

Seventeenth plenary meeting of the 38th session of the General Conference

Tuesday 17 November 2015 at 2.30 p.m.

President: Mr Stanley Mutumba Simataa (Namibia)

Leaders' Forum (*continued*)

1. The President:

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I declare open the seventeenth plenary meeting of the General Conference, which will be dedicated to the continuation of the Leaders' Forum of the General Conference, and later on, the adoption of the report of the Culture Commission. But first, we will have the honour of hearing addresses by our distinguished visitors.

Official Visit of the President of Malta

2.1 The President:

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, our first speaker this afternoon is Her Excellency Ms Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta. Ms Coleiro Preca became the ninth President of the Republic of Malta last year, by unanimous decision of the House of Representatives. Her Excellency thus became the youngest President of her country, and only the second woman occupying the office of the Head of State.

2.2 Her Excellency has been active in politics for the past 40 years, starting at the young age of 16. Within the Labour Party, she served in a number of positions, including as Secretary General, between 1982 and 1991. Her Excellency is the only woman who ever occupied this important elected position in a Maltese political party. Her Excellency also served as a Member of Parliament in the House of Representatives between 1998 and 2014, and as a reform-minded Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity. Madam President, we are honoured today by your presence, and are looking forward to hear your message today. I know have the pleasure to invite you to take the floor.

3.1 Ms Preca (President of Malta):

Madam Director-General, Mr Chair of the General Conference, Mr President of the Executive Board, Excellencies, distinguished colleagues. We meet here today to commemorate UNESCO's seventieth anniversary. The world of today is very different from that of seven decades ago. One would hope it is a better world, a world that has grown in its appreciation of peace, and respect for human rights and human dignity. One would hope that we have learnt lessons from the past, from our histories that are all touched by the horrors of war and human suffering. I wish we could believe that the world has transformed itself into a better and more beautiful place.

3.2 Yet how can we possibly think that our progress has been sufficient, in light of the events that took place last week in Beirut, in Paris, and in other parts of the world? Lives have been destroyed, families have been torn apart, and livelihoods disrupted. Our peace of mind is under attack, by the purveyors of fear and terror. We are confronted, in their acts of directed cruelty, by a stark reminder of the evil that hides behind a mask of ideology, of perverted religion, of disordered culture. And yet this cannot be so.

3.3 Culture grows from the ground of altruism. It is built on cooperation and connection. The roots of culture find deep and enriching sustenance in the relationships we form, within our homes and our communities, in openness and in respect, and in care of the ultimate fragility of the Other. In the words of Martin Buber, the philosopher, "All real life is encounter", by which I understand him to mean that it is only in authentic encounters, even with those whose life paths seem most distant from our own, that we may initiate the kind of dialogue that shall lead to enduring and sustainable peace.

3.4 The opportunity presented by this Conference is of vital importance. In thinking about a vision for UNESCO's future, we are invited to consider those people, those children, who today most keenly need our help as an international community. In thinking about UNESCO's future, we are challenged to find ways of fostering peace and understanding on a global scale. UNESCO must be reoriented towards today's concerns, securing its relevance and affirming its mandate to foster a lasting peace.

3.5 I firmly believe that the founding mandate of UNESCO remains as valid today as it was 70 years ago. UNESCO remains critical in facilitating networks of solidarity between different communities at national, regional and global levels and in providing a carefully considered understanding of the challenges faced by humanity.

3.6 One of UNESCO's key roles must be the championing of culture as a force for dialogue. Culture opens spaces where even the most embittered enemies and the most distant communities can come together, held by the spirit of human creativity and imagination. UNESCO is a driver for social cohesion, for economic growth, innovation, and sustainable development.

3.7 Culture provides a context in which the work of conflict resolution and transformation can take place, a common denominator that can bridge difficult situations. Culture promotes mutual understanding and highlights shared priorities that transcend seemingly insurmountable barriers.

3.8 As an international community now committed to the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we must remember that development is inseparably linked with the realities of culture. We must listen to cultural practitioners, and accept that their knowledge brings with it a subtle wisdom that can give depth and quality to the goals we envision. A vision in which diversity is celebrated, and mutual respect is given freely and openly. A vision that shall, if given its due importance, ensure that the atrocities we have recently witnessed shall not be repeated.

3.9 As leaders we must make sure that the principles of cultural diversity motivate all spheres of policy-making, at every level. This approach needs to inform the way we do things, and needs to play an integral role in our practices, our legislation and all other instruments and institutions through which the lives of our communities are affected.

3.10 UNESCO must be encouraged to continue its role as a champion of culture. UNESCO must continue fostering intercultural understanding, by protecting heritage and supporting and celebrating our planet's diversity of human culture. Of special importance, UNESCO must continue to be a key voice for education so that every child, regardless of gender or socio-economic status, has access to quality education as a fundamental human right and as a prerequisite for human development.

3.11 In deliberating our vision for UNESCO's future, we must build on this legacy. We must capitalize on UNESCO's strengths, to address the challenges and opportunities that exist today. The Sustainable Development Goals agreed upon at the United Nations Summit highlight some of these present challenges. In my address at the summit some weeks ago, I shared a vision for the future with my fellow leaders. The truth is that we are at a crossroads, a moment in time where unity and global solidarity are of key importance. We must make a renewed commitment to safeguarding human dignity and human rights, not for the privileged few but for each and every one of us, wherever we live and whatever our circumstances.

3.12 Today, we still face a situation where poverty affects millions worldwide. Food security, gender inequality, access to education, and threats to sustainability are some of the many challenges that require a concerted effort by the international community. The Sustainable Development Goals provide excellent guidelines on what truly merits the attention of world leaders at this critical moment in our history.

3.13 As leaders, future generations will judge us by the efforts we make. We must come together as partners to deliver tangible results, and produce a real change that shall benefit all humankind. The role of UNESCO is critical, a guide and a companion in our journey. We need to see this moment in our history as an opportunity for the global community to uncover the root causes of inequality. We must openly and honestly explore the structural inequalities that perpetuate harmful cycles of privilege and oppression, and in the process damage the lives of countless millions.

3.14 Let us also remember that measuring economic success is not enough. We often witness economies performing excellently in terms of economic output but the standards of living do not reflect a similar and corresponding improvement. Economies would, in many cases, register growth but people in poverty or at risk of poverty would still face the same precarious situations with devastating consequences for their future. This approach must change, and we thus need to be more comprehensive in our policy formulation and in the way we measure improvement.

3.15 In essence we need to go beyond measuring economic indicators and basing our policies exclusively on economic factors. We need to take into consideration indicators of wellbeing within our communities, because these are determinants that are of equal importance. The means to measure wellbeing already exist. We now need to use these innovative approaches to come up with policies that strengthen and nurture our communities, not only on an economic front but on all fronts, and place human well-being at the heart of our concerns.

3.16 As leaders, we are in a strategic position to make a difference. We need to make sure that equal access to opportunities is a reality for all. The mandate of UNESCO in securing access to these basic rights thus remains. As leaders, we need to fully support UNESCO's work in these essential areas. My vision for UNESCO's future is that it should always remain a global leader in advancing knowledge and understanding among people; in championing true equality; in furthering popular education and culture; and in increasing and diffusing knowledge on a global scale.

3.17 We also need to think about the tragedies that continue to unfold in this day and age. Migration is a reality that persists in creating situations of great concern. We need to continue finding tangible, dignity-affirming ways of addressing migration, anchored in a rights-based approach. Most importantly we need to think about every human being risking their life at this very moment. We must ensure that no more lives are put at risk.

3.18 Our meeting here today will undoubtedly make headlines throughout the world. Nonetheless, those same news headlines will also include grim stories about migrants and their often thwarted journey in search of better lives or life itself! In determining UNESCO's role and its place in the future, it is therefore essential that UNESCO continues to place emphasis on the human face of migration. It is imperative that it continues addressing the implications of the movement of peoples within its fields of competence. It is necessary that UNESCO, in an unhindered manner, continues to anchor its interventions within the framework of universal human rights.

3.19 Dear friends, the achievement of gender equality is another agreed Sustainable Development Goal, and one of UNESCO's global priorities. Gender equality is an affirmation of basic human dignity, and is necessary to create sustainable and peaceful societies. It is a fundamental component in development. We must recognize that issues of gender are strongly linked with other goals, and will have tremendous effects on the overall success of the Sustainable Development Goals.

3.20 Even if some progress has been made, the fact is that women, girls and gender minorities continue to occupy a disadvantaged position throughout the world. This inequality is not limited to location, or to whether their oppression occurs in poor households or in developing countries. Discrimination occurs in situations of peace with just as devastating an effect as in situations of conflict.

3.21 Reports continuously show that inequalities persist worldwide, affecting a wide range of rights, including health, education, public and political life, employment, and access to justice. In looking at a more equal future, we must all recognize that gender inequality negatively affects all people, regardless of their gender identities. The road toward gender equality should be viewed not merely as a transfer of opportunities or privileges from one group to another, but as a fundamental step in the enjoyment of all our rights.

3.22 One of the leading global campaigns on gender equality is the "HeForShe" campaign spearheaded by

UN Women. Together with fellow heads of State, I am committed to this campaign and its message of gender equality. Together with other champions, we are determined to make a difference in the lives of women and girls worldwide. To this mandate, through my Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, I have added a focus on the protection and empowerment of gender minorities. We encourage all other HeForShe champions to do the same, recognizing the importance of gender self-determination.

3.23 A key message of the campaign is that gender equality is not an issue faced by women or gender minorities alone. It is a human rights issue that affects us all. We all stand to benefit from gender equality, liberating us from prescribed social roles and the gender stereotypes of a binary system that must be interrogated, and transformed.

3.24 We are here to acknowledge the 70th anniversary of the adoption of UNESCO's Constitution. Perhaps one of the most quoted line of the Constitution is "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". This notion provides an impetus to acknowledge that UNESCO must continue to remain committed to peace always, and in all ways. As leaders we must continue to support this mandate, and support the overarching mission of UNESCO. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals, we must all strive to promote peaceful and inclusive societies.

