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para la Educación,  
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
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联合国教育、  
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Item 5.3 of the provisional agenda

**IMPLEMENTATION OF 34 C/RESOLUTION 58  
CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS  
IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES**

**OUTLINE**

**Source:** 35 C/Resolution 58.

**Background:** This document is presented in compliance with 34 C/Resolution 58.

**Purpose:** To provide the major highlights of the detailed information contained in the Executive Board documents 181 EX/47, 182 EX/54 and 181 EX/59 and 182 EX/59 on the situation of the educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories during the 2008-2009 biennium. The Director-General intends to submit an addendum to the present document.

**Decision required:** A draft resolution will be proposed in the addendum to the present document.

## INTRODUCTION

1. At its 34th session, the General Conference adopted 34 C/Resolution 58 concerning educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories, and thus renewed the consensual approach initially adopted by the General Conference at its 33rd session regarding the Organization's efforts towards reconstruction and dialogue in the Middle East. 34 C/Resolution 58 reaffirmed UNESCO's commitment to further strengthen the Organization's assistance programme in the Palestinian Territories and to consolidate its role in facilitating Palestinian-Israeli dialogue initiatives within its fields of competence. The present document provides the major highlights of UNESCO's efforts in this regard during the 2007-2009 biennium. Detailed information on such action was made available to the Executive Board at its 181st and 182nd sessions in the respective reports on this item.

2. The period under review was one of renewed engagement with the Palestinian Authority (PA), supported by the international community, including the United Nations. In December 2007, the PA presented its new Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP) at the Paris Donor Conference. The Plan is a 3-year reform agenda focusing on capacity development of the PA institutions in the areas of good governance, law and order and in the delivery of basic social services. Of special interest to UNESCO is the fact that both quality education and cultural tourism are recognized as strategic priorities in this Plan. The Joint UNESCO/PA Committee met in March 2008 to take stock of ongoing assistance and discuss UNESCO's contribution to the PRDP. Priority areas of cooperation were confirmed and identified within all fields of competence of the Organization. In June 2008, the Director-General's official visit to the Palestinian Territories served to further discuss the cooperation between the Palestinian Authority and UNESCO at the highest level. Part I of the present document describes highlights of UNESCO's activities in support of reform and development implemented in the Palestinian Territories during 2008-2009.

3. After a situation of relative stability in 2008, the Gaza Strip was affected by a severe escalation in violence and a deepening humanitarian crisis in early 2009. The one-month conflict (27 December 2008 to 17 January 2009) resulted in heavy civilian casualties and suffering, especially among children. It had a strong impact on infrastructure in Gaza, including schools and universities. The media profession and infrastructure were also affected, as were various cultural heritage sites. In the context of the overall humanitarian response to the conflict, UNESCO participated in the United Nations Gaza Flash Appeal launched in February 2009. Part II of the present document provides information on UNESCO's humanitarian response in Gaza.

4. In the spirit of the global United Nations reform, the UNCT for the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) worked in an increasingly integrated manner during this period. A 3-year United Nations Mid-Term Response Plan (MTRP) was launched in June 2009, comprising ongoing United Nations assistance programmes in support of the PRDP, and identifying future initiatives, in particular in Gaza, for recovery and development. In the same vein, the number of United Nations joint programmes in support of the Palestinian institutions and people increased. Two Millennium Development Goal Trust Fund (MDG-TF) projects, one on "Culture and development" and one on "Gender equality and women's empowerment" started in summer 2009. A project concept note on "Livelihood protection and sustainable empowerment of vulnerable rural and refugee communities in the Jordan Valley", was submitted to the Human Security Trust Fund (HSTF) Secretariat in June 2009. UNESCO is a participating agency in these three joint programmes.

## PART I

### HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

#### Education

5. Assistance in the field of education focused on the four priority areas of assistance defined during the eighth meeting of the Joint UNESCO/PA Committee: namely, teacher education, educational planning, technical vocational education and training (TVET), and science education.

6. During the biennium, the main area of support was teacher education, identified by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) as a central priority of its reform agenda towards quality education. The national teacher education strategy (TES) developed with UNESCO's technical assistance and thanks to funding from Norway, was approved in May 2008. Based on the MoEHE's request, UNESCO designed a three-year technical assistance programme. The programme entitled "Quality Systems for Quality Teachers" assists the MoEHE in implementing the TES. In December 2008, this assistance programme was approved for funding by the European Union (total budget: €3.6 million). Its implementation started in early 2009.

