

## **Presentation of Plenaries**

### ***Plenary session 1 – What can education achieve against violent extremism?***

Approaches in countering violent extremism have shifted in recent years, from purely security-focused responses to the recognition that prevention should play a stronger role in the long-term perspective, as exemplified by the United Nations Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism which was presented by the Secretary-General in January 2016 and calls on Member States to develop national prevention plans. In this context, education is given a central role. This perspective is reflected at the global level in the UNESCO Executive Board *Decision 197EX/46 on UNESCO's role in promoting education as a tool to prevent violent extremism*. It is clear that education policy-makers can build upon ongoing policies and programmes destined to address some of the drivers of violent extremism, such as peace and human rights education, and develop pedagogies to enhance the critical thinking skills of learners and thus their resilience to extremist narratives, including through media and information literacy. However, more clarity is needed as to what the formal sector of education can achieve, alone or in conjunction with other segments of society, and how the prevention of violent extremism can be introduced and mainstreamed in the education system of countries where it is a matter of grave concern. The Plenary Session, which will introduce the conference, will gather ministers of education and will review the following five recommendations proposed in the UNESCO Guide on PVE-E:

1. Developing education policies for inclusion and diversity
2. Promoting safe and supportive school environments
3. Building resilience and fostering constructive engagement
4. Identifying students at risk
5. Building partnerships

### ***Plenary session 2 – Youth town hall meeting - TAGe***

### ***Plenary session 3 – The education sector's interactions with the broader society***

Preventing Violent Extremism relies on community-oriented approaches, locally driven, based on public participation and support and relying partly on a relationship of trust and common engagement between various sections of society. It may, for instance, involve State authorities, notably law enforcement bodies, and public and youth organizations, parents and families, local politicians, religious leaders, businesses, media, NGOs and all other relevant non-formal education or youth stakeholders whose interactions may contribute to the prevention of violent extremism. In this context, schools can be places of dialogue and focal points for youth, families, and the wide range of actors who may be involved in these types of approaches, and may contribute to enhance public authorities' responses to local possible drivers of violent extremism. Though there are benefits to reinforcing such connections between different actors and sectors of the society, as they may enhance cooperation, dialogue and identify better communities issues and grievances, we should be wary of the dangers inherent in interactions between education work and community policing. This session will therefore consider PVE-E from its multi-dimensional approach, and help identify more precisely how education policies are embedded in the larger context of national plans to PVE and how education authorities can work with other institutions and individuals at national and local levels.

The Plenary Session will address in particular ways in which the education sector can interact with the following:

- Families and close community relations
- Law enforcement authorities
- Religious communities and leadership
- The media, notably Internet social media