

Intervention delivered by Ms Armgard Weihe, Deputy Secretary-General at the UNESCO 38th General Conference November 6th 2015

Mr President of the General Conference
Mr Chair of the Executive Board
Madam Director-General
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

The role of UNESCO in *“building peace in the minds of men and women”* is more relevant than ever. Celebrating the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, we look forward to working together in the years to come.

It is a great pleasure for me to attend this 38th General Conference and on behalf of the Faroese Minister of Education, Research and Culture, Ms Rigmor Dam, to speak at this prominent session.

Being an associated member since 2009, the Faroes value the opportunity of cooperation in this global forum, and I would like to congratulate Montserrat with its associated membership of UNESCO.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda sets out to take the bold and transformative steps to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. The global and broad mandate puts UNESCO in a central position in contributing to reaching the ambitious goals formulated for the next 15 years. With an ambition of eradicating extreme poverty and securing peace, human rights, education, gender equality and freedom of expression are central to a successful outcome of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

The challenges are immense: Poverty, inequalities, unemployment, conflicts, disasters and related humanitarian crises are present in an excessive degree. We face natural resources depletion and environmental degradation, and the impacts of climate change are increasingly affecting our lives. How can we overcome these adverse impacts on our planet? The global partnership calls for every single one of us to act.

Situated in the North Atlantic Ocean, the Faroe Islands for more than 70 years have developed a prosperous society and an increasingly self-governed nation under the external sovereignty of the Kingdom of Denmark. This development has called for continued capacity building in all parts of our society.

Visioning a sustainable future with renewable energy, the Faroese Power Company, owned by the municipalities in the Faroe Islands, has set a target of the islands being 100% supplied by renewable energy by 2030. To an island society that only a few years ago was heavily dependent on fossil fuels these are ambitious targets and it was with much pride that the company received the Nordic Council Nature and Environment Prize 2015 at a prestigious ceremony held last week by the Nordic Council in Reykjavík. Immense effort and focused action will be needed in order to achieve the ambitious goal by 2030. Sharing knowledge and cooperation is key to achieve sustainable development and are highly relevant issues for UNESCO to foster.

UNESCO's work on education is of particular importance, as we strongly believe that the right to education for all is essential for societies to thrive. The Faroes welcome the commitment in the Framework for Action Education 2030 to inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.

Education is a basic human right and fundamental to sustainable development and so is creativity, art and heritage. The destruction of our shared cultural heritage is heart breaking and we welcome actions taken by UNESCO in this matter including the campaign #Unite4heritage.

We find that the standard setting instruments in UNESCO's conventions and recommendations are of huge importance to national heritage management. Freedom of expression and the safety of journalists are issues that concern all of us and are valuable parts of UNESCO's work.

In terms of gender equality, I am proud to inform you that for the first time, the recent government of the Faroes has gender equality, as the share of men and women holding posts as Ministers in the government is 50/50 – after all gender equality is a necessary foundation for the creation of a sustainable and peaceful society.

Thank you for your attention.