

## Fourth plenary meeting of the 38th session of the General Conference

Wednesday 4 November 2015 at 3.00 p.m.

President: Mr Stanley Mutumba Simataa (Namibia)

### Visit by His Excellency Mr Henry Puna, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands

#### 1.1 The President:

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, if we could please take our seats. I declare open the fourth plenary meeting of the General Conference. Distinguished delegates, many of you have travelled from afar to attend this august body. But very few have travelled farther than our esteemed guest this afternoon. It is my honour and special privilege to welcome His Excellency, Mr Henry Puna, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands. Although not a member of the United Nations, the Cook Islands has been a proud Member State of UNESCO over the past 25 years.

1.2 His Excellency, Mr Henry Puna, is a lawyer by training, educated in Cook Islands, New Zealand and Australia. After a successful career in law, Mr Puna entered politics by winning parliamentary elections a decade ago. Under Mr Puna's leadership, the Cook Islands Party won landslide elections in 2010, and he subsequently became the country's Prime Minister. It was under Mr Puna's premiership that the Cook Islands became a founding member of the Polynesian Leaders Group, bringing together eight countries of the region to cooperate in the fields of education, culture, environmental conservation and climate change adaptation. Your Excellency, we are honoured to have you here with us, and are looking forward to your speech. The floor is now yours, Sir.

#### 2.1 Mr Puna (Prime Minister of Cook Islands):

Your Excellency Mr President, thank you for those very kind words. Excellencies, Ministers, members of the diplomatic corps, distinguished representatives, youth leaders, ladies and gentlemen, I bid you good afternoon and *kia orana*. I also take this opportunity to congratulate UNESCO on celebrating its 70th anniversary. It is indeed an auspicious milestone and reminds the world of just how long the message and mission of UNESCO has been with us and yet sadly, at times we struggle as a global community to live up to that.

2.2 My country also celebrated this year our 50th anniversary of self-governance in free association with New Zealand. We have taken the time to reflect on where we have come from and acknowledge the opportunities we will have and the challenges we will face in the next 50 years. Our national vision is for a society where all live with dignity, enjoy their human rights, achieve their full potential and contribute to the development and well-being of society. You will note that this vision describes the attributes and opportunities for our people – because our people, spread over 15 small islands and atolls and more than 2 million square kilometres of ocean, are at the centre of our development.

2.3 When we consulted with our communities on what they wanted for the Cook Islands in the next 50 years, a group of students at one of our secondary schools came out very clearly. They said that they wanted a Cook Islands that they can be proud of. As they will be the leaders in 50 years' time, it is our responsibility to make sure that our focus remains grounded on our people, their families and their communities. By promoting social investment, our people will be able to fulfil their potential, to prosper and to participate in the social, economic, political and cultural life of our nation and when today's young people take the lead they can take the lead of a country that they can be proud of.

2.4 With this in mind, the question needs to be asked, how can the Cook Islands contribute to the UNESCO agenda and how can the programmes and initiatives of UNESCO support our development pathway? Our culture and our identity are the foundations of our country. We have thousands of years of knowledge and practice that have led us to be the people and the country that we are today – this cannot be lost. The work of UNESCO on intangible cultural heritage, education for sustainable development, Memory of the World Programme, and work to support archival practices in the Pacific, all support this. But we must go further. The Cook Islands commits to working in the next year to ratify at least one additional cultural convention. Why has this work not had priority in the past? Possibly because until the more recent conventions of intangible cultural heritage and cultural diversity, we did not necessarily see our cultural heritage reflected in the older conventions. Our cultural heritage is not buildings and monuments, our cultural heritage is centuries of calendars for fishing and planting, traditional navigation, using our ocean and environment to predict and signal our weather patterns, the drum beats and dance steps. These are the things that have made our country what it is and are still all in use today. We must find a way to see these aspects of knowledge and practice recognized within the tools of UNESCO so that we see them validated when we ratify such conventions.

2.5 We have high levels of access and participation in education from early childhood to senior secondary level, but ensuring that education is high quality and relevant to the lives of young people creates challenges in our country. The ability to sustain a scope of curriculum programmes for small and often geographically isolated cohorts, and the ability to meet the needs and interests of all students, requires new ways of thinking about resourcing and providing access to education. To this end my country is investing in the integration of information technology (IT) into our teaching programmes and the use of real-time IT as a delivery modality to our isolated students. The cost of such infrastructure and connectivity has a significant impact on the operating expenses of our schools but equity over economies of scale informs our decision making.

2.6 For our "at risk" and "in risk" youth, ongoing engagement or re-engagement with education and training both formal and non-formal, helps to improve individual self-esteem and responsibility which supports a more cohesive society. Currently we are strengthening our training for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development programmes; building second-chance training opportunities, and providing easily accessible pastoral care through counselling and careers advisory services.

2.7 We know that the issue of supporting our youth in a fast changing twenty-first century is one that the whole Pacific is dealing with. We also know that many of the UNESCO programme areas and the work of other United Nations

agencies have identified youth strategies. We humbly ask that such efforts could have a greater level of explicit coordination and collaboration so that countries can have more streamlined access to expertise and support in this area.

2.8 I take this opportunity to note the importance of the UNESCO field office for Pacific States to our region. We recognize the financial constraints under which the Organization is working but request that such constraints do not impact on the ability of the UNESCO Apia Office to support our countries in the implementation of the full scope of the UNESCO agenda. While we fully acknowledge the work and support of Headquarters and regional offices, nothing and I mean nothing, can replace the value added to our work by people working amongst us in the Pacific.

2.9 Within the Pacific region, we know each other very well. We understand the impact the decision of one country can have on the political and financial environment of our neighbours and the livelihoods of those in the region. We work together for the betterment of our region while respecting the sovereignty and unique culture and contribution of our individual countries and people. To this end, the Cook Islands offers its full and strong support to the candidacy of Samoa as a voice for the Pacific on the Executive Board of UNESCO.

2.10 As we commence work on the Post-2015 Agenda and respond to the challenges of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the challenge to UNESCO will be to build such an understanding as that we have in the Pacific across all countries so that, while we maintain our individual sovereignty, we respect each other and work together to meet global goals in a way that is equitable, empowering and sustainable for the well-being of all and particularly our next generation. We, the Cook Islands, are ready to play our part in meeting this challenge. *Kia orana e kia manuia*. Thank you for your attention.

3. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for your very inspiring words. As I understand, black pearls from the Cook Islands are known around the world, and you Mr Henry Puna, have been personally involved in making pearl farming one of your country's leading export industries. The Cook Islands are providing the world with sea pearls, and you have provided us all with pearls of wisdom this afternoon. Thank you again for your speech, Your Excellency.

**General policy debate** (*continued*)

4. **The President:**

Ladies and gentlemen, we will now continue with national statements. In order to make our afternoon as efficient as possible, we will need to continue the good practice of respecting the six-minute time limit. I wish to thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation in this regard. I now have the honour to call on our first speaker, His Excellency, Ivica Dacic the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Serbia. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

5.1 **Mr Dacic** (Serbia):

(*address delivered in Serbian; English text provided by the delegation*):

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Director-General of UNESCO, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, may I, first of all, congratulate you, Mr President, on your election and wish you every success in the discharge of this important post.

5.2 The Republic of Serbia truly believes in the noble mission of this Organization, whose 70th anniversary we are observing this year. UNESCO's role in the promotion of universal human values through cooperation in the areas of culture, education, science, information and communication is more important today than it has ever been before. In a world of growing global interdependence, peaceful intercultural dialogue and exchange are essential to safeguarding international peace and security, and towards achieving overall social and economic progress. The Organization's unique expertise makes UNESCO an important factor in the process of seeking solutions to complex challenges facing mankind at this historical juncture.

5.3 Against the background of this responsible role of UNESCO on the international level, it is crucial to preserve, in these troubled and demanding times, the Organization's moral credibility. UNESCO should continue to adhere to its original principles and goals. Politicization of its work is not in the interest of its mission, which is so vitally important to mankind. Any abuse of UNESCO, being also part of the United Nations system, should not be allowed, especially in the year marking its 70th anniversary. It is not for UNESCO to make political decisions regarding statehood. Moreover, it should not be allowed to put UNESCO at the service of affirming the illegal and unilateral declaration of independence of a part of the territory of a United Nations Member State, whose sovereignty and territorial integrity are guaranteed by a valid and legally binding United Nations Security Council resolution. This, of course, refers to the application by the so-called "Republic of Kosovo" for admission to UNESCO membership. I will take this opportunity to recall once again that under United Nations Security Council resolution 1244, Kosovo and Metohija constitutes a territory of the Republic of Serbia under the interim administration of the United Nations, where the United Nations Interim Administration Mission (UNMIK), continues to be active today. Therefore, it is not a State.

5.4 All this testifies to the fact that the application for admission by the so-called "Republic of Kosovo" is unprecedented in UNESCO's history thus far. By opposing this act, Serbia is defending international law, the United Nations Charter and the United Nations Security Council as the supreme authority for safeguarding international peace and security. These principles must be fully respected, for only in this way will the existing system of international relations, founded on the United Nations Charter, be preserved, and the universal character of international law maintained.

5.5 The session of the Executive Board of UNESCO held on 21 October showed not only all the controversial nature of the issue at point but also a deep divide among the Member States. This is undoubtedly proved by the fact that the absolute majority of 31 out of 58 members of the Board did not effectively endorse the adoption of the recommendation. In the Organization, having as one of the main objectives to protect the cultural heritage of mankind for generations to come, we must not forget that 236 religious and cultural and historical monuments have been targeted in Kosovo and

Metohija since June 1999, i.e. after the end of armed conflict. To date, 174 religious sites of the Serbian Orthodox Church and 33 cultural and historical monuments were destroyed, with more than 10,000 icons, ecclesiastical art and liturgical objects stolen. Nearly 5,300 tombstones in 256 Serbian Orthodox cemeteries were destroyed or damaged, and in more than 50 of them there is no entire monument. Still today, four gems of our spiritual and cultural heritage – Decani Monastery, the Patriarchate of Pec, Gračanica and the Church of Our Lady of Ljevis – are inscribed on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger. For all these reasons, we are deeply concerned about our cultural and historical heritage in the Province, which is a pillar of our national, cultural and spiritual identity and a part of the precious historical and civilizational heritage of modern Europe and the world.

5.6 In addition, I would like to point out that it is neither the intention nor the desire of Serbia to isolate or prevent anyone from having access to the activities of UNESCO. On the contrary. However, the fact is that Kosovo and Metohija participates even now in numerous activities of the Organization, but in a status-neutral manner and in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1244, which shows best that the true intent of the applicants is solely political.

