



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Address by

Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO,

on the occasion of the opening of

the 192nd session of the Executive Board

UNESCO, 30 September 2013

Madam Chair of the Executive Board,
Madam President of the General Conference,
Excellencies, Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

I should like to begin by expressing my indignation at the terrible attack in Nairobi last week. We stand together with Kenya and with all victims of violence and hatred.

Ghanaian poet Kofi Awoonor, who died in the attack, wrote this prophetic text over 40 years ago:

The dawn crack of sounds known

Rending our air (...)

A sudden silence fell

As the crowd pushed and yelled

Into the bright sharp morning of a shooting.

Violence exposes how vulnerable societies are to the demons of ignorance and intolerance.

This weekend, in Timbuktu, a car-bomb attack killed four people and blew the door off of the Djingareyber Mosque.

Violence struck in Yobe, in north-eastern Nigeria, where nearly 50 people were shot in a school.

Meanwhile, ten students were killed in an attack on a school in Syria, where 100,000 people have already died, two million are now refugees and cultural heritage has been destroyed.

Violence does not strike at random: it deliberately targets schools, students, and cultural heritage buildings.

It is a challenge to humanity.

Nothing can ever justify attacking a school.

I condemn those who target them and I condemn those who use them as shields in their struggles.

Schools are the birthplace of emancipation, development and the fight against ignorance and poverty.

UNESCO must safeguard this by responding to extremism with the culture of peace and mutual understanding.

This must form the core of our future strategy to offer concrete, rapid and powerful responses.

How can we meet the needs of young people, the largest generation the world has ever produced, who demand the right to an education, a job and a role in society?

How can we share the tools of science to anticipate the effects of climate change and the intensification of natural risks?

How can we handle the challenges posed by cultural diversity, growing inequalities and social transformation?

UNESCO has an obligation and a duty to be more effective and flexible. My expectations for discussions at this session and at the General Conference are high.

There are also words, and moments, which inspire trust in international cooperation.

In May I visited the Ayesha-e-Durrani school in Kabul.

A young girl had written on a piece of paper stuck on the wall: “my pen is my sword”.

This statement reflects a desire to rebuild through education.

For ten years, UNESCO has worked with the Government of Afghanistan to overhaul the country’s education system.

Ten years ago, no girl could enter a school.

Today, they wish to become doctors, scientists and teachers.

This is our answer to extremism!

The country is picking itself up through culture, in Bamiyan, in Balkh and in Herat, where UNESCO is working with Japan, Italy, Switzerland and the Republic of Korea, with visible results.

It is a lesson for us all: to stay true to our values in bad times, and to measure how far we’ve come.

By defending these values, UNESCO was able to overcome challenges in the past. By doing so again, it can surmount the difficulties it faces today.

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, these difficulties are real.

The question is: do we want to give UNESCO what it needs to have an impact, as it should, on the future of humanity?

I have devoted all my efforts to representing the message of UNESCO, to making our voice better heard and to strengthening our action, including in emergency, post-conflict and post-disaster situations and in the area of risk prevention. Real progress has been made.

Governments – your governments – look to UNESCO and count on us.

I am worried today: we are discussing a budget of \$507 million, which is a ridiculous amount in light of our mission.

There is a risk that UNESCO be prevented from acting in line with its ambitions.

For we can always cut back, and optimize, but we must not kid ourselves: nothing comes without consequences.

This situation calls for a method, and I quote that of Descartes:

“Divide each of the difficulties under examination into as many parts as might be necessary for its adequate solution.”

Guided by the roadmap, we have sustained the impact of the financial crisis. It is behind us.

We have accelerated reform to make UNESCO a more active, more open, and more effective Organization both at Headquarters and in the field, based on the recommendations of the Independent External Evaluation.

We have safeguarded programme implementation – and sometimes more.

In each case, our accomplishments are considerable.

No, there is no handbook for perfectly managing a crisis on this scale. If we had to do it again, perhaps we would do it differently.

But in the end, the result is there: we managed the crisis, and we managed it well.

In fact, the most recent financial report by the External Auditor in 2012 issued an unqualified opinion for the third consecutive year.

Remember where we stood two years ago: facing a \$220 million provisional shortfall.

Two years on, we have balanced the books.

Few had dared to hope that this might be possible.

This achievement is the result of rigorous management across the board to reduce costs, missions, consultants, equipment and assistance. It is the result of efforts to mobilize additional funds, the emergency fund and various other contributions from our Member States, for which I thank you once again.

It is also the result of the hard work of our staff.

I have said before that UNESCO's staff were its main asset, and this crisis is proof of that.

The staff have stepped up to the mark, absorbing the extra workload and facing up to extra pressure.

Thanks to its staff, UNESCO has been able to take measured, rather than hasty decisions about its own future.

In my eyes, that was the only way the crisis could be managed responsibly and UNESCO's foundations preserved.

It is also the result of efforts to accelerate the reform process. Now, we must take stock of how far we have come. The roadmap that I proposed, which was discussed and approved by the Executive Board, set clear targets, which we are going to reach.