7. The new Five-Year Education Development Strategic Plan (EDSP 2008-2012), finalized with UNESCO/IIEP technical assistance, was launched by the MoEHE in July 2008. The EDSP served as a crucial element to advance a process of donor alignment and harmonization within a sector-wide approach (SWAp). In terms of the implementation of the Plan, continued UNESCO/IIEP assistance focused on the development of the Ministry's capacities at the central, district, and school levels in planning, administrative and managerial skills. In support of the development of science education and research, UNESCO focused, on the one hand, on the introduction of micro-science kits in marginalized and isolated Palestinian schools and the adaptation of their use within the Palestinian education system and curriculum. Also, initial steps were taken towards the formulation of a National Policy Framework for Science, Innovation and Technology.

#### Culture

8. UNESCO assistance for the safeguarding and enhancement of the Palestinian cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, as well as for the promotion of cultural diversity, was further consolidated in close cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) and the Ministry of Culture (MoC). Also, the MDG-TF funded project "Culture and Development in the oPt", promoting a comprehensive approach to all dimensions of cultural diversity, creates an opportunity for strengthened interministerial cooperation in the field of culture and a closer linkage with the many civil society organizations active in the area. The Joint Programme was launched on the occasion of the 2009 World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (21 May) with the organization of a ceremony and guided visit in the historical city of Sebastiya (Nablus Governorate).

9. As far as intangible cultural heritage is concerned, the "Action plan for the safeguarding of the Palestinian Hikaye (folktales)", sponsored through the Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan Prize (United Arab Emirates), was completed.

10. Thanks to extrabudgetary funding, larger technical assistance and conservation efforts for the safeguarding and promotion of culture especially in Bethlehem, Nablus and Jericho were undertaken.

11. Bethlehem – The project "Riwaya Museum – Bethlehem" funded by Norway, entered its last phase, namely that of the co-production of the museum exhibition by a joint team of international and local experts, as well as of capacity-building of the Museum staff. The museum concept and the executive design of the museum exhibition were completed using a participatory approach

involving all local stakeholders. The physical reconstruction works at the museum site advanced significantly and are expected to be completed in December 2009. Synergies were built between this pilot and the publishing of the National Museum Policy. Also, the project “Bethlehem Area Conservation and Management Plan” funded by Italy, was completed. In December 2008, a “Charter on the Safeguarding on Palestinian Historic Towns and Landscapes – the Bethlehem Charter” was adopted by the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the three municipalities of the Bethlehem area. The finalization of the Preliminary Bethlehem area conservation and management plan was achieved in July 2009. Finally, the documentation and training components of the project “Safeguarding Historical and Environmental Resources towards Sustainable Development in Bethlehem Governorate”, funded by Norway, were brought to completion. This innovative project, which focuses on the protection of the Palestinian cultural landscape, will be used to inform similar components in the execution of the above-mentioned MDG-TF programme.

12. Nablus – The project “Old City of Nablus Renovation – Restoration and Adaptive Re-use of Khan al-Wakala”, funded by the European Union was revitalized. Civil works were resumed after the awarding of the international tender for the structural works and mechanical/electrical installations of the new block to complete the missing part of the building. Also, the “Revitalization Plan for the Old City of Nablus”, funded through the Munir Sukhtian Group-Jordan, was completed. The physical renovation of two sites (Al-Habalaeh and Al-Qarion) identified in the Plan, was carried out under the supervision of local young architects. Finally, initial steps towards the “Conservation and Management of the archaeological site of Tell Balata” were taken thanks to funding from the Netherlands. A project proposal was drafted in close cooperation with MoTA and the Department of Archaeology of the University of Leiden. The proposal was submitted to the Netherlands for potential funding.

13. Jericho-UNESCO provided continued technical assistance to the MoTA for the United States-funded project on the establishment of the “Archaeological Park of Qasr Hisham”, executed directly by the MoTA. Funding was mobilized from the Czech Republic. The funding will serve to further define the executive design for the protective shelters for the mosaic pavement and other visitors’ facilities. UNESCO also continued supporting Palestinian living cultures, in particular the book industry, dance, music and cinema.

### **Information and communication**

14. Assistance focused on the promotion of independent and pluralistic media, freedom of expression, access to information and communication, as well as the safety of media personnel. Activities in this field increased considerably during the biennium, as extrabudgetary funding from Finland, the United Nations Democracy Fund and IPDC was secured.

