

Check against delivery

## **NATIONAL STATEMENT**

of the Head of the Governmental Delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria to the 36th session of the UNESCO General Conference

H. E. Mr. Serguei IGNATOV, Minister of Education, Science and Youth

Mrs President of the General Conference,

Mrs President of the Executive Board,

Mrs Director General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

Two years after our Director General took office we witness remarkable efforts and tangible results in achieving the goal of a reformed UNESCO, more focused on its core activities and values. The revised budget proposal dully reflects that and Bulgaria supports the zero nominal growth option.

My delegation wishes to congratulate the Director General for her strong commitment to increased visibility of UNESCO and for her efforts to a more coordinated interaction with other UN agencies which is crucial in obtaining the required impact of our actions. We also commend her for the courageous decisions she has made in difficult moments when the credibility, image and values of UNESCO were at stake. Bulgaria renders its unreserved support for all her endeavors.

We all recognize the world is facing challenging economic times and we realize that the way forward to stability, which relates to more sustainability, to prosperity as well as to life in dignity, is through investment in education, scientific research and more socially-beneficial innovations.

Here I would like to share with the membership of UNESCO that my Government has decided, in a moment of reduced budgetary spending, to increase the budgets for Education and Culture for 2012.

While that investment is essential for strengthening the global economy in order to remain true to the vision and values that lie at the heart of UNESCO, we cannot but recognize and highlight the pivotal role of science and technologies in the pursuit of a more equitable, sustainable and humane society in the 21st century.

We are to respond to the global multifaceted challenges by devising the proper strategies based on the right concepts and the perception that more innovations are needed to serve a social purpose and meet or alleviate the social needs of all kinds – as for decent quality of education for all to support personal and community development, for better scientific outcomes generating even more excellence in innovation, and for active civil society to safeguard the human values and overarching social principles of democracy and respect for human rights.

To accomplish the targets set by the Millennium Development Goals, there is a need to foster the social entrepreneurship as a means of innovation and promote research on the types of platforms needed to facilitate cross-sector collaborative social innovation.

We are of the opinion that sustainable development requires holistic approaches that make the most of synergies between cross-disciplinary and policy domains, relying on proper education for a change. Education is a key instrument and a powerful tool for bringing about changes in values and attitudes, skills, behaviors and lifestyles. These can only be achieved by encouraging critical, creative and innovative thinking in the educational process from an early age. Therefore pre-schools and primary education institutions have a particularly prominent role to play.

We should spare no efforts supporting and encouraging the development of the intellectual potential of young people. That is how we could help them in developing active attitudes towards the social and environmental problems, in generating enthusiasm and willingness for a creative future of their own to the benefit of a healthier and a more sustainable “green” world of change.

Therefore, the need to focus on promoting science education at all stages and levels in the increasingly knowledge-based societies in order to strengthen the capacity in young people to contribute to contemporary society. It will also help to raise youth’s understanding of global challenges such as climate change, the limits to energy resources, the need to protect the cultural heritage and biodiversity. Fostering education of tolerance and respect to the different cultural values and manifestations is a prerequisite to building a culture of peace.

In all our activities in the field of education we need to further sharpen the focus on the priorities Africa and gender equality.

Cultural innovations and products provide for the economic growth and support social cohesion, alleviating social disparities. Concentrating investments in the field of culture will enhance sustainable development.

My delegation warmly welcomes the initiative of the Director General for South East Europe to use culture as a bridge to and accelerator of development.

Excellencies,

My delegation subscribes to the appeal of the Director General to act in unity.

Let us sustain our common vision for the future of our Organization and strengthen our mutual cooperation. The rapidly changing world needs UNESCO more than ever before.

Thank you !