

Universal Periodic Review
(23rd session, October–November 2015)
Contribution of UNESCO to Compilation of UN information
(to Part I. A. and to Part III - F, J, K, and P)

Oman

I. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

Scope of international obligations: Human rights treaties which fall within the competence of UNESCO and international instruments adopted by UNESCO

1. Table:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession or succession</i>	<i>Declarations /reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>	<i>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence</i>
Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)	Not state party to this Convention	<i>Reservations to this Convention shall not be permitted</i>		Right to education
Convention on Technical and Vocational Education. (1989)	State party to this Convention			Right to education
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)	06/10/1981, Acceptance	<i>Declared not to be bound by the provisions of Article 16, paragraph 1</i>	N/A	Right to take part in cultural life
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)	04/08/2005, Ratification		N/A	Right to take part in cultural life
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural	16/03/2007,		N/A	Right to take part in cultural life

Expressions (2005)	Ratification			
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II. Input to Part III. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law to items F, J, K, and P

Right to education

NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

Constitutional Framework:

2. The **Basic Law of the Sultanate of Oman (the Constitution)** was promulgated in the Royal Decree No. 101/1996, which was published in the Official Gazette on 6 November 1996¹. The text does not explicitly enshrine the right to education, however, **Article 13** recognize Education as a key pillar of the society and provides that:

- a) "Education is a cornerstone for the progress of society which the State fosters and endeavours to make it accessible to all.
- b) Education aims to raise and develop the general cultural standard, promote scientific thought, kindle the spirit of research, respond to the requirements of economic and social plans, build a generation that is physically and morally strong, that takes pride in its nation, country and heritage, and preserves its achievements.
- c) The State provides public education, works to combat illiteracy and encourages the establishment of private schools and institutes under its supervision and in accordance with the provisions of the Law.
- d) The State fosters and preserves the national heritage, encourages the sciences, arts, literature, and scientific research and assist in their propagation."

Moreover, **Article 12** states that "Justice, equality and equality of opportunity between Omanis are the pillars of society, guaranteed by the State" and with regard to the principle of non-discrimination, **Article 17** adds that "All citizens are equal before the Law, and they share the same public rights and duties. There is no discrimination between them on the ground of gender, origin, colour, language, religion, sect, domicile or social status."

Legislative Framework:

¹ <http://www.omanet.om/english/government/basiclaw/overview.asp?cat=gov&subcat=blaw>
<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/47392/92273/F544628608/OMN47392.pdf>
<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/d7b9a489f1f0469e700f4cd76f21550a0bf1c25c.pdf>,
 Accessed on 23/01/2014

3. The legislative framework of Oman is composed of:
- a) “The **organizational regulations for public schools** issued by **Ministerial decision No. 21** of 1993 are considered the basis on which the work of the schools is organized, where the administration of the school finds the organizational and guiding tool for the operations and foundations of the educational system.
 - b) Education policies in the Sultanate also proceed from the **Basic Statute of State issued by Decree No. 101/1996**. The Ministry is working in accordance with the educational guidelines stipulated in these regulations stating, *inter alia*, that education is the fundamental basis for social progress sponsored by the State; which seeks to disseminate and expand education; raise the general cultural level; develop scientific thought; promote the spirit of research; respond to the needs of social and economic plans; and create a new generation, strong in its structure and morality and proud of its nation, its country, its heritage and willing to preserve its accomplishments.
 - c) In addition, **other regulations and guidelines** are issued by specialized departments of the Ministry complementing the organizational regulations, such as the regulations concerning: libraries, and the laboratory, the social specialist and the educational activities guidelines.
 - d) [The Department of Regulations and Performance Evaluation] is currently studying the **regulations governing schools in the public sector**, in order to modernize them according to the Ministry’s commitments in the field of education.
 - e) Amendments have recently been completed on the **regulations regarding Parent Councils** in order to improve their role in the developments being implemented by the Ministry, the objective being to extend co-operation between the school, parents and society. These amendments have been issued by **Ministerial decision No. 10/99**.
 - f) The **Royal Decree No. 104/2005** has established the Higher Education Admission Centre, affiliated to the Ministry of Higher Education. The **Ministerial Decree No. 8/2011** issued by the Ministry of Higher Education on 29 January 2011 details the procedures for admission to higher education institutions.
 - g) Education is provided free of charge to all children from grade 1 to grade 12.”²
 - h) “**Regulations regarding co-operative associations** are currently under review, in order to take into account the remarks made by educational regions and other departments of the Ministry. It should be mentioned that the objectives of the co-operative associations are to develop social relations among students, facilitate their access to educational materials, and train them to participate and invest in funds of public and private benefit.
 - i) The Department is also amending the **regulations regarding student affairs and school discipline** in the light of the remarks received from educational regions and the findings of the field visits made by the department, in order to take advantage of the innovations in

