U.S. cuts UNESCO funding after Palestinian membership vote
October 31, 2011 | By Josh Levs, CNN

The United States is cutting funding to the U.N. education and science agency UNESCO after the agency voted to accept a Palestinian bid for full membership, the U.S. State Department said Monday.

"Today's vote by the member states of UNESCO to admit Palestine as member is regrettable, premature and undermines our shared goal of a comprehensive just and lasting peace in the Middle East," said State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland.

"The United States will refrain from making contributions to UNESCO," she said.

The United States was going to make a $60 million payment in November, and will now not do so, she said.

Some U.S. lawmakers had called on the Obama administration to withhold funding to UNESCO if the measure was approved.

How the U.S. decision could be counterproductive

The lawmakers cited U.S. law, which states that funds must be denied to any organization granting the Palestine Liberation Organization "the same standing as member states."

A spokeswoman for the U.S. Mission to UNESCO -- the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization -- said the United States contributes $80 million a year.

The U.S. contribution comprises 22% of the agency's funding in its regular budget, a spokeswoman for UNESCO said.

The vote, which required two-thirds approval by UNESCO members, passed with 107 in favor, 14 against, and 52 abstentions.

It was the first such vote by a part of the world body.

Representatives of several countries pointed out that currently that bid is being discussed by members of the U.N. Security Council.

Huge applause broke out at the meeting in Paris when the results of the vote were announced.

UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, speaking after the vote, said she is concerned for the financial stability of the organization.

"I believe it is the responsibility of all of us to make sure that UNESCO does not suffer unduly," she said, specifically citing concerns about losing funding from "our largest contributor, the United States."

Bokova said the "admission of a new member state is a mark of respect and confidence."

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon addressed the concern as well, saying "we will need to work on practical solutions to preserve UNESCO's financial resources." Ban said he had no further comment, although he noted "the urgency of a negotiated solution of the Middle East peace process."

How Unesco countries voted on Palestinian membership

Guardian, Tuesday 1 November 2011

Palestinian Authority granted full membership of UN cultural agency after 107 vote in favour, 14 against and 52 abstain
Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas. His speech calling for recognition by the United Nations was met with applause. Photograph: Mohamad Torokman/Reuters

**Breakdown of how Unesco countries voted on Palestinian membership**

194 member states

173 votes cast

81 required majority

52 abstentions

14 "no" votes

107 "yes" votes

**No:**

Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Israel, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Palau, Panama, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sweden, US, Vanuatu.

**Abstentions:**

Albania, Andorra, Bahamas, Barbados, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Colombia, Cook Islands, Ivory Coast, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Georgia, Haiti, Hungary, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Liberia, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, South Korea, Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Switzerland, Thailand, Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, UK, Zambia.
Yes:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Absent (includes states that lost right to vote because membership fees were not paid):

Antigua and Barbuda, Central African Republic, Comoros, Dominica, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Madagascar, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Niue, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tajikistan, East Timor, Turkmenistan.