5.7 Ladies and gentlemen, Serbia is strongly committed to dialogue with representatives of Pristina, conducted under the auspices of the European Union, and being one of the few successful examples of peaceful conflict resolution in the world today. Extremely important agreements have been reached in the framework of the dialogue in the interest of improving the everyday living conditions of all inhabitants of Kosovo and Metohija. Our commitment to this process reflects a strong resolve to actively contribute to the improvement of political and economic stability of the western Balkans, as well as to solving all outstanding open issues solely by political and diplomatic means. It is with this aim in mind that the Republic of Serbia has demonstrated its constructiveness and willingness to find a compromise in the dialogue. In this way, we have helped reach mutually acceptable solutions for many complex issues in a variety of segments, from justice to energy and telecommunications sectors, in the interest, first and foremost, of reconciliation and a common future. Discussions on the property owned by the Serbian Orthodox Church, as well as on the status and protection of Serbian cultural heritage in Kosovo and Metohija in the Brussels dialogue are yet to be on the agenda.

5.8 Taking this as a starting point, I appeal to you. Let us postpone the debate on this issue in UNESCO and let us give dialogue a chance because it is the only way to achieve a mutually acceptable solution on this issue and thereby avoid further divisions, politicization and confrontation within UNESCO. This approach is also in the spirit of the principles on which the Organization was founded and, we believe, in the best interest of regional stability and cooperation. With your support for the adjournment of the debate, help us reach a sustainable solution that will not be the result of unilateralism and imposition, but of a constructive approach and dialogue. That is what we are asking for – a chance for dialogue and agreement rather than unilateralism. Thank you.

## 6. **The President:**

Thank you very much your Excellency. Our next speaker is His Excellency Dapong Ratanasuwana, Minister of Education of Thailand. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

### 7.1 **Mr Ratanasuwana (Thailand):**

Mr President of the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. I wish to congratulate UNESCO for its great success during the past two years in promoting sustainable development and accelerating reform initiatives in UNESCO priority areas. This reflects the leadership of the Director-General and I commend her achievements in managing the very challenging context of the Organization.

7.2 Thailand is now in the process of reform in many aspects. Education, of course, is one of them. The Thai Government has continuously allocated over 20% of the national budget to education. But why is this current government putting such a high priority on educational reform, and why now, more than ever? We sincerely believe that education is a key tool to achieve security, prosperity, sustainability and resilient democracy. I can say that this is in line with the original objective of UNESCO's founders. Indeed, it is evident that UNESCO has promoted education as a key tool to build peace in the world during the past 70 years. I, therefore, trust that UNESCO will maintain its role as a capacity builder in delivering inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

7.3 Regarding this, I would like to encourage UNESCO to put the Education 2030 Agenda into concrete actions and integrate education into other areas of UNESCO's mandate. Education in this sense should be education for a sustainable future that can help build our ability to cope with borderless and interconnected challenges. This calls for extensive collaboration among governments, international organizations, the public sector and the private sector. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be our guiding framework in going towards the same direction. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, education has to be well integrated with science, technology and innovation as well. We support UNESCO's role in working with other agencies to solve global issues, such as climate change and water security by using a holistic approach.

7.4 Ladies and gentlemen, the Thai people regard His Majesty the King as an exemplary teacher. In fact, many aspects of Thai education reform reflect His Majesty's principles and philosophy. His Majesty has urged teachers to love and dedicate themselves to their students, and to focus on developing their potential. Education must encourage and promote ethics, mindfulness, thoughtfulness, and public benefit over self-interest. Students' sense of team spirit, harmony and giving should be encouraged.

7.5 In the Thai context we have been following His Majesty the King's sufficiency economy philosophy which is very similar to the concept of sustainable development. I am proud to say that His Majesty has been our growth model and has led by example in promoting education and conservation of environment and culture. It is evident and internationally recognized, since in 2006, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan presented the United Nations first human development lifetime achievement award to His Majesty, King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, and said that His Majesty had reached out to the poorest and the most vulnerable people of Thailand and empowered them to take their lives in their own hands.

7.6 This is why Thailand has been focusing on empowering local people. Therefore, we fully support UNESCO's effort in promoting social transformations and intercultural dialogue in order to eradicate poverty, prevent violence, and promote social inclusion and sustainable peace. When they engage themselves in development, they will be able to improve their livelihood, and retain the pride of their natural and cultural heritage. On behalf of the Thai Government, I would like to thank UNESCO for its tireless efforts in all priority areas. We certainly continue to pledge our commitment to work with UNESCO and the global community, for our better today and tomorrow. Thank you for your attention.

*Ms Lomonaco (Italy) takes the Chair*

8. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Now I have the pleasure to introduce as the next speaker Her Excellency, Honourable Ms Freda Belinda Adeline Tuki, Minister of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs of Solomon Islands. Thank you.

9.1 **Ms Tuki (Solomon Islands):**

Madam President, Madam Director-General, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, let me begin by saying that it is indeed a privilege for me and members of my delegation to be representing our country, Solomon Islands, at the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO. It is an honour for me in particular to make a few remarks on this wonderful occasion, in front of such esteemed dignitaries who have gathered at this Conference.

9.2 Madam President, I wish to extend greetings to you as President of the General Conference of UNESCO from the Government and people of Solomon Islands. I would also like to express my Government's acknowledgement with thanks to UNESCO for its continued support in our education reform programmes, particularly early childhood care and education, basic education programme, teacher professional development and disaster preparedness initiatives for schools that aim to improve our systems so that they can respond to the impact of natural disasters such as cyclones.

9.3 Madam President, Solomon Islands applauds UNESCO and other United Nations agencies for the vision to develop a new global education agenda, Education 2030, which is fully captured in Sustainable Development Goal 4, and its corresponding targets which aim to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Madam President, this is a challenging aim indeed for a small island developing State like Solomon Islands. The new education agenda is undoubtedly holistic, ambitious and aspirational and resonates well with my country's dream – to educate every citizen in our country. Nonetheless, Madam President, Solomon Islands will strive to make a difference towards our young people's education so that they can realize their full potential and are better prepared for the challenges ahead. Education is undoubtedly the tool for change and progress and the main driver of development and in achieving the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), hence my country's commitment to invest more in education in the coming years.

9.4 Madam President, in this regard, I wish to inform you about the preparatory work that my Government, through the Ministry of Education, has made to implement the Sustainable Development Goals especially those that are concerned with further development of education in our country. The three broad goals of the education reform programme that my country is currently implementing are to improve access to education at all levels of our education system, ensure quality of education in terms of teacher effectiveness and better learning strategies for students, and better management of resources at the national, provincial, education authority and school level.

9.5 Madam President, since Solomon Islands began a comprehensive education reform in 2004, our country has made educational advances particularly in terms of improved access to primary education, although progress was slowed than we had hoped. But the good news is that many of our school-age children are now attending primary and junior secondary schools. The literacy and numeracy standards of our primary school pupils have also increased. However, we need to work hard to improve access and quality of education, not only at the early child care and education level, but also at the senior secondary education level.

9.6 Madam President, there is now a growing emphasis on the quality of education in my country especially, to improve the quality of teaching and learning processes, so that our students can acquire essential knowledge, skills and attitudes they require to earn a living as well as to contribute towards the social and economic development of Solomon Islands. In order to strengthen our education reform initiatives, our Ministry has more recently made progress on the development of our new education sector strategic framework, which will take our country through to 2030, as well as developing our five-year cycle medium-term national education and provincial education action plans. These plans will align with Sustainable Development Goal 4 to guide the development of education.

9.7 Madam President, although we have made moderate progress in our efforts to improve the quality of education and learning opportunities for our children and youths, Solomon Islands still needs to work hard to implement programmes and activities of UNESCO's sectoral mandates, such as developing a participatory approach that can enable us to integrate traditional and scientific knowledge in the management of the impact of climate change and natural hazards. Thank you, Madam President.

10. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. I now have the honour to call to the floor His Excellency, Mr Paul Rabary Andrianirina, Minister of National Education of Madagascar. Thank you.

11.1 **M. Andrianirina (Madagascar) :**

Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Madame la Directrice générale, Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs. Au nom de la République de Madagascar, permettez-moi tout d'abord de vous féliciter, Monsieur le Président, pour votre brillante élection. Nous vous souhaitons plein succès pour votre mandat. Nous rendons également hommage aux leadership et importantes actions de votre prédécesseur, S. E. M. Hao Ping.

11.2 Monsieur le Président, cette 38<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence générale est marquée par la célébration du 70<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de notre Organisation. Durant toutes ces années, l'UNESCO s'est efforcée de relever les grands défis de notre siècle ; en tout premier lieu, la promotion de la paix dans le monde. Les nouveaux objectifs du développement durable adoptés par les Nations Unies confirment l'importance des idéaux de l'UNESCO qui doivent s'imposer face aux enjeux du développement durable, notamment l'éradication de la pauvreté, l'accès à une éducation de qualité pour tous et la préservation du patrimoine culturel et naturel.

11.3 Monsieur le Président, l'éducation est le meilleur moyen pour réaliser les EDD. Pour le Gouvernement de Madagascar, l'éducation pour tous et de qualité constitue la priorité des priorités. Le Président de la République malgache, S. E. M. Hery Rajaonarimampianina, a réitéré cette conviction lors de la 70<sup>e</sup> Assemblée générale des Nations Unies. Madagascar développe actuellement des programmes et des stratégies afin d'assurer une éducation répondant aux normes de qualité, et souhaite également la poursuite du programme KPFA. Madagascar s'attèle actuellement à une réforme du curriculum, en mettant en avant la sauvegarde du patrimoine et les nouvelles technologies de la communication et de l'information, afin d'améliorer l'apprentissage et les acquis des élèves. Madagascar loue les efforts de l'UNESCO dans le cadre de la priorité Afrique concernant le projet de *Histoire générale de l'Afrique*, et tiendra compte de ce projet dans les réformes curriculaires de l'éducation à Madagascar.

11.4 Après l'adoption du cadre d'action *Éducation 2030*, Madagascar demande des soutiens techniques et financiers pour ses programmes sur l'éducation des enfants déscolarisés ainsi que l'éducation des enfants et des jeunes filles. Notre objectif est, en effet, la promotion d'une éducation équitable, inclusive et de qualité et un apprentissage tout au long de la vie.

11.5 Monsieur le Président, la culture constitue un des leviers du développement durable. L'une des priorités de Madagascar est de faire de ses valeurs identitaires des vecteurs et des moteurs de notre relance économique. Pour y parvenir, Madagascar a besoin de renforcement des capacités et d'une importante assistance technique pour développer ses industries créatives.

