



UNESCO'S SAMARKAND CONFERENCE AS A CENTER FOR INITIATIVES AND COOPERATION

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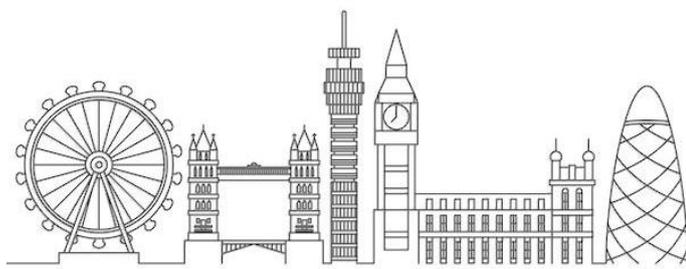
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Abstract. *This article analyzes the main issues discussed and proposals put forward within the framework of the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference, held in Samarkand from October 30 to November 13, 2025. Also covered are the materials of important events related to the organization's activities, including UNESCO's 14th Youth Forum, the 12th Interregional Council of UNESCO National Commissions, and the international conference ‘‘Samarkand - 3000-year Historical Heritage’’. The article comprehensively analyzes current issues such as global trends and prospects in the field of education, climate change, energy efficiency, the role of science and technology in solving environmental problems, preserving the world cultural and natural heritage, ensuring cultural diversity, and promoting cultural values. In the research process, relevant regulatory legal documents, scientific research, special literature, and materials of the periodical press were used.*

Keywords: *UNESCO, Uzbekistan, Samarkand, General Conference, Executive Council, tangible cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage, national values, history, culture, art, folklore, international cooperation.*

Today, issues such as establishing peace throughout the world, eliminating poverty, ensuring sustainable development, establishing intercultural dialogue through education, developing scientific fields, promoting international cultural and information exchange, and developing tourism are among the important tasks of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, including UNESCO, which is an organization for science, education, and culture.

The General Conference, one of the three main bodies of UNESCO, is the main body of the organization and is held every two years in Paris, the headquarters of the organization, with the participation of all member states. From October 30 to November 13, 2025, Uzbekistan hosted the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference, a world-class event in the ancient and vibrant city of Samarkand. The event became a historically significant event that contributed to the further enhancement of the country's authority in the international arena, acquainting the world community with the rich history and culture of Uzbekistan. The main event of UNESCO, a cultural organization of the UN, was organized outside its headquarters in Paris for the first time in more than 40





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years. The last visiting format of the organization's General Conference was held in 1985 in Safia, the capital of Bulgaria.

Since Uzbekistan joined the ranks of UNESCO member states on October 26, 1993, it has been actively cooperating with the organization in areas within its competence. As a result of this successful cooperation, a major conference of the organization was entrusted to Uzbekistan. At the 43rd session held in Samarkand, one of the main events of the General Conference was the confirmation of Egyptian Khalid al-Anani⁴⁸ as the new Director-General of UNESCO. He was elected as the twelfth head of the organization. For Ms. Audrey Azoulay, who has led the organization since 2017, the Samarkand session was the last one in which she participated as the organization's Director-General. The new Director-General of UNESCO officially took office in Samarkand. Khalid al-Anani won the election held at the 222nd session of the organization's Executive Committee.

“At a time when divisions can cast a shadow on dialogue, it is necessary to remind everyone that our future depends on each other. The message of the UNESCO General Conference must be clear: common heritage and collective knowledge are the foundation on which we can build peace and sustainable development. In Samarkand, we speak the languages of education, culture, and science” said Ms. Audrey Azoulay⁴⁹. The participation of Ms. Audrey Azoulay, who headed the organization, and the newly elected Khalid al-Anani in this prestigious conference also increased its significance.

Before the start of the main event, on October 27-28, the city of Samarkand hosted the XIV UNESCO Youth Forum, which united young people from all over the world. This major international conference, dedicated to the theme “Climate Movement and its Social Impact, Especially for Youth,” was organized by UNESCO and the Government of Uzbekistan. The purpose of the conference is to support the active participation of young people in the fight against climate change, to promote their initiatives and ideas on a global scale, and to jointly shape a sustainable future⁵⁰. The Youth Forum has been a traditional platform for dialogue between young leaders, held biennially since 1999⁵¹. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the 14th Youth Forum symbolically marked the beginning of the conference.

