



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# Conference of Parliamentarians for UNESCO

Saturday, 3 October 2009, Room X (Fontenoy)  
UNESCO - Paris

## PARLIAMENTARY DECLARATION

### *Adopted by the participants to the Conference of Parliamentarians for UNESCO*

**We, members of parliaments**, representing the five continents, met on the occasion of the First Conference of Parliamentarians at the invitation of UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) organized on the eve of the 35<sup>th</sup> General Conference, in Paris at UNESCO Headquarters, on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2009. :

**Convinced** that cooperation with parliamentarians is a major component of UNESCO's partnership policy because it enables the Organization to mobilize a powerful network of national and regional legislators;

**Aware** of the direct impact on the preparation of legislation and the adoption of national budgets and to ensure that the Organization's field of competence;

### **1. EDUCATION**

**Recognizing** that education is a fundamental human right, the key to developing human resources and a cornerstone of sustainable development;

#### **Reaffirming our commitment to:**

- The World Declaration on Education for All, Jomtien (1990);
- The Dakar Framework for Action and Education for All goals (2000);
- The UN Millennium Development Goals (2000);
- The United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012);
- The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014);

**Convinced** that promotion of Education for All (EFA), a priority for UNESCO, is a multi-stakeholder endeavour, based on cooperation and coordination between parliamentarians, National Commissions for UNESCO, governmental organizations within our countries and UNESCO and other international organizations such as the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, regional partners, bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and all the other civil society organizations,

**Committed to support** UNESCO as the lead global coordinating agency for EFA and a provider of technical assistance at national level,

We, as guardians of the right to education, **uphold** these commitments to provide to the achievement of the EFA goals, in collaboration with UNESCO, in particular by:

- **Encouraging** governments to ratify relevant conventions and ensure their implementation;
- **Encouraging** the governments to allocate sufficient funds in the field of education to achieve the six EFA Goals;
- **Encouraging** improved governance in education, ensuring that the issues of access, equity and quality are at the core of all national education policies and strategies.

**Invite** UNESCO to:

- **Monitor and evaluate** the recommendations of the regional parliamentary fora for Education;
- **Continue to assist** activities of these fora as vital tools to strengthen cooperation between the actors at regional level and to create a World Forum of Parliamentarians for Education after the establishment of a Regional Forum of Latin America and the Caribbean, in 2010;
- **Facilitate** the exchange of good practices and innovative methods in the field of Education, among the parties involved in the field EFA;

**Invite** Member States to include in their delegations to the General Conference parliamentarians actively involved in the promotion of EFA;

## **2. CULTURE**

**Confirm** our commitment to promote a better understanding of UNESCO's international conventions in the field of culture, and to support their ratification;

**Recognising** the need for wider ratification of UNESCO's conventions, the participants recommend:

- **Encouraging** the adoption of all administrative, legal, and technical measures at the national level in order to improve the implementation of the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 14 May 1954) and its 1954 and 1999 protocols at the national level;
- **Underlining** the fundamental importance for the States to ratify the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (Paris, 14 November 1970) and the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (Rome, 24 June 1995) to adopt appropriate implementing legislation, to ensure its effective application, and to publicize its legislative, judicial, and administrative measures;
- **Insisting** on the need to further strengthen the role of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of illicit appropriation as a facilitator for the return of cultural property to its countries of origin or its restitution in case of illicit appropriation;

- **Encouraging** States to promote the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 16 November 1972) and enhance its implementation through actions focusing on protection and safeguarding of natural and cultural heritage
- **Encouraging** States to ratify the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (Paris, 2 November 2001) to adopt appropriate national legislation to facilitate the Convention's implementation;
- **Encouraging** States to further ratify the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Paris, 17 October 2003) and to adopt appropriate legal, technical, administrative and financial measures and policies to ensure the safeguarding, the development and the promotion of intangible cultural heritage at national and local level, with the participation of communities, groups and individuals concerned;
- **Encouraging** States to ratify the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Paris, 20 October 2005), by adopting a public awareness strategy to sensitize decision makers and opinion leaders including civil society, and to contribute regularly to the International Fund for Cultural Diversity.