11.6 Enfin, Madagascar tient à féliciter la Directrice générale pour l'initiative et le succès planétaire de la campagne « Unite4Heritage ». Nous saisissons cette occasion pour condamner fermement tous les actes de destruction des sites et monuments historiques inscrits ou non sur la liste du patrimoine mondial. Conformément à son programme national de développement, Madagascar tient à souligner sa volonté de protéger sa biodiversité, qui constitue l'un des derniers sanctuaires de la diversité biologique de la planète. Disposant de ce potentiel exceptionnel, Madagascar développe résolument le tourisme culturel et durable. Ainsi, nous soutenons la COI avec son programme de système d'alerte et d'atténuation des tsunamis. Tout en remerciant l'UNESCO pour le projet « École scolaire », Madagascar encourage le Secrétariat à renforcer le programme sur les énergies alternatives et renouvelables, et c'est dans ce cadre que nous soutenons les efforts et la protection de la biodiversité à la veille de l'ouverture de la Conférence mondiale sur le climat qui se tiendra bientôt à Paris.

11.7 Nous souhaitons ainsi que le Secrétariat alloue plus de moyens aux programmes pour la jeunesse, pour l'éducation physique et sportive, et pour l'éducation à la paix. Dans ce cadre, Madagascar soutient la création de l'Institut de catégorie 2, École de la paix, en Côte d'Ivoire. En tant que membre du Conseil intergouvernemental du PIDC, Madagascar renouvelle ici son soutien à ce programme en vue de son impact positif sur les populations les plus démunies. Et nous soutenons également le PIPT indispensable à la mise en place de sociétés équitables et inclusives. Ainsi, Madagascar demande au Secrétariat de renforcer le Secteur communication information en le dotant des moyens nécessaires à ses ambitions. Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs, je vous remercie de votre aimable attention.

12. **Le Président :**

Merci beaucoup, Excellence. C'est nous qui vous remercions pour votre intéressante intervention. Et maintenant, le prochain orateur est S. E. le Ministre des sciences, de la recherche et des technologies de République islamique d'Iran, M. Mohammad Farhadi.

13.1 **Mr Farhadi** (Islamic Republic of Iran):

Your Excellency, Mr Stanley Simataa, sincere congratulations to you on your election as President of the 38th session of the General Conference. I wish you the best in your important task. Madam President, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured to congratulate you on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO. From its inception, UNESCO has been a place in which to expand cooperation among cultures and faiths, and this policy has brought many valuable gifts to humanity. Seventy years after UNESCO's foundation, we have a good opportunity to wisely view the past in order to trace the future and prepare the force and importance of this great unique Organization. This House is here, among many other tasks, to promote cultural diversity. Therefore allow me to continue my speech in my mother tongue, Persian.

*(The speaker continued in Persian; text in English provided by the delegation)*

13.2 UNESCO was born in the hope of becoming the pioneer in opposing ignorance, violence, intolerance and war. Today more than ever, the world cries for peace, moderation, prudence, and genuine dialogue for the sacred sake of justice, equality of educational opportunity, sustainable development and the culture of peace. Today, the world needs to confront the negative phenomena of extremism and violence. The Islamic Republic of Iran expresses its deep concern over the loss of human life and the displacement of peoples, as well as the widespread, unprecedented destruction of cultural heritage in countries in west Asia and Africa with the intention of cultural cleansing through violence and extremism. Terrorism is now also financed by the sale of artefacts. We support UNESCO's efforts in assisting the concerned governments to protect their cultural heritage and proclaim our readiness to collaborate, in the spirit of the rich concept of the protection and promotion of cultural diversity in this House.

13.3 On the other hand, adolescents and children are among the most vulnerable of society. In this context of conflict and the destruction of heritage sites, some computer games propagate hatred and psychologically prepare children for

violent behaviour. I propose that UNESCO launch a worldwide campaign in the framework of the “#Unite4Heritage” campaign to create and disseminate free virtual games promoting love of cultural heritage with different educational tools.

13.4 Excellencies, social and human sciences are also a field which is entrusted to UNESCO. Iran is proud that it has proposed and sponsored the Avicenna Prize for Ethics in Science, approved during the 32nd session of the General Conference, a unique initiative which highlights the critical importance of ethics in our fast moving and technologically enamored world. Ethics in science and value education go hand-in-hand in building a resilient and sustainable world. The ethical aspects of scientific and technological development, especially in the field of cyberspace, have increasing importance as far as international protocols are concerned. Allow me to add that tonight the Avicenna Prize will be presented to the current laureate, Professor Shinwari of Pakistan.

13.5 Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, we honour the efforts made to achieve education for all (EFA), a large part of whose goals have been attained. We have also done our utmost in this regard. We hope that through collaboration we can strive to attain the goals of the global education agenda, Education 2030, especially the free exchange of information without discrimination. For this purpose, it is necessary that UNESCO support policies aimed at preventing scientific discrimination in education and access to the most advanced sciences, and enable the countries of the South to access educational and scientific resources, through which they can attain higher levels of science and technology in the framework of South-South and South-South-North cooperation and thus achieve the right to education. My Government strongly supports the development of a global convention for the recognition of higher education qualifications and believes it to be a positive step towards reducing the scientific gap between North and South, facilitating South-South-North cooperation and enabling the circulation of elites and the intellectual capital of developing countries.

13.6 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, global climate and environmental changes have pronounced effects, especially in regions like west Asia which are facing a severe shortage of water resources. In addition to extensive consequences to the technical and economic infrastructure of the countries of the region, they have a social and cultural impact. We believe that regional and international cooperation for the conservation management and optimal utilization of joint water resources in arid and semi-arid regions is essential. Supporting transboundary biosphere reserves in cooperation with UNESCO can help achieve these goals. I urge UNESCO to design and follow up studies for the three axes of environmental sustainability, justice in energy, and worldwide cultural development and research by 2050. In order to achieve the 2014-2024 objective entitled “Energy for All”, UNESCO should support training in development, production and use of all renewable energies, especially in rural areas. In this regard, we propose and donate the creation of a UNESCO prize for renewable energy, which would be a material and moral support for the development and use of these resources in developing countries.

13.7 The post-2015 development agenda emphasizes low cost internet access for all in the least developed countries (LDCs) by 2020. My country also supports UNESCO’s actions to enhance the access of people with disabilities to information communication technologies (ICTs). In view of its mandate, UNESCO is requested to offer applicable guidelines to meet the ethical and social challenges introduced by ICTs, such as the lack of respect for privacy and the expansion of extremism on the Internet and through ICTs, which have unfortunately in recent years been used by extremists to promote hatred and violence and even to recruit to terrorist operations. We also underline the necessity of promoting linguistic diversity in cyberspace in order to enable multilingual content use, and promote free access to scientific information resources.

13.8 Considering the importance attached by UNESCO to social inclusion with emphasis on youth and women, and especially women with special needs, we wish to underline the importance of their empowerment, with a special focus on women’s skills education. We announce our readiness to cooperate with UNESCO and its partners to achieve this objective. The active presence of the Tehran cluster office, which I really admire, can particularly enhance this cooperation in the region.

13.9 Madam Director General, I admire your efforts to promote UNESCO’s ideals in the approved United Nations Post-2015 Development Agenda, ideals which are all traced in UNESCO’s DNA, the beautiful term you used in your speech yesterday. I would like to take this opportunity to recall the approved proposal of President Rouhani of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2013, namely a “World against Violence and Extremism (WAVE)”. It is in UNESCO’s DNA, I believe. He will participate in the Leaders’ Forum on 16 November to further focus on his above-mentioned proposal. Thank you for your attention.

14. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Our next speaker on my list is His Excellency, Mr Torbjørn Røe Isaksen, Minister of Education and Research of Norway. You have the floor, Excellency.

15.1 **Mr Isaksen (Norway):**

Madam President, Madam Director-General, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, considerable progress has been made in the world in the last few decades. Never before have so many people enjoyed such high standards of living or benefited from so much cooperation. At the same time, the past few years have taught us that we cannot simply assume that progress will continue and this only serves to underline the need for a well-functioning United Nations.

15.2 There are dark clouds on the horizon. Not since the Second World War have so many people been forced to flee from their countries and flee from their homes. We have all been witnesses to the horrible destruction of cultural treasures that belong to us all. Norway commends UNESCO’s work in putting this high on the international agenda including in the United Nations Security Council. Norway also strongly supports the campaign “#Unite4Heritage”.

15.3 We need the United Nations like never before. To succeed, the United Nations needs to adapt to a world that is facing new challenges. And UNESCO, like other members of the United Nations family, has to undergo a continuous

process of reform if it is to retain its relevance in a rapidly changing world. Member States should give strategic direction to these reforms and hold the Secretariat accountable for conducting its work in a transparent and efficient manner. At the same time, we wish to avoid time-consuming micro-management and to ensure that the UNESCO Secretariat gets sufficient space and financial resources to carry out its duties and achieve expected results.

15.4 Ladies and gentlemen, Norway puts education first. We are in the process of doubling Norway's development assistance for education. In particular, we want to strengthen girls' education, the quality of learning, vocational and technical training, and education in emergencies and protracted crises. The provision of education is, of course, a national responsibility. Mobilization of domestic resources is key. However, official development assistance (ODA) remains a necessary addition, particularly in the least developed and most fragile countries.

15.5 The Oslo Summit on Education for Development resulted in a high-level commission on the financing of global education and opportunities. The commission has been welcomed by the United Nations Secretary-General, who has also stated that he will act on its recommendations. It is an urgent challenge to reach the growing number of children and adolescents who are out of school in countries affected by emergencies and protracted crises. Additional resources must be mobilized for this purpose, both as part of humanitarian responses and in terms of longer-term investments in resilient educational systems. Furthermore, we need to do what we can to protect education from attacks. In the end of May, Norway hosted a safe schools conference. The main objective was for countries to sign the "Safe Schools Declaration", including the guidelines for protecting schools and universities from military arms in conflicts. As we speak, 49 States have endorsed the Declaration, and we are hoping for many more.

15.6 Ladies and gentlemen, let me mention another, but not entirely different, challenge related to education. We live in an era where people are on the move, either forced or voluntarily. I am confident that it will benefit individuals, students, academics and not least countries if we develop a global instrument for just, fair and transparent recognition of their qualifications, making use of their resources and competencies. The development of a global convention for recognition of higher education qualifications responds to this need and Norway strongly supports this initiative.

15.7 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is ambitious, comprehensive and universal and it will be our navigational star for the next 15 years, including here at UNESCO. As a coastal State investing heavily in research on how the oceans influence our climate and environment, we are pleased as well for the role given to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) in the 2030 Agenda and within UNESCO. It is a recognition of the global trust in IOC and confidence in its ability to deliver.

15.8 UNESCO also has a vital role in promoting access to information and press freedom. We will continue to prioritize the work on the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. World leaders adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September this year, which include a commitment to public access to information. The target SDG 16.10 states plainly that all countries pledge to "ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements." This new commitment has potentially transformative implications for the free flow of information and independent media development worldwide. Thank you, Your Excellency.

