



24 January 2022
Expo 2020 Dubai
The Italy Pavilion

Context

The **International UNESCO Chairs Forum on the Futures of Higher Education** is being organized jointly by Italy and UNESCO at Expo 2020 Dubai to mark the International Day of Education 2022. The Forum fits within the overall framework of UNESCO's [Futures of Education](#) initiative which seeks to generate an agenda for global debate, research and action on the futures of education, learning and knowledge in a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty and precarity. It is also one of the preparatory events for the 3rd UNESCO World Higher Education Conference ([WHEC2022](#)) to be held 18-20 May 2022 in Barcelona, Spain. WHEC2022 and its preparatory events aim to define and prepare knowledge-based, participatory scenarios to shape a new era of higher education systems and institutions, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 disruption.

The International UNESCO Chairs Forum offers a platform to leverage collective interdisciplinary intelligence relative to the futures of higher education systems, with a focus on skills development in the context of the uncertain futures of work, as well as on the digital transformation of our societies and its implications for higher education. The Declaration of the Italian UNESCO Chairs for Sustainability will also be presented.

Skills for Work and Life

Today's world is experiencing societal and environmental challenges, and unprecedented technological change, affecting higher education systems, academic mobility, working patterns, welfare systems and ways of life. It will be crucial to further promote the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes through lifelong learning, technical training, entrepreneurship and vocational training that facilitate transitions of young people from education to quality, fulfilling employment, as part of an overall strategy to modernize higher education and labour market systems. Higher education can foster forward-looking initiatives to help match the supply and demand of competencies for work and life in tomorrow's world. This focus area will address the following questions:

- How can “interdisciplinarity” be further promoted as the way of allowing people to learn by making connections between ideas and concepts across different disciplinary boundaries?
- How could we deliver the promise of better transitions between higher education and work?
- What role for higher education institutions in supporting lifelong learning?
- How can higher education contribute to more inclusive, peaceful and sustainable societies?

Digitalization and Connectivity

Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, and online learning platforms are having increasing impacts on education systems worldwide, including the higher education and research communities. Digitalization is the process of breaking geographical and cultural boundaries, allowing teachers, educators and students to take their knowledge beyond the classroom, potentially to a worldwide audience. Thus, digitalization is not only about innovation or technology, but is also a matter of culture and the capacity to foster connections. Yet, affordable connectivity for learning and meaningful access to digital technologies is a global challenge and there are enormous disparities between and within countries to address. Efforts are currently underway to help steer the digital transformation of education towards equity, inclusion and quality. This focus area will explore the following questions:

- How could higher education create more inclusive, engaging and effective education processes through affordable connectivity and digitalization?
- How to facilitate integration of digital technologies with existing models of teaching and learning?
- How to meet different learner needs by using digital technologies to customize education?
- How to facilitate collaborations, develop educators' capacities and enrich the content of learning?
- How might digitalization and connectivity further support lifelong learning?
- How to address the ethical issues relating to the use of digital technologies in higher education and research settings?

Forum Structure

Following an introductory high-level segment that frames the Forum, two expert panels will be devoted to: (1) Skills for Work and Life, and (2) Digitalization and Connectivity, bringing in international and interdisciplinary perspectives. Finally, the Declaration of the Italian UNESCO Chairs for Sustainability will be introduced and presented. The International UNESCO Chairs Forum on the Futures of Higher Education will be held in hybrid mode and livestreamed on [Facebook Italy Expo 2020](#) and [YouTube Italy Expo 2020](#).

Working language: English.

Provisional Agenda

24 January 2022

11:00 to 13:00 Dubai time

Hybrid event

THE FUTURES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Collective intelligence for knowledge and learning

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| <p>11:00 – 11:15</p> | <p>Presenter: Lorenzo Micheli, Education Programme Manager, Italy Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai</p> <p>Welcoming remarks</p> <p>Mr. Paolo Glisenti, Commissioner of the Italian Pavilion</p> <p>Opening remarks</p> <p>Ms. Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO H.E. Maria Cristina Messa, Minister of Universities and Research, Italy (tbc) H.E. Patrizio Bianchi, Minister of Education, Italy H.E. Ms. Salma Aldarmaki, Secretary General of United Arab Emirates National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, United Arab Emirates (tbc)</p> |
| <p>11:15– 11:30</p> | <p>Keynote</p> <p>The Futures of Higher Education: Global trends, opportunities and challenges</p> <p>Mr. Francesc Pedro, Director, UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean</p> <p>Discussants</p> <p>Professor Alberto Melloni, UNESCO Chair in Religious Pluralism and Peace, Italy (tbc) Professor Domenico Simeone, UNESCO Chair on Education for Human Development and Solidarity among Peoples, Italy</p> |
| <p>11:30 – 12:00</p> | <p>Panel 1: Skills for Work and Life</p> <p>Panelists will include UNESCO Chairholders from different regions of the world whose research focuses on the changing world of work and implications for skills development as we look to the future.</p> <p>Professor Loes Damhoff, UNESCO Chair in Futures Literacy, The Netherlands Dr. Ziad Said, UNESCO Chair on TVET and Sustainable Development, Qatar Dr. Elia Marúm-Espinosa, UNESCO Chair on Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Mexico Dr. Willy Ngaka, UNITWIN Network on Literacies, Green Skilling, and Capacity Development for Sustainable Communities in Africa, Uganda</p> <p>Moderation: Giorgia Ferraro, Italy Pavilion Peer Mentor</p> <p>Q&A (5 min.)</p> |

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| 12:00 – 12:30 | <p>Panel 2: Digitalization and Connectivity</p> <p>Panelists will include UNESCO Chairholders from different regions of the world whose work is focused on the digital transformation of our societies and the implications for higher education systems.</p> <p>Professor Yunkeum Chang, UNITWIN International Network for Women’s Empowerment through ICT Skills and Leadership Education, Republic of Korea Professor Moussa Lo, UNESCO Chair in Emerging Sciences and Technologies for Development, Senegal Professor Virginia Rodés, UNESCO Chair on Open Education, Uruguay (tbc) Professor Emma Kiselyova, UNESCO Chair in Education and Technology for Social Change, Spain(tbc)</p> <p>Moderation: Sara Distante, Italy Pavilion Peer Mentor</p> <p>Q&A (5 min.)</p> |
| 12:30 – 13:00 | <p>Declaration of the Italian UNESCO Chairs for Sustainability</p> <p>H.E. Patrizio Bianchi, Minister for Education, Italy Mr. Franco Bernabè, President, Italian National Commission for UNESCO Ms. Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education & Youth, European Commission (tbc) Professor Annateresa Rondinella, Coordinator Commission Institutional Relationships for Chairs UNESCO, Italy Professor Benno Werlen, UNESCO Chair on Global Understanding for Sustainability, Germany Dr. Axel Didriksson, UNESCO Chair on University and Regional Integration, Mexico</p> <p>Moderation: Lorenzo Micheli, Education Programme Manager, Italy Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai Valentina Mini</p> |
| 13:00 | <p>Closing remarks</p> <p>H.E. Maria Cristina Messa, Minister of Universities and Research, Italy (tbc) Ms. Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education & Youth, European Commission (tbc) Representative of UNESCO</p> |