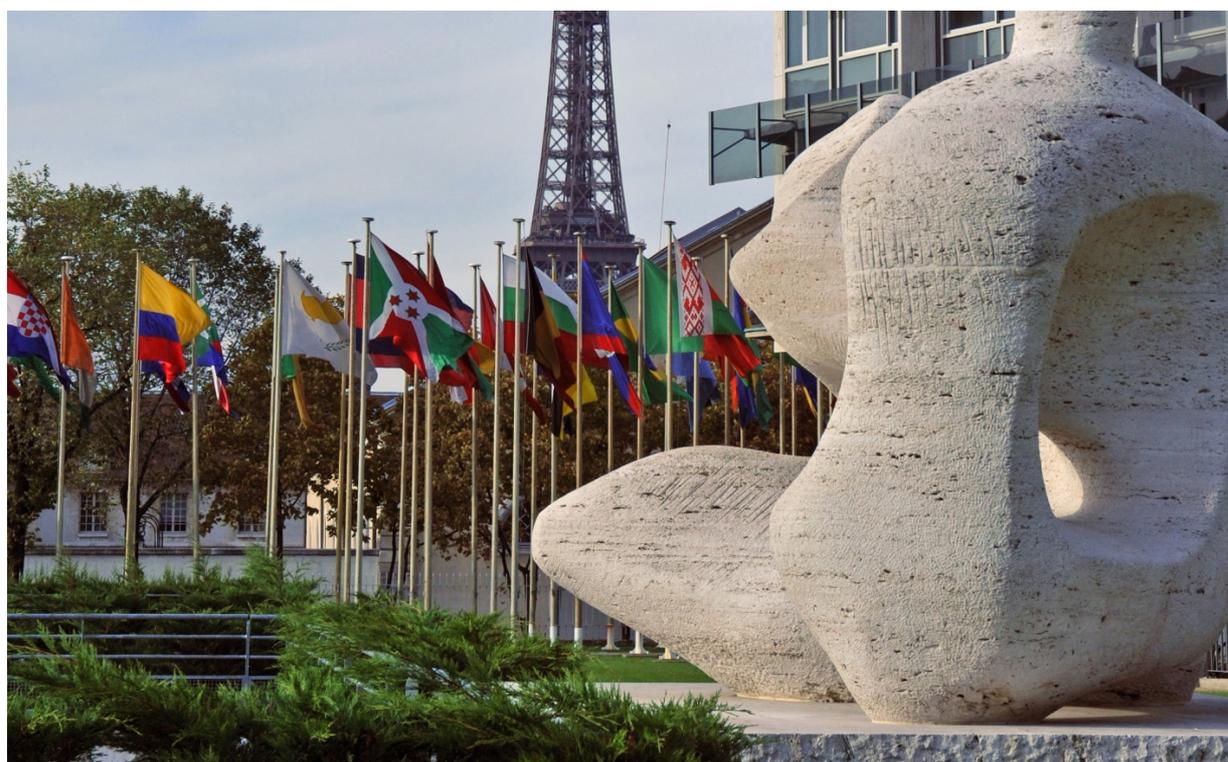


UNESCO GATHERS NATIONAL COMMISSIONS ON COVID-19

L'UNESCO RASSEMBLE LES
COMMISSIONS NATIONALES
AUTOUR DU COVID-19



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UNESCO gathers National Commissions on COVID-19

L'UNESCO rassemble les Commissions nationales autour du COVID-19

I. Introduction

On 29 April 2020, the National Commissions for UNESCO joined the first Online Meeting on COVID-19, organized by the Sector for Priority Africa and External Relations, and led by Mr. Firmin Edouard Matoko, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO for Priority Africa and External Relations.

Some 112 National Commissions participated in the meeting, along with more than 23 representatives of the Permanent Delegations, including also 30 Directors of the Field Offices. In total, more than 270 persons joined this meeting through Microsoft Teams platform, while some 230 participants watched this online meeting through UNESCO Webcast.

The objective of this meeting was to present key initiatives undertaken by UNESCO to support Member States in responding to the pandemic, and to provide a platform for National Commissions to share their responses and raise questions as relevant. Prior to the meeting, the National Commissions were requested to share with the Secretariat brief input on the key actions and initiatives they have taken and supported at the national level.

This Report is divided into two parts. The first part presents a brief summary of the discussions held during the meeting. The second part provides a list of actions taken by National Commissions, as this was shared with the Secretariat, in order to disseminate this important information widely. Some of these contributions have already been published on the Online Platform of the National Commissions as well as on UNESCO.int website. This is followed by an annex with more information on the agenda of the meeting and participants, including the Opening Remarks of the Assistant Director-General of UNESCO for Priority Africa and External Relations and the presentation of the Secretariat.

II. Online Meeting

In his Opening Remarks to the Online Meeting, Mr Firmin Edouard Matoko, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO for Priority Africa and External Relations, recalled that the National Commissions remain at the heart of the actions that UNESCO continues to undertake to fight against this pandemic. He also expressed Organization's deep gratitude to the National Commissions for their hard work and numerous actions undertaken in the fields of UNESCO's competences. Mr Matoko also recalled that this meeting is the first in a series of other regional and sub-regional meetings with the National Commissions that UNESCO is planning to organize. These upcoming meetings aim to continue already engaged discussion with the National Commissions on COVID-19 and other issues such as consultation on C4/C5.

These remarks were followed by a brief introduction of key initiatives by the colleagues in charge of the Priority Africa and Gender Equality as well as the colleagues from Education, Culture, Social and Human Sciences, Communication and Information, National Science Sectors as well as the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

After extensive interventions from National Commissions from every region, the Online Meeting was wrapped up by Mr Firmin Edouard Matoko who renewed his gratitude to the National Commissions for their support to UNESCO's initiatives at national level and their rich array of actions taken to advance UNESCO values and objectives, drawing on all UNESCO networks, ASP schools, learning and creatives cities, as well designated sites, all aiming to fight against COVID-19. He welcomed the many statements made, and took note of the importance of consulting with Member States in moving forward. He noted

also the follow-up that will be made to respond to a number of questions raised by the National Commissions, including through the organisation of future meetings at the regional and sub-regional levels. In closing, he thanked the National Commissions for sharing their contributions and encouraged all those remaining to share the actions and initiatives they have taken in response to the pandemic with the Secretariat in order to share this widely.

☞ **Priority Africa** – presentation made by Mr Firmin Edouard Matoko, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO for Priority Africa and External Relations

Mr Firmin Edouard Matoko informed the National Commissions about UNESCO's intention to mobilize Youth and African Intellectuals to reflect on the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath. In this regard, he announced an online meeting, "How does Africa envision COVID-19 and its aftermath?" initiated by UNESCO and scheduled for 7 May 2020. The main objective will be to contribute to an understanding of the sociocultural dimensions of the COVID-19 health crisis and of its impact on the future of African societies. This online meeting brought together intellectuals and figures in African social and cultural life for an exchange on two central questions: COVID-19 in Africa: the major stakes and challenges and avenues for reflection for a post-COVID-19 world. Mr Matoko also called upon the National Commissions to support UNESCO's aforesaid initiatives with Youth and Intellectuals.

☞ **Gender Equality** – presentation made by Ms Saniye Gülser Corat, Director of the Division for Gender Equality

Ms Corat recalled that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls remain a priority during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, she recalled seven global issues for UNESCO intervention, which are:

1. Girls' education. 90% of the world's countries have shut schools in efforts to slow the transmission of COVID-19, affecting more than 743 million girls. 112 million of these girls are living in the world's least developed countries – contexts of economic vulnerability and crisis, where gender disparities in education are highest. Over 94 million of these girls are living in countries facing humanitarian crises, such as in refugee camps where only half of girls are as likely as boys to enrol in secondary education;
2. Access to technology and digital solutions. Women are up to 31% less likely to have internet access than men in some countries, and worldwide about 327 million fewer women than men have a smartphone. Even when women have access to the internet, gender disparities may make them less able to use it for various reasons during COVID-19 lockdown;
3. Violence and harassment. Violence, harassment and oppression against women and girls during every type of emergency tend to increase. Women who are displaced, refugees, and living in conflict-affected areas are particularly vulnerable;
4. Sexual and reproductive health and rights. Access to vital sexual and reproductive health services, including for women subjected to violence, will likely become limited during the COVID-19. Overloaded health systems, reallocation of resources, shortages of medical supplies, and disruptions of global supply chains could harm women's access to contraception and pre-and post-natal and birth care. Interrupted supply chains affecting the availability of sexual and reproductive health services and commodities;
5. Leadership and decision-making. Women are on the front-line interaction with communities and their participation in much of the care work makes them well placed to positively influence the design and implementation of prevention activities and community engagement;
6. Inequalities and climate injustice. Inequalities in access, use and management of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services making women (and their dependents) even more vulnerable with COVID-19;

Income and social insecurity. Women make up 57% of those working on a part-time basis; 740 million women work in the informal sector. They are expected to bear the heaviest brunt of job losses (ILO). 70% of health and social care workers globally are women (WHO).

☞ **Education** – presentation made by Mr Astrid Gillet, Chief of Executive Office of the Education Sector

Ms Gillet recalled that most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. These nationwide closures are impacting over 72% of the world's student population, with some 191 countries affected and almost 1.57 billion

students and learners out of school. In this regard, UNESCO continues to support countries in their efforts to mitigate the immediate impact of school closures, particularly for more vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, and to facilitate the continuity of education for all through remote learning.

In this regard, the Education Sector set out the main lines of UNESCO's responses at the following levels:

1. Creating a community of practice;
2. Leading ministerial policy dialogues;
3. Collecting and curating resources, information, responses online;
4. Providing targeted support to countries; and
5. Mobilizing partners through the Global Education Coalition.

Ms Astrid Gillet introduced the mission and goals of the Global Education Coalition aiming to facilitate inclusive learning opportunities for children and youth during this period of sudden and unprecedented educational disruption. She also recalled that the Coalition is including today some 80 partners, with a focus on three flagship areas: 1) teachers; 2) gender equality; and 3) connectivity. She also provided examples of actions taken in every region of the world, focusing on thematic regional bureaux, as well as regarding the reorientation of existing programmes.

Culture – presentation made by Ms Dorine Dubois, Chief of Executive Office of the Culture Sector

Ms Dorine Dubois stressed that, as a result of the pandemic, cultural institutions are closed in 9 out of 10 countries and that artists and culture professionals can no longer live from their activities. Because of the COVID-19 crisis, 90% of countries closed World Heritage sites and 75 million jobs in the tourism sector are under threat. She also recalled the main activities and initiatives undertaken by the Culture Sector to address the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this regard, Ms Dorine Dubois outlined the following main pillars of UNESCO's response in the field of culture: 1) Communication, advocacy and awareness-raising; 2) Impact assessment of the cultural sector and support for public policies; 3) Support for artists, culture professionals and communities; 4) Capacity-building and resources to safeguard heritage. She also informed the National Commissions about an online meeting convened by UNESCO on 22nd April 2020, attended by over 130 Ministers and Vice-Ministers of Culture to discuss the direct effects of the current crisis on tourism, museums, cultural production and artists, as well as measures that they have taken to mitigate the impact of the crisis. She also informed the National Commissions about a weekly "Culture & COVID-19: Impact and Response Tracker" recently launched by Culture Sector to provide an overview of the rapidly evolving situation and explores both the immediate impact of the health crisis and examples of how countries around the world are adapting to the situation. Ms Dorine Dubois also informed the National Commissions about the "ResiliArt" movement aiming to support Member States in the development of policies and financial mechanisms that can help creative individuals and communities overcome the current crisis. She also informed the National Commissions that the statutory meetings of the Conventions have been postponed following relevant decisions of the governing bodies of the Conventions. Ms Dubois also underlined successful activities of the Culture Sector, during this crisis, through its network of UNESCO Chairs and Learning Cities and requested National Commissions to further support the capacity building activities in the field of Culture.

