

Universal Periodic Review
(16th session, spring 2013, from 22 April – 3 May 2013)
Contribution of UNESCO

(The countries to be reviewed are, in this order: Turkmenistan, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Colombia, Uzbekistan, Tuvalu, Germany, Djibouti, Canada, Bangladesh, Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, and Cuba. Each submission should refer to one country only)

Uzbekistan

I. BACROUND AND FRAMEWORK

1. Human rights treaties which fall within the competence of UNESCO and international instruments adopted by UNESCO

I.1. Table:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession or succession</i>	<i>Declarations /reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>	<i>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence</i>
Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)	Ratified 08/12/1997	<i>Reservations to this Convention shall not be permitted</i>		Right to education
Convention on Technical and Vocational Education. (1989)	Accession 08/12/1997			Right to education
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)	Notification of succession 13/01/1993			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)	Ratified 20/01/2008			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)	Not state party to Convention			Right to take part in cultural life

II. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground

1. Right to education¹

Normative Framework:

2. Constitutional framework: According to Article 41 of the Uzbekistan Constitution of 1992², “Everyone shall have the right to education. The state shall guarantee free secondary education. Schooling is under state supervision.”

3. Additionally, Article 18 stipulates: “All citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall have equal rights and freedoms, and shall be equal before the law, without discrimination by sex, race, nationality, language, religion, social origin, convictions, individual and social status”.

4. Legislative framework: Immediately after independence, the Government passed the Law on Education in July 1992 to provide the legal basis for the sector and to set off the most urgent reforms needed to adapt the education system to the demands of a transition economy. The 1992 Law laid down several principles such as: children’s right to education and protection; the right of workers to individual leave for training purposes; the financial autonomy of institutions including the possibility to conclude contracts with companies; and the right to establish private schools. In addition, the 1992 Law provided for the development of new curriculums and textbooks, certification and accreditation of educational institutions as well as the establishment of specializations and types of educational institutions attuned to market needs. Greater emphasis was placed on the Uzbek language, history and literature as well as on foreign languages, business, economics and vocational-technical education. The duration of compulsory and free basic education was reduced from eleven to nine years due to financial constraints.³

5. The Law on Education was adopted in 1997. Article 4 stipulates that “the right to receive education is given to all, irrespective of sex, language, age, race, nationality, conscience, religious beliefs, social origin, occupation, social status, place of residence, period of residence in the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Right to education is supplied by:

- a) Provision for development of government and non-governmental educational institutions;
- b) Provision of part time and full time training;
- c) Free education based on a state program for personnel training, as well as vocational training based on contractual agreements;
- d) Equal rights of graduates of all types of educational institutions when entering educational institutions of the next grade;
- e) Rights for extern accreditation by educational institutions of citizens educated at home or through self-learning programs.

¹ *Sources:*

² <http://www.gov.uz/en/constitution/> (Accessed 7 October 2010)

³ International Bureau of Education, Profile of the education system in Uzbekistan, <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fr/dans-le-monde/regions-de-lunesco/asia-et-pacifique/ouzbekistan/profile-of-education.html> (Accessed 7 October 2010)

6. Citizens of other countries have a right to receive education in the Republic of Uzbekistan according to international agreements.”⁴

7. The guiding principles of state policy in the field of education as stipulated in Article 3 of the Law “On Education” of the Republic of Uzbekistan are the following:

1. Humanistic, democratic character of education and upbringing;
2. Continuity and succession of education;
3. Compulsory general-secondary as well as secondary specialized and professional education;
4. Freedom to choose direction of secondary specialized, professional education: to continue education at academic lyceums or professional colleges;
5. Secular character of the education system;
6. Accessibility of education within the state educational standards;
7. Unity and differentiation of approach to selection of learning programs;
8. Promotion of education and encouragement of gifted children;
9. Combination of state and public management in the education system.