² IBE, World Data on Education, 7th ed., 2010-2011, Oman, pp. 2-3,
http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Oman.pdf, Accessed on 23/01/2014

that domain and to benefit from the experience of other countries. It should be noted that the new regulations insist on preventive educational methods that could help school administrators in guiding student behaviour and organizing relations in order to prepare a sound educational climate to fulfil the mission of the school.”³

- j) “There is no compulsory education in Oman”⁴, but “free quality education is available for all students, both boys and girls, wherever they may live and from all socio-economic levels. In 2008, **Royal Decree 63/2008**⁵ on the law of the disabled extended this right by specifying that individuals with disabilities have the right to education and training.”⁶

Institutional Framework:

4. “Within the framework of the new structure of the Ministry of Education, a new department (**Department of Regulations and Performance Evaluation**) was created. Its functions are to study, propose and follow-up the enforcement of rules, regulations and decisions organizing the work of schools in the public sector, to supervise guidance counselors in educational regions, and to evaluate the performance of schools.”⁷

5. “The **Administrative Orientation and Student Affairs Section** was created in every educational region of the Sultanate with the aim of supervising the formulation of laws and regulations, and monitoring their enforcement, in co-ordination with the concerned departments in the Ministry.”⁸

Policy Framework:

A) General information

³ IBE, World Data on Education, 6th ed., 2006-2007, Oman, p. 6,
http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/archive/Countries/WDE/2006/ARAB_STATES/Oman/Oman.pdf,
Accessed on 23/01/2014

⁴ IBE, World Data on Education, 6th ed., 2006-2007, Oman, p. 6,
http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/archive/Countries/WDE/2006/ARAB_STATES/Oman/Oman.pdf,
Accessed on 23/01/2014

⁵ <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/86171/97049/F437420075/OMN86171%20Arabic.pdf> (in Arabic only)

⁶ Inclusive education in the Sultanate of Oman: national report of the Sultanate of Oman, submitted for the 48th International Conference on Education in 2008, p. 59,
http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/oman_NR08.pdf, Accessed on 23/01/2014

⁷ IBE, World Data on Education, 7th ed., 2010-2011, Oman, pp. 2-3,
http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Oman.pdf, Accessed on 23/01/2014

⁸ IBE, World Data on Education, 6th ed., 2006-2007, Oman, p. 6,
http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/archive/Countries/WDE/2006/ARAB_STATES/Oman/Oman.pdf,
Accessed on 23/01/2014

6. “In the **Fifth Development Plan (1995-2000)**, the Ministry introduced further innovations, with the aim of creating an education system that would match those of advanced countries. The major objective of this plan was the improvement of the quality and efficiency of the general education system in order to match international standards.”⁹

7. “The [...] **National programmes, plans** (in particular, the **Sixth Development Plan 2001-2005**) and political declarations on education mainly concerned the following issues:

- a) Enforcement of decentralization of administration;
- b) Providing universal education: the Government aims to provide education to all members of the society regardless of gender, both in towns and rural areas [...];
- c) Planning and programming of facilities [...];
- d) Encouraging the expansion of private education;
- e) Developing the assessment and evaluation system;
- f) Providing quality education at all levels.”¹⁰

8. In the **Seventh Five Year Plan (2006-2010)**, the education priorities were “to continue increasing enrolment and literacy rates, enhancing the participation of the private sector in education and improving the quality of education.”¹¹

9. “The drawing up of a **National Strategy for Childhood, 2006**: the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of National Economy and UNICEF collaborated to formulate a future vision for early childhood in Omani society and define the goals and aims which development plans and programmes will strive to achieve in the area of childhood. In this context and pursuant to the extreme importance accorded to children in the Sultanate, several studies were drafted in 2007 for the national strategy for childhood on a number of themes – legislative, health, environmental, educational, cultural, social and the media – to ensure that children obtain the best levels of protection and care, designed to address and prevent the problems of childhood, and to formulate guidelines, programmes and plans in respect thereof.