3.25 I would like to take this opportunity to share with you a project currently being finalized by my Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society. Together with a number of international academic and professional partners, we are in the process of establishing an Institute for Peace and Wellbeing. We are interested in researching, motivating, and inspiring cultures of peace and wellbeing, exploring best practices, and finding the most efficient and effective systems of knowledge sharing.

3.26 Through this Institute we shall engage with communities, with a special focus on our Mediterranean region. We want to learn about how communities can achieve well-being, as active citizens who can effectively access and enjoy their rights. We want to promote inclusive spaces within societies, as a direct pathway to peace and wellbeing. In line with UNESCO's priorities and objectives we believe the Institute can be instrumental in fostering understanding and peace on a communal, national, regional and international level.

3.27 We believe there is a deep need for dialogue. Many of the voices that call out, in need of answer, are met with a deafening silence. We wish to be that voice which comes in reply to break the silence, small at first but insistent in our commitment to the great work at hand. Peace and wellbeing are two pillars that provide the most firm foundation for our future, and those of future generations. Let us strengthen this foundation by doing all that is within our power to eradicate poverty, to diffuse conflict, and ensure the equality of all members of our human family.

3.28 My fellow leaders, in conclusion, I must mention the role of civil society and its place in the future of UNESCO. Civil society operates at grassroots level, in direct contact with the lived experiences and realities of all communities. It is essential that we continue collaborating with civil society and give its input the weight and importance it deserves. We have heard the cries of outrage, despair, fear and confusion provoked by last week's atrocities. We have been touched by this great suffering, and we stand here with the heavy task of determining a path forward.

3.29 Once again, UNESCO is called upon at this moment in history to play its part. We must listen and respond to the hopes of our peoples. We must ensure that we do not fail them. I have no doubt UNESCO will live up to its mandate, strengthening its resolve and keeping true to its foundational values. Together, we must promote equality and justice for all. Together, we must find ways of facilitating and brokering peace. Together, we must strive for the well-being of our world. Thank you.

4.1 **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. On behalf of all Member States, I would like to thank you most sincerely for a very rich and enlightening speech. Before I proceed, I wish to acknowledge with pleasure, the presence once again of His Excellency, the President of Cameroon. Mr President, we have the pleasure to welcome you back. At the same time we have the pleasure to receive the President of Azerbaijan.

4.2 Thank you very much Your Excellencies, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, ladies and gentlemen. Our next speaker is His Excellency, Mr Miroslav Lajčák, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia. Mr Lajčák served as his country's ambassador in Japan, Serbia and Montenegro, as well as the Special Representative of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina, before being named the Deputy Prime Minister of Slovakia three years ago. Your Excellency, we are happy to welcome you to UNESCO, and are looking forward to hearing your speech. Your Excellency, it is not my pleasure and privilege to invite you to take the floor.

5.1 **M. Lajčák** (Vice-Premier ministre et ministre des Affaires étrangères de la Slovaquie):

Monsieur le Président, Madame la Directrice générale, Mesdames et Messieurs. La France – berceau des valeurs démocratiques, des droits de l'homme, de la liberté, de la culture – a été de nouveau brutalement attaquée. Permettez-moi d'exprimer mes condoléances les plus sincères aux proches des victimes et des blessés. En ce moment tragique, notre pensée, soutien et solidarité appartiennent à l'audacieux peuple français. Nous sommes tous Paris !

(L'orateur poursuit en anglais)

5.2 Brutal and barbaric terrorist acts against defenceless civilians deserve our total condemnation. This is inhumane and against any religious beliefs. When some of the witnesses described what happened at the Bataclan theatre, they said the terrorists had behaved like machines. Yes, because they lost their souls, their humanity! Without them, we can turn into machines. Terrorists all around the world – in Paris, Beirut or Kenya – are inhuman machines regardless of their motivation or ideology. They are simply killers, enemies of mankind. Their way brings no solutions, just death.

5.3 Our immediate spontaneous reaction must be resolve and unity, defense of our values and way of life. What is of the essence is not to allow the terrorists to form our agenda. They declared themselves faithful to Islam. They want to force upon us their perverse version of one of the great world religions, Islam. We all know it is a shameful lie. They

represent no religion. We will not allow them to bring the fight to the people of different faiths, hatred based on religion, race or ethnicity. His Holiness Pope Francis has said in his reaction to Friday's tragic events in Paris: "The road of violence and hatred does not resolve humanity's problems and using the name of God to justify this road is blasphemy".

5.4 We in Europe are proud of our historic heritage including ancient Greek and Roman philosophy. We should remember and occasionally remind ourselves that during the Middle Ages, Greek ideas were largely forgotten in Western Europe. They re-entered the West through translations from Arabic to Latin thanks to Islamic philosophers such as Al-Kindi (Alkindus), Al-Farabi (Alpharabius), Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes). The re-introduction of these philosophies, accompanied by new Arabic commentaries, had a great influence on medieval philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas. That has been a real contribution of Islam to Europe. We need more Islamic philosophers and scientists and less hate preachers.

5.5 Mr President, UNESCO is playing and will continue playing a key role in creating the world where there is no space for terrorists. We have gathered here today to share our views about its future. No terrorist can change that. Our Organization celebrates its 70th anniversary. We are going to take stock of our efforts so far. But most importantly, we are going to help create a vision for UNESCO of the future, one that is better equipped to deal with global threats and challenges. Their scale is unprecedented, including violent extremism and international terrorism.

5.6 Mr President, when UNESCO was created 70 years ago, it was a response to the shock and moral crisis triggered by the Second World War. Lessons learned from its atrocities called for the establishment of the universal platform for dialogue, to assist States in cooperating and promoting education, culture and science, and to safeguard our common heritage for the benefit of the nations. Hence, this idea has been firmly rooted as a main objective of UNESCO in Article I of its Constitution. Education, culture, science, communication and information are genuine parts of our lives, wherever we live and whatever we do. Human beings simply cannot exist without them. They contribute to the satisfaction of our material and mental needs, interests and aspirations. They are tools enriching the welfare of all humankind. But, unfortunately, they also are abused for the promotion of false ideas and vicious ideologies of terror.

5.7 As our response to the recent wave of terror, the need to define a new humanism is more relevant than ever. It should be bringing nations and people back together through education, culture, science and communication. We have to refresh the spirit of London of 1945 and adapt it to the present world, its needs and challenges. UNESCO is a huge laboratory of thoughts. Let us together make better use of it for the creation of a new humanism further reflected in a new multilateralism. I fully agree with Madam Director General Irina Bokova. She calls for a return to the original meaning of culture. From the very beginning of her tenure she wanted it to be accepted by all of humanity. Because we see it matters. There can be no lasting peace and global prosperity without intellectual and moral cooperation among the nations.

5.8 Mr President, we are utterly devoted to the universality of UNESCO. In our understanding, we deem it a capability to act together in a concerted manner at the worldwide level. But it is a political category rather than an arithmetic one. We have a joint responsibility to ensure that UNESCO further enhances its capacities for effective global action. Today it is more required than ever.

(The speaker continues in French)

5.9 En parlant de l'UNESCO, on utilise souvent le mot « valeurs ». Dans ce contexte, j'ai surtout envie d'évoquer les valeurs qui ne sont pas cotées en Bourse, et de répéter avec René Maheu : « L'essentiel de la mission de l'UNESCO n'est pas d'ordre technique ; il est éthique ». En affrontant les difficultés, l'UNESCO doit rester fidèle à sa mission éthique. Dans toute organisation internationale à vocation universelle, il existe toujours des dossiers qui causent des divisions entre les États. Les désaccords sont naturels et inévitables. Ils sont également très utiles et, à long terme, ils renforcent notre capacité à délibérer sérieusement mais aussi à respecter nos différences et à trouver ensemble les meilleures solutions. Nous devons être bien conscients que les organisations intergouvernementales ne sont pas éternelles. Elles font partie et sont le résultat d'un processus d'évolution. Leur espace vital s'annonce plus darwinien que jamais. Elles sont parfois gourmandes, égocentriques et déjà trop nombreuses. Seules les plus aptes subsisteront. La capacité de réinventer et de s'ajuster au nouvel environnement et aux nouveaux défis est essentielle.

(L'orateur poursuit en anglais)

5.10 Mr President, we need UNESCO more than ever. It should play an even more significant role in addressing present-day threats. It has to continue its efforts to eradicate illiteracy and poverty, to stand up against escalating conflicts and rising violent extremism, and resolutely reject barbaric attacks and savage destruction of precious cultural heritage. They serve as the common spiritual identity of all of us.

5.11 The current threats to international peace and security have never been more complex. The increasing danger posed by terrorist and extremist groups requires a global response. We must face up the twisted philosophies of ISIL, Al Qaeda, Al Shabaab, Boko Haram and others. There is no alternative to combating them upfront, because it is our obligation to protect and preserve priceless human heritage for many generations to come. We thus fully support the "#Unite4Heritage" campaign. We also encourage all Member States to protect past legacy where it is threatened by extremists by offering voluntary contributions to the Emergency Fund and the Fund of the Second Protocol of the Hague Convention. For our part, we are ready to do it.

5.12 The efforts to extend the mandate of the United Nations peacekeeping missions to culture go in the right direction, because culture has been identified by the United Nations Security Council as a major component of global security and it is now generally regarded as one of the key elements of global peace. 2015 is a crucial year to put in place a truly integrated sustainable global agenda. It embraces all nations and tackles all aspects of human existence. A UNESCO agenda has so much to offer in this respect, because it directly copes with poverty, healthcare and education, and also deals with climate, culture, science, communication and information.

5.13 Climate change is a truly defining issue of our time. Bold action is needed today to reduce emissions and build resilience. Paris will soon host the ground-breaking 21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (COP 21). Slovakia will take part in it fully supporting Paris and France as its hosts. UNESCO is in an extraordinary position to have its say, too. It can address climate change exactly by taking advantage of its multidisciplinary mandate.

5.14 The newly adopted Education 2030 Framework for Action is a milestone. It aims to improve and promote inclusive and high-quality education, taking into account sustainable development, human rights and global citizenship. Inclusive education that respects gender equality is a key element for building a sustainable, tolerant and inclusive society. Youth should be provided with necessary competencies and the ability to use them, and thus to contribute to building and shaping the societies they live in.

