

**2012 WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OER) CONGRESS
UNESCO, PARIS, JUNE 20-22, 2012**

**DRAFT DECLARATION (VERSION 4)
(PREPARED FOLLOWING THE REGIONAL POLICY FORUM FOR EUROPE -
CAMBRIDGE, UK, 17 APRIL 2012)**

Note on the drafting process

A first version of a Draft Declaration on OER for submission to the World OER Congress was prepared by the Project Secretariat following the first meeting of the International Advisory and Liaison Group (IALG) held at UNESCO, Paris on December 19, 2011. It has been presented for further comments and editorial suggestions at regional policy forums held in the Caribbean (January 2012), Africa (February 2012), Latin America (March 2012) and Europe (April 2012). This fourth version was prepared following discussions at the Europe Forum. It will be further refined at policy forums in Asia-Pacific (April 2012) and the Arab States (May 2012). The resulting text will then be reviewed by the IALG when it meets on May 11, 2012 prior to being submitted to the Congress. Successive drafts are being posted on the UNESCO (www.unesco.org/oercongress) and Commonwealth of Learning websites (<http://oercongress.weebly.com/paris-declaration.html>).*

**The IALG to the COL/UNESCO project Fostering Governmental Support for Open Educational Resources Internationally is composed of up to 15 members identified by UNESCO's regional electoral groups and includes representatives from NGOs and other IGOs (e.g. OECD, Creative Commons, OER Africa). It is co-chaired by the UNESCO ADG/CI and the President of COL.*

Preamble

Mindful of relevant international statements including:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26.1), which states that: "Everyone has a right to education";

The 2000 Dakar Framework for Action that made a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults;

The 2003 World Summit on the Information Society and its declared commitment "to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge";

The 2005 Convention on the Promotion of Cultural Diversity, which states that: "Equitable access to a rich and diversified range of cultural expressions from all over the world and access of cultures to the means of expressions and dissemination constitute important elements for enhancing cultural diversity and encouraging mutual understanding".

Noting that the term Open Educational Resources (OER), which was coined at UNESCO's 2002 Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries, designates teaching, learning and research materials in any medium that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions. Open licenses do not affect the authorship of the work;

Recalling existing Declarations and Guidelines on Open Educational Resources such as the 2007 Cape Town Open Education Declaration, the 2009 Déclaration de Dakar sur les Ressources éducatives libres and the 2011 Guidelines on Open Educational Resources in Higher Education;

Noting that Open Educational Resources (OER) further the aims of the international statements quoted above;

Governments/competent authorities attending the UNESCO World OER Congress declare that they will:

- a. *Foster awareness of the benefits of OER.* The use of OER can help to widen access to education at all levels and contribute to social inclusion, gender equity and special needs education. Greater use of learning resources can improve both cost-efficiency and learning outcomes.
- b. *Create enabling environments for Information and Communications Technologies (ICT).* Adequate infrastructure, especially affordable broadband Internet connectivity, widespread mobile technology and reliable electrical power, are essential for the effective use of ICT in education. Improving media and ICT literacy and encouraging the development and use of learning materials in digital formats as OER will foster quality teaching and learning.
- c. *Promote and adopt legal frameworks for open licensing.* Open licenses refer to a spectrum of legal frameworks which allow different kinds of uses. They should facilitate the re-use, revision, remixing and redistribution of educational materials across the world. The educational community should enhance its understanding of open licensing.
- d. *Support the sustainable development of quality learning materials.* Educational institutions need support, and teachers require training and incentives, in order to produce and share high quality educational resources using appropriate technologies. The credibility of OER will depend on the use of sound quality assurance mechanisms.
- e. *Foster the emergence of new strategic alliances for OER.* As technology creates new opportunities for sharing materials in diverse media, new strategic partnerships between the education, industry, media and telecommunications sectors will help to ensure sustainability.
- f. *Encourage the development and adaptation of OER in a variety of languages and cultural contexts.* To ensure the relevance of OER, authorities should encourage their production and use in local languages and diverse cultural contexts. Intergovernmental organisations should encourage the sharing of OER across languages and cultures.
- g. *Encourage research on the use and impact of OER.* More research on the production, use and re-contextualisation of OER and their impact on the quality and cost-efficiency of teaching and learning is required to strengthen the evidence base for public investment in OER.
- h. *Facilitate finding, retrieving and sharing OER.* Expanding the use of OER requires that it be simple to find and retrieve them. Adopting appropriate open standards can help facilitate the use of OER by ensuring the availability of editable electronic documents in diverse media regardless of changing software.
- i. *Encourage private and non-governmental institutions to contribute to OER.* Governments may choose to give incentives to private and non-governmental institutions to increase the availability of OER.
- j. *Encourage the open licensing of educational materials produced with public funds.* Governments/competent authorities may wish to ensure that educational materials developed with public funds be made available under open licenses (with any restrictions they judge necessary) in order to maximize the impact of the investment.

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