10. The most important goals of the strategy are:

- a) the provision of full protection and care for children,
- b) ensuring that they grow up in a safe and risk-free environment,
- c) the protection of children,
- d) enshrining their rights in legislation and

⁹ World Data on Education, sixth edition, 2006-07, Oman, p. 2, http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/archive/Countries/WDE/2006/ARAB_STATES/Oman/Oman.pdf, Accessed on 23/01/2014

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 3

¹¹ Inclusive education in the Sultanate of Oman: national report of the Sultanate of Oman, submitted for the 48th International Conference on Education in 2008, p. 14, http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/oman_NR08.pdf, Accessed on 23/01/2014

- e) guaranteeing the application of these rights in society.”¹²

B) Inclusive Education

11. “The **National Strategy for the Disabled**: the Ministry of Social Development, the official body which oversees this group, engaged in formulating a national strategy for the care of the disabled, which comprises all welfare, rehabilitation, educational and employment services for this section of society, including matters relating to disabled rights education. In coordination with the Ministry of Information, a three year plan (2008-2010) has been put in place in this regard.”¹³

12. There are several initiatives taken towards inclusive education:

- a) “**Wheelchair accessibility** is now included in all new schools being built by the ministry. This facilitates access to education and gives a clear message of acceptance and welcome to the physically disabled.
- b) The role of the school social worker is being redefined to **provide more social care in schools** and more effectively meet the needs of students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.
- c) **Assistance to low-income families** is provided. Both the government and the private sector offer assistance to low-income families, such as providing school uniforms and one free meal per day for each student.
- d) A **nutrition programme**, focusing on the importance of providing students with nutritious food, was carried out in pilot schools in each region during 2003-2004 in coordination with the Ministry of Health. [...]
- e) A **health programme** has been introduced in schools. In cooperation with the Ministry of Health, all schools in the country offer the services of a nurse and, on occasion, of a doctor, who provide medical assistance and information on student health issues. [...]

C) Teachers

13. “Oman has large numbers of teachers, resulting in pupil/teacher ratios of 12:1 at primary level and 15:1 at secondary level in 2009. Newly recruited teachers have no choice of school, but are allocated by the Ministry of Education. The distribution of teachers is even across regions, with

¹² National submitted to UNESCO in 2009 within the framework of the fourth consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO’s Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (covering the period 2005-2008), p. 7, unofficial translation

¹³ National submitted to UNESCO in 2009 within the framework of the fourth consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO’s Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (covering the period 2005-2008), p. 7, unofficial translation

¹⁴ Inclusive education in the Sultanate of Oman: national report of the Sultanate of Oman, submitted for the 48th International Conference on Education in 2008, p. 55,
http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/oman_NR08.pdf, Accessed on 23/01/2014

the average pupil/teacher ratio for primary and secondary education varying in 2009 from 8:1 in Al-Wusta, a remote, sparsely populated region, to 14:1 in Al-Batinah, in the north. However, teachers can request a transfer after one year: in 2009, 5.8% of all teachers were transferred, mostly out of remote regions, which were left with a large proportion of inexperienced teachers. In Al-Wusta in 2009, 59% of teachers had less than five years of experience, compared with 26% nationally (Oman Ministry of Education and World Bank, 2012).¹⁵

D) Quality education

14. The **School Performance Evaluation System** was introduced to “establish national criteria and introduce a comprehensive system of school self-evaluation, complemented by occasional, thorough external evaluation.”¹⁶

E) Curriculum

15. “Objectives [of the Ministry of Education]:

[...]Work on forming appropriate curricula and constantly develop to keep abreast of modern developments at a time that runs in a very rapid pace.”¹⁷

16. “The Ministry of Education has developed the curricula, including therein concepts for teaching students about their rights and duties vis-à-vis their homeland, society and environment, supporting the teaching of human rights in the curricula and reviewing several of the general goals of each subject.”¹⁸ The themes integrated are the following: “health care, gender equality, and equality before the law, free education, prevention of the employment of children, teaching those with special needs, dignity, the prevention of abuse, freedom of expression, gender equality at work, social security, justice, tolerance, life and security, consultation, democracy, freedom of belief.”¹⁹ “On this basis, advanced Omani curricula will be characterised by clarity of vision in

¹⁵EFA GMR 2013-14, p 251 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002256/225660e.pdf>

