

Background Guide

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



Property of Lagos Model United Nations

Background Guide: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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LMUN 2021: The Sixth Session

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Letter from the USG

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Lagos Model United Nations Conference 2021. We are pleased to have you showcase your diplomacy, public speaking, and negotiations skills at this year's conference, particularly in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

This year, the staff of The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization are: **Oluwadaara Openiyi** (Under Secretary General), **Peace Oluwabusayomi Solomon** (Chair), **Temiloluwa Omoniyi** (Vice Chair), **Janet Ikheidi** (Researcher) and **Taiwo Oluwafisayomi** (Researcher).

Oluwadaara is currently a 400 law level student at the University of Lagos. She was a delegate in The Lagos Model United Nations Conference in 2018 where she won the outstanding delegate award. She was also a delegate of The Cambridge University International Model United Nations in the same year. She went on to serve as a researcher for the Economic and Social Council at LMUN 2019. Finally, at the LMUN 2020 and The Youth International Summit Model United Nations (YISMUN), she served as the Vice Chair of The United Nations Environmental Assembly and the Co-Chair of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) respectively. Oluwadaara enjoys travelling, cooking and meeting new people. **Peace** is a 300 level law student at the University of Lagos who pushes consistently pushes for impactful living. She was a delegate of The UN Women at LMUN 2019 where she won the position paper award, distinguished delegate award and the outstanding delegation award. She also served as a researcher in the UNESCO committee at LMUN 2020. Peace is strongly interested in product design, branding and sustainable development. **Temiloluwa**, a 200 level law student at the University of Lagos was a delegate at LMUN 2019. She proceeded to serve as the researcher of the General Assembly at LMUN 2020 also serving as the Editor-In-Chief of the International Press in the YISMUN that year. She was also a delegate at the Wind of Change Model United Nations Conference where she won the best delegate award in the United Nations Human Rights Council. **Janet** is currently a 300 Level Law Student at the University of Lagos. Her MUN journey started in 2020 where she served as a Delegate of Singapore at the International Model United Nations Online Conference and was awarded Verbal Commendation. She then participated in YISMUN as a Delegate of Turkey serving in the United Nations Women Committee. Later that year, she served as a delegate of Austria at WOCMUN. She is currently serving as a researcher of UNESCO at this year's LMUN Conference.

Oluwafisayomi is a penultimate student of the Faculty of Law, University Of Lagos who has experiences in mediation, arbitration and international law. She was a delegate in the General Assembly Second Committee at LMUN 2019. She also served as a member of the international press and as a delegate in the WHO Committee at YISMUN 2020. She is a young lover of God driven by competence and excellence.

The topics to be deliberated upon by the committee for this year's conference are:

- I. **Education for All: Strengthening Rural Education.**
- II. **Protection of Cultural Sites and Property in Times of Armed Conflicts.**

Delegates are reminded that though this Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics.

Furthermore, to encourage adequate preparation for the conference, each delegate or delegation is to submit a Position Paper on the date communicated upon registration, in accordance with the position paper guide.

Other essential documents that will aid preparation for the conference has been provided for delegates on the LMUN official website- www.lmun.ng.

For further questions or concerns regarding preparations for the conference, please contact me at usgdevelopment@lmun.ng of the committee at – unesco@lmun.ng.

We look forward to having you at The LMUN Conference 2021. See you soon!

Naomi Oluwadaara Openiyi
USG Development Department, LMUN 2021.

Abbreviations

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
AU	African Union
CADE	Convention Against Discrimination in Education
CapEd	Capacity Development for Education
CapEFA	Capacity Development for Education for All
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EFA	Education for All
EFA-FTI	Education for All-Fast Track Initiative
ERP	Education for Rural People
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GCED	Global Citizenship Education
GEFI	Global Education First Initiative
GEM	Global Education Meeting
GEMR	Global Education Monitoring Report
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IAG-TVET	Inter-Agency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training

IBE	International Bureau of Education
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICOMOS-ICORP	International Council on Monuments and Sites – International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
ILO	International Labour Organization
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OP-CEDAW	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women
RAM	Rapid Assessment Missions
RDA	Rapid Data Assessment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UDHR	Universal Declaration for Human Rights
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN	United Nations
UN Charter	Charter of the United Nations

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOSAT	The United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme
WHC	World Heritage Centre
WHF	World Heritage Fund
WHL	World Heritage List

Committee Overview

Introduction

UNESCO is a specialized intergovernmental agency of the United Nations (UN) that seeks to provide solutions to educational, scientific and cultural issues affecting people worldwide and contribute to peace and security through collaboration and cooperation with other international bodies.¹ As the successor to the League of Nations' International Committee of Intellectual Cooperation, UNESCO was founded through the establishment of the UNESCO constitution by 37 participating countries on the 16th of November, 1945, after the Second World War. However, it came into force on the 4th of November, 1946.² In the present day, UNESCO has 193 Members and 11 Associate Members,³ with its headquarters located in Paris, France. The Governing Bodies of UNESCO include the General Conference and the Executive Board.⁴ The current Director-General is Audrey Azoulay, who was elected at the 39th session of the UNESCO's General Conference.⁵

The mission of UNESCO brought about by its mandate in education, sciences and culture and communication remains clear till today, which is to ensure peace and security in the international sphere, achieve quality education for everyone, enhance cultural diversity, abolish poverty, create inclusive knowledge societies and contribute to sustainable development through information and communication.⁶ Since its inception, UNESCO has made significant contributions to the education sector in line with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, Quality Education, evidenced by the conferences and programmes it has held on its own or in collaboration with other international bodies. Some of these include the World Conference on Education for All in 1990, the International Congress on Population Education and Development in 1993, Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future in 2008, Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals to be held in 2021.⁷ In providing support to countries to promote quality education, UNESCO is primarily supported by individual institutes, which it calls the "UNESCO Category I Institutes." Some of these institutes include the

¹ UNESCO, "UNESCO in brief-Mission and Mandate".

² *Ibid.*

³ UNESCO, "Countries".

⁴ UNESCO, "UNESCO's Governing Bodies".

⁵ UNESCO, "Director-General, Audrey Azoulay".

⁶ UNESCO, "Introducing UNESCO: what we are"; UNESCO, "UNESCO in brief-Mission and Mandate".

⁷ UNESCO, "UNESCO Education Conferences".

International Bureau of Education (IBE), the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (UIS).⁸

As the only agency of the United Nations that places focus on the promotion of culture in basic sciences, UNESCO carries out research and training programmes and projects to provide countries with the necessary knowledge and education in the application of recent innovations, mainly referring to the activities of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC). UNESCO's significant activities concerning culture are geared towards safeguarding cultural heritage, preserving and promoting respect for cultural awareness, identities and diverse communication and enhancing creative and intellectual expression. The Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict in 1954, the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property in 1970 and the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention) in 1972 play significant roles in ensuring the protection and preservation of the cultural heritage. UNESCO's two global priorities include Africa and Gender Equality.

Governance, Structure and Membership

UNESCO is a sovereign organization affiliated with the UN through an international specialized agency agreement signed between the United Nations and UNESCO in 1946, with its headquarters in Paris, France.⁹ UNESCO's structure is divided into three principal organs requisite for the organization's smooth running. These three principal organs are the General Conference, the Executive Board, and the Secretariat, headed by a Director-General. As of January 2020, Member States of UNESCO include 193 Member States and 11 Associate Members.¹⁰

The General Conference is made up of UNESCO's Member States representatives. It meets every two years and the conference is attended by the Member States and Associate Members, together with observers from non-Member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Each country has one vote, regardless of its size or the extent of its contribution to the budget. The General

⁸ UNESCO, "About the Education Sector".

⁹ United Nations, Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth, "UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization".

¹⁰ UNESCO, "Member States of UNESCO".

Conference determines the policies and the Organization's main lines of work. It has to set the programmes and the allocation of UNESCO. Decisions of the General Conference are made by a simple majority vote, except for certain constitutionally specified matters that require a two-thirds majority, such as amending the UNESCO constitution or adopting an international convention. Conventions adopted by the General Conference do not automatically bind member States. Still, the UNESCO constitution requires them to submit such Conventions to their appropriate national authority for ratification within one year. The same applies to recommendations, which the General Conference is empowered to adopt by a simple majority vote.

The Executive Board is elected by the General Conference, consisting of 58 Member States serving a four-year term. It oversees UNESCO's programs' execution, meeting at least twice a year. Before the General Conference convenes, the Executive Board reviews the budget estimates and work program for the following two-year period, as prepared by the Director-General. It submits these recommendations to the General Conference and organizes the conference's agenda.¹¹ It is worthy to note that initially, the UNESCO constitution provided that "although the members of the Executive Board are representatives of their respective governments, they shall exercise the powers delegated to them by the General Conference on behalf of the Conference as a whole."¹² And until 1993, the members of the board were not the Member States, but personalities designated by name. UNESCO's constitution only provided that the General Conference should "endeavor to include persons competent in the arts, the humanities, the sciences, education and the diffusion of ideas." In 1993, the General Conference changed this criterion. Since that time, it has been requested of the Member States of the Executive Board to appoint a person qualified in one or more of UNESCO's fields of competence and with the necessary experience and capacity to fulfill the administrative and executive duties of the board. In electing the Member States to make up the Executive Board, the General Conference must also consider the diversity of cultures and balanced geographical distribution.

The Secretariat is the branch of the organization involved with executive functions and tasked with implementing UNESCO's programmes. It consists of the Director-General who heads the secretariat and the Staff appointed by the Secretary-General. The staff is divided

¹¹Permanent Delegation of Germany to UNESCO, "Structure".

¹² Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

into Professional and General Service categories. About 700 staff members work in UNESCO's 53 field offices worldwide, with the current Director-General who oversees their activities in the person of Audrey Azoulay.¹³ She took office on 15 November 2017 for a four-year term and was elected at the 39th Session of the General Conference.¹⁴

Mandate, Functions and Powers

The mandate of UNESCO spurs from the provisions of Article I of its Constitution¹⁵, which provides that:

The purpose of the Organisation is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among Members State through education, cultures and science to ensure universal respect for justice, the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are reaffirmed for the people of the world, irrespective of race, language, ethnicity, sex, or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations.¹⁶

UNESCO's founding vision was born in response to World War II in 1938-1945, marked as racist and discriminatory violence. Seven decades on and many liberation struggles later, UNESCO's mandate remains relevant as ever with cultural diversity under attack and new forms of intolerance and conflict, rejection of scientific facts and threats to freedom of expression, peace and human rights. In response to this, UNESCO's duty remains to reaffirm the humanist missions in education, science and culture¹⁷ through promoting international collaboration among nations.

The main functions of UNESCO include working to ensure that every child has access to quality education, promoting cultural acceptance between nations, protecting historical sites during periods of war and conflict, improving technology to aid distribution of resources and energy, and secure the safety of individual expression and basic human rights as a fundamental right and a critical condition for democracy and development through developing educational tools to help people live as global citizens free of hate and intolerance. UNESCO's operations in building a culture of peace have been possible through its use of intercultural communication with Member States within the International community, promoting a shared understanding of environmental conditions

¹³ UNESCO, "The executive branch of the organization".

¹⁴ UNESCO, "Director-General, Audrey Azoulay".

¹⁵ Seán Ó Siochrú, "United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)", [2007].

¹⁶ Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

and their impact on humanity through research and educational enlightenment, and promoting the development of fundamental rights.¹⁸ UNESCO also coordinates the international community through partnerships, policy guidance, capacity development, monitoring and advocacy¹⁹ to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals defined in Agenda 2030.²⁰

UNESCO's mandate is also clearly defined in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations. In fulfilling its mandate, UNESCO teams up and works closely with various bodies, including the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), to deliberate on issues brought before it and provide lasting solutions to such matters. UNESCO's partnership with other institutions helps formulate policies and provide financial and technical assistance to State Parties. UNESCO serves as a laboratory of ideas for State Parties to draw from its wealth of knowledge concerning policy-making, developing feasible goals and plans, and ensuring capacity building, all in line with the SDGs.²¹

In education, UNESCO has worked tirelessly to improve education in various countries around the world through its Education for All initiative in 2015.²² Since its inception, UNESCO has played a vital role in natural, social and human sciences. Various programmes, research and research materials have been provided to facilitate and increase human interactions with science and technology for capacity building. The culture, communication and technology aspect has not been left out and UNESCO has been building a society where there is the preservation of and respect for people and culture while ensuring that the right to freedom of expression is not in any way violated.²³

Recent sessions and Current Priorities

UNESCO's 44th session, initially scheduled to hold on the 29th of June, 2020 – 9th of July, 2020, was postponed to June – July 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, an online session was held on the 20th of November, 2020. Its 43rd session was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 30th of June, 2019 – 10th of July, 2019.²⁴

¹⁸ SEG Wiki, "UNESCO".

¹⁹ UNESCO, "Leading SDG 4 - Education 2030".

²⁰ UNESCO, "UNESCO in brief - Mission and Mandate" [website].

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² UNESCO, "What it is and what it does".

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ UNESCO, "43rd session of the World Heritage Committee".

UNESCO's current priorities include Africa and Gender equality. UNESCO and its development partners are attentive to 54 African countries with a more vital and better-targeted strategy. The African Renaissance is underway, with the adoption of the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development paving the ground for the African Economic Community.²⁵ On gender equality, UNESCO believes that all forms of discrimination based on gender are violations of human rights and a significant barrier to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.²⁶ UNESCO assembled a Global Education Meeting (2020 GEM) online on 20 and 22 October 2020, co-hosted by the Governments of Ghana, Norway and the United Kingdom.

The 2020 GEM provided a platform for idea exchange among high-level political leaders, policymakers and global education actors to protect and rethink education in the current and post-COVID-19 world and agree on global priority actions for educational recovery and progress in the Decade of Action for Sustainable Development.²⁷ The event provided a tactical opportunity for the Member States and the international community to maintain and scale up their commitment to education as the most crucial investment for a sustainable recovery and future.

