

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

Wednesday 18 November 2015 at 4.10 p.m.

President: Mr Stanley Mutumba Simataa (Namibia)

Report of the joint meeting of commissions

1.1 The President:

Good afternoon Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. I believe we have a quorum now. We can therefore start with our meeting. I declare open the eighteenth plenary meeting, the very last one of the 38th session of the General Conference. We have exchanged our views, we have shared our best national practices, we have also shared our vision for the future of our Organization. We have, during the past weeks, greeted many a distinguished guest, we have deliberated many an important issue, and we have lived moments of very strong emotions.

1.2 Indeed, ladies and gentlemen, we have accomplished a lot together over the past 15 days, and our work is almost done – unbelievable! I was joking with colleagues as we were walking and I was telling them, “We are now taking our last steps to Room I,” and I was saying, “Let us hurry up, so we are not late.” However, there are two very important items which we are yet to consider – the examination of the report of the Joint Meeting of Commissions, and the adoption of the Appropriation Resolution.

1.3 Let us therefore start with the first of these items, and examine the report of the Joint Meeting of Commissions. The Joint Meeting of Commissions was held this morning, under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Sudders, Chairperson of the APX Commission. He will present the report contained in document 38 C/96. Your Excellency, Ambassador Sudders, you now have the floor, Sir.

2.1 Mr Sudders (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) (Chairperson of the joint meeting of commissions):

Thank you very much Mr President, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Mr Deputy Director-General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates and dear colleagues, I had the honour of chairing the joint meeting of commissions, which examined three items in two sessions held on 4 and 18 November, and it is now with great pleasure that I submit for your consideration this last report of the 38th session of the General Conference.

2.2 The draft resolutions that the commissions jointly recommended to the General Conference for adoption are contained in document 38 C/96. The draft appropriation resolution for 2016-2017, which was examined this morning at the last joint meeting, is contained in a separate document, 38 C/13.

2.3 The first joint meeting of commissions held on Wednesday 4 November discussed item **3.5** related to the adoption of the provisional budget ceiling for 38 C/5 (2016-2017). Herein the recommendation of the Executive Board to the General Conference with regard to the budget ceiling as contained in the 38 C/6 documents, which is a Programme and Budget scenario of \$667 million, including \$653 million of assessed contributions from Member States as well as \$14 million in additional appropriations and the related \$518 million expenditure plan based on an expected cash flow of \$507 million and additional appropriations of \$11 million for 2016-2017. These were both endorsed. The joint meeting of the commissions also provided guidance on the budget envelopes for each major programme.

2.4 By endorsing at an early stage of the General Conference those relevant paragraphs contained in the 38 C/6 documents, the joint meeting of commissions provided a clear direction for the work subsequently undertaken in programme commissions, as it was reported to you separately by the chairperson of each commission between Friday, 13 to Tuesday, 17 November.

2.5 Mr President, now let me turn to the discussions that took place this morning at the second meeting of the joint commissions. Following the adoption of the relevant parts of the 38 C/6 and 38 C/6 Addendum by each programme commission, Member States adopted these documents in their entirety after having taken into account the structural adjustments that had been proposed by the Director-General at the 197th session of the Executive Board and as reflected in document 38 C/INF.17 and Corr. These adjustments related only to budget transfers from one line to another within major programmes; between culture and social and human sciences, from the Bureau of Strategic Planning to a newly created “Field Support and Coordination” service. Those were the two major changes. These changes did not impact the overall budget envelope.

2.6 As is customary, the last joint meeting of commissions also examined the draft appropriation resolution under item **3.3** of the timetable. This resolution is contained in document 38 C/13 for consideration and approval by this plenary meeting of the General Conference. With regard to the section of the appropriation resolution dealing with transfers, and based on a draft resolution, the limit of the transfers which the Director-General could make between appropriation lines without the prior approval of the Executive Board was changed to 2% instead of the 5% initially proposed. It was noted that a 2% margin would continue to allow a sufficient level of flexibility, while ensuring stability for the smaller programmes. The joint meeting of commissions was also reassured that during the course of the biennium the Director-General would take into account both the letter and the spirit of the resolutions and decisions of the governing bodies.

2.7 In response to more technical aspects, the Secretariat had noted that the proposal to increase the level of transfer flexibility in the first place stemmed from the decision of the Executive Board to increase the level of flexibility in order to compensate for the proposal to lower the appropriation level from the major programmes to main lines of action. The Secretariat had also conducted a review of eight United Nations agencies, wherein it was noted that the level of the transfer flexibility varied from one agency to another and that it was related to the number of budget appropriation lines.

