



UNESCO at the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly and the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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© UNESCO/Ania FreindorfIrina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO

From 22 to 30 September, UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova, is in New York to take part in a number of high-level events within the framework of the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. She will join Heads of State, Government leaders, UN High Level Representatives and civil society for the historic adoption of new Sustainable Development Goals, from 25 to 27 September. These represent a universal, ambitious, sustainable development agenda, an agenda “of the people, by the people and for the people,” crafted with UNESCO’s active involvement.

A Strong Push for Quality Education

In this context, UNESCO will reaffirm the importance of inclusive and quality education for all to achieve sustainable development.

The Director-General will participate in a high-level event on 26 September, organized by UNESCO within the framework of the UN Secretary-General’s [Global Education First Initiative \(GEFI\)](#), entitled “Bridging the MDGs to the SDGs for Education 2030”.

This will provide a platform for partners, GEFI Champion Countries and Youth Advocates to come together and advance the Education 2030 Agenda by reaffirming their commitment to put an equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning up front and centre in the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The event will underscore the [Incheon Declaration](#), adopted by 160 Member States and the education community at the [World Education Forum 2015](#) in Incheon, Republic of Korea on 21 May, 2015.

The Director-General will open the event in her capacity as Executive Secretary of GEFI Steering Committee. UNESCO Special Envoy for the Advancement of Girls and Women’s Education, and First Lady of China, Ms Peng Liyuan, the President of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Ms Park Geun-Hye, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Ms Malala Yousafzay, and UN Special Envoy for Global Education, Mr Gordon Brown, will address the opening session.

The Director-General will participate in a High-Level Event on “Ensuring the Inclusion of the Right to Education in Emergencies in the Post-2015 Agenda”, on 30 September, co-hosted by the Permanent Missions of Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Norway, Portugal, Qatar and the United Kingdom to the United Nations. The event will highlight the right to education during emergencies, to generate political momentum and concrete proposals on how to uphold this right in emergency situations.

In the same context, the Director-General will participate in a meeting hosted by the Global Business Coalition for Education on 29 September, on how the business sector can work with international donors and foundations can drive the policy, advocacy and delivery needed so that education is a priority during emergencies.

On 29 September, the Director-General will take part in the first meeting of the International Commission on Financing of Global Education Opportunities, which was launched during the Oslo Education Summit for Development in July 2015.

In an event on 26 September, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the ITU, the Director-General will highlight the importance of solving the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education crisis that the world faces today.

Protecting Cultural Heritage and Countering Violent Extremism

The Director-General will raise the flag in New York for protecting cultural heritage and fighting against the illicit trafficking of cultural objects as a security imperative, essential for peacebuilding and sustainable development. The Director-General will underline the importance also of investing in youth and access to quality education to counter violent extremism.

UNESCO is co-organizing a ministerial-level event with the Permanent Missions of Jordan and Italy to the UN as well as INTERPOL and UNODC entitled “Protecting Cultural Heritage: an Imperative for Humanity”, on 27 September. The event will launch a new partnership to leverage the commitments of governments, UN system, security, development and humanitarian partners as well as all others in support of the protection of world heritage, calling for recognition of the importance of cultural heritage in peacekeeping, humanitarian and development efforts. The event will include interventions by high level government representatives and Heads of UN agencies.

On 24 September, the Director-General will take part in a high-level conference on the destruction of cultural heritage in conflict organized by the Asia Society, the Antiquities Coalition and the Middle East Institute. Key participants include H.E. Dr Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, Foreign Minister of Iraq, H.E. Mr Nasser Judeh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Mr Kevin Rudd, President of the *Asia Society Policy Institute*, Ms Josette Sheeran, President of the *Asia Society*, and Ms Deborah Lehr, Chair of the *Antiquities Coalition*.

On 29 September, the Director-General will participate in a Roundtable on “Conflict Antiquities: Forging a Public/Private Response to Save the Endangered Patrimony of Iraq and Syria”, organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the United States Department of State.

On 29 September, Irina Bokova is taking part, in the name of the United Nations, in the “Leaders’ Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism”, hosted by the President of the United States, H.E. Mr Barack Obama.

On 28 September, the Director-General will address the Annual International Economic Alliance on the subject of “Culture and Countering Violent Extremism.” Participants include S.E. Rama N'Diaye Ramatoulaye Diallo, Minister of Culture of Mali, H.E. Bert Koenders, Minister of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands, Ambassador Thomas Pickering, Ms Grete Faremo, Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Project Services, and Ambassador Cynthia Schneider.

Harnessing Gender Equality for Sustainable Development

The Director-General will take part in key events highlighting the UNESCO's advocacy and leadership in gender equality and the empowerment of women for sustainable development and lasting peace.

She will speak at the "Post-2015 Dialogue 2 on Inequalities, empowering women and leaving no one behind", held on 25 September, co-chaired by the President of the Republic of Croatia, H.E. Ms Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, and the President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. Mr Uhuru Kenyatta. This Dialogue will be dedicated to tackling inequalities within and between countries and supporting countries in special situations; supporting all vulnerable groups; achieving gender equality; ensuring access for all to education, health care, social protection and safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation.

The Director-General will attend the opening ceremony of "Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Commitment to Action", held on 27 September, 20 years after the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), co-organized by the People's Republic of China and UN Women. His Excellency Xi Jinping, President of China, and Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General will address the opening. The event will bring together Heads of State and Government to commit to the accelerated implementation of gender equality within a timeframe aligned to the post-2015 development agenda.

The Director-General will participate in an event organized by the Asian University for Women on "Sabaya, Sister, Student: Overcoming Vulnerability through Education", held on 28 September. Key speakers include Rukmini Callimachi, two-time Pulitzer Prize Finalist and foreign correspondent for *The New York Times*, Elizabeth McCormack, advisor to the Rockefeller family, and Catherine Russell, US Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues.

In her capacity as co-chair of the Broadband Commission, the Director-General will take part in the "Launch of the Broadband Gender Report on Combatting Online Violence against Women and Girls", on 24 September, with the participation of Baroness Beeban Kidron and online safety advocate, Ms Anita Sarkeesian, as well as Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, and Ms Helen Clark, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.

She will participate in the Meeting of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Digital Development, on 26 September. The President of the Republic of Rwanda, H.E. Mr Paul Kagame, President of the Carlos Slim Foundation, Mr Carlos Slim Helú, and the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union, Mr Houlin Zhao, will also participate in the meeting.

Irina Bokova will participate in the "International Conference on Sustainable Development", on 23 September, under the theme "Implementing the SDG's: Getting Started" at the Earth Institute in Columbia University in New York. This will bring together professionals from the private sector, academia, government and civil society, along with students from the world's top universities, two days before the United Nations Summit to identify and share practical, evidence-based solutions that can support the SDGs. Key speakers include the President of Liberia, Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the Former President of Ireland, President of the Board of Trustees of the Mary Robinson Foundation, Her Excellency Mary Robinson, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Jan Eliasson, and the Director of Columbia University and Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General on the Millennium Development Goals, Professor Jeffrey Sachs.

In New York, the Director-General will hold a number of bilateral meetings in the margins of the UN General Assembly.



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