Social and Human Sciences – presentation made by Mr Magnus Magnusson, Director of the Partnerships and Outreach of the Social and Human Sciences Sector

Mr Magnusson recalled that in line with its overall programme framework, SHS has developed and adapted a number of immediate and longer-term actions to respond to the crisis with emphasis on the regional and national level in coordination with Field offices, which are structured around the following main axes:

1. Fostering the production of social and human sciences knowledge is not just about the pandemic, but also about the world that it reveals;
2. UNESCO's role as a "laboratory of ideas" that helps make sense of the world during and after the pandemic will require pulling together the full range of intellectual capacities in the broad UNESCO family;
3. Awareness raising to fight discrimination and exclusion and empower people with skills of values such as solidarity, individually and collectively;

4. Strengthening the sciences in all their dimensions, including ethically, through existing instruments (e.g. Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers) and the development of new instruments (Recommendation on Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, Recommendation on Open Science).

Mr Magnus Magnusson also informed the National Commissions of the #MyCOVID-19Story #YouthOfUNESCO campaign, which is an open invitation to young people from all over the world to share their own experience of the pandemic. These positive stories, recorded on video, will be featured on UNESCO's social media channels and feed into the "Youth as Researchers – Covid19" Project. In addition, through actions at the level of Field Offices and that involve young people, beyond the physical health objectives, UNESCO promotes the mental, ethical and social dimensions of physical activity and physical education initiatives for which SHS's Values Education through Sport toolkit remains highly relevant. In ending, the National Commissions have also been informed about the Futures Literacy Forum, initiated by SHS and planned for December 2020.

🌀 Communication and Information – presentation made by Mr Guy Berger, Director for Communication and Information Strategy and Policy of the Communication and Information Sector

Mr Berger informed the National Commissions that the Communication and Information Sector has structured its response to COVID-19 around four thematic pillars, which are:

1. Advocating for freedom of expression and safety of journalists, and reinforcing the capacities of media to cover the crisis;
2. Developing and disseminating resources to tackle disinformation about COVID-19;
3. Harnessing innovation and digital technologies to counter COVID-19; and
4. Promoting open and universal access to information in response to COVID-19.

He also informed the National Commissions about preparations for 2020 World Press Freedom Day, entitled "Journalism without Fear or Favour," which has been adapted to focus on the role of free and independent media in providing verified, accurate and potentially life-saving information in times of crises such as one related to COVID-19. While recalling the importance to guarantee the physical and psychological safety of journalists covering this crisis, Mr Guy Berger also recalled that the Communication and Information Sector is supporting the various projects aimed at developing the capacities of media to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, in regions of the world that face severe consequences because of the pandemic. He also informed the National Commissions about UNESCO's #DontGoViral campaign, aiming to inform communities across Africa about COVID-19, as well as on CodeTheCurve hackathon supporting young innovators across the world to develop digital solutions to counter COVID-19 and the on the ongoing coordination of the initiative "Collective Intelligence and AI Against COVID-19" to develop a comprehensive global knowledge platform. He also recalled that the Sector is currently working on Open Educational Resources to support learning through openly licensed teaching and learning materials, and to collect and share information on COVID-19 resources and on Open Science aiming to allow scientific information, data and outputs to be more widely accessible.

🌀 Natural Sciences – presentation made by Mr Abou Amani, Chief of Executive Office of the Natural Sciences Sector

Mr Amani made a presentation on the importance of international cooperation in the field of Natural Science to cope the COVID-19 crisis. In particular, he underlined that UNESCO has an ever more important role to play in analysing and mitigating the impacts of the pandemic both in short and mid-long term in science, such as water, biodiversity, ecosystem which relate directly to our lives. In this regard, Abou Amani informed the National Commissions about UNESCO's three main pillars in the field of Natural Science:

1. International scientific cooperation. The online Ministerial Dialogue organized on 30 March 2020 for the Ministers in charge of science and research on open science and COVID-19 has clearly highlighted the importance of opening science and strengthening scientific cooperation in response to COVID-19 and any other global similar pandemics. COVID-19 has made open science and scientific cooperation more relevant than ever. Regional consultations on open science will continue towards the preparation of the UNESCO recommendation on open science that will facilitate greater and timely access to scientific research worldwide and help to fill the knowledge gap particularly in developing countries;

2. Water. Access to safe water and sanitation (to at least wash hands) is indispensable to contain COVID-19. Unfortunately, around One in three people worldwide do not have access to safe drinking water, and over half the world doesn't have access to safe sanitation. Through its water programmes, UNESCO provides scientific and technical advice and build capacity for the Member States for evidence based and inclusive water policies and for sustainable management of water resources. Water education and awareness raising are the main axes of interventions;
3. Epidemiology and ecology. This pillar is about the importance of reinforcing resilience of people and nature to cope with possible future crises and to live with nature in harmony was underscored – to be taken forward also through a new global coalition on nature approved by the UNSG in late March.

03 Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission – presentation made by Ms Ksenia Yvinec, Head of the Operational Support Unit, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

Ms Yvinec gave a presentation on the role and functions of the IOC and established linkages between the IOC's core functions and the initiatives launched to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. In particular, she emphasized the following key initiatives of the IOC in the framework of the COVID-19 crisis:

1. Ocean Observation. The IOC-coordinated Global Ocean Observing System delivers the essential information for: climate assessment and adaptation; weather and ocean-related hazards forecasts; and monitoring of ocean health. The observers' ability to work is currently limited by access and travel restrictions and research vessels called back to port. IOC will continue to work closely with their communities to repeat surveys on impact through 2020 and create a platform to share best practices in recovery operations;
2. Tsunami Warning and Preparedness. IOC coordinates 4 regional end-to-end tsunami early warning systems, with designated 24/7 Tsunami Service Providers in each region issuing alerts to Member States. This requires maintaining a responsive and efficient network of international, regional, national and community level partners. While Member States prioritize COVID 19-related responses, multi-hazard episodes continue to occur and the pressure on IOC partners in civil protection and disaster management agencies is tremendous. As an example, tropical cyclone Harold significantly impacted Pacific Region SIDS and immediate relief efforts are delayed by quarantine measures. The assessment of the Hurricane Season preparations in the Caribbean is also complicated by restrictions. IOC is launching a survey of Tsunami National Contacts to identify post COVID19 weaknesses, inform work plan and resource mobilization, in a challenging post crisis environment;
3. Assessment of impact on investments in ocean science. This will be done through the IOC's Global Ocean Science Report. Launched for first time in 2017 at the 1st UN Oceans Conference in New York, the report offers a global record of how, where and by whom ocean science is conducted, including funding and workforce. The 2nd edition was supposed to be launched at the 2nd UN Oceans Conference in Lisbon, postponed to later this year. IOC would like to conduct an additional study for publication in 2021, complementing the 2nd edition of the Report. In a longer-term, the 3rd edition of the Report will allow a fuller assessment, including the impact on Member States' ability to implement target SDG 14.a on marine scientific research capacity and transfer of marine technology, for which this report serves as a monitoring tool.

After the presentations, the floor was opened to National Commissions. Mr Nicolas Mathieu, Secretary-General of the Swiss National Commission for UNESCO took the floor to update the National Commissions on the postponement of the 7th Interregional Meeting, which was initially scheduled to take place in Lugano from 25 to 28 May 2020 and postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The National Commissions for UNESCO will be informed as soon as the new dates of this meeting are determined.

Thereafter, some 38 National Commissions¹ took the floor to briefly inform UNESCO's Secretariat and National Commissions on their COVID-19 related activities initiated at national level and raise some questions and comments on UNESCO's key initiatives to respond to COVID-19. During this discussion,

¹ Switzerland, Japan, China, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Russian Federation, France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, El Salvador, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Palestine, Barbados, Mexico, Algeria, Guinea, Peru, Guatemala, Saudi Arabia, Armenia, Italy, Finland, Germany, Malawi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syrian Arab Republic, Poland, Zimbabwe.

the questions raised by the National Commissions included on the following issues, which were addressed by the Secretariat: **Education** – Funding streams and other details on Global Education Coalition, Remote learners, TVET in Africa; **Culture** – Will the initiative entitled “Culture & COVID-19: Impact and Response Tracker” go to all regions, Date of the upcoming World Heritage Committee meeting; **Social and Human Sciences** – Multilateralism in after COVID-19 moment; **Natural Sciences** – Sciences, Epidemiology and Ecosystems link in time of crisis; **Communication and Information** – Media and Information Literacy, Disinformation, CI initiatives to respond to COVID-19; **Intersectoral issues** – Can the model of *RésiliArt*, initiated by UNESCO’s Culture Sector, also be taken to Education and SHS Sectors; **Other issues**: C/4/C5 consultations and link to the Strategic Transformation, Participation Programme deadlines and fellowships.

III. Actions Taken by National Commissions for UNESCO by Region

This input comes from National Commissions, in the language provided and with light editing only for publication purposes.

AFRICA

1. Angola

In the context of combating the spread of COVID-19, the President of the Republic of Angola decreed the State of Emergency, on the 25th of March, which was extended until next May 10, in order to avoid a situation of public calamity. The Presidential Decree provides for the suspension of certain limited social interactions, as freedom of worship, demonstration, emigration, restricted of movements, including the cancellation of all levels of school attendance.

To mitigate the effects of COVID-19 in the education, the Education Sector and its partners in Angola, as the National Commission for UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank, prepared an Emergency Plan, which aims to reinforce and operationalize the prevention measures and control the pandemic, mitigating its impact on the lives of families and on the teaching and learning process. This plan comprises:

- Preparation of teachers, elaborate and dissemination of TeleLessons and Radio-Lessons in the media (Public Television and Radio);
- Preparation of minimum discipline programs for all suspension and back to school scenarios;
- Preparation of contents and simplified exercises to support distance learning;
- Preparation for the provision of digital contents platforms and exercise books for students;
- Preparation of manuals for the best pedagogical guidance for teachers, parents and guardians;
- Reinforcement of the operational capacity and digital skills of the technical team of the Ministry of Education;
- Implementation of support and training strategies for supervisors, managers and teachers;

Sensitizing the school community to readjust the academic year 2021.

2. Côte d'Ivoire

Le résumé des actions de la Commission Nationale dans la riposte contre la COVID19 :

1. Réunions avec le Cabinet du Ministre de l'Éducation, le Bureau UNESCO, l'UNICEF et la Télévision Ivoirienne pour la mise en place des équipes de téléenseignement et d'enseignement à distance.
2. Réunions avec le Ministère de la Communication et la presse en ligne pour la sensibilisation et la lutte contre les fake news.
3. Sensibilisation au respect des mesures barrières et du couvre-feu à travers le site web, les pages Facebook et WhatsApp de la Commission nationale.
4. Coordination de la participation des Ministres invités aux réunions virtuelles de l'UNESCO en rapport avec le COVID19.

3. Guinée équatoriale

Depuis l'apparition du Coronavirus-19 sur la scène internationale et nationale, la Commission Nationale travaille en étroite collaboration sur les scénarios d'analyse qui ont lieu au sein du Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement Universitaire et des Sports. Ce Ministère préside la Commission Nationale de Coopération avec l'UNESCO. Sous l'égide dudit ministère, la Commission a offert son aide pour planifier les actions suivantes visant à atténuer les effets du coronavirus-19, en proposant les solutions suivantes aux problèmes cités ci - dessous :

Arrêt des cours

1. Mise en œuvre de stratégies d'enseignement à distance.

2. Préparation et impression du matériel d'apprentissage.
3. Évaluation de l'apprentissage.

Désalignement du calendrier scolaire

1. Ensemble d'incitations au secteur de l'éducation.
2. Révision du calendrier scolaire.
3. Ateliers didactiques après la quarantaine.

Risques pour la santé dans les écoles

1. Mise en œuvre du programme de santé scolaire.

Désalignement du processus de contrôle des diplômes (sélectivité et formation professionnelle)

1. Mise en œuvre du Plan National de Renforcement Académique aux étudiants du 2^o de Baccalauréat et Formation Professionnelle.
2. Impression de matériel didactique pour la préparation de la sélectivité.
3. Cours d'été pour étudiants suspendu dans l'appel ordinaire.
4. Cours de formation pour les enseignants sur la sélectivité.

4. Mauritius

The National Commission aim at the following main objectives:

- Ensure continuity of learning for all students in Mauritius;
- Ensure that schools reopen with appropriate services and measures in place in a staggered manner a few weeks after lockdown is lifted;
- Ensure the health and safety of students, teaching and non teaching staff;
- Protect and provide for children with disabilities and from vulnerable groups.

