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### UNESCO International Conference of NGOs, December 2024

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#### 1. Building capacities for action

Every two years, this International Conference in official partnership with Unesco, organized by the Unesco NGOs Liaison Committee in relationship with the different sectors of the Organization, presents the report of the actions carried out by the NGOs, elects a new President who will have the responsibility to organize the Forums requested by Unesco with the help of the NGOs in official partnership.

Indeed, and as it was very insistently repeated by the Assistant Director of Unesco, Mr Xing Qu, China, her Exc. Simona Miculescu, President of the General Conference, Mr Julien Pellaux, Director in charge of the partnerships with the civil society, as well as the various Directors of the Sectors, « *Unesco is the intellectual agency of the United Nations, its laboratory of ideas* ». Not a legal body ( like a national or European Parliament) able to vote laws applicable throughout the world.

« The thoughts carried out by the NGOs within Unesco are intended to provide solutions to the major challenges of the time, in order to safeguard Peace between nations, and to build fairer, more egalitarian, and more inclusive societies.

NGOs, as links between governments and peoples, beyond political polarizations, are an essential driving force of Unesco, and are acting on all the continents . Endowed with a transformative power through their actions on the ground, they find out new solutions to propose in order to help Unesco in the *normative* work assigned to it within UN.

The NGOs in official partership with Unesco represent a powerful force to respond to the challenges of the change of civilazation we are currently experiencing, their rôle, as official partners, being to prepare the new paradigms shift due, in part to the emergence of AI , with the ethical problems it entails, climate change, oceans pollution, the still existing inequality between M/W, the absence of freedom of expression, and the manipulation of information. »

The rôle of the NGOs – and their work within the Organization – as presented by the Department of the Partnerships with the Civil Society - is therefore to bring Unesco innovative ideas in each aerea of competence : ideas able to help the formulation of RECOMMENDATIONS ( and NOT laws) which are examined by the Executive Council before being submitted and voted by the General Conference.

This work constitutes an *obligation of the NGOs Partnership* with Unesco, the basis for the

renewal of the official partnership.

At the end of the General Conference, those voted Recommendations are delivered to the Member States, *encouraging them to have them voted on by their respective national Parliaments.*

As an institution, Unesco cannot intervene in place of the States: *only*, the national governments (the Member States) can decide if they lawfully apply them or not. (It is the same for the delivery of the visas to the artists, or for the canceling of the Custom rights for artists traveling with their art works: the governments *only* are allowed to vote those decisions, which are *national* decisions. Not an international *organization* – and not jurisdiction – like Unesco)

This is why it is very important for the AIAP NCs to keep their Delegation to Unesco informed of their activities supporting the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals).

This Conference was presented as a « key moment, bringing together the networks of NGOs in official partnership that maintain a global presence through their members, and cover the entire mandate of Unesco. »

The very tight collaboration between Unesco and the European Union, on all topics, was also underlined as being very important.

Under the theme « Building capacities for action », the Conference focused on consolidating the advocacy and strengthening partnerships with Unesco.

## **2. Preparation of Mondiacult 2025**

This international Conference, which will bring together a great number of Ministers of Culture, as well as other personalities from civil society, will meet in Barcelona, Spain, from September 29 to October 1, 2025, and will build on the results of Mondiacult 2022, held in Mexico City. « It will define the global agenda for Culture » declared the Directrice Générale. « As a major advocacy platform, Mondiacult aims to strengthen the cultural rights and to build the consensus to include Culture as an independent sustainable development objective in the forthcoming UN strategy

Indeed, in the international texts, Culture and Arts don't appear as a sustainable development goal.

*At Unesco, the introduction of Arts as part of Culture is very recent, and stems from the work of the cultural NGOs in relationship with the Liaison Committee.*

1°/ It was recalled by the Assistant Director General for Culture, Mr Ernesto Ottone, Chile, that Culture does not reside only in its preservation, in the condition of the artists, or in a consumer product, but as a multidimensional impact.

2°/ The questionnaire on the Status of the artists received more than 11 000 answers from all regions of the world.