### **3. SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES**

**Recalling** the Declaration adopted in Helsinki, Finland, on 14 January 2003 on the occasion of the international roundtable on "Science Technology and Innovation Policy: Parliamentary Perspective", which encourages the Parliaments to further develop their own concepts through which they deal with science, technology and innovation policy;

**Recognizing** the continuing relevance of the Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers adopted by the 18<sup>th</sup> General Conference of UNESCO on 20 November 1974;

**Underlining** the ethical responsibility incumbent on science practitioners and policy-makers, as stated in particular in the 1999 Declaration on Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge, as adopted by the World Conference on Science and endorsed by the 30<sup>th</sup> General Conference of UNESCO on 16 November 1999,

**Aware** of the importance of defining a legal framework, of ethical rules to guide scientific and technological developments and address their implications for society:

- **Call on** to ensure that legislative action in the area of science policy takes appropriate account of the ethical aspects of science including the creation, where relevant, of institutions to reinforce science ethics within national science, technology and innovation systems;
- **Call on** to strengthen their foresight capacities in order to underpin scientifically informed and ethically sensitive public debate on the ethical challenges arising from scientific developments and technological innovation;
- **Invite** to support and promote opportunities for dialogue and informed pluralistic public debate involving parliamentarians with a view to reinforcing the capacity of parliaments to address ethical issues in relation to science and technology.

**Recognizing** the indivisibility, interdependence, interrelation and equal importance of all human rights and the role of UNESCO for the right to education, the right to information and the freedom of expression as well as to the right to benefit from the progresses of scientific research and the right to participate in the cultural life,

**Aware** that poverty is an impediment for human dignity and for the fulfillment of all human rights;

**Having made** the Declaration of the World Conference on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance (Durban, 2001) our own.

**Calling on** the universal ratification of all instruments in favor of human rights, the promotion of national legislations to fight against racism and discrimination, in view of the strengthening of democracy, taking into account researches in the field of social sciences to address major contemporary social transformations.

#### **4. Natural Sciences**

**Concerned** about the negative impacts of climate change on the world;

**Welcoming** with satisfaction the UNESCO Strategy for Action on Climate Change and its associated detailed plan of action;

**Do declare** our commitment to intensify efforts to address climate change mitigation and adaptation of human behaviors in view of climate change, in partnership with UNESCO in particular;

**Convinced** of the importance of this goal and ideal, and follow up the implementation of these efforts;

**Do declare** to encourage the creation and implementation of national policies and international agreements conducive to achieve a stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system;

**Do commit ourselves** to promote international solidarity by assisting those most vulnerable to adapt to the effects of climate change.

#### **5. Communication and Information**

**Convinced** of the importance of freedom of expression and freedom of the press as a basic human right;

**Do declare** our commitment:

- **to promote** awareness of human rights, particularly freedom of expression, press freedom and international humanitarian law amongst civil society;
- **to promote** freedom of expression through independent and pluralistic media, able to report independently of governmental, political or economic control;

- **to promote** press freedom through media professionals that are free from intimidation, pressure and coercion, whether from political, social, or economic forces;
- **to help** preserve an independent, sustainable, pluralistic and professional environment, by strengthening the skills and capacities of journalists to work in a professional manner respecting ethics and deontology; the concept of ethical journalism promoted by UNESCO is proposed in this respect.
- **to ensure** that journalists are able to work in full security and independence in situations of risk;
- **to foster** the free flow of information through policies based on the four key principles of inclusive knowledge societies: freedom of expression, equal access to quality education, universal access to information, and respect for cultural diversity;
- **to respect** the function of the news media as an essential factor in good governance, vital to increasing both transparency and accountability in decision-making processes and to communicating the principles of good governance to the citizenry;
- **to promote** broad awareness of legislation and of policies on access to information held by public bodies, among civil servants and officials as well as by the media and the general public;
- **to expand** the reach of information and communication technologies (ICTs) especially to poor and marginalized populations and/or to help them to create their own outlets that voice their concerns.

**Adopt** the present document entitled the Declaration of the Conference of Parliamentarians for UNESCO on 3 October 2009 in Paris, France.