16. **Le Président :**

Merci beaucoup. Le prochain orateur est M. Hazwan Al-Waz, Ministre de l'éducation de la République arabe syrienne. Merci.

17.1 السيد الوز (الجمهورية العربية السورية) :

السيد رئيس المجلس التنفيذي، السيد رئيس المؤتمر العام، السيدة المديرية العامة، أصحاب السعادة، يسرني ووفد بلادي سورية أن نحكي وإياكم الذكرى السبعين لتأسيس منظماتنا العتيدة، ونشارك في أعمال الدورة الثامنة والثلاثين للمؤتمر العام ونقل لكم وللعالم أجمع تحية شعبنا المتجذر في أرض أسهمت في بناء البشرية وسطرت تاريخ الإنسانية. ندخل السنة الخامسة وشعبنا في سوريا يخوض معركة ضد الإرهاب والتطرف العنيف بفكره التكفيري وإجرامه المنظم المتمثل بالتنظيمات الإرهابية المسلحة كداعش وجبهة النصرة والعصابات المسلحة الأخرى ومتفرعات تنظيم القاعدة لإسقاط نموذج دولتنا الوطنية ومصادرة قرارها السياسي السيادي المقاوم. ولقد أدركت الإرادة السياسية العليا في بلادي ومنذ البداية مرامي الحرب الظالمة على أبناء شعبنا فلبت حكومة سوريا مطالب المجتمعية المحقة وأعلنت بلادي تصديها للإرهاب ومحاربتة.

17.2 السيدات والسادة، فرضت الأزمة الراهنة على سوريا حكومةً وشعباً أن تتخذ من محاربة الإرهاب أولوية، فوضعت الخطط الحكومية تحت عنوان "التصدي للأزمة" لدرء تداعياتها على الإنسان والوطن وأنبرت مؤسسات القطاع العام وهيئات المجتمع المحلي والقطاع الخاص يداً واحدة وفق الموارد المتاحة لضمان مواصلة العملية التنموية والحفاظ على المقدرات ومعالجة الانعكاسات الاقتصادية والاجتماعية للنزوح الداخلي والهجرة التي تطل خاصةً الشرائح الشابة، وخصصت 10.39% من الميزانية الحكومية العامة للعام 2016 لتوفير مستلزمات مواصلة تعليم الطلبة عامةً، بما فيهم الطلبة النازحين في الداخل السوري والمهجرين بفعل الإرهاب. وواصلت وضع استراتيجيات وطنية لتطوير التعليم في إطار خطط التطوير المجتمعي الشامل، لدرء الأزمة والأضرار المفجعة التي ألحقتها العصابات الإرهابية المسلحة بقطاع التربية بشرياً ومادياً، حيث بلغ عدد الطلبة في العام الدراسي الحالي 4 250 000 طالباً وطالبة يتابعون التعلم في 468 مدرسة.

17.3 السيدات والسادة، اتخذت أوجه التعاون بين حكومة بلادي ومنظماتنا العتيدة، دفعاً حثيثاً خلال الأزمة الراهنة، مما يبرهن عن جدية الالتزام المتبادل بالحفاظ على الرصيد التعاون التاريخي بين اليونسكو وسوريا التي تحتفل في عام 2016 بالذكرى السبعين بانضمامها إلى المنظمة. ونوجه من هذا المنبر تقديراً للموقف الموضوعي للسيدة المديرية العامة إيرينا بوكوفا ولليونسكو بمحشد الرأي العالمي وتعبئة الجهود لحماية التراث الثقافي السوري المادي واللامادي، من إجرام الإرهاب ومحاولاته طمس تاريخ وهوية الحضارة في سورية وإبنا لنعلن أن سورية التي تدافع بكل طاقاتها الوطنية الرسمية والشعبية عن التراث الثقافي والتاريخي والديني، وللتصدي للإتجار غير المشروع بثرواتها وممتلكاتها الثقافية، تتكافل مع جهود اليونسكو والدول الصديقة في مبادرة "#متحدون من أجل التراث". كما الالتزام الكامل باتفاقيات اليونسكو المبرمة ذات الصلة وتؤكد حرصنا على إعلاء قيم اليونسكو "بناء حصون السلام في عقول البشر" ومساندتها في تفعيل دورها وتحسينها في وجه الأزمات التي تعيق مسيرتها، وندعم الخيرات البراجمية الهادفة إلى تحقيق التنمية المستدامة بحلول عام 2030، وخطة عمل التربية المنبثقة عنها مما نراه رافعة أساسية في مواصلة الإصلاح الإداري، وسياسية الموارد البشرية والبرمجة حسب الميزانية وأولوية إفريقيا، والمساواة بين الجنسين، ومبادرة التعليم أولاً والتعليم

للجميع والتعلم مدى الحياة، ووجودة التعليم وتدريب المعلمين وتعليم الفتيات والطفولة المبكرة، فضلاً عن الأولويات التي تراعي قضايا العلوم الاجتماعية والإنسانية وبرامج الشباب والإعلام والتقانة والعلوم الطبيعية والبيئية والموارد المائية.

17.4 السيدات والسادة، في عالم نشد فيه بلوغ أهداف العقد الأممي للتقارب بين الثقافات ومكافحة الفقر والتصدي للتطرف العنيف كمفززات مباشرة للإرهاب نؤكد دعمنا التام لإسهامات المنظمة باعتبارها رافعة لتحقيق السلم والأمن الدوليين ونبذ الارتكابات الإرهابية القائمة على التمييز الديني والعرقي والإقصاء والإتجار بالبشر وتدمير الحضارات وانتهاك سيادة الشعوب وحقوقها بتقرير مصيرها. نؤكد على شرعية قرارات اليونسكو المتعلقة بالقدس الشريف وبالأراضي العربية المحتلة بما فيها الجولان السوري المحتل، ونرفض الانتهاك الممنهج لحرمة المسجد الأقصى وتحويل القدس وسعي سلطات الاحتلال اليومي لتدمير مقدرات وتراث شعبنا في الجولان السوري المحتل، وتخريب نسيجه المجتمعي وبنية مؤسساته التعليمية والثقافية وإلغاء دورها في حفظ الهوية الوطنية والتاريخية.

17.5 السيدات والسادة، ونحن على مشارف نظام عالمي جديد ينشد السلام والعدالة والاحترام المتبادل وسيادة الشعوب والحفاظ على مقدراتها وحضاراتها فإننا ندعم القضايا العادلة لدول مجموعة السبعة والسبعين والصين وحركة عدم الانحياز ودول البريكس والجهود المبذولة في إطار منظماتنا العتيدة لعالم أكثر إنسانية. وشكراً لحسن الاستماع

#### 18. The President:

The next speaker is His Excellency, Mr Shamsiddin Orumbekzoda, Minister of Culture of Tajikistan.

#### 19.1 Г-н Орумбекзода (Таджикистан):

Уважаемые коллеги, дамы и господа. От имени делегации Таджикистана позвольте, прежде всего, поздравить вас с 70-летним юбилеем и очередной Генеральной Конференцией ЮНЕСКО. Одновременно хотел бы выразить признательность Генеральному директору, Ее Превосходительству г-же Ирине Бокковой за искреннее личное стремление ради укрепления всесторонних связей между странами-членами ЮНЕСКО.

19.2 Как уже отметили предыдущие ораторы, ЮНЕСКО на протяжении последних семи десятилетий проделала громадную и бесспорно ценнейшую работу, продвигая идеи мира, солидарности, толерантности и межкультурного диалога путем развития сфер образования, науки и культуры. Аналитический взгляд в прошлое отчетливо показывает, что за этот период деятельность ЮНЕСКО была весьма продуктивной и эффективной. Однако сегодня мировое сообщество столкнулось с новыми, более опасными вызовами и угрозами: международный терроризм, религиозный радикализм, вандализм быстрыми темпами сеют зерна вражды, нетерпимостью и жестокостью в умах молодого поколения. Мы все с вами являемся свидетелями последних чудовищных событий в странах Ближнего Востока, где совершается чрезмерная жестокость, человеческая трагедия и варварское уничтожение исторических памятников мирового культурного наследия. В нынешних условиях, в свете новых глобальных вызовов и угроз роль ЮНЕСКО в качестве консолидирующей силы, в усилении взаимодействия между странами-членами Организации для предотвращения и недопущения в будущем этих угроз как никогда велика.

19.2 Республика Таджикистан во главе с Его Превосходительством президентом страны, уважаемым Эмомали Рахмоном, с первых дней обретения независимости придает особое значение всестороннему сотрудничеству с ЮНЕСКО. За последние два десятилетия в рамках сотрудничества с ЮНЕСКО, его центрами в стране были осуществлены многочисленные программы и проекты, которые внесли весомый вклад в развитие сфер образования, науки, сохранение материального и нематериального культурного наследия в стране. Таджикистан и впредь намерен придерживаться курса углубления взаимодействия и повышения роли ЮНЕСКО в стране и в мире в целом. Безусловно, что благие намерения и благородные цели Организации достижимы, в первую очередь, путем улучшения качества образования людей и воспитания молодого поколения в духе мира, как акцентировали тут многие выступающие. Правительство Республики Таджикистан считает развитие образования, культуры, науки в стране одной из приоритетных задач государства и последовательно предпринимает действенные шаги в этих направлениях.

19.3 Следует отметить, что финансирование сектора образования, культуры и науки из государственного бюджета за последние десять лет увеличилось более чем в 12-15 раз. И эта благоприятная тенденция будет сохранена и в последующие годы.

19.4 Отрадно отметить, что Таджикистан в тесном сотрудничестве с ЮНЕСКО эффективно реализует многочисленные программы и проекты в области образования, культуры и науки. За последние годы в рамках реализации задач программы «Образование для всех» в стране были проведены многочисленные конференции, семинары, круглые столы, телевизионные передачи, открытые уроки, тренинги, и разработаны методические учебные планы по ускоренному обучению и т.д. Одним из важнейших достижений в ходе реализации программы «Образование для всех» является разработка и принятие Концепции по инклюзивному обучению для детей с ограниченными возможностями на период 2011-2015 гг. и Национальной стратегии развития образования в Республике Таджикистан до 2020 г.