Within the framework of the conference, the 12th Interregional Meeting of the National Commissions for UNESCO Affairs was also held at the Samarkand International Tourism Center⁵². The meeting was opened by the Chairperson of the National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO Gayane Umerova, who was elected Chairperson of the meeting. The meeting discussed issues of youth

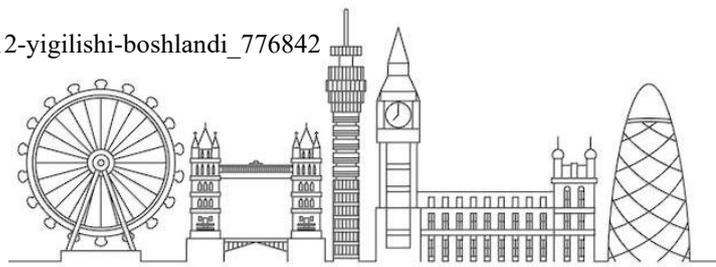
⁴⁸ <https://dunyo.info/uz/UNESCO---samarkand/v-samarkande-zavershaetsya-podgotovka-k-predstoyaschey-43-y-sessii-generalnoy-konferencii-yunesko>

⁴⁹ https://uza.uz/uz/posts/yunesko-bosh-direktori-samarqandga-keldi_776752

⁵⁰ https://uza.uz/uz/posts/yunesko-43-sessiyasi-raisi-ozbekistonga-keldi_775827

⁵¹ <https://dunyo.info/uz/UNESCO---samarkand/v-samarkande-zavershaetsya-podgotovka-k-predstoyaschey-43-y-sessii-generalnoy-konferencii-yunesko>

⁵² https://uza.uz/uz/posts/yunesko-milliy-komissiyalarining-12-yigilishi-boshlandi_776842





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policy development, strengthening cooperation between states, civil society, and the private sector, sustainable development, and inclusivity.

The holding of the large-scale UNESCO International Forum in Samarkand was a vivid confirmation of the republic's commitment to the ideas and values of the organization, as well as its firm commitment to actively contribute to the development of global dialogue for peace, mutual understanding, and sustainable development. Within the framework of this important session, more than 150 events of various formats, seminars and conferences, international exhibitions, concert programs, including more than 20 additional events initiated by Uzbekistan, were held, dedicated to discussing key issues in the fields of education, science, culture, ecology, technology, and communications. The event was attended by high-level delegations from more than 200 countries and international organizations, including the President of the Republic of Serbia Alexander Vucic, the President of the Slovak Republic Peter Pellegrini, UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay, and other honored guests.

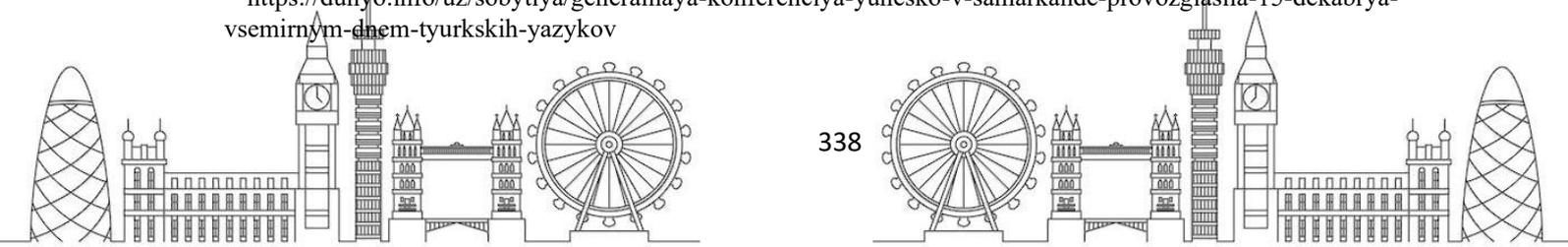
Within the framework of the conference, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev received the Director-General of the organization Audrey Azoulay in Samarkand. Issues of further development of the multifaceted partnership between the Republic of Uzbekistan and UNESCO were considered. At the conclusion of the meeting, the President of Uzbekistan presented Ms. Audrey Azoulay with the highest state award – “Do‘stlik”⁵³ (the Order of Friendship) - for her significant contributions to the development of ties in the fields of science, education, and culture, as well as for her personal contribution to the wide popularization of the rich cultural heritage of our people.