2.8 Member States reiterated that any savings identified in the biennium should go to strengthen the major programmes. This was a decision they felt that they had taken in the previous biennium, and on this occasion, given the experience of the last biennium, they decided to include this principle in the appropriation resolution in order to make it a binding principle. Once again it was stressed that decisions should be implemented, not interpreted. One Member State urged that particular attention should be given to reinforce the World Heritage Centre.

2.9 The section of the appropriation resolution dealing with staff was also amended slightly to clarify that the Director-General should request prior approval from the Executive Board for any change to Annex II in respect to the total number of ADG posts and to the total number of grade D-1 posts and above. Member States also requested a clearer link between the number of ADG posts and those receiving salaries at that level and this was established in the appropriation resolution which was duly amended to that effect.

2.10 One Member State further noted that the posts of the category 1 institutes which are financed by the regular budget should also be included in Annex II of the C/5 document. One Member State requested that, to the extent possible, and within the budgetary prerogatives of the Director-General, the secretariats of the culture conventions should be reinforced, particularly with a view to the fulfilment of statutory obligations.

2.11 Before the adoption, the joint meeting of commissions was reminded that by approving the appropriation resolution and its revised appropriation table, which includes the Director-General's proposed structural adjustments, the joint meeting of commissions would also be adopting the recommendations of the Executive Board contained in document 38 C/6 and Addendum in particular concerning the fact that the balance of the Emergency Fund would go to fund the zero nominal growth plus ceiling, and that any remaining balance of the Emergency Fund would go to the Invest for Efficient Delivery Fund. With that in mind, I draw your attention particularly to paragraph 18 of document 38 C/6, and within that, paragraphs 8, 9 and 10 of the 38 C/6 paragraph 18 which we are hereby adopting.

2.12 Mr President, the joint meeting of commissions then examined item 3.4 on the preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5). As this was on the agenda of each commission, there were enriching debates in each commission and the Secretariat had provided an information document (38 C/INF.19) summarizing those debates. The chairperson of each commission also briefly took the floor in the joint meeting this morning to present the outcomes of those debates. The two draft resolutions that had been submitted on this were in fact complementary rather than contradictory and were thus examined as such – in other words, in a merged, single draft resolution. Some Member States expressed their reservations on the singling out of a specific programme when the draft resolution should have been general in nature. This was in particular related to the MOST Programme. A Member State also reminded us that youth was also a priority and should not be neglected.

2.13 Mr President, the 39 C/5 document will be crucial for UNESCO's positioning on the achievement of the 2030 agenda and thus preparations for it are of critical importance. On that, let me quote a Japanese strategist, Miyamoto Musashi, "Perception is strong and sight weak. In strategy it is important to see distant things as if they were close and to take a distanced view of close things."

2.14 Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Deputy Director-General and dear colleagues, it was my last FA report in the Executive Board and my last APX report on Friday, 13 November, and now this is my last joint meeting of commissions report, and I believe the last report of the General Conference. I wish to pay tribute to all Member States for their active participation and for their support to me in my functions. Let me recall the words of Albert Camus, "Real generosity toward the future lies in giving all to the present". I thank most particularly the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of all the commissions who were at my side in our meetings. Finally, let me also express my thanks to the Director-General, the Deputy Director-General, Mr Tang, the Office-in-Charge of the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP), Mr Jean Yves Le Saux, the Legal Adviser, the Director of Human Resources Management (HRM) and the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), who were all available to provide the necessary clarifications and answers to our queries. Thanks, as ever, to the interpreters, the translators, the conference room clerks and technicians for their support. And last, but by no means least, thanks to Mr Sachin Bhatt and his excellent team, who have supported me throughout this work. Thank you for your attention.

3. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Ambassador Sudders, for presenting a very comprehensive but very clear report. Dear colleagues, are there any comments on the report? I do not see any. May I then assume that the General Conference takes note of the report? Argentina, you have the floor now, Madam.

4. **Argentina:**

Muchas gracias señor Presidente. Mi delegación quiere intervenir para felicitar muy especialmente al Embajador Sudders por haber conducido de una manera excelente esta reunión conjunta por su energía, su profesionalismo y también agradecer muy especialmente por su especial habilidad para acordar consensos.

