

The Assistant Director-General for Education

To all Secretaries-General
of National Commissions
for UNESCO

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30 January 2024

Subject: UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme 2024 application cycle and engagement opportunities

Dear Secretary General,

I am pleased to inform you that the 2024 cycle of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme is now open. The online portal is available for direct submission of applications by host institutions and their validation by the National Commission. The application deadline is 30 April 2024, 23:59 (CET/Paris time). Please note that only complete applications with the requisite letters of support will be considered. The [Programme guidelines](#) and [webpage](#) can be consulted for further information.

The temporary measure applied in the 2022 and 2023 cycles to limit the number of applications for the creation of new UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks to a maximum of two per country is maintained for the current cycle. We are pleased to note that this measure has encouraged institutions from over a dozen non-represented countries to apply to the programme. Further, recognizing the different schedules and approaches, a maximum of two additional submissions can exceptionally be accepted if accompanied by valid justification, to be sent to unitwin@unesco.org.

As a reminder, the proposed Chair or Network must be in an area that is closely related to UNESCO's current programmes and priorities and the application must meet all the required criteria outlined in the programme guidelines. National Commissions are to ensure only relevant applications are submitted and are encouraged to consult the UNITWIN Programme Team and UNESCO Sectors well in advance of the deadline.

An information session on the 2024 application cycle will be organized with the National Commissions on 26 February 2024, 13:00 – 14:30 CET. You are kindly invited to register on the [Zoom registration page](#). The meeting link and agenda will be shared shortly.

In terms of **engagement opportunities**, we recall that over the past year, thirteen online [UNESCO Chairs Seminars](#) convened over 4000 participants from around the world. The seminars generated interdisciplinary perspectives on varied topics including the future of higher education, the right to science, and issues addressed by the Flagship Programmes of UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029. These seminars continue in 2024 with a new series designed to inform the [Pact of the Future](#) which will be negotiated at the Summit of the Future convened by the UN Secretary-General (22-23 September 2024). We will address a range of issues such as development financing; peace and security; science, technology and innovation; youth and future generations; and global governance.

We count on your support to participate in these seminars, help identify speakers and experts, and disseminate the announcements, summaries, and recordings to relevant networks. UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks organizing their own events are encouraged to liaise with relevant UNESCO entities and to announce their events on the [dedicated space for university-led events](#), as well as on their own institutional websites in line with official guidelines on the use of UNESCO's name and logo.

National Commissions are encouraged to facilitate **networking opportunities**, for example, by organizing annual meetings of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Network members or convening various experts working on a particular theme. Such meetings strengthen interdisciplinary collaborations and have helped to foster synergies between UNESCO Chairs and other UNESCO networks, such as the UNESCO Associated Schools Network, the Global Network of Learning Cities, the Global Network of Creative Cities, as well as Category 2 Centers under the auspices of UNESCO.

National Commissions are also encouraged to help facilitate the participation of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks in intellectual and public policy debates, ethical reflections and standard setting processes, and prioritize their nominations for expert groups, jury compositions and prizes. National Commissions can also help to ensure the network members' contributions to major upcoming 2024 events such as the [Global Forum on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence 2024](#) (5-6 February, Slovenia); [World Conference on Culture and Arts Education](#) (13-15 February, United Arab Emirates); [2024 Ocean Decade Conference](#) (10-12 April, Spain); [World Press Freedom Day Conference - A Press for the Planet: Journalism in the face of the Environmental Crisis](#) (3-5 May, Chile); [Futures of Education Africa: Towards a collaborative research agenda](#) (November, Ethiopia).

Finally, and as you may know, a [Report on the activities of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme](#) was discussed at the 42nd Session of the General Conference. The report describes recent efforts to (i) streamline administrative procedures and improve database management; (ii) promote visibility and improve communication; (iii) strengthen community engagement and knowledge sharing; (iv) ensure better contributions to UNESCO programmes and priorities; (v) leverage the expertise of the network, including follow-up to the conference on [Transforming Knowledge for Just and Sustainable Futures](#) held to mark the 30th Anniversary of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme (Paris, 3-4 November 2022). Member States warmly congratulated the Secretariat on the visible improvements.

In this regard, we thank you for your invaluable cooperation, in particular with the pre-selection process as well as the continuous coordination and monitoring of the activities of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks. Please do not hesitate to contact my colleagues in the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme for any additional information you may need at unitwin@unesco.org.

We look forward to our continued cooperation in 2024.



Stefania Giannini