8. According to the 1997 Law , the state supports home schooling and self-education (Article 18). Students from educational institutions are given the privileges of a scholarship and a hostel room according to the normative documents (Article 20). Training and support of orphans and children without parents or legal guardians is legally achieved with full state funding (Article 22). Specialized educational institutions are being organized to train and treat physically and mentally handicapped children and teenagers. The decision on children’s attendance at educational institutions and removal from study are taken by the Psychological-Medical-Pedagogical Commission on the basis of agreement with consent of parents or legal guardians. Tuition fees of students in specialized educational institutions are fully or partly covered by state funds (Article 23). Specialized education institutions provide educational, professional training and social rehabilitation programs for children and teenagers who need special conditions for rehabilitation and learning. There is special governmental regulation for providing learning and self-learning opportunities for those in prison (Article 24).⁵ Article 29 stipulates that The State education bodies control private educational institutions compliance to education laws. Private educational institutions violating the education laws may have their activities suspended by their accreditation bodies. Admission to private educational institutions is carried out at the same time and by the same time methods as the state’s educational institutions. Article 30 establishes that Parents or legal guardians of children must defend the legal rights and interests of the child and are responsible for its upbringing and the receiving of pre-school, secondary, special secondary and vocational education.

9. The impetus of the **1997 Law on Education** can be seen in various measures. New kindergartens and educational institutions have been established; as well as experimental programs for teaching foreign languages, arts and computer science to young. A new curriculum has been introduced for general basic education schools and new textbooks have been developed. New types of educational institutions have been established based on market requirements, including business schools, banking colleges and academic lyceums. Extra-budgetary means of financing educational institutions have been devised. Specialized foundations have been established for talented students and high-level scientists to study at

⁴Extracts from the state report submitted for the 7th consultation on the implementation of the Convention against Discrimination in Education, 2007.

⁵ Ibid.

prestigious universities abroad (UMID Foundation, USTOZ or Teacher Foundation, KAMOLOT or Youth Foundation). A new testing system has been introduced at the national level as a means to monitor the quality of education. Several regional higher education institutions have been upgraded to university status. Special programs have been developed for the rural areas. International and scientific links are being expanded to support the modernization of education.⁶

10. The Law on “Family Code” was adopted in 1998. . Article 73 establishes that parents are responsible for the upbringing and development of their children. They must care for the child’s health and physical, mental, spiritual and moral development. Parents must ensure their child gets the necessary level of education , established by law.

11. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Social Protection of People with Disabilities was adopted on 11.07.2008.

12. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Guarantee of Child Rights was adopted on 07.01.2008.

Policy measures:

13. Uzbekistan gained independence in 1991. Subsequently the opportunity for the development of national education was created. Profound reforms began in 1997 with the adoption of the Law on the Education and the National Program on Personnel Training (NPPT). This program provides a long-term strategy for strengthening education, the development of a continuing education system and reinforcing the multi-level higher education system.⁷

14. In 2004, the Government launched the National Program for Basic Education (2004–2009), which aims to strengthen basic education in order to meet international standards and to remove disparities between rural and urban schools, thereby creating equal opportunities for all students. Under the program, new schools are being constructed and existing schools are being rehabilitated and repaired.⁸

15. The State Program on Development of School Education was adopted in 2006 in order to improve school learning programs, develop new school textbooks, raise the status of teachers; including raising their salaries, to strengthen financial and technical bases of schools and to develop sport.⁹

⁶ International Bureau of Education, Profile of the education system in Uzbekistan, op.cit.

⁷ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/higher/uzbekistan.pdf (Accessed 13/10/2010)

⁸ International Bureau of Education, Profile of the education system in Uzbekistan,, op.cit.