5. **The President:**

Thank you very much. I see the distinguished representative of Iran.

6. **Islamic Republic of Iran:**

Mr President, I would like to echo strongly what was said by Argentina. Thank you.

7. **The President:**

Thank you very much. I see El Salvador would like to take the floor.

8. **El Salvador:**

Gracias señor Presidente. La verdad que mi delegación, mi país quiere dar las gracias de la manera más especial al Embajador Sudders por haber conducido de una manera extraordinaria por cuatro años las comisiones financieras. La verdad que nos ayudó muchísimo a llegar a buenos consensos. Hubieron puentes que se tendieron entre

todos los grupos regionales y por eso le damos las gracias embajador y amigo. Usted ha sido un excelente Presidente y cualquier persona que le va a seguir va a tener mucho trabajo en llegar a la excelencia suya. Muchas gracias.

9. **The President:**

Thank you very much. United Arab Emirates.

10.1 **Émirats arabes unis :**

Monsieur le Président, merci de m'avoir passé la parole. Je voudrais dans ces moments de gravité. Ce sont les moments de récolte et je peux témoigner que la présence des Émirats arabes unis lors de cette Conférence générale a été intense, fructueuse et on n'a pas lésiné sur les moyens pour venir en aide à tous les projets de construction, de modernisation, de réhabilitation de l'UNESCO.

10.2 Je voudrais mettre l'accent sur le rôle prodigieux qui a été joué par M. Sudders lors de ces années où il a présidé la Commission de l'APX. C'était un homme d'une grande patience, d'une grande diplomatie. Il a su toujours arrondir les angles et il a construit des consensus dont on avait besoin, un grand besoin. Et je pense qu'avec lui, on a pu faire une autopsie en profondeur de l'état financier de l'UNESCO ainsi que des programmes parce que tous les poids sont organiquement liés et c'est très difficile de séparer les uns des autres.

10.3 Je voudrais dire un dernier mot également de remerciement à tous les soldats, connus et inconnus, qui ont contribué avec un don de soi, et je peux dire un don de soi qui va jusqu'au sacrifice, pour conférer cet aspect cohérent à la Conférence générale et à tous les volets de cette Conférence générale. On a vécu un grand moment et l'UNESCO maintenant, je pense, repart mieux armée pour affronter les difficultés d'une part et pour rayonner sur un monde qui est parfois obscur et obscurantiste. Et c'est à nous tous de jouer et de bien jouer. Merci.

11. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. I like the choice of your words "financial autopsy." But I like the context in which it was used, Sir, not the literal context, I really like it. Thank you very much. Next, the distinguished representative of Portugal, and then I see Bangladesh.

12. **Portugal :**

Merci beaucoup, Monsieur le Président. Le Portugal souhaite s'associer à ce qui vient d'être dit par l'Argentine et de manière tellement éloquente aussi bien par Mme l'Ambassadeur d'El Salvador et le distingué représentant des Émirats arabes unis. En effet, l'Ambassadeur Sudders a su traiter avec une sensibilité extraordinaire des matières qui, à première vue, pourraient paraître difficiles, complexes, incompréhensibles même, et il a su prendre sur chacun de nous ce qu'on avait de mieux à proposer en rendant des fois plus compréhensibles les questions qu'on souhaitait mettre en valeur. Donc le Portugal remercie très vivement tout ce que l'Ambassadeur Sudders a fait dans le domaine de la Commission des finances et administration, et aussi pendant cette Conférence générale. Merci beaucoup, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur Sudders.

13. **The President:**

Thank you very much. I believe we have exhausted our list and once again let us thank Ambassador Sudders for a job well done because I, too, sat in so many of those FA Commission meetings and indeed he was able to drive us to the desired conclusion. Once again, thank you very much. Sorry, I forgot about Bangladesh. My sincere apologies, Bangladesh. Yes Sir, bring our discussion to a close, honourable Minister.

14. **Bangladesh:**

Thank you, Sir. Mr President, I thank His Excellency, Ambassador Sudders, for an excellent report which reflects his knowledge and insight of administrative and financial issues related to UNESCO. The Bangladesh delegation also acknowledges his excellent work as Chair of the FA Commission and in the Executive Board and the Commission of the General Conference. Thank you very much.