At the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference held in Samarkand on November 3, the initiative to declare World Turkic Languages Day by the member states of the organization was unanimously approved. This initiative was put forward by Uzbekistan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan in co-authorship with 26 UNESCO member states. December 15 was designated as the date for celebrating World Turkic Languages Day. It was on this date, in 1983, that the Danish scholar Wilhelm Thomsen announced the decipherment of one of the oldest documents testifying to the origin of the Turkic languages - the alphabet of the Orkhon inscriptions. According to the decision of the General Conference, Turkic languages are the native language of more than 200 million people living in the territory of several UNESCO member states, that is, on an area of about 12 million square kilometers⁵⁴.

The declaration of World Turkic Languages Day will contribute to the preservation and development of linguistic and cultural diversity, regional and global cooperation, oral traditions and forms of self-expression of the Turkic peoples, as well as the

⁵³ https://uza.uz/uz/posts/ozbekiston-prezidenti-yunesko-bilan-hamkorlikni-yanada-kengaytirish-muhimligini-qayd-etdi_777336

⁵⁴ <https://dunyo.info/uz/sobytiya/generalnaya-konferenciya-yunesko-v-samarkande-provozglasila-15-dekabrya-vsemirnym-dnem-tyurkskih-yazykov>





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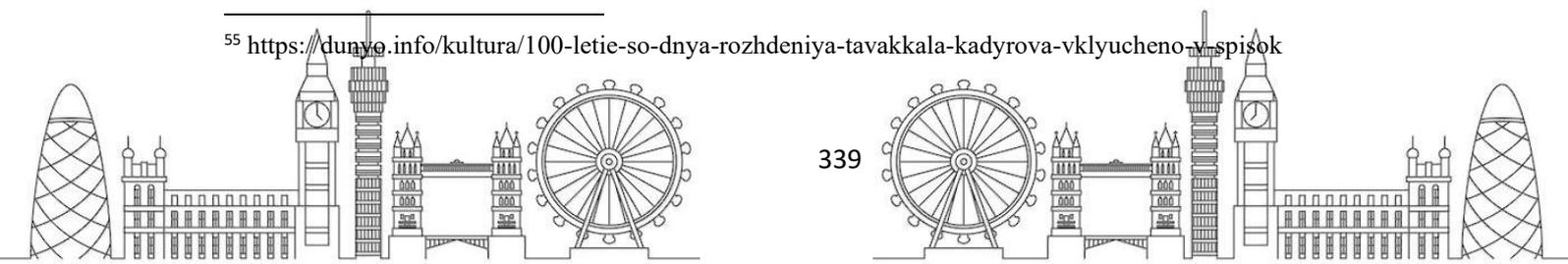
implementation of UNESCO's priority projects in these areas. This initiative will also serve as a new impetus for the active development of research on Turkic languages, holding informational and educational events and strengthening international cooperation, and popularizing the cultural and documentary heritage of Turkic-speaking states. As part of the celebration of World Turkic Languages Day, it is planned to hold various cultural presentations and events that demonstrate the cultural and social value of Turkic languages and raise awareness of their contribution to human progress, including exhibitions, lectures, literary evenings, and artistic performances.

The UNESCO - Uzbekistan Beruni Award ceremony "Scientific Research on Artificial Intelligence Ethics" was held on November 6 as part of the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference. Established jointly by UNESCO and the Government of Uzbekistan, this award recognizes the high contribution to the development of ethical standards in the field of artificial intelligence. The prize is awarded to three laureates once every two years to a person, institution, or organization. Each laureate will be awarded a medal, a certificate, and a cash prize of \$30,000. 2025 laureates: Professor Virgilio Augusto Fernández de Almeida, Professor Claudia Roda, and Professor Susan Perry, China, International Institute for Management of Artificial Intelligence at Tsinghua University.

On November 5, the international conference "Samarkand: 3000 Years of Heritage" was held at the Hilton Samarkand Regency Hotel. The event was organized by the Foundation for the Development of Culture and Arts of Uzbekistan, the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, the National Archaeological Center, and the khokimiyat of Samarkand region with the support of UNESCO. The conference was held within the framework of the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference. The forum brought together leading scientists, researchers, and representatives of international organizations from around the world. The participants exchanged views on archaeological discoveries, the development of urban planning in the Zarafshan Valley, and the role of Samarkand in the history of world civilization.