⁹ The Development of Education, National Report of Uzbekistan, 2008, p. 4, http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/uzbekistan_NR08.pdf (Accessed 13/10/2010)

16. Compulsory Education: The nine-year general primary and secondary education in Uzbekistan is compulsory and free.¹⁰ According to the new legal frame the education system of Uzbekistan includes 12 years of free compulsory education consisting of 9 years of general secondary (4 years of primary and 5 years of secondary education) and 3 years of secondary specialized vocational education (professional colleges and academic lyceums).¹¹

17. It is the Act on Education and the NPTT that guarantee free education.

18. Pre-school Education: The Ministry of Education in cooperation with UNICEF launched a workshop in 2010 on “Pre-School upbringing in the family” in order to ensure the quality of education in Uzbekistan. The workshop identified four key focal areas for the next phase of work. Institutionalization and expansion of the Child Friendly School initiative, further development of the work in the pre-school education sphere, ensuring inclusiveness of education, and strengthening monitoring and evaluation at all levels.¹²

19. Within the framework of the Program “Development of the child of early age and general quality education” a Teacher Training Institute carried out research in 4 pilot regions of Uzbekistan.¹³

Inclusive Education

20. Students with disabilities: An important project called “Comprehensive Education for Disabled Children”, was implemented with the assistance of the Asian Bank of Development in 2006. It must be noted that despite this project various problems regarding inclusive education have not been solved and will have to be taken care of in the next years.¹⁴

21. Even today, there is a system of differentiated network of special education – boarding schools where children are educated separately from their healthy peers.¹⁵

¹⁰ The Development of Education, National Report of Uzbekistan, 2008, op. cit., p. 5.

¹¹ Report submitted by Uzbekistan for the 4th consultation on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, 2009, p. 1.

¹² The Development of Education, National Report of Uzbekistan, 2008, op. cit., p. 5.

¹³ Ways and perspectives of inclusive education development in the Republic of Uzbekistan, Ministry of People Education of Uzbekistan, 2007, http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Inclusive_Education/Reports/minsk_07/uzbekistan_inclusion_07.pdf (Accessed 13/10/2010)

¹⁴ Ways and perspectives of inclusive education development in the Republic of Uzbekistan, Ministry of People Education of Uzbekistan, 2007, op. cit.

¹⁵ The Development of Education, National Report of Uzbekistan, 2008, op. cit., p. 12.

22. Since June 2006 the Ministry of Public Education, in cooperation with Asian Development Bank carries out research under the project: “General education for children with disabilities”.¹⁶

23. Languages in education: Based on the principle laid down in the Law on Education (Article 4), representatives of different nationalities are provided education in their native languages. Manuals and textbooks are published in 7 languages: Uzbek, Russian, Karakalpak, Kazakh, Tajik, Kyrgyz and Turkmen. Therefore, there are 7 teaching languages in the primary and general secondary education systems. Vocational and higher education mostly provide programs in 2 languages: Uzbek and Russian.¹⁷

24. The concept of multilingual education introduced into the curriculum allowed the development of three language learning programs (native, state and a foreign language). It provides learners with an opportunity for better understanding and appreciation of other cultures. Moreover, there are annual increases in the number of universities introducing multilingual teaching modalities, in order to provide equal opportunities for various linguistic groups..¹⁸

25. Secondary education is taught in seven languages (Uzbek, Karakalpak, Russian, Tajik, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, and Kazakh).

26. Quality Education: The 2004- 2009 State Program on Development of School Education was adopted in accordance with Resolution № 321 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan (dated 09.07.2004).

27. School environment: In recent years the infrastructures of schools have been improved considerably; a number of schools have been built and classes are equipped with computer facilities. Furthermore, the provision of textbooks was improved.¹⁹

28. The UN provided assistance in developing the National Program for the Quality and Efficiency of Education for 2008-2012. A multi-sectorial approach has been adopted with regards to quality; with child friendly school packages currently applied in 750 schools addressing a number of issues including: water, sanitation, hygiene as well as inclusive education.²⁰

29. Health education: HIV/AIDS preventive programs have been implemented in the country. One of the main objectives of the education sector is propaganda of healthy life style among students and pupils. To that end, according to the Joint Decree of the Ministry of Higher and Special Secondary Education, Ministry of Public Education and Ministry of Culture and Sports (No. 178/197/713, 10 August 2005) a new subject “Valeology” was

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁷ International Bureau of Education, Profile of the education system in Uzbekistan, op.cit.