15. **The President:**

Thank you very much Your Excellency for adding to the portfolio of gratitude that was advanced by several Member States. Even those who chose not to take the floor, I am sure you agree in silence. I was almost on the verge of saying, may I then assume that the General Conference takes note of the report of the joint meeting of commissions and adopts the draft resolution contained therein, subject to the decisions that the Conference may take on budgetary issues when adopting the appropriation resolution for the next biennium? Since I do not see any differing opinion, I take it that we have so **decided**. Thank you very much.

Item 3.3: Adoption of the Appropriation Resolution of 2016-2017

16. **The President:**

Dear colleagues, the last item remaining on our agenda is item **3.3**, "Adoption of the Appropriation Resolution for 2016-2017". The document pertaining to this item is 38 C/13. In his report, Ambassador Sudders presented the appropriation resolution which the six commissions, at their joint meeting, recommended for adoption. Are there any comments on this resolution? I see none. May I take it that the General Conference takes note of the report of the Chairperson of the APX Commission and adopts the appropriation resolution for 2016-2017 contained in document 38 C/13? It is so **decided**.

Closure of the 38th session of the General Conference

17. The President:

Ladies and gentlemen, we have thus finished our formal agenda for this session of the General Conference. Allow me at this particular point in time to give the floor to the Deputy Director-General who wishes to say a few words as this session draws to a close. Mr Deputy Director-General, you now have the floor.

18.1 The Deputy Director-General:

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Director-General I wish to thank every Member State for their commitment to UNESCO. This is especially meaningful in this year when we celebrate the Organization's 70th anniversary. This is especially meaningful after the devastating terrorist attacks that Paris suffered on 13 November. This criminal, barbaric act of violence affects us all.

18.2 Violent extremism is a global challenge, and we must respond together. This year, in Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq, we have seen women and men, communities, killed, persecuted on the basis of religious and ethnicity. We have seen humanity's cultural heritage attacked, looted, to finance terrorism. These are all faces of the same violent extremism. Fuelled by hatred, intolerance, false interpretations of faith, violent extremism seeks to divide humanity, to tear it from the history it shares, to destroy the culture that brings it together.

18.3 We can never accept this. Never. We must stand together, with France, with all women and men, with all societies across all corners of the world. This violence reminds us of the vulnerability of all societies today. It reminds us also of the steel of our resilience and resolve. This resilience finds shape in the Constitution of UNESCO, written 70 years ago after a devastating world war that flaunted human rights and dignity like never before.

18.4 This session of the General Conference has seen a renewed commitment to the values, principles and objectives at the heart of UNESCO. More than ever, the world seeks the "soft power" that is within the DNA of UNESCO. This was true 70 years ago, and it has never been so relevant – one month after the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development in New York, when Member States agreed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; one month before the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In Paris (COP 21), which many Member States see as part of the same, single agenda for sustainability; at a time when women and men shoulder the burden of change, oftentimes discontinuous change, across the world.

18.5 We are determined to move forward. We are determined to support every government in advancing quality education and learning opportunities for every girl and boy, every woman and man, throughout life. We are determined to lead forward education for the twenty-first century, education for sustainable development, and global citizenship education. We are determined to lead the change and the charge to prevent and counter violent extremism and cultural cleansing, wherever it may be. We are determined to defend freedom of expression and media freedoms, to enhance the safety of journalists, to end impunity and help build knowledge societies. We are determined to support societies in managing social transformations, to promote inclusion and justice. We are determined to advance science cooperation, to deepen ocean sustainability and water management, to bolster disaster readiness. We are determined to empower girls and women everywhere, as a human rights issue, as a development multiplier, as a sustainability and security imperative. We are determined to support Africa's renaissance, working with African governments, with the African Union, and regional communities, to advance the culture of peace, to bolster capacities at every level. This requires a stronger UNESCO – and we will continue the reform of the Organization, to sharpen delivery, to ensure the Organization is fit for purpose at every level.