Conclusion

UNESCO plays a vital role in enhancing cultural understanding, promoting international cooperation through education and, in the end, ensuring the promotion of world peace and stability. It also plays a role in ensuring that in a world where diverse opinions, beliefs, behaviors exist, peace is the order of the day. UNESCO is instrumental in ensuring a sustainable future for generations despite the changing climate and building more substantial inclusion of societies in education, the sciences, culture, communication and sustainable development for oceans.²⁸ UNESCO plays the role of a pilot in mobilizing other international organizations, Member States, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil societies etc., thus leading them to achieve these goals.

²⁵ UNESCO, "Priority Africa".

²⁶ UNESCO, "Niamey hosts the 12th International Fashion Festival in Africa".

²⁷ UNESCO, "Education post-COVID-19: Extraordinary session of the Global Education Meeting (2020 GEM)".

²⁸ UNESCO, "UNESCO and Sustainable Development Goals".

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Centre for Educational Research and Innovation: The Power of Digital Technologies and Skills . Retrieved 9 May, 2021 from:

<https://www.oecd.org/education/cei/GEIS2016-Background-document.pdf>

This document highlights UNESCO's role in Educational Research and Innovation. It also highlights the power of digital technologies and skills.

SDG Knowledge hub: Extraordinary Meeting to Rethink Education, Present Cooperation Mechanism. Retrieved June 2, 2021 from:

<http://sdg.iisd.org/news/extraordinary-meeting-to-rethink-education-present-cooperation-mechanism/>

Participants at the second annual Global Education Forum called to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on education to avoid a "generational catastrophe." UN leaders and organizations are urging financial support to achieve SDG 4 (quality education) ahead of an extraordinary session of the Global Education Meeting in October 2020.

UNESCO, Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Retrieved 7 June, 2021 from:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/unesco/about-us/who-we-are/history/constitution/>

This website provides the legal framework and principles guiding UNESCO as an organization and its powers, functions and operations. The Constitution is binding on Member States of the United Nations and it seeks to promote international collaboration in education, science, and culture.

UNESCO Digital Library [website]: Basic texts: 2018 edition. Retrieved 20 December 2020 from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261751.page=6>

This website provides an overview of UNESCO's mandate within the UNESCO constitution, its governance and structure, the rules of procedure of the General Conference and the Executive Board, and the rights and obligations of Associate Members. This document is particularly important to delegates because it provides an entry point for delegates in understanding the core mandate and priorities of UNESCO.

UNESCO in brief- Mission and Mandate. Retrieved 20 December 2020 from:

<https://en.unesco.org/about-us/introducing-unesco>

This website provides a basic overview of UNESCO and its role within the United Nations, including its vision and global priorities. The resource represents a good entry point for delegates to begin their research on the

committee. It also provides adequate information on the committee's history, strategic documents and a selection of UNESCO's success stories through graphic presentations. This website should help provide delegates with background knowledge of the committee and clearly understand its mandate.

UNESCO, Member States of UNESCO. Retrieved 17 January 2021 from:

<https://en.unesco.org/countries/member-states>

This website explains the UNESCO membership and how they are admitted into the UNESCO upon the executive board's recommendation by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Conference. It further explains the admission process, rights and obligations of the Associate Members, which the General Conference determines. This website is relevant to delegates as it will aid their understanding of Membership of UNESCO.

UNESCO, Structure. Retrieved 18 January 2021 from:

<https://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/United-Nations-Related-Agencies/The-United-Nations-Educational-Scientific-and-Cultural-Organization-UNESCO-STRUCTURE.html>

This website explains UNESCO's structure, the general conference, executive board, Director-General and Secretariat, and UNESCO's field offices. This website will help the delegate's knowledge of the structure and functions of the organs of UNESCO.

UNESCO, World Heritage Convention. Retrieved 7 June, 2021 from:

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/>

This website links together in a single document the concepts of nature conservation and the preservation of cultural properties. The Convention seeks to achieve five strategic objectives which include credibility, conservation, capacity building, communication and communities.

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UNESCO, UNESCO and Sustainable Development Goals. Retrieved 17 January 2021 from:

<https://en.unesco.org/sustainabledevelopmentgoals>

Education for All: Strengthening Rural Education

“Education is a fundamental right and the basis for progress in every country... With partnership, leadership and wise investments in education, we can transform individual lives, national economies and our world.”

Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General.²⁹

Introduction

Education plays a significant role in driving growth and ensuring sustainable development. Education is a life-changing tool that provides us with the necessary knowledge to make better-informed decisions. Education is also pertinent in building reasonable young individuals who would take a keen interest in shaping the future we want. The road to having a gender-equal world and a world of minimal or no inequalities at all starts with education. Education provides the knowledge needed to upscale and develop, bridging the gap between the poor and the wealthy (social classes), the boy child and the girl child (gender bases) and the rural and urban communities. According to UNESCO, “education is a human right for everyone throughout life and that access must be matched by quality.”³⁰ If we must enhance socio-economic growth and development in any country, education must be significantly invested in.

The Education for All (EFA) has been a development priority for UNESCO for many years. Many countries strengthen their education policies and programs to achieve quality education access. The Education for All initiative developed in 2000, was originally set to be achieved by 2015. However, only about one-third of countries in the world were able to meet the set goals.³¹ There has been a considerable gap between the education status in urban areas and rural areas over the years. This gap undoubtedly leads to unequal access to opportunities, which would be beneficial to the individuals' future.³² Therefore, now more than ever, this inequality gap must be effectively tackled in ensuring education for all if Africa must meet up with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets by 2030. Education is at the heart of UNESCO's mission to build peace, eradicate poverty, and drive

²⁹ UNESCO, “Sustainable Development begins with Education”, Ban Ki-moon on a booklet for his Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in India, September 15 2015.

³⁰ UNESCO, “Education transforms lives”.

³¹ Office of the Secretary's Envoy on Youth, “Education for All 2000-2015: Only a third of countries reached global education goals”.

³² UNESCO, “Inequalities in Education”.

sustainable development. Thus, UNESCO continues to remain at the forefront in ensuring education for all.³³

International and Regional Framework

The Education Sector gained its prominence when the lack of education, as a result of the outbreak of the Second World War, became a pressing global issue in 1942. Thus, the European government met within the United Kingdom to reconstruct the education system's prestige before the outbreak of the war.³⁴ Furthermore, a United Nations Conference for establishing an academic and cultural organization was convened in London in 1945 to determine the "intellectual and ethical commonality of mankind," marking the establishment of UNESCO.³⁵

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly drafted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) document,³⁶ which served as a milestone document in Human Rights history³⁷ by ensuring that Universal Free Primary Education was categorized as a compulsory right to every child.³⁸ Hence, the right to education was further enshrined in various international conventions, particularly the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)*³⁹ and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*⁴⁰. Due to the recognition of the right to education, literacy was viewed as a moving target as many countries aspired – following the aims laid out in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) – to ensure that secondary education is free and easily accessible and for more widespread tertiary education. This positive progress indicated that education had become very uneven, primarily due to inequalities and discrimination. The right to education continued to be denied to children, disadvantaged groups and those living in extreme poverty and deprivation. The most deprived children

³³ UNESCO, "Education transforms lives".

³⁴ UNESCO, "History of the Education Sector".

³⁵ UNESCO, "Who we are; The Organisation's history".

³⁶ UN General Assembly, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III).

³⁷ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, General Assembly Resolution 217 A.

³⁸ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70: Still working to ensure Freedom, Equality and Dignity for All".

³⁹ UN General Assembly, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 16 December 1966, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 993, p. 3.

⁴⁰ UN Commission on Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child., 7 March 1990, E/CN.4/RES/1990/74.

have continued to be left behind: children with disabilities, indigenous children, refugee children – and especially girls who belong to these groups.

The UNESCO General Conference in 1960 adopted the *UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education*⁴¹ as the first legally binding international instrument entirely dedicated to the right of education with a binding force in international law.⁴² This Convention became the organization's standard-setting instrument in the field of education with its primary objectives of ensuring: (i) elementary education is free and compulsory for every child (ii) secondary education in its different forms is generally accessible and available to all children (iii) tertiary education equally accessible⁴³ to all based on individual capacity (iv) equivalent standards of education in all public educational institutions of the same level and conditions concerning quality (v) opportunities for those who missed all or part of their primary education and their continuation of education (vi) training opportunities for the teaching profession without discrimination. The Convention is recognized as a cornerstone of the Education 2030 Agenda and is a powerful tool in advancing inclusive and equitable quality of education for all (SDG4).⁴⁴

In 1966, the United Nations General Assembly recognized the Economic, Social and Cultural Right as a legal right in the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)*⁴⁵. The Covenant devotes two articles to the right to education—Articles 13 and 14. These Articles are recognized as the comprehensive and detailed provisions in the right to education in international human rights law.⁴⁶ The adoption of General Comment No. 11 on Article 14 (plans of action for primary education) indicates that the United Nations General Assembly is aware that equal access to quality education remains a distant goal for millions of vulnerable people throughout the world.⁴⁷

⁴¹ UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), “Convention Against Discrimination in Education”, 14 December 1960.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ UNESCO, “What you need to know about the Convention against Discrimination in Education”.

⁴⁵ International Network for Economic, Social & Cultural Rights, “Introduction to Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights”.

⁴⁶ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “CESCR General Comment No. 13: The Right to Education (Art. 13), Adopted at the Twenty-first Session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”, on 8 December 1999 (Contained in Document E/C.12/1999/10).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

By 1979, many international Conventions and Declarations such as the Beijing Declaration,⁴⁸ the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (OP-CEDAW)⁴⁹ and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Maputo Protocol)⁵⁰ were designed to promote equal rights for men and women and were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. Despite all these various instruments, there is still severe and evident discrimination against women, hindering their participation in the social, political, economic, and cultural lives of their countries in extreme violation of the principles of equal rights and respect for human dignity.

Rural women in developing countries are unfortunately the poorest and least favored group in accessing quality education. The United Nations General Assembly members have recognized this group of women as alarming; therefore, adopting the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*⁵¹ became a necessity. The Convention defines women's equal rights and addresses the elimination of any form of discrimination against women.⁵²

In 1989, world leaders decided to come together. They made a historic commitment to the world's children, a promise to every child to protect and fulfil their rights, by adopting a global legal framework- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child⁵³ made provision for the realization that children are not just objects who belong to their parents but are individual entities with the right to make decisions, however, with their parents' guidance since they are minors. The Convention categorically affirmed that every child has a right to education. The sole purpose of education is to enable every child to develop to their fullest possible potential while learning to respect human rights and elementary freedoms. The guiding

⁴⁸ United Nations, "Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women", 27 October 1995.

⁴⁹ UN General Assembly, "Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 6 October 1999", United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 2131, p. 83.

⁵⁰ African Union, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 11 July 2003.

⁵¹ Food and Agriculture Organization, "Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): Guidelines for reporting on Article 14" [Rome 2005].

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ UNICEF, "What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child?"

principles of the Convention that are relevant to education cover non-discrimination factors, the child's best interests, the child's right to life, survival and development, and the child's right to express specific opinions in accordance with the right to freedom of expression.⁵⁴

In 1989, the United Nations had prioritized the need to promote the "development of technical and vocational education in the safeguarding of peace and understanding among nations" and was part of the core mandate of the United Nations.⁵⁵ The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had significant impact on the right to technical and vocational education as it is functional in providing students the needed knowledge and skills to promote their personal development and growth and also the opportunity for those from developing countries, the opportunity and access to receive technical and vocational training in other countries; providing retraining and reorientation of adults whose present knowledge and skills have become obsolete owing to societal changes; providing programmes that promote the technical and vocational training of young women and girls that have been out-of-school likewise the unemployed youth, out of school youths, the children of migrant workers, refugees, persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups who live in poverty, among many others.⁵⁶

Also, the African Union, during its 1979 Assembly of Heads of State and Government, adopted a resolution highlighting that there was a crisis in Africa with regard to the lack of access to Education in the continent. They further saw the need to draft a continent-wide human rights instrument which is the African Charter, similar to the various international conventions that the United Nations General Assembly had previously drafted, the European Convention on Human Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights, among others.⁵⁷ There was a need to replicate a regional human rights system for Africa. Thus, the African Charter⁵⁸ recognized the need to promote human rights under its provision in Article 25, which provides that the Members States to the present Charter shall have the duty and obligation in accordance to the African Union Charter to promote and ensure the respect of the rights and freedoms contained in the present Charter through

⁵⁴ Thomas Hammarberg, "A School for Children with Rights" [1998] UNICEF [website].

⁵⁵ UNESCO, "Records of the General Conference: Resolution" [2000].

⁵⁶ Plan International, "Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)".

⁵⁷ African Union, "African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights" [website].

⁵⁸ Organization of African Unity (OAU), African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights ("Banjul Charter"), 27 June 1981, CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982).

teaching, education and publication⁵⁹, and to see to it that all understand the freedoms and rights enshrined in the Charter.⁶⁰

Subsequently, the African Union recognized the need to establish different regional frameworks to promote the welfare and rights of Africans. Hence, various Charters were drafted, among which the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child 1990*⁶¹ and the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003)*⁶² were established to provide elaborate and comprehensive rights to the disadvantaged groups especially children and women living in the worst form of poverty.

In 2006, youths, experts and ministers met at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to discuss adopting the African Youth Charter⁶³ as a strategic framework for youth authorization and development activities at the continental, regional and national levels across Africa.⁶⁴ The Charter was to address fundamental issues affecting youth, including employment, education, skills development, youth participation, peace and security and welfare of all youth in the Diaspora, those with disabilities⁶⁵, and conjointly give an avenue for effective youth participation within the development process.⁶⁶

Role of the International System

In line with the provision of quality education as one of the core mandates of UNESCO, the international sphere has worked relentlessly to ensure that there are provisions in place to fight against discrimination in education and furthermore ensure the inclusion of everyone in education. Notable is the Convention against Discrimination in Education (CADE) which was adopted in 1960 by the UNESCO's General Conference to combat the

⁵⁹ Scott Leckie, Anne Gallagher, "Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights: A Legal Resource Guide" [2011].