UNESCO has streamlined its bureaucracy: while maintaining the same level of service, the cost of central services has been reduced by 20%.

We are making progress on each of the strategic directions set by the Independent External Evaluation; indeed, nearly 70 of the 86 recommendations have already been implemented.

The various parts of UNESCO are now better united.

The number of work plans has been drastically reduced.

But of course, the number of work plans is not what matters most; the key is to have a coherent overarching strategy.

That is why our C/4 strategy is based on clearer main themes.

That is also why the ordering of priorities approved on 4 July is a major development.

This is exactly the sort of progress that I hoped and called for and I am pleased that Member States have responded because this is only the beginning.

My reform has one aim: to make UNESCO more relevant, more visible and more effective.

In education, for example, we have identified the most pressing needs in terms of the education for all (EFA) movement and stepped up a gear by launching EFA acceleration programmes in eight African countries since March, with a further ten to be launched in October; bringing the focus back onto teacher training to improve education quality; launching a new distance-learning teacher-training project, with the support of the People's Republic of China, in eight African countries, beginning with Côte d'Ivoire, Namibia and Ethiopia; using the emergency fund to finance a teacher-training programme in the Republic of the Congo, which I have visited; launching national reviews of progress made in EFA; supporting national education system reforms, such as the work in Mexico to improve quality of learning; and updating the Delors education report.

In New York last week, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Brookings Institution unveiled a new system of indicators to assess learning outcomes.

This completely innovative approach opens up the debate to cover more than just education; it improves citizenship through discussions about learning, skills acquisition and the very purpose of schooling.

This new conceptual approach is a UNESCO creation.

All of this work will allow us to step up the pace between now and 2015 and position ourselves for the post-2015 period.

The first results are already visible. UNESCO is recasting the debate, focusing on quality and content rather than just access.

At the Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, organized by UNESCO and UNICEF and held in Dakar in March 2013 with the support of Senegal, Canada and Germany, our concept of "inclusive quality lifelong education and learning" was taken up.

It is now used to guide the discussions of the working group on post-2015 education goals.

That is an example of leadership: setting the terms of the debate, creating the tools to accompany it and working with partners to move forward.

That is how UNESCO plays its role as an intellectual leader.

At this point, I will quote what the Chair of the Executive Board has just said:

“Keeping in mind the proposed documents 37 C/4 and 37 C/5, Board Members should carefully reflect on how to advocate for a stronger role by UNESCO in the implementation of the post-2015 international sustainable development agenda, leveraging the Organization’s pluridisciplinary competences in education, science, culture and communication.

The forthcoming General Conference would be an opportunity to initiate such a dialogue amongst Member States – building momentum towards a cohesive voice at the United Nations next year.”

We are following the same model in the field of culture, where we are actively advocating for “culture and development”.

We proposed holding a debate on this topic at the United Nations General Assembly.

The idea was taken up by the President of the General Assembly, Mr Vuk Jeremić, in June. This was the first time such a debate had ever been organized at that level.

It was a major event, with keynote speeches from ministers for foreign affairs and culture ministers from Bangladesh, Cape Verde, Jamaica, Morocco, Benin, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, South Africa, El Salvador, Paraguay, the Philippines, Brazil, Spain and Argentina.

After the debate, several States created an open-ended working group on the matter to maximize impact on the post-2015 agenda.

I should particularly like to commend France, Peru, Cuba, Hungary, Bulgaria, Indonesia, Bangladesh, South Africa, Senegal and all the other members of that group. I should also especially like to commend China for its decisive commitment at the Hangzhou International Congress on “Culture: Key to Sustainable Development” in May 2013.

At all of these forums, culture stands out as a driving force of sustainable development, as I am sure it will continue to do at the World Culture Forum in Bali this November.

The cultural industries create hundreds of thousands of jobs in tourism, the crafts sector and the creative arts.

When culture is taken into account, it ensures the mobilization and commitment of entire peoples without which there can be no sustainable development.

This was the major lesson learned from the 18 projects financed by the UNDP-Spain MDG Achievement Fund, which demonstrated how cultural activities can unlock the door to all the education, social inclusion and health goals.

The third Creative Economy Report, a project assigned to UNESCO this year, and to be launched in November in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is an important global reference publication that will give us more weight in the debate. This very high quality work, which was produced in a very short space of time, is something of which we can all be proud and which yet again demonstrates our strategic focus and our important stance on a major development issue for the future.

UNESCO must be in tune with our changing world.

In every country I visit, I can see the tremendous need for UNESCO so as to harness the potential of education, scientific progress, cultural dialogue and new technology.

I have seen it in Haiti where, three years after the earthquake, over one million children are back in school and President Martelly's free universal education plan is receiving support from UNESCO.

We are working hard to improve content quality, enhance teacher training and produce statistics.

I also saw it when I visited the country's first ever biosphere reserve, the Parc de la Selle, with President Martelly.

It has enormous potential to reduce poverty, teach farmers sustainable production methods and develop ecological farms.

I have seen it in El Salvador too, where at the Trifinio Fraternidad biosphere reserve, which is shared with Honduras and Guatemala, young people from all

three countries are rallying together to work towards sustainable development, with substantial backing from Germany.

