

ENGLISH

**NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee
Meeting 8
26 November 2025**

Present:

Svetlomira Stoyanova
Sanjiv Layek
Davide Grosso
Isabela Carrozza Joia
Nisrine Ibn Abdeljalil
Olga Legacka
Nick Newland

1. NGO space – brief overview of activities during the General Conference in Samarkand, participation, and outcomes

The President recalled the main activities and outcomes of the events held in the NGO Space during the General Conference, followed by a discussion that outpoints the following:

Events and Sessions Organized

- Welcome and introductory presentation of the NGO Space.
- Overview of the Youth Forum activities and recommendations for the General Conference, along with the work of the Youth Working Group.
- Meeting with National Commissions, facilitated by three National Commissions (England, France, and Uganda). This was one of the most well-attended events within the programme of the NGO space.
- Presentation on the evolution of the work of the Liaison Committee over the past years:2020-2026.
- “NGO Focus” session aimed at giving NGOs a platform to present their activities and work plans for the coming year (with more than ten NGOs presenting).
- A presentation by Julien Pellaux (Director, Partnerships Division) in the NGO Space on the work of the Partnerships Directorate.
- A meeting with Mohamed Elfarnawany Director (D-1) of the Division of Priority Africa Coordination, marking the start of a strategic collaboration focused on Advancing a Culture of Peace in Africa.

- A “meet and greet” session with NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO, attending the 43rd session of the General conference in person.
- A panel on culture, moderated by Davide Grosso, focusing on the Liaison Committee’s past work and its current commitments with the cultural sector.

Participation and Engagement

- A total of 37 NGOs participated in the GC, representing 57 participants.
- 15 NGOs took the floor in the plenary session on 5.11.2025.
- The shared use of the NGO space with National Commissions enhanced its impact and strengthened direct engagement with NatComs and delegations.
- In this GC, NGOs were more focused and active in participating in the General Conference, the NGO Space activities, and networking with other stakeholders.

Overall Assessment and Key Lessons

- The NGO Space was considered highly effective and impactful in engaging delegations and National Commissions, notably thanks to the support of the Secretariat.
- The events were of good quality and provided valuable opportunities for interaction and networking.
- It is recommended that NGOs be sensitized in advance to better prepare their presentations, in order to ensure that the audience fully appreciate the scope and impact of their work.

Communication

Communication coverage of the NGO Space activities was ensured through posts prepared by Isabela, Communication Officer, highlighting all events and activities held in the space.

2. Participation in the Youth Forum (intervention by Isabela Joia)

- The Youth Forum was held on the 26th and 27th, with the primary objective of formulating recommendations to be shared during the General Conference.
- This year’s theme focused on climate action and its social impacts. The recommendations explicitly identified NGOs as key stakeholders, recognizing young people working within NGOs as leaders and active contributors to the implementation of UNESCO’s work.

3. Youth Working Group (intervention by Isabela Joia)

- The Youth Working Group is currently undergoing a revitalization process. A Padlet board has been created to engage young participants and allow them to present their work and initiatives.
Among the upcoming activities of the Youth Working Group is its engagement in the forthcoming Greening Education Forum.

4. **Upcoming Forum #18 and satellite events**

- The steering committee for the Greening Education Forum has been established and includes three NGOs : Siiri Tiivits-Puttonen from BPW, Gabriele DRUETTA from AUF and Kathleen Ngu from Sulitest, along with Cyril Noirtin and Nisrine Abdeljalil from the Liaison Committee and representatives from the sector and the Secretariat.
- A meeting with sector representatives was scheduled for 5 December to discuss priority topics and potential dates for the forum.
- It was suggested to update the list and dates of the side events, provide all relevant information regarding the participation of NGOs within the Liaison Committee, and ensure the use of visuals produced by the graphic designer to enhance communication and presentation of the forum activities.

5. **Collaboration between the Division for Priority Africa Coordination and the NGO–UNESCO Liaison Committee**, with a focus on mobilizing NGOs to advance a culture of peace across the African continent

- Discussions are underway with the Liaison Committee and the Division of Priority Africa to explore collaboration. The objective would be to work jointly on promoting a culture of peace in Africa and to mobilize NGOs active in Africa to participate in various events that the Division plans to organize next year, as well as to find ways to promote the work carried out by these NGOs. This represents an opportunity to align Liaison Committee activities with UNESCO priorities.
- As part of this exploration, it was suggested to circulate a questionnaire in early 2026 to NGOs in official partnership to identify their planned activities next year related to the Culture of peace, and to determine how they could be engaged during Africa Week, which will take place in the last week of May at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.
- The third edition of the biennial event in Luanda, Angola is scheduled for next October, offering another potential avenue for collaboration and engagement.
- A webinar “Advancing a Culture of Peace in Africa” is scheduled on 01.12, part of the “How to Engage alongside UNESCO” webinar series.

6. Financial situation of the Liaison Committee

- A reminder was provided regarding the existing contract with UNESCO, which the Liaison Committee is required to report on by the end of the year (currently in progress), as well as the financial support received thanks to Nick's efforts.
- The Liaison Committee has also received USD 8,500 in contributions from NGOs. A reminder will be sent to all NGOs to encourage those who have not yet submitted their contributions to do so.
- Due to various international factors, notably the withdrawal of the United States, the Liaison Committee will not receive financial support from UNESCO in 2026.
- The Liaison Committee needs to consider alternative ways to raise funds to support the planned activities in its work program and upcoming forums.
- Several suggestions were made to request financial or in-kind contributions from NGOs for specific events.
- It was noted that the slow progress in delivering activities makes it more difficult to solicit contributions from NGOs. A summary of completed and planned activities should be prepared and shared to increase visibility of the Liaison Committee's work and NGO engagement.

7. Upcoming events in 2026 – proposals and planning

- A proposal was made by Sanjiv Layek (WASME) to hold a forum on youth entrepreneurship in India in 2026. Sanjiv will work with Nick Newland (ACWW) on developing the feasibility of this initiative.
- Given the anticipated financial constraints for organizing multiple forums in 2026, it was suggested to consider holding one physical forum during Africa Week at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.
- The President noted that while the Liaison Committee is expected to organize four international forums and one international conference, it is important to realistically consider time and financial constraints. The priority should be on ensuring quality and impactful actions rather than aiming to hold all five events.