⁶⁰ African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Adopted 27 June 1981, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982), entered into force 21 October 1986).

⁶¹ Organization of African Unity (OAU), African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 11 July 1990, CAB/LEG/24.9/49 (1990).

⁶² Thoko Kaime, "The Foundations of Rights in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child"; African Journal of Legal Studies, "A Historical and Philosophical Account".

⁶³ African Union, African Youth Charter, 2 July 2006.

⁶⁴ UNFPA East and Southern Africa, "African Youth Charter" [2012].

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

exclusion of anyone on any basis in education and to ensure that no one is denied equal access to opportunities.⁶⁷ This Convention is the first legally binding international document that is solely committed to ensuring that education is a fundamental human right. Every state takes responsibility for ensuring that no one is deprived of such rights.⁶⁸ It equally stresses the importance of education in achieving the remaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the importance of teachers' training in ensuring quality education.

In 2000, *The Dakar Framework for Action Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments* was adopted by the World Education Forum to ensure that the goals to achieve education for all are met sustainably. As the instrumental agency in education, UNESCO serves as the Secretariat responsible for forming collaborations with other agencies. The Framework employs formal and informal techniques, covering primary education and even early childhood education, life-skills programmes such as technical and vocational training, etc.⁶⁹ The Framework also seeks to ensure the inclusion of girls, minorities, disabled, rural people, young people and adults in education and lifelong learning opportunities. It also places focus on Africa and African governments tasked with ensuring the active involvement of stakeholders such as civil society, private sectors, and non-governmental organizations in education.

Inspired by the Dakar Framework, the *Education for All-Fast Track Initiative (FTI)* was launched in 2002 to mobilize civil societies, teaching organizations, private sectors, developing countries, and international organizations to strengthen education systems in developing countries. This is achieved by establishing education strategies, advancing collaboration in education, sharing solutions to problems facing educators, financing the implementation of programs and keeping track of the results and data to measure progress.⁷⁰ Also, the launch of *Education for Rural People (ERP)* in 2002 under the leadership of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations as part of its implementation process for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The ERP program originated from the global consensus on the importance of education in

⁶⁷ United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, "Convention against Discrimination in Education"; UNESCO, "Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960".

⁶⁸ UNESCO, "What you need to know about the Convention against Discrimination in Education".

⁶⁹ World Education Forum, "The Dakar Framework for Action"

⁷⁰ UNESCO, "The Education for All-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI)".

reducing poverty and the concern over the development challenges presented by approximately 880 million⁷¹ illiterate youth and adults and approximately 130 million out-of-school children, many of whom are rural and female. The most important products of ERP to date have been the knowledge generated and disseminated, innovations identified, and tools used to strengthen national capacities to advance ERP in areas such as education quality and access, gender responsive learning environments as well as parent and community engagement.⁷²

In 2011, the EFA-FTI was rebranded to reflect what it does correctly and its name was changed to *Global Partnership for Education (GPE)*.⁷³ It is pertinent to note that GPE is the only global fund exclusively committed to education.⁷⁴ Furthermore, in 2003, the Capacity Development for Education Programme (CapED) was established to serve as the Capacity Development for Education for All (CapEFA) Programme, mainly supporting countries at the national level. The Programme places a significant focus on the least developed countries.⁷⁵

In 2012, the *Global Education First Initiative (GEFI)* was launched by the former United Nations General Secretary, Ban Ki-moon, placing huge priority on ensuring that every child is put in school, improving the quality of learning and fostering global citizenship.⁷⁶ UNESCO equally serves as a Secretariat of this Initiative to ensure universal and quality education, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities now known as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund now the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women known as the UN Women, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, World Bank, Global Partnership for Education, Educate A Child, Education International etc.⁷⁷

⁷¹ David G. Acker, Lavinia Gasperini, "Education for Rural People: What have we learned? [2008].

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Global Partnership for Education, "EFA FTI is now the Global Partnership for Education".

⁷⁴ Devex, "Global Partnership for Education".

⁷⁵ UNESCO, "The CapED Programme".

⁷⁶ Sustainable Development Goals, Partnerships Platform, "Global Education First Initiative".

⁷⁷ UNESCO, "About the Global Education First Initiative".

In 2015, *The Education 2030-Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action* was launched at the Education 2030 High-Level Meeting and the 38th UNESCO General Conference. This Framework was put into place to complete the unfinished work the Education for All (EFA) initiative had set out to achieve, that is, ensuring education for everyone.⁷⁸ This Framework's mission, in which UNESCO plays a huge role, is to bring together different countries, organizations, and international bodies centered on providing quality education. Also, to provide financial support; suggest new viable solutions and strategies for countries and keep track of obligations to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.⁷⁹ The Framework's Progress is monitored, evaluated, and reported by UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR).⁸⁰

Curtailing Illiteracy in Rural Areas

Education, be it formal or informal, is an essential factor responsible for the growth and development of any community. It enhances quality of life as educated people possess the adequate knowledge to make better and well-informed decisions in all spheres of life. While the literacy level may have increased in developed countries, there is still work to be done in the least developed countries. According to UNICEF, the level of youth literacy in countries in West and Central Africa remains below 50 percent compared to developed countries.⁸¹ Many factors are responsible for this alarming disparity, including poverty, lack of knowledge of the importance of education, lack of access to available opportunities and the internet, limited or no educational infrastructures etc.

The lack of education is one of the main reasons people move from rural communities to urban ones. The Center for Immigration Studies records that most immigrants struggle with the basic literacy level⁸² because most people just run to urban communities in want of a better and quality life. The obvious downside of this is the overpopulation resultant in these urban communities and the continued underdevelopment in the rural communities. If education can be prioritized in rural communities, there is no doubt that population in these communities would increase thereby leading to a reduction in the population of urban communities. Education in rural communities would help them make better and informed decisions about their farming systems and implement innovations to

⁷⁸ UNESCO, "Education 2030 Framework for Action to be formally adopted and launched".

⁷⁹ World Education Blog, "Education 2030 Framework: let's get started".

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ UNICEF Data, "Literacy rates around the world".

⁸² Center for Immigration Studies, "Immigrant Literacy: Self-Assessment vs. Reality".

make their lives easier.⁸³ It would equally make people in rural communities more aware and interested in policy and development. When people are given quality education, these people are equipped with the required knowledge to implement better infrastructures and facilities for the improvement of sectors such as transportation, healthcare etc.

The recognition of this birthed the Education for Rural People (ERP) initiative by the UN; the ultimate goals include eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, the achievement of universal primary education etc. The initiative arose because, in 2010, facts showed that four out of five of the at least 61 million out-of-school children and, as a consequence, of about 775 million illiterate youth and adults are rural people.⁸⁴ This initiative seeks to close the rural-urban gap in education by increasing the access to primary education to rural people and enhancing the quality of education provided for rural people.⁸⁵

Increased Access to Education in Rural Areas

For decades, governments have recognized that the rural populace, despite making up a majority of the global population, remains severely disadvantaged when it comes to education. Yet, in several countries, the necessary policies, resources and community support to improve the education system are not in place.⁸⁶ Over half of the world's population is rural, earning small incomes from agriculture and many needing the assistance of their children in sustaining their households. Nearly a billion individuals – a simple fraction of the women – are uneducated, illiterate and unable to access the information that could transform their lives. An estimated 130 million school-age children who do not attend school are mostly present in rural families. Thus, hundreds of millions of rural people cannot access one of the most fundamental human rights – the right to education.⁸⁷

Education has been a crucial factor in ensuring sustainable development in any nation. An education system in rural communities can improve the rural populace's standard of living through knowledge impact and skills acquisition.⁸⁸ Hence, the availability of quality

⁸³ Rural Development Institute, Farheen Sajjad, "The role of education in rural communities".

⁸⁴ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, "Out-of-School Children and Youth"; Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), "Education for Rural People".

⁸⁵ Sustainable Development Goals Partnerships Platform, "Education for Rural People".

⁸⁶ Lavinia Gasperini, "Education for rural people: a crucial factor for sustainable development" FAO [website].

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Farheen Sajjad, "The role of education in rural communities", (2019).

education in rural areas equals rural development. Also, in rural development, education has a vital role to play as it is characterized by economic development, especially in Agriculture, as education is essential for growth and serves as an index for measuring any nation's development progress.⁸⁹

It is essential to note that education is not only a human right; it is also a social necessity irrespective of geographical location. While rural populations have immensely benefited since the declaration of the right to free universal and compulsory education, the tasks remaining demands renewed, stronger and persevering efforts.⁹⁰ Thus, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in collaboration with UNESCO and the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) under the flagship of "Education for Rural People," recognized the need to educate boys and girls as a top priority in ensuring functional literacy among rural groups.⁹¹ However, the lack of access to quality education poses a huge challenge in educating all rural people. This is so because most rural communities are marked with a shortage of qualified teachers, proper infrastructures, lack of basic amenities such as potable water and electricity and the relative non-existence of secondary schools situated in rural areas.⁹² Hence, spending public money on rural education through the provision of a sustainable mechanism such as providing a tuition waiver for disadvantaged rural communities (mountainous and water-logged communities), rehabilitation of existing school infrastructures, introduction of innovative method of teaching (interactive and engaging teaching) with the aim of increasing access to education is an investment that will surely promote and accelerate the economic, social, cultural and political development of a country.

There is no doubt that education plays a vital role in capacity building and creating a more sustainable future. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 provides for the right to education: "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory".⁹³ Many decades later, the gap between illiterates and the educated, particularly in rural areas, seems to be increasing. Education for All means providing access to education at the all levels- elementary, primary, secondary and university levels.

⁸⁹ Life Learners, "The importance of education in Rural Areas".

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Wanga Weluzani Chakanika, Noah K. Sichula, Phyllis Inutú Sumbwa, Mwenya Nduna, "The challenges of rural education in Africa", December 2012.

⁹³ UDHR, Article 26.

In countries like Sierra Leone, Croatia, Liberia, Zambia, Zimbabwe etc, many children are made to drop out while some have never been enrolled into the school system.⁹⁴ This is resultant from severe restrictions such as inaccessibility due to lack of adequate transport means, inability to pay for school fees or buy books or poor payment of teachers. It is even more unfortunate that girls are made to choose house chores over school because parents do not believe it is a wise investment for them to make in their education.⁹⁵ This belief is owed to many discriminatory traditional practices which also force the girl child into early marriages and pregnancies, domestic labour etc.⁹⁶ There is also the issue of poor funding of schools as a result of misappropriation of funds and corruption, leading to an increase in the number of out-of-school children.⁹⁷ Even where these schools are funded to a manageable extent, the teachers are inadequately catered for leading to a rise in teacher absenteeism thereby also leading to poor or no education to children.⁹⁸ In most African countries, the number of schools created are inadequate to cater for the number of children present while some already created schools lack proper infrastructure.

In addressing rural-urban disparities and bridging the gap, certain things need to be put in place by various governments and NGOs in order to corroborate the efforts of UNESCO. Thus, for children to go to school, schools must first be created. The governments of countries affected must create a workable structure that allows for the financing, creation and maintenance of school buildings. The proper infrastructure must be provided in line with the objectives of the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).⁹⁹

The next step is providing a means of getting the children to school. There should be increased access to transport services for both students and teachers and roads leading to schools should be fixed. In Rural Africa, the World Bicycle Relief collaborated with the Ministries of Education in Zambia and Zimbabwe and piloted the supply of over 500,000 bicycles to over 500 schools. These bicycles are uniquely made for African roads and help to increase school attendance. With these bicycles, students ride in groups and parents feel more secure allowing their children, especially the girls, to go to school. This initiative

⁹⁴ Education Policy and Data Center, "Out of School Children: Data Challenges in Measuring Access to Education".

⁹⁵ ReliefWeb, "13 reasons why girls are not in school on International Day of the Girl Child".

⁹⁶ Joyce Banda and Priscilla Atansah, "An Agenda for Harmful Cultural Practices and Girls' Empowerment".

⁹⁷ The Guardian, "Poor funding, one of education sector's greatest problems".

⁹⁸ International Monetary Fund, 2004, "Educating Children in Poor Countries".

⁹⁹ Devex, "UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning".

has been commended for shortening the distance to education. The creation of boarding school systems should also be greatly encouraged. This would reduce the cost of everyday transportation and would assure the parents of their children's whereabouts and safety. Free education should also be embraced. Poverty is one of the most common problems in rural Africa and India. The poor can only have access to education if the government provides free education for those who are financially handicapped.

Access to free books, free libraries and scholarships should also be provided. Innovative teaching methods and internet access are also very important. The right is not only to be taught but to have access to quality education. While the main focus of education is usually placed on school children, it is important that the teachers are also considered. Many countries experience a high rate of teacher absenteeism and therefore have to struggle with getting the teachers to work. This not only affects the students but tends to cost the government more. Learning from Indonesia, a group of specialized personnel can be created in each country to monitor the performance of teachers. The Indonesian KIAT Guru Pilot in 2016 was said to cause a 22% increase in the presence of teachers in school by 2017.¹⁰⁰ The salaries of teachers should also be looked into as most countries do not allocate enough funds into the educational sector. This causes teachers to be paid meagre amounts leading to a demotivation to work. A number of other workable solutions can also be explored.

With increased access to education comes an increase in all sectors, provision in employment and an increase in the productivity and income of the rural labour force. A good education for people in rural areas is not out of reach. Innovative approaches to ensure increased access to education can bridge the gap between the illiterate majority and the educated minority.