The results of this survey were briefly presented in preview, but have not yet been the subject of a report after analysis and writing by experts working for Unesco and have the responsibility to prepare Mondiacult 2025.

The main points resulting from this first analysis of the questionnaire are :

- priorities in general
- priorities relative to digital technologies
- AI
- protection of the works

- participation in cultural and artistic education,
- cultural jobs
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3°/ Given the *enormous difference obtained in the responses*, Mr Ottone stressed, Unesco already favored a presentation of the results according to the priorities as to the centers of interest by region : western and eastern Europe, to which USA and Canada have been annexed, and the rest of the world, that is to say the four remaining regions.

Indeed, it clearly appears that the priorities of the artists are inversely proportional according to the geographical location and to the richness of the concerned country.

« The distribution of needs is not at all the same even if the needs posed remain the same ».  
(Dixit)

This document, in spite of repeated requests from the secretariat remains confidential, but it will be presented to all the Ministries of Culture who will go to Barcelona, and will be put on line before the meetings.

4°/ The Directrice Générale will ask that the official text resulting from the Mondiacult 2025 consultation and discussion be integrated into the UN texts, Culture ( and the Arts more recently) having been recognized by Unesco as a factor of sustainable development, and being part of the SDG beyond 2030.

« Indeed, Culture is an opportunity given to communities to develop their own values, as well as a tool for both personal and economic development. As for heritage, it covers a wide range of functions, from the creative industries to other sectors of social inclusion » (E. Ottone)

### 3. Importance of Education / Arts Education

1°/ The Deputy Director for Education, Mrs Stefania Giannini, Italy, recalled the main principles that define this new vision of society, and refers to the text on *The Recommendation for Peace, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development, 2024*

Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development : an explainer. Unesco Digital Library

Mrs Giannini insisted that this text should be considered as a living instrument, and not as an 'abstract' UN treaty.

It presents four aspects of the same approach, the most important being to tackle the causes of violence : legacy of violence and hate speeches.

2°/ Regarding Art Education , and following the Conference held in Abu Dhabi in 2024, see the publication :

[UNESCO Member States adopt global framework to strengthen Culture and Arts education | UNESCO](#)

3°/ Finally, the Deputy Director insisted on the importance of Green Education, strongly encouraged by Unesco.

### 4. Freedom of Expression and Gender Equality

Thirty years after the Beijing Conference, held in 1995, and which proclaimed that « Women's rights (are) defined as a Human Right », physical violence and cyber harassment against

women continues to increase.

A regulation of the digital space, which already began in Europe, is therefore necessary on a global space .

The latest Unesco documents on the subject can be found under the following links :

*Your opinion doesn't matter anyway*

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387483#:~:text=%E2%80%9CYour%20opinion%20doesn%E2%80%99t%20matter%2C%20anyway%E2%80%9D%20is%20the%20response,are%20supposed%20to%20prev>

*Unesco action for gender equality*

[UNESCO in action for gender equality: 2022-2023 - UNESCO Bibliothèque Numérique](#)  
*See more particularly pages 57 – 65*

## 5. [Ethics on AI](#)

In this field , the Unesco objective is :

- to better coordinate via an international platform which is not built yet at an international platform
- to provide financial and political supports to NGOs specialized in cyber violence
- to involve women in the development of algorithms which are created by men
- to work on the cultural and religious roots of patriacial societies.

## 6. [Oceans Decade](#)

From June 9 to June 13, 2025, the United Nations Conference on the Oceans will take place in Monaco and Nice, France : UNOC 2025.

On June 8, the World Oceans day will be celebrated also.

<https://unocnice2025.org>

The challenges of this international Conference are explained through the link :

<https://www.nausica.fr/fr/le-mag-ocean/les-enjeux-de-unoc-3-la-conference-des-nations-unies-sur-locean-2025>

Solutions proposed by Unesco are gathered and will be submitted to the G20 under the title :

[Unchartered waters: an exploration for gender equality and the ocean - UNESCO Bibliothèque Numérique](#)

This, perhaps, could inspire visual artists wishing to work or to have working groups on this topic ?

MP