I have seen the need for UNESCO at the teacher-training college in Malawi, where we have launched a programme for teacher training in the field of technical and vocational education, with support from the Republic of Korea.

I have seen it at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana, which is educating the brilliant minds of tomorrow and promoting higher education in Africa.

I have seen it all over Africa, where in recent months UNESCO has reinforced its support for science, technology and innovation policies in Botswana, Burundi, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Togo and Zimbabwe.

This perfectly captures the spirit of the African Renaissance described at the African Union Summit and highlighted in particular at the African Youth Forum, to which I had the honour of being invited.

When UNESCO is called upon, we must respond.

And respond we do. That is why UNESCO plays its role even in situations where we would not usually intervene, such as countries in transition, and countries in post-conflict and post-disaster situations.

We respond with our work in Mali, where reconstruction of the Timbuktu mosque has begun and will go on despite the violence and the threats.

Repairing heritage heals wounds and shows respect for identity, which is why we will keep on repeating, calmly yet firmly, that we do not have to choose between human life and heritage; the two are inseparable.

I was most touched when last week, standing at the rostrum of the United Nations General Assembly, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita of Mali expressed his gratitude to UNESCO during the general debate.

We stand with the people of Egypt, where I sent a mission from 11 to 16 September to assess the losses suffered after the looting of the Mallawi Museum and finalize the full inventory of the collections.

We respond by building reconciliation through education in Cote d'Ivoire, with the help of school textbooks on the culture of peace. I should like to express my great appreciation to Angola for its support for all of our activities to promote a culture of peace in Africa.

We respond to extremism by transforming a former torture centre, the Navy Mechanics School (ESMA) in Buenos Aires, into a UNESCO human rights education centre, which is now fully operational.

We respond by working at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute in collaboration with India to foster peace and citizenship education in Asia and the Pacific, helping people to live side by side in one of the world's most diverse regions.

We respond by mobilizing young people to help to build the new societies of the Arab world. To quote Rached Rachdi, a young student who attended the citizenship workshop held by UNESCO in Tunisia last May:

“Young people feel that they are being heard and can play a useful part in their societies. We now know what a constituent assembly is. We worked on a few articles to come up with more accurate wording.”

We respond by providing education for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, with the support of the European Union, Qatar and our other partners. Last week at the Metropolitan Museum, we launched the Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk, in collaboration with the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the United States Department of State. Our response is to hold a meeting here with all our partners for the protection of the Syrian heritage and with Mr Brahimi, the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria.

We respond by strengthening the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property to promote respect for peoples' identity and memory.

I drew on the emergency fund to accelerate the implementation of the Convention and convened a Meeting of the States Parties this year, one year ahead of schedule, to draw up the guidelines.

In the same spirit, I have initiated consultations on the future of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, set to continue on 21 November, to reinforce the credibility of this vital tool for our work.

We respond by using new satellite technology to help Kenya locate water resources in a drought-stricken region.

You have seen the pictures of water gushing out of the ground: that is what UNESCO at its best can offer to those who call on us.

Our global assessment of transboundary aquifers and groundwater systems in small island developing States has provided data that has never been published before, thanks to the work carried out in cooperation with the Global Environment Facility and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

That is why UNESCO must continue to reform and move closer to the field.

Our five cluster offices in Africa will be operational by the end of the year, as I promised.

That is also why UNESCO must continue to improve its integration in the United Nations system.

Let us not forget the progress we have already made.

Heritage protection is becoming much better integrated into Security Council resolutions, where it matters most. This shows that our message has got through.

We have UNESCO to thank for the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity

Operational implementation of this Plan has already begun in four countries: Nepal, South Sudan, Iraq and Pakistan, and it will soon continue in Latin and Central America.

That is a hallmark of leadership: a major contribution to freedom of expression and freedom of the press. At this opportune moment, I should also like to congratulate Costa Rica on its celebrations for World Press Freedom Day.

UNESCO helped to set the themes of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Annual Ministerial Review, which last July was dedicated to science, technology, innovation and the potential of culture.

We are entrusted with the leading role on major United Nations system initiatives such as the Global Education First Initiative.

Last week I was in New York to celebrate the first anniversary of this Initiative in the company of brave, young Malala Yousafzai from Pakistan, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Presidents of South Africa, Croatia, Guyana and Mozambique and the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

Over the past 12 months, we have seen the extraordinary political impact of the Initiative, which in turn reinforces our actions on the ground.

The Scientific Advisory Council, officially launched by the Secretary-General last week, is another example of UNESCO's leadership.

It is the culmination of wide-ranging consultations following the Rio+20 Conference and I am proud of everyone involved for their hard work and dedication to the project, which brings together around 30 international scientists and which will serve as a global reference point to improve links between science and policy.

This key position gives us more visibility and, most importantly, helps us to get our ideas across more effectively and improve our performance.

This is particularly notable in our work leading International Year of Water Cooperation.

UNESCO is currently strengthening its links with UN-Water and devising an integrated approach to water management and sanitation.