In the framework of "STAY SAFE STUDY AT HOME" daily program, educational programmes recorded by Educators are broadcast on TV for All subjects (Home recording, vetted and uploaded on drives which are then sent for broadcast after final vetting by the Mauritius Institute of Education).

Online learning system is well integrated, Internet facilities are provided to families on Social Register.

5. Uganda

UNESCO has engaged the Government of Uganda directly and through the Regional office in webinar meetings on COVID-19 and the country's response to the pandemic: in education, science, culture and ICT. UNESCO through the Regional office has supported online education of teachers through the existing hubs in three tertiary institutions by providing internet services.

The National Commission has played its liaison role to ensure dialogue among partners to seek for solutions and progress of programmes through online means amidst the pandemic. In the education programme, the Commission has been involved in putting together a concept for online and digital learning to be supported by UNESCO.

6. Zambia

Zambia has recorded its first confirmed COVID-19 cases on March 18, 2020 and the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) has started taking measures to contain the virus from spreading widely including school closures.

To mitigate the impact of this situation, the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) is seeking to work with stakeholders and partners to implement an emergency response and recovery plan to ensure students are engaged in learning in their homes. Though this state of health emergency is new to many of the actors in the sector, international expertise building on the global experience in strengthening education as a response to national and global emergencies could offer insights that support the development of this plan. The plan is twofold, to be delivered in phases. While Phase One focuses on response plan to ensuring continuous learning by students during the stay home period of the outbreak, the focus of Phase Two is recovery plan to prepare schools for reopening post this health emergency and putting measures in place that will support a sustainably safe school environment across Zambia and ensure learning continues in the event of another emergency of this nature (*more detailed information to be posted on the National Commissions Online Platform*).

ARAB STATES

7. Algérie

Dans le contexte de la crise sanitaire liée à la propagation du Covid-19, un certain nombre de mesures en matière d'enseignement à distance visant à faire face à l'épidémie ont été prises en Algérie afin de palier à la fermeture des établissements scolaires et universitaires.

Grace à l'usage des TIC, des dispositifs ont été mis en place dans le processus de d'éducation à distance :

1. Diffusion quotidienne de cours scolaires et de contenus éducatifs à travers des chaînes éducatives. Cette plate-forme se veut complémentaire aux cours télévisés en constituant le socle de la continuité éducative

qui permettra aux élèves d'accéder au moyen d'une connexion internet à différents contenus éducatifs :

- Des vidéos (dont les séances diffusées par la chaîne éducative);
- Des fichiers en format interactif ou imprimables ;
- Tout autre contenu disponible (interactif ou pas).

2. Mise en place de l'e-learning ou télé-enseignement via la plate-forme éducative ONEFD complémentaire aux cours télévisés.
3. Développement de cours via des plateformes numériques accessibles à tous les étudiants des établissements universitaires

8. Jordan

Measures taken by the Jordan National Commission during COVID-19 outbreak include:

1. Sharing through its site and social media the official messages, initiatives and measures concerning COVID-19 outbreak undertaken by the three organizations - UNESCO, ALECSO and ISESCO - aimed at:
 - Raising public awareness about Coronavirus;
 - Supporting distance learning efforts done by the country by circulating lists of open and free resources and educational content;
 - Organizing training sessions for teachers to enhance their capacities in using electronic platforms;
 - Organizing the participation of government officials in different webinars to highlight Jordan's best practice.
2. Highlighting and sharing the best practices of the Jordan Ministry of Education concerning the online learning.
3. Sharing among the ASPnet schools different cultural competitions and best activities done by the Jordanian students.

9. Libya

In light of the rapid developments and the conditions experienced by most countries of the world as a result of the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, the Libyan Government of National Accord has taken some measures in response to the pandemic, including the closure of all the educational institutions, public and private, for all stages and declaring state of emergency. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education in the State of Libya has taken a number of preventive measures.

A committee has been formed, immediately after the shot down of schools, within the education sector led by the Minister of Education (National Commission Chairman), and membered

by Deputy Minister of Education, Secretary General of National Commission, a number of departmental directors in the Ministry of Education, and delegates from the National Center for Disease Control. The committee undertakes the following:

- The daily follow-up with the Ministry of Health, the relevant state institutions and international organizations, about the latest developments regarding the spread of the viral pandemic.
- Putting preventive measures to be followed within the educational institutions.
- Follow up on the implementation of the plan approved by the National Center for Disease Control, concerning the protection and prevention of educational institutions.
- Taking decisions regarding the reopening or not of schools, institutes and universities during this period, in coordination with the relevant authorities.
- Communicate with the various media outlets to brief them about what is new in this matter, and inform them of the measures taken to combat the viral pandemic and the preventive measures to be followed within educational institutions, in a manner that ensures the proper functioning of the educational process during this critical period.
- Forming a technical committee charged with activating distance learning and open education programs through television channels and educational platforms via the Internet:

The Ministry of Education started implementing distance learning immediately after the closure of schools, four TV channels started broadcasting classes on the 17 March, they are targeting students at primary schools from grade 4 -9, and secondary school levels. The ministry of education defined the Microsoft G360 services (Microsoft Meets) as a formal platform for distance education for general and higher education.

The universities and research institutes have run several national initiatives towards the awareness of the public about coronavirus pandemic using online lectures and workshops, they aim to teach public the ways to avoid the virus infections, explain the possible methods of virus transmission between people, define and explain the symptoms of infections, the lectures were broadcasted through different means, such as university websites, social media, TV etc. Some universities and research centers have started running research projects concerning the coronavirus; these include PCR tests and sequencing of the virus and immunity-based research.

10. Morocco

In light of the current global situation caused by the spread of the Corona pandemic, the Moroccan government, under the royal directives, has taken a set of precautionary measures to reduce the spread of the epidemic. These measures include the creation of the fund for the management of the Corona virus pandemic to cover urgent expenses, the closure of borders, the cancellation of all gatherings and demonstrations, the temporary closure of mosques, as well as the Government's issuance of a law decree on the enactment of provisions for the state of health emergency. It also created a leadership committee to track the epidemiological situation and created the Economic Vigilance Committee.

Regarding the fields of education, science and culture, various measures were taken, including:

- Suspension of classes in all educational institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research, whether public or private. In order to limit the movements of students for their safety and to ensure pedagogical continuity, the Ministry decided to adopt distance education to avoid negative effects caused by any interruption in academic achievement.
- The three telecommunication companies operating in Morocco decided to temporarily allow free access via fixed and mobile networks to all sites and platforms related to distance education or training established by the Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research.
- Adopting a program to support interdisciplinary scientific research in areas related to the Corona pandemic with a financial cover of ten million dirhams.
- The Moroccan Film Center has been streaming Moroccan full-length films online over the period of the quarantine.

11. [Palestine](#)

1. Media level

- PNCECS follows up on every press release issued by UNESCO, its regional and field offices in relation to coping with the implications of Corona pandemic through circulating them to relevant parties and institutions, in addition to publishing them in local media and official sites for the Commission. Examples include:
 - Publishing a guidance brochure to teach children at home in light of the escalating Corona crisis. The brochure was produced to deliver assistance and useful advice for parents.

- Circulating and disseminating UNESCO releases in relation to: How to plan for distance learning during the temporary schools' closure. UNESCO has circulated ten recommendations for distance learning in Arabic language to guarantee the continuation of the learning process.
- In the context of ISESCO platform "ISESCO Digital home", the initiative of "Teaching Distant Arabic Language for Non-Arabic Speakers" was circulated among Palestinian universities for foreign students.

2. Obtaining emergency funding

- PNCECS submitted project to Participation Programme and Fellowships Section through emergency assistance fund (Emergency Support Request for The Palestinian initiative Regarding Engagement of the Higher Education and Ministry of Health to Cope with repercussion of Corona Virus Disease Pandemic).
- PNCECS signed an agreement with the Ministry of Culture through Arab League Educational, Cultural, Scientific Organization's support to implement nearly 60 various cultural and artistic activities through face book and social media in a timeframe of two months, and broadcasting it through the official website of the Ministry of Culture, in addition to equipping them with the required equipment to implement these activities (phone video camera, and laptops).

12. [Qatar](#)

Precautionary measures undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to counter the outbreak of COVID-19:

- Implementing the decision issued by the Council of Ministers to reduce the number of employees reporting to their workplaces in government institutions to 20% of the total number of employees, and 80% of employees would work remotely from their homes.
- Canceling the in and out attendance fingerprint.
- Suspending study in all public and private schools.
- Implementing the distance learning initiative across all school levels, to include:
 - Video recording lessons.
 - Launching distance learning platforms.
 - Launching educational TV channels - Qatar Education 1 and Qatar Education 2.
 - Participating in the conferences of the Supreme Committee for Crisis Management and raise awareness through various media.
- Suspending work at the public service centers in all government complexes and provide

services through the Ministry's customer service center and via the hotline 155 and WhatsApp.

- Activating the electronic services on the Ministry's official website.
- Denying entry of food and drinks from external restaurants to the Ministry's tower.
- Denying access of cleaning staff during official working hours.
- Providing hand sanitizers, medical masks and gloves to all Ministry employees, in addition to providing hand sanitizers in the facilities of the Ministry building and affiliate administrative and educational buildings.
- Disinfecting the ministry tower and affiliate premises monthly.
- Organizing an awareness lecture to on COVID-19.
- Issuing an e-brochure on preventive measures against COVID-19.
- Developing educational and awareness messages for students, school staff and Ministry employees.
- Providing Ministry departments with approved guidelines and directives.
- Coordinating with the School Health and Services Program at the Primary Health Care Corporation to educate students and school employees about preventing COVID-19 infection, associated symptoms, and actions to be taken in the event of suspected cases in the school through school nursing (prior to the decision of suspending schools).
- Working and coordinating directly with the competent health authorities for decontamination and identifying those who contacted confirmed or suspected cases in the ministry or schools.
- Developing a guidebook on the precautionary measures against COVID-19 at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.
- Participating in developing the "National Response Plan Against COVID-19 and the Plans of Government Institutions" under the National Committee on COVID-19 with the membership of His Excellency the Undersecretary.
- Designating isolation rooms for suspected COVID-19 cases in the Ministry and its affiliate administrative buildings.
- Implementing precautions and instructions of the use of elevator.
- Placing safety distance floor marks in the public reception area at the Ministry building.
- Preparing for preventive measures in examination centers, such as providing nursing service at all centers.
- Conduct a temperature test for all individuals entering the Ministry building and other administrative buildings, by providing nurses

to carry out the test + distributing temperature test devices to administrative buildings.

13. [Saudi Arabia](#)

The National Commission worked closely with the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education providing them with a regional/international voice and sharing their valuable experiences and unsurpassed national achievements in overcoming COVID-19 challenges to benefit other states, National Commissions and communities the world over.

It actively participated in UNESCO's visual resource enrichment #ShareCulture initiative and its COVID-19 #ShareCulture video campaign as well as a wide variety of national, regional and global forums, work sessions and online events.

The National Commission provided UNESCO's World Digital Library access to over 120 thousand Saudi books abstracts and downloadable links to over 400 Saudi books courtesy of King Fahad National library.

It collaborated with Heritage Commission and Saudi Heritage Preservation Society (NGO) in developing "Dananah" - an online initiative reviving traditional games (representing 13 regions within the kingdom) that can be enjoyed indoors by families nationwide during the COVID-19 stay-home periods.

14. [Syrian Arab Republic](#)

The Government of Syria continues to implement a range of preventive measures. This includes a lockdown from 6 pm to 6 am during the week. During weekends (Friday and Saturday) the lockdown starts from 12 pm to 6 am. Other measures include a ban on travel between cities and also travel within cities to and from urban and rural centers, with exemptions for emergency and health services, humanitarian and essential services (electricity, water, and communications), and journalists.

Closure of schools and universities, cultural centers remain imposed, and both governmental and other sectors offices remain on reduced working hours. The government team working on plans to tackle the COVID-19 have decided to extend the closure of schools and universities from 15 April 2020 to 02 May 2020. The economic sanctions imposed on Syria prevent the Syrian students from reaching the educational platforms due to the cutting of electricity for long time, sometimes due to the lack of fuel and gas. Help is sought in asking to stop these sanctions on Syria to be able to face this pandemic and protect people.

