

Re|Shaping Cultural Policies for the Promotion of Fundamental Freedoms and the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

Presentation of Palestine's Quadrennial Periodic Report on the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

With the support of the UNESCO Ramallah Office, the Ministry of Culture (MoC) organized on 30 June 2020 a presentation on the first draft of the Quadrennial Periodic Report (QPR) on the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, to be submitted by Palestine to UNESCO on 15 July 2020. The event comes in the framework of the *"Reshaping Cultural Policies for the Promotion of Fundamental Freedoms and Diversity of Cultural Expression"* project, implemented by UNESCO with the financial support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), to which the State of Palestine was chosen as a beneficiary country in addition to 15 others.

The event, which was held virtually due to safety measures linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, brought together over 40 culture practitioners, artists and decision makers from different fields, representing the public and private sectors, to discuss the outcomes of the first draft of the QPR.

During his opening remarks, the Minister of Culture, H.E. Dr. Atef Abu Saif, thanked the UNESCO Ramallah Office and the project coordinator for the continuous support during the drafting of the report. Dr Abu Saif stressed the importance of the participatory process of dialogue amongst the different stakeholders and key actors in the cultural field, in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and in Jerusalem. He further emphasized the significance of highlighting the cultural practices in the different domains, saying that such practices are the true witness of the Palestinian cultural identity that needs to be enhanced and preserved for future generations. Dr Abu Saif also pointed to the immense importance of improving data and statistics collection mechanisms for the culture sector in Palestine, and reassured all stakeholders that their feedback and comments were important and needed to consolidate the final version of the QPR.

Ms Noha Bawazir, UNESCO Representative to Palestine and Head of the Ramallah Office, welcomed the attendees, thanked H.E Dr Atef Abu Saif for his steady commitment in the process, as well as the MoC staff and project coordinator for the dedication in putting the draft together, and commended MoC's efforts into owning and leading the process. Ms Bawazir expressed UNESCO's satisfaction with the outcome of this participatory process and her deep appreciation for the efforts invested during the past few months for the proper drafting and finalization of the QPR. She further emphasized that the involvement and contribution of all different stakeholders, public and private, is key to presenting the current status of implementation of this important Convention, ensuring that the QPR will be used as a baseline to inform future actions needed to promote and protect the rich diversity of cultural expressions in Palestine.

Ms Bawazir emphasized that UNESCO will continue supporting and enhancing the capacities of line Ministries and institutions in this domain, and expressed UNESCO's strong commitment in continuing supporting Palestine in the effective implementation of all the ratified culture conventions.

The meeting was facilitated by Ms Manar Natour, Director General of Cultural Cooperation and Aid Management and focal point for the 2005 Convention at MoC, and included a through presentation by her colleague from MoC, Mr Khalid Mansour, on the content of the draft report. Mr Mansour presented the work methodology, the executive summary of the report and ran a review of the projects listed as good and innovative practices implemented both by the public sector and by Palestinian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). He also presented the main results achieved in implementing the 2005 Convention and described the main challenges encountered, along with proposed solutions envisioned to overcome them.

After the presentation, the participants engaged in a discussion on the report highlighting the importance to address women's participation in the sector, to institutionalize dialogue between MoC and cultural CSOs, and to propose concrete action plans to further advance in the effective implementation of the 2005 Convention in Palestine.

It is important to mention that in the framework of this project, UNESCO already provided the State of Palestine the opportunity to organize multi-stakeholder consultation meetings that included governmental and civil society actors; delivered training on data collection and analysis; and supported inter-ministerial cooperation. On the other hand, the project shall allow facilitating public debates on emerging topics such as digital culture, gender equality in culture, media diversity and artistic freedom. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was difficult to organize the debates in the past few months which are therefore foreseen to be conducted during the month of August 2020.

For more information on this project, please contact Mr Giovanni Scepi, Culture Specialist at the UNESCO Ramallah Office, at " g.scepi@unesco.org or Ms. Salaam Bannoura at: s.bannoura@unesco.org

For more information on UNESCO's activities in Palestine, please visit <https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/ramallah> and visit us on : [UNESCO National Office Ramallah Office](#)