

Speech of H.E. Mr V. Jehlicka, Minister of Culture of the Czech Republic,

34. General Conference of UNESCO

Dear Mr President of the General Conference,
dear Excellencies, Ministers, Mr Director-General,
ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to start by congratulating the President on his election. I would like to assure him, that the Czech Republic supports wholeheartedly the joint declaration of EU Member States on the draft Medium-Term Strategy, the draft programme and budget for the upcoming two years, and other fundamental issues, which has been made on their behalf by the distinguished representative of Portugal.

In this respect, we approve in principle the reform measures taken to make the organization and its secretariat more effective. We also welcome the improved readability of the draft programme and budget for the forthcoming two-year period and the efforts to deliver specific tangible results.

Denis de Rougemont once said that, in culture, taking stock of differences is necessary not to divide, but to enrich culture even more.

Yet this is only possible if we preserve cultural diversity and intensify intercultural exchange. Accordingly, the Czech Republic endorses the new Medium-Term Strategy's focus on promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

With reference to this primary objective of the Medium-Term Strategy, we believe that the organization's programme proposed for 2008 and 2009 is clearly structured and remarkably well tailored to achieve that objective. We salute the fact that this programme moulds the primary objective into concrete action, whether museums or any new direction pursued by cultural statistics, recommendations on the status of the artist or the new Cultural Heritage Charter

The Czech Republic takes the view that understanding and respecting cultural diversity is crucial for the realization of the Medium-Term Strategy's other primary objectives, whether these are 'attaining quality education for all', 'mobilizing science knowledge and policy for sustainable development' or UNESCO's capacity to address 'emerging ethical challenges'.

With this in mind, the promotion of cultural diversity and cultural dialogue is not – and cannot be – the subject of just one UNESCO sector programme. We believe that the issue of cultural diversity should be addressed on the one hand by programmes in the sectors of education and social and human sciences, and on the other hand by programmes in the communication and information sector. Indeed, the organization's significance lies in the fact that its structure is designed to allow this interplay of different programme sectors. I note that this interpenetration of the Medium-Term Strategy's primary objectives in the major programmes is one of the methods our organization should adopt as a matter of principle. This goes beyond cultural diversity. Can ethical challenges really be viewed simply as a matter for the social

sciences programme? Is education for all really confined just to education as a priority requiring no response from the cultural sector? Against this background, an emphasis needs to be placed on the inter-sector nature of UNESCO's work and on more effective cooperation between experts and institutions in the fields of education, science, culture and communication and information.

It is axiomatic that UNESCO should help pursue the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the UN, and play a coordinating role in the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

Education is evidently set to remain one of UNESCO's main priorities, but in our opinion it should not be restricted solely to knowledge-based targets. In the field of education, we also need to engender a 'hunger for knowledge' and nurture the process of 'learning to learn'.

In our opinion the amount paid in contributions should be consistent with the compromise draft of the budget drawing on essential programme requirements

Mr President,

The Czech Republic intends to continue pursuing UNESCO's key objectives, and in this age full of new challenges recalls, more than ever, the idea enshrined in the UNESCO Constitution that conflicts have always begun in the minds of men and that it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed. Accordingly, it wishes to contribute to international intellectual cooperation as this is the only way forward in this respect. This cooperation is possible only if there is profound respect for human rights. We therefore call on UNESCO to continue supporting observance of these principles with concrete action, in particular in light of the fact that next year is the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Thank you for your attention.

**Návrh vystoupení delegace České republiky na interdisciplinární komisi — v rámci
34. zasedání Generální konference UNESCO v Paříži dne 17. — 18. října 2007,**

Dokument 34 C 7 (a 34 C 4)

Dear Mr President,

The Czech Republic delivers the following opinion on the draft programme for 2010-2011: In recent years, major progress has been made in UNESCO's operational structure. However, there is still room to increase the effectiveness of its work significantly, especially as regards the efficient multidisciplinary interplay of programmes, which could be valuable in view of the limited funds. As such, the Czech Republic recommends taking further reform measures that will enhance the organization's efficiency and make it more responsive to regional conditions. We also recommend seeking a further improvement in the transparency of the programme for 2010-2011 and its evaluation. In essence, we should continue along the same path pursued during the preparations for the 2008-2009 period.