15. United Arab Emirates

In response to the current global pandemic, the UAE government has implemented measures to support the stability of society at all levels and across all sectors. All relevant ministries have been instructed to provide smart services through electronic platforms.

The UAE National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, under the Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development, is working remotely and holding virtual meetings with its partners to consult on its work, the UNESCO Medium Term Strategy and the implementation of relevant UNESCO conventions and programs. It has adjusted some of its deadlines for 2020 and continues to support its partners through electronic platforms.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

16. Bangladesh

Like most of the countries of the world, Bangladesh has responded very fast to the COVID-19 pandemic by gradually restricting all non-essential daily affairs following the guidelines of WHO and health experts. The Government has closed all educational institutions in the mid of March. Immediately after the lockdown started, Ministry of Education has initiated distance learning through a dedicated TV channel to provide academic support to the students of primary and secondary levels. Online classes have been introduced by a number of universities and colleges for tertiary level students.

The Bangladesh National Commission, from the very beginning of the outbreak, has been accomplishing its coordinating role with different government organisations regarding UNESCO affairs in consultation with UNESCO Dhaka Office.

The Bangladesh National Commission has published all government instructions and guidelines related to COVID-19 on its website for the general people and different government and non-government agencies including educational institutions. In cooperation with ISESCO, it is going to distribute PPE and other medical equipment among hospitals which are especially working for the treatment of COVID-19 patients in a joint programme with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh National Commission is closely monitoring the situation in Bangladesh as well, following guidelines provided by the government and also by UNESCO. It will continue its coordinating and advisory role for ensuring sectoral programmes in education, science, culture and communication and information.

17. China

After the outbreak of COVID-19, the Chinese National Commission has taken multiple actions to respond.

1. It promptly alerted its partners to cancel or postpone the organization of big events and strictly follow local requirements on COVID-19 prevention and control, including canceling their overseas travel plan. Based on the consultation of members of the World Heritage Committee, its 44th session has been postponed to a later date.
2. The National Commission coordinated Chinese participation in online meetings in education, science, and culture, and supported partners to join UNESCO's initiatives to share the best practices on promoting ICT in education and online learning during school closures. With the National Commission's support, INRULED, a UNESCO category 2 center in China, released the Handbook on Facilitating Flexible Learning during Educational Disruption, and cooperated with IITE to organize online meeting on how to help students be active learners at home.
3. The National Commission endorsed Chinese Creative Cities to support other members and UNESCO to combat the pandemic and mobilize partners to provide quality online education resources globally. Shanghai and Wuhan Municipal governments presented two sessions co-organized by Life-long Learning Institute on the responses of learning cities to COVID-19, and UNESCO Chair in South East University compiled the Urban Function-Spatial Response Strategy for the Pandemic. The National Commission has also mobilized over 10 major partners to share quality online education platforms and educational resources through UNESCO especially for African countries. That effort will be further reinforced. The National Commission will convene a virtual meeting with its partners to further mobilize their support and align their actions in support to UNESCO's initiatives.

It is proposed to construct a coalition of National Commissions to share resources and experiences

on fighting the pandemic to support all countries in needs especially African countries.

18. [Cook Islands](#)

Key measures taken by the Cook Islands National Commission to support the Cook Islands response to the COVID-19 pandemic has largely been in the form of information sharing, but also includes;

1. Financial support provided to the Ministry of Education (MoE) for COVID-19 publications
2. Ongoing engagement with MoE and other partners in producing guidelines for schools during COVID-19
3. Dissemination of learning material and useful links to schools
4. Support to Government Agencies who also engage with UNESCO, notably, Ministry of Cultural Development (Online Ministers meeting)
5. Translation support for NGOs who are compiling learning resources for children to access during COVID-19 (Dream Journals)
6. Sharing of Cook Islands response to COVID-19 via Cook Islands National Commission social media platforms.

19. [India](#)

In wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO (INCCU) has been working online to carry forward the mandates of the respective Sub-Commissions.

Promoting digital education with equity

- The Ministry of Human Resources Development and its associated institutions are promoting digital education through Online Educational Platforms and through the mediums of TV and Radio.
- One such example is the online platform for school education called DIKSHA, which has 88,315 e-content items in 15 Indian languages, catering to Grades 1-12. During the lockdown period these contents have been accessed nearly 215 million times. A common national program has been launched, calling individuals and organizations across the country to contribute e-learning resources for school education to ensure continuity of quality learning.
- Regulatory changes are being brought in to promote online education. India will also offer online courses to other countries.

Online promotion of cultural heritage

- 'ViraasatSetu' App launched to raise awareness about tangible and intangible heritage of India in the digital space.

Webinars were held around Indian heritage sites and cities.

Promoting scientific research as response to COVID-19

- Over 200 Corona related research projects are on at leading Science and Technology institutions in the country. These range from personal protective care equipment to testing kits, data analytics models and treatment alternatives. Engineering students from IIT Bombay, NIT Srinagar and Islamic University of Science & Technology (IUST), in Jammu and Kashmir, have come up with a low-cost ventilator using locally available materials. IIT Delhi has developed low cost Probe-free COVID-19 detection assay.

20. [Iran \(Islamic Republic of\)](#)

Activities so far undertaken by the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO in response to the COVID-19 pandemic mainly contribute to promoting the mental health of the society and are carried out within the disciplinary grounds of Culture, CI, and Education. The following are examples of activities so far implemented.

1. Iranian Clubs for UNESCO at the front

The 7 Iranian Clubs for UNESCO are trying to lend the nation and the medical societies a hand in the nation-wide combat against COVID-19. In this pursuit the Clubs have participated in social activities to produce sanitary clothing (for surgeons, nurses and physicians), masks as well as food supplies.

The success factors of these projects include harnessing ICTs for social emergency aid actions by providing an IT-based supply-demand-and-distribution chain, and private sector engagement. To this date, a number of 1900 million masks have been produced. Funding of all of the abovementioned activities was based on voluntary public donations.

2. Graphics design exhibition

In response to the silent epidemic of mental illness following the covid-19 pandemic and in tribute of the selfless efforts of medical communities in their combat against the Coronavirus, the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO organized a virtual national graphics design art festival, showcasing relevant posters and infographics of warnings, recommendations and important preventive measures, etc.

Considering the major role played by the medical communities worldwide, it is proposed to have this event also organized at regional and/or international level. The cooperation of the National Commissions can be most effective in this regard.

3. Iran creative cities respond to COVID-19

The four Iranian creative cities of Rasht, Isfahan, Bandar Abbas and Sanandaj, using the potential of music to raise spirits, are organizing, in cooperation with and under the supervision of the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO, 4-minute virtual concerts by renowned composers for the public. The performances will be recorded at home and later sent to the National Commission for public distribution on social media and the National Commission's instagram. This activity is carried out under the current global motto: "Stay Home".

4. Literature used to support nation during COVID-19

Professors of literature perform 1-hour live readings of Iranian literary works and poetry from home to be posted on the National Commission's Instagram on a daily basis for the public. Well-known Iranian singers will perform spirit-raising songs at home. These performances will then be posted, by the National Commission, on social media for public use.

5. Live discussions

The National Commission has committed to organizing live discussion sessions on the topic of "Our Post-Corona World", where scientists in various fields of science, culture, economy and politics discuss their views of the world in the post-corona era. This programme runs live on the National Commission's instagram, every other day.

21. Japan

The Japanese National Commission for UNESCO appreciates UNESCO's efforts for providing opportunity to build a sense of solidarity to overcome this crisis. Supporting children's study while schools are being temporarily closed is an important issue. The National Commission is supporting children's study through utilizing ICT and providing educational guidance through individual meetings with teachers.

For the realization of the SDGs, which the 41 C/4 and the 41 C/5 will center on, the National Commission would like to place emphasis as priority areas on the following pillars, namely, 1) ESD for 2030, 2) UN Decade of Ocean Science, 3) contributions to UNESCO reforms, 4) regional revitalization and the building of multicultural societies, and 5) collaboration among diverse stakeholders.

22. Kazakhstan

The National Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan makes all necessary efforts to promptly inform state bodies, local communities

and NGOs in the field of culture, education and science of a variety of valuable recommendations and materials prepared by UNESCO in cooperation with the Member States. Recommendations for distance learning planning and adaptation of teachers and children to work in the new realities were of practical value for Kazakhstan.

There is no doubt that the current situation poses large-scale scientific challenges for the global society, which can only be solved by the joint efforts of scientists from all countries. It should be mentioned that Kazakh scientists of the National Center of Biotechnology in the shortest term developed their own PCR test system for the diagnosis of COVID-19 based on WHO recommendations.

Culture and art support us in times of crisis. Kazakhstan launched a new project «Star in quarantine» in the live format. Kazakh artists of various genres and directions almost daily hold free online concerts and meetings, which are broadcasted in open access and are publicly available to all regions of the country.

Almost all museums and libraries have expanded free online access to their audio and video recordings, virtual tours and publications. Besides, Kazakh institutions actively conduct online conferences. Thus, an international forum dedicated to the 175th anniversary of the great Kazakh poet Abay Kunanbayev and the 1150th anniversary of the scientist and philosopher Abu Nasr al-Farabi was organized in online format with the participation of speakers from China, Turkey, Hungary and Russia.

Given the unprecedented negative effect of the COVID-19 on the tourism sector, the National Commission, with the assistance of the UNESCO Cluster office in Almaty prepared and distributed to state and local executive bodies information and analytical material «Use of the capacity of UNESCO for the development of tourism industry of Kazakhstan», where special emphasis was made on historical-cultural and natural heritage of the country and the possibilities of its use and promotion in tourism.

23. Lao People's Democratic Republic

The Deputy Secretary General of the National Commission has been assigned in the Task Force Committee of Education COVID-19 response in the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Staff rotation to work at home and office was introduced to reduce the crowdedness by using remote communication to ensure a smooth and

effective coordination and dissemination information for any important matter such as invitation from UNESCO to the online meeting in the field of education, culture, science and environment.

Another focus has been raising awareness of COVID-19 response among ASPnet school members and encouraging them to participate in UNESCO activities such as writing solidarity messages to other ASPnet school members around the world and nomination youth to the ad-hoc committee (for instance, YoU-CAN).

24. [Nepal](#)

Policy measures and priority areas set by the government in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Protect children and the teachers from infection: Tips on health and hygiene, psychosocial counselling and disseminating facts and protective measures;
- Continue learning in lockdown: Priority is to continue learning at home (through National TV/ radios/FM/Cable TVs);
- Academic plan after schools / colleges / universities / technical institutions re-open with high priority to reschedule the academic calendar (admission, exam, alternative education pedagogy, training, curriculum);
- Budgetary Plan.

The National Commission has initiated following activities in line with the above set priorities:

- Contingency plan: developed and launched by Nepal Education Cluster.
- Coordination with provincial and local government, the local Education Groups-LEG including UNESCO Kathmandu, Open University-OU and some other universities, Private institutions (Some government and Private schools have already started the online classes).
- Psychosocial support to needy children, teachers and parents, awareness on the transmission of COVID-19.
- The development, adaptation and dissemination of distance and virtual learning using digital materials.
- Form Thematic sub committees (6) working for immediate and long terms interventions.
- Mobilize the media to disseminate education related messages and content.

25. [New Zealand](#)

The New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by sharing reliable and evidence-based information through our channels, sharing

information from UNESCO and other multilaterals with the relevant authorities in New Zealand in order to inform their decision making, and by launching a quick-response small grant process.

Grants of NZD\$5,000 that have been issued include [OER4Covid](#), an initiative by the Open Education Resource Foundation to establish an open source web conferencing facility to support educators in lockdown to communicate and collaborate, and [Te Rito Toi](#), an arts and wellbeing online curriculum resource designed to support teachers make returning to school a positive and affirming experience for young students.