I took this message to The Hague on the occasion of World Day for Water; to the International Conference on Cooperation in the Field of Water in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, and to Stockholm, Sweden on the occasion of World Water Week. I will take this message to the International Water Association Development Congress in Nairobi, Kenya, and soon to Budapest and Mexico.

In parallel, we are reinforcing capacity-building through training courses in integrated flood risk analysis in Asia with Japan's International Centre for Water

Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM), water resources assessment in Africa with Brazil's HidroEX International Centre for Education, Capacity Building and Applied Research in Water, and negotiation skills on water management issues for over 30 officials of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and around 100 educators from Latin America and the Caribbean.

An essential aspect of my reform is opening up to civil society, the private sector and our partners.

We now have a comprehensive strategy in this regard. UNESCO has strengthened ties with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), from which we have received several contributions, including \$7 million to rebuild the education system in Chad.

UNESCO is overseeing a project of almost \$15 million aiming to engage civil society in educational policy development in more than 50 countries.

I am thinking of all the new projects launched with the European Union, such as our youth programme implemented in ten Mediterranean countries for a fuller integration of issues related to youth into national policies.

Our partnership with Procter & Gamble for the education of girls in Senegal is also exemplary; it produces tangible and visible results and we are going to extend it to other countries.

This partnership policy is a major focus of our future development, particularly in the current situation, and innovative funds-in-trust agreements signed recently encourage us to continue. We have signed agreements with Malaysia (\$5 million), Indonesia (\$4 million), and with the Malala Fund for Girls' Education in Pakistan (\$10 million) where we have now identified projects, and I call on all countries that wish to join it to do so.

We have recently signed, just two weeks ago, an agreement with India and the Government of West Bengal, to develop ten rural craft centres and train more than 2,500 craftspeople: this is a perfect example of culture for development.

I am obviously thinking of the recent agreements signed with Brazil and *O Globo* newspaper, with Angola, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. I am also thinking of the agreement signed with Saudi Arabia to promote the culture of peace and dialogue: \$9 million were received in 2012, implementation began this year and a conference on youth volunteering is planned in Riyadh at the end of 2013.

I will also mention the agreement with Azerbaijan for \$5 million, in support of our work in Africa.

These are innovative examples of South-South cooperation.

Tremendous progress is within reach when countries unite and there is strong political will – as in the case of the E-9 countries, chaired by India, which have made education a priority by committing themselves to ensuring access to quality basic education, including adult literacy.

Allow me to pay tribute to India for its leadership and mobilization in that connection.

UNESCO is playing a major role here, in conjunction with our specialized institutes, such as the International Centre for South-South Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation (ISTIC), in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, whose last evaluation highlights the role it plays to place science at the service of the most vulnerable, small island developing States and least developed countries.

I believe that many Member States were present for the celebrations of ISTIC's fifth anniversary, held last week at UNESCO Headquarters.

Our work with the National Commissions has been revitalized. Our relations with NGOs are more strategic and allow us to involve civil society in the post-2015 debate.

In July, we became one of the first United Nations agencies to adopt a policy of open access to our publications.

Hundreds of our publications are thus going to be made available worldwide to millions of people.

This is an example of leadership for knowledge sharing.

The evaluations conducted by the Swedish Government and the British Department for International Development (DfID) confirm the gains in concentration, efficiency and leadership.

I have said so many times: we know how to be hard on ourselves, and the reports issued by our own Internal Oversight Service (IOS) have drawn no punches.

We must gauge the progress made in just a few years despite an unprecedented financial crisis.

We must look to the areas where we have not succeeded.

And we must be clear: we are coming to the end of a cycle.

You have read the IOS audit of the working methods in the Culture Sector (192 EX/5, Part II); the situation that it describes applies to the whole of UNESCO:

“Over the years, the work of the convention secretariats has increased due to: (a) an increase in the number of States Parties to the conventions; (b) an increase of the number of statutory meetings and their bodies; (c) an increase in the number of decisions and recommendations to be implemented by the secretariats; (d) an increase in the number of nominations; and (e) an increase in the number of periodic reports.”

This increase in workload, combined with diminishing resources, is not sustainable.

There are limits to cost reduction.

The first limit is consistency: the ad hoc group recommends focusing on the implementation of the conventions, but how can this be done if the cost of statutory activities absorbs the bulk of the resources?

Take the example of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, whose tenth anniversary we marked last June in Chengdu.

I saw the vibrancy of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Quang Nam Heritage Festival in Hoi An, Viet Nam; and the International Music Festival “Sharq Taronalari” in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

At these festivals, we do not only celebrate dance and music, but it is also the identity of peoples and social cohesion that are at stake, and this is why our work for the intangible heritage is so important.

The number of files to be processed has soared since 2008 and, at the same time, there are fewer Professional staff members to examine them.

This is also true for the 2005 Convention on the Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which plays a central role in the development of many countries of the South and in our advocacy for culture and development.

We have responded by further integrating the operation of the conventions and pooling the logistics of the various secretariats, but there are limits to this exercise.