As regards the structure of the next 35 C/5, in our opinion the structure of document 34 C/5 could be used as a template, i.e. each major programme should be linked to priorities and main axes.

However, we also take the view that priorities such as intercultural dialogue, like the ethical challenges of our time, cannot be a matter for a single sector. The future 35 C/5 must respond even more clearly to the fact that the Medium-Term Strategy encompasses underlying themes that concern all sectors. In other words, each major programme should address the issue of how it can help realize the priorities of another major programme. Departmentalism needs to be eliminated from UNESCO's work and programme.

We feel that the tangibility of the 35 C/5's results is particularly important. That is not to say that we are in favour of quantifying results for quantification's sake, but that we must seek out the qualitative dimension of outputs from the implementation of the two-year programme. For example, it is better to have one exceptional study on cultural policy than five average ones. In education, UNESCO has ample quality programmes addressing the most burning issues connected with the social and economic development of the world. The results of the main programme, 'Education for all', which have been achieved since the Dakar conference in 2000 are a sign that UNESCO is in a position to ensure the meaningful realization of the ambitious goals set by that conference. This programme is sure to figure in the forthcoming 35 C/5. In the same vein, 2010-2011 period should also be dedicated to the programme focusing on education for sustainable development, which is never too late anywhere. UNESCO's unique role here is particularly crucial. UNESCO has also taken action of global importance in sport. Its Convention against Doping promises to improve ethics and culture in sport.

In addition, we believe that the outputs from 35 C/5 should be made available to the general public in all countries. Even the best of studies (and the current 34 C/5 proposes many of them as quantifiable outputs) are of little value if they are burrowed away somewhere in the secretariat. In this respect, if the results of the two-year programme are to take the form of documents (studies, policies, analyses, recommendations, etc.), we think that, at the very least, they should be made available in electronic format to those they seek to inspire.

Mr President, it is certainly laudable that we are to determine the paths that UNESCO will follow in the future in improving its contribution to the goals that were once the subject of broad international consensus. Yet if we are to be consistent, for example with the results of the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Stockholm, our organization – together with Member States – should question what has been achieved, what requires new impetus, and where we are dragging our heels. The world is transforming too rapidly for our organization to make any headway without such an analysis. Therefore, analyses of the results achieved should constitute the keystone of further activity.

Mr President,

The Czech Republic underlines the priority of preserving cultural diversity and the continuing intensification of intercultural exchange. We take the view – and will continue to take the view – that understanding and respecting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are essential if we are to achieve the Medium-Term Strategy's objectives, whether they are 'attaining quality education for all', 'building a knowledge society', or UNESCO's capacity to address 'emerging ethical challenges'.

Mr President, perhaps we are all familiar with the words of Yehudi Menuhin, that 'It is art that can structure the personalities of young people with a view to open their minds, to instil the respect of others and the desire of peace.' I find it regrettable, then, that the issue of education through and for art, which is so central to the UNESCO mission, was sidelined somewhat in 34 C/5. There can be no future for art, culture or cultural diversity if the minds and hearts of young people are not receptive to them. We believe that 35 C/5 should make amends for this. Nor should we abandon projects which have been up and running at UNESCO for years and in respect of which UNESCO is indispensable, such as the Index Translationum, which is perhaps much more relevant for cultural diversity than ten fiery slogans, and more relevant than its creators intended all those decades ago. Likewise, we should not abandon projects such as Memory of the World.

Mr President,

UNESCO's Constitution states inter alia that conflicts have always begun in the minds of men and that it is in the minds of men that defences of peace must be constructed. This is feasible only if UNESCO, by taking concrete action in its programme for 2010-2011, continues to help pursue the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the UN, especially in the field of education, and play a coordinating role in the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. The Czech Republic takes the view that, in this era of new challenges, the focus of the programme for the next two years should be geared towards the fulfilment of this idea and key objectives.

Thank you for your attention.