The 100th anniversary of Tavakkal Kadyrov's birth has been officially included in the list of international anniversaries to be celebrated by UNESCO in 2026-2027. The proposal of Uzbekistan (with the support of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Turkmenistan) to include the 100th anniversary of Tavakkal Kadyrov in the list of international anniversaries to be celebrated within the framework of UNESCO in 2026-2027 was approved at the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference held in Samarkand. UNESCO's decision is a vivid example of the international community's high appreciation for the outstanding contribution of the renowned Uzbek singer Tavakkal Kadyrov to the development of music, the art of singing, and culture, thereby advancing UNESCO's goals and objectives⁵⁵.

⁵⁵ <https://dunyo.info/kultura/100-letie-so-dnya-rozhdeniya-tavakkala-kadyrova-vklyucheno-v-spisok>

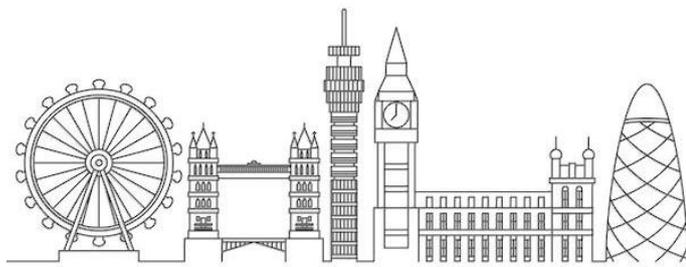
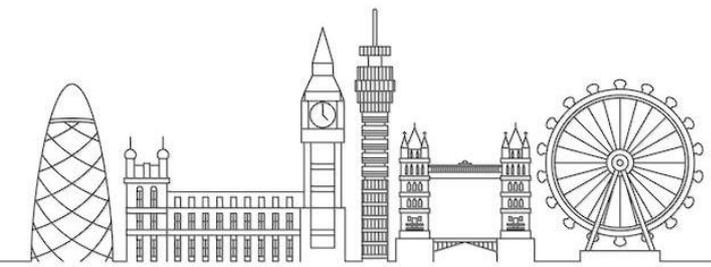




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President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev participated in the opening ceremony of the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference and put forward a number of important initiatives and proposals. Including:

- ✓ Implementation of the UNESCO Platform for the Development of Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs;
- ✓ Holding the World Professional Education Summit;
- ✓ implementation of the model project “Artificial Intelligence – School” in Uzbekistan with the participation of UNESCO in order to widely introduce artificial intelligence into the education system;
- ✓ Holding an international conference of experts on the ethics of artificial intelligence under the auspices of UNESCO;
- ✓ Declare November 19 as “International Day of Documentary Heritage”;
- ✓ Establishment of the International Institute for Digital Heritage, which is part of the UNESCO structure;
- ✓ Holding an international congress of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network on handicrafts in Bukhara in 2027;
- ✓ establishment of the UNESCO Academy for Women’s Leadership in order to study the most advanced experience and practice, exchange knowledge;
- ✓ Holding a global forum of women in the field of education, culture and science in Samarkand;
- ✓ Promoting the global initiative “UNESCO's Ecological Capital” to recognize and encourage cities that take a responsible approach to the environment and successfully implement “green” programs;
- ✓ Development of a resolution of the UNESCO Executive Council “On Strengthening Measures for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage in the Context of Globalization and Climate Change”;
- ✓ Holding an international symposium on the preservation of cultural heritage in the context of globalization and climate change in Khiva;
- ✓ dissemination of biased information in the virtual space, misleading public opinion, taking joint effective measures against discrimination;
- ✓ Holding an International Festival of Children's Cultural Content for the exchange of best creative works and multimedia ideas of the younger generation;
- ✓ Development of a comprehensive UNESCO strategy for the development of media literacy;
- ✓ The above-mentioned initiatives put forward by our President, such as joint use of the potential of unique projects implemented in Uzbekistan - the Center of Islamic Civilization, research centers of Imam Bukhari, Imam Moturidi, Imam Termizi,





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Bahouddin Naqshband, will be of great importance not only for Uzbekistan but also for the world community in the future.

In short, the holding of the UNESCO General Conference in Uzbekistan is a recognition of the republic's role in the international arena. Holding the conference in Samarkand will further strengthen the city's position as a center of world culture and civilization. The holding of the large-scale UNESCO International Forum in Samarkand became a vivid confirmation of the republic's commitment to the ideas and values of the organization, as well as its firm commitment to actively contribute to the development of global dialogue for peace, mutual understanding, and sustainable development.

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