



**Speech by His Excellency
Dr. Mohammad bin AbdulWahed Al-Hammadi
Minister of Education and Higher Education
Secretary General of
The Supreme Education Council
at
UNESCO's 38th
General Conference
Paris, 3 - 18 November 2015**

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

**Your Excellency/ Hao Ping, President of the UNESCO 37th General Conference,
Your Excellency Mr. Mohamed Sameh Amr, Chairman of the UNESCO Executive Board,
Your Excellency Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO,
Your Excellencies heads and members of delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**As-salamu alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakaatuhu
Peace and blessing of Allah be upon you.**

On behalf of the delegation of the State of Qatar, allow me to express our congratulations to Mr., President of the General Conference for being elected as president of this session, wishing him success in managing the work of this conference. I would also like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the former president of the previous conference and to the members of the Executive Board for their efforts in the previous session.

I seize this occasion to laud the efforts of the UNESCO Director-General Ms. Irina Bokova for managing UNESCO during the period between the 37th and the 38th session despite the great challenges facing the Organization due to low budget and lack of revenues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Recently, the United Nations 70th session summit was held, in which the heads of majority nations of the world have participated and during which the Post-2015 Development Agenda was adopted, constituting a positive step toward an internationally joint development. However, we do not expect to reap the fruits of such development, especially in the Arab region, should conflicts and wars continue. Quoting His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani from his speech to the General Assembly: "in the absence of peace and stability, there will be neither development nor justice with the lack of security and stability, which is reflected in our current situation in some countries around

the world, especially in the Arab region, such as the loss of educational opportunities for children and youth, displacement of families, and the destruction of cultural heritage.

The adoption of the sustainable development plan by the heads of states requires from us, in our official capacity, and from the UNESCO, to exert more efforts at the national level, and to show solidarity and cooperation at the international level to be able to achieve Goal 4 of the plan on education and pertinent goals and objectives included in the framework that has been discussed and commented upon during the Incheon meeting in Korea, which will be adopted in our meeting tomorrow. I hereby stress the need to ensure the provision of basic education for all children, and to bridge the wide gaps we have witnessed in achieving this goal over the past decade.

We, in the State of Qatar, under the leadership and guidance of His Highness the Emir, pay great interest to education at all levels and stages. We are also aware of our humanitarian duty toward the peoples of the world, realizing the importance of international cooperation to support education and global educational goals and objectives and ensure quality and comprehensive education for all. We believe that education contributes to a positive role in achieving convergence, communication and interaction between civilizations, promotes common human values, human rights, and the principles of truth, justice, peace and mutual respect. Hence, the State of Qatar has been proactive in providing development aid to developing and afflicted countries in various parts of the world through positive contributions to relevant international organizations such as UNESCO or civil society organizations; starting from education, a tributary for sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Education for sustainable development is the only way to build the abilities, competencies and values of both individuals and communities to address the environmental risks using innovative solutions. Therefore, State of Qatar sought to integrate sustainable development, its values and practices in the educational curricula with a view to achieving Qatar's National Vision 2030. Our educational system was developed according to world-class standards to attain quality education with high quality outputs. Improving the outputs of education entailed updating the general framework of student assessment policies; completing the Qatar National Curriculum General Framework document; implementing the Literacy and Numeracy Initiative in early years education; developing adult education system; establishing a specialized center for supporting learning difficulties; developing and updating a professional licensing system for teachers and school leaders; and establishing the Training and Educational Development Center.

Believing that scientific research is the clear path toward establishing a scholarly foundation to lead the country to a knowledge-based economy, Qatar University has established 10 interdisciplinary applied research centers, working on 480 research projects, and cooperates with 133 international partners. In the context of developing methods of scientific thinking among the youth, Qatar University, in cooperation with the UNESCO, has implemented several projects aimed at promoting

research and scientific skills and capabilities of secondary school students, as represented in the project (Al-Bayraq) which is based on the applications of sciences useful to the environment in Qatar. The program has had good and tangible results on students' research skills, and has won the WISE Award for Best Educational Project of the Year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We hail and commend UNESCO for its continued efforts in supporting the programs for the conservation and protection of cultural and tangible heritage around the world, and in promoting the capacity building of individuals to preserve such heritage, in true embodiment of the human intellect, and to preserve the national identity. As part of our engagement with the UNESCO in these efforts, the State of Qatar, during the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee, took the initiative to contribute the sum of 10 million US dollars to support World Heritage Fund that aims at ensuring rapid intervention in the World's heritage sites that are exposed to the risk of natural disasters and armed conflicts, with the objective of restoring and repairing the damaged heritage. The Qatari contribution is also meant to develop an information bank of the heritage sites located in places prone to disasters in order to restore such sites rapidly and accurately.

To highlight the efforts exerted by Qatari cultural institutions, at the international level, to preserve the rich heritage of the Muslim world, The State of Qatar has organized the "Golden Age of Islamic Civilization Exhibition" at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris last September. The exhibition shed light on the history of the Islamic World and its contributions to optics as represented by the contributions of Ibn al-Haytham, the founder of this science.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I reiterate that the issue of Jerusalem and the need to protect it from the excavations carried out by the Israeli government to alter the historic nature of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the acts of desecration and sacrilege to the sanctuaries are of critical importance to all Arab and Islamic countries. Even though this issue was presented in several sessions of the Executive Board and in most of the UNESCO General Conference sessions, however, we have not seen any actions taken on the ground to stop and prevent such transgressions, rather recently we have been witnessing serious transgressions by the Israeli authorities and religious extremists trespassing on Jerusalem, attacking and ridiculing religious symbols and sanctities. From this platform, we call upon our Organization to take urgent and decisive actions that support the preservation and protection of the religious sanctities in the Holy Jerusalem.

Thank you all for your kind attention and I wish you and the conference every success.

Peace and blessing of Allah be upon you.