¹⁶ Inclusive education in the Sultanate of Oman: national report of the Sultanate of Oman, submitted for the 48th International Conference on Education in 2008, p. 22, http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/oman_NR08.pdf, Accessed on 23/01/2014

¹⁷ Ministry of Education’s website, accessible at :

http://www.oman.om/wps/portal/!ut/p/a1/hc5NC4JAEAbg39LBY86kYtrNEENNIItTSvYTCugrmymyPZ_z6TLkEfc3uH52UGCCRAMuxasayveJPVz0z0U-j569DVFDT0WEc39veR4-ACcTmCdAT4ZSsz81w9pA0cgE1Nxg7gz3cCPAgsV9eB45lZXbVt7gR9nPCCs5vn0cmo1uWowIIIWVFAhX8S4Lv u-7VYSSjgMg8w4ZzWVCyHhp0bJux6SNwjtObm5c5Lfb2v2AB1EZME!/dl5/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/EN/site/home/gov/gov1/gm/moe/, accessed on : 25/11/2014

¹⁸ National submitted to UNESCO in 2009 within the framework of the fourth consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO’s Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (covering the period 2005-2008), p. 5, unofficial translation

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 10, unofficial translation

respect of how to incorporate the values and principles of human rights in the educational system. They will be integrated in respect of their incorporation of pedagogic values related to the culture of human rights and make use of classroom and non-classroom activities in support of the culture of human rights.”²⁰

F) Financing of education

17. “**Scholarships** and overseas study are made available to males and females equally. There is no specific programme to encourage females to study the subjects traditionally set aside for males, just as there are no scholarships and programmes set aside for women and not men.”²¹

G) Gender equality

18. “**Study on gender equality and the empowerment of women:** This study tracks progress in the capacity-building of Omani women in various fields, analyses gender discrepancies in respect of, inter alia, such acquired rights as education, health and employment and in respect of State leadership positions, and offers recommendations for the reduction of the gap between men and women at all levels.”²²

19. “Since the 1980s, the Sultanate has held a number of **training courses** in various fields for women across the country. [...]The issues dealt with include the following: [...] Equal opportunity in education and employment.”²³

20. “Private schools apply the **co-educational system at all levels**, as do Government and private institutions of higher education. Government schools, however, limit the co-educational model to the first stage of basic education (grades 1-4). That is in response to the demands of the Consultative Assembly and parents’ councils for a combination of co-educational education at the first and last stages of education and separation of the sexes in the middle stage, for cultural, social and age-related considerations.”²⁴

²⁰ Ibid, p. 6, unofficial translation

²¹ Oman’s Report on the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women, 2010, p.21, accessible at:
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fOMN%2f1&Lang=fr (Accessed on 26/11/2014)

²² Oman’s Report on the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women, 2010, p.8, accessible at:
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fOMN%2f1&Lang=fr (Accessed on 26/11/2014)

²³ Oman’s Report on the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women, 2010, p.8, accessible at:
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fOMN%2f1&Lang=fr (Accessed on 26/11/2014)

²⁴ Oman’s Report on the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women, 2010, p.20, accessible at:

21. “**Curricula and textbooks have been revised** at least twice in order to present male and female roles as mutually supportive and based on equality in respect of rights and duties. The last revision took place when preparations were being made to apply the basic education system before accession to CEDAW, and references discriminating on the basis of gender and showing stereotyped categories were systematically removed. Training workshops were held for teaching staff, for the same purpose.”²⁵

Cooperation:

22. Oman is **not party** to the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education. Oman reported to UNESCO on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1960 UNESCO Recommendation against Discrimination in Education within the framework of the **Sixth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 1994-1999).

23. However, Oman did not report to UNESCO within the framework of the:

- a) **Seventh Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2000-2005)
- b) **Eighth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2006-2011).

24. Oman reported to UNESCO on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms within the framework of the **Fourth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2005-2008). However, Oman did not report to UNESCO within the framework of the **Fifth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2009-2012).

25. Oman did not report to UNESCO on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1976 UNESCO Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education within the framework of the **First Consultation** of Member States (1993). However, Oman did report to UNESCO within the framework of the **Second Consultation** of Member States (2011).