15. Technical advice in the area of media legislation was requested during the 8th meeting of the Joint UNESCO/PA Committee (Marco 2008). In cooperation with the Ministry of Information and Birzeit University, support was provided for the drafting of a new broadcast law.

16. The project “Reconstruction and Strengthening the News Agency Wafa”, funded by Italy, was completed. Activities during the biennium included: legal advice, training of Wafa’s reports and senior staff, development of the photography department and a study tour to news agencies in Turkey and the United Kingdom.

17. Together with the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) a digital and web radio was established for Voice of Palestine.

18. In the context of the project “Strengthening Palestinian Participatory Democracy and Public Dialogue” implemented in partnership with AMIN Media Network/Internews and funded by United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), the first Palestinian blogging portal in Arabic and English languages was established. Training workshops for future bloggers targeting journalists, students,

civil society, academics, officials, women and refugees in the West Bank and Gaza will start in July. During the biennium, support was provided to various Palestinian media-training institutions and centres, so as to enhance their capacities to improve the technical and managerial skills of media professionals, and to give increased access to information and communication to the Palestinian population.

19. Given the prevailing security situation, the safety of journalists remained a constant concern. A two-year project “Promotion of the freedom of expression, safety of journalists and empowering women in media” was approved and funded by Finland in Spring 2009 and will focus on assistance such as psycho-social support, safety equipment, increasing awareness and reporting on the violations against press freedom and building a professional peer support network for journalists in Gaza and the West Bank.

### **Social and human sciences**

20. UNESCO assistance continued focusing on strengthening the institutional and human capacities of the Palestinian Women’s Research and Documentation Centre (PWRDC). Thanks to funding from Norway, as well as in the context of the newly launched MDG-TF project “Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in the oPt”, the Centre significantly expanded its research and training activities.

## **PART II**

### **UNESCO’S HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN GAZA**

21. In response to the emergency situation in Gaza, and based on its participation in the United Nations Rapid Needs Assessment, UNESCO introduced six projects in the United Nations Gaza Flash Appeal (February 2009), and designed early activities to meet urgent needs on the ground. Simultaneously, the human and financial capacities of UNESCO to operate within the Gaza Strip were enhanced, in particular through the creation of a Project Antenna in Gaza City and the earmarking of funding – both regular and extrabudgetary – for project activities. The projects are as follows: (i) emergency rehabilitation of higher education institutions (\$800,000); (ii) provision of emergency secondary education in non-UNRWA schools (\$800,000); (iii) support for crisis planning and management for affected school principals and district officials (\$400,000); (iv) training in INEE minimum standards (\$320,000); (v) promotion of schools as safe zones (\$420,000); and (vi) safety and protection of journalists and press freedom in Gaza (\$200,000). In this context, the UNESCO response continued to focus mainly on education, but also on the safety and protection of media professionals.

### **Education**

22. As reflected in the five education projects introduced in the United Nations Gaza Flash Appeal, UNESCO focuses on gap areas. The goal is to promote a comprehensive approach to the restoration of educational services in Gaza and contribute to closing the widening gap in the delivery of Palestinian educational services between the West Bank and Gaza. These areas, which were not covered by interventions by other agencies or humanitarian actors, are: (i) the urgent reactivation of educational services in upper secondary and higher education; and (ii) the promotion of quality standards in education in crisis situations.

23. Important progress was achieved in mobilizing funds for the above-mentioned projects. Japan, Saudi Arabia as well as HRH Princess Firyal of Jordan, Goodwill Ambassador for UNESCO, particularly dedicated to the promotion of Education for All, committed funds at an early stage. The totality of these funds was channelled to the project “Provision of emergency secondary education in non-UNRWA schools”. In May 2009, Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Mised, First Lady of Qatar and UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education, indicated her willingness to give additional support to the five UNESCO Emergency Education projects under

the Gaza Flash Appeal, for a total amount of \$2.8 million. This commitment was materialized through the signing of a framework agreement on 8 July 2009 with the Office of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah.