Africa and its literacy level: where we are versus where we ought to be

Attaining literacy has been one of Africa's biggest challenges because the continent is one of the largest regions of the world burdened with the highest illiteracy rate. Additionally, the causative factors contributing to illiteracy are most present in Africa, with the highest proportion of children who do not have access to elementary education or leave school early, thereby falling into illiteracy.¹⁰¹ With most of the world's population being rural, the Sub-Saharan Africa region has quite a large proportion of its population living in rural

¹⁰⁰ World Bank, Indonesia, "Improving Teacher Performance and Accountability".

¹⁰¹ Gorgui Sow, "Literacy in Africa: It's in our own hands", [2015].

areas.¹⁰² According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, of all regions with rural populations, Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest education exclusion rates. This is quite alarming because education is a fundamental human right recognized globally and documented in many education policies, even among Sub-Saharan African countries.¹⁰³

The United Nations Declaration Literacy Decade (2003–2012) reaffirms the role of literacy and skills acquisition at the heart of the fundamental human right to education.¹⁰⁴ The human right has a range of key characteristics: it is inseparable from the recognition of human dignity. Therefore, it is universal in its acknowledgment for all people irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, social origin or age.¹⁰⁵ Hence, any education system's ultimate goal would be to equip its children with the necessary literacy and wider skills that they need to take control of their destinies, attain their full potential, and maximize their life opportunities.¹⁰⁶

Literacy is the very foundation of human growth, improving globally. However, Africa is the only continent where more than half of its people living in the continent still do not have access to quality education.¹⁰⁷ Education in Africa has been a significant priority for UNESCO and the UIS. Presently, the UIS has developed an indicator to assist governments, donors and UN partners to better address the challenges around Africa's low literacy rate. For example, the UIS tracks the extent to which schools lack basic amenities, such as access to electricity, potable water and learning materials. It also monitors the classrooms' conditions and the school environment, ranging from textbooks' availability to the average class sizes and the prevalence of multi-grade school rooms. While most African countries face an acute shortage of teachers, the Institute also produces a range of data on their training, recruitment, working conditions and remuneration rate.¹⁰⁸

However, Africa falls behind other continents concerning primary school enrollment rates¹⁰⁹ as the biggest challenge facing the continent is that it has the majority of its

¹⁰² UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, "Education for rural people in Africa" [2006].

¹⁰³ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, "Education in Africa".

¹⁰⁴ DVV International, "Literacy in Africa: It's in our own hands".

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Bridge International Academies, "How Important is Literacy to Education and Development?" 13 November 2018 [website].

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, "Education in Africa".

¹⁰⁹ Global partnership for Education, "Final assessment of MDG impact on education" [2015].

population living in rural areas, which means that provision of quality education for children in a rural school, children with disabilities and those from disadvantaged communities will continue to be a struggle for Africa as rural areas are often deprived of better education services. This is majorly because schools are few and located far from the people, leading to a marked shortage of teachers, learning materials, and other educational resources such as libraries.

Nonetheless, Africa has made positive strides in improving its education system by promoting gender equality and women empowerment¹¹⁰ through the African Union (AU) strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2018-2028)¹¹¹ and the AU Agenda 2063, which aims to reorient Africa's education and training systems to meet the knowledge and competencies required to develop skills, promote innovation and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development in the African continent.¹¹²

It is important to stress that the Africans Education system structure is based on oral communication. The coronavirus pandemic's impact has affected the education system, which reaffirms that Africa is yet to be placed on the level it ought to be in the 21st century as technology in Africa for learning is still very much novel.

Importance of technical and vocational education training

UNESCO and the International Labor Organization (ILO) defines Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) as those "practical aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies, innovations and other related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge¹¹³ relating to occupants and young people in various sectors of economic and social life."¹¹⁴ The TVET is particularly vital for promoting and ensuring economic development, increasing employment size, and improving employment standards by training youths with the necessary skills needed for

¹¹⁰ United Nations Development Programme, "Assessing Progress in Africa toward the Millennium Development Goals" MDG Report [2011].

¹¹¹ African Union, "AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" [website].

¹¹² African Union, "Reorienting Africa's education and training systems for sustainable development" [website].

¹¹³ UNESCO-UNEVOC, "Vocational education and training", [website].

¹¹⁴ Professor DR. AB. Rahim Bakar, "Preparing Malaysian Youths for the World of Work", 14 January 2011.

the market demands.¹¹⁵ Also, TVET is dispensed in public and private educational institutions, or different forms of formal or informal instruction geared towards granting all segments of the society access to life-long learning resources¹¹⁶ while enhancing communication, negotiation and teamwork skills for the labor market.

The TVET's main objective is to train youths and adults alike in preparation for the labor market. With technical revolution and innovations in science and technology, labor market demands have significantly evolved. New challenges have to be met to match the education planned for occupational demands. In this regard, several countries are reforming their education system through policies to train youths and adults with skills to meet national, regional or international market demands.¹¹⁷

UNESCO has developed a Strategy for "TVET (2016-2021)" in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 4-Quality Education and the Education 2030 Framework for Action to strengthen TVET systems of Member States' through advancing youth employment and entrepreneurship skills.¹¹⁸ The strategy focuses on three key areas: fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship, promoting equity and gender equality and facilitating the transition to green economies and sustainable societies.¹¹⁹ The strategy aims at addressing the issues of growing youth unemployment by supporting countries in providing access to quality skills training for youths, bridging the gap of gender inequalities through policy dialogue and programmes on Technical and Vocational Training to ensure all young persons, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups have equal access to learning opportunities and skills development. The strategy also aims to connect TVET to other Sustainable Development Goals areas such as food safety, health, energy, sustainable industrialization, and agriculture as all the SDGs are interrelated.¹²⁰ The importance of TVET in reducing unemployment through increased productivity cannot be overemphasized because at the global level, the UNESCO-UNEVOC network with the cooperation of the Inter-Agency Group (IAG-TVET) and other UN organizations work hand in hand in promoting technical and vocational education and skill learning.

¹¹⁵ Sen Cong, Xiaomei Wang, "A Perspective on Technical and Vocational Education and Training" [2012].

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ UNESCO, "What UNESCO does on TVET" [website].

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

It is also necessary to note that although TVET has one goal, its impact is different in UNESCO member states based on national values and issues. Countries like Saudi Arabia, spend a huge amount of money on education. Yet, this has not guaranteed a reduction in unemployment. The issue is not necessarily a lack of education or empowerment for the youths. It is a case of having many skilled individuals with little to no job opportunities made available to them.¹²¹ Over the years, a number of strategies have been employed to reduce unemployment particularly in countries with a high number of unemployed youths. While developing countries with relatively large economies need skill development to maintain economic growth, countries with very small economies need it to boost their economy. This skill development has been done through public training by the government or ministries as well as organising training programs to empower youths. Youths have also been encouraged to acquire both soft and hard skills. In a bid to prepare students for the labour market, countries like Nigeria, for example, have provided and introduced such students to a wide area of specialised work skills in areas such as agriculture, computer education etc.¹²² This has ensured that the students are somewhat prepared before the giant leap into the labour market right after graduation.

Also, a four segment approach was developed in Bangladesh to develop skills in youths and optimally reduce unemployment throughout the nation. This approach included public training by NGOs and ministries as well as creating learning opportunities for those who have no education. Many countries, developed and developing alike, have also encouraged self employment. It was recorded that countries like Ireland, Spain and Greece and many other countries of the world once suffered around 50 percent unemployment.¹²³ TVET, in promoting self employment has made youths more independent, thus being capable to create a means of livelihood for themselves. Various governments have also supported the youths through empowerment programs, grants, loans and reduced taxes for small business owners. In France, there are vocational centres for those who are interested in being self-employed. These measures have reduced unemployment among youths as well as served as a poverty alleviation scheme in some parts of the world. With reduced unemployment also comes an increased economy.

¹²¹ UNEVOC, "Tackling Youth Unemployment through TVET", Report of the UNESCO-UNEVOC Online Conference.

¹²² Dr. Chijioke Jonathan Okelewe, "Prospects of TVET: Towards Addressing Youth Unemployment in Nigeria".

¹²³ Journal of Training and Development, 'Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Workforce Development', July 2015.

Summarily, TVET holds a high level of importance. Reports show that the global unemployment rate amounted to 5.42% in 2020 as opposed to 5.67% in 2016.¹²⁴ And although unemployment rates differ from country to country, these reports show improvements. technical and vocational training, if further promoted, would ensure a reduction in the level of employment. More youths around the world would be educated as well as provided with a valid means of income.

Girl's education: Ensuring all-inclusiveness in Education

It is no news that the importance of the girl child's education is pivotal for any nation's development. Girl education is instrumental in equipping girls and women with the necessary skills and know-how to exist, function and adapt accordingly in a dynamic world.¹²⁵ Girls' high potential in making a huge change to create a sustainable future for generations remains untapped. Thus, it is pertinent that education is accessible to girls to afford the world this future.

Schools' closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly worsened the disparity in education as 43 million girls were adversely affected and 11 million girls might not return to school after the crisis.¹²⁶ It is however alarming that even before the COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO estimated the presence of over 130 million out-of-school girls.¹²⁷ In 2017, UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimated that globally over 750 million people are illiterate, of which two-thirds are women.¹²⁸ This is majorly owed to the existent gender stereotyping, socio-cultural practices like child marriage and early pregnancy, poverty, gender-based violence, among many others. Furthermore,

It is unfortunate that many rural communities still hold and practice barbaric beliefs harmful to the girl child. The gender stereotyping existing in many areas such as education, career, politics, and in everyday life, that favours the boy child over the girl child puts a stop to the girl child's dreams. This harmful favoritism commences even from the home where parents would scold the girl child for not remaining in the kitchen, leaving the boy child to do whatever he wants. This also prevails where the parents would rather labor hard and send the boy child to school with the belief that the girl child would end up

¹²⁴ Statista, Global Unemployment Rate 2010-2020 (website).

¹²⁵ World Bank, "Girls' Education".

¹²⁶ UNESCO, "Keeping girls in the picture"; Global Partnership for Education, "Education Data Highlights"; Plan International, "Gender Inequality is keeping girls out of school".

¹²⁷ UNESCO, "UIS Fact Sheet No 48"; *Ibid*.

¹²⁸ UNESCO, "UIS Fact Sheet No 45".

in the kitchen in her husband's house after all. It is also sickening that some communities still force their girls to marry at a very young age, rendering all their hopes and ambitions to fruition.¹²⁹ With all of these still in existence, we have quite a long journey to eliminate girls' exclusion in education.

The "Her Education, Our Future" is one of UNESCO's initiatives to upscale the girl's education and secure a better future.¹³⁰ The initiative is instrumental to the 2019-2025 UNESCO Strategy for Gender In and Through Education.¹³¹ It focuses on sorting correct and relevant data to develop better policies, establishing and implementing policies that would ensure the inclusion of girls in education and incorporating better and good formal or informal practices to encourage girls to take up learning opportunities.¹³²

Recent development and challenges

There is no doubt that education offers many long-term benefits. Being the center of building human capital, when appropriately delivered, education can enhance long-term cognitive abilities and performance. When provided early education, disadvantaged children gain the most because early programs can help overcome education barriers posed by poverty, race, ethnicity, gender, and religion.¹³³ Educational attainment is on the rise globally. This is because the proportion of children between ages 15-17, with at least some form of primary or secondary education, has been projected to rise from 60% in 2005 to 71% in 2025.¹³⁴ Tertiary education attainment is equally projected to rise from 10% to 14%. The number of highly educated adults has been projected to rise fastest in Asia and will continue to grow in Sub-Saharan Africa over the next 20 years.¹³⁵

The Global Education Monitoring Report 2016 indicates that compared to the wealthiest children, children from disadvantaged groups are four times more likely to be out of

¹²⁹ Khazar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, "Socio-cultural Constraints of Girls' Access to Education in Mtwara District, Tanzania".

¹³⁰ UNESCO, "Her education, our future: UNESCO fast-tracking girls' and women's education".

¹³¹ UNESCO Digital Library, "From access to empowerment: UNESCO Strategy for Gender In and Through Education 2019-2025".

¹³² UNESCO, "Her education, our future: UNESCO fast-tracking girls' and women's education".

¹³³ George Ingram, Annababette Wils, Ania Chaluda, Benjamin Sylla, HyeJin Kim, Joe Goodfriend, and Sarah Oliver, "Global Educational Trends" [2009 draft].

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

school and five times more likely not to complete elementary education.¹³⁶ While the situation is most acute in the developing world, growing inequalities are also present in many developed countries, compounded mainly by increasing international migration and globalization.

One of the most challenging factors of ensuring equal access to education remains that education is under-financed in most developing countries, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa. This under-financing contributes to the lack of educational resources in rural areas, lack of learning materials for pupils and students in government-owned schools, lack of qualified teachers in government-owned schools etc.

Through the Education 2030 Framework for Action, SDG 4 aims to “ensure inclusive, equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”¹³⁷ by addressing the problem of large gaps in access to education, learning achievement and continuation in education in many settings. Target 4.7 of SDGs 4 on education specifically recognizes the Education Sustainable Development (ESD) and related approaches such as Global Citizenship Education¹³⁸ in attaining quality education for all. The Education Sustainable Development (ESD) and the Global Citizenship Education (GCED) are indispensable parts of quality education.¹³⁹ They work by instilling in learners the right values, attitudes and behaviours that would support responsible global citizenship in terms of creativity, innovation, learning and commitment to peace, human rights and sustainable development.¹⁴⁰

With two of the most significant exclusion factors for education being poverty and rural location, UNESCO has made positive strides in assisting the Member States in reinforcing their education reforms. These reforms include monitoring the literacy levels for youth and adults, increasing the supply of qualified teachers by reforming the teaching profession, and widening the access to Technical and Vocational Skills Education and Training (TVET) for young adults, especially for girls and women.¹⁴¹ The reforms are carried out through its

¹³⁶ UNESCO, Global Monitoring Report 2016, “Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all”.

¹³⁷ UNESCO, “Education and gender equality”.

¹³⁸ UNESCO, “Education for Sustainable Development”.