The staffing situation at the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) is worrying, and we must reflect together about the future, with the full support of the Member States, because the ability of the IOC to fulfil its role is at stake.

For ten years, UNESCO staff numbers have steadily decreased.

For ten years, UNESCO's budget has steadily decreased: in real terms, it is now less than half as much as it was in 2000.

We cannot meet tomorrow's challenges with yesterday's budget.

Today, most of the progress made is thanks to extrabudgetary funds.

The amount of voluntary funding exceeds that of the regular budget.

This is a mark of confidence in us, and I am extremely grateful, but it is also changing the nature of our budget.

Throughout the biennium, I have safeguarded UNESCO staff, who are the principal resource of the Organization: not a single staff contract has been terminated in two years.

I have done this for the simple reason that it would not do to shake up our principal asset without knowing what course the Member States wish to take.

Now is the time to set this course, for everyone, for the Secretariat and for the Member States.

Ladies and gentlemen,

On 4 July, at the 5th special session of the Executive Board, you adopted on *5 X/EX/Decision 2*.

A decision that reflects a shared understanding of where UNESCO stands today.

It draws on 191 EX/Decision 15 (ii), which called for work “to identify programmatic priorities for future orientations of the Organization” in a situation of significant cash flow shortfall.

This decision provided the basis for the *open-ended working group* to identify priorities within an expected envelope for 2014-2015 of \$507 million.

The work of the *working group* was trail-blazing, and I wish to thank its co-Chairs, Ambassador Adoua and Ambassador Sudders.

I thank all Member States for their engagement in this process.

As Ambassador Adoua said to the Executive Board at its 5th special session, the open-ended working group was guided by a single objective –

That UNESCO may continue to be a light in the dark, an international point of reference, a house of dialogue and consensus.

Thank you, Ambassador, for formulating our mission so eloquently.

In the words of Ambassador Sudders, the working group displayed in action the strength of the axiom “*Unity in Diversity.*”

This was an important strategic priority-setting exercise for the Organization.

All of this speaks, I believe, to the strength of our common determination to act.

The Board, at its 5th special session, adopted a decision defining an order of priorities among expected results in each major programme, taking into consideration those identified in 36 C/Resolution 1.

On this basis, the Board requested me in that decision to submit an expenditure plan and an indicative staff restructuring plan, guided by the following principles:

- That the share of budget resources allocated to Part II.A should be gradually improved, to reach the level provided for in document 37 C/5;
- That further savings of \$33 million should be found from other parts of the budget – excluding the Participation Programme and the governing bodies;

- That each major programme shall maintain the relative share of resources foreseen in document 37 C/5, with budget allocations broken down into three levels of priority – A, B and C;
- That, where available resources make it impossible to maintain a critical mass of programme activity, I shall make proposals – to reallocate resources to a higher priority; to merge expected results in order to achieve a critical mass or to realize efficiency gains, which may include possible reductions in staff; to split expected results and propose the continuation of activities that can achieve a critical mass; to strengthen intersectoral and interdisciplinary approaches.
- That, for each expected result, a minimum of 20% of resources shall be earmarked for operational activities;
- That the resources available for the two global priorities shall reflect a balance between coordination and programme activities, allocating at least 70% to the latter;
- That, in preparing the expenditure and restructuring plan, I shall include non- and lightly-earmarked extrabudgetary resources guaranteed for the biennium;
- That human resources should be allocated to priorities in a strategic manner;
- That programme funds shall not be used to fund non-programme costs;
- That any savings arising during the biennium shall be directed to the five major programmes.

This decision provided the basis for *document 192 EX/16 Part 1*.

I wish to underline this reflects an all-UNESCO process.

Every part of the House has been reviewed, including field offices.

Every programme, every department and unit has been involved in some way.

July and August saw intensive discussions in different forms throughout the Organization, with my personal participation.

It has included staff at Headquarters, field and Institutes – since 4 July, three additional all-staff meetings have been held in Paris and webcast, including one I led personally on 16 July.

This has involved the staff associations, with whom I have held two meetings since the 5th special session, in addition to the Deputy Director-General and the Director of Human Resources Management (HRM) – and this does not include other meetings and correspondence with the staff associations.

I can say this process has not been easy, and it has meant making tough choices.

Document 192 EX/16 Part 1 is our reply to a very complex decision by the Executive Board, within a very tight deadline, guided by a single, overriding objective – to ensure that UNESCO continues to deliver on its mandate.

Regarding the income and expenditure plan, my first step was to determine incompressible and statutory costs.

Following this, the amount of \$33 million was equitably distributed among non-programme sectors and bureaux, applying an across-the-board cut of 14.8% over relevant parts of the \$536 million baseline, with incompressible costs set aside, and while recognizing the need for coherence in the central services – this left the Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs (LA) and the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) untouched.

Despite tremendous efforts, I have not been able to reduce the full \$33 million – leaving \$5.3 million still to be cut.

To respect the decision of the Executive Board, further savings will be pursued over the next biennium, and I am confident they will be achieved should you provide me the trust to do so.

