Cairo Declaration 2026

New Momentum for MIL: Peace for All

Adopted at the close of the III MIL & Global Understanding Conference: Peace for All, Arab States Regional Event of UNESCO Global MIL Week 2026. Cairo, 18–20 October 2026.

The III MIL & Global Understanding Conference has brought together in Cairo researchers, educators, media professionals, students and institutional representatives from more than twenty countries. Building on the Cairo Declaration of 2024 and the Barcelona MIL Action Agenda of 2025, it has sought to strengthen media and information literacy (MIL) as a contribution to democratic citizenship, mutual understanding among peoples and peace.

The participants thank the **Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT)** and the **Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB)** for organising the Conference. They also thank for their support the **UNESCO Media and Information Literacy and Digital Competencies Unit**, the **UNESCO Regional Office in Cairo**, the **UNESCO UNITWIN MILID Network**, the **League of Arab States**, the **Governorate of Cairo** and the **Embassy of Spain in Egypt**, as well as the experts who contributed to its sessions.

1. Conclusions

The participants in the Conference:

Recognise that generative artificial intelligence has become embedded in search engines, social media, education and news production. They also recognise that synthetic content has spread to electoral campaigns and armed conflicts, and that models, data and computing capacity are concentrated in very few companies and countries.

Affirm the need to renew the MIL paradigm so that it integrates AI literacy as one of its core dimensions, in line with UNESCO's AI competency frameworks and the European Union Artificial Intelligence Act. AI is a cross-cutting technology that is transforming the media, information and the environment in which we live. This renewal must preserve the fundamental values of MIL:

- critical thinking;
- creativity;
- participation;
- inclusion;
- ethics and intercultural dialogue.

At the same time, it must develop new concepts and research perspectives on:

- the nature of generative systems;
- the authenticity and provenance of content;
- authorship;
- human autonomy in relation to automated systems.

Underline that the global expansion of platforms, social media and AI has brought about a deep mediatisation of social life. MIL must therefore combine its traditional approaches, focused on content and competencies, with an analysis of the ownership, management and concentration of power that AI is accelerating. To this end, they advocate:

- democratic participation in the design and governance of technologies, platforms and services;

- algorithmic transparency, independent auditing and researchers' access to data;
- distributed, open and decentralised AI that protects privacy and prevents the commodification of personal data.

Stress that MIL, together with independent journalism, is a condition for information integrity and a contribution to education for peace. This requires:

- independent research, with rigorous methods and shared indicators;
- teacher training;
- the recognition of young people as agents in the transformation of digital environments.

2. Two initiatives

The participants in the Conference:

Welcome the founding of the **Media and Information Literacy International Scientific Association (MIL/ISA)**. MIL research remains fragmented across disciplines, languages and countries, and policies require a sound and independent knowledge base. The new association will:

- bring together the research community from all regions;
- support doctoral candidates and early career researchers;
- develop a line of publications;
- promote the transfer of knowledge.

They ***invite*** researchers to join it.

Recognise the **MIL Young Peace Ambassadors Programme**, developed within the UNESCO UNITWIN MILID Network. The programme trains students and young researchers in the critical analysis of media and in the creation of campaigns promoting MIL, human rights and intercultural dialogue. They ***support*** its consolidation as an international network, its extension to new regions and the evaluation of its results.

3. Plan of action

Under the umbrella of the MIL & Global Understanding Conference, the participants ***agree*** on the following:

1. **A Mediterranean MILID network (Almería, February 2027).** A working seminar will bring together universities and partners from both shores of the Mediterranean to establish a network on MIL, information integrity and intercultural dialogue. Its tasks will be to:
   - identify capacities and priorities;
   - define research lines;
   - prepare applications for future calls. These include calls arising from the University for the Mediterranean envisaged in the European Union's Pact for the Mediterranean, and from the joint UNESCO–EU initiative on information integrity in the Mediterranean presented at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2026.
2. **The 18th International Congress on Local Communication, ComLoc 2027 (Universitat Jaume I, Castellón, Spain, 14–16 April 2027).** Under the theme “Media Literacy in the Media in Europe and Spain”, it will examine the role of public and private media, especially local media, in promoting media literacy, within the framework of the obligations set by Directive (EU) 2018/1808. The MIL & Global Understanding initiative will take part in the Congress and bring to it the perspective of this Declaration.
3. **The IV MIL & Global Understanding Conference (University of Salamanca, October–November 2027).** It will review this plan and open a new stage of work.

4. **A joint seminar with the UNESCO UNITWIN MILID Network (Paris, spring 2028).** It will review the progress of the Mediterranean network, MIL/ISA and the MIL Young Peace Ambassadors Programme, and connect them with the international MIL agenda.

The Co-Directors of the Conference will coordinate the follow-up of this plan and report on it at the IV Conference.

The participants ***reaffirm*** their commitment to MIL for all, contributing to more democratic, more just and more peaceful societies.