



# World Humanities Conference

Liège, Belgium, 6-12 August 2017

## Draft Outcome Document

### A New Humanities Agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

We, the participants in the World Humanities Conference held in Liège, Belgium, from 6 to 12 August 2017, organized by UNESCO<sup>1</sup>, CIPSH<sup>2</sup> and the Foundation for the World Humanities Conference, which has brought together participants from all around the world to reflect and engage in dialogues to establish a new agenda for the humanities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century,

Inspired by the constitution of UNESCO, which states that the defences of peace must be constructed in the minds of men that peace must be founded upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind,

Considering the constitution of CIPSH, which states that a better knowledge of human behaviour is indispensable to a closer understanding of peoples, and identifies cooperation among scholars and with non-academic partners as relevant levers for fostering such knowledge and its dissemination, and reiterating the 2010 call by the General Assembly of CIPSH, meeting in Nagoya, for a new foundation of the humanities, rooted in their responsibility in managing the human and cultural complexity of our societies, within a plurality of world cultures;<sup>3</sup>

Aiming to contribute actively to the 2030 Agenda for Inclusive and Sustainable Development, with the specific approach and competences of the humanities;

---

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

<sup>2</sup> Conseil International de la Philosophie et des Sciences Humaines (*International Council of Philosophie and Human Sciences*)

<sup>3</sup> Final Statement of Outcomes presented at the CIPSH-ISSC General Assembly and a Joint Scientific Symposium

(<http://www.cipsh.net/upload/userfiles/ISSC-CIPSH%20Joint%20Symposium%20Statement%20of%20Outcomes.pdf>)



Reaffirming the 2011 Busan Declaration,<sup>4</sup> which states the urgency of addressing the current status of humanities and rethinking the meaning of humanism in the face of ongoing crises and rising uncertainty in a world affected by rapid globalization;

Recalling the statement of UNESCO's Executive Board in May 2017 reaffirming the importance of "the role of humanities in a world in transition" and their "historic task of struggling against xenophobia, intolerance and fundamentalism";<sup>5</sup>

Aware of growing difficulties across the globe, where humanities are not only faced with intellectual challenges that see their relevance called into question, requiring reconsideration of their traditional status, but also with institutional challenges, as increasingly scarce humanities funding pressures scholars to conform to the metrics of application-oriented disciplines;

1. [Action to be undertaken by foundations, councils and other funding bodies]

Call on foundations, councils, sponsors and other funding bodies to establish transparent mechanisms of collaborative international funding, securing the academic independence of researchers and the wider socialization of new knowledge resulting from such efforts;

2. [Action to be undertaken by media and civil society]

Call on media to make the message of the World Humanities Conference accessible to all members of civil society who are in turn expected to engage in discussion with regard to how and why humanities matter to their lives individually and collectively;

3. Call on higher education institutions, academies, research centres and similar scholarly bodies and communities:

- [Agenda in reference to the organization of higher education as well as general education]

To foster interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration with other domains of research and human reflection, from sciences to the arts and traditional knowledge, and also to collaborate in conceiving new ways of teaching the humanities in general

---

<sup>4</sup> Busan Declaration: Towards a New Humanism for the 21st Century

([http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=221283&set=0059072AB2\\_0\\_376&gp=1&mode=e&lin=1&ll=1](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=221283&set=0059072AB2_0_376&gp=1&mode=e&lin=1&ll=1))

<sup>5</sup> 201 EX /Dec. 37 (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002480/248002e.pdf>)



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Management of  
Social Transformations  
Programme

## Public consultation document – July 2017



education and for lifelong learning;

- [\[Agenda in reference to assessment of research in the humanities\]](#)

To recognize that specific and transparent qualitative criteria of assessment of research in the humanities should be discussed and agreed;

- [\[Agenda in reference to language\]](#)

To endorse language diversity in academic publications, to produce extensive multi-language lexicons in the various fields of studies and to secure translation of all main international conventions into all national languages;

- [\[Agenda in reference to societal challenges, namely climate/environment/sustainability, borders/migrations/identities, history/memory/politics/heritage, new humanities challenges\]](#)

To recognize the irreplaceable capacity of humanities helping contemporary societies to meet critical challenges of the 2030 Agenda, which relate to meanings, values, understandings and long-term trends;

- [\[Engagement and follow-up\]](#)

To join and contribute to UNESCO and CIPSH initiatives to follow up on the World Humanities Conference;

#### 4. Call on CIPSH and its member organisations:

- [\[Research agenda\]](#)

To promote in the framework of a research agenda the re-foundation of the humanities epistemological framework through interaction and convergence of different academic traditions, the re-connection of disciplinary educations through humanities, and the re-structuration of humanities research framework, namely engaging other fields of expertise in CIPSH,

- [\[Public agenda\]](#)

To discuss and assess their contribution towards their global projects and interactions amongst each other, with UNESCO and other potential partners for the advancement of academic knowledge as well as the re-introduction of humanities perspectives into daily life of societies;



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Management of  
Social Transformations  
Programme

## Public consultation document – July 2017



### 5. Call on UNESCO, through its Secretariat and Member States:

- [\[Action to be undertaken by UNESCO Secretariat\]](#)  
To ensure the strong presence of humanities within the Management of Social Transformations Programme, in particular by promoting the establishment of a network of UNESCO Humanities Chairs in all regions of the world to facilitate international scientific cooperation amongst the disciplines of humanities, and, in close collaboration with CIPSH, by scoping and in due course producing periodical editions of a World Humanities Report;
- [\[Action to be undertaken by UNESCO, through its Secretariat and Member States\]](#)  
To take into consideration the outcome of the World Humanities Conference within their own strategies, namely in terms of research and education policies, language considerations, quality assessment and funding of the humanities, as well as their engagement in the main societal challenges in collaboration with CIPSH;
- [\[Agenda of UNESCO, through its Member States and Secretariat\]](#)  
To ensure that the outcome of the World Humanities Conference is taken into account by the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference of UNESCO in November 2017, as requested by the Executive Board.