19.5 Также, пользуясь предоставленной возможностью, хотел бы обратить внимание участников Конференции на актуальнейшие вопросы современности, связанные с защитой окружающей среды, изменением климата, рациональным водопользованием, адекватным доступом к питьевой воде. В июне этого года в столице Таджикистана г. Душанбе состоялась Международная конференция высокого уровня по итогам реализации Международного десятилетия действий «Вода для жизни» 2005-2015 гг., которая подвела итог Международной декаде «Вода для жизни». Можно с уверенностью сказать, что Международное десятилетие действий «Вода для жизни» логично и гармонично вошло в процесс реализации целей развития тысячелетия и содействовало их достижению. Однако современные глобальные вызовы и угрозы, включая финансово-экономический кризис, рост населения, изменение климата, учащение стихийных гидрометеорологических явлений, нехватка воды и, как результат, возрастающий уровень бедности, увеличение миграционных процессов, рост инфекционных заболеваний, детской и материнской смертности все еще требует мобилизации наших усилий и принятия соответствующих мер в этих сферах. В этой связи президент Республики Таджикистан выступил с инициативой об объявлении новой декады «Вода для устойчивого развития», которая, безусловно, созвучна и соответствует текущим глобальным тенденциям по определе-



нию наших будущих действий на период после 2015 г., в котором водным ресурсами, по нашему мнению, должно отводиться ключевое место.

19.6 Мы выражаем признательность Комитету всемирного наследия ЮНЕСКО, Межправительственному комитету по нематериальному культурному наследию ЮНЕСКО за всестороннюю поддержку в деле сохранения материального и нематериального культурного наследия Таджикистана.

19.7 С первых дней обретения независимости вопросы сохранения своих многовековых культурных традиций Таджикистан ставит в число первоочередных. На государственном уровне эта позиция влилась в целенаправленную и осмысленную культурную политику, которая во многом созвучна с положениями и требованиями Конвенции ЮНЕСКО по сохранению культурного и природного наследия.

19.8 В конце я хотел бы завершить свое короткое выступление словами великого мудреца, основоположника таджикской, иранской и дорийской литературы Абу Абдаллаха Рудаки, который сказал: «Нет в мире радости сильнее, чем лицемерье близких друзей». Спасибо за внимание.

20. **The President:**

Our next speaker on the list is Her Excellency, Honourable Ms Nimisha Jayant Madhvani, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Uganda.

21.1 **Ms Madhvani (Uganda):**

Thank you Madam President. I am actually the Ambassador of Uganda to UNESCO. The Minister sends her greetings to the Director-General and conveys her apologies. Due to elections she is unable to be here but her heart is very much in two places. It is my pleasure on behalf of my delegation to congratulate Mr Stanley Mutumba Simataa on his election as President of the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO. I trust that guided by the African spirit of *ubuntu* you will steer this session to achieve amicably, as is the tradition of UNESCO, consensus on matters before it. We salute the Director-General for her very detailed achievements for our Organization since our last meeting. We also thank the team she worked with in the Secretariat, the Executive Board and indeed the Member States for supporting her in moving UNESCO forward. Uganda further extends its congratulations to the Chair of the Executive Board for his leadership of the Board.

21.2 The challenges of our Organization have been with us for some years now. In spite of them, we still expect the Director-General to delivery more and better services. We must in this session support the efforts of the Director-General by providing adequate finances to enable her to implement the programme we agreed in document 37 C/4. If this is not done we risk the continuation of millions of children worldwide being unable to access quality education and many adults, particularly women, remaining illiterate. Furthermore, we risk lagging behind in science and innovation and also missing out on delivering on conventions on culture, as well as promoting freedom of expression and access to information. The greatest loser in this will be the priority areas of Africa, Gender Equality and Youth, and the bigger family of least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS).

21.3 We heard the voices of youth in their recommendations urging UNESCO to do more in its fields of competence, to ensure peace and sustainable development become a reality for many people now and not in some distant future. If we do not provide the requisite resources, we will have shot ourselves in the foot and made a false start in the journey towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals. The Ugandan delegation, Madam President, would like to appreciate the support from UNESCO over the past biennium in all the programmes. This support has enabled us to address many issues facing teachers in the delivery of appropriate quality education. The support has enabled us to address issues of science technology and innovation, climate change, as well as promoting cultural heritage and freedom of expression. However, we believe that more can be done and we look forward to this in the next biennium.

21.4 Madam President, the challenges that led to the establishment of UNESCO are still with us today. The world needs peace today as it did 70 years ago, perhaps more. This peace is built in the minds of people through education, sciences, culture and communication, and through the intellectual cooperation of humanity. Uganda further requests the Director-General for a special showing of Pascal Plisson's film "Le grand jour" to all members of UNESCO, ministers here present, and members of parliament to various countries. This film encapsulates most of the principles of UNESCO – youth education, preservation of cultural heritage, and skills development, illustrated through four young people from Uganda, Mongolia, Cuba and India.

21.5 Uganda would like to congratulate UNESCO on its 70th anniversary. In Uganda, we celebrated UNESCO's 70th anniversary at the end of September, 2015. We used the occasion to sensitize Ugandans, particularly youth, on the values of UNESCO, what it stands for and its mandate and programmes. As the final celebrations come around the corner, it is not too late to reflect on the extent to which the values and aspirations of the founding fathers have been and are being addressed, so as to develop strategies for the next 70 years. Madam President, I wish the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO fruitful dialogue that will reaffirm UNESCO's status as a beacon of hope and an agent of sustainable development and peace. We look forward to your visit to Uganda. Thank you, for God and my country.

22. **Le Président :**

J'ai l'honneur de vous introduire la Vice-Ministre-Présidente du Gouvernement flamand et Ministre flamand de l'éducation de la Belgique, S. E. Mme Hilde Crevits. Merci.

23.1 **Mme Crevits (Belgique):**

Monsieur le Président, Madame la Directrice générale, Chers Collègues, Excellences, Mesdames, Messieurs, la Belgique se félicite tout d'abord du rôle crucial qui a été confié à l'UNESCO dans la mise en œuvre de l'Agenda 2030 pour le développement durable des Nations Unies. Nous voudrions exprimer notre engagement pour le nouveau programme d'action Éducation 2030, qui a mis l'accent sur la qualité de l'éducation tout au long de la vie et qui a explicitement reconnu l'éducation comme un bien public. La responsabilité publique qui en découle doit être une tâche à assumer par chaque acteur du système éducatif, tant privé que public. L'enseignement des valeurs démocratiques et la

promotion du dialogue entre nos communautés culturelles, religieuses et philosophiques peut s'avérer un outil efficace pour lutter contre toutes les formes de radicalisation. À cet égard, nous saluons particulièrement le lancement d'un nouveau Plan mondial pour l'éducation au développement durable.

23.2 Nous appelons enfin l'Organisation et ses États membres à s'appuyer pleinement sur l'expertise de l'UNESCO, en ce qui concerne les ressources éducatives libres par exemple, ou pour l'élaboration d'un nouvel instrument normatif mondial pour la reconnaissance des qualifications de l'enseignement supérieur.

23.3 L'appel à une UNESCO énergique, déterminée et efficace n'a jamais été aussi urgent. Des violents conflits armés sont à l'origine de grands flux migratoires mondiaux. Des efforts supplémentaires seront indispensables pour parvenir à un développement durable au niveau mondial. Notre patrimoine commun pâtit lui aussi des troubles et conflits dans le monde. Et si le patrimoine est menacé, la population l'est également, et inversement. Les destructions du patrimoine de l'humanité qui sévissent actuellement au Proche et au Moyen-Orient nous touchent au cœur. En Belgique, nous avons nous-mêmes vécu pareilles tragédies au cours des deux guerres mondiales.

23.4 Les déchirures dans notre paysage, ainsi que nos cités médiévales comme Nivelles et Ypres, ou encore la bibliothèque de l'Université Louvain, complètement détruites durant le conflit, en témoignent jusqu'à nos jours. Des initiatives comme « #Unite4Heritage » mobilisent le soutien de l'opinion publique autour des actions de l'UNESCO. En contribuant au projet « Sauvegarde d'urgence du patrimoine culturel syrien », le Gouvernement de Flandre apporte lui aussi son aide. Il est évident que des actions post-conflit seules ne sont pas suffisantes. Nous devons agir avant que le patrimoine n'existe plus que dans les manuels d'histoire. Nous nous félicitons donc du renforcement de l'action de l'UNESCO en matière de protection du patrimoine culturel et de promotion du pluralisme culturel en cas de conflit armé.

23.5 Il est incontestable que la prévention et la sensibilisation contribuent à la paix, à la stabilité et au développement. La clé de l'efficacité de l'UNESCO résidera dans la façon dont elle sera capable de combiner ses forces. Ainsi, l'éducation peut contribuer au développement durable mais également aux sciences, aux technologies et à l'innovation qui sont indispensables pour la réalisation des objectifs de durabilité et la lutte contre le changement climatique.

23.6 Chers Collègues, nous voulons poursuivre nos efforts pour arriver à un accord qui incitera chacun à contribuer à la lutte contre le changement climatique. Comblé le fossé entre des pays se trouvant à un stade différent de développement sera un élément-clé pour la conclusion d'un véritable accord sur le climat.

23.7 Nous soulignons également l'importance de la coopération scientifique. L'UNESCO est l'hôte de la Commission océanographique intergouvernementale (COI) qui joue un rôle essentiel dans le transfert de technologie marine et dans le développement des capacités. C'est donc avec satisfaction que nous constatons que des efforts supplémentaires capitaux ont été fournis dans le projet de budget en faveur de l'organisation. Les résultats du travail sont rendus visibles par le centre de catégorie 1 de la Commission à Ostende. L'institut fête aujourd'hui ses 10 ans d'existence. Un autre anniversaire à célébrer sont les 10 ans de la Convention sur la protection et la promotion de la diversité des expressions culturelles. Le Forum, organisé en Belgique, pour célébrer ce 10<sup>e</sup> anniversaire a permis de réaffirmer que la Convention de 2005 est pleinement applicable au numérique car reposant bien sur le principe de la neutralité technologique.

23.8 Nous voudrions enfin remercier l'UNESCO pour son association à la 1<sup>ère</sup> Conférence mondiale des sciences humaines pour la planète en transition qui se tiendra à Liège, au mois d'août 2017. Chers Collègues, l'UNESCO est le forum mondial par excellence pour affronter les grands défis de notre communauté internationale d'un point de vue humaniste et multidimensionnel. Joignons donc nos forces et partageons nos expertises pour réaliser son programme ambitieux. Merci.

24. **The President:**

The next speaker is the Minister of Culture of Singapore, Her Excellency, Ms Grace Fu.

25.1 **Ms Fu (Singapore):**

Madam President of the General Conference, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, Singapore congratulates UNESCO on 70 years of building peace through education, science and culture. Singapore is a member of the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee and of various UNESCO networks. We proudly reaffirm this partnership on this milestone anniversary for UNESCO. This year, 2015, is also a special year for Singapore, being our 50th year of independence. It was made even more special with the inscription of the Singapore Botanic Gardens as a world heritage site.