5.15 We live in an era of unprecedented dissemination of information. People often struggle to attach value to them or hesitate how to utilize them properly. We need quality education institutions where people can learn critical thinking, to understand and appreciate our cultural and historical heritage, the fundamental values of freedom, democracy and tolerance. Education is crucial to our progress and sustainability, but it also significantly helps guide us to peace and stability and in the end our civilized future.

5.16 The suffering of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers calls for concerted efforts, a multidimensional approach and long-term strategies. The elimination of root causes, rather than dealing with consequences alone, is a must. UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme has good capacity to focus on all such urgent implications.

5.17 We will also continue supporting efforts to mainstream human rights across the UNESCO agenda. We remain committed to the promotion of gender equality, and the empowerment of women and girls. We will strive to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls, and encourage equal access to education and employment. Our strong opposition to all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance is unwavering.

5.18 Science is what drives our lives to an ever more advanced level. There is an imperative to invest more in research. We have to attract young people in particular to devote themselves to science and make use of their talent to contribute to the well-being of future generations. Finally, the relevance of communication and information is truly unique. UNESCO's role in promoting universal respect for justice, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms is irreplaceable. Specifically, press freedom and freedom of expression need to be reinforced. But the safety of journalists worldwide is worrying. Slovakia therefore acts along with the international community on this front. We back global efforts to end impunity for crimes against journalists.

5.19 Mr President, before concluding, I will come back once more to the vision of UNESCO as we see it. We need to have a UNESCO for all. This formula very well embodies what we want to achieve, because we founded this Organization with a vision to serve us all for a better world. Thank you for your attention.

6. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for your very elaborate statement and indeed for the very rich, wise words advanced to us. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I now have the pleasure of welcoming His Excellency, Mr Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, who will be our next distinguished speaker. Under his leadership, Azerbaijan has experienced rapid economic growth and became a reliable partner of UNESCO, supporting our Organization in all areas of its mandate. I wish in particular to pay tribute to His Excellency's initiative to launch the "Baku Process" which brings together ministers of culture from two different geographical regions, encompassing the Council of Europe and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Over the past few years, Azerbaijan has successfully hosted three World Forums on Intercultural Dialogue and will soon organize the 7th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. These are all signs of Azerbaijan's commitment to the promotion of intercultural dialogue. Mr President, we are pleased to welcome you to UNESCO, and are looking forward to hearing your message. It is now my distinct pleasure and privilege to invite you to take the floor.

7.1 **Mr Aliyev (President of Azerbaijan):**

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, dear friends, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, I would like to express my deepest condolences of the people of Azerbaijan to the people of France in connection with the terrible act of terror in Paris on November 13. Azerbaijani people share the pain of the people of France and stand shoulder to shoulder with them in this tragic moment in the history of the French Republic. This terrible act of terror once again shows that the international community should unite its efforts to combat this evil. No country in the world can be 100% guaranteed against these terrible attacks. Therefore only the unified efforts of the international community can help us to combat this evil. Azerbaijan, as a country which suffered from numerous terror attacks in the past, will play its role in the battle against terrorism and this role is appreciated by the international community.

7.2 Azerbaijan is an active member of UNESCO. It was more than 23 years ago, almost immediately after the restoration of our independence, that Azerbaijan became a member of UNESCO and is playing its role in the promotion of the values of humanity. Azerbaijan signed and ratified almost all of the Conventions and other legal instruments of UNESCO. In 2003, Azerbaijan and UNESCO signed the Framework Agreement on the cooperation in the fields of culture, science, education, and communication, which allowed Azerbaijan to become one of the donor countries of UNESCO. This is our obligation and commitment in front of the least developed countries. Azerbaijan itself experienced poverty, economic devastation, occupation and economic decline at the beginning our independence, where we were the recipients of international aid. Now it is our turn to pay back and to contribute to the cause of development in the world. I am absolutely sure that the areas of UNESCO's activities such as education, culture and, of course, science, are the main areas for development of humankind, the development of which will make our world more secure and safe.

7.3 We are proud that historical monuments of Azerbaijan such as the Walled City of Baku, Shirvansha's Palace and Maiden Tower, Petroglyphs of Gobustan are among the protected historical monuments of UNESCO in the World Heritage List. Azerbaijan is a land of ancient culture, history and traditions, but is young as an independent State – only 24 years old. These years were ones of transformation from one political system to another, from a planned economy to a market economy, and during these years our country managed to succeed. Today Azerbaijan is a reliable partner in the international arena and is an active member of many organizations. Our biggest political and diplomatic success was our election, with the support of 155 countries, to the United Nations Security Council in 2011. That was a form of recognition by the international community of the role of Azerbaijan, our positive activity in the global arena, and that was a sign of respect, trust and appreciation of what we have accomplished. As a reliable member of the international community, during the two years of our membership in the United Nations Security Council we addressed two important issues: the fight against international terrorism and intercultural dialogue.

7.4 Unfortunately, Azerbaijan from the very beginning of our independence has become the object of Armenian aggression. Occupation by Armenia of internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan continues today. As a result of a policy of ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijanis, more than 1 million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons. Some 250,000 Azerbaijanis were deported and ethnically cleansed from Armenia and 750,000 became internally displaced in our own country. We suffered humanitarian catastrophe and that was at the time when we were not economically developed, we were very poor. Today, watching the television reports about the migration crisis which Europe now is facing, of course we understand the pain of the people who have to leave their homes. At the same time, we understand that it creates difficulties for those who live in Europe. But at the same time we remember 1992 and 1993, those years when we in Azerbaijan had to accommodate 1 million people. At that time the population of Azerbaijan was something more than 8 million, so it was one of the highest per capita number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world. We did everything in order to integrate refugees and IDPs into our society. Today, they play a very important role in the development of our country.

7.5 Armenia not only violates international law and norms, but also violates historic justice. The United Nations Security Council adopted four resolutions demanding immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from the territory of Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, more than 20 years have passed since that time and these resolutions are not implemented. Here we come to a very important issue of global security and global configuration in the international arena, namely that decisions and resolutions of leading international bodies are ignored and there is no punishment for that. Armenia continues to ignore Security Council resolutions and there are no consequences for them. This issue must be seriously addressed and we need to elaborate the mechanisms of implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council to avoid double standards, because we all know that in some cases Security Council resolutions are being implemented within days if not hours. But in our case, for more than 20 years, no progress around the negotiation table because Armenia does not want peace. They do not want to live in peace with us, they want to keep an occupation policy for as long as they can, and unfortunately they have succeeded so far. But time is on our side; time is on the side of justice or the side of international law, and I am sure that Azerbaijan will restore its territorial integrity which is respected by the whole world. The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan has the same value as the territorial integrity of any other country. As a result of the occupation, our historical, architectural, and religious monuments were destroyed. You can find the images and videos on the Internet. More than 600 historical and architectural monuments of Azerbaijan were totally destroyed by Armenian armed forces; 22 museums were destroyed with 40,000 items which were exhibited into those museums, including the very precious items of our historical heritage, stolen from our museums and then sold at different auctions. Ten mosques were demolished by Armenian occupants while today in the centre of Baku you can see an Armenian church restored by the government of Azerbaijan. So this is the difference in approach to multiculturalism, this is the difference in approach to religious tolerance, and this again shows that terrorism has no religion, has no nationality, and it is absolutely unacceptable to link Islam with terrorism. I represent a Muslim country, a country which suffered from Armenian terrorism, from occupation, from destruction of our historic monuments. Of course, we will return to our lands, we will restore our cities, build new schools and hospitals there, but we will not be able to restore our historical monuments. Armenia has destroyed our historical heritage but they cannot destroy our will, the will of refugees and IDPs who want to go back to their homes, and the will of their children and grandchildren who were born in Baku and other cities of Azerbaijan who have never seen their historic land, but they live with a strong will in their heart to return – and they will return. We will do everything in order to restore the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

7.6 Again I would like to say that international law norms fully support Azerbaijan's position. At the same time, Nagorno-Karabakh is a historic land of Azerbaijan. The word "Karabakh" has Azerbaijan origin – it means "black garden", it does not mean anything in Armenian. Armenians were settled in that area in the middle of the nineteenth century. If you look at the maps of Czarist Russia of the beginning of the twentieth century you will see that an absolute majority of the names of the citizen villages, of all the toponyms of today's territory of Armenia, have Azerbaijani origins. In 1918, after the collapse of the Russian empire, the first democratic Republic of Azerbaijan was established. One of the first decrees of that Republic was to transfer Yerevan from Azerbaijan to Armenia. Today's capital of Armenia is our historic city of Yerevan, the population of which at the beginning of the twentieth century, 80% was of Azerbaijani origin. Today it is completely ethnically cleansed. So history and international law supports our position, and as you can imagine this issue is number one for Azerbaijan, for every citizen of Azerbaijan.

7.7 Despite these tragic events and occupation which continues to this day, Azerbaijan managed to achieve great success in transformation. We created strong democratic institutions, a modern political system, and a multiparty system. Azerbaijan is a country where all the freedoms are respected: freedom of political activity, media freedom, and freedom of assembly. According to the World Bank's assessment in 2008, only 17% of Azerbaijanis were Internet users; in 2015, it was already 75%, and our plan is to cover the whole country with free broadband Internet. Therefore, it is clearly demonstrated that media freedom, freedom of information for us, is one of the priorities. As Mr President mentioned, Azerbaijan has achieved great success in economic development, despite this heavy burden of refugees. Economic growth, more than 300%, during the last decade was one of the fastest in the world. Investing in human capital we managed to reduce dramatically the level of poverty from almost 50% to 5% in 10 years. Unemployment is even less

than 5%. We have very low foreign debt – only 12% of gross domestic product (GDP) and according to the World Economic Forum, Azerbaijan is number 40 with respect to global competitiveness of its economy. So economic reforms allowed us to accumulate financial resources and to channel them to social and infrastructural development. We invest in the future. We invest in education – more than 3,000 schools were built in the last 10 years in Azerbaijan, taking into account that the number of schools in general is less than 5,000. We achieved almost 100% literacy rates which creates a very strong intellectual potential for our future. More than 500 hospitals and medical institutions built during the last 10 years allow our people to have access to modern medical services. So human capital development for us always was, and is, a major priority.