¹³⁹ UNESCO, “What is Education for Sustainable Development?”.

¹⁴⁰ UNESCO, “Global citizenship education”.

¹⁴¹ UNESCO, “UNESCO Literacy Projects”.

“Capacity Development for Education (CapED)” programme and “UNESCO-Pearson Initiative for Literacy: Improved Livelihoods in a Digital World” project.¹⁴²

Despite all efforts made by governments, civil societies and the international community to bridge the gap of unequal access to education, the world is yet to achieve universal access to education for all. On the positive side, Governments in developing countries have continued to increase their efforts in measuring the learning outcomes. This is done through national and international assessments, the abolition of tuition fees to increase the number of children going to school and using these to ensure that all children receive the promised quality of education.

Conclusion

In reality, there is still a lot of work to be done in bridging the inequality gap in education. The importance of education, especially in rural communities, cannot be overstressed. To ensure global sustainable development, education must be heavily invested in and made accessible to all, including girls. Early childhood education, primary education, secondary education, technical and vocational education, and adult education are prerequisites for developing a better-thinking and confident individual, thereby promoting the world’s growth and development. Thus, to ensure quality education and improve access to education for everyone, UNESCO partners with other international bodies, civil societies, inter-governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, private sectors etc.

Further Research

What are the various factors responsible for the wide inequality gap in education in rural areas compared to urban areas? How can we appropriately utilize technology to increase access to education and opportunities in rural areas? What are the roles of governments, civil societies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other necessary stakeholders in these undeveloped countries to bridge this gap? How can these stakeholders collaborate and form alliances to strengthen rural education? Does the media play a role in increasing access to education in rural areas? What initiatives can be put in place or improved upon to ensure girls’ inclusiveness in education in rural areas? What are the laws and policies that the Member States have adopted in ensuring that rural people have access to education? Are there equal compliance policies to ensure that these laws and policies are being put in place? What steps can be taken to increase education in rural

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

areas in Africa? How can the United Nations come into play to enhance cooperation between the Member States to eradicate rural illiteracy? How can Member States contribute to achieving the 2019-2025 UNESCO Strategy for Gender In and Through Education?

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This report provides key statistics on global efforts made in archiving Education for All through the 2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR). It highlights governments' efforts in most developing countries in increasing access to quality education. This provides delegates information on goals of the Education for All initiative set in 2000, the challenges and the need to achieve SDGs 4.

UNESCO, About the Global Education First Initiative. Retrieved 17 January 2021 from:

<https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/The%20Global%20Education%20First%20Initiative.pdf>

This document focuses on the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) key priorities in placing every child in school, improving the quality of learning and fostering global citizenship through strengthening the global movement on quality education and generating additional funding through sustained advocacy efforts. This document allows delegates to understand the Global Education First Initiative's efforts to ensure increased education access.

UNESCO, Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960. Retrieved 17 January 2021 from:

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This document provides the Articles in the Convention against Discrimination in Education adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its eleventh session. Delegates need to understand the Convention as it

highlights the barriers needed to be overcome to fully realize the right to education.

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Retrieved 17 January 2021 from:

<https://en.unesco.org/news/education-2030-framework-action-be-formally-adopted-and-launched>

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<http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/publication/education-rural-people-africa>

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Education for Rural people, which led to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs 4).

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<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1681Dakar%20Framework%20of%20Action.pdf>

The report shows the collective commitment action made at the meeting in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000 in achieving Education for All (EFA) goals and targets for every citizen and every society. It provides an insight to understanding the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child that all children, young people and adults all have the right to benefit from one of the most fundamental right- the right to education. This right will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know and live together.

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Protection of Cultural Sites and Property in Times of Armed Conflicts

“The destruction of a culture is one element of a global strategy of hatred, and the fight against impunity and respect for the rule of law must be part and parcel in a broader vision for peace.”

Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO.¹⁴³

Introduction

Culture represents the ideas, customs, and social behaviors of a specific people or society and the worth of cultural property, whether archaeological or ethnological, is immeasurable. Such items often constitute the very essence of a society and convey important information concerning individuals' origin and history. The term 'cultural property' as defined within the 1954 Hague Convention¹⁴⁴ means movable or immovable property, whether secular or religious and irrespective of origin or ownership, which is of great importance to the cultural heritage. Examples include buildings and other monuments of historic, artistic or architectural significance; archaeological sites; artworks, antiquities, manuscripts, books, collections of the same; and archives. The term also encompasses buildings for preserving or exhibiting and refuges for sheltering movable cultural property. In line with Article I of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property¹⁴⁵: “Cultural property means property which, on religious or secular grounds, is specifically designated by each State as being of importance for archaeology, prehistory, history, literature, art or science”. Cultural property reflects the community's lifetime, history, and identity. Its preservation helps rebuild a broken community, re-establish its identity, and link its past with its present and future. It contributes to humankind's cultural heritage; that's why it must be protected at all costs. The protection of cultural property during armed conflict relies on the principle that damage to any people's cultural property means, within the words of the 1954 Hague Convention, damage to the cultural heritage of all mankind.

¹⁴³ Irina Bokova, the Director-General of UNESCO at a bilateral working meeting during an official visit to the International Criminal Court to explore ways to deepen cooperation in the fight against impunity.

¹⁴⁴ UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), “Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict”, 14 May 1954, Article 1.

¹⁴⁵ UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property 1970.

Armed conflict and military operations have often destroyed irreplaceable cultural property, a loss not only to the country of origin but also to all people's cultural heritage. Cultural property must be safeguarded during times of armed conflict to stop culture eradication in the long run. According to the World Heritage List (WHL) established through the 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, there are currently 845 cultural sites, 209 natural sites, and 38 mixed sites.¹⁴⁶

UNESCO seeks to ensure the preservation of cultural heritage and diversity; therefore, championing the fight against the destruction of Cultural Sites and Property in Times of Armed Conflicts.

International and Regional Framework

At the 1899 Hague Peace Convention, the *Convention with respect to Laws and Customs of War on Land*¹⁴⁷ was adopted and became the first multilateral treaty adopted under UNESCO.¹⁴⁸ This is one of the earliest documents to establish cultural property protection. Article 56 of the Convention prohibits the destruction or intentional destruction of cultural property thus:

The property of the communes, that of religious, charitable, and educational institutions, and those of arts and science, even when State property, shall be treated as private property. All seizure of and destruction, or intentional damage done to such institutions, to historical monuments, works of art or science, is prohibited, and should be made the subject of proceedings.¹⁴⁹

As a result of the aftermath of the Second World War, the *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (Hague Convention)*¹⁵⁰ was adopted in 1954. Adopted in Hague (Netherlands), the first international treaty was created to focus exclusively on protecting cultural heritage in times of conflict. Two protocols supplement this convention. The First Protocol to the Hague Convention- *the Protocol to the*

¹⁴⁶ Humanitarian Law & Policy, "Cultural Property Protection: A Humanitarian Concern".

¹⁴⁷ International Conferences (The Hague), Hague Convention (IV) Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and Its Annex: Regulations Concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land, 18 October 1907.

¹⁴⁸ UNESCO, "Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict".

¹⁴⁹ UNESCO, "Convention (II) with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its Annex, Article 65".

¹⁵⁰ UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), "Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict", 14 May 1954.

Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954),¹⁵¹ was adopted at the same time as the Convention itself.¹⁵² The First Protocol criminalizes the transfer of cultural heritage and suggests the return of properties to the authorities of the territory from which it was removed during the time of unrest.¹⁵³ The Second Protocol to the Hague Convention was adopted in 1999, creating an additional layer of enforcement to protect cultural property.¹⁵⁴ Under this protocol, clearly defined sanctions were created if serious violations for cultural property are committed.¹⁵⁵

Article 7 of the Hague Convention provides that parties (the government of each country) are to introduce, during peacetime, regulations to their military forces to foster respect and strict adherence to the Convention and respect of cultural property of all people.¹⁵⁶ Parties are also to educate civilians on the need to respect cultural heritage. Article 23 provides for State Parties to request assistance in the form of personnel, financing etc.¹⁵⁷ This is, however, subject to the will of individual states. Also, Article 28 provides that parties to the Convention must take all necessary steps to impose sanctions and prosecute persons who breach the Convention's provisions.¹⁵⁸ However, breaches are not international war crimes and therefore, there is no mechanism under the Convention to bring erring parties to book, especially under international law. Individual states or parties to the conflict must therefore create their sanctions and accountability systems suitable for them.

During the 17th session of UNESCO in 1972, the committee adopted *the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention)*¹⁵⁹ to address the threat that cultural and natural heritage face from both natural and intentional destruction.¹⁶⁰ Article 1 of the Convention highlights that

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² UNESCO, "The Hague Convention".

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ UNESCO, "Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1999)".

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, Article 7.

¹⁵⁷ Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, Article 23.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ UNESCO, "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage", 16 November 1972.

¹⁶⁰ UNESCO, "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage".

monuments, groups of buildings, and sites would be considered cultural heritage while Article 2 identifies natural heritage.¹⁶¹ The 38 Articles of the World Heritage Convention outline the role and responsibility of member states in identifying vulnerable sites and safeguarding them, the structure of its governing body, funding etc. Furthermore, this Convention was created to promote cooperation among nations to protect the heritage of outstanding value worldwide. It was intended that its World Heritage List properties will continue to be conserved.¹⁶²

In 2003, the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*¹⁶³ was adopted. Articles 1 and 2 highlight the purpose of the convention and the definitions of specific terms. The Convention also emphasizes the need to protect intangible cultural heritage as an enabler for sustainable development. In 2015, during the 39th session of UNESCO in Bonn, Germany, the *Bonn Declaration on World Heritage* was adopted by State Parties to the World Heritage Convention.¹⁶⁴ This declaration condemns the looting and destruction of cultural property, whether as a war tactic or as a revenue source for terrorist groups. It further emphasizes the importance of cooperation between member states to ratify cultural conventions and ensure effective implementation.¹⁶⁵ Heritage protection is also recommended to be added to mandates of peacekeeping missions across the world.¹⁶⁶

Also, in 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG)*.¹⁶⁷ This agenda, which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), recognizes culture's role through cultural heritage in achieving sustainable development. UNESCO's Culture Programme contributes to the implementation of SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, mainly SDG target 11.4, which seeks to protect cultural heritage on a global scale specifically.¹⁶⁸ UNESCO is currently working in line with SDG 11 to ensure that the cities of tomorrow are 'inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.' It is believed that through increased public and private expenditure on the maintenance and

¹⁶¹ UNESCO, "The World Heritage Convention".

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ UNESCO, "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage".

¹⁶⁴ World Heritage Convention, "Bonn Declaration on World Heritage".

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ General Assembly, "Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development-A/RES/70/1".

¹⁶⁸ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Sustainable Development Goals 11".

conservation of all types of culture, the international community can protect cultural heritage.¹⁶⁹

There also exists “*The New Urban Agenda*,” adopted on 20 October 2016, at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador.¹⁷⁰ The New Urban Agenda’s implementation emphasizes the importance of cultural heritage during the planning stages of human settlements and sustainable urban development at the local level. This agenda lays further emphasis on SDG 11 on the 2030 Agenda. In line with the New Urban Agenda, UNDP in 2017 welcomed its Strategic Plan 2018-2021 to enable the committee to effectively carry out its plans and ensure the actualization of a new vision for our cities.¹⁷¹

The fight against cultural heritage destruction is a global effort as regional organizations have also made significant contributions to ensure the proper safeguarding of cultural property during conflict. Noting that in recent times, Africa has been regarded as a high-risk area for theft of cultural property in times of Armed Conflict, several treaties, conventions and charters have been adopted or created to ensure the protection of said cultural property.

The African Union Commission in 2006 adopted *the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance* to ensure that member states protect cultural diversity and heritage.¹⁷² This particular Charter replaced *the Cultural Charter for Africa* adopted in 1976 as expressed in Article 1.¹⁷³ Article 3 of this revised charter highlights the objectives and principles of the Charter, which include, but are not limited to, the promotion of the freedom of cultural democracy, preservation of the African heritage, to strengthen the role of culture in promoting peace and good governance.¹⁷⁴ In other words, this Charter emphasizes cultural diversity, unity, and the voices of traditional leaders and elders as keys to successful peace building, particularly in Africa. To fulfil the set objectives, Article 4 suggests that African states adhere to certain principles.¹⁷⁵ These principles border on access to education and

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ General Assembly, “New Urban Agenda”.

¹⁷¹ United Nations Development Programme, “Cities 2030: Implementing the New Urban Agenda”.

¹⁷² African Union, “Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, 2006”.

¹⁷³ UNESCO, “Charter for Cultural Renaissance (2006)”.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

culture, respect for all cultural identities, and the role of science and technology in the lives of the African people.

In May 2017, the Council of Europe adopted *the Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property*¹⁷⁶ which is the only international treaty specifically dealing with the criminalization of illicit trafficking of cultural property.¹⁷⁷ It establishes criminal offences such as “theft, unlawful excavation or acquisition, and the intentional destruction of cultural property” and sets out sanctions for such offences. This Convention seeks to promote national and international cooperation in combating criminal offences in this context.

Role of International Systems

In fulfillment of its mandate to protect cultural property on a global scale, UNESCO has been working with organizations in various sectors and governments of countries to ensure this protection. This emphasizes the need for State Parties to appreciate World Heritage Properties, promote cooperation among nations, and enhance their protection through education and information programmes. The World Heritage Committee (WHC) is the primary body tasked with implementing the World Heritage Convention.¹⁷⁸ It assists the Hague Convention's signatories (i.e., Member States) to conserve their cultural and national heritage within their territory.¹⁷⁹ Member States are encouraged to set up, for instance, security or tourist services at their sites and to undertake technical conservation research to preserve their national heritage. The World Heritage Convention also founded the World Heritage Fund (WHF).¹⁸⁰ The fund is managed through the World Heritage Committee and ensures the effective allocation of financial assistance to member states that need it. The fund also seeks to provide expert personnel to protect cultural property and report activities to the Member States.¹⁸¹ The Convention also establishes the World Heritage List, a list of properties that have outstanding value universally.¹⁸² Only the

¹⁷⁶ UNESCO, “Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict”, 14 May 1954.

