



**unesco**

United Nations  
Educational, Scientific  
and Cultural Organization

**215 EX/43**

**Executive Board**

**Two hundred and fifteenth session**

PARIS, 19 September 2022  
Original: English

Item 43 of the provisional agenda

**THE BAKU PROCESS: PROMOTING INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE  
AND SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT**

**SUMMARY**

This item has been included in the provisional agenda of the 215th session of the Executive Board at the request of Azerbaijan.

An explanatory note, together with a proposed decision is attached.

Financial implications: no financial implications.

Decision required: paragraph 9.



Job: 202202357

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. Located between the two great civilizations, Azerbaijan is a unique place, where the world's main religions peacefully coexist and values and traditions of different cultures harmoniously complement each other. Azerbaijan has been staunch advocate of multiculturalism and as such, has invested significant efforts in actively promoting its successful model on a global scale. Launched in 2008, Baku Process<sup>1</sup> serves as a solid platform for raising awareness and exchanging best practices and lessons learnt on all the issues related to enhancing the role of intercultural dialogue among various stakeholders and within international frameworks.

2. Since 2011, the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue (WFID) – the Baku Process's seminal event convened every two years, in partnership with UNESCO and other international and regional organizations, such as United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), Council of Europe, Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), strives to strengthen and broaden the conceptual basis of the intercultural dialogue and seeks ways of using dialogue as a strong tool to tackle global challenges, to achieve mutual understanding, embrace wider socio cultural contexts and genuinely universal values. Since 2011 the Government of Azerbaijan held five editions of WFID (*please refer to the Annex*).

## II. BACKGROUND

3. Our today's world is torn by, sanitary crisis, conflicts, and other global challenges and threats, such as populism, deep inequalities, and violent extremism, which are on the rise, undermining people's ability to live and progress together. Intercultural Dialogue, as one the ways to promote mutual respect and understanding is at heart of these turbulent paradigms. It seeks to contribute to the complex communication which occurs between culturally heterogeneous groups. Intercultural Dialogue aims not only to recognition, tolerance and acceptance of cultural differences, but it also strives for solid foundations to ensure smooth interactions between culturally diverse groups. In this respect, Baku Process launched by the "Baku Declaration on the Promotion of Intercultural Dialogue"<sup>2</sup> comes in a timely manner and complements United Nations efforts in promoting intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace.

4. Since 2011 UNESCO has played an active role in design and conceptualization of Baku Process, as one of the key partners of WFIDs. More than 50 various activities and projects were implemented within the Baku process, in close collaboration with UNESCO. Academic Forums of UNESCO Chairs working in the field of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, high-level panel on girls' education, workshop on Silk Road initiative and most notably, the global panel of international organizations dealing with intercultural dialogue, which, in a unique format, brought together key international actors under the same umbrella for the first time, provided a solid platform for extensive debates and discussions on the need to further enhance global and regional efforts in promoting culture of peace and development. In this sense, the Baku Process paved the way for the establishment of "Peace4Culture" initiative, as a new dimension of the Baku Process, which seeks to highlight the importance of sustainable peace in reviving the spirit of culture and protecting and promoting cultural heritage. Close engagement of UNESCO in Baku Process and its valuable contribution to organization of WFIDs has reaffirmed the leading role and potential of UNESCO in promoting intercultural dialogue, thereby contributing to the efforts to retain this item high on global agenda.

5. The Baku Process, and in particular the WFID provides an important space to design, shape and catalyse other ongoing initiatives led by UNESCO in the area of intercultural dialogue, such as UNESCO ArtLab for Human Rights and Dialogue, as well as Story Circles (Building Resilience through the Development of Intercultural Competencies). WFID's future editions are potential platform to explore the further possible developments of these interconnected initiatives.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://bakuprocess.az/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806b0155>

6. Recognizing the success of the Baku Process to date, the United Nations Secretary-General's Annual Report (2017) to the United Nations General Assembly on intercultural and interreligious dialogue and a culture of peace (A/72/488)<sup>3</sup> contained a reference to the WFID, as a key global platform for promoting intercultural dialogue. One of the two corresponding United Nations resolutions (A/RES/72/136)<sup>4</sup> also emphasized the importance of the Baku Process which has been at the forefront of advocating for dialogue among cultures since 2008. In the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites: In Unity and Solidarity for Safe and Peaceful Worship (2019)<sup>5</sup> the WFID was denoted as one of the main global platforms for promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

### III. OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE

7. Based on the global agenda on the Dialogue among Civilizations adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (November, 2001)<sup>6</sup>; resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace<sup>7</sup>; United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (53/243) in 1999<sup>8</sup>; UNESCO Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)<sup>9</sup>; the Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which was issued by ICESCO in 2004<sup>10</sup>; Declaration and Action Plan of the Third Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe member states, the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (May, 2008)<sup>11</sup>, the "Baku Declaration on the Promotion of Intercultural Dialogue"<sup>12</sup>, the Baku Process has built a solid common ground and became pertinent nowadays in order to:

- (a) Promote understanding, dialogue, and tolerance among cultures to strengthen international cooperation for implementing United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (namely SDG 16 on Peace, justice and strong institutions and SDG 17 on Partnerships for the goals) and its relevant targets;
- (b) Build respect and understanding among cultures and amplify voices of moderation and reconciliation, which help to calm cultural and religious tensions between nations and peoples;
- (c) Enhance all regional initiatives by working with all stakeholders including both government decision-makers and the private sector;
- (d) Define opportunities of culture, cultural heritage, and art to effectively use its potential in the process of realizing intercultural dialogue and mutual cooperation and prepare feasible recommendations for practical actions;
- (e) Support cultural and artistic activities and exchanges, while recognizing the role of artists and creators as vehicles for dialogue and mutual understanding, and introduce incentives to facilitate equal access and participation in these activities;
- (f) Develop intercultural dialogue through concerted actions between the competent international and regional organizations with the active involvement of concerned member states and civil society organizations;

---

3 <https://undocs.org/A/72/488>

4 <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/72/136>

5 <https://www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/12-09-2019-UNAOC-PoA-Religious-Sites.pdf>

6 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/452158>

7 <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/74/23>

8 <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/53/243>

9 <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/passeport-convention2005-web2.pdf>

10 <https://www.icesco.org/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/04/Conference-Ministers-Culture-4-2004.pdf>

11 [https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper\\_final\\_revised\\_en.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf)

12 <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806b0155>

- (g) Provide a platform to build partnerships exposing best practices, lessons learnt and success stories;
- (h) Engage all layers of society including women, youth, vulnerable and marginalized groups;
- (i) Address the major global issues, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on intercultural dialogue and socio-cultural sustainability, and propose multilateral actions;
- (j) Support UNESCO's programmes, including Intercultural Dialogue, Silk Roads, Youth, Sport, etc.

8. This will be achieved in close cooperation with relevant sectors of UNESCO Secretariat.

### **Proposed draft decision**

9. In light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 215 EX/43,
2. Conscious of the potential of intercultural dialogue for promoting social cohesion and inclusion and its role in tackling global challenges,
3. Acknowledging the leading role of UNESCO in promoting intercultural dialogue and a culture of sustainable peace and development, and its active engagement in the conceptualization and design of the World Forums on Intercultural Dialogue,
4. Also acknowledging the contribution of the Baku Process to the objectives of major UNESCO programmes such as those on intercultural dialogue, the Roadmap against Racism and Discrimination, the Silk Roads, youth and sport,
5. Recalling the social and economic impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, significantly hampering inclusive progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the importance of intercultural collaboration and understanding in this context,
6. Referring to the key initiatives and achievements within the framework of the Baku Process since 2008,
7. Noting that the activities within the Baku Process will have no financial implications for UNESCO's regular budget,
8. Recommends that UNESCO continue to take the lead in fostering intercultural dialogue and a culture of sustainable peace by defining policies as well as by supporting and implementing the flagship programmes and initiatives at the local, regional and international levels;
9. Decides to support the Baku Process on a regular basis;
10. Encourages the Secretariat and Member States and partners to continue supporting the Baku Process in order to strengthen global efforts to enhance intercultural dialogue;
11. Also recommends that this item be included in the agenda of the 42nd session of the General Conference of UNESCO;

12. Further recommends that the General Conference adopt at its 42nd session a resolution endorsing the Baku Process as an international forum bringing together various stakeholders to establish an effective and efficient dialogue between cultures and civilizations.

## ANNEX

No.	Forum	Dates	Title	Key outcomes
1	1st World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue	7-9 April 2011	“United Through Common Values, Enriched by Cultural Diversity”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>5A</b> (which stands for first letters of continents in Azerbaijani language “<i>Avropa, Asiya, Afrika, Avstraliya və Amerika</i>”) – Intercultural Cooperation Platform was initiated by Azerbaijan;</li> <li>2. Established a Baku Global Think-Tank Group for Intercultural Dialogue as a research group of World Forum;</li> <li>3. Created a foundation to implement the CEDAW process and make the most of existing institutional and legal constraints to promote and protect the role of women in intercultural dialogue.</li> </ol>
2	Second World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue	29 May 29-1 June 2013	“Living together peacefully in a diverse world”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1st Ministerial Meeting within the Baku Process with over 75 participants from Europe, Asia, Africa and Americas;</li> </ol>
3	3rd World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue	18-19 May 2015	“Sharing Culture for Shared Security”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inauguration of the “Tree of Peace”, a sculpture by Hedva Ser, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Cultural Diplomacy;</li> <li>2. 1st Academic Forum of UNESCO Chairs on Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue;</li> </ol>
4	4th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue	5-6 May 2017	“Advancing Intercultural Dialogue: New Avenues for Human Security, Peace and Sustainable Development”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1st High-Level Meeting of International Organizations with participation of representatives from UN, UNESCO, ICESCO and other notable international organizations;</li> <li>2. Recognized the changing global political context by seeking to include all so-called Global Connectors and reach out directly to new entrants to WFID – notably the private sector;</li> </ol>
5	5th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue	2-3 May 2019	“Building dialogue into action against discrimination, inequality and violent conflict”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For the first time in WFIDs’ history participants from 135 countries attended the Forum;</li> <li>2. A two-year Action Plan promoting peace and intercultural dialogue in the world was adopted together with the partners of the Forum.</li> </ol>