7.8 As Mr President mentioned, Azerbaijan plays a very active role in the dialogue of civilizations and cultures. We are proud that UNESCO is an official partner of the three forums which were held on intercultural dialogue, and are proud of unique role that Azerbaijan plays as a country which is situated between East and West, a country with a predominant Muslim population, but a secular society and a secular government, a member of the Council of Europe and a member of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. We are trying to use this great opportunity to bring peoples and civilizations closer together. The Baku Process, which we launched in 2008 when we invited the ministers of culture of members of the Islamic Cooperation Organization to attend the meeting of ministers of culture of the Council of Europe member States in Baku, was the first step. Then in 2009, we did the opposite: there was a meeting of ministers of culture of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation States and we invited members of the Council of Europe. Intercultural dialogue today is needed as never before. When we launched the Baku Process the situation in the world in 2008 was absolutely different. Today we see that the level of mutual mistrust is growing. We see if we do not take adequate measures, confrontation based on religious and ethnic grounds will create even bigger problems for all of us. But we can live in peace and I think the example of countries like Azerbaijan demonstrates that. In our country, representatives of all religions live in peace and friendship. Our Government, the State, invests in the construction of not only mosques, but also the construction and reconstruction of churches, – Orthodox and Catholic churches – and synagogues. We are proud that one of the oldest – maybe the oldest church in the Caucasus – is situated in Azerbaijan near the ancient city of Sheki. In the same way, we are proud that one of the most ancient mosques, which was built in 743, is situated in the ancient Azerbaijani city of Shamakhi. All the representatives of different confessions celebrate religious holidays at the same table.

7.9 Therefore multiculturalism for us is not just an idea which is being discussed today, whether it works or does not work, whether it has failed or not. For us, multiculturalism is our tradition. Today it is not only tradition – it is a State policy and our lifestyle. It is possible, because again we accumulated very large experience in that area. One example: this year Azerbaijan hosted the first inaugural European Games. It was very, I think, strange that all the continents except Europe had their own Games: Olympic Games, where the motherland is ancient Greece, then Baron de Coubertin restored them here in France, but Europe never had their own Games. So, the very wise decision of the European Olympic Committee to host the first Games in a Muslim country shows that ideals of multiculturalism and tolerance are very important for all of us. The European Games were a real success with more than 6,000 athletes representing 50 Olympic Committees of Europe. In 2017, we will host the Islamic Solidarity Games and Azerbaijan and Baku probably will be the only country in the world for many years to come that will have these two events in one and the same city. We will continue to contribute to the cause of mutual understanding, because multiculturalism is based on mutual understanding and mutual respect. We should respect other religions the same way as we respect our own. We should live side by side with our neighbours, not asking them their nationality or whether he or she prays in the church, synagogue or in the mosque. Only in this way can we reduce potential risks and eliminate growing tensions. The situation in the world is changing, unfortunately, not in the direction that we would like to see. We need to unite our efforts. We in Azerbaijan are doing our part of the job in order to bring continents and civilizations together. As Mr President of the General Conference mentioned, next year we will host the Alliance of Civilizations Forum, which will be a global event, particularly aimed at discussion of the issues of multiculturalism, religious and ethnic tolerance. I would like to underline the unique role of UNESCO in these issues. We fully support the activity of UNESCO and the strong leadership of the Director-General Ms Bokova, and Azerbaijan will do everything in order to support UNESCO in all its noble activities. Once again, I would like to welcome you, express my respect to you, and congratulate UNESCO on its 70th anniversary. Thank you very much.

8. The President:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. On behalf of all Member States, I would like to thank you most sincerely for your very elaborate and illuminating speech. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, as I informed you earlier, His Excellency, Mr Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, has sent a message to this august assembly. His message will be delivered by Her Excellency, Ms Crystal Nix-Hines, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the United States of America to UNESCO. Madam Ambassador, it is now my pleasure to invite you to deliver the message.

9.1 Ms Nix-Hines (Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the United States of America to UNESCO):

Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director General, Excellencies, I have been asked to share with you a statement from President Obama, in light of the tragic events that took place here in Paris Friday evening. I also saw Secretary of State Kerry earlier today at our Embassy and he expressed again his commitment to advancing the support of the United States for UNESCO's important work at this critical time.

9.2 Secretary Kerry spoke to us about the recent attacks, saying that our challenge is to stop the immediate threat and destroy it, to eliminate the people going into the pool by providing other options, by reaching them before they are radicalized, by getting people to see there is better governance and there are better opportunities. And globally, he noted, we have a lot of work to do.

9.3 As you know, President Obama earlier this year in Washington organized a Summit on Countering Violent Extremism. He hosted another Leaders Forum in New York along the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in September, and Director General Bokova spoke eloquently on the work being done to enhance this Organization's mandate to promote global citizenship, specifically using education as a tool to prevent violent extremism.

9.4 Secretary Kerry and Deputy Secretary Blinken just announced a new public-private partnership with UNESCO and other partners to develop state-of-the-art training materials to deter impressionable youth from violent extremism - a need painfully highlighted by the horrific attacks here and elsewhere. Many of you have embraced UNESCO's leadership in this area during the latest session of the Executive Board and this session of the General Conference, as one way that we can collectively advance the mandate of UNESCO to build peace in the minds of men and women.

9.5 I have the privilege of sharing the following message from President Obama: "Once again, we have seen an outrageous attempt to terrorize innocent civilians. This is an attack not just on Paris, it is an attack not just on the people of France, but this is an attack on all of humanity and the universal values that we share. This is a heart-breaking situation, and obviously those of us here in the United States know what it is like. We have gone through these kinds of episodes ourselves.

9.6 Paris itself represents the timeless values of human progress. Those who think that they can terrorize the people of France or the values that they stand for are wrong. The American people draw strength from the French people's commitment to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness. We are reminded in this time of tragedy that the bonds of liberté and égalité and fraternité are not only values that the French people care so deeply about, but they are values that we share. And those values are going to endure far beyond any act of terrorism or the hateful vision of those who perpetrated the crimes Friday evening.

9.7 In closing, I note that like many of you, we suffered casualties during the attack, including the loss of a young student, Nohemi Gonzalez. Like many other young people, she came to Paris to expand her horizons and enrich her education. Sadly, as Secretary Kerry said, we do not have the power to bring these young people back. But as he challenged us, we must do instead what is in our power. And that begins with a fierce sense of solidarity among good and decent people everywhere, with the vow that we will never be intimidated by terrorists, and we will fight to ensure that the world that our children inherit is richer in love and shorter on hate." That is the peacebuilding work of UNESCO the United States Government affirms today. Thank you. *Merci beaucoup.*

10. The President:

Thank you very much Madam Ambassador. May I please kindly request you to convey the appreciation of the General Conference to President Obama for his message, which is very much appreciated. Ladies and gentlemen, we will now suspend our meeting for a few minutes to allow us to welcome President Hollande. May I kindly request you to remain seated while we proceed to welcome our distinguished guest.

The meeting is suspended from 3.50 p.m. to 4 p.m. to allow the President of the General Conference and the Director-General to welcome His Excellency, Mr François Hollande, President of France.

Official visit of the President of France

11.1 The President:

Thank you very much Excellencies. May I please respectfully request all of us to take our seats? Excellencies, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, it is my immense privilege and honour to welcome our next speaker, His Excellency Mr François Hollande, President of the French Republic. Your Excellency, before giving you the floor, and in my capacity as President of the General Conference of UNESCO, allow me to express our heartfelt condolences to the people and the government of the French Republic in the wake of the atrocious attacks which befell this beautiful city last Friday.

11.2 Mr President, UNESCO was born in London, but it grew up right here, on the left bank. For the past seven decades, we have called Paris our home. The city and the Organization have grown together, sharing the same humanistic values, sharing the same principles and ideals. This is why we wish to send a clear message to the French people today. The attack against Paris is an attack against the values that we all share. Your loss, Mr President, is the loss of the whole of humanity. Your pain is our pain too.

11.3 Mr President, your presence in this room today sends a very powerful message. We sincerely appreciate your resolve not to give in to fear. We all need to show that humanism is stronger than hate, that hearts and minds are mightier than bullets, that peace will prevail, and joy will reign again in the streets of Paris, and joy will reign again indeed around the whole world. Mr President, it is now my distinct honour and pleasure to invite you, Your Excellency, to take the floor and address us.

12.1 M. Hollande (Président de la France) :

Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Madame la Directrice générale, Mesdames, Messieurs, représentants de vos différents pays, je m'adresse à vous dans des circonstances particulièrement douloureuses, vous les avez rappelées mais je tenais à être parmi vous après le lâche et abject attentat qui a eu lieu dans mon pays, vendredi soir. Je veux dire tout le symbole que j'attache à ma présence. Je suis ici à l'UNESCO, l'Organisation qui rassemble les pays pour la paix et pour la culture, et c'est la raison pour laquelle il était si important à mes yeux de venir participer à cette Conférence, pour rappeler ses valeurs, ses principes et cette volonté qui a été celle, au lendemain de la barbarie de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, de faire prévaloir l'éducation, la culture et la science contre le fanatisme et le totalitarisme.

12.2 Je veux, ici, saluer tous les gestes d'amitié et de solidarité qui nous sont venus du monde entier : de l'Opéra de Sydney, de la porte de Brandebourg, des pyramides d'Égypte, de la Perle de l'Orient en Chine et du Metropolitan Opera de New York avec *la Marseillaise* qui a été entonnée par Placido Domingo. Tous ces lieux dans tous vos pays pavés aux couleurs du drapeau français, c'était le même message de solidarité qui nous était adressé. C'était aussi la même confiance dont vous vouliez, une fois encore, porter témoignage de la force que vous donnez à la France de porter ses valeurs. Car ce que les tueurs voulaient atteindre, c'était l'idée même de la France : ses valeurs, sa jeunesse, sa vitalité, sa culture, son art de vivre. En visant des cafés, un lieu de spectacle, un stade, les terroristes djihadistes voulaient

frapper une société – la nôtre, la vôtre – où l'on peut se rencontrer, échanger, partager, rire, faire la fête. Ils croyaient – ces assassins si lâches ! – atteindre cette cohésion précieuse qui rassemble dans nos villes tous les âges, toutes les nationalités, toutes les classes sociales, toutes les religions.