26. [Republic of Korea](#)

Online activities

- The National Commission (KNCU) has initiated an online campaign in schools that are part of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) in the Republic of Korea to help overcome the current COVID-19 outbreak.
- KNCU has also collaborated with the Ministry of Education and other national agency (KATOM) to create and distribute an infographic with pointers on digital media literacy in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Translation of UNESCO documents

- KNCU has translated the 'Statement on COVID-19: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE,' jointly issued by the IBC and the COMEST, into Korean and has disseminated it through local media and websites. KNCU has also translated the results of UNESCO's ministerial conferences in response to COVID-19, and has shared these with the public.

More detailed information on KNCU's actions in response to COVID-19 is posted on the Online Platform and [unesco.int](#)

27. [Tajikistan](#)

The National Commission is very much concerned with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has a long-term negative impact on children and youth around the globe, and especially in Tajikistan, as its education sector has a number of difficulties which may complicate the country's shift from in-person to online education:

- Limited access to Internet across the country;
- Lack of equipment to implement distance learning at schools and institutions of higher education;

- Lack of educational technologies (no distance education programs)
- Limited amount of teachers, who can conduct e-learning sessions (there is a strong need for conducting trainings for teachers to facilitate their transition to the so called “new online reality”).

28. [Thailand](#)

- Working from home is implemented with 25% of the staff working at the office in rotating shifts. All staff entering the building must, disinfect their hands with the provided alcohol gel, undergo a body temperature scan, wear a face mask at all times, and practice social distancing of at least two meters.
- Working closely with specialized committees to support UNESCO during the crisis, i.e., translating and disseminating “Statement of IBC & COMEST on COVID-19”, taking part in the “Group of Friends for Futures Literacy” project and plan meetings with the National Commission expert committee to discuss the post -COVID-19 strategy.
- Supporting MOE in arranging distance learning approaches via satellite or DLTV (Distance Learning Television) to bridge the knowledge gap for learners in rural areas. Presently, Thailand has an opportunity to adopt this approach for underprivileged children and youth for all learners nationwide.

29. [Tonga](#)

Tonga is still COVID-19 free, but it is just as alert as other affected countries to respond to the pandemic. The schools went on holiday from 30 March to 13 April, following which the Ministry of Education decided to provide free public transportation to all students to and from school for three weeks just so that they would not drop out of school. Pastoral care teams are sent to primary schools to encourage students to continue attending school.

30. [Viet Nam](#)

National measures

As the pandemic spread, Viet Nam has taken measures to prevent its expansion such as early social distancing, online learning, combat with fake news and misinformation that could cause public anxiety, support to the poor and disadvantaged people with initiatives like rice ATMs, book ATMs etc.

International measures

Viet Nam has supported some countries in Asia, Europe and the US by giving foods, medical equipment and supplies. A common declaration was issued during ASEAN special summit, which identified joint effort and action among ASEAN countries to fight against COVID-19.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

31. [Armenia](#)

The Armenian National Commission for UNESCO is in daily contact with all the members of the Commission and duly shares all the information received from UNESCO regarding the efforts and steps undertaken by the Organization and its Member States with regards to the COVID-19 pandemic in the field of education, science and culture. It has supported the preparation of the following information documents:

1. Initiatives implemented in the Republic of Armenia in order to ensure the continuity of cultural life in the situation of the spread of COVID-19. One of these initiatives is a joint project implemented by the Armenian National Commission for UNESCO and Hovhannes Toumanian Museum. "The Liar" fairy-tale by the writer Hovhannes Toumanian was read in 9 languages and have brought together many kids around the world to manifest unity, linguistic and cultural diversity, to interconnect through culture and to show a great desire to continue learning and exploring during the hard times of COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Measures implemented in the Republic of Armenia in order to ensure the continuity of educational process in all educational institutions in the situation of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

The above information documents through the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to UNESCO were duly submitted to the UNESCO Secretariat relevant divisions. The information on the implemented measures at the national level is being regularly updated by the relevant high-ranking officials, who participate in various webinars and online teleconferences organized by UNESCO.

More detailed information on the National Commission's actions in response to COVID-19 is posted on the Online Platform and unesco.int

32. [Azerbaijan](#)

In the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO has been effectively exercising a

coordination work with relevant national bodies and the Organization. This includes timely informing national bodies about UNESCO's key initiatives and facilitating accession to them such as *ResiliArt*.

Furthermore, the National Commission cooperates with UNESCO with a view to ensuring the participation of Azerbaijan in the various virtual events of Organization, as well as sharing information on implemented national measures and presenting ideas and initiatives to UNESCO. The National Commission plans soon to hold a virtual meeting.

In Azerbaijan, numerous target-oriented projects are being successfully carried out by government structures in education, culture, science, information-communication technologies and other related sectors. Such projects include among others cultural initiative "Stay at Home, Create at Home", TV lessons, live assignments, online classrooms, STEAM classes, online services via www.evdegal.az, competition "Global Virtual Hackathon", the provision of e-books by libraries, etc.

33. [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

The National Commission has excellent cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Sarajevo, which helped to provide equipment for students in social categories and for children with special needs so that they can attend distance learning. All UNESCO-related education documents are submitted to the relevant Ministries of Education and published on the National Commission's website.

In cooperation with the UNESCO Office and the Office of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in BiH, the National Commission is working on a survey aimed at collecting information on technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and good practices to help relieve the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the fields of education and training for the needs of the labor market.

In cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the National Commission is conducting research on the impact of the COVID-19 virus pandemic on cultural institutions. The aim is to gain insight into the current situation and assess the effects of the crisis on the regular activities of cultural institutions and cultural industries, as well as on changes in cultural participation, audience habits and cultural contents. The answers will be used to define the needs of the cultural sector and to create measures for institutions responsible for the field of culture. This will further draw attention to the need for culture in

the days of global crisis and challenges for humanity.

The National Commission supports the cooperation of National Commissions and the exchange of experience and positive practices through the Online Platform. It also considers it important to support priority actions from UNESCO funds aimed at addressing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

34. [Canada](#)

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO has decided to accelerate the development of publications of relevance in the context of the pandemic. Of note:

- Open Science: a new paper on Open Science (and a related blog) has been published. The document is the result of consultations with the Commission's members, including several from the Youth Advisory Group. The offices of the Chief Scientists of Canada and Quebec have also been involved. The paper provides Canadian perspectives on open science and will serve as the basis for consultations on the development of a possible UNESCO recommendation on the issue. The Commission is currently working on other themes in greater depth. With its UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education (which has a co-Chair in India), it is exploring the role of open science in the decolonization of knowledge. Discussions are also underway to explore issues specific to the Francophonie.
- Education: Among the Commission's recent publications, there is a new Teacher's Guide for UNESCO Associated Schools, which is at the heart of a new blog published on the issue of education in times of crisis. This blog recommends online resources from Canadian partners and has generated lots of interest on social media.
- AI: The Commission will soon receive the first draft of a discussion paper on artificial intelligence and education, that may be of interest to other National Commissions.

The Commission has also established two major partnerships:

- Social Impacts Network on COVID-19: The Commission joined forces with the Association for Canadian Studies and the Vanier Institute to create the Network with the purpose to monitor the social impacts of the pandemic and provide analysis and ideas to help decision-makers respond appropriately. This initiative is supported by an expert committee of senior representatives (including the Assistant Chief Statistician of Canada),

academia, the private sector and civil society. The research is based on surveys conducted by Leger Marketing. It highlights how Canadians of diverse backgrounds respond to radical and sudden changes in their society. It is hoped that this research will, among other things, help understand how people from diverse backgrounds are affected by this pandemic. The Commission is considering a series of analysis and publications on the social issues affecting for example youth, seniors and newcomers that will be made available within its networks, including its Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities, which is a member of the ICCAR steering committee.

- Working group on ecosystems and green infrastructure: Another partnership has just been established with UNESCO Chairs in Canada. Under the leadership of the new UNESCO Chair in Food, Biodiversity and Sustainability at Wilfrid Laurier University, a working group has been created to propose investments that could contribute to post-COVID economic recovery while strengthening the resilience and self-sufficiency of the communities and the fight against climate change. The Commission is planning a series of opinion pieces and issues briefs on priority themes such as ecosystems and biodiversity, food systems and green infrastructure. Critical issues such as strengthening local governance and the circular economy will be addressed. The idea is to identify relevant public policy considerations for all levels of government. Emphasis will be placed on networks and partnerships that should be leveraged, including UNESCO ones such as Biosphere Reserves and Geoparks.

Beyond these initiatives, the National Commission is taking an active part in advancing consultations related to the development of UNESCO's new Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 and looking at ways to support other initiatives. One of them is assisting the Canadian Delegation and UNESCO with mobilizing funding for the creation of a virtual platform to consult with up to 50,000 people as part of the process surrounding the development of a new normative instrument on the ethics of artificial intelligence. At the same time, discussions are underway with members of its Youth Advisory Group to explore, for example, how to counter misinformation/Fake News and how to address new forms of racism and discrimination.

35. [Cyprus](#)

The Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO is closely following the recent developments and supports all efforts to combat the COVID-19 virus

pandemic. Facing unprecedented challenges created by the measures implemented at the national, regional and international levels, the key initiatives taken by the Commission are as follows:

1. The Commission has prioritized the implementation and/or completion of projects and activities that can be implemented using online technology and tools (i.e. submission of nomination files, circulation of announcements and awards, meetings of expert committees).
2. The Commission has embraced remote, online working with minimal disruption to day-to-day operations in order to ensure the safety of its employees and of any visitors to its premises.
3. Overall, the Commission's main focus is on those measures that could sustainably enhance the resilience of the cultural and educational sectors, both in the short and longer term (e.g. relaxing deadlines, rescheduling events, facilitate the use of various premises and funds).

36. [Finland](#)

Beyond the ordinary and more permanent tasks and duties, the Secretariat of the National Commission of Finland, acting within the Secretariat of International Relations of the Ministry of Education, has, among others:

- attended UNESCO's webinars for the Community of Practice, concerning MS's education responses in COVID-19. The main outcomes of these webinars have been widely shared with the relevant stakeholders, including the broader UNESCO community in Finland, and the National Commission;
- actively informed broad ranges of relevant stakeholders, including the broader UNESCO community in Finland, about initiatives by the UNESCO Secretariat using i.e. the UNESCO COVID-19 Portal, and about other crucial UNESCO related initiatives, such as the Joint Declaration on COVID-19 by four Groups of Friends on the Safety of Journalism;
- also actively informed about and advocated for participation in different World Press Freedom Day events and launched an article on press freedom in cooperation with the national branch of RSF;
- facilitated the national preparation and participation in UNESCO's high-level meetings, including the three recent COVID-19 related Ministerial webinars on education, culture and open science;
- been in constant contact with the Members of the National Commission and other UNESCO affiliated actors and informed about UNESCO's response to COVID-19 and have had feedback from the members of the Commission;

- been involved in and assisted in collecting information on the COVID-19 situation in other countries worldwide for the daily updates and briefing of the senior management of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture;
- called Nordic coordination meetings between capitals and delegations on a regular basis;
- participated in various other national and international webinars and meetings on the theme;
- facilitates ongoing preparation of various national reports and replies by Finland to surveys and inquiries by UNESCO, including the C/4 and C/5 consultation by UNESCO, and other UN and international organizations.
- Inspiring and consulting UNESCO designations in Germany to take innovative digital action; also collecting their concerns. Highlighting their best practice in social media. In week 4-8 May, organizing three video conferences with WH sites, Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks for next steps.
- Drawing upon flagship UNESCO actions (including ministers' conferences) through translations and follow-up. For example, on Covid-19/Open Science, our Executive Committee has issued a Statement, we currently finalize a publication and prepare a webinar series.
- Initiating exchange of experiences among European National Commissions, since we need to replicate best practice, especially in this fast-moving times, to demonstrate and ensure the relevance of UNESCO.

37. [France](#)

During the ongoing pandemic period, the French National Commission for UNESCO (CNFU) supports and brings together many initiatives at national level including from schools, universities, associations and cities, organizes and coordinates consultations in cultural, scientific and educational sectors, participates in various expert and committee meetings. In this sense, it considers important to involve National Commissions in the global reflection on the "post-COVID" and on the new priorities to come.