(The Deputy Director-General continues in French)

18.6 Excellences, mesdames et messieurs, les décisions de cette Conférence générale s'appuient sur une mobilisation sans précédent des États membres, des organisations internationales, des ONG. Vous l'avez rappelé, Monsieur le Président. Cette participation donne une assise robuste à l'ensemble des décisions qui ont été prises – sur le budget, le programme, la stratégie pour la protection du patrimoine culturel et du pluralisme, pour l'éducation contre l'extrémisme violent, pour la mise en œuvre de l'Agenda 2030 où les priorités de l'UNESCO sont fermement intégrées. Cette participation est aussi un signe de confiance très fort dans la pertinence et l'avenir de l'UNESCO. Et nous le constatons aussi avec l'adhésion de Montserrat comme nouveau Membre associé. Chacun mesure la nécessité de traiter ensemble, de manière intégrée, avec une approche globale, les enjeux de l'éducation, de la culture, de l'information, du partage des savoirs pour créer une culture de la paix, pour lutter contre l'extrémisme, pour créer une nouvelle conscience de l'environnement durable. L'UNESCO est la seule plate-forme mondiale pour aborder ces questions de manière transversales. Et lors de ces dernières semaines, l'UNESCO a prouvé, une fois de plus, sa capacité à être un laboratoire des idées, avec des initiatives, des propositions, sur l'éducation inclusive, le droit d'asile pour les biens culturels, une équipe spéciale d'intervention pour la protection du patrimoine, qui combine les civils et les militaires, et tant d'autres.

18.7 Lors du Forum des jeunes, lors du Forum des dirigeants et dans des dizaines d'événements parallèles, cette Maison a vécu au rythme des idées, des initiatives, du partage des énergies qui nous font avancer. Toute cette énergie, toutes ces idées, nous allons les porter ensemble, et nous allons commencer immédiatement avec la COP21 qui se réunit dans quelques jours. Merci à tous de votre engagement. Merci de votre confiance. Il y a beaucoup à faire, alors au travail !

(Le Directeur général adjoint poursuit en anglais)

18.8 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, ahead of us, we have many challenges. Standing in unity, we will defeat violent extremism. We will get rid of the scourge of poverty. We will build societies that are inclusive and tolerant. Above all, we will anchor our societies in justice, freedom, sustainable development and peace. This is the promise of

UNESCO. This is the mandate of UNESCO. Excellencies, allow me now, Mr President, as is customary to offer the President of the General Conference an honorary gavel recognizing your excellent work. It is with great pleasure that I hand you the gavel on behalf of the Director-General, Ms Irina Bokova. Thank you very much.

19.1 The President:

Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Director-General for your very wise and kind words. Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Mr Deputy Director-General of UNESCO, Honourable Ministers and heads of delegations, Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and Permanent Delegates to UNESCO, members of the media, ladies and gentlemen. We have now come to the end of our engagement in respect of the 38th session of the General Conference and I must admit that I have a feeling of nostalgia. It is not too long ago that I took very carefully those steps coming from the podium, like a baby learning how to walk for the first time, but after two weeks, I now have a level of comfort, and I can negotiate those steps even with my eyes closed. So if I had a wish, I would have said, "Can we extend our engagement for another week?"

19.2 This session has been exceptional in many respects. First and foremost, it is ending on the first day, which follows the three-day national mourning of our host Member State following the terrorist attack last week. Here again, Excellencies, I would like to reiterate our sincere condolences once again and express our sympathy to the French people, their government and all the other nations that lost nationals during the attacks of the past week. It is also the week of our 70th anniversary for our Organization and I am grateful and greatly appreciative of the fact that we could maintain the Leaders' Forum and plenary sessions notwithstanding the attacks. In this regard, I wish to renew, in particular, our deep gratitude to all the staff that mobilized the security not only of our building, but of all the participants and those who were involved in the organization of the sessions and events.

19.3 Despite the current extremely difficult context of our host country and city, our deliberations concluded with the participation at the highest level of representation of all of us as Member States. I believe that this is a strong signal, a clear indication that together we refuse to give in to the pressures, threats and destabilization attempts of extremism. Our unreserved condemnation of terrorism goes hand-in-hand with our common will to continue debating key topics on education, the sciences, culture and communication and information. As we bring the proceedings of this General Conference to a close, I must admit that it has been an extremely enriching experience for me – from the first day I made the solemn pledge that I would do my utmost to preside over our meetings in a fair and reasonable manner. I must say that I am humbled and gratified by the atmosphere of frankness, trust and mutual respect established during the series of plenary sessions that we had. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to you all for your commitment to support the highest standards for our Organization. Even in moments when we could not reach consensus and had to resort to a vote, we displayed high levels of maturity and tolerance, where different positions of Member States were listened to, but above all, were respected by all.