In this process, for the major programmes, a total amount of \$216.3 M was established for expenditures during the biennium – with operational costs representing \$59.9 M, and staff costs amounting to \$156.4 million.

This amount has been distributed among the major programmes according to their relative share in document 37 C/5.

You will find information in *document 192 EX/16 Part 1* – with Culture’s share increased to 18.9% after a shift of \$2 million, to respond to statutory obligations.

We have determined budget amounts for each expected result, broken down by operational and staff costs.

The results may be found in *Annex II* -- including expected results that have been merged in Major Programmes II, III, IV and V, as recommended by the Executive Board.

Throughout this process, I have been careful to distribute mandated reductions in staff costs equitably between Headquarters and the field, and to maintain the minimum 20% target for operational activities for almost all expected results.

I have paid special care to the two global priorities, Africa and gender equality.

This is especially important now, as the Executive Board must consider the *UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2014-2021* – this includes actions across all programmes, to strengthen synergies in all our activities to promote equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for girls and women.

The Executive Board will consider also the *Revised Operational Strategy for Priority Africa for 2014-2021* – which, as requested, takes into account alignment with major partners, the roles and responsibilities of different parts of the UNESCO family, and the need for monitoring.

I see the Gender Action Plan and the Africa Strategy as essential platforms for stronger action on UNESCO’s global priorities.

On staff restructuring, I wish to highlight the following points.

This has been and will continue to be an extremely complex exercise, involving multiple rounds of review with Assistant Directors-General and Directors of bureaux/offices – to develop a financial expenditure plan and, from a human resources perspective, to review draft proposals for restructuring and staffing that would allow the delivery of programme priorities within the \$507 million envelope.

This expenditure plan represents a considerable reduction in number of posts – a reduction of 439 (-23%) compared with document 36 C/5, and 285 (-16%) compared with document 37 C/5 Draft.

In *Annex V*, you will find preliminary information on the regular budget post structure, compared with documents 36 C/5 Approved and 37 C/5 Draft (\$653 M).

These are our projections based on current discussions and information.

I must be clear, ladies and gentlemen, these are still early days – this process is dynamic and rolling.

It is not yet possible to indicate how possible reductions will be distributed between occupied and vacant posts.

We need to await the results of the voluntary agreed separation exercise launched on 9 September, as well as the recommendation of this Executive Board and the decision of the General Conference, prior to finalizing changes to the structure and the identification of specific posts to possibly be abolished.

The voluntary separation exercise will be funded by this year's resources.

For separations *after* the General Conference, I intend to open a special account for contributions by Member States, to support separation arrangements in line with statutory obligations and the redeployment process.

With regard to occupied posts, I wish to state once again that I am committed to a transparent and equitable process, to be undertaken after decision by the General Conference on the proposed plan.

The process will identify posts that may possibly be affected and support the redeployment of concerned staff – in line with the appropriate regulations and rules, and the *Redeployment Administrative Circular*, put in place two years ago in the event of a need to abolish occupied posts. The Redeployment Committee includes the Staff Associations as full members.

Dialogue will remain my guiding principle – with all staff, with the staff associations.

Since 2011, I have not spared any effort – successfully, I should add – to avoid the termination of staff contracts and to minimize the impact of the financial shortfall on UNESCO staff.

I will continue to review all possible options and suggestions to further soften the landing – including early retirements, voluntary separations, special leave without pay, as well as other mechanisms, such as part-time and job-sharing.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We must be clear.

We are engaged in a process that will affect UNESCO as a whole.

This will have consequences on our capacity to delivery, on our ability to lead, on the quality of our impact mainly at national level, in the field.

I see this as a call to responsibility.

It is our responsibility to take decisions now that ensure UNESCO can implement its priorities and retain a leading role in the multilateral system.

These objectives cannot be negotiable.

This calls for serious reflection by all Member States.

It calls for new forms of engagement and support by Member States.

We cannot allow the best and the brightest of our staff to leave because they don't see a future.

We cannot allow UNESCO to become a shadow of itself.

This is unacceptable.

Yes, the situation is difficult – but I am convinced that together we can turn this around, because we have strong foundations to build on.

I see these foundations partly in extrabudgetary resources that are increasing, that are taking on new forms that show UNESCO is sought after.

I see these foundations in the positive assessments UNESCO has received from a number of Member States, as I mentioned earlier.

Just last week, the United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO released a report on *The Wider Value of UNESCO to the United Kingdom*, which shows that the United Kingdom benefits from membership 6 times the investment made – and this does not mention substantial intangible benefits, which are difficult to measure.

Across the world, in both developing and developed countries, governments are increasingly confident in UNESCO, and the relevance our action is recognized more and more.

I see these foundations in UNESCO's action across the world where needs are most acute – in Haiti or in the Horn of Africa.

I see these foundations, for instance, in UNESCO's *ASPNet* – whose 60th anniversary we celebrated earlier this month in Suwon, Republic of Korea. This global network started with 33 schools in 15 Member States in 1953, and now includes 9,700 educational institutions in 180 countries. We cannot let them down – this is an incredible success story that speaks to the strength of the values we share.