¹⁸ Report submitted by Uzbekistan for the 4th consultation on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, 2009, p. 7.

¹⁹ The Development of Education, National Report of Uzbekistan, 2008, op. cit., p. 6.

²⁰ http://unic.un.org/aroundworld/unics/common/documents/newsletters/en/tashkent_UN_Uzb_Newsletter_latest.pdf (Accessed 12/10/2010)

introduced into the system of continuous education beginning from 2005. The subject's curriculum includes fundamentals of healthy life, fundamentals of medicine, preventive measures on HIV/AIDS, Iodine deficiency, Ferrum deficiency; struggle against drug addiction, alcoholism and smoking.²¹

30. Human Rights Education: For the purpose of promotion of human rights the subjects on human values was included into the curriculum or integrated into existing subjects in all levels of education, such as:

- a) "Odobnoma" (Ethics) and "ABC of Constitution" in primary education;
- b) "Trip to the Constitution World", "History", "Basics of Moral", "Literature", "Basics of State and Law" in secondary education;
- c) "Person and Society" in secondary specialized, vocational education;
- d) "History of Uzbekistan", "Cultural Rights", "Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan", "Human rights", "Child rights" in higher education.

31. The on-going gradual education reform in Uzbekistan includes issues of introduction or incorporation of new subjects on universal values and civic education. A National Action Plan for Human Rights Education has been developed in accordance with the Framework for the UN Decade for Human Rights Education. The new curriculum focuses on the development of citizenship, local and universal values, development of skills for cooperation and solidarity in society. All the subjects in the curriculum contribute to this shaping of values. Teachers training programs were organized in cooperation with relevant governmental organizations, NGOs and international organizations. Capacity building activities involve the representatives from local communities, religious leaders, NGO experts and private sector specialists to the process of human rights education in schools and in out-of-school programs.²²

32. Teachers status and training: The National Program on Personnel Training was adopted on August 29th, 1997.

33. The system of teacher in-service training has been strengthened, requiring three years of training instead of five as before. Teacher's salaries have also significantly increased (more than 2.5 times since 2004).²³

34. School Environment: During the cotton harvests in Uzbekistan, for instance, schools and colleges are closed for months with the approval of the State, and students are made to pick cotton en masse. Families who refuse to send their children to the cotton fields are subject to intimidation and threatened with the loss of social benefits, gas supplies, water and electricity, while their children are threatened with exclusion from school. Children as young as seven are known to work harvesting cotton.

²¹ The Development of Education, National Report of Uzbekistan, 2008, op. cit., p. 11.

²²Report submitted by Uzbekistan for the 4th consultation on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, 2009

²³Education in Uzbekistan, UNICEF, <http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/Uzbekistan.pdf> (Accessed 12/10/2010)

35. Forced child labor in Uzbekistan's cotton fields was the focus issue of the 21 June 2011 hearing at the European Parliament. Members of the parliament warned that the European Union's human rights efforts are being undermined by unprincipled trade agreements with Uzbekistan. In February 2011, the European Council approved a protocol granting various tariff and customs privileges and free access to European markets for Uzbek textiles - an industry known to use raw cotton harvested by at least one million child labourers a year.

Cooperation:

36. Uzbekistan is party to UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education since 1997 and submitted a report, in 2007, on the measures taken for its implementation within the framework of the Seventh Consultation (covering period 2000-2005).

37. Uzbekistan reported to UNESCO in 2009 within the framework of the fourth consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation, Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (covering the period 2005-2008).

38. Uzbekistan submitted a national report for the Eight Consultation on the measures taken for the implementation of the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education (covering the period 2006-2011).