12.3 Ils pensaient aussi, en s'attaquant à un restaurant cambodgien, au concert d'un groupe américain, à un match de football international, à des lieux fréquentés par des ressortissants de multiples nationalités – hélas, 19 parmi les victimes du drame de vendredi soir –, ils pensaient affaiblir la passion française d'accueillir le monde entier, amoindrir cette fierté que nous avons d'être un pays qui échange avec toutes les cultures. Ils ont, d'ores et déjà, perdu ce combat-là. Car aujourd'hui, en nous tenant debout, déterminés face à la terreur, nous voulons marquer notre attachement indestructible à la liberté et au dialogue des cultures. Tout le contraire de l'obscurantisme, du fanatisme, du fondamentalisme, de l'islamisme radical. L'histoire nous l'apprend : ce sont toujours les totalitarismes et les intégrismes qui interdisent la musique, brûlent les livres, détruisent le patrimoine, tentent d'effacer la mémoire de ce qui les précède.

12.4 Et si nous sommes en guerre – oui, en guerre – contre le terrorisme djihadiste, nous ne sommes pas dans une guerre de civilisations car les assassins n'en portaient aucune trace, de civilisation. Notre réponse doit être impitoyable au plan extérieur comme sur le terrain intérieur. Elle est dirigée contre les commanditaires – nous savons où ils sont en Syrie – comme contre leurs bras armés et leurs complices, y compris en France. Mais on ne lutte pas contre le terrorisme en se cachant, en se mettant entre parenthèses, en suspendant la vie économique, sociale, culturelle, en interdisant les concerts, le théâtre, les compétitions sportives. Non, nous ne céderons pas aux terroristes en suspendant notre mode de vie. Nous ne renoncerons à rien.

12.5 Voilà pourquoi, après l'émotion et le deuil, la France, dans la même dignité, saura faire face en restant elle-même et Paris demeurera la ville des théâtres, des cinémas, des musées, du spectacle vivant. Parce que la culture sera toujours chez elle en France. Parce que le spectacle vivant est bien vivant en France. Parce que les salles de cinémas continueront d'accueillir un large public. Parce que tous les musées seront ouverts pour, là encore, faire découvrir aux visiteurs les merveilles qui existent dans notre patrimoine. La France est un pays ouvert et le demeurera. Ouvert à tous les arts, à toutes les musiques, à toutes les créations, à tous les publics. La jeunesse de France, celle qui a été meurtrie, blessée dans cette nuit de vendredi à samedi, sera la plus ardente à défendre cette liberté et cette conception de la vie en commun. Et pouvais-je trouver un meilleur endroit pour le dire, pour affirmer cette exigence de tenir bon que cette enceinte de l'UNESCO ? Une institution qui est née de la volonté de réunir l'humanité par l'éducation et la culture, et qui a choisi Paris comme Siège de cette grande Organisation.

12.6 Oui, l'UNESCO, c'est « la conscience morale de l'humanité » et ce qui l'a fondé, c'est la promotion de la « diversité des cultures ». Une diversité fondée sur l'idée que la culture relie les hommes à leur histoire, à leur territoire. Une diversité ancrée dans la reconnaissance de l'égalité des cultures, chaque peuple ayant un message singulier à porter au monde. Une diversité qui refuse l'uniformisation et promeut la pluralité des opinions et des croyances. Une diversité qui fait de l'éducation le levier de l'émancipation universelle. Voilà pourquoi la Convention de 2005 sur la diversité des expressions culturelles, dont nous célébrons le 10^e anniversaire, est si importante à nos yeux. En soulignant que les biens culturels sont porteurs d'identité, de valeurs et de sens, cette Convention a consacré le droit souverain des États à soutenir la création artistique et à ne pas faire de la culture une marchandise. C'est la raison pour laquelle la France a toujours refusé que les services audiovisuels soient inclus dans la négociation du partenariat transatlantique entre l'Union européenne et les États-Unis. Et je vous assure que cette vigilance demeurera tout au long du processus.

12.7 Cette bataille de la diversité et de l'exception culturelle, nous devons aussi la mener alors que la révolution numérique bouleverse la création, la diffusion et le partage de la valeur économique liée aux œuvres. Et là encore, la France défendra l'application du principe de neutralité technologique et demande que la Convention de 2005 puisse s'appliquer aussi aux œuvres numériques. C'est la condition indispensable pour protéger les droits des auteurs et des créateurs.

12.8 Mais si je suis venu devant vous aussi, c'est pour défendre le patrimoine, les œuvres que nous avons en commun, que nous avons héritées de l'histoire. Ces œuvres qui peuvent également être victimes du terrorisme. L'UNESCO a créé – c'était en 1972 – la Liste du patrimoine mondial. Plus de 1 000 sites sont aujourd'hui classés, dont 41 – et j'en suis fier – en France. Je sais que ce sont des cibles de choix pour ceux qui veulent annihiler la mémoire des peuples. Je pense aux Bouddhas de Bâmiyân, aux temples d'Angkor et de Palmyre. C'est toujours la même tentative des totalitaires de vouloir aussi faire que leurs crimes touchent à la mémoire. Les fanatiques s'en prennent aux vivants mais ils s'en prennent aussi aux morts ; ils s'en prennent à tout ce qui est humanité, à celle d'aujourd'hui, de demain et également à celle d'hier, de celle dont on procède. Les terroristes voudraient tout effacer : la jeunesse, la culture, la vie et en même temps, l'histoire et la mémoire.

11.9 L'UNESCO joue un rôle majeur dans la préservation de ces biens, ces biens communs. C'est elle qui alerte avant qu'il ne soit trop tard, qui prévient avant que des destructions et des pillages puissent avoir lieu. C'est l'UNESCO également qui lutte contre le trafic des œuvres et des antiquités. Mais l'UNESCO fait également davantage et je veux, ici, en remercier la Directrice générale. Elle participe aussi à la réhabilitation des sites détruits ou qui ont pu être endommagés, en Afghanistan, en Iraq, au Mali. Je me souviens encore de notre visite avec la Directrice générale, Mme Bokova. Nous étions à Tombouctou lorsque la ville a été libérée et nous avons constaté devant nous le saccage des mausolées, la destruction des manuscrits. Et c'est votre honneur et c'était aussi notre responsabilité de faire en sorte qu'en même temps que nous redonnions au Mali le retour à son intégrité territoriale, nous puissions aussi réhabiliter ce qui avait été détruit ou abîmé.

12.10 La France a toujours été aux côtés de l'UNESCO. Elle a mis ses ressources et ses compétences au service de la restauration des sites et ensemble, en 20 ans, 70 projets ont pu être menés à bien. Nous pouvons aussi agir même au Proche et au Moyen-Orient. À la suite des destructions des monuments et des sites archéologiques en Syrie et en Iraq, et qui avaient soulevé une émotion considérable... Je pense notamment à Palmyre où l'ancien conservateur a préféré rester ; il savait le sort qui l'attendait, il a été décapité par les bourreaux de Daesh qui ont eux-mêmes commis

l'irréparable sur le site. Alors face à cette émotion, j'avais demandé au Président du musée du Louvre, Jean-Luc Martinez, de travailler pour nous proposer un plan d'action – il vient de m'être transmis –, il comporte trois priorités que je soumetts à l'UNESCO et sur lequel la France va s'engager.

12.11 La première de ces priorités, c'est la lutte contre les trafics des biens culturels. Il faut savoir qu'en ce moment-même, l'organisation terroriste Daesh délivre des permis de fouille, prélève des taxes sur des biens qui vont ensuite alimenter le marché noir mondial, transitant par des ports francs qui sont des havres pour le recel et le blanchiment, y compris en Europe. La France a donc décidé d'introduire un contrôle douanier à l'importation de biens culturels et intégrera dans son droit les résolutions du Conseil de sécurité interdisant le transport, le transit, le commerce du patrimoine culturel mobilier ayant quitté illégalement certains pays.

12.12 La seconde priorité, c'est d'empêcher que les œuvres transportées puissent tomber entre les mains des terroristes. Alors la France accueillera des refuges pour que les biens culturels menacés puissent trouver, si je puis dire, un asile. Un asile dans les musées qui souhaiteraient, face au danger, mettre les collections à l'abri. Le droit d'asile vaut pour les personnes, et nous devons d'ailleurs le garantir même dans les circonstances douloureuses, éprouvantes que nous connaissons. Mais l'asile vaut également pour les œuvres, pour le patrimoine mondial. Et c'est la raison pour laquelle cette disposition figurera dans la loi « Liberté de la création » que la Ministre de la culture, Fleur Pellerin, est en charge de faire voter au Parlement. La France offrira son assistance pour élaborer, avec les gouvernements légitimes et les musées volontaires, des plans de sauvegarde d'urgence, assortis d'un mécanisme permettant la sortie et l'hébergement temporaire de ces œuvres pendant le temps des conflits.

12.13 Enfin, la troisième priorité, c'est de conserver la mémoire des sites. Ces 20 dernières années, la France a consacré près de 170 millions d'euros à la protection du patrimoine et à l'archéologie du Proche et du Moyen-Orient. Aujourd'hui, mon pays accueille 460 boursiers syriens et plus de 300 boursiers irakiens, dont une vingtaine travaille dans le domaine du patrimoine. Et je souhaite que mon pays, y compris dans ce contexte, y compris avec ce qui vient de se passer, puisse accueillir encore davantage d'archéologues syriens et de chercheurs syriens pour qu'ils puissent continuer leur travail.

12.14 De la même manière, la France contribuera à la numérisation des archives archéologiques, de cartographie des sites et des inventaires de collections, de manière à pouvoir reconstituer en 3D, comme l'on dit, le patrimoine qui aura pu hélas être détruit mais qui, finalement, pourra laisser une trace. J'ai demandé au Ministère des affaires étrangères, Laurent Fabius, et au Ministre de la culture, Fleur Pellerin, de mobiliser également la Commission européenne pour que l'Europe puisse prendre des mesures d'harmonisation comme le contrôle à l'importation, les certificats d'exportation, sous la recommandation de l'UNESCO. Nous parlons beaucoup des paradis fiscaux et nous avons raison de vouloir, là encore, faire en sorte qu'ils puissent disparaître. Mais nous devons également éliminer les « paradis du recel » dans le monde.

