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Governance at UNESCO: The role of the Executive Board

Remarks

by

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Chairperson of the Executive Board,
Madame Director General of UNESCO,
Dear Mr. Martin O'Malley,
Excellences,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to join you, as President of General Conference, in this special session of Executive Board Meeting, and especially with attendance of our special guest Mr. Martin O'Malley, Inspector General of Global Fund.

The topic of this session—Governance at UNESCO, is an old subject as this is what we are facing every day, but it is also a new topic as a better governance of the Organization is crucial to meet the actual challenges. Good governance is the common concern of all member states as it is the fundamental factor to ensure UNESCO's capacity in providing best services to its member states.

I am happy to notice that, some relevant resolutions in this regard have been adopted in 37th session of General Conference, which demonstrated the high attention and expectation from member states on this matter. And I appreciate the efforts made by Director General, the Chairperson of the Executive Board and the Secretariat in implementing these resolutions by promoting the internal reform of the organization, which has scored remarkable achievements.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Crisis is the word that we are using the most to describe the actual situation of our organization. As shared by the ambassador of United States in her intervention, the word "crisis" is actually constituted of two Chinese characters: and, which means respectively danger and opportunity.

This interpretation implies the philosophy that danger contains opportunity and, opportunity could be found in danger. Hence, I have the reason to believe that, if every Member State could contribute creative thinking and constructive ideas to UNESCO, the danger that we are facing could turn into opportunity.

I would also like to quote the intervention of ambassador of Belize in which he indicated that, “UNESCO is a titanic boat, but we cannot let it capsize” His words made me recall a Chinese fable entitled a common danger cause a common action: around 2500 years ago, there were two enemy states in today’s china mainland, whose people fought each other year by year. And once, people from the two states took the same boat to cross the sea and, unfortunately, they encountered the storm. At that very moment, the two peoples forgot the resentment to each other and started to struggle in solidarity, and finally all of them succeeded and survived.

This story is no doubt inspiring to all of us today, Executive Board, the Secretariat and the Member States, as we are exactly the people in the same boat facing big storm. In this house, we share the same destiny, and we share the same mission. What we need is exactly what is being discussed today— a good governance, for us, to be more coordinated and united, heading to the bright future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have the consensus that, improving the governance and working efficiency of this house is critical for UNESCO to maintain its leading role, to meet the needs of Member States and continue to contribute to the sustainable peace of humanity as a whole.

70 years of history is not short for an organization, and it demonstrates its importance and dynamism. We need to treasure it, protect it, and rejuvenate it.

Dear friends, it is time to act!

Thank you very much!

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