were also an opportunity to start building a professional framework that might function as a model for the improvement of media-professional thought and action in the Middle East.

34. UNESCO also organized language courses, teaching Hebrew to Palestinian journalists and Arabic to Israeli journalists. These courses were tailored for the specific needs and interests of media professionals and focused on the language, culture and media in Israel and in the Palestinian Territories in a professional manner.

35. Finally, within the framework of the **Civil Societies in Dialogue** Programme, several publications were prepared, including a short version of the document “Proposed Guiding Principles for Israeli/Palestinian Academic Cooperation: translating the shared adherence to academic freedom into action” and the “Mapping of Mainstream Civil Society Organizations” both in Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

CONCLUSION

36. Given recent developments in the Middle East as reported in paragraphs 1-5 of this document, the Director-General intends to submit an addendum to the present document before the 179th session of the Executive Board, so as to keep Member States abreast of the situation and UNESCO’s response thereto.



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ADDENDUM

SUMMARY

As announced in document 179 EX/39, this addendum presents an update of new developments in relation to the implementation of 34 C/Resolution 58 and 177 EX/Decision 62 and UNESCO's response thereto.

Decision proposed: paragraph 5.

1. Pursuant to 177 EX/Decision 62, requesting "... the Director-General to follow closely the implementation of the recommendations of the seventh joint meeting of the UNESCO Secretariat and the Palestinian National Committee for UNESCO (1-2 September 2005) (...)" and following the intersectoral mission led for this purpose by the Deputy Director-General in early December 2007, the **Eighth Meeting of the Joint UNESCO/Palestinian Authority Committee** was held on 4 and 5 March 2008 at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris.

2. The delegation of the Palestinian Authority was headed by Mr Yahya Yaklef, President of the Palestinian National Committee for Education, Culture and Science, and was composed of H.E. Ms Lamis Al-Alami, Minister of Education and Higher Education, H.E. Ms Khoulood Deibes, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities and of Women Affairs, H.E. Mr Elias Sanbar, Ambassador and Permanent Observer of Palestine to UNESCO, as well as representatives of various line ministries of the Government of the Palestinian Authority.¹ The Director-General opened the meeting and introduced the UNESCO delegation, headed by the Deputy Director-General and composed of senior staff from all programme sectors and relevant central services, as well as the head and programme officers from the UNESCO Ramallah Office.

3. The purpose of the meeting was: (i) to discuss ongoing and future cooperation with Palestinian institutions, with particular focus on the implementation of the flagship and other priority projects identified during the Seventh Joint UNESCO/PA meeting (September 2005); and (ii) to identify new strategic areas of priority action, taking into account the "Palestinian Reform and

¹ Representatives from the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Higher Council for Culture and the media sector.

Development Programme” (PRDP), presented by the Palestinian Authority to the international community during the Paris Donors’ Conference (December 2007).

4. The Joint Committee confirmed the need to continue some of the ongoing flagship and priority projects identified during the Seventh Joint Committee Meeting. In addition, based on the strategic priorities defined in the PRDP, the following additional priorities were identified:

EDUCATION

- Development of a policy framework for scientific research, technology and innovation;
- Provision of technical support to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the implementation of the National Teacher Education Strategy;
- Provision of technical assistance to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in revisiting and activating the National TVET Strategy/Plan;
- Capacity development at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Educational Planning and Management.

CULTURE

- Establishment of a network of cultural centres in rural areas;
- Development and promotion of a book industry: targeting authorship and access;
- Safeguarding of movable cultural heritage and capacity-building for the fight against looting and illicit trafficking;
- Development of Cultural Routes focusing on tangible cultural heritage preservation. In this context, it was agreed that UNESCO will also continue its ongoing assistance for the preservation and enhancement of major cultural heritage sites, notably in Bethlehem (with particular emphasis on the Nativity Church) and Jericho.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

- Promoting an enabling environment for freedom of expression and freedom of information through media legislation and regulatory frameworks;
- Building national and institutional capacities and expertise in preserving Palestinian audiovisual heritage;
- Provision of ICT-based tools for empowerment, creativity and skills-building activities in existing Palestinian youth centres.

SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

- Promoting sports with and for Palestinian youth, through capacity-building of youth organizations and bodies;
- Capacity-building equality of women through continuous support to the development of the Palestinian Women Research and Documentation Centre (PWRDC).

5. In view of the information provided in document 179 EX/39 and the present addendum, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following draft decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 34 C/Resolution 58 and 177 EX/Decision 62, as well as Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with regard to the right to education, Articles 4 and 94 of the Fourth Geneva Convention with regard to the denial of the right of children to education, as well as the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) and the Hague Convention (1954) and its Additional Protocols,
2. Having examined document 179 EX/39 and its Addendum,
3. Further recalling the role that UNESCO is called upon to play in order to satisfy the right to education for all, and to meet the need for Palestinians to have safe access to the education system,
4. Recalling paragraph 31 of the Medium-Term Strategy (31 C/4 Approved), defining a “road map for a revitalized UNESCO: principles of action and programming”, and paragraph 12 of 31 C/Resolution 43,
5. Committed to the safeguarding of monuments, works of art, manuscripts, books and other historical and cultural properties to be protected in the event of conflict,
6. Deeply convinced that the continuous strengthening of the reconstruction and development process in the Palestinian territories should be carried out in a context of non-violence and of mutual respect and recognition, as promoted by the objectives of the road map,
7. Supports the efforts made by the Director-General with a view to the implementation of 34 C/Resolution 58 and 177 EX/Decision 62, and requests him to do everything possible to ensure that they are fully implemented in the framework of the Programme and Budget for 2008-2009 (34 C/5 Approved);
8. Expresses its appreciation for the substantial contributions of all concerned Member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to UNESCO's action in the Palestinian territories, and appeals to them to continue assisting UNESCO in this endeavour;
9. Thanks the Director-General for the results that have been obtained in relation to the implementation of a number of current educational and cultural activities, and invites him to strengthen UNESCO's financial and technical assistance to the Palestinian educational and cultural institutions in order to address new needs and problems resulting from recent developments;
10. Expresses its continuing concern at any actions undermining the cultural and natural heritage, and cultural and educational institutions, as well as at any impediments which prevent Palestinian and all other schoolchildren and students from being an integral part of their social fabric and from exercising fully their right to education, and calls for the observance of the provisions of 34 C/Resolution 58 and 177 EX/Decision 62;
11. Encourages the Director-General to continue to reinforce his action in favour of the reconstruction, rehabilitation and restoration of the Palestinian archaeological sites and cultural heritage;
12. Invites the Director-General to address the needs for capacity-building in all UNESCO's fields of competence by expanding the financial assistance programme for Palestinian students both from the regular budget and from extrabudgetary resources, and by establishing a multi-donor trust fund benefiting Palestinian students in need;

13. Requests the Director-General to follow closely the implementation of the recommendations of the eighth meeting of the Joint UNESCO-Palestinian Authority Committee (4-5 March 2008) and to organize, as soon as possible, the ninth meeting of the Joint UNESCO-Palestinian Authority Committee;
14. Encourages Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, and expresses the hope that a just and comprehensive peace will be brought about speedily;
15. Also invites the Director-General:
 - (a) to continue the efforts he is making to preserve the human, social and cultural fabric of the occupied Syrian Golan, in accordance with the relevant provisions of this decision;
 - (b) to undertake efforts to offer appropriate curricula, and to provide more grants and adequate assistance to the educational and cultural institutions of the occupied Syrian Golan;
16. Decides to include this item on the agenda of the Executive Board at its 180th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a progress report thereon.