12.15 Mesdames et Messieurs, la préservation du patrimoine de l'humanité est une grande cause et nous devons coordonner tous nos efforts, mutualiser tous nos moyens pour assurer cette préservation de la mémoire. Mais il nous faut aussi associer le partenariat privé pour que les ressources publiques ne soient pas les seules qui puissent être sollicitées. Je propose donc qu'il puisse y avoir une structure internationale unique, bien identifiée, qui puisse rassembler les dons et les contributions et constituer un fonds de dotation international dédié aux biens culturels en danger. Tout ce que je viens de proposer autour de ce plan d'action, je suggère que l'UNESCO puisse prendre l'initiative d'un instrument international permettant de garantir la pleine application de ses engagements.

12.16 L'UNESCO a été créée il y a 70 ans, après la tragédie, la barbarie déjà, et avec un principe qui, pour certains, était une utopie : « les guerres naissant dans l'esprit des hommes, c'est dans l'esprit des hommes que doivent être élevées les défenses pour la paix ». Tel était l'esprit de ceux qui ont fondé l'UNESCO. Aujourd'hui, 70 ans après, à Paris, c'est au nom d'un pays attaqué, d'un pays éprouvé, d'un pays debout, que je m'exprime devant vous pour vous dire qu'il faut plus que jamais refuser la peur, la division et la haine, et choisir la vie, la culture, le partage, le respect, la dignité. À la barbarie des terroristes, nous opposerons l'invincible humanité de la culture qui, comme le disait André Malraux, « a fait de l'homme autre chose qu'un accident de la nature ». La culture, voilà pourquoi la France se bat aujourd'hui. Merci.

(Applaudissements)

*The meeting is suspended from 4.20 p.m. to 4.25 p.m. while His Excellency,
Mr François Hollande, President of France, is escorted from the room.*

13.1 **The President:**

Thank you very much. Can you please take your seats so that we can continue with the remainder of our programme? Thank you very much. Notwithstanding that His Excellency, President Hollande, has left I wanted on your behalf to thank him most sincerely for having graced our Organization with his presence. The President had in his delegation three ministers that accompanied him, a clear indication of the importance that he attaches to UNESCO and we are definitely truly humbled as Member States for that particular gesture.

13.2 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we will now proceed and I have the pleasure of welcoming His Excellency, Mr Nurul Islam Nahid, Minister of Education of Bangladesh, who will deliver a message on behalf of the Head of State of his country. Your Excellency, you now have the floor, Sir.

14.1 **Mr Nahid** (Minister of Education of Bangladesh):

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Madam Director General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. On 4 November, I addressed this august body as the head of the Bangladesh Delegation to the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO. Today, it was our Honourable Prime Minister, Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, who was scheduled to address this Leaders' Forum. She could not be here today due to

extraordinary circumstances. However, I would like to read out the statement that she would have delivered to this august gathering on her behalf.

14.2 Before beginning with the speech of the Bangladesh Prime Minister, let me express our deepest condolences to the Government and the people of France for the loss of so many innocent lives due to despicable acts of terror last week. Terrorists are terrorists, irrespective of their colour, creed or religion, and must have no place in any civilized society. Our Government stands ready to work with all governments to fight this global scourge in all its forms and manifestations.

14.3 Now, Mr President, let me read out my Prime Minister's address: "It gives me great pleasure to address this Leaders' Forum. I thank Ms Irina Bokova for inviting me here. As always, I am deeply touched by her warmth and friendship. For me, personally, UNESCO has a connotation of peace. I came here first in 1999 to receive the UNESCO–Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize during my first term as Prime Minister. Last year, I was given UNESCO's "Tree of Peace" award for our work in girls' education.

14.4 Over four decades ago, the father of our nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his address to the United Nations General Assembly said, "Peace represents the deepest aspirations of men and women throughout the world. Peace to endure must be peace based on justice." Inspired by his vision, Bangladesh steers every year the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on a "Culture of Peace and Non-violence". We commend UNESCO for making the concept its own, and giving it global relevance.

14.5 Today, in a world torn apart by wars and conflicts, we are in the search for lasting peace. We must mobilize the resources we have to defeat the forces that want to destroy our civilization. We need to build enough resilience within individual minds, within families, and within communities. We must invoke the power of education, culture, science and communication to bring about a fundamental change in our understanding of peace and progress. Here, we find the enduring value of UNESCO and its call for "new humanism". We need a new impetus to promote quality and inclusive education, cultural diversity, and a rational, scientific outlook as critical enablers of sustainable development and human dignity.

14.6 Mr President, my vision for Bangladesh is to become a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed nation by 2041. To realize these visions, we have made education a central pillar of our national development agenda. Our landmark national education policy is an outcome of the lessons learnt in working together with UNESCO for achieving education for all. Through our sustained investment in education, we have attained the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets of nearly 100% enrolment in primary schools, and gender parity in primary and secondary education. This year alone, we have distributed 326.35 million text books free of cost on the first day of the year. This is perhaps the biggest such undertaking anywhere in the world. Our Government has given stipends to 13.4 million students, with 75% of them girls. We are currently working on reducing drop-out rates, increasing pass rates, and having more girls in higher education.

14.7 Our focus now is more on quality education. I remain personally committed to this as a champion of the United Nations Secretary General's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI). We are investing in teachers' training, setting up model schools, expanding technical, vocational and ICT-based education, modernizing madrassa curricula, and reforming assessment systems. Our home-grown efforts at achieving total literacy, promoting second chance learning, and creating life-long learning opportunities are being scaled up further.

14.8 In Bangladesh, we attach particular importance to girls' education. We consider this to be a must to keep improving our human development scorecards. I see girls' education as the prime investment to make to end child marriage, prevent violence against women, and change mind-sets about women's role in society. We have the empowering tools of ICT to make a sea change in our efforts. Our young boys and girls are growing up to be the main agents of our digital Bangladesh. We are using ICT to reach quality teaching to remote areas. It is important for our students to get access to new innovations and ideas. I want our children to grow up as truly global citizens.

14.9 Along with science, liberal arts, culture and sports are the other fundamental pillars of human civilization. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development duly appreciates culture as a driver of sustainable development. The people of Bangladesh turn to their rich cultural heritage in search of their identity and resilient spirit. Our *Baul Songs* and *Jamdani* now belong to the cultural heritage of mankind. We shall continue to work with UNESCO to promote cultural diversity to build bridges across communities and nations. As a cornerstone to that, our Government remains committed to upholding freedom of expression and speech. In the knowledge and information society we wish to build, we shall continue to foster dialogue, tolerance, fair play, and mutual understanding.

14.10 Mr President, language is the main vehicle for all human endeavours. Here I wish to recall UNESCO's seminal contribution to preserving mother tongues and promoting multilingual education. UNESCO made a big step forward by declaring our "Language Martyrs' Day" on 21 February as the International Mother Language Day. We are again grateful to this conference for recognizing the International Mother Language Institute (IMLI) in Bangladesh as a UNESCO category 2 institution. We wish to build an archive of all living languages in the Institute, and I invite you all to make the best use of it. For our part, we are introducing education through mother tongues for our different ethnic groups. We have set up institutions to preserve their languages and showcase their cultures.

14.11 Mr President, we see UNESCO's added value in addressing two main challenges facing the international community. First, the threats of terrorism and violent extremism respect no borders. My Government and I have taken a zero tolerance approach to all forms of terrorism and violent extremism. We have made no compromise with our home-grown terrorist outfits. We keep constant vigil on their possible links with any regional or international terrorist networks.

14.12 There is much that needs to be done to root out the mind-set that turns to violent extremism. Education of the right kind is perhaps our only response to the wrong narratives being fed to our youth by the violent extremists. Second, climate change impact can reverse much of our development gains. Bangladesh remains on the frontline of that threat,

but has not surrendered to it. We have taken a number of adaptation measures with our own resources.

14.13 UNESCO's work on conserving biospheres has been a wake-up call to the damage being done to our natural resources. The preservation of the world's natural heritage sites and underwater resources remains our shared responsibility. In less than two weeks from now, in this historic city, the international community has the opportunity to deliver some hope for those affected by climate change. I add my voice to the call for a game-changing new deal to save our planet and its people.

14.14 Mr President, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is universal and ambitious. To deliver on those goals, we must set our ambitions higher for all major partners including UNESCO. There is room for creativity and innovation. There is also scope for reform and renewal. If we expect UNESCO to do what it does best, we must further invest in building its resources and capacity to do so. At 70, UNESCO is still a young organization. It is perhaps one of the best legacies we have from the ashes of the Second World War. With UNESCO on our side, let us join our hands to create a world where, in the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore's words, the "mind is without fear and the head is held high", where "knowledge is free" and "words come out from the depth of truth". I thank you for your kind attention.

15. **The President:**

Thank you very much Your Excellency. Your Excellency, may I kindly request you to convey on our behalf our sincere thanks and appreciation to Her Excellency, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen that brings to a close the segment in terms of the Leaders' Forum. I want to once again request you to join me in expressing our thanks and gratitude to all the heads of State and government that graced our beloved Organization. We also thank the Director-General and the Executive Board for having prepared for this Leaders' Forum. I am sure you will agree with me that notwithstanding the circumstances, the Leaders' Forum was a resounding success. Can we give a round of applause for that?

(Applause)

Report of the Culture Commission

16. **The President:**

I now advance to this session to examine the report of the Culture Commission which is contained in document 38 C/94. I invite His Excellency, Dr Arunas Gelunas, who presided over the Culture Commission, to present the report. Your Excellency, you have the floor, Sir.