¹⁷⁷ Council of Europe, “Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property”, May 2017; Council of Europe, 2018, “Details of Treaty No.221”.

¹⁷⁸ UNESCO, “The World Heritage Committee”.

¹⁷⁹ UNESCO, “The World Heritage Convention”.

¹⁸⁰ UNESCO, “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage”.

¹⁸¹ UNESCO, “The World Heritage Fund”.

¹⁸² UNESCO, “World Heritage List”.

properties of states that are parties to the convention are included in this list. The countries have been divided by the World Heritage Committee into five geographic zones thus: Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Furthermore, the World Heritage Committee prepares and publishes a list of World Heritage sites in Danger, sites threatened by grave and specific dangers like development projects, the outbreak or threat of armed conflict or natural disasters". Consent is sought from State Parties before any "in-danger" listing. If a site is threatened and there is no effective government in place, the Committee may decide on its own to protect such a site at all cost.

UNESCO's means of distributing and assisting the Member States to better protect their cultural heritage through funding. Member states can submit to the committee a request for financial assistance based on some UNESCO criteria. The proposed activity's cost-effectiveness and many other factors are considered before any amount is approved. One of such monetary assistance is the Fund for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. This trust fund was established through the Second Protocol for the Hague Convention in 1999.¹⁸³ The Fund is one of UNESCO's channels for distributing material and technical assistance for the Member States to protect their cultural heritage during conflict. It was established through the Second Protocol for the Hague Convention in 1999. The First Protocol provided a system of protection adapted explicitly to situations in which another State occupies one State's territory. Several conflicts that erupted in the 1990s revealed specific gaps in the Hague Convention's protection and its First Protocol. This led to the drafting of the Second Protocol in 1999, which supplements and reinforces the protection system set out in the Hague Convention by clarifying the concepts of "safeguarding" and "respect", providing for new precautions and instituting a system of enhanced protection for the property of greatest importance for humanity. The Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict 1999 has played quite a huge role in funding cultural property and site protection. Article 5 highlights the preparatory measures taken in time of peace for the safeguarding of cultural property against the foreseeable effects of an armed conflict such as the appropriate preparation of inventories, the planning of emergency measures for protection against fire or structural collapse, the preparation for the removal of movable cultural property or the provision for adequate in-site protection of such property, and the designation of competent authorities responsible for the safeguarding of cultural property.

¹⁸³UNESCO, "Second Protocol (1999) to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict".

In times of war and conflict, certain humanitarian rules must be observed, even with regard to those on the opposing side. These rules are set out mainly in the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977 and 2005. The rules set out in the four Geneva Conventions apply to international armed conflicts, i.e., the use of armed force between two or more States. Only one provision in the Geneva Conventions – Article 3 common to all four Conventions – applies to non-international armed conflicts, i.e., fighting between government armed forces and armed groups (or between armed groups themselves) where the groups possess a certain degree of organization and the violence reaches a certain level of intensity. These conventions adopted on 8 June 1977, Protocols I and II are international treaties that supplement the Geneva Conventions of 1949. They significantly improve the legal protection covering civilians and the wounded and lay down detailed humanitarian rules that apply in civil wars. They were adopted by States to make international humanitarian law more complete and more universal and to adapt it better to modern conflicts. The Geneva Conventions of 1949 afforded significant improvements in victims of conflict's legal protection.

Recent examples of UNESCO's financial assistance to the Member States include \$2,585 to Deutsche Stiftung Welterbe, the German World Heritage Foundation, being monies for the development of a National Action Plan for Risk Management at World Heritage Properties in November 2017. Other funding includes a \$50,000 grant to Libya in 2016 for emergency protective measures to their cultural heritage and a \$40,000 grant to Mali in the same year for enhanced protection for the Tomb of Askia.¹⁸⁴

In 2015, UNESCO created *the Strategy for Reinforcing UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict*.¹⁸⁵ This strategy was created as a result of heightened levels of deliberate attacks on cultural heritage by violent extremists.¹⁸⁶ During a 2015 General Conference, the committee recorded these destructions and attacks as the destruction of culture, likely reducing the population.¹⁸⁷ This strategy was created to respond to these attacks and attempts to

¹⁸⁴ UNESCO, "The Fund for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict".

¹⁸⁵ UNESCO, "Strategy for Reinforcing UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict".

¹⁸⁶ UNESCO, "Reinforcement of UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict".

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

destroy cultural heritage on a global scale. This strategy is a six-year plan outlining the different mechanisms that UNESCO aims to implement to preserve culture. These activities include support to governments in developing institutions and for capacity-building. It also seeks to develop and strengthen partnerships between national authorities and other United Nations entities to successfully implement all relevant conventions and action plans successfully. UNESCO also helps states ratify and effectively implement the Hague Convention and its Protocols. UNESCO supports States Parties and civil societies' governments with capacity-building and awareness-raising programs, including various publications such as manuals, information kits, and brochures. UNESCO also delivers technical and professional assistance to heritage sites in immediate danger.

In response to the deliberate destruction of cultural property in conflict zones, UNESCO created the *#Unite4Heritage* campaign.¹⁸⁸ The campaign leverages on the relationship between youths and social media to protect cultural heritage. In 2015, the Permanent Missions of Italy and Jordan to the UN, UNESCO, INTERPOL, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), launched the initiative "Protecting Cultural Heritage - An Imperative for Humanity."¹⁸⁹ The initiative calls for establishing specialized police units to assist with timely responses to threats to cultural heritage. It also suggests the creation of a database that will be connected to INTERPOL's Stolen Works of Art Database, a global database accessible by all holding records of missing cultural property.¹⁹⁰ An agreement was also signed with the UN Institute for Training and Research Operational Satellite Applications Program (UNOSAT).¹⁹¹ This was created to focus exclusively on geographical mapping technologies and protect heritage. In 2017, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2347 on "Maintenance of International Peace and Security."¹⁹² This resolution created international provisions that criminalize and condemn the unlawful trafficking, damage or destruction of cultural property. The Military Manual on the Protection of Cultural Property serves as a practical guide to the implementation by military forces of the rules governing the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict. It combines a military-focused account of states and individuals' international legal

¹⁸⁸ UNESCO, "#Unite4Heritage".

¹⁸⁹ UNODC, "Global initiative launched to counter the destruction and trafficking of cultural property by terrorist and organized crime groups, 2015".

¹⁹⁰ INTERPOL, "Creating a National Cultural Heritage Unit, 2017".

¹⁹¹ UNITAR, UNESCO and UNITAR-UNOSAT Team Up to Protect Cultural Heritage with the Latest Geo-Spatial Technologies 2015.

¹⁹² UN DPI, "Security Council Members Decry Ruin of Cultural Heritage to Fuel Armed Conflict amid Calls for Greater Cooperation in Holding Profiteers Accountable, 2017".

obligations with suggestions as to best practice at the different levels of command during the conducting of military operations by land, sea or air.¹⁹³ Military forces must pay particular attention and be capable of ensuring the protection of heritage under challenging circumstances. This is the aim of the manual, to outline the practical implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention and its Second Protocol to enable the Member States to cooperate with UNESCO, including in their military directives, guidelines and instructions on the protection of cultural property.

The idea of creating an international movement for protecting heritage emerged after World War I, the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage thus developed from the merging of two separate movements: the first focusing on the preservation of cultural sites and the other dealing with the conservation of nature.¹⁹⁴ The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage is an international agreement that the General Conference of UNESCO adopted in 1972. It is based on the premise that certain places on Earth are of outstanding universal value and should form part of humankind's common heritage. The countries who ratify the Convention (States Parties) have become part of an international community, united in a common mission to identify and safeguard our world's most outstanding natural and cultural heritage. While fully respecting national sovereignty and without prejudice to property rights provided by national legislation, States Parties recognize that the protection of World Heritage is the international community's duty as a whole. The international system is most affected by culture degradation and cultural heritage destruction. In light of UNESCO's mandate to preserve the global cultural heritage, it has been directly involved with other international organizations, governments, and the private sector to combat the illicit trafficking of cultural properties.

With these conventions, UNESCO seeks to remind us of different ways different people interact with nature or culture, defines it and goes further to show the need to strike a balance between the two.

Protection of cultural heritage

The intentional attacks on cultural sites and property during armed conflict are not new. Throughout history, warring parties have targeted cultural property precisely because such sites are essential to humanity globally. They have a huge symbolic value beyond the

¹⁹³ UNESCO, "Manual on the Protection of Cultural Property".

¹⁹⁴ UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "The World Heritage Convention".

immediate and present. Such attacks target an entire history of a people and have a destructive impact. Because of this scale of devastation, intentional attacks against protected cultural sites can constitute a war crime. In accordance with Article 39 of the UN Charter, the “unlawful destruction of cultural heritage, and the looting and smuggling of cultural property in the event of armed conflicts initiates a threat to international peace and security”.¹⁹⁵ The weight of the importance of cultural heritage protection can be deduced from its definition: protection of cultural heritage or protection of cultural goods means all measures to protect cultural property against damage, destruction, theft, embezzlement or other loss.¹⁹⁶ The term “monument protection” is also used for immovable cultural property. Cultural connection is the connection to the past – to individual social values, beliefs, customs and traditions that allows for heritage which is central to protecting our sense of who we are. It gives us an irrefutable responsibility to identify ourselves with others and deepen our sense of unity, belonging and national pride.¹⁹⁷

UNESCO protects the cultural heritage by employing: standard-setting activities (concerning the preparation and implementation of international legal instruments, and acting as Secretariat in that regard); technical and scientific assistance; support for training and capacity-building; policies to combat illicit trafficking and for the return and restitution of cultural property; preservation, safeguarding, rehabilitation and conservation measures (assistance for developing conservation tools and techniques, and museums, stressing the concept of access and the role of museums as places of exchange and education); policies to promote, educate, inform and raise awareness aimed at the general public and professionals.¹⁹⁸

Suppressing the financing of terrorism plays a role in protecting and preserving cultural heritage. The intentional destruction of cultural heritage by groups during armed conflict remains a growing challenge for the international community. This intentional destruction is a means of hindering post-conflict recovery and sustainable development, also part of a wider effort to erase particular cultures and histories. The sponsoring of terrorism in high-risk areas like the Middle East and Africa escalates the rate of destruction of cultural sites and property. The UN Security Council built on the 1970 Convention and recognized

¹⁹⁵ United Nations, Charter of the United Nations, 24 October 1945, 1 UNTS XVI, Article 39.

¹⁹⁶ Catherine Fiankan-Bokonga, “A historic resolution to protect cultural heritage”.

¹⁹⁷ US Embassy in the Philippines, “Cultural Heritage Preservation”.

¹⁹⁸ UNESCO, “What policies is UNESCO employing to protect the cultural heritage?”.

the link between the illicit trafficking of cultural property and the financing of terrorism in Resolution 2199 of 2015 on “Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.”¹⁹⁹ Article 16 of the Resolution recognizes that terrorist entities such as Al Qaida and Daesh generate income to support their recruitment activities and strengthen the effectiveness of their attacks through the looting and smuggling of cultural property from Iraq and Syria;²⁰⁰ also by partaking in the trafficking of cultural property- buying cultural objects with illegally obtained money and legally selling these items later at a high cost. As a result, the Member States and international organizations' protection of cultural heritage becomes imperative to curb a vital revenue stream for terrorist groups. These terrorist organizations rely on money to sustain themselves and carry out terrorist acts. Most of the finances required for acts of terrorism are derived from a wide variety of sources and are equally sponsored.

Endangered Cultural Heritage: Challenges and Remedies

Cultural Heritage is endangered by acts of terrorism and harmful human practices. International Organizations and the Member States of the United Nations are saddled with the duty of responding to reports of danger or destruction. However, these entities' capacities to respond to reports of theft of cultural heritage are weakened because when human life is at risk during times of armed conflict, such other issues as the protection of cultural heritage become of less priority to the law enforcement units.²⁰¹ Another challenge is the absence of specialized units dedicated to responding to threatened cultural heritage reports. Thus, the timeliness of response and assessment of damaged cultural heritage presents a critical challenge for the international community. These challenges range from inadequate laws protecting cultural property, ignorance on behalf of enforcement agents and citizens, absence or lack of adequate funding, low community participation or poor physical planning mechanism. However, these challenges can be solved.

One of such ways is through the Rapid Data Assessment (RDA).²⁰² The international bodies responsible for assessments such as the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), International Council on

¹⁹⁹ UN Security Council, “Security Council resolution 2199 (2015) [on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts by Al-Qaida], 12 February 2015, S/RES/2199 (2015)”.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, Article 16.

²⁰¹ ICCROM, “Protecting Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict, 2012”.

²⁰² Vafadari et al, “Damage Assessment and Monitoring of Cultural Heritage Places in a Disaster and Post-Disaster Event- A Case Study of Syria”.

Monuments and Sites – International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness (ICOMOS-ICORP) or RAM(Rapid Assessment Missions) are often unable to access damaged sites to assess risks and save cultural property.²⁰³ RDA thus serves as a ground for immediate assistance from relevant authorities and ensures that this assistance is delivered in real-time. Another remedy is an investment in technology and technology-based devices, websites or software. Computer systems with the latest software can be provided for the specialized police units. This will help to ensure that a database is created and updated from time to time. Other equipment like a police radio, mobile phones etc., will help with communication. Drones can also be provided to ensure monitoring, whether during peacetime or armed conflicts. Specialized units can also assist with information sharing and frequent education of the public on the dangers of deliberate attacks on cultural heritage.