25.2 Singapore is a young nation, but our roots go back centuries. The Gardens itself was founded in 1859. We carefully preserved it throughout Singapore's journey of modernization and development. This did not happen by chance in our small and densely-populated city-state. Other heritage sites have also stood the test of development. There are over 7,000 conserved buildings and 70 national monuments in Singapore, such as the Yueh Hai Ching temple, one of our oldest temples, built in the 1850's, where our ancestors gave thanks after arduous journeys at sea, or the former Supreme Court and City Hall, from pre-independence days, which we have lovingly restored to house our new national gallery. It goes to show the values that underpin our urban design and development, that we must harmonize economic and physical development with social, cultural and environmental needs. This is a people-centred approach to designing a liveable city of the future.

25.3 Singapore must get this right. As a tiny island State, there is no room for error. Our development is thoughtfully designed and implemented to support our policy objectives. One example is the environment, and the way we have used our drains and canals. Located at the equator, we need an efficient drainage system to manage the heavy downpours we often get. It is not difficult to find big concrete canals in many parts of the country. About 10 years ago, we decided to turn these drains into active, beautiful and clean water bodies. We converted unsightly canals into meandering rivers, seamlessly integrated with parks, and populated with canoes and boats. What used to be unsightly concrete features have become vibrant waterways for the community.

25.4 Another example is our social policy of racial and religious harmony where everyone is treated equally, regardless of creed. Our community and living spaces are designed to support this. From our unique street food, or hawker food as we call it in Singapore, to public housing, places of worship and schools. Let me elaborate. Our hawker food used to be sold on the streets. To improve hygiene and sanitation, we created hawker centres to house our food vendors or hawkers. Hawkers of Chinese, Indian, Malay and other races operated side by side. Over time, they influenced one another in their use of spices, ingredients and cooking techniques, producing uniquely Singaporean flavours and characteristics. These hawker centres are now found in neighbourhoods all over Singapore. There are options for everyone, including Halal food for Muslims, and vegetarian food. They are more than just places for a good meal. They are common spaces for Singaporeans to take part in communal life. A society that eats together stays together.

25.5 In town planning, we design for a living environment that integrates the different races. As a matter of policy, our towns are multiracial, with different races living as neighbours to one another. We provide places of worship for different faiths in every town. We ensure that our schools are multiracial, where our children can learn their vernacular languages, and grow up with children of different races. All of this shows our effort in applying thoughtful urban design to the process of development. It is not just for the aesthetics, but to meet policy needs, supported by an appreciation of people's needs and aspirations. Singapore is happy to share our own experiences in these areas, and to learn from fellow Member States. I warmly welcome all Member States to join us for the 2016 World Cities Summit in Singapore next July. It will be a chance for global leaders to share practical insights in urban development, and the design of liveable and sustainable cities.

25.6 Madam President, I have shared these thoughts on Singapore's journey of development to illustrate the natural affinity between our priorities, and UNESCO's noble mission. We will build on this to forge deeper partnerships with UNESCO. Singapore is proud to be part of UNESCO's global action to build peace among all nations. Thank you.

26. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Excellency. I have now the honour to introduce Her Excellency, Ms Jet Bussemaker, Minister of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands. Thank you very much.

27.1 **Ms Bussemaker (Netherlands):**

Madam President of the General Conference, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, as the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science, I am speaking to you today on behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. I would like to start by giving my compliments to the Director-General, Irina Bokova, for her leading role in successfully positioning UNESCO's work, particularly in the fields of education (SDG 4), gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (SDG 5), at the heart of the new 2030 Agenda as it links peace, security and sustainable development.

27.2 Today, I would like to focus on three topics. All three are cornerstones of a healthy and democratic society and all three are bound by the overarching theme to protect what is valuable and vulnerable. The first is cultural heritage, the second is freedom of expression and journalists' safety, and the third is respect for diversity and the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals.

27.3 Let me start with the first topic, cultural heritage. Heritage determines our identities and can be considered the face of our nations. For precisely these reasons, it is shocking to see heritage on the frontline of conflict. I attach great importance to UNESCO's leading role in putting the protection of cultural heritage high on the international agenda. UNESCO is tasked with coordinating this action. Cooperation within the United Nations, with and between Member States and other strategic partners, including NGOs, is therefore essential. At a national level, we have to echo this broad cooperation. Allow me to share the example of the trafficking of cultural goods. To combat this, we need to cooperate on reliable evidence-based information and data collection. We call on UNESCO and its Member States to make this part of our common goal.

27.4 This brings me to my second point: the importance of freedom of expression, and in particular the safety of journalists and other media workers. Independent media is the heartbeat of a properly functioning democracy. It is therefore unacceptable that journalists and other media workers are being threatened, harassed, physically attacked and even murdered because of their investigative work or their opinions. At this moment, nine out of 10 cases where journalists are murdered, the killers go unpunished. Two days ago, we commemorated the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, and for the Kingdom of the Netherlands the implementation of UNESCO's Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity is of the utmost importance.

27.5 The third vulnerability that we feel must be protected involves bullying, discrimination and violence towards pupils and students, boys and girls on the ground of their actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity. During today's side event on addressing homophobic bullying at school, I met with colleagues from sub-Saharan Africa, South-East Asia, Latin America and Europe. It is promising to see that ministers of education are reporting progress in different regions of the world. They do so by developing evidence-based sexuality education, sharing good practices and building strong communities. We made a pledge for next year's UNESCO's stock-taking ministerial conference against homophobia and transphobia in education. In this respect, I would like to conclude this last subject by quoting United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who said earlier: "Hatred of any kind must have no place in the twenty-first century. We must all raise our voices against attacks on lesbians, gays, bisexual, transgender and inter-sex people." I agree fully with him.

27.6 Madam President, in the interest of peace and freedom around the world, UNESCO must be capable of operating effectively and decisively on all these themes in order to transform vulnerability into strength. Doing so requires the active contribution of all United Nations organizations, Member States and other strategic partners, including civil society organizations.

27.7 To conclude, I should like to reiterate our message as a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the 2017-2018 United Nations Security Council. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is your partner for peace, justice and development. Thanks to UNESCO, there is growing awareness that security is not only about armed forces, but also about culture, cultural heritage, education and sustainable development. We want to take our international responsibility at all levels. Thank you.

28. **The President:**

Thank you. We now have Her Excellency, Honourable Ms Aishath Shiham, Minister of Education of Maldives.

29.1 **Ms Shiham (Maldives):**

Madam President, Madam Director-General, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Excellencies; distinguished delegates; ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to represent the beautiful islands of the Maldives at the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference. I join others in warmly congratulating Honourable Stanley Mutumba Simataa, on his election as the President of this memorable Conference. May I also take this opportunity to express our deepest appreciation to the Director-General, Madam Irina Bokova, for her remarkable leadership and unrelenting efforts to reform UNESCO towards the noble causes of peace and shared prosperity.

29.2 Madam President, as we are completing one-and-a-half decades into the new millennium, 2015 remains a year of historical significance for my country. Perhaps one of the ways for which it will be most remembered will be the historic adoption of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by world leaders. These represent a universal, ambitious agenda "of the people, by the people and for the people", to secure a world that we deserve. Maldives is determined to join hands with the rest of the world and international partners to take the bold and urgent steps needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. In our efforts to achieve these goals, we will be building on six out of the eight MDGs that we have achieved and stand firmly resolved to fulfil the rest.

29.3 We are encouraged by the significant improvements Maldives has made in universalizing educational access both to girls and boys from pre-school to secondary levels. We stand firm in ensuring 12 years of free education through the Government's "no-child-left-behind" policy beginning in 2016. We are progressively making headway in improving the quality and relevance of education we provide. We have undergone a process of reforming our school curriculum to place greater emphasis on socio-economically relevant themes and issues, life skills, development of values and skills development, in order to ensure the creation of responsible and productive citizens. The reforms uphold human rights, democracy and justice. We all know that quality education can only be provided by quality teachers. As such, earlier this year we set higher standards for teachers and the training of teachers has been given high priority.

29.4 Madam President, investing in people is, we believe, the best way to promote human rights, the best way to guarantee a brighter future for the generations to come, and the best way to ensure that the democracy gains we have made are consolidated and further enhanced. That is why President Abdullah Yameen Abdul Gayoom's Government has embarked on a national development agenda that is based on the "empowerment of people": empowerment of youth, empowerment of children, and the empowerment of women.

29.5 Madam President, Excellencies, ladies and gentleman, for us in the Maldives, climate change is a security threat. Together with other small island developing States, we have taken urgent action to keep the rise of global temperature below 1.5 degrees celsius. We are working, in good faith, towards a legally binding agreement in Paris this month.

29.6 Another such issue is oceans. Oceans are intimately linked with our lives and livelihoods. They are the source of our food, and the backbone of our heritage and traditions. This is why Maldives banned turtle poaching in the early 1980s, declared Baa Atoll as a UNESCO biosphere reserve in 2012, and made the entire Maldives a shark sanctuary. We understand the value of our oceans and the treasures it contains. Our oceans are home to some of the most valuable marine habitats in the world. Building the resilience of our people remains at the centre of our efforts.

29.7 Madam President, each of us is a reflection of our past, of our history. I share with Madam Director-General the urgency and significance of ensuring that we conserve and promote the rich history and heritage of our past. Heritage in all its forms binds us closer as a nation and provides us with a shared vision for the participatory evolution of our nations, increases our appreciation of the diversity of nations and leads people into peace. Let me conclude by congratulating UNESCO on its 70th anniversary and reaffirm the Maldives's commitment to the high ideals that UNESCO stands for of creating a better world for all. Thank you all.

30. **The President:**

Thank you. We now have the Minister of Basic Education of South Africa, Her Excellency, Ms Angie Motshekga. Thank you, Minister.

31.1 **Ms Motshekga (South Africa):**

Madam President, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General Irina Bokova, honourable colleagues and delegates, ladies and gentlemen, South Africa would like to take this opportunity to thank UNESCO for the opportunity to address the general policy debate of the 38th session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

31.2 First, Madam President, as the South Africa Development Community region, and in particular the Republic of South Africa, we wish to congratulate Stanley Mutumba Simataa for his election yesterday as President of the 38th session of the General Conference. His election has made us proud as a country, region and the African continent as a whole, and again I would like to congratulate him.

31.3 As the Republic of South Africa we recognize fully and support the Education 2030 Agenda as encapsulated in the Education 2030 Framework for Action. Cardinal in this regard is for Member States to fully integrate Sustainable

Development Goal (SDG) 4 in their education programmes, through which inclusive and equitable quality education is ensured and lifelong learning opportunities for all are promoted.

31.4 Madam President, Madam Director-General, honourable colleagues and delegates, the Republic of South Africa is fully committed to continuing to implement the UNESCO programmes. We commit ourselves as a country to integrate UNESCO programmes, particularly the Education 2030 Framework for Action, in our programmes. Coincidentally, the Education 2030 Framework is inextricably aligned to our 2030 national development plan. The integration of the Education 2030 Framework for Action with our 2030 national development plan is guaranteed.