17.1 **M. Gelunas** (Président de la Commission Culture – CLT):

Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Madame la Directrice générale, Mesdames et Messieurs les délégués, Mesdames et Messieurs, je tiens à remercier les États membres de l'UNESCO de m'avoir confié la tâche importante et enrichissante de présider la Commission Culture. De même, je voudrais exprimer ma gratitude aux membres de cette Commission qui ont participé activement aux débats et qui ont fait preuve d'engagement et d'efficacité, ce qui nous a permis de mener nos travaux de manière productive et ponctuelle.

17.2 La Commission a débuté le jeudi 12 novembre et a conclu ses travaux plus tôt que prévu, le vendredi 13 novembre 2015. Les recommandations formulées par la Commission Culture apparaissent dans le document 38 C/94. La Commission a commencé ses travaux en élisant M. Roberto Ramírez Aldana (Honduras), Mme Christina Cameron (Canada), S. E. Mme Ruchira Kamboj (Inde) et S. E. M. Khalil Karam (Liban) comme Vice-présidents de la Commission ; et M. Ali Ould Sidi (Mali) comme Rapporteur.

17.3 La Commission a adopté son calendrier provisoire, qui a réparti son travail en six débats ; 242 interventions ont eu lieu au cours des deux jours, lors des débats et l'examen des projets de résolution. Quatre événements parallèles ont été organisés en marge de la Commission, les 12 et 13 novembre 2015, à savoir un événement sur la campagne #Unite4Heritage ; le lancement des activités autour du 10e anniversaire de la création du Fonds du patrimoine mondial africain ; un événement sur le 10e anniversaire de la Base de données de l'UNESCO sur les législations nationales du patrimoine culturel ; et un panel de discussion sur la Condition de l'artiste et la liberté artistique.

(L'orateur poursuit en anglais)

17.4 In its first debate, the Commission considered item **3.4** on the preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5) and item **4.5** on the conclusions of the Youth Forum. Under item **4.5** on the conclusions of the Youth Forum, two youth delegates presented the Forum's recommendations related to culture, notably with regard to safeguarding tangible and intangible heritage, particularly threatened by conflicts and climate change, and to encouraging artistic and cultural creativity in all its expressions. The Member States fully endorsed the conclusions of the Forum.

17.5 Item **3.4** on the preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5) was introduced by the representative of the Director-General, Mr Francesco Bandarín, Assistant Director-General for Culture and Mr Jean-Yves Le Saux, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Strategic Planning. During the debate, a total of 28 Member States and 2 Observers took the floor. The 2030 agenda, the need to respond to emergency situations when heritage and the diversity of cultural expressions are put at risk and the standard-setting instruments of UNESCO in the field of culture were the three main points highlighted by the delegations which participated in the debate. Cultural diversity, youth, gender, and the need for greater intersectoral cooperation especially in the area of heritage education, were among the other issues highlighted by a large number of delegations.

17.6 Almost all delegations highlighted the importance of aligning the priorities of Major Programme IV – Culture with the 2030 Agenda which should be considered as an overarching framework of all UNESCO activities including those related to culture. Most delegations emphasized more specifically the importance of culture having been included for the

first time in the international development agenda, with specific entry points in nine of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as culture's role as an enabler and a driver for sustainable development. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of delegations also highlighted the significance of UNESCO's culture conventions not only as crucially important standard-setting instruments but also as key tools for achieving the SDGs and for preventing the destruction of cultural and natural heritage in conflict and emergency situations. The role of UNESCO in emergency situations was frequently underscored, as well as the need to protect and promote cultural diversity. The Commission also emphasized the importance of youth at the core of the UNESCO's actions towards achievement of the SDGs; as well as the importance to continue mainstreaming gender equality in all culture programmes. The need for enhancing synergies between UNESCO conventions as well as between Major Programmes was another recurrent theme.

17.7 Dear colleagues, I introduced here only the main lines of this rich and inspiring debate which touched upon a number of crucial aspects of the Culture Sector's programme priorities for the future. I will stop here and invite you to read the more detailed outline, included as an annex in the report of the Commission, contained in document 38 C/94.

17.8 Dear colleagues, I will now move to debate number two of our agenda. The consideration and adoption of the Draft Budget for 2016-2017 – Part II A: Major Programme IV – Culture (38 C/5), under item 3.2, was introduced by the representative of the Director-General. Mr Bandarin informed the Commission that the Programme and Budget contained in the 38 C/5 documents were a direct continuation of the four-year programme defined for the period 2014-2017 and that some minor adjustments had been introduced to the culture programme, among which the denomination of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the title of Expected Result 7, with a view to including the Creative Cities Network and the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture; enhanced references to cities and the protection and safeguarding of culture in emergency situations; as well as streamlined performance indicators. He also recalled the Director-General's proposal mentioned in document 38 C/INF.17 to transfer Expected Result 5 from Major Programme IV to Major Programme III with effect from 1 January 2016.

17.9 During this debate, a total of 27 Member States took the floor. The alignment of the 2030 Agenda with the culture programme and budget; the effective implementation of the statutory obligations of the standard-setting instruments of UNESCO in the field of culture, especially capacity building and monitoring, and the need for their governing bodies to prioritize, taking into consideration the challenging financial situation; and the need to respond to emergency situations when heritage and the diversity of cultural expressions are put at risk were the three main points highlighted by the delegations which participated in the debate.

17.10 The Culture Commission then recommended to the General Conference to adopt the recommendation of the Executive Board on Major Programme IV contained in document 38 C/6 and its Addenda. Under item 3.2, the Commission then considered draft resolution 38 C/DR.3 submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran, in conjunction with document 38 C/8. The Commission decided to recommend that the General Conference adopt the core text of the resolution, excluding the explanatory note attached to it. The status of the explanatory note was questioned by the delegation of Norway and several other delegations and was clarified by the representative of the Director-General and the Legal Adviser. The Delegation of Iran also took the floor and agreed to the proposed approach to adopt the draft resolution without the explanatory note.

17.11 Under item 3.2, the Commission then considered draft resolution 38 C/DR.12 submitted by China. Taking into account the considerations of the Director-General in document 38 C/8, the structural changes proposed for Major Programmes III and IV and the intervention of the sponsor, who expressed agreement with the proposed approach, the draft resolution was not retained. The Commission concluded its second debate by recommending that the General Conference adopt on a temporary basis the draft resolution in paragraph 04000 of document 38 C/5 Volume I, as amended.

17.12 During debate number three, a total of 29 Member States took the floor. Under item 4.4 the Commission considered a proposal for the establishment in Beijing, China, of an International Centre for Creativity and Sustainable Development as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO. Further to the decision taken by the General Conference at its first plenary session, no debate took place on this item and the Commission decided to recommend to the General Conference the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 3 of document 38 C/18, Part XXI. China took the floor after the resolution was adopted.

17.13 As regards item 4.21 on the proclamation of 5 May as African World Heritage Day, many delegations of African Member States and from other regions of the world took the floor and emphasized that the proclamation of this Day will contribute to mobilizing support for the safeguarding of African world heritage properties and to promoting South-South cooperation. The annual event will also be rotating in order to strengthen regional collaboration in the field of heritage conservation. The Commission unanimously recommended to the General Conference to adopt at its plenary session the draft resolution contained in paragraph 2 of document 38 C/68.

17.14 In the framework of the same debate, the Commission also considered item 7.7 and 7.4 both of which had previously been examined by the Legal Committee. On item 7.7 concerning the report on the implementation by Member States of the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, including a glossary of definitions, a number of Member States considered it important to enhance the implementation of the Recommendation, while some noted that no reports have been submitted and that no specific budget for the monitoring of the implementation of the Recommendation was allocated. Some Member States stressed the need of ensuring synergies with other cultural conventions, in particular the 1972 and 2005 Conventions, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the new urban agenda. UNESCO's contribution to the forthcoming Habitat III conference foreseen in 2016 was welcome. On the specific topic of reporting by Member States, it was suggested that synergies with other instruments, more specifically the 1972 World Heritage Convention reporting process, should be explored.

17.15 In his reply, the Assistant Director-General for Culture highlighted that the 2011 HUL Recommendation had become a reference in the past four years and stressed the importance of linking the Recommendation to the 2030

agenda. He also stressed the role of urban heritage in the new urban agenda and the fact that contributing to the Habitat III conference was a rare opportunity to advocate the link between culture and development. He referred to the process of developing the report which will be discussed at the International Conference in Hangzhou, China in December 2015. The Commission recommended to the General Conference to adopt at its plenary session the draft resolution contained in paragraph 3 of document 38 C/83, as amended by the Legal Committee.

17.16 On item **7.4** on the consolidated report on the implementation of the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist, a number of Member States stressed the need for synergies with the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and highlighted the impact of digital technologies on the creation and distribution of artistic expressions. In their interventions, several delegations called for enhancing the implementation of the Recommendation and agreed with the four cross-cutting themes identified by the Secretariat related to digital technologies, transnational mobility, social protection and artistic freedom. Some delegates emphasized the importance to provide facilities to ensure an increased mobility of the artists. They encouraged the Secretariat to continue its monitoring functions, despite the fact that there were no resources available, and suggested that the synergies created with the 2005 Convention were an efficient way forward to maintain an “observatory function”. He recommended to the General Conference the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 5 of document 38 C/83, as amended by the Legal Committee and by the Commission.

17.17 In debate number four, the Commission recommended, by consensus and without debate, to the General Conference that it adopt the two draft resolutions submitted by Palestine and Qatar on item **4.2** on Jerusalem and the implementation of 37 C/Resolution 44, and item **4.3** on the implementation of 37 C/Resolution 67 concerning educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories.

17.18 During debate number five on items **4.11** and **7.3** a total of 47 Member States took the floor. Under item **4.11**, the Commission considered the reinforcement of UNESCO’s action for the protection of cultural heritage and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict, which was introduced by the representative of the Director-General. Mr Bandarin explained the main objectives of the strategy presented in document 38 C/49 as well as the financial and organizational requirements for its successful implementation. He further recalled the revisions made to the original document following its discussion at the 197th session of the Executive Board, notably the clarification of the terminology used, as well as the integration of a rapid response mechanism at the request of Italy and other Member States.