2. Right to take part in cultural life

Achievements challenges, best practices and constraints related to the implementation of the right to take part in cultural life

39. Normative Framework: Constitutional and Legislative frameworks: Uzbekistan passed several laws on the preservation of cultural heritage properties and that are consistent with the provisions of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, among which *Law N. 269-II of 2001 on preservation and use of cultural heritage properties* and *Law N. 42 of 2009 on preservation and utilization of archaeological heritage properties*. Those laws regulate relations in the sphere of preservation, conservation, presentation and use of cultural heritage, which is defined as national property of the people of Uzbekistan. As per Article 2 of Law N. 269-II, in case regulations of an international instrument/agreement to which Uzbekistan is party, differ from those established in the legislation of Uzbekistan on the preservation and utilization of cultural heritage properties, regulations of the international agreement should be followed.

40. Existing national laws do not provide to ensure the proper management of World Heritage properties. The Legislative Chamber of Parliament is currently considering inclusion of additional provisions in the existing laws. This would strengthen the existing legal framework for the preservation of the World Cultural Heritage.

41. With regard to the intangible cultural heritage, following the ratification of the 2003 Convention in 2009, the Government of Uzbekistan modified the existing national *Law N. 269-II on preservation and utilization of cultural heritage properties* so as to integrate new norms pertaining to that domain. In that context, the norms concerning the interpretation of

intangible cultural heritage were reviewed. New regulations on the preservation and revitalization of intangible cultural heritage are under elaboration by Uzbekistan.

42. The Government of Uzbekistan is currently considering the possible ratification of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

43. Institutional framework: The main authority responsible for the management of the cultural World Heritage properties is the Board of Monuments of the Ministry of Culture and Sports. Coordination with other relevant ministries is ensured through an Inter-Organizational Commission chaired by the Minister of Culture. This ensures close cooperation between the authorities responsible for development activities and the authorities responsible for heritage conservation.

44. The Ministry of Culture and Sport is also responsible for implementation and monitoring of the 2003 Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention. A Republican Research-Methodical Centre was established in 2010 and has branches in all regions of Uzbekistan. The centre is functioning as a specialized organization on intangible cultural heritage and cooperates with governmental, non-governmental organizations and institutions in Uzbekistan. In particular, the Centre promotes the role of intangible culture heritage among local communities' organizations (mahallas) and educational institutions as well as principles of the Convention, thereby supporting the right to take part in cultural life.

45. Policy measures: Uzbekistan adopts short and long term programmes for the preservation of cultural heritage properties. It also adopted in 2010 a State programme for safeguarding, promotion and utilization of intangible cultural heritage for 2010-2020. Furthermore, the government of Uzbekistan allocates annual state budgets and sponsorships to heritage related programmes.

46. Work with civil society: As stipulated in the *Law on preservation and utilization of cultural heritage properties*, the provincial cultural departments of the Ministry of Culture and Sport have the obligation to ensure the implementation of the Law at the provincial level through the involvement of public associations and institutions as well as organizations from the civil society. In this respect, civil society is actively involved in the preservation, safeguarding, promotion and enjoyment of cultural heritage of Uzbekistan. In particular, civil society actively participates in the organization of cultural events, such as traditional festivals in Uzbekistan and abroad, folk games, traditional competitions etc. Civil society is therefore involved in cultural manifestations that fall within the scope of the 2003 Convention, and in particular in the inventory of intangible cultural heritage. Local communities' organizations (*mahallas*) play an important role in cultural heritage related activities.

Freedom of opinion and expression

Achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints

47. Legislative framework: The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan²⁴, in principle, guarantees freedom of expression and information, specifically Article 29 states that: "Everyone shall be guaranteed freedom of thought, speech and convictions. Everyone shall

²⁴ <http://www.gov.uz/en/constitution/#s268>

have the right to seek, obtain and disseminate any information, except that which is directed against the existing constitutional system and in some other instances specified by law. Freedom of opinion and its expression may be restricted by law if any state or other secret is involved.” Article 30, also in principle, provides for the right to access information and Article 67 (2002 amendment), prohibits censorship. Moreover, a freedom of information law in the form of *the Law on the Principles of and Guarantees for the Freedom of Information*²⁵ has been in existence since 1997.

48. However, the Law on Mass Media (amended 2007) includes the need to licence media outlets and continues to require foreign media representative to be accredited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to operate within Uzbekistan.