31.5 I do wish to reiterate our commitment and active participation in UNESCO and its programmes. We want to reiterate that we fully support the adoption of the Education 2030 Framework for Action; we will actively participate in the development of the thematic indicators of the Education 2030 Framework for Action. We also want to commit to the integration of the Education 2030 Framework for all with our country's 2030 national development plan. We also fully support the alignment of the Framework with existing education frameworks in Africa and we will continue to cooperate with Member States, particularly on the African continent, in our region in particular, in strengthening our monitoring and evaluation as well as reporting processes and mechanisms. We will share with Member States the new groundbreaking scientific discoveries related to the new hominin species, named *Homo Naledi*; which was recently discovered in our country, as well as from our work involving the square kilometer array (SKA), which again we believe will contribute greatly in scientific and groundbreaking information about our past, our history, and about science.

31.6 I am pleased to report that the Government of South Africa, in cooperation with the Governments of Botswana and Namibia and the Southern African Development Community Region, is implementing the Stampriet transboundary aquifer system study, which is the only UNESCO pilot case study of its kind. This project, which is an underground system between South Africa, Botswana and Namibia, is an agro-international programme that will help to harness underground water resources for our region which is highly stressed and currently going through a very serious drought. We do believe that this programme that we have with UNESCO will help to mitigate the difficulties that we are experiencing as a region. We believe that this programme with UNESCO is an essential life-sustaining resource which will enhance our cooperation as Member States but hopefully, as I said, will deal with the precarious water scarcity in the region.

31.7 Madam President, Mr Chair, Madam Director-General and colleagues, I want to reiterate that in South Africa we do commit ourselves fully to the programme and will endeavour at all costs to make sure that indeed we implement and work in cooperation with other Member States and follow all the guidelines and also contribute in our humble way in ensuring that indeed as a nation, we meet these goals. I thank you.

32. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. The next speaker on the list is Minister of Education of Panama, Her Excellency Ms Marcela Paredes de Vasquez.

33.1 **Sra. Paredes de Vasquez (Panamá):**

Señor Presidente de la Conferencia General Señor Presidente del Consejo Ejecutivo Señora Directora General. Distinguidos Delegados, Señoras y Señores En esta oportunidad nos dirigimos a tan distinguida conferencia en representación de la República de Panamá, para presentar la visión del Estado panameño en materia educativa, y declarar nuestro compromiso con la Declaración de Incheon, Korea 2015. Existe un amplio consenso en nuestro país respecto a que una educación de calidad es la única vía para potenciar las capacidades de la población y reducir la desigualdad. Compartimos la visión de una educación centrada en el ser humano, su dignidad y sus derechos fundamentales, con justicia social y con respeto a la diversidad cultural, lingüística y étnica. El crecimiento económico de Panamá ha sido uno de los más altos de Latinoamérica durante la década reciente. Aun así, somos un país con una desigualdad relativamente alta. Las debilidades en materia educativa y desarrollo del capital humano persisten en Panamá, y mejorarlas constituye una de nuestras más importantes estrategias.

33.2 El Plan Estratégico de Gobierno del Presidente Juan Carlos Varela, para el período 2015-2019, prioriza la atención a los grandes retos sociales Entre las principales acciones tomadas por el gobierno panameño en materia educativa podemos señalar las siguientes: Reforzamiento del programa de Beca Universal, que asigna de manera condicionada entre US\$30 y US\$50 mensualmente a estudiantes de media de escuelas oficiales y de escuelas particulares de bajo costo, beneficiando a más de 550,000 estudiantes. Mejora de la calidad de las instalaciones educativas. A través del programa "Mi Escuela Primero", se desea llevar cada centro escolar a una condición digna, con todas las facilidades para un efectivo proceso de aprendizaje, En este esfuerzo se ha invitado, con resultados exitosos, a la empresa privada, El gobierno panameño también ha lanzado una agresiva iniciativa para eliminar las "aulas rancho", presentes sobre todo en las zonas indígenas. La Ampliación de cobertura en el nivel medio y preescolar. 50 nuevas escuelas de nivel medio, así como 2000 aulas nuevas para preescolar es la meta. El esfuerzo de mejora educativa no está circunscrito a la infraestructura. Dotar a nuestros jóvenes de competencias que les permitan afrontar con éxito los retos del presente y del futuro, también son una prioridad de gobierno. Panamá Bilingüe: Busca dotar a las escuelas oficiales de una educación de calidad, en el idioma inglés así como en el idioma español. Se formarán 10000 maestros en el idioma inglés, hasta alcanzar certificación de dominio. Estos maestros estarán en entrenamiento intensivo por un año, que con 4 meses de inmersión en un país de habla inglesa. Posteriormente serán insertados en las escuelas primarias.

33.3 Aprende al máximo con 4 ejes de acción, razona al máximo que transforma la enseñanza de las matemáticas, comprende al máximo que busca mejorar los niveles de lectura o de comprensión lectora, descubre al máximo que imprime a la enseñanza de las ciencias un enfoque indagación, convive al máximo que refuerza los elementos de una formación integral. La articulación de la educación técnica y la creación de institutos técnicos superiores no universitarios con carreras técnicas de dos años. Otras líneas de acción importantes se orientan a fortalecer la educación inclusiva en el país con estándares de atención de 0 a 10 años y de jóvenes desertores del sistema escolar. La mejora en la calidad educativa no será una realidad sino mejoramos la formación inicial y la educación continua de

nuestros docentes con un instituto de formación docente, con un instituto de liderazgo educativo esperamos mejorar tanto a nuestros profesores como la gestión de los directivos, deseamos un sistema de evaluación nacional que incluya medición de resultados de aprendizaje y participar en la prueba de Pisa del 2018

33.4 A nombre del gobierno panameño aprovecho para agradecer el apoyo de UNESCO y reconocer la labor en pro de la educación que realiza, deseamos expresar con gran satisfacción la firma el pasado 30 de octubre del memorándum de entendimiento de préstamo del personal con la Señora Irina Bokova, Directora General de la UNESCO y su Excelencia Isabel de Saint Malo de Alvarado, Vicepresidente y Ministra de Relaciones Exteriores de Panamá, finalmente reiteramos a UNESCO nuestras felicitaciones en su aniversario número setenta (70) y felicitamos por su gestión a la señora Irina Bukova, auguramos muchos éxitos a la nueva presidencia, y reiteramos nuestro compromiso de país en impulsar la educación, la cultura y la ciencia bajo los lineamientos de UNESCO. Muchas Gracias.

34. **The President:**

We have now His Excellency, Honourable Mr Otmar Enrique Oduber, Minister of Tourism, Transportation and Culture of Aruba. Please, Mr Minister, you have the floor.

35.1 **Mr Oduber (Aruba):**

*Cada ken cu su forsa esey ta un realidad. Tur hende tin un sombra hasta den scuridad. Hende ta keda hende no ban lubida. Si e zapato unta sirbibo bo tey cana forsa.* Dear Madam President, dear Madam Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, Your Excellencies, colleagues, ministers, ladies and gentlemen, it is with great honour that I, as the Minister of Tourism and Culture of Aruba, direct myself towards you at the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO. The words that I have expressed have been written in Papiamentu. Originating from an Aruban song, their significance is a reflection of the message that I hope to share with you today:

35.2 In English the message said: *"We all have our strengths, that is a reality. Everyone has a shadow even in the darkest of places. People will remain people, please let us not forget that. If the shoe does not fit you, you won't be able to walk straight.* Beforehand let me state that I admire, applaud and support the institution that is UNESCO. Seventy years striving to build lasting peace on the basis of intellectual solidarity and the promotion of collaboration, is the source of inspiration for many countries including mine. It is no simple task to connect and to coordinate 204 nations striving to adhere towards a collective vision. It is only logic that at times this collective vision is reassessed in order to ensure that every country feels represented by it.

35.3 In the case of Aruba, an island in the Caribbean, I can tell you that we are quite similar as well as quite different compared to many countries attending this Conference. A small island home to approximately 110,000 inhabitants, Aruba is primarily known for its booming tourism industry. Our pristine beaches, year-round sunny weather and service-driven people have been the attraction for many visitors for more than two decades now. Residing within the Dutch Kingdom, Aruba obtained its independent status in 1986. Fortunate enough to be a worthy partner within this Kingdom, Aruba is also very proud of its autonomous voice. Although not unfamiliar with worldly challenges, Aruba has known no wars, no heavy conflicts, no natural disasters. We count our blessings every day. Does this mean that we are better off than other countries? Should we be considered exemplary?

35.4 Ladies and gentleman, please allow me to share some thoughts with you in regards to one topic that I believe best reflects my message today. I would like to address the intangible cultural heritage of Aruba and local efforts for the safeguarding thereof. Considering the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, it can be mentioned that the Dutch Kingdom has ratified the associated Convention in 2012. Aruba, as part of the Dutch Kingdom, also has the duty to comply with the rules of this convention. Article 13 of the Convention states that "in order to ensure the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, each State Party shall endeavor to amongst others: designate or establish one or more competent bodies for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage".

35.5 Do not get me wrong as my intention is not to repeat information that is already known to you nor is it to waste your time. Yet the previously described sentence is but an example of the challenges Aruba has encountered during its ratification process. As required by the Convention, it has not been possible for the island of Aruba to designate or establish a competent body for the safeguarding of our intangible heritage, the reason being that it is simply not feasible to acquire the local expertise and funding to do so. Perhaps you may call it a matter of prioritization. We often get quite inspired after visiting such conferences as this one, where you get to meet colleagues and other professionals that understand what the priorities are on an international level.

35.6 Yet when we return to our daily realities, who are we to solely decide what the most pressing issues are? It is not always easy to sit at the table and advocate for culture when stark budget cuts are a current trend for most of us. It becomes even more difficult when you are part of a potent yet small nation. As the American diplomat Madeleine Albright once said "Do resolutions have teeth and if they do, do they bite?" This shows the stark contrast between a diplomatic environment and our daily realities.

35.7 Does this mean that Aruba as a nation will cease to strive to ratify this Convention? No, we will call upon our partners, friends and allies to provide us with perhaps new insights that enable us to reach this collective objective. I will sit at the table again for as long as it takes. I think I will also call upon UNESCO to recognize these challenges that are often characteristic of smaller nations and that prioritization of the SIDS should become a reality. Thank you very much.

36. **Le Président:**

Merci beaucoup. Nous avons le plaisir maintenant d'accueillir la Ministre de l'éducation de base du Cameroun, S. E. Mme Youssouf Hadidja Alim. Merci, Madame la Ministre.