Furthermore, while creating specialized units, a section should be created to recover properties removed from their place during conflicts. This agency will be saddled with the data-keeping of such properties and ensuring that those items are returned safely after the end of the armed conflict or during a time deemed safe for the transport and return of such items. Governments can assist in creating public policies as well as ensuring the protection of cultural heritage-related crimes. In Argentina, the Department for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, established in 2002, successfully carried out several investigations resulting in the return of stolen cultural artifacts to their owners.²⁰⁴

ICCROM emphasizes improving peacetime documentation mechanisms such as creating electronic repositories for information about cultural heritage as a possible solution for streamlining assessment and recovery efforts during conflict.²⁰⁵ When such a mechanism is already in place during peacetime, it will relieve tensions during the war and cultural property protection would be less difficult. The physical destruction of the Timbuktu Mausoleums was well documented during the Northern Mali conflict of 2012; therefore, less visible damage was inflicted on the intangible cultural heritage being practiced at these sites. If measures are not already put in place during peacetime, there might be a massive loss of properties when conflicts arise. In some countries like Iraq, Yemen and other high-risk war areas, various cultures such as artifacts, handmade materials etc., have

²⁰³ ICCROM; “Disaster Risk Management of Cultural Heritage, Sub-theme of ITC2019”.

²⁰⁴ UNESCO, “The Fight Against the illicit trafficking of cultural objects: The 1970 Convention: Past and Future”.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

largely disappeared and can no longer be safely conducted in their original settings due to war.

Also, improved funding to all agencies responsible for protecting cultural property cannot be overemphasized. Without funding, projects, strategies and initiatives cannot be successfully carried out and completed. If these initiatives are put in place, there should be routine checks, maintenance, repair and replacement if necessary. Governments need to study the past to understand the present and create a desirable future. Studies should be carried out from time to time to analyze past armed conflicts to develop more effective ways to preserve cultural heritage in the event of future conflicts.

The Hague Convention 1954: Effectiveness Then and Relevance Now

The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, also known as the “1954 Hague Convention”, is an international treaty adopted on May 14, 1954, in The Hague, Netherlands.²⁰⁶ This convention is the first international treaty explicitly created to protect cultural property against destruction or damage and theft, looting, or other forms of unlawful seizure and military use during periods of armed conflict. Signatories to this convention have sought to ensure that all forms of culture are provided with safeguarding measures. It was created in the wake of the numerous destructive attacks on cultural property during the Second World War. The convention is supplemented in two protocols adopted on May 14, 1954 and March 26, 1999 respectively.

The First Protocol contains 15 paragraphs and protects the movable property in its occupied territory, prohibiting the unlawful removal or transfer of cultural property and manages such property's return. On the other hand, the Second Protocol provides concrete safeguarding measures to be taken when war crimes are committed. It also expressly defines the sanctions to violations committed. It is important to note that the Second Protocol does not replace the 1954 Hague Convention; it merely supplements it. While Article 28 of the 1954 Hague Convention establishes that States Parties “must undertake all necessary steps to prosecute and impose penal or disciplinary sanctions upon those persons”, the Second Protocol specifies the scope of these sanctions²⁰⁷

Cultural property threatened by armed conflicts may result from intentional targeting as a means of ‘cultural cleansing’ or destruction by warring parties. This damage could have

²⁰⁶UNESCO, “Convention Concerning the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict”.

²⁰⁷ Hague Convention, Article 28.

been avoided if safeguarding measures are put in place during peacetime. Cultural property reflects the identity of the community. Its preservation, particularly during peacetime, helps rebuild, re-establish and reform individual and community identity. Thus, the loss of or damage to such property impoverishes humankind. The ratification of the 1954 Convention and its Second Protocol by State Parties sends a clear message to perpetrators that States understand, respect the importance of cultural property and abide by the framework these standard-setting instruments create.²⁰⁸

The Convention provides a legal framework aimed at protecting cultural property both in times of peace and in the event of armed conflict. It is however not enough to create sanctions. These sanctions need to be implemented so that erring parties are punished without prejudice thus establishing a legal framework which protects cultural property, during peacetime as well as in the event of armed conflict. The ratification and effective implementation of the Convention will have a deterrent effect on perpetrators of war crimes and will eventually reduce impunity. Until today, the Convention serves as a regulatory framework for protecting cultural property and the sanctions for violations thereof.

The Hague Convention 1954 is preceded by the Hague Conventions of 1899²⁰⁹ and 1907²¹⁰. The clear intention of the 1954 Convention was to ensure that the destruction of cultural heritage during war would not occur. Despite these intentions, the subsequent years have seen more destruction. Around the year 1950, The Nazi Party headed by Adolf Hitler rose to power in Germany and confiscated and destroyed many objects and artefacts of the Western Europeans. Similarly in the 1990s, the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia²¹¹ led to a total review of the Hague Convention. This resulted in the 1999 protocol.²¹² The Second Protocol focused on measures to be carried out in peacetime rather than deflect till times of conflict. The second protocol provided for the safeguarding, respect, occupation and special protection of cultural property in Articles 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9 respectively.²¹³ During peacetime, State Parties are to prepare for the safekeeping of cultural property, establish

²⁰⁸ UNESCO, "Convention Concerning the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, Second Protocol".

²⁰⁹ Convention Respecting The Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague, II).

²¹⁰ Convention Respecting The Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague, IV).

²¹¹ International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, "The Conflicts".

²¹² UNESCO, "Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict 1999".

²¹³ Second Protocol to the Hague Convention, Articles 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9.

specialised personnel within the armed forces and consider the use of the Blue Shield. The symbol of the Blue Shield is the international equivalent of the Red Cross to mark cultural property to be protected. The International Committee of the Blue Shield, now referred to as Blue Shield International,²¹⁴ is the body charged with the responsibility of strengthening international cooperation to protect cultural property. Article 27 of the Second Protocol recognizes the creation and duty of the body.²¹⁵ During armed conflicts, State Parties are advised to respect cultural property within and outside their territory, protect such territory as far as possible, and take all necessary steps to ensure the protection of cultural property. The convention also provides measures to be taken after hostilities have ended. It prohibits the retention of cultural properties as war reparations and promotes the return of such cultural properties acquired during armed conflicts.

It has been nearly 21 years since the ratification of the Second Protocol on 26th March 1999. However, the destruction or theft of cultural property is still being recorded till today. New threats have been witnessed in the 21st century with the looting, damage and destruction of ancient monuments, museums, buildings and historic sites. In 2003, deliberate attacks on the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad was reported with about 15,000 objects taken from the archives.²¹⁶ More recently, the ancient World Heritage sites of Palmyra in Syria²¹⁷ and Nimrud in Iraq²¹⁸ gained the attention of the world media in 2016. Is it then safe to say that all gaps have been filled? While it is clear that the Hague Convention, alongside its Protocols, was drafted with the protection of cultural property in mind, it is clear that some obstacles still remain. There is still a lack of knowledge of the convention particularly within the armed forces. The military forces in countries like Iraq, Mali, Syria and Yemen have little to no knowledge of the convention and its protocols or the blue shield emblem. Therefore, it is important to educate them about the convention and the protection the blue shield offers, its application and for adequate assistance be provided for members of the armed forces. As of June 2018, only about 131 states and 77 states are parties to the first and second protocol respectively.²¹⁹ It is important that the ratification of the Second Protocol is encouraged. Additionally, it is important that there are channels of communication made available to armed groups while protecting the cultural heritage in their territory. The efforts to protect cultural property would be frustrated if there are no

²¹⁴ UNESCO, Blue Shield International, "Protecting Cultural Heritage".

²¹⁵ Second Protocol to the Hague Convention, Article 27.

²¹⁶ UNESCO, "Iraqi Museums and Conflict".

²¹⁷ UNESCO World Heritage Site, "Site of Palmyra".

²¹⁸ UNESCO World Heritage Site, Iraq "Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List".

²¹⁹ UNESCO, "State Parties".

effective communication mediums. Frequent training should also be given to members of the armed forces so that they can perform their duties more effectively. In view of this, UNESCO in 2016 collaborated with the Sanremo International Institute of Humanitarian Law and published a manual titled 'Protection of Cultural Property: Military Manual'.²²⁰ This manual provides a practical framework for the protection of cultural property, explaining the rules contained in the Second Protocol as well as how those rules are to be interpreted by military forces around the world. However, UNESCO cannot achieve this alone. Thus, the role of organizations such as NGOs is key in this regard and should be supported.

Education as a tool in Preserving Cultural Heritage

UNESCO serves as the United Nations lead on Quality Education-SDG 4, which focuses on making quality education available to all; its education policies are somewhat based on its mandate. Education plays a role in strengthening messages within the society about the negative impacts of violence. It is a means of educating people about other non-violent ways of responding to conflict. In situations where peace processes are underway, education may also contribute to social transformation-through reforms to the education system itself and educating people about new arrangements for political representation, justice and policing.²²¹ Education is the fundamental tool that makes institutional change possible by educating personnel in those important positions or those who will shape future institutions. It is the most powerful tool we can use to develop the economic and social skills necessary to generate sustainable livelihoods for successive generations, thereby reducing the rate of conflict or terrorism. The education sector is one of the most paramount development interventions supported by governments to strengthen peace building efforts during post conflict recovery and address long-term human development needs in underdeveloped states. Education of the masses ensures that adequate information about cultural heritage preservation is spread. The 2010 UNESCO report on the Hidden Crisis²²² points to the significant negative impact of conflict on the population's proportion with formal education, the average years of education attained, and the literacy rate.²²³

²²⁰ UNESCO, "Protection of Cultural Property: Military Manual"

²²¹ Alan Smith, "The influence of education on conflict and peace building, 2010".

²²² UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education, March 2011.

²²³ UNESCO, "Educate a child; armed conflict".

Providing access to quality education is an effort to address issues to do with marginalization, inequality, unemployment, etc. It focuses on populations with a higher probability of being attracted to violence. Our cultural sites and property can be better protected through formal and informal education. The first step is ensuring quality education, which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, is attained.²²⁴ It is important to note that the youth are fragile to radicalization and terrorist influence; therefore, education must be concentrated in their sector of society. Social media is an essential tool of education due to the pandemic, which allows no room for the masses' full educational implementation. Therefore, cultural heritage preservation and protection have to be passed as a message through social media.

UNESCO's World Heritage Education Programme, initiated as a unique project in 1994, gives young people a chance to voice their concerns and become involved in protecting our shared cultural and natural heritage.²²⁵ It also promotes awareness among young people of the importance of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972) and a better understanding of the interdependence of cultures amongst young people.

Case Study

For decades, protection of cultural property in times of armed conflict as well as natural disasters has been a recurring topic. Though Cultural heritage may be also threatened during peacetime, severe damage often occurs during times of conflict.

In Yemen, there has been a war ongoing for years. In 2014, there was a power struggle in Northern Yemen between the Houthi Movement and President AbduRabbu Mansour Hadi.²²⁶ The Houthi aligned with Former President Ali Abdullah Salem and his loyalist forces. Hadi was eventually compelled to flee the country. He sought refuge in Saudi Arabia and appealed for assistance to regain control in Yemen. In March 2015, this internal power struggle became an international conflict.²²⁷ There occurred a bombing campaign

²²⁴ UN Nations "Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

²²⁵ UNESCO, "Intangible cultural heritage: safeguarding intangible cultural heritage".

²²⁶ Benjamin Passey, "The Destruction of Cultural Heritage in the Yemen Conflict: Legal Implications and State Responsibility" (2018) BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY PRELAW REVIEW.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

by Saudi Arabia against Northern Yemen and this long siege has left the country in ruins, especially places of cultural importance to the people of Yemen.

Yemen's cultural heritage is as unique as it is universal, and those who value it most are Yemenis themselves. It is the fingerprint of hundreds of thousands of years of human history and resilience²²⁸. Yemen is a beautiful country of deserts, valleys, coastal landscapes, and spectacular mountains. These landscapes together with villages and cities built of mud and stone that are a testament to some of the most diverse and exceptional vernacular architecture in the world, recognized as such by UNESCO²²⁹. Yemen is rich in culture, media, sport, theatre, language and even World Heritage Sites. Yemen is home to the Old Walled City of Shibam in Wadi Hadhramaut, inscribed by UNESCO in 1982, the Old City of Sana'a and the latest addition to the WHS, the Socotra Archipelago. The resultant effect of war is that cultural property becomes less valuable or lost, mainly because, during the war, there is deliberate damage to cultural heritage.

Since March 2015, there have been counts of damaged or destroyed archaeological sites, museums, mosques and churches, tombs, monuments, old cities, and UNESCO World Heritage Sites according to the official Yemeni list. Fifty-nine of these sites have been damaged or destroyed by Saudi coalition bombs and Two sites have been damaged by opposition forces. The remaining sites were damaged by explosives detonated by al-Qa'ida. Three of these damaged sites include the historic cities of Sanaa, Zabid, and Shibam.²³⁰

The 2003 UNESCO Declaration's preamble expresses that:

Cultural heritage is an important component of the cultural identity of communities, groups and individuals, and of social cohesion, so that its intentional destruction may have adverse consequences on human dignity and human rights.²³¹

Many other Conventions also highlight the dangers of cultural theft, emphasizing the need to protect cultural property. But what do we do when this cultural warfare is often justified even in various international treaties because it was due to the prevention of enemy use or part of indiscriminate firing at entire areas?

²²⁸ Cambridge University Press, "The Destruction of Yemen and Its Cultural Heritage".

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ The Globe Post, "Yemen War Erodes the Country's Architectural Heritage".

²³¹ UNESCO, "Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage".