I see foundations to build on in the vision of UNESCO that we share.

We have seen this in the *Open-Ended Working Group* and the *Ad Hoc Preparatory Group*, whose Chair, Ms Vera Lacœuilhe, I thank most warmly for her leadership and hard work.

I see strong foundations in the resilience of the Organization, in the determination all staff are showing, for which I am extremely grateful.

I believe “we” have perhaps never been so united towards a common goal – to strengthen UNESCO's ability to deliver its mandate.

On these foundations, we must shape a UNESCO that is ever more relevant, efficient and performing – despite stringent conditions, at a level of funding that echoes in real terms that of the mid-1990s.

We have no choice in current circumstances but to make the very best of the situation.

For me, as Director-General, this means we must accelerate change.

This calls for even more courage, creativity and innovation – it calls for deeper mutual trust.

This requires a new commitment by all to change, to make the sacrifices necessary for a stronger Organization.

We must move beyond stop-gap measures, like a blanket freezing of recruitment – to review programmatic priorities and staff together, to ensure maximum coherence, efficiency and dynamism.

We must modernize the alignment between the regular budget and extrabudgetary funding – so that they complement each other and do not compete, to ensure maximum predictability, and this is what I intend to do.

We must sharpen our ability to generate new resources and to manage and monitor them appropriately, for the benefit of the Organization and its programmes – this is what I intend to do.

We must strengthen our capacity to deliver activities “on time and within budget” – to meet demand and expectations head-on, and this is what I intend to do.

We must sharpen our focus even more and avoid the temptation to spread thin, and this is what we must do together.

I believe we should not try *to do everything with less*.

At some point, this may mean a review of mandates and the implementation of statutory obligations – these have expanded over the last decade while UNESCO’s budget has decreased.

The gap between workload and funding is becoming unsustainable in a number of areas – we need to rethink both *what* we do and *how* we do it.

We must deepen the quality of our impact – this must be the next great goal to guide us.

We must safeguard the unique expertise embodied in our staff – to avoid hollowing out the Organization and to strengthen our ability to implement programmes.

As we tackle all of these questions, ladies and gentlemen, we will have to make tough decisions, about *what is necessary*, about *what is sustainable*.

We simply cannot shy away from the reality of the situation.

I am convinced we cannot accept a reduced status quo for UNESCO, a “business as usual” scenario with fewer resources.

I remember here the words of Shakespeare, who said:

“There is no virtue like necessity”.

We have been proactive – but we must continue to act.

We have taken hard decisions – we must remain bold and ambitious.

We have no choice but to continue, and I would say to continue full steam.

The good news is we are not starting from scratch.

We begin with a firm framework for reform, guided by the independent external evaluation of UNESCO that must be implemented – to strengthen UNESCO’s leadership globally and in the United Nations system, to sharpen our focus to meet expectations, to deepen our impact everywhere, especially in the field.

We begin with a strong vision for UNESCO’s action over the medium term, to lay the foundations for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development.

We begin with an Organization that has weathered the storm and emerged resilient.

We begin, most of all, with a strong sense of responsibility, with steady hands and a clear vision.

We must now make the most of every drop of expertise we have, to build an even more performing UNESCO.

I know this has never been more important, because expectations are high.

Expectations are high for UNESCO to build on the *United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012)* and to take forward education for sustainable development (ESD).

Expectations are high for UNESCO to support countries accelerating towards the education goals by 2015 and to shape a bold new goal on learning thereafter.

Expectations were high last week in New York, at the *United Nations General Assembly Special Event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*, where I spoke about the need to harness cross-cutting multipliers for sustainable development and poverty eradication – such as science, technology and innovation, such as cultural heritage and creative industries.

Expectations are high regarding UNESCO’s unique expertise in the ocean sciences, in our capacity-building for sustainable water management.

Expectations are high for UNESCO to promote stronger science for sustainable development.

Expectations are high for UNESCO to sharpen United Nations action to protect the safety of journalists and tackle impunity, to promote freedom of expression on its platforms.

Expectations are high regarding UNESCO's rising profile in disaster risk reduction, in early warning systems, in support to peace-building and democratic transitions – this is an area of rising importance for UNESCO that we must nurture.

These are the new challenges we must tackle.

Expectations are high for UNESCO to continue safeguarding cultural heritage, especially when it is under attack.

Expectations are high for UNESCO's leadership in advancing new forms of global solidarity and intercultural dialogue – through the *International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022)*, which was launched in Astana, Kazakhstan, this August, as well as through our work with the *Alliance of Civilizations*, with whom I renewed our memorandum of understanding on 25 September,

Expectations are high also for the *Slave Route project*, whose 20th anniversary we commemorate next year – last week, in New York, I was honoured to participate with the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki moon, the President of the General Assembly, John W. Ashe, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, H.E. Ms Portia Simpson Miller, and the President of Senegal, H.E. Mr Macky Sall, in the ceremony unveiling the winning design, "The Ark of Return," for the *Permanent Memorial in Honour of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade* in which process UNESCO played an instrumental role.