49. Uzbekistan has wide-ranging legislation which deals with defamation and libel. Defamation is criminalized under Article 139 of the Criminal Code²⁶ with correctional labour, monetary fine, and prison terms of up to six years. Libel is criminalized under Article 140 with a monetary fine, correctional labour, and imprisonment as possible sentences. Furthermore, Article 158 of the Criminal Code punishes “public affront or denigration with regard to the President” through print or other mass media with “correctional labour up to three years, arrest up to six months, or imprisonment up to five years.”²⁷

50. Contrary to the prohibition on censorship of the mass media as stated in Article 67 of the Constitution, there continue to be reported cases of filtering and blocking of media including the Internet such as the blocking of websites with user-generated content²⁸.

51. Media self-regulation: Media self-regulatory mechanism is yet to be truly developed in Uzbekistan due to the strict control of the media by the government. Nevertheless, some of form of media self-regulation exists through organization such as the Union of Independent Journalists of Uzbekistan that works to defend freedom of expression and the media.

52. Safety of journalists: UNESCO recorded no killing of journalists and media workers in Uzbekistan between 2008 and 2011.

53. However the operating environment is challenging due to the government using legislative provisions against journalists for example which results in wide-spread self-censorship. The environment remains particularly difficult for independent journalists who are often subject to harassment and arrest.²⁹

²⁵ [http://www.rti-rating.org/pdf/Uzbekistan%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.rti-rating.org/pdf/Uzbekistan%20(2).pdf)

²⁶ http://www.ctbto.org/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Legal_documents/national_provisions/Uzbekistan_CriminalCode_220994.pdf

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/65016> and <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/uzbekistan/9092977/Uzbekistan-blocks-Wikipedia-pages-say-witnesses.html>

²⁹ <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/65725>

4. The right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications (REBSP)

Co-operation, Achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints:

54. Uzbekistan submitted to UNESCO its national report on the application of the 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers and took an active part in the consultations concerning the question of a possible revision of the 1974 to be discussed.

55. As indicated in the national submission of Uzbekistan, the Uzbekistani national law incorporates most principles of the 1974 Recommendation. For instance, Principles of the UNESCO Recommendation are reflected in following legal documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan: Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (article 42); Law on Education (articles 3, 5, 15, 19); Statute of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Statute of the State Committee for Coordination of the Development of Sciences and Technology of the Republic of Uzbekistan; National Program on Personnel Training (Chapter 3, articles 3, 4; Chapter 4, articles 2, 13).

56. Uzbekistan suggested in its submission that the 1974 Recommendation is ‘adequate for the current science policy. However there are needs to review the text of the recommendation in the light of future global challenges in science ethics and science policy’.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Right to education

57. UNESCO has recently launched the 8th Consultation on the measures taken for the implementation of the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education (covering the period 2006-2011), the result of this Consultation will be submitted to UNESCO’s governing bodies at the end of 2013. Uzbekistan has not yet reported to UNESCO on the Convention and is strongly encouraged to submit a report.

58. Uzbekistan could be encouraged to adopt further measures (e.g. special laws) which aim to combat discrimination in education, protect minority groups, combat illiteracy, and promote gender equality.

Right to take part in cultural life

59. While the government is paying great attention to meet the requirements of UNESCO conventions, their local implementation needs to be strengthened and introduced to the different segments of the civil society in order encourage community involvement in the preservation of cultural heritage.

Freedom of opinion and expression

60. The Government is encouraged to take steps to enable a media environment that is truly free, pluralistic and independent.

61. The Government is encouraged to decriminalize defamation and subsequently incorporate it into the civil code in accordance with international standards.

62. The Government is encouraged to take steps to ensure the access to public information is easily and freely available to the public in accordance with international standards.

63. The Government is encouraged to allow journalists and media workers to practice in a safe, free, independent, and pluralistic media environment as part of their fundamental human rights.

64. UNESCO recommends strengthening capacity in the field of journalism standards and ethics to develop the media self-regulatory mechanism both for media professionals and policy-makers.