



General Conference

41st Session, Paris, 2021

41 C

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Item 5.25 of the provisional agenda

41 C/59

4 November 2021

Original: English

WORLD FUTURES DAY

OUTLINE

Source: 212 EX/Decision 50

Background: This item has been included in the provisional agenda of the 41st session following the decision of the Executive Board at its 212th session (212 EX/Decision 50).

Purpose: This document presents the summary of the Executive Board discussions and its recommendation to the General Conference to adopt a resolution to celebrate World Futures Day at UNESCO Headquarters and field offices on 2 December each year, in compliance with the UN Common Agenda proclaimed by the Secretary General of the UN in September 2021. The aim would be to encourage the dissemination of futures literacy as a capability-based approach to development. The World Futures Day would also promote public awareness of the future through active collaboration.

Decision required: Paragraph 6



Job: 202103871

Background

1. The Executive Board, at its 212th session, considered document 212 EX/50 which proposed to celebrate annually World Futures Day on 2 December. The document brought to the attention of the Executive Board the strengthened need to enable anticipatory action at all levels worldwide, and for futures literacy following the global health and economic hardship resulting from the pandemic. It noted that events marking the World Futures Day will endeavour to foster a culture of anticipation of both future challenges and opportunities, and recommended, in 212 EX/Decision 50, that the General Conference request the Director-General to mark the World Futures Day to be held annually.

2. The celebration of World Futures Day is in compliance with the United Nations Common Agenda proclaimed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in September 2021. On 10 September 2021, the United Nations Secretary-General published the report "Our Common Agenda", which underscored the urgency to secure a more sustainable future for all people and set out a vision to accelerate the implementation of existing agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, the United Nations Secretary-General has proposed futures-oriented initiatives including a Summit of the Future.

3. Since 2012, Member States have encouraged UNESCO, in its role as a global laboratory of ideas, to explore new ways to use-the-future for anticipatory decision-making. Working closely with Member States, a community of practitioners and researchers organized by UNESCO, including a growing network of UNESCO Chairs in futures studies and futures literacy, have been conducting innovative experiments around the world to produce evidence of the diversity of reasons and methods people use to imagine the future.

4. UNESCO continues to play a crucial role within the United Nations system as the coordinator of the HLCP Foresight network. It remains imperative to understand the universality of human anticipatory and imaginative capabilities across the different sectors, including the social and human sciences, education, the natural sciences and culture, as well as in the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and beyond. The World Futures Day closely aligns with UNESCO's mission as a leading specialized agency of the United Nations system and it will showcase the Organization as a key platform for responding to the future needs of humanity through its global laboratory of ideas function.

5. On the date of 2 December, it is proposed that World Futures Day is celebrated annually to highlight the importance of collective intelligence leading to collective innovation for the emergence of short and long-term future. Against this backdrop, the objectives of World Futures Day include the following:

- (a) Promote public awareness of the future as a concept conducive to sustainable development;
- (b) Highlight the universality of human anticipatory activities and imagination;
- (c) Generate new discourses on best practices and measures to strengthen futures literacy and the understanding of its framework;
- (d) Encourage international collaboration and dialogue on future related strategies, as well as futures literacy capabilities, in all levels of decision-making;
- (e) Increase research on the application of futures literacy and related fields as well as its impact to develop conscious and sustainable ways to relate and act in the present to have an impact on the future;
- (f) Build the futures literacy capacity of societies and institutions.

Proposed draft resolution

6. In light of the above, the General Conference may wish to adopt a resolution along the following lines:

The General conference,

Having examined document 41 C/59,

Noting the recommendation of the Executive Board as contained in 212 EX/Decision 50,

Recognizing the significance of future-oriented thinking conducive to readiness, adaptability, creativity and ingenuity, and the need to collectively and inclusively work towards new means to address global challenges and accelerate the delivery of shared aspirations,

Noting with appreciation UNESCO's efforts in the field of futures literacy,

Recognizing the importance of understanding how the concept of the future should be considered and meaningfully applied across the sectors of education, the social, human and natural sciences and culture, as well as in the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and beyond,

Noting that the celebration of a world futures day at UNESCO will have no financial implications for UNESCO and will be funded through voluntary contributions,

1. *Proclaims* 2 December of each year World Futures Day;
2. *Invites* the Director-General to seek funding from voluntary contributions to support the celebration of World Futures Day on 2 December of each year, as one of the international days marked by UNESCO;
3. *Invites* Member States to organize events at national, regional and international levels such as a series of conferences and workshops among other activities, bringing together the public and private sector, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, civil society and youth, experts, as well as educational and research institutions.