Since February 2009, UNESCO has carried out the following activities in the field of education:

- A six-week catch-up course for upper-secondary education students in Gaza, who were sitting for the Tawjihee exam ending the upper secondary education cycle in June 2009. This initiative benefited more than 5,000 students from six government schools located in the areas most affected by the recent conflict in Gaza while seeking to address the learning gap caused by the conflict when schools were closed for one month.
- Support to higher education. This entailed, in particular, support to the most affected university in Gaza, namely, the Islamic University, enabling this institution to conduct belated end of semester exams and to carry on with teaching, specifically in the engineering, IT and nursing departments which were hardly hit during the conflict.
- A five-day training of trainers workshop on INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies and Schools as Safe Zones in Gaza City (May 2009). The training involved a group of 30 educationalists, teachers, school supervisors, and NGO workers dealing with education. The purpose of the training was to introduce the INEE Minimum Standards as a tool and a standard set of criteria to cope with education in emergencies and crisis periods, as well as in recovery situation.

### **Protection and safety of journalists**

24. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza has a critical impact on the press freedom and safety of journalists, highlighting the urgency to protect media professionals, increase awareness on the freedom of expression and access to information in a conflict situation and support the independent and pluralistic media in Gaza.

25. The Gaza Flash Appeal project on “the Safety and Protection of Journalists and Press Freedom in Gaza” partially funded by Finland has made it possible to address immediate needs in terms of psychosocial support for Palestinian journalists and photographers, as well as safety and first aid training for local media organizations. A first training session is scheduled to take place on 29 and 30 June. In addition, the project will create a support network for media professionals in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to monitor and address violations against press freedom and provide opportunities for journalists to strengthen professional capacities and exchange best practices.

## **PART III**

### **THE SITUATION OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN**

26. Funding (\$113,000) from the Japanese Funds-in-Trust (JFIT) was approved in May 2009 for a project to develop a scholarship programme for Syrian students in the Occupied Syrian Golan. This project, prepared in close consultation with the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), is expected to be implemented during the period 2009-2013 (four academic years).

### **CONCLUSION**

27. The biennium has been one of further expansion of UNESCO assistance in the Palestinian Territories, but also one of major challenges given the rapidly changing situation in the region. The focus has been on assistance for development in support of the Palestinian reform agenda as put

forward in the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (2008-2010), in particular the priority areas of cooperation identified during the eighth meeting of the UNESCO/Palestinian Authority Joint Committee, held at UNESCO Headquarters on 4 and 5 March 2008. The fiscal crisis of the Palestinian Authority, as well as the deterioration of the security situation, created new demands for assistance beyond the focus on institutional and human capacity-building.



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**ADDENDUM**

**OUTLINE**

This document is presented as an addendum to document 35 C/17, and proposes a draft resolution in this regard.

**Resolution proposed:** paragraph 1.

1. In the light of the information provided in document 35 C/17, the General Conference may wish to adopt a resolution along the following lines:

The General Conference,

1. *Recalling* 34 C/Resolution 58, 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* documents 35 C/17 and Add.,
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. *Committed* to the safeguarding of monuments, works of art, manuscripts, books and other historical and cultural properties to be protected in the event of conflicts,
5. *Supports* the efforts made by the Director-General with a view to the implementation of 34 C/Resolution 58 and 182 EX/Decision 54, and *requests* him to do everything possible to ensure that they are fully implemented in the framework of the Programme and Budget for 2010-2011 (35 C/5 Approved);
6. *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;
7. *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;
8. *Congratulates* the Director-General for UNESCO's rapid response to the situation in the Gaza Strip resulting from the escalation of violence and hostilities in December 2008 and January 2009, *thanks* him for the initiatives that have already been implemented in the framework of the United Nations Flash Appeal for Gaza, with the generous financial support of Member States and donors, in particular Sheika Mozah Bint Nasser al Missned, First Lady of Qatar and UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education, and *calls upon* him to continue contributing to the United Nations humanitarian response and to participate in the integrated United Nations response to the Gaza Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan developed by the Palestinian Authority, within the Organization's fields of competence;
9. *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 the present resolution;
10. *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;
11. *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 *thanks* Saudi Arabia for its generous contribution in this regard;
12. *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), especially in Gaza, and to organize, as soon as possible, the Ninth Meeting of the Joint UNESCO/Palestinian Authority Committee;
13. *Encourages* the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, and *expresses* the hope that the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations will be resumed, and that a just and comprehensive peace will be brought about speedily, in accordance with UNESCO's Constitution and the United Nations resolutions on this matter, particularly the relevant Security Council resolutions;

14. *Also invites* the Director-General:
  - 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 resolution;
  - 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;
15. *Recalling* that this item is inscribed on the agenda of the 184th session of the Executive Board, *decides* to include this item on the agenda of the 36th session of the General Conference.