26. Oman is **a party** to the 1989 UNESCO Convention on Technical and Vocational Education since 02/04/1991.

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fOMN%2f1&Lang=fr (Accessed on 26/11/2014)

²⁵ Oman’s Report on the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women, 2010, p.21, accessible at: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fOMN%2f1&Lang=fr (Accessed on 26/11/2014)

Freedom of opinion and expression

Constitutional and legislative framework:

27. Freedom of expression and freedom of the press are guaranteed by the 1996 Basic Statute of the State of Oman.²⁶

28. The 1984 Decree on Press and Publications extends the 1974 Penal Code of Oman that already rendered defamation as a criminal offense.²⁷ Any kind of publication of what is considered defamatory matter can lead up to imprisonment for a maximum of three years.²⁸

29. Omantel, the sole Internet Service Provider of Oman, requires internet users to sign the Internet Services Manual.²⁹ This stipulates what can be published online, allowing the government to control internet content.

30. The 2002 Telecommunications Regulatory Act allows the authorities to prosecute individuals for any message that “violates the public order and morals” with a maximum imprisonment sentence of one year.³⁰

31. There is no Freedom of Information law in Oman.

Media self-regulation:

32. Self-regulatory mechanisms of the media exist in Oman through an entity such as the Oman Journalist Association.

Safety of journalists:

33. UNESCO recorded no killing of journalists in Oman between 2008 and 2013.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

²⁶ See the Basic Statute of the State (Constitution of Oman) at https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Oman_2011.pdf

²⁷ See the Penal Code of Oman (Royal Decree N. 7/74) at https://www.unodc.org/tldb/pdf/Oman_CP.pdf, in particular Articles 126, 135, and 173.

²⁸ See the ‘Royal Sultani Decree No. 49/1984 on Press and Publications issued on May 29, 1984’ at: http://www.dc4mf.org/sites/default/files/press_law_oman.pdf

²⁹ See the ‘Internet Services Manual’ at: http://www.omantel.om/wpresources/files/CyberCafe/Terms_and_conditions_internet_cafe.pdf

³⁰ See the Telecommunications Regulatory Act (Royal Decree No. 30/2002) at <http://www.ituarabic.org/coe/2005/Interconnection-05/Documents/Additional-2b.pdf>.

Recommendations made within the framework of the first cycle of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, considered on (please check the date on the following web site: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Documentation.aspx>)

Right to education

34. In the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of 24 March 2011, the following recommendations were made to Oman:

- i. 89.15. *Continue efforts to **enhance the capacities of institutions working with persons with disabilities**, including educational and health institutions (Saudi Arabia);*
- ii. 89.20. *Further pursue cooperation with civil society organizations with a view to **promoting and protecting human rights in different areas, including the areas of education, health, migrant workers and gender equality** (Morocco);*
- iii. 89.28. *That the Sultanate of Oman strengthen its cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights with a view to holding more training sessions for awareness raising and **education on human rights** (Kuwait);*
- iv. 89.42. *Ensure **equal rights between women and men** with regard to [...] education (Italy);*
- v. 89.82. *Maintain its efforts in the fields of health and education (Cuba);*
- vi. 89.83. *Strengthen education and health systems, **fight illiteracy** and raise awareness on human rights issues (Saudi Arabia);*
- vii. 89.86. *Continue efforts to ensure the **enrolment of all segments of society in education** (Yemen);*
- viii. 89.87. ***Remove all restrictions on girls' access to education** (Australia);*
- ix. 89.89. *Continue its efforts to integrate **human rights education** in the remaining grades in schools (Democratic People's Republic of Korea);*
- x. 89.90. *Increase efforts to **integrate a human rights culture into school curricula** at all stages of education (Bahrain);*
- xi. 89.91. *Improve continuously the **implementation of its programmes for human rights education** (Philippines);*
- xii. 89.92. *That the Sultanate of Oman further pursue the practical measures which it has taken to **spread a human rights culture in educational institutions, and use the media for this purpose** (Kuwait);*
- xiii. 89.93. *Intensify programmes and activities and **provide training and education on human rights issues to military and police officers** (Saudi Arabia);*
- xiv. 89.94. *Share best practices in **promoting the education of children with disabilities** (Qatar);*
- xv. 89.95. ***Share with other States its expertise** and achievements in the management of institutions providing special needs education (Saudi Arabia);*
- xvi. 89.96. *Continue efforts to **provide educational facilities to persons with special needs** (Lebanon);*

All those recommendations enjoyed the support of Oman.