19.4 The work of the committees and commissions has been completed in the most effective and transparent manner. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the chairpersons of the respective commissions for their effective leadership and management of the work of their commissions. Mr Deputy Director-General, I would also like to thank the Director-General and your good self as well as your team, for the invaluable support provided to me. I acknowledge the commitment, enthusiasm and professionalism of the Secretariat. It was a indeed a pleasure for me to work closely with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of the General Conference, Mr Jacques Rao and Mr Luis Salamanques, and I am taking this opportunity to wholeheartedly thank the entire Secretariat of the General Conference, an extremely dedicated team of highly professional colleagues for a job, extraordinarily well done. And here I would like to mention them: Mr Boris Falatar, Ms Anna Bonetti, and Ms Martha Milanzi-Nguni. Many thanks also go to – and I have dubbed this team the inner circle of the President – Ms Dorine Dubois, Personal Assistant, Ms Catherine Thiounn, Senior Assistant, and Ms Yasmine Babiard. My respectful and warm thanks also go to the Chair of the Executive Board, my dear brother Mr Mohamed Amr, who, and I am speaking from experience, led the Executive Board effectively over the past two years. Let me also thank the silent supporters of our meetings, the very important people, those who we do not always see, but who have ensured the smooth functioning of the Conference, the dedicated staff behind the stage, in their offices at all times of the day, sometimes even during the night. Your contributions, my dear colleagues, wherever you are, created the requisite environment for the harmonious interactions that we had as Member States.

19.5 Ladies and gentlemen, UNESCO, as any multilateral institution, needs to rely on the unity and cohesion of its constituencies. Our tripartite configuration with a General Conference, an Executive Board and a Secretariat, needs to be strong, stable and united, to deal with both external and internal issues, while working in harmony in pursuit of the Organization's constitutional mandate. For this reason, I commit today, before you, to provide the support and guidance necessary for the checks and balances in our Organization. I am determined to do so within the framework of my two-year mandate, as ex-officio member of the Executive Board, as an honest broker when needed, always, and I am emphasizing this, in close collaboration with the Secretariat, while providing visibility to the Organization and enhancing its profile whenever possible. Member States indeed have the sacred responsibility to create the necessary enabling environment for the Secretariat to effectively implement our Organization's programmes.

19.6 Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, I wish to thank you once again for your participation, for your enlightened and stimulating statements and for your wise decisions over the past two weeks. I wish you safe journeys back home with your families, and look forward to our continuous joint cooperation to promote the ideals of our Organization, so that, beyond our respective mandates, it can continue to support human development over decades. Thank you very much for your attention.

(Applause)

19.7 Thank you very much. After democratically giving the floor to my good self, I now have to democratically recognize those who want to intervene, and indeed I have the pleasure to recognize the distinguished representative of Syrian Arab Republic.

٢١,١ الجمهورية العربية السورية :

شكراً سيدي الرئيس، أهنتكم على الجدارة والحنكة التي تخلصتم بها في رئاستكم للمؤتمر العام، أهنت سعادة السفراء، رئيس المجلس التنفيذي ورئيس اللجنة الإدارية والمالية على أداؤهما، وتمنى لهما التوفيق في مهامهما المستقبلية التي سيتبوأنها. نتقدم بالشكر لسكرتارية المؤتمر العام على حسن إدارتها وجهوزيتها، وكذلك المترجمين وكل من عمل على إنجاح المؤتمر. تحنى السيدة المديرة العامة على إنجاح المؤتمر العام في الذكرى السبعين لتأسيس منظماتنا العتيدة.

٢١,٢ رغم الظروف العصبية التي يشهدها العالم وبلدي سورية، بتاريخ ١٤ تشرين الثاني/نوفمبر ٢٠١٥ أصدرت وزارة الخارجية السورية بيان الإدارة التالي ضد الجرائم الوحشية التي طالت الشعب الفرنسي: "إن الجمهورية العربية السورية تدين بشدة الاعتداءات الإرهابية التي وقعت في باريس، وتعرب عن تعاطفها ومواساتها للشعب الفرنسي وعائلات الضحايا وتمنياً بالشفاء العاجل للجرحى. إن الشعب السوري الذي يعاني منذ خمس سنوات جراء جرائم الإرهاب التكفيري المدعوم خارجياً يدرك أكثر من غيره بشاعة ما حصل في باريس والأخطار الجسيمة التي يشكلها الإرهاب على الأمن والسلم في العالم أجمع. إننا تؤكد ما سبق وحدرت منه مراراً أن الإرهاب لا حدود له، وسيرتد على داعميه الأمر، الذي يتوجب توحيد كل الجهود الدولية الصادقة للقضاء على هذه الآفة وتصويب السياسات الخاطئة وقصيرة النظر التي تصب في مصلحة الإرهابيين، من أجل مكافحة فعالة للإرهاب وخطط وفرض السلم والاستقرار في المنطقة والعالم". أمني البيان وأنضم إليه بصوتي وباسم وفد بلادي والوفد الرسمي المشارك في المؤتمر العام، مع تمنياتنا للجمع بالتوفيق. شكراً سيدي الرئيس لمنحي الفرصة لأخذ الكلمة. شكراً مرة أخرى للجمع.