Some examples of CNFU's initiatives related to the mobilization of UNESCO networks in France:

1. CNFU partnered with the UNESCO Associated Schools Network Unit to conduct a series of interviews with students, teachers and confined parents.
2. To ensure educational continuity, CNFU supported the creation of an educational kit and a set of activities around the Sustainable Development Goals for the French Associated Schools. It also supported the provision of the ASPnet with educational sheets developed by the UNESCO Chair on Education & Health in collaboration with the New Caledonia Department of Education.
3. As part of UNESCO's reflection on artificial intelligence and the fight against the epidemic, CNFU launched a public consultation Platform on Artificial Intelligence and Transhumanism in partnership with MGEN, the first mutual health insurance in France. This consultation is targeted at 4 million MGEN members and any citizen who wishes to speak on the issues of biotechnology, or even medicine in the current context.

38. [Germany](#)

Key measures of the German National Commission on COVID-19 include:

The German National Commission also translated into German 10 UNESCO recommendations to ensure distance learning, available on the Commission's website.

39. [Hungary](#)

The Hungarian National Commission focused on its website that is due to be launched in April. Work still in progress with the aim of collecting input from UNESCO designations about their activities. The National Commission translated into Hungarian the joint IBC – COMEST Statement on COVID-19: ethical considerations from a global perspective and published it on website, together with other reports in Hungarian about UNESCO's initiatives in science (online meeting of ministers and open science), in education (#learning never stops; Global Education Coalition); on the safety of journalists and access to information during the COVID-19 pandemic; Little Artists Exhibition: Call for artwork!

The National Commission partnered with KPMG for a partnership agreement in education.

The UNESCO Chair on Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainability published online learning tools for students preparing for their matura exams in Literature, History and English.

40. [Latvia](#)

The Latvian National Commission for UNESCO is focusing on three lines of action:

- provision of relevant information for general public (including, regular press reports on UNESCO Covid-19 education webinars, Learning Cities webinars, as well as Futures of Education International Commission and new movements in the culture sector);

- supporting UNESCO networks (including methodological materials for ASPnet schools and media literacy toolkit);
- continuing UNESCO programs and projects in Latvia (including translation and promotion of Comest report on Robotics ethics, working with our expert at the Ad Hoc Expert Group for the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, planning projects on equal access to cultural heritage in digital world).

41. [Luxembourg](#)

The Luxembourg National Commission for Cooperation with shares examples of its actions taken during the crisis:

- Digital IKI project: highlighting practices that are part of the intangible cultural heritage through the www.iki.lu website and our social networks. As these practices cannot take place due to COVID19, the Commission would like to perpetuate these traditions online and take advantage of the confinement to research and document them in detail.
- Consultation of civil society in relation with the implementation of the 2005 Convention for promoting the freedom of cultural expressions.
- Newsletter issued providing information on initiatives launched by UNESCO in order to efficiently inform and rally national partners.
- Regular teleconferences with national designations.

The National Commission congratulates the multiple initiatives launched by UNESCO in all areas of its mandate and follows them with great interest. The Commission intends to make better use of the space of the Online Platform of National Commissions created to share initiatives taken at national level.

42. [Poland](#)

The Polish National Commission focuses on informing stakeholders in Poland about UNESCO's activities to respond COVID-19 pandemic. It provides information notes/articles, and links to relevant UNESCO's web pages via our website, disseminates relevant information by email to UNESCO networks in Poland, such as ASP, UNESCO Chairs, and programme committees, inspires or participates in online/tele meetings with partners and participates in exchange within European Network of National Commissions. Of keynote importance is keeping communication with partners and facilitating progress in preparation of planned events, even though the dynamic, unstable health situation can severely question their feasibility in 2020.

43. [Portugal](#)

In Portugal, following the Council of Ministers held on 12 March 2020, extraordinary measures have been adopted regarding the pandemic. One of them has been the suspension of all the schools and extracurricular activities for every level of education and for every school as of 16 March 2020. This precautionary measure was accompanied by the recommendation to ensure the continuity of teacher's work with students.

In this regard, the Ministry of Education launched a website - <https://apoioescolas.dge.mec.pt/> - to offer new interaction, communication and productivity tools as well as educational resources (for every classes and subjects with free open access) and activities to constitute a support base for the schools through this distance learning transition. This website also presents a set of suggestions and methodologies to support the educational activities planification in line with the distance learning modalities (EaD), including the roadmap - 8 guiding principles for the execution of the EaD.

44. [Romania](#)

A COVID-19 public information campaign concerning UNESCO's areas of expertise:

- The initiatives and resources destined for on-line learning offered by the Romanian Ministry of Education and/or by UNESCO;
- Dissemination of information regarding the Global Education Coalition;
- Measures of Romania and of UNESCO in the cultural sector within the context of COVID-19

Online activities/events:

- "West meets East - a cultural book exchange" international exhibition of reinterpreted objects created by 86 artists – online exhibition;
- "Music and Hope. The power of music in Easter prayers" – live online recital.

Policy briefs and Policy Papers prepared on key-issues in the context of COVID-19 crisis:

- Public policies adopted internationally for the cultural sector;
- Cultural and Natural Heritage sites issues during the lockdown;
- Journalist security and information quality.

45. [Russian Federation](#)

The Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO serves as a coordinator between the UNESCO Secretariat and Russian educational institutions. It regularly informs the Russian Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science

and Higher Education about the Organization's initiatives aimed at adapting education systems to the situation caused by the spread of coronavirus.

Vladimir Filippov, Chairman of the Russian Committee for UNESCO educational programs took part in the first online meeting of Ministers of Education dedicated to the fight against COVID-19. Ufa city - member of the network of Learning cities, also regularly participates in UNESCO webinars.

The National Commission mobilized Russian UNESCO Associated schools to participate in the webinar "School education in the context of a pandemic: the possibilities of digital technologies" organized by UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE). It was a constructive exchange of experience and best practices between schools. The Russian National Coordinator of ASPnet Nella Pruss has proposed an initiative to create a virtual platform to exchange experience in distance learning and to develop cooperation between schools - members of the Network within the framework of UNESCO projects and initiatives.

The Russian National Commission for UNESCO also actively engages the UNESCO Chairs in the discussion on the initiatives to support the education system in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Commission encourages the innovative projects of UNESCO Chairs aimed at adapting the educational system to digital learning. Thus, the UNESCO Chair "Societal, Legal and Ethical Frameworking of Knowledge Societies" of the State University of Management has recently launched the project "Digital volunteers". This is an online educational resource that includes international online courses, webinars, information about internships and grants.

The UNESCO Chair on Global Problems and Emerging Social and Ethical Challenges for Large Cities of Moscow State University developed an anti-virus strategy which consists basically of employment of combination of various methods and technologies of replacing the resident instruction by the full-fledged distance learning. This Chair, in close cooperation with the Russian National Commission for UNESCO, will organize the International Scientific Congress "Globalistics-2020" in the on-line format on 18-23 May 2020.

The National Commission would like to underline that in this situation UNESCO could employ its potential, raising the attention to such effective programs as UNITWIN, MOST, Bioethics relevant to crisis problems and effectively use its networks.

46. [Slovenia](#)

Response of the educational (distance learning on all levels) and cultural institutions (on-line celebration of the world days like poetry and book) and individuals was immediate, prompt and to the point. There was no need for particular intervention from the National Commission. Special attention was given by the institutions and government to the vulnerable groups.

It is noted that UNESCO designations and networks are not well prepared for the situations such as current lockdown. The National Commission will encourage them (and financially support in the next work programme) to prepare virtual presentations an online tools for visiting and interacting with, which may come handy also in other similar circumstances (temporary non-availability, maintenance, environmental reasons).

Recently established International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence under the auspices of UNESCO (IRCAI) launched the [Corona Virus Media Watch](#) that uses global and national news updates to create powerful narratives and visualizations that ultimately can take us further into future predictions of how the pandemic is evolving across the world. IRCAI will contribute with the following, but not limited ideas/solutions/technologies:

- "Digital Twin" proposal for global / country level for any global crisis;
- Public facing portal with analytical visualizations on Coronavirus involving various data sources;
- Comprehensive AI software library and services to tackle other specific problems related to Coronavirus and similar potential future threats.

47. [Sweden](#)

- [Digital meetings](#): The National Commission hosted a digital seminar for UNESCO Chairs and, in cooperation with partners, hosted the global launch of Freemuse report "The State of Artistic Freedom 2020".
- [Coordination](#): UNESCO designations (World Heritage Sites, biosphere reserves, Creative Cities etc) were asked, via email, how they were experiencing these new circumstances, and were requested to share best practices to learn from each other.
- [Corona-focused communication](#): The National Commission has translated and published the UNESCO article on how the Covid-19 education crisis affects girls. It has also communicated UNESCO's response to this situation within education and published ideas

for how to experience culture from home in these trying times.

48. [Turkey](#)

Following the epidemic, the Turkish National Commission has kept working within UNESCO fields, firstly by rotating the experts and then by telecommuting. All the informative and directive texts on the UNESCO website regarding the effects of the epidemic over education, ethics and culture have been translated into Turkish and uploaded and posted on the Turkish National Commission's website and its social media accounts. Online surveys provided by UNESCO have been evaluated by the respective Expertise Committees and filled and shared with the stakeholders such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

UNESCO designations within Turkey have been contacted and directed through concerning areas such as required measures and online editing. Learning Cities of Turkey have been contacted to follow and participate at Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) webinars organized by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). Online meetings of Open Science and Ministers of Culture have been followed and Turkey's participation in these meetings has been ensured.

Under the guidance of the Secretariat of the Turkish National Commission, online meetings (video conferences) have been organized with the Expertise Committees and the Executive Board of the National Commission, and also with the UNESCO-related stakeholders such as UNESCO Chairs, Creative Cities, and the representatives of the World Heritage Sites.

The process of the UNESCO Chair applications has been continuously kept with the concerning Turkish universities such as revising and optimizing the application files. ICH nomination files which are planned to be submitted for the

2021 cycle have been evaluated by the ICH Expertise Committee of the National Commission in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Projects of the "Anatolian Tales" and the "Anatolian Child's Games" which are co-executed by the Turkish National Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been made into videos and published on YouTube, Instagram and Facebook.

49. [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#)

The UK National Commission has been posting some of the activities of UNESCO and of the UK UNESCO designations on its website (<https://www.unesco.org.uk/>) as well as holding video webinars with UK UNESCO designations, government officials and extensively using social media to highlight best practice, funding and UNESCO site web activities (Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/unescouk/?hl=en> and Twitter <https://twitter.com/unescouk?lang=en>).

Like elsewhere, UNESCO and the UK Network of UNESCO sites are working hard to make sure that learning can continue throughout this period of sudden disruption to education. Many of the UK UNESCO sites and designations have created and shared online learning material relevant to their local communities and the wider UK public for learners at home to benefit from. The educational material not only provides children and youth the opportunity to continue learning but also to continue benefitting from engagement with their heritage, natural environment and creativity throughout the COVID-19 outbreak.

For those currently working in the UK Heritage Sector, the National Lottery Heritage Fund has made available a £50million Heritage Emergency Fund to support the sector as an immediate response to the COVID-19 crisis.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

50. [Argentina](#)

Since the beginning of the face-to-face courses' suspension, the Argentinian National Commission of Cooperation with UNESCO, through the Ministry of National Education, carried out actions to prevent that health protection measures deepen social and educational inequalities in Argentina.

The Ministry of National Education implemented the Programme in Spanish entitled: "Seguimos Educando" (We keep educating) which combines daily classes broadcast on radio and television with

a collection of educational material printed and distributed throughout the country as well as digital resources for students, parents and teachers.

In the social aspect, the Ministry participates in the Committee integrated by different Ministries which aim to keep food assistance active throughout the country, especially because 80% of public schools in Argentina provide food for their students. Every week, the Ministry of National Education, identifies provinces' needs in order to support them in the

effective maintenance of food assistance while the confinement measures persist.

51. [Barbados](#)

Barbados is currently developing a comprehensive national capacity-building programme in schools and communities and is funding a campaign to produce analogue and digital content that will be accessible across multiple delivery channels. In addition, the Prime Minister has committed \$1 million dollars to the arts and artists in response to the impact of COVID-19 on that sector.