Let me also highlight UNESCO's work to support sport and physical education, as vehicles for social inclusion, for gender equality, for youth empowerment – this was taken forward at the *5th International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS V)*, held in Berlin last May. I wish to thank Germany for sponsoring this major event.

In this respect, let me say I have listened with care to Member States on the proposed *Centre for Social Transformations and Intercultural Dialogue*.

I made this proposal in response to the call for greater inter-sectoriality and focus.

I made it also in the spirit of 190 EX/Decision 19, which requested “*clear proposals for innovative, holistic and effective structures and programme delivery as well as enhanced interdisciplinarity.*”

I made it in reply to the rising demand across the world for support to public policies for social inclusion and intercultural dialogue, for sharper work in foresight.

I find it encouraging and important that we have consulted at length and discussed many questions.

I am pleased that we have jointly identified social inclusion and intercultural dialogue as a key challenge of our time, and that we agree on the importance of strengthening UNESCO's support to Member States in managing social transformations, in making social inclusion possible in situations of rising diversity, in anticipating the needs for better public policy – and, in this respect, we have jointly reaffirmed the importance of the intergovernmental work of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme.

But I understand your concerns today as they relate to current circumstances of constraint.

I have heard you, and this is why I will not pursue at this stage the establishment of the Centre.

Nevertheless, I wish to invite you to continue discussions after the General Conference, to define the right way to strengthen UNESCO's work as a global laboratory of ideas but also at the same time as a capacity-builder in the wider United Nations system.

In this regard, I wish to cite here the words of the President of Peru, H.E. Mr Ollanta Humala, who said last week to the *MDG Success Event*, organized by the United Nations Secretary-General:

Debemos de encontrar una nueva manera -- no crecer para incluir, pero incluir para crecer.

This, I believe, is what is important right now, and this, I believe, this expresses the spirit of all our discussions about social transformations, social inclusion and sustainable development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

On 26 July, the United Nations Secretary-General released a report, called *A Life of Dignity for All*, drawing also on the report of the *High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, co-chaired by Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of Indonesia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia, and David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The July report opens with the following sentence:

The world's quest for dignity, peace, prosperity, justice, sustainability and an end to poverty has reached an unprecedented moment of urgency.

I agree – this is a moment of urgency.

... urgency to tackle deepening inequalities and societies ripped asunder.

... urgency to act together against rising threats to human rights and dignity.

... the urgency of a planet under pressure, facing accelerating climate change and losing biodiversity.

... the urgency of a world that is globalizing but increasingly fragmented.

UNESCO must play a leading role in this quest – especially now, as we push towards 2015 and set a new agenda to follow, as we agree on a new Medium-Term Strategy for UNESCO.

As I have reported on many occasions, UNESCO is deeply involved in the global conversation to define a bold development agenda after 2015.

I look forward to your debate at this Council and the General Conference on this issue.

We are bringing all of our expertise to bear, we are sending your message, and we are making headway – in promoting a holistic education goal that focuses on equity and quality learning throughout life, in underlining the multiplying power of the

sciences for sustainable development, in highlighting culture as an enabler and a driver for meaningful and inclusive development, in underlining the importance of freedom of expression for governance and the rule of law, which is also important for sustainable development.

UNESCO must bring its mandate to the post-2105 agenda, and we are doing so – because our mission has never been more relevant for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development.

The future we want will be built on learning, on knowledge-based societies, where all have access to new technologies, to open educational resources (OER).

This is not just about education; it is about the knowledge divide that is deepening across the world – I believe UNESCO has a key role to play in bridging this divide, in promoting access and the skills necessary to make the most of all opportunities.

This is a goal of the *Broadband Commission for Digital Development*, whose annual meeting I co-chaired ten days ago in New York, in support of broadband as an accelerator for sustainable development and poverty eradication, as a way to reach and include young people.

This is why UNESCO's message must be heard – this is why we must accelerate change.

For this, we need the support of all Member States.

I join the Chair of the Executive Board here in making an appeal to the United States, for its full support to the Organization – especially at this point when cooperation with the United States is so wide and deep, with universities, institutions, the private sector and, when, I believe, UNESCO has never been so important for shaping an effective, rules-based multilateral order, for advancing human rights and dignity.

More than ever, I am convinced the world needs a new humanism that brings human development with the preservation of the planet that provides equal access to all to the benefits of education, the sciences, culture, communication and information.

For this, we must look beyond short-term difficulties and keep our gaze firmly locked on UNESCO's mission.

We must pursue – *relentlessly* – our goal to shape a more relevant, more effective, more performing UNESCO.

The world is changing – UNESCO must accompany this change.

We must move with it, to strengthen the ties that bind humanity together, that remind us of everything we share, the values and dreams we hold in common, and to work to make them real.

We must continue what we have started and, in the uncertainty of change, we must never lose touch with our goal, for UNESCO to remain in the words I cited earlier – “*a light in the dark, an international point of reference, a house of dialogue and consensus.*”

Together, by remaining true to our values, inspired by the great humanist spirit that has always guided us; I am convinced we can achieve this.

We can shape together the UNESCO the world needs today.

Thank you.