17.19 All speakers stressed the importance of the protection of cultural heritage during armed conflict. The delegates also underlined the need for UNESCO to cooperate and coordinate with other United Nations bodies, as well as with Member States, to implement the strategy. A number of delegates underlined the need to further discuss its implementation modalities, including those of the rapid response mechanism. Several delegates provided an overview of national initiatives undertaken for the protection of cultural heritage, including on the subject of safe havens, and expressed their wish for these to be seen as part of the comprehensive efforts of the international community.

17.20 In his reply, Mr Bandarin provided clarifications on the nature of the intended cooperation with the United Nations system and other international organizations in the field of humanitarian action and peacekeeping operations. The draft resolution was extensively discussed and some amendments were introduced, including a reference to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2199 as an important benchmark in the reinforcement of UNESCO’s activities to protect cultural heritage. The Culture Commission recommended the General Conference to adopt the draft resolution contained in paragraph 55 of document 38 C/49, as amended by the Culture Commission.

17.21 Under item **7.3**, the Commission examined the reports on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. This item had previously been examined by the Legal Committee. Mr Bandarin introduced the item and recalled the creation of a new organ for the Convention in 2012, namely the Subsidiary Committee to the Meeting of State Parties to the 1970 Convention. He also proposed an amendment to the draft resolution, the purpose of which was to streamline the reporting process of the 1970 Convention and to harmonize it with other conventions.

17.22 During the debate, several Member States mentioned the progress achieved at the national level in the fight against illicit trafficking and provided examples of restitution cases in the recent months. Some delegates stressed the importance of prevention measures and the role of customs, bilateral agreements and partnerships in the context of the 1970 Convention. The Culture Commission recommended the General Conference to adopt at its plenary session the draft resolution contained in paragraph 5 of document 38 C/81, as amended by the Legal Committee and by the Culture Commission.

17.23 Also under the fifth debate, the Commission took note without debate of the reports concerning the main activities and decisions taken by the Administrative Council of the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture, as well as by the following three Intergovernmental Committees: for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (2014-2015); for promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation (1-2 October 2014); and for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (June 2012 – June 2014).

17.24 At its sixth and last debate, the Commission examined item **4.22** and item **6.2**. During this debate, a total of 43 Member States and 1 Observer took the floor. Item **4.22** concerning the Re-design of the UNESCO-Aschberg Bursaries for Artists and amendment of the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture (IFPC) was examined further to the respective decision of the Executive Board at its 197th session. The delegations which addressed this item in their intervention expressed their agreement with the proposed resolution. The Czech Republic asked that the oral report reflect its request that the reports submitted to the governing bodies of the 2005 Convention include a specific chapter on the use of the funds in the UNESCO-Aschberg programme for Artists and Cultural Professionals. The representative of the Director-General recalled that a certain number of reporting tools and mechanisms, including SISTER, exist to track programme activities. He also recalled that the funds will be used for the 2005 Convention as well as for the UNESCO

Creative Cities Programme. The Culture Commission recommended the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 5 of document 38 C/69.

17.25 Item **6.2** on the proposal for a non-binding standard-setting instrument on the protection and promotion of various aspects of the role of museums and collections was introduced by Mr Bandarin, followed by a presentation by Mr Nicolas Dimic, Deputy Permanent Delegate of Canada to UNESCO and Rapporteur of the Intergovernmental Meeting of legal and technical experts related to the draft Recommendation on the Protection and Promotion of Museums, their Diversity and their Role in Society, which took place on 28 May 2015 at UNESCO Headquarters.

17.26 Almost without exception, the speakers that took the floor during this debate expressed their full support, highlighting that the need for a new international instrument on museums has been increasingly called for. It was noted that the preliminary consultation process and the Intergovernmental Meeting had allowed discussion and agreement on all different aspects of the Recommendation. Some specific issues raised by some delegations, such as, among other, the High-Level Forum of Museums and digitisation, could be addressed at subsequent workshops and conferences, as suggested by the representative of the Director-General at the end of the debate.

17.27 Several Member States took the floor to propose amendments to the draft resolution on item **6.2**, contained in paragraph 14 of document 38 C/25, which was adopted as amended by the Commission. Some Member States had perceived sub-paragraphs (a) to (e) of paragraph 3 of the draft resolution as redundant and had suggested deleting these sub-paragraphs. As the majority of Member States agreed to retain the sub-paragraphs as drafted by the Secretariat, the delegations of Sweden and Norway asked that their view be reflected in the oral report. Also, the delegation of the United States of America, while supporting the consensus, had some issues as to how Member States are meant to follow up on the specific recommendations contained in the above mentioned sub-paragraphs which were addressed to museums and museum professionals and requested that this be reflected in the oral report. ICOM, the International Council of Museums, also took the floor as an Observer and important partner in drafting the text, and expressed their full support to the Recommendation.

17.28 Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to express my gratitude to all my colleagues in the Culture Commission for the spirit of cooperation and constructive dialogue that prevailed throughout our debates. My gratitude also goes to Ms Petya Totcharova, the Secretary of the Commission, Mr César Moreno Triana, Ms Doyun Lee, Mr Arturo Rey da Silva, Mr Francisco Gomez Duran, Ms Naïma Boumaiza, Ms Suzanne Martin-Siegfried, and Ms Nathalie Valanchon for ensuring the Secretariat of the Commission.

17.29 Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, as it was expressed by the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, in the wake of the barbaric attacks perpetrated in Paris only a few days ago in which violent extremists struck places of culture and conviviality, “they represent an attack against the whole of humanity”. On behalf of the Members of the Commission, I would like to condemn these terrible crimes and present my heartfelt condolences to the French people. I am also very proud that my President yesterday laid flowers at the place where the massacre took place. On that note, I would like to conclude with the words of the Lithuanian and Polish poet Czesław Miłosz, Nobel Prize in Literature laureate in 1980:

“Human reason is beautiful and invincible.
No bars, no barbed wire, no pulping of books,
No sentence of banishment can prevail against it.
It puts what should be above things as they are.
It does not know Jew from Greek nor slave from master.”

Thank you very much.

18. The President:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for having delivered such an elaborate report and let me thank the members of your Commission for their dedication and for having concluded the work of the Commission quite effectively and efficiently. Are there any comments or suggestions on document 38 C/94? I see the distinguished representative of Ecuador, followed by Iran.

19.1 Ecuador:

Gracias señor Presidente. Le agradezco por darme la palabra y quisiera aprovechar esta oportunidad para expresar nuestras condolencias al pueblo francés por los tremendos ataques terroristas que ha sufrido París y todo el pueblo de Francia y la comunidad entera, el viernes pasado.

19.2 Señor Presidente: Quisiera a través suyo transmitir mis sinceras felicitaciones al distinguido Embajador de Lituania que ha presidido la Comisión de Cultura de una manera tan eficiente. Y sobre todo, reconocer su siempre dinamismo, su ecuanimidad y su objetividad. Que no solamente en la presidencia de la Comisión sino en otros foros que han tenido que ver con el tema de cultura pues, él ha liderado nuestros procesos de una manera bastante adecuada y su liderazgo ha sido demostrado.

19.3 Señor Presidente. Como lo ha dicho el distinguido Embajador de Lituania, la cultura es uno de los roles fundamentales de la Organización y ahora más que nunca tenemos que preservarlo. Tenemos que dar a la UNESCO el rol que le corresponde en la Agenda para el Desarrollo Post 2015. Varios de los mecanismos que las convenciones de cultura de los que disponemos los Estados Miembros pueden coadyuvar para el desarrollo sostenible y, particularmente para nuestro país y para varios países de América Latina. La Convención de 1970 contra el Tráfico Ilícito de Bienes Culturales es un tema fundamental en el cual se ha avanzado muchísimo y la UNESCO puede sentirse orgullosa de haber adoptado en este año justamente al celebrar sus 70 años las directrices operativas de esta convención que permitirán su aplicación plenamente.

19.4 Otros instrumentos como la recomendación sobre el tema de los museos es también de mucha importancia y

quisiera, señor Presidente, alentar a los Estados Miembros a que apliquemos de manera oportuna y ágil estos instrumentos que nos ha dado la Organización. Gracias Señor Presidente.

20. **The President:**

Thank you very much. Let me then invite the distinguished representative of the Iran to take the floor.

21. **Islamic Republic of Iran:**

Thank you so much, Mr President. Regarding the recommendations of the Commission concerning draft resolution 38 C/DR.3 which was proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran, I would like to remind the President of the Commission of Culture that in our deliberations during the sessions, the distinguished representative of Norway just suggested to omit the operational part of the explanatory note, not the whole explanatory note. So the Islamic Republic of Iran would like to request that the explanatory note except its operational part would remain as it is and would be maintained. It can be also confirmed by the distinguished representative of Norway. Thank you so much.

22. **The President:**

Thank you very much. Where is Norway? Yes, you have the floor.

23. **Norway:**

Thank you, Mr President. I confirm that Norway asked only for the deletion of the operational paragraph in the explanatory note. Thank you.

24. **The President:**

Thank you very much. Let me then invite the Chairperson of the Culture Commission to comment on that.

25. **Mr Gelunas** (Chairperson of the Culture Commission – CLT):

Thank you very much dear colleagues for your requests and the explanation by the Member State of Norway. This is well noted. I will contact the Secretariat and probably it is just a typo because as you can well see the document is of enormous size and we will take necessary measures. Thank you very much.

26.1 **The President:**

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. I believe that will be taken full care of and indeed the necessary amendments will be affected. Are there any further comments to be made? I do not see any. May I then assume that the General Conference takes note of the report of the Culture Commission and adopts the draft resolutions contained therein, subject to the decisions that the Conference may take on budgetary issues when adopting the Appropriation Resolution tomorrow? I see no objections. *It is so **decided**.*

26.2 Dear colleagues, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we have thus finished our agenda for this afternoon. And again I have very good news up my sleeve this afternoon. The good news is that tomorrow we will not have any plenary meeting, we only meet in the afternoon to adopt the report of the joint meeting of commissions that will meet in the morning, including item 3.4, preparation of the 39 C/5, and the Appropriation Resolution for 2016-2017. Let us try to be on time for tomorrow so that we can conclude and land our flight properly without any turbulence. Enjoy the evening and we will see you tomorrow. *This meeting is now **adjourned**.*

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.