Analysis:

35. Oman adopted various programmes to improve access to quality education, through several Development and National Plans and through the “National Strategy for Childhood”. It also strived to make education more inclusive by adopting a “National Strategy for the Disabled”. However, no sufficient measures have been taken to address persisting discriminations, especially against women. In addition, no further measures including human rights education in training and curricula, especially as regards Oman military and police officers have been taken.

36. Specific Recommendations:

36.1 Oman should be strongly encouraged to ratify the UNESCO Convention against discrimination in education

36.2 Oman should be encouraged to further submit state reports for the periodic consultations of UNESCO’s education related standard-setting instruments.

36.3 Oman could be encouraged to further provide human rights education, especially for its military and policy officers.

36.4 Oman could be encouraged to further promote education for all, especially by continuing to implement programmes to ban discrimination against women.

36.5 Oman could be encouraged to further its policy to improve access of the persons with disability to education.

Freedom of opinion and expression

37. Oman is recommended to introduce an access to information law that is in accordance with international standards.³¹

38. Oman is recommended to decriminalize defamation, currently found in 1984 Decree on Press and Publications, the 1974 Penal Code as well as the related 2002 Telecommunications

³¹ See for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the recommendations of the 2000 Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the 1981; 2002 Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the 2002 African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression in Africa and the 2000 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights’ Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression.

Regulatory Act, together with any internet-related provisions, and place it within a civil code that is in accordance with international standards.³²

Cultural rights

39. As a State Party to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)³³ and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)³⁴, Oman is encouraged to fully implement the relevant provisions that promote access to and participation in cultural heritage and creative expressions and, as such, are conducive to implementing the right to take part in cultural life as defined in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In doing so, Oman is encouraged to give due consideration to the participation of communities, practitioners, cultural actors and NGOs from the civil society as well as vulnerable groups (minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, young peoples and peoples with disabilities), and to ensure that equal opportunities are given to women and girls to address gender disparities.

Freedom of scientific research and the right to benefit from scientific progress and its applications

40. **Oman**, in the framework of the 2015-2017 consultations related to the revision and monitoring of the Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers is encouraged to report to UNESCO on any legislative or other steps undertaken by it with the aim to implement this international standard-setting instrument, adopted by UNESCO in 1974. The 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers sets forth the principles and norms of conducting scientific research and experimental development and applying its results and technological innovations in the best interests of pursuing scientific truth and contributing to the enhancement of their fellow citizens' well-being and the benefit of mankind and peace. The

³² See for example, General Comments No 34. of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 2006 Recommendation of the 87th Session Human Rights Committee, the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, and Resolution 1577 (2007) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

³³ See UNESCO 2013. Oman Periodic Report on the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/download.php?versionID=22443>

³⁴ See UNESCO 2012. Oman Periodic Report on the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Heritage. http://www.unesco.org/culture/cultural-diversity/2005convention/data.php?1411480344&dir=reports&link=Oman_Report_OwnFormat_EN_2012.pdf

Recommendation also provides the guidelines for formulating and executing adequate science and technology policies, based on these principles and designed to avoid the possible dangers and fully realize and exploit the positive prospects inherent in such scientific discoveries, technological developments and applications. **Oman** did not submit its 2011-2012 report on the implementation of the 1974 Recommendation. In providing its report in 2015-2017 on this matter, **Oman** is kindly invited to pay a particular attention to the legal provisions and regulatory frameworks which ensure that scientific researchers have the responsibility and the right to work in the spirit of the principles enshrined in the 1974 Recommendation, such as: i) intellectual freedom to pursue, expound and defend the scientific truth as they see it, and autonomy and freedom of research, and academic freedom to openly communicate on research results, hypotheses and opinions in the best interests of accuracy and objectivity of scientific results; ii) participation of scientific researchers in definition of the aims and objectives of the programmes in which they are engaged and to the determination of the methods to be adopted which should be compatible with respect for universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as ecological and social responsibility; iii) freedom of expression relating to the human, social or ecological value of certain projects and in the last resort withdraw from those projects if their conscience so dictates ; iv) freedom of movement, in particular for participation in international scientific and technological gatherings for furtherance of international peace, cooperation and understanding; v) guarantees of non-discrimination in application of rights to satisfactory and safe working conditions and avoidance of hardship; to access to educational facilities, occupational mobility, career development, participation in public life, and vi) right of association, etc.