

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

**DRAFT DECLARATION (VERSION 6)
(PREPARED FOLLOWING THE REGIONAL POLICY FORUM FOR THE ARAB STATES
MUSCAT, OMAN, 7-8 MAY 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), Europe (April 2012), Asia-Pacific (April 2012) and the Arab States (May 2012). This sixth version was prepared following discussions at the Arab States Forum, the last one in the series. This draft 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 Millennium Declaration and the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action, which made global commitments 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";

The declarations of the six CONFINTEA Conferences emphasising the fundamental role of Adult Learning and Education.

Noting that the term Open Educational Resources (OER) was coined at UNESCO's 2002 Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries and designates teaching, learning and research materials in any medium, digital or otherwise, 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 licensing neither removes copyright nor affects 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 and use of OER.*
Promote and use OER to widen access to education at all levels, both formal and non-formal, in a perspective of lifelong learning, thus contributing to social inclusion, gender equity and special needs education. Improve both cost-efficiency and learning outcomes through greater use of learning resources.
- b. *Facilitate enabling environments for Information and Communications Technologies (ICT).*
Bridge the digital divide by ensuring adequate infrastructure, especially affordable broadband Internet connectivity, widespread mobile technology and reliable electrical power. Improve media and ICT literacy and encourage the development and use of learning materials as OER in open standards digital formats.
- c. *Reinforce the development of strategies and policies on OER.*
Develop specific policies for the production and use of OER or make reference to OER within wider strategies for advancing education.
- d. *Promote and adopt legal frameworks for open licensing.*
Facilitate the re-use, revision, remixing and redistribution of educational materials across the world through open licensing, which refers to a spectrum of legal frameworks that allow different kinds of uses.
- e. *Support capacity building for the sustainable development of quality learning materials.*
Support institutions and train and motivate teachers and other personnel to produce and share high-quality educational resources, taking into account local needs. Promote quality assurance to ensure the credibility and reputation of OER.
- f. *Foster strategic alliances for OER.*
Take advantage of evolving technology to create opportunities for sharing materials in diverse media and ensure sustainability through new strategic partnerships within and among the education, industry, media and telecommunications sectors.
- g. *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, respecting indigenous knowledge and rights.
- h. *Encourage research on OER.*
Foster research on the development, use and re-contextualisation of OER and their impact on the quality and cost-efficiency of teaching and learning in order to strengthen the evidence base for public investment.
- i. *Facilitate finding, retrieving and sharing of OER.*
Encourage the development of user-friendly mechanisms to find and retrieve OER of quality that are specific and relevant to particular needs. Adopt appropriate open standards to ensure interoperability and to facilitate the use of OER in diverse media.
- 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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