



Fact Sheet: International Day of Light

What is the International Day of Light?

The International Day of Light is a global initiative that provides an annual focal point for the continued appreciation of light and the role it plays in science, culture, art, education, and sustainable development, as well as fields as diverse as medicine, communications, and energy. The broad theme of light will allow many different sectors of society worldwide to participate in activities that demonstrates how science, technology, art and culture can help achieve the goals of UNESCO – education, equality, and peace.

What is its goal?

The goal of the International Day of Light is to highlight to the citizens of the world the importance of light and optical technologies in their lives, for their futures and for the development of society.

Who is organizing the International Day of Light?

The International Day of Light is administered from the International Basic Science Programme (IBSP) of UNESCO by a Steering Committee that includes representatives from UNESCO as well as: the American Institute of Physics (AIP), the American Physical Society (APS), Bosca, the China International Optoelectronic Expo, the Chinese Optical Society, the European Centres for Outreach in Photonics (ECOP), the European Physical Society (EPS), the European Photonics Industry Consortium (EPIC), the Hawaiian Eye Foundation, the International Association of Lighting Designers (IALD), the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), the IEEE Photonics Society (IPS), the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES), Light: Science & Applications, the International Commission on Illumination (CIE), lightsources.org - the international network of accelerator based light sources, Light: Science and Applications, The Optical Society (OSA), SESAME, Signify, the International Society for Optics and Photonics (SPIE), Tampere University of Technology, Thorlabs, VELUX. The Steering Committee is assisted by an Advisory Board representing all sectors of the community of light science and technology, astronomy, lighting and applications, art, energy, architecture, and lighting design, as well as representatives from international organizations. Many countries also have designated national node contacts who can provide information about national organization. See www.lightday.org/nodes

How did the International Day of Light come about?

The International Day of Light is a follow-up to the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies 2015. This UNESCO-led international year was highly successful in raising global awareness of the achievements of light science and its applications through more than 13,000 activities carried out in 147 countries. The International Day of Light proposal was first examined by the UNESCO Executive Board during its 200th Session in Paris held from October 4-18 2016, introduced by sponsors Ghana, Mexico, New Zealand and the Russian Federation. A favorable decision was taken with 15 additional co-sponsors from: Argentina, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Iran, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Nicaragua, Serbia, Nigeria, Paraguay, Qatar, Vietnam, and Uganda. The UNESCO General Conference formally proclaimed the International Day of Light during its 39th session on the 7 November 2017 with additional support being expressed by: Colombia, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Finland, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Madagascar, South Africa, Sudan, Sweden, Togo, Zimbabwe.



When will the International Day of Light will be celebrated?

The International Day of Light will be held on 16 May every year, the anniversary of the first successful operation of a laser in 1960. The laser is a perfect example of how a scientific discovery can yield revolutionary benefits to society in communications, healthcare and many other fields. The International Day of Light however is not just about science – the themes cover all areas of light in its general sense including art, culture, and development. Under the leadership of UNESCO, the first International Day of Light was celebrated on the 16 May 2018. Over 640 events took place worldwide in more than 80 countries.

When will the next celebration of the international Day of Light take place?

For the celebration of the International Day of Light on 16 May 2019, events focusing on all aspects of light science and applications will again be supported. A special focus for UNESCO in 2019 will be to promote the use of light science as a means of stimulating young people and women, especially in developing countries, to study science and engineering. To this end, the International Day of Light on 16 May 2019 will see a one-day conference on *Illuminating Education* at the UNESCO Category I Institute ICTP in Trieste, Italy. There will also be hundreds of events around the world arranged by local organizers.

Can I get involved?

Yes! UNESCO welcomes all partners who wish to get involved in the International Day of Light either through organizing their own activities or by supporting the *Illuminating Education* conference on May 16 2019 at UNESCO-ICTP in Trieste. If you wish to organise an event yourself, please note that it must respect the general goals of the International Day of Light in promoting science, education, art, culture, etc. related to the broad themes of light and light-based technologies. All events should also respect the general aim of UNESCO in contributing to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information. You can request registration of your event for inclusion in the official International Day of Light 2019 calendar [here](#). The submission must be in English. International Day of Light events can be hosted on or around May 16th.

Can I support in other ways?

There are a variety of opportunities to become an official Supporting Partner of the International Day of Light 2019, and particularly the *Illuminating Education* event on May 16 2019 at UNESCO-ICTP in Trieste, Italy. For enquiries about such partnership opportunities, please contact the International Day of Light Secretariat at dayoflight@eps.org.

Where can I get more information?

Secretariat: dayoflight@eps.org
Website: <http://www.lightday.org/>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/IDL2019>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IDL2019>
Official Hashtag: #IDL2019