These initiatives will together provide excellent opportunities for implementation of the cultural conventions, the Memory of the World programme and the Slave Route project, and disaster risk education all of which will be prioritized for online community consultation and capacity building activities. The Barbados National Commission established in 1970 will thus celebrate its 50th anniversary by strengthening its support for the execution and promotion of these initiatives.

52. [Colombia](#)

The President of Colombia, H. E. Mr. Iván Duque, and its Ministers decided to declare the State of Emergency in the country on March 17th, 2020, due to COVID-19 Pandemic. Ever since, the entire country has been undergoing quarantine to prevent the spread of COVID-19, while the governmental institutions have been working in different initiatives to face this global crisis.

In consequence, the Colombian National Commission for UNESCO (whose Executive Secretariat is exercised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) has coordinated the country's participation in different worldwide scenarios led by UNESCO. Colombian decision makers from the national and the local level have joined UNESCO's different platforms, -either as speakers or audience-, to exchange ideas, share good practices and discuss contingency plans. The National Commission prepared a PDF with the specific information of the country's participation in the different UNESCO scenarios, as well as the official links of the measures taken by the national and local governments, to contribute to sharing good practices during the Covid-19 crisis (*to be posted on the National Commissions Online Platform*).

53. [Costa Rica](#)

The Costa Rica National Commission for UNESCO is currently supporting the measures taken by the Ministry of Public Education to address the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. The Programme in Spanish entitled: "*Aprondo en casa*" (I learn at home) aims

to bring students closer to educational centers as well preventing losing connection between students, parents and teachers. To that purpose, the National Commission is helping with the distribution of educational material to promote learning in aspects related to culture and indigenous peoples.

The National Commission is also providing drinking water to several schools and educational centers due to water rationing that crosses the country as well as continuing with the hand washing campaign.

54. [El Salvador](#)

In the face of the national emergency COVID-19, the Ministry of Education of El Salvador has designed and implemented the strategy of educational continuity, to therefore not interrupt the school year, modifying the way of teaching through the various educational platforms. The educational material for students, methodological and study guides have been printed and provided to be completed at home for those students that have difficulty accessing the internet or no access to devices connecting to the online platform.

On the other hand, work is underway on the long-term strategy to overcome the digital divide, where the support of the national and international community is needed on the development and implementation of the lines of action. In this regard technical cooperation and support of UNESCO is important.

55. [Haïti](#)

Principales mesures prises par la Commission nationale haïtienne de coopération avec l'UNESCO :

1. Appliquer les mesures de confinement du gouvernement, pratiquer le télétravail ;
2. Suivre les mesures prises par les Ministères de l'Éducation et de la Culture : fermer écoles et universités pour éviter la propagation du virus ; faciliter l'enseignement en ligne, subventionner les écoles privées et leurs enseignantes ; réaliser une évaluation spéciale en fin d'année scolaire ; interdire l'accès aux sites, les rassemblements et activités culturelles dans les lieux publics ; informer sur les actions du gouvernement ;
3. Mettre en place, avec le Bureau de l'UNESCO en Haïti, un espace de rencontre virtuelle pour faciliter les communications entre les acteurs culturels et leur public.

56. [Mexico](#)

Suspension of classes through Agreement 02/03/20 published on March 16, 2020.

- Taking into consideration the risk of coronavirus contagion and seeking to maintain the educative service delivery, it was decided to use the internet and Television broadcasting for providing e-learning to children and youth that remain in voluntary lockdown.
- Current connectivity reaches 70% of the whole country. However, in rural areas, connectivity oscillates around 48%, thus those regions are mainly covered by TV, which has national coverage of over 95%.
- Each level of education has a specific Schedule for classes, being the reason why pre-school and primary school get four daily hours, while secondary and high school get three hours every day.
- Those students that have access to the internet may use the online platform @prende 2.0, which counts with attractive digital resources for the basic education level. It also exists a High School online program and the National Open and Distance Learning University of Mexico (UnADM).
- The program content “Aprende en Casa” for TV and online, was designed considering the established lessons in the catalog of free textbooks.
- Quick training for teachers in digital skills was implemented online within the MexicoX platform. Besides, teachers can organize their classes through virtual classrooms using Microsoft Teams as a free tool.

Returning to school, an announcement of April 21st, given by the Secretary of Education, Esteban Moctezuma Barragan

- Every student will return to school on June 1st for continuing with in-person classes, and for those municipalities, without COVID-19 reports, the return will start from May 18th.
- Until then, the program Aprende en casa remains, underpinned by emergent educational practices, like tv broadcasting entailing educational content through Channel 11, TV Educativa, TV UNAM as well as through local TV stations. After each transmission, the students must complete five questions and add them to a folder intended to gather experiences.
- Aiming to recover the scholar calendar and considering the classes that were lost, there will be an extension, consequently, the school cycle 2019-2020 will end on July 17.

57. [Peru](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic arrived in Peru in early March. Several measures have been taken on the part of the Peruvian Government to fight against this virus and to safeguard the citizens. One of the first measures was to ban all public events that congregate 300 people or more, as well as to postpone the new school year. Peru's 'lockdown' obliged its population to be more creative and working from home. The public sector is aware of the extent of COVID-19 and is implementing strategies to prevent the expansion of the virus as well as to keep citizens informed and deliver public services.

The Peruvian National Commission of Cooperation for UNESCO is aware of its privileged position during this crisis, despite problems related to internet connection. By being part of the structure of the Ministry of Education, specifically within the International Cooperation General Office, it receives not only government official information but also data from all over the world. It is in this spirit that the Peruvian National Commission is taking part in the collective effort to find the best solution to preserve educational rights. One way of doing this is by disseminating official messages through its social media.

58. [Sint Maarten](#)

In the fight against COVID-19, the Sint Maarten National Commission has been posting and sharing updates, videos, and literature on its Facebook page to educate the public about the Corona virus. The National Commission invites the Minister and Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, schoolboards, school managers, teachers, NGOs and civil society to participate in the webinars UNESCO organizes to engage and inform persons from the education sector.

The National Commission ensures that the departments of education and culture provide data to UNESCO concerning how these areas (education & culture) in St. Maarten have been impacted by COVID-19.

The National Commission is assisting in identifying COVID-19 related funding opportunities and technical support possibilities for St. Maarten.

Annex I

Agenda – Online meeting with National Commissions for UNESCO

Welcome remarks

Mr Firmin Edouard Matoko, Assistant Director-General, Priority Africa and External Relations

Introduction of UNESCO's key initiatives to respond to COVID-19

Moderated by Dov Lynch, Chief of Section for Relations with Member States

- Global Priority Africa – Mr Firmin Edouard Matoko, Assistant Director-General, Priority Africa and External Relations
- Global Priority Gender Equality – Ms Saniye Gülser Corat, Director of the Division for Gender Equality.
- Education Sector – Ms Astrid Gillet, Chief of Executive Office of the Education Sector
- Culture Sector – Ms Dorine Dubois, Chief of Executive Office of the Culture Sector
- Social and Human Sciences Sector – Mr Magnus Magnusson, Director of the Partnerships and Outreach of the Social and Human Sciences Sector
- Communication and Information Sector – Mr Guy Berger, Director for Communication and Information Strategy and Policy of the Communication and Information Sector
- Natural Sciences Sector – Mr Abou Amani, Chief of the Natural Sciences Sector
- Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission – Ms Ksenia Yvinec, Head of the Operational Support Unit, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

Discussion with National Commissions on their actions, including support and involvement with UNESCO initiatives (3 minutes by National Commission)

Moderated by Dov Lynch, Chief of Section for Relations with Member States

Closing Remarks

Mr Genc Seiti, Director of the External Relations Division, Sector for Priority Africa and External Relations.

Mr Firmin Edouard Matoko, Assistant Director-General, Priority Africa and External Relations

Annex II

Mr Firmin Edouard Matoko, Assistant Director-General, Priority Africa and External Relations Welcome remarks – Online meeting with National Commissions for UNESCO

Bonjour, Bonsoir,

Mesdames et Messieurs les Secrétaires généraux,

Excellences, Chers collègues,

Bienvenue dans notre réunion en ligne pour les Commissions nationales de 5 régions.

Malgré les circonstances exceptionnelles de cette rencontre virtuelle, je suis très heureux d'être en contact avec vous.

Tout d'abord, j'espère que vous allez bien et que vos familles, vos proches, tous ceux qui vous sont chers ainsi que vos équipes se portent bien. Je souhaite également à tous les musulmans de monde entier un très bon Ramadan. Paix à vous tous !

Ensuite, je voudrais vous remercier d'avoir répondu rapidement et positivement à notre invitation pour nous réunir aujourd'hui en tant que Famille !

Bien que cette réunion avec les Commissions nationales se tient le 29 avril, notre travail et notre échange avec vous ont débuté dès le début de cette crise. Les Commissions nationales restent au cœur même des actions que notre Organisation continue à mettre en place pour combattre cette pandémie et je tiens à remercier ici chacune et chacun d'entre vous pour le travail acharné et pour les actions nombreuses qui ont été réalisés par vos Commissions Nationales respectives en apportant ainsi le soutien aux autorités de vos pays, dans les domaines de compétences de notre Organisation.

Aussi, je me réjouis du fait que les nombreuses informations, y compris les stratégies adoptées, les initiatives lancées, les déclarations officielles ou encore le compte-rendu des réunions majeures organisées par l'UNESCO ont été partagés avec l'ensemble des Commissions Nationales afin de vous bien informer sur tout ce qui constitue aujourd'hui les actions prioritaires et que nous appelons unanimement, la réponse de l'UNESCO au COVID-19.

C'est très important que les Commissions nationales ont tant participé aux réunions thématiques des secteurs, et bien d'autres webinars. Notre réunion aujourd'hui s'ancre dans cette continuité et sera suivie de réunions avec les Commissions nationales au niveau régionale, aussi bien avec BSP.

Je ne le dirai jamais assez, mais sachez que l'UNESCO est très fière de vos remarquables travaux réalisés depuis le début de cette crise mondiale sans précédent.

Vous avez démontré vos hautes compétences à travailler main dans la main avec votre Organisation (Siège et hors Siège) afin d'aider vos pays, vos gouvernements, vos peuples et toutes les parties prenantes.

Permettez-moi de vous rappeler aussi notre réunion en ligne se tient en cette fin du mois d'avril alors que l'ensemble des Commissions Nationales étaient attendues à Lugano, en Suisse, du 25 au 29 mai prochains à l'occasion de la 7^e Réunion Interrégionale des Commissions Nationales. Je tiens à remercier ici la Commission nationale suisse et tout particulièrement son Secrétaire général, Nicolas Mathieu pour son soutien précieux aux divers préparatifs qui étaient engagés depuis le mois de novembre pour préparer cette manifestation majeure. En consultation avec la Commission nationale suisse nous avons décidé de reporter cette réunion et le message à égard vous a été communiqué en mars dernier. J'espère très sincèrement qu'une autre date sera identifiée à l'issue de cette crise et que la 7^e Réunion Interrégionale se tiendra à Lugano comme prévu. Il va sans dire que les Commissions Nationales seront tenues informées de tout développement dans ce sens.

Je peux dire haut et fort que vous avez une position privilégiée dans cette crise. J'ai suivi attentivement et j'ai admiré vos récentes initiatives et actions, que ce soit de la part des Commissions nationales de l'Allemagne, de l'Arménie, du Canada, de Chypre, d'Iran (République Islamique), de la Palestine, du Pérou, de la République de Corée, de la Roumanie, du Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord, du Kazakhstan, etc.

A cet égard, je tiens à remercier quelques 42 Commissions nationales qui ont bien voulu nous envoyer les grandes lignes de leurs diverses actions et initiatives relatives au COVID-19. Ces informations nous sont précieuses et seront partagées avec l'ensemble des Commissions Nationales et j'encourage toutes les Commissions nationales qui n'ont pas envoyé leur contribution de le faire très prochainement. Cela nous laissera plus de temps aujourd'hui pour adresser vos questions spécifiques.

J'ai participé également le 23 avril à une réunion virtuelle entre le Bureau d'Abuja et les Commissions nationales anglophones de la sous-région. Je peux vous assurer que malgré le confinement, le télétravail, le manque de moyens, auxquels il faut rajouter le stress et l'angoisse quotidienne, vous avez réussi à faire la différence dans vos pays.