22. **The President:**

Thank you very much your Excellency. I now recognize the distinguished representative of Iran.

23. **Islamic Republic of Iran:**

Thank you very much, Mr President. Before you were called there to be given the gavel, you told us that we have come to the end of our formal agenda. Then what about informal agenda? Then you said in your speech, you replied to me that you would be our President for two years. Therefore I am sure you will not leave your gavel just in a corner, you will not hide it, you shall use it. Therefore I am sure you will try to bring us together for the informal agenda that we are going to pursue for two years. I can see the formal governing bodies, the formal parts, I see you there, distinguished Chair of the Board who prepared this agenda for us and our distinguished Deputy Director-General representing our Director-General. Okay, but altogether there is an informal agenda. Why? Because when we talk about a formal agenda, we take care of legalities, regulations, finally we say wrong or right, but there lies a field beyond right and wrong and that field is the field of beauty and ugliness. When we talk in our Constitution about intellectual and moral solidarity, when we talk about intellectuality and morality, then we come to the concept, to the categorization of beauty and ugliness as well. When it is combined with the concept of wrong or right, then we will find our informal agenda. Therefore, while I would like to thank all of you, our distinguished President, the Board, the Chair of the Board, our Director-General and our Deputy Director-General. I would like to ask you to please continue to chair us for our informal agenda, because beyond this idea or that idea, beyond being legally right or wrong, there lies another field. We shall meet there when the soul lies down on that beautiful grass, then the world is too full to talk about ideas, languages, and even the phrase "each other" shall not make any sense, if we think about our beautiful, informal agenda. Thank you.

24. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, the President of the 31st session of the General Conference. That was very wise and timely counsel. And when they offer us counsel, young people, like some of us, can only do one thing and one thing only, and that is to listen and accept the wise counsel. Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Bangladesh would now like to take the floor. You now have the floor, Sir.

25. **Bangladesh:**

Thank you Sir. Mr President, as the 38th session of the General Conference is drawing to a close, I wish to register my sincere appreciation for the manner in which you have presided over this historic session of the UNESCO General Conference. Your straightforward and transparent approach, your wisdom and even-handedness played a pivotal role in the smooth and fruitful conclusion of the 38th session of the General Conference. We look forward to working closely with you for the next two years. I would also like to thank the Director-General, the Deputy Director-General and the able members of the Secretariat for their efficient support to the work of the General Conference. Before I conclude, I wish to reiterate Bangladesh's unflinching support to UNESCO in the fight against extremism and terrorism through education and intercultural dialogue and by strengthening a culture of peace. Thank you, Mr President.

26. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for those very kind words. Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, we have thus come to the end of our last plenary meeting and I wish to once again thank you all for your active participation, for your very thoughtful statements and your very wise decisions over the past two weeks. Before I mark the end of the session, we will have the pleasure to listen to a short musical performance prepared by Maestro Jorge Lozano-Corres, and performed by none other than the UNESCO Choir. The first musical piece we will hear is a traditional Bulgarian song, followed by an extract from the Sonnambula by Vincenzo Bellini. The performance will conclude with another traditional song, this time from Oaxaca, Mexico. Let me now invite the performers to present their musical interlude.

(Musical interlude)

27. **The President:**

What an end to our meeting! Can we show our appreciation once again, colleagues? (Applause) When we say UNESCO turned 70, the fact that we have our staff members, also exercising their talent, unlike some of us, particularly my good self, then you know that the Organization has matured. And one of them, by the way, is the head of our security. He was there, not only taking care of our security but also letting us enjoy the pleasure of listening to music. What an Organization! Before I declare the meeting closed, colleagues and friends, allow me to say *bon voyage, buen viaje, rihlah sa'adah, Sčastlivovo puti, Yilù ping'an*. On that note, my dear friends, I now declare **closed** the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO and God bless.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.