Laws governing the preservation and protection of cultural heritage, especially during war, have existed for centuries. Article 17 of the 1874 Brussels Declaration stipulates that if a defended town, fortress or village is bombarded, all necessary steps must be taken to spare, as far as possible, buildings dedicated to worship, art and science.²³² Similarly, the 1907 Hague Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land established the principle of immunity for cultural objects, even in the event of armed conflict.²³³ The Hague Convention 1954 further establishes the protection of cultural property and its Second Protocol goes further to provide defined sanctions for violations.²³⁴ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,²³⁵ the New Urban Agenda, the Council of Europe Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property and a plethora of other Laws, conventions and resolutions similarly support this cause. Despite international bodies and countries' involvement, this war has not ceased to exist. This suggests an underlying question: whether these laws have been sufficient. While these provisions were established to protect cultural property in the event of armed conflict, they have failed to perform the duty they created correctly.

The absolute need for cultural property protection cannot be overemphasized. In light of these occurrences, the United Nations, some countries, and organizations have made several contributions to ensure that Yemen's crisis is curtailed. On 21 October 2011, the United Nations Security Council expressed grave concern for Yemen's ongoing unrest and adopted 'United Nations Security Council Resolution 2014'.²³⁶ Fifteen State Parties voted for the adoption of this resolution and none voted against it. Resolution 2216 was adopted on 14 April 2015, demanding the Houthis to withdraw from and relinquish all seized arms and areas.²³⁷ Also, on 24 March 2017, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2347 to protect cultural heritage.²³⁸ In September 2017, the United Nations passed a resolution establishing an inquiry into Yemen's human rights violations. Another contribution was that of the United States by providing intelligence and material support to Yemen's people.

²³² Treaties, States parties, and Commentaries - Brussels Declaration, 1874 - Article 17.

²³³ UNESCO, "1907 Hague Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land".

²³⁴ UNESCO, "Convention Concerning the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (Hague Convention) 1954.

²³⁵ UNESCO, "UNESCO and the Sustainable Development Goals".

²³⁶ UN, "United Nations Security Council Resolution 2014", S/RES/2014(2011), 21 October 2011.

²³⁷ UNSCR 2216, S/RES/221(2015).

²³⁸ UNESCO, "UNESCO Digital Library, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2347, (S/RES/2347 24 March 2017".

Being plagued with a global pandemic as the COVID 19 has also caused more harm. With a crisis that has already set back Yemen's development by 20 years, the Coronavirus pandemic poses more threats to the economic, cultural, food and social sector in Yemen.²³⁹ This means that if other countries face an additional 10% of problems due to the virus, Yemen is more likely to face about 30-50%. Without food or assured security and the ongoing war and health crisis, culture professionals in Yemen cannot have a practical means of livelihood. However, UNESCO launched a social media movement and debate on 15 April 2020 to call attention to the impact of COVID-19 on the cultural sector. The movement, ResiliArt Yemen, under the EU-funded Cash for Work Project, featured interventions from national policymakers, including the Director-General of UNESCO.²⁴⁰ This initiative, targeted at young individuals, was held on 18 May 2020 via an open online Zoom webinar with well-versed panelists.

It is a fact that there have been many calls for help concerning the issue in Yemen. However, the improvement the people of Yemen hoped to see is far from being reached.²⁴¹ In the heart of war and the ongoing humanitarian crisis, organisations, international bodies and the government of Yemen continue to make efforts to revive their cultural property which has been destroyed. Since 2018, the World Monument Fund has highlighted 25 sites under destruction.²⁴² The city of Ta'izz seems to have suffered the most damage. Other cultural property being destroyed include monuments, mausoleums and even cities, including the Qubbat al-Husayniyah, Imam Palace and Al-Badr Palace, Ta'izz Museum Complex, Hammam al-Mudhaffar etc. The World Monument Fund believes that preservation of cultural heritage is a powerful tool capable of bringing people together after periods of armed conflict.²⁴³

In light of this, the organisation has partnered with various organisations including the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums (GOAM) in Ta'izz, Yemen, to help preserve and restore cultural property which may have been destroyed. International attention was brought to the situation in Yemen, walls, foundations, and damaged stones in the mausoleums restored and resources as well as guidelines have been put in place to

²³⁹ UNESCO, "Building Resilience of Yemeni Cultural Operators in COVID-19 Context" 8 June 2020.

²⁴⁰ UNESCO, "ResiliArt".

²⁴¹ Mohammed Yahya Gahlan, "Many calls but little action to stop cultural destruction in Yemen" [website].

²⁴² World Monument Fund, "In the Heart of War- Torn Yemen, Cultural Heritage Revived".

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

better protect the cultural heritage in Yemen. WMF is set to launch a new project in July 2021 to restore the lost connection between the people of Yemen and their cultural heritage.²⁴⁴

Recent Developments and Challenges

Culture is the foundation of well-being. No development is sustainable without considering culture as culture involves people. To respond to the urgent need for the conservation and protection of cultural property, UNESCO has developed, supported and enforced various initiatives, conventions and laws.

On 1 September 2015, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) published photos showing certain individuals, identified as the ISIS Jihadists, had destroyed the Temple of Bel in Palmyra.²⁴⁵ This meant that the World Heritage Site in Syria had ceased to exist. In February 2016, Italy signed an agreement with UNESCO to create the “World’s first emergency task force for culture. This task force was proposed to be composed of civilian experts and the Italian carabinieri (personnel at the national level who carry out policing duties).

Since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and inclusion of cultural heritage in 2015, UNESCO has worked to date to ensure culture’s contribution to sustainable urban development.²⁴⁶ The 2030 Agenda recognizes culture’s role through cultural heritage in achieving sustainable development. In that light, UNESCO’s Culture Programme contributes to the implementation of SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities particularly, target 11.4, which aims to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage. UNESCO is working in line with SDG 11 to ensure that the cities of tomorrow are “inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.” For this, UNESCO’s Institute of Statistics will contribute to the development of indicators.

In October 2019, UNESCO, Beirut organized its regional workshop on the “1954 The Hague Convention on The Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict” addressed to female military personnel through a field visit to the World Heritage Site of Tyre, Lebanon.²⁴⁷ This workshop is organized to allow female military personnel in Lebanon,

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ UNESCO, “A historic resolution to protect cultural heritage”.

²⁴⁶ UNESCO, “What are the Millennium Development Goals?”.

²⁴⁷ UNESCO, “Female military personnel conclude their third day of training on “Protecting Cultural Property” at the World Heritage Site of Tyre”.

Iraq, and Jordan to gain hands-on experience in protecting cultural property in emergencies. A Protection and Enhancement Plan was prepared for the site to ensure maximum protection is given to areas surrounding the World Heritage Site of Tyre.

Additionally, in 2020, UNESCO granted international assistance through the Fund for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Event of Armed Conflict. This fund was to implement preparatory measures for protecting cultural heritage in Latin American countries. By this, Barbados received financial support to conserve its slavery records. This fund was also used to train its Department of Archives staff. Similarly, Mexico received financial assistance to develop a functional and feasible Risk Management Plan for the National Museum of Anthropology of Mexico.

On 14 May 2020, an online meeting was conducted by UNESCO. This was in line with the 66th anniversary of the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. At this meeting, various cultural property threats were discussed, particularly in the COVID-19 era. Preventive measures and strategies to increase support in high-risk areas were discussed. On 30 June 2020, Ukraine acceded to the 1999 Second Protocol to the Hague Convention.²⁴⁸ By virtue of Article 44, the 1999 Second Protocol will enter into force immediately for Ukraine. This represents a step in the right direction for protecting cultural heritage in Ukraine. By virtue of this signature, Ukraine is entitled to financial and technical support in response to cultural heritage-related issues from the 1999 Second Protocol Intergovernmental Committee.

In December 2020, the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, also known as the 1999 Second Protocol Intergovernmental Committee, held its 15th meeting. At this meeting, State Parties discussed, among other things, ways to monitor and reinforce the protection of cultural property. In another of its sessions, the Committee adopted a Declaration to protect cultural property in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan. In conformity with Article 23 of the 1954 Hague Convention, the Declaration encourages UNESCO's initiative to carry out an independent technical mission as soon as possible. Emergencies relating to the theft of cultural property, safeguarding measures and sanctions for countries involved in armed conflicts were also discussed.

²⁴⁸ UNESCO, "Ukraine accedes to the 1999 Second Protocol to the Hague Convention, strengthening the protection of its cultural heritage".

In a January 2021 meeting, UNESCO and Zanzibar agreed to cooperate in the rehabilitation of Stone Town of Zanzibar World Heritage Property.²⁴⁹ This was in response to the Beit-al-Ajaib historic building's collapse, also known as the House of Wonders, in the Stone Town of Zanzibar World Heritage property on 25 December 2020. UNESCO continues to partner with the government of Zanzibar and other relevant bodies to ensure the restoration of the House of Wonders, as it is often referred to, and the protection of the Stone Town of Zanzibar.

Culture and Cultural Heritage are essential. It is not just monuments. It is years of education, living, creating historic pieces and telling unique stories. Culture must be harnessed for societies' well-being, especially for post-COVID recovery strategies at all levels. Despite the creation and implementation of various laws and conventions and the existence of various organizations and bodies, the problem of looted cultural heritage has not entirely been solved. Only a few governments have enacted the Hague Convention's safeguarding provisions since 1954 to proactively prepare for armed conflict during peacetime. This is because many countries find it unthinkable that they will be attacked on national soil and therefore would not spend resources on protective measures in the event of cultural or natural disasters. Another challenge is the lack of military awareness. Only a few countries have created their specialized personnel or conducted training as the Convention mandates. These challenges are all set against a background of increasing threat to cultural property, particularly in high-risk areas.

In January, heightened political tensions between the United States and Iran threw a spotlight on the issue of intentional destruction of cultural heritage and what such a loss would mean for the Iranian people.²⁵⁰ Luckily, the International Humanitarian law was respected. It is evident that deliberate attacks on cultural property by warring parties are very existent today. UNESCO plans to expand its operational activities to enhance the capacity of never states to better protect their cultural heritage and diversity, as assets for development and peace.

UNESCO has increased efforts to reduce cultural property vulnerability before, during and after periods of armed conflicts. This and many measures have been put in place to ensure cultural heritage preservation and protection for generations to inherit. Thus, in years to

²⁴⁹ World Heritage Convention, "UNESCO and Zanzibar to cooperate in rehabilitation of Stone Town of Zanzibar World Heritage property".

²⁵⁰ Council in Foreign Relations, "US- Iran Relations".

come, member States will be able to prevent, mitigate and recover the loss of cultural heritage in times of armed conflicts.

Conclusion

Cultural heritage is a continual phenomenon; thus, it must be protected at all costs because of its importance for generations to come. Cultural sites and property continue to be targeted during armed conflict as a means of weakening a community's culture, sense of belonging and erasing their collective identities. UNESCO remains at the forefront of global efforts to prevent, preserve and respond to the destruction of cultural sites and property around the world.

Further Research

Does sponsoring terrorism indirectly lead to the destruction of cultural sites and property? How can governments work together to reduce cultural property destruction or trafficking during armed conflict? Does cultural heritage still have the same value after being recovered? Can NGOs and individuals work together for this cause? How can partnerships between UNESCO and other relevant bodies be strengthened, and which new ones could be established? What are existing limitations within the frameworks that call for protecting cultural heritage? What are effective plans of action to overcome those limitations? How can partnerships between UNESCO and other relevant authorities be further developed, and which new ones could be established? How can the Member States effectively implement the Hague convention and other fundamental conventions to protect cultural sites and properties?

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<https://www.icrc.org/en/download/file/1040/advice-protection-cultural-property-armed-conflict.pdf>

This document gives a detailed overview of Cultural Property, its protection during and after hostilities as a result of war. It also provides various timelines to the creation and ratification of international instruments that protect cultural property. It further explains the importance of the ratification of certain treaties and international provisions, giving the delegate much needed information about the Protection of Cultural Property.

UN, 'Envision 2030 Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities' [Website] Retrieved 25 December 2020 from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030-goal11.html>

The sustainable development goals are 17 goals designed to help achieve a more sustainable future. This website will provide delegates with relevant information on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 11 which is our main focus for the purpose of this committee. This Goal is a blueprint to ensure that cities are safe and sustainable. This resource also contains other relevant resources which delegates can use to conduct further research to understand the scope of the importance of the 2030 Agenda.

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This document contains sections of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, its 159 Articles and two annexes, Annex I and Annex II. Delegates can make reference to the convention to understand its provisions. Delegates will have more knowledge about cultural property in the Geneva Convention, as well as several other provisions, comparing the similarities, differences and improvements in the various instruments created to protect cultural property.

UNESCO, Protection of Cultural Property, Military Manual. Retrieved 4 June 2021 from: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/pdf/MilitaryManuel-En.pdf>

This document is on the duty and importance of military interference in the protection of cultural property. It provides delegates with insight on various international sources of law, including the Hague Convention, places much emphasis on cultural property protection as well as provides preparatory measures for future armed conflicts.

UNESCO, 'The Penal Protection of Cultural Property (2017)' Retrieved 24 December 2020 from: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/pdf/Penal-Protection-Cultural-Property-En_01.pdf

This document provides an overview of the 1954 Hague Convention and its 1999 Second Protocol, particularly highlighting the fight against impunity. With this document, delegates will have a clear insight into the relevance of the convention, implementation in different legal traditions, as well as the stance of international bodies and tribunals on this issue.

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This document is about UNESCO's plans to ensure that young people are informed about World Heritage sites as well as the importance of culture and diversity. This brochure provides delegates with insights on what the World Heritage Education Program entails. It captures the objectives of the program, its skill development and training courses, youth forums and volunteer opportunities. Delegates will be exposed to the UNESCO Associated Schools Project and Work as well as the World Heritage in Young Hands Kit, two initiatives that focus on youth enlightenment about world heritage.

UNESCO, 'World Heritage in Danger, Compendium II' ICOMOS [Website] Retrieved 24 December 2020 from:

<https://whc.unesco.org/document/106357>

This document exposes the delegates to the threats to World Heritage Properties, including statistics and timelines. The World Heritage Convention was created for the protection of cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value. This document will give the delegates insight into the tools foreseen by The 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage as well as the scope of the idea "In-Danger Listing".

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