Pour susciter l'inspiration et l'échange d'idées à travers les régions et les secteurs, nous partagerons des informations sur de nombreuses collaborations initiées et coordonnées par vous en réponse à COVID-19 sur le site Web de l'UNESCO et le Plateforme en ligne des Commissions nationales. Vous êtes également les bienvenus pour utiliser ce dernier outil de communication dans votre travail quotidien et votre collaboration au sein du réseau.

As you know, on April 9, the Director-General led an information meeting with Member States. After this, a series of virtual thematic information meetings was organized from April 15 to 28 with the ADGs of the 5 Sectors and with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).

I also wished to virtually meet the five regional groups at UNESCO during this month of April to stay connected, share UNESCO's responses to Covid-19 and improve the capacities of countries to cope with the short- and long-term impact of COVID-19 and to think about the era after the pandemic.

Today, I would like to do the same with you, but above all, I would very much like to give you the floor so that you can share with us your achievements, needs, difficulties and expectations.

This is our very first exchange, but I also plan to meet with you at the regional level to explore the specific needs of each region. This meeting should allow us to strengthen the links, in this period of crisis, around the triangle which unites the Secretariat, the National Commissions and the Field Offices. I take this occasion to greet here the colleagues from the Field Offices who have joined for this meeting.

We have gathered colleagues today from Priority Africa and Gender Equality as well as my colleagues in the executive offices of the 5 Programmatic Sectors to give you a global overview of UNESCO's actions in response to Covid-19. I am also accompanied today by the Director of the External Relations Division, the Head of External Relations with Member States; and Heads of Participation Programs and the Section responsible for Relations with the United Nations and the National Commissions Unit.

I now give the floor to our moderator and Chief of the Section for External Relations with Member States, Mr Dov Lynch and I wish all of us a very fruitful discussion.

Annex III

List of Participants – Online meeting with National Commissions for UNESCO

AFR	APA	ARB	ENA	LAC
National Commissions: Angola Benin Cameroun Congo Côte d'Ivoire Democratic Republic of Congo Djibouti Ghana Ile Maurice Kenya Malawi Mozambique Namibia Nigeria Seychelles South Africa Togo Uganda Zambia Zimbabwe	National Commissions: Bangladesh Brunei Darussalam China Cook Islands Fiji India Indonesia Iran (Islamic Republic of) Japan Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Lao People's Democratic Republic Mongolia Myanmar Nepal New Zealand Philippines Republic of Korea Sri Lanka Tajikistan Thailand Vietnam	National Commissions: Algeria Bahrain Jordan Lebanon Libya Palestine Qatar Saudi Arabia Syrian Arab Republic United Arab Emirates	National Commissions: Armenia Austria Azerbaijan Belgium Bosnia and Herzegovina Bulgaria Canada Cyprus Czechia Denmark Estonia Faroes Finland France Georgia Germany Hungary Iceland Italy Latvia Lithuania Malta Montenegro Netherlands North Macedonia Norway Poland Portugal Romania Russian Federation Serbia Slovenia Spain Sweden Switzerland Turkey Ukraine United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	National Commissions: Argentina Bahamas Barbados Brazil British Virgin Islands Cuba Curaçao Ecuador El Salvador Grenada Guatemala Haiti Jamaica Mexico Peru Saint Kitts and Nevis Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Sint Maarten Trinidad and Tobago Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Total: 20	Total: 23	Total: 10	Total: 38	Total: 21
Permanent Delegations: Namibia Senegal South Africa	Permanent Delegations: India Philippines Republic of Korea	Permanent Delegations: Egypt Lebanon Palestine	Permanent Delegations: Andorra Cyprus Greece Norway	Permanent Delegations: Antigua & Barbuda Bolivia (Plurinational State of) Brazil Chile Cuba Ecuador Honduras Mexico Panama Uruguay
Total: 3	Total: 3	Total: 3	Total: 4	Total: 10

Total participants from National Commissions for UNESCO: 112

Total participants from Permanent Delegations: 23

Annex IV

Power Point Presentation – Online meeting with National Commissions for UNESCO



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Introduction of UNESCO's key initiatives to respond to COVID-19
Introduction des initiatives clés de l'UNESCO en réponse au COVID-19

Moderated by Dov Lynch, Chief of Section for Relations with Member States
Modérée par Dov Lynch, Chef de Section des relations avec les États membres

Global Priority Africa	Priorité Globale Afrique
Priority Gender Equality	Priorité Globale Egalité des Genres
Education Sector	Secteur de l'Éducation
Culture Sector	Secteur de la Culture
Social and Human Sciences Sector	Secteur des Sciences Sociales et Humaines
Communication and Information Sector	Secteur de la Communication et de l'Information
Natural Sciences Sector	Secteur des Sciences Naturelles
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission	Commission Intergouvernementale Océanographique



UNESCO

NatCom Online information meeting

29 April 2020

COVID-19 and Key Gender Equality Issues for UNESCO programmes



Why?

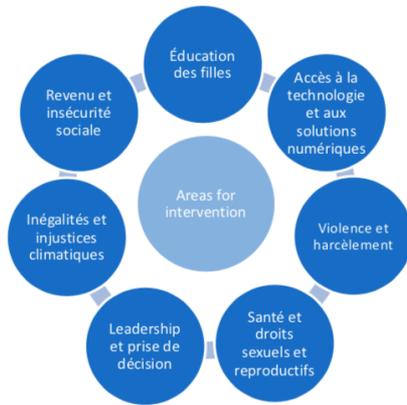
- 90% of the world's countries have shut their schools in efforts to slow the transmission of COVID-19 (UNESCO)
- Digital gender gap
- Significant increase in the incidents of violence against girls and women
- Interrupted supply chains affecting the availability of sexual and reproductive health services and commodities
- Women leaders, women scientists and their responses and their voices
- Women make up 57% of those working on a part-time basis; 740 million women work in the informal sector. They are expected to bear the heaviest brunt of job losses (ILO). 70% of health and social care workers globally are women (WHO)
- Inequalities in access, use and management of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services making women (and their dependents) even more vulnerable with COVID-19.



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Pourquoi ?

- 90% des pays du monde ont fermé leurs écoles pour ralentir la transmission de COVID-19 (UNESCO)
- Fracture numérique entre les genres
- Augmentation significative des incidents de violence contre les filles et les femmes
- Interruption des chaînes d'approvisionnement affectant la disponibilité des services et des produits de santé sexuelle et reproductive,
- Femmes dirigeantes, femmes scientifiques et leurs réponses et leurs voix
- Les femmes représentent 57% des personnes travaillant à temps partiel ; 740 millions de femmes travaillent dans le secteur informel. Elles risquent de connaître le plus grand nombre de pertes d'emplois (OIT). 70% des personnels de santé et des services sociaux dans le monde sont des femmes (OMS)
- Les inégalités d'accès, d'utilisation et de gestion des services d'eau, d'assainissement et d'hygiène (EAH) rendent les femmes (et les personnes à leur charge) encore plus vulnérables avec COVID-19.



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UNESCO's Education response to COVID-19 crisis



Set up **community of practice** – with focal points from Ministries of education – and launched a series of **webinars** for this group



Provided a **curated list of distance learning management solutions & issue notes**



Policy dialogue among Ministers and creation of **ad hoc ministerial group**



Creation of the **Covid-19 Global Education Coalition** :

- ✓ 80+ partners providing **coordinated** support
- ✓ **Matching** on the ground needs with local and global solutions for distance education solutions
- ✓ 3 Flagships: Gender, Teachers, Connectivity



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La réponse éducative de l'UNESCO face à la crise du COVID-19



Mise en place d'une **communauté de pratique** - avec des points focaux des ministères de l'éducation - et lancement d'une série de **webinaires** pour ce groupe



Provision d'une liste de **solutions de gestion de l'enseignement à distance et de notes de synthèse**



Organisation du **dialogue politique entre les ministres** et création d'un **groupe ministériel ad hoc**



Création d'une **Coalition mondiale pour l'Éducation face au Covid-19**:

- ✓ 80+ partenaires pour une réponse **coordonnée**
- ✓ Faire **correspondre** les besoins sur le terrain et solutions locales et mondiales pour l'enseignement à distance
- ✓ 3 thématiques phares: Genre, Enseignants, Connectivité

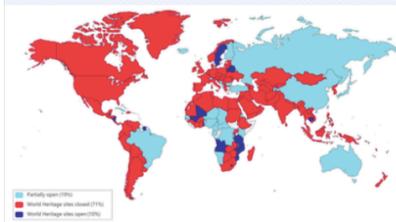


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Information meeting: National Commissions on COVID-19 response

Education
2030

Impact of COVID 19 outbreak Impact de la pandémie de COVID 19



- **Cultural institutions are closed**
- **90% of countries closed World Heritage sites**
- **75 million jobs in the tourism sector are under threat**
- **Cultural professionals' livelihoods are in danger**

- **Les institutions culturelles restent portes closes**
- **90% des pays ont fermé leurs sites du Patrimoine mondial**
- **75 millions d'emplois menacés dans le secteur du tourisme**
- **Moyens de subsistance des professions culturelles menacés**



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Culture Sector Response Réponse du Secteur de la Culture

4 PILLARS

1. Communication, advocacy and awareness-raising
2. Impact assessment of the cultural sector and support for public policies
3. Support for artists, culture professionals and communities
4. Capacity-building and resources to safeguard heritage

4 PILIERS

1. Communication, plaidoyer et sensibilisation
2. Étude d'impact sur le secteur culturel et appui aux politiques publiques
3. Soutien aux artistes, aux professionnels de la culture et aux communautés
4. Renforcement des capacités pour la protection du patrimoine



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SHS action critical to address social issues in (post-)COVID world



- Social and human sciences knowledge production / Production de connaissances en sciences sociales et humaines
- Laboratory of ideas to think the (post-) COVID-19 world / Laboratoire d'idées pour penser le monde d'après
- Awareness raising to fight discrimination/ sensibilisation à la lutte contre les discriminations
- Strengthening science embedded in ethical dimensions and universal values / Renforcer la science par l'ancrage dans ses dimensions éthiques et dans les valeurs universelles



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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

CI response to COVID-19

1. **Advocating for freedom of expression and safety of journalists, and reinforcing the capacities of media to cover the crisis**
2. **Developing and disseminating resources to tackle disinformation about COVID-19**
3. **Harnessing innovation and digital technologies to counter COVID-19**
4. **Promoting open and universal access to information in response to COVID-19**



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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Réponse CI face au COVID-19

1. **Plaider pour la liberté d'expression et la sécurité des journalistes, en renforçant les capacités des médias**
2. **Développer et partager des ressources pour lutter contre la désinformation sur le COVID-19**
3. **Mobiliser l'innovation et les technologies numériques pour contrer le COVID-19**
4. **Promouvoir l'accès libre et universel à l'information en réponse au COVID-19**



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SC's response to COVID-19

Key pillars of Natural Sciences Sector's intervention

1. Open Science and International scientific cooperation for COVID-19

Ministerial open science and COVID-19 and follow
Sustain funding for research

2. Water for COVID-19

Regional Webinars WWDR messages
Promotion of Solar water disinfection
Women, Girls and water

3. Epidemiology and ecology-reconstruction

Living in Harmony with nature
green economy for building resilience



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Réponse de SC au COVID-19

Piliers principaux de l'intervention du Secteur des Sciences exactes et naturelles

1. Science ouverte et Coopération scientifique Internationale pour le COVID-19

Reunion Ministérielle sur science ouverte et COVID-19
Plaidoyer pour un financement durable de la recherche

2. L'eau pour le COVID-19

Webinaires régionaux sur les messages du WWDR
Promotion de la désinfection solaire de l'eau

3. Épidémiologie et reconstruction écologique

Vivre en harmonie avec la nature –coalition nature
Promotion de l'économie verte pour la résilience



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1. Confinement of observers: future risk / Confinement d'observateurs: **risque futur**

2. Tsunami Warning Services: impact / Services d'alerte aux tsunamis: **impact**

3. Resources for Ocean Science: SDG 14.a / Investissement dans les sciences océaniques: **ODD 14.a**