37.1 **Mme Hadidja Alim (Cameroun) :**

Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Madame la Directrice générale, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres et Chefs de délégation, Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les ambassadeurs délégués permanents, Mesdames et Messieurs, la 38<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence générale de

l'UNESCO est un moment particulier de la vie de notre Organisation. En effet, en même temps qu'elle conclut l'année de célébration du 70<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la signature de l'Acte constitutif de l'UNESCO, elle est la première rencontre des États membres, après l'adoption – le 25 septembre dernier, à New York – par l'Assemblée générale de l'ONU, du programme de développement pour la période post-2015 qui marque le passage du cycle des OMD à celui des ODD.

37.2 C'est donc pour moi un grand honneur et un réel plaisir de prendre la parole au nom de la République du Cameroun en cette circonstance solennelle. Permettez-moi tout d'abord de remercier chaleureusement M. Stanley Mutumba Simataa, de la Namibie, d'avoir accepté de représenter l'Afrique à la présidence de la 38<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence générale de l'UNESCO et de le féliciter pour cette brillante élection.

37.3 Monsieur le Président, je puis d'ores et déjà vous assurer du soutien de mon pays dans l'accomplissement de votre mission. Dans le même chapitre, je voudrais rendre un hommage à votre prédécesseur, M. Hao Ping, pour la compétence avec laquelle il s'est acquitté de son mandat. Sa présence constante à toutes les rencontres organisées au Siège de l'Organisation a été la preuve de son engagement profond et de tout le sérieux avec lequel il a assumé sa charge. Permettez-moi également d'adresser mes chaleureuses félicitations à S. E. Mohamed Sameh Amr, Président du Conseil exécutif, pour le doigté avec lequel il a mené la préparation de nos assises. Les États membres retiendront aussi que c'est à son implication personnelle que nous devons la rénovation de la salle du Conseil exécutif, à laquelle le Cameroun a apporté une contribution de 50,000 euros.

37.4 Enfin, mes félicitations vont à Mme Irina Bokova, Directrice générale de l'UNESCO, pour le courage et le dynamisme avec lequel elle dirige l'UNESCO. Je lui adresse également mes félicitations pour l'initiative d'organiser un Forum des dirigeants Spécial 70<sup>e</sup> anniversaire, et la remercier d'avoir bien voulu y convier S. E. M. Paul Biya, Président de la République du Cameroun.

37.5 Madame la Directrice générale, Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs, l'UNESCO a fortement contribué à la formulation des ODD, notamment à la définition de l'ODD 4 relatif à l'éducation, ainsi qu'à ses cibles. L'adoption en ce jour du cadre d'action Éducation 2030 est la preuve du rôle de leader que joue cette organisation dans le domaine de l'éducation. Dans la même dynamique, l'UNESCO a veillé à ce que soient prises en compte ses valeurs et ses visions dans les domaines des sciences naturelles et exactes, des sciences sociales et humaines, de la culture, de la communication et de l'information.

37.6 Madame la Directrice générale, la 37<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence générale avait adopté la stratégie révisée de la priorité Afrique. Celle-ci était apparue comme la voie idoine pour assurer à cette priorité globale de notre Organisation une plus grande visibilité et une meilleure prise en charge dans les programmes de l'UNESCO. Deux années se sont écoulées et nous constatons qu'il est toujours difficile d'apprécier la performance de cette priorité. Aussi soutenons-nous la demande qui vous a été adressée par le Conseil exécutif de présenter, à sa 199<sup>e</sup> session, une proposition en vue de la prise en compte des indicateurs de performance des priorités globales Afrique et Égalité des genres, ainsi que des points de référence et cibles correspondantes, de sorte que ces priorités soient dûment reflétées dans tous les résultats réputés pertinents.

37.7 Mesdames et Messieurs, je voudrais également saisir cette occasion pour relever avec force que les relations entre le Cameroun et l'UNESCO sont excellentes depuis 1960, date de l'adhésion de mon pays à l'UNESCO. Celle-ci, depuis lors, accompagne le Cameroun dans la formation des ressources humaines de qualité et dans les réformes des programmes liés à ces domaines de compétence. Comment ne pas rappeler, pour s'en féliciter, que ces deux dernières années nous avons vu ces relations se densifier, avec la visite de S. E. Mme Irina Bokova, Directrice générale. Elle a effectué à Yaoundé, sur invitation du Président de la République du Cameroun, S. E. M. Paul Biya. Une visite au cours de laquelle elle a procédé à l'inauguration du Bureau régional multisectoriel de Yaoundé qui bénéficie d'une dotation annuelle de \$300,000, soit 150 millions de francs CFA, inscrits au budget de la République du Cameroun. Permettez-moi, Excellences, de saisir l'occasion qui m'est offerte pour exprimer la profonde gratitude du Gouvernement camerounais à Mme la Directrice générale de l'UNESCO pour l'estime, la considération et l'honneur faits à notre pays.

37.8 En outre, la coopération Cameroun-UNESCO vient de s'enrichir par la décision toute récente d'ériger le Centre d'excellence de microsciences de Yaoundé en centre de catégorie 2, sous l'égide de l'UNESCO. Je voudrais remercier ici solennellement le Conseil exécutif pour cette décision, qui dote la sous-région Afrique centrale d'un cadre de recherche performant et moderne dans le domaine des sciences. Nous avons l'espoir que le Centre international de recherche Chantal Biya (CIRCB), dont le dossier a déjà été soumis à l'UNESCO, connaîtra le même aboutissement heureux.

37.9 Enfin, mon pays tient à signifier sa profonde gratitude à l'UNESCO pour sa réintroduction au programme de participation et la création de 15 nouvelles radios communautaires ainsi que la réhabilitation de 21 autres existantes. En outre, mon pays ambitionne de faire la réserve faunique du Dja, avec l'aide de l'UNESCO et des autres partenaires, un exemple réussi de conciliation des objectifs de développement, avec l'impératif de conservation du patrimoine culturel.

37.10 Mesdames et Messieurs, je voudrais tout simplement dire que le Cameroun reste à votre côté et continuera à lui apporter son concours en vue de la promotion et de la diffusion des vertus cardinales qui fondent son action et auxquelles l'humanité est si fièrement attachée parce qu'elles justifient notre existence. Je vous remercie pour votre aimable attention. Le texte plus détaillé sera remis au groupe demain. Merci. *Choukran.*

#### 38. The President:

Thank you very much. We now have the pleasure to introduce His Excellency Professor Mohammad Thneibat, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education of Jordan.

#### 39.1 السيد الذنيبات (الأردن) :

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، السيد رئيس المؤتمر العام، السيد رئيس المجلس التنفيذي، السيدة المديرة العامة لمنظمة اليونسكو، أصحاب المعالي والسعادة رؤساء وأعضاء الوفود. السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته، وبعد، فيسرتي بداية التوجه بالتهنئة لسعادة السيد ستانليه سيماتا على انتخابه رئيساً للدورة الثامنة

والثلاثين للمؤتمر العام لمنظمة الأمم المتحدة للتربية والعلوم والثقافة، متمنياً له التوفيق والنجاح في إدارة أعمال هذا المؤتمر، كما أتقدم بالشكر والتقدير للسيد هاو بنغ على نجاحه في رئاسته للدورة السابعة والثلاثين المنقضية، وكذلك إلى السيد رئيس المجلس التنفيذي والسادة الأعضاء، منتهزاً الفرصة لأثني على جهود السيدة إيرينا بوكوفا في قيادة المنظمة للأعوام الماضية، كما أعرب عن تقدير حكومة المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية لقيادة المنظمة على مساعيها في المحافظة على التراث الثقافي لمدينة القدس الشريف والذي أصبح مهدداً أكثر من أي وقت مضى بالتهويد الممنهج وتقييد دخول المصلين إلى المسجد الأقصى (الحرم الشريف) من قبل سلطات الاحتلال، مؤكداً أهمية الالتزام بالأبعاد السياسية والقانونية لهذه القضية الحساسة، مع استعداد الحكومة الأردنية لتقديم الدعم اللازم لتقديم الدعم اللازم للحفاظ على واقع مدينة القدس قبل حرب عام 1967، والمحافظة على النسيج الثقافي والعماري والسكاني لهذه المدينة المقدسة بشكل عام وعلى المقدسات الإسلامية والمسيحية بشكل خاص. كما أدعو اليوم لأن يكون موضوع الحفاظ على التراث الثقافي من أولويات عمل الدورة الثامنة والثلاثين للمنظمة.

39.2 السيدات والسادة، نجتمع مرة كل عامين، لنستعرض إنجازاتنا وخططنا ولنؤكد مسؤوليتنا والتزامنا بالعمل على ترجمة الميثاق الأساسي للمنظمة الذي يقوم على "الساهمة في صون السلم والأمن بالعمل عن طريق التربية والعلوم والثقافة على توثيق عرى التعاون بين الأمم، لضمان الاحترام الشامل للعدالة والقانون وحقوق الإنسان والحريات الأساسية للناس كافة دون تمييز بسبب العنصر أو الجنس أو اللغة أو الدين، كما أقرها ميثاق الأمم المتحدة لجميع الشعوب". ونحن في الأردن ملتزمون بهذا الميثاق الإنساني قولاً وعملاً، أملين تعزيز مفاهيم السلام والتسامح والمساواة وحقوق الإنسان والحريات الأساسية للناس، ونتحمل مسؤوليات حسام وأعباء اقتصادية واجتماعية وثقافية وسياسية لترجمة التزامنا حتى أصبح الأردن قبلة وملاذاً لمعظم شعوب منطقتنا، نتقاسم لقمه العيش دون تمييز أو تفرقة أو اعتبار لجنس أو دين أو هوية، نقدم التعليم والصحة وفرص العمل وكل فرص العيش الكريم والأمن واحترام الآخر والعيش المشترك. هذه المسؤولية تبتئها المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية بمجدية تامة قيادة وحكومة وشعباً بفضل الرؤية الحكيمة لصاحب الجلالة الهاشمية الملك عبد الله الثاني ابن الحسين المعظم.

39.4 السيدات والسادة، لقد استقبل الأردن أعداداً كبيرة من اللاجئين من سوريا والعراق وغيرها من الدول التي تعاني من آفة الإرهاب المتنامية والصراعات المحلية المسلحة البغيضة، حيث بلغ عدد اللاجئين السوريين فقط المقيمين في المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية قرابة المليون ونصف مليون لاجئ منهم 145 ألف طالب على مقاعد الدراسة يعاملون معاملة الطالب الأردني في الحصول على فرص التعليم. تتحمل المنظمات الدولية 38 في المائة من تكاليف تعليمهم، مما ترتب عليه تحمل الدولة لأعباء مالية كبيرة من أجل توفير البنية التحتية والخدمات التعليمية والصحية لهم في بلد محدود الموارد والإمكانيات، لذلك فإنني أدعو منظماتنا العريقة والمجتمع الدولي لبذل المزيد من الجهد من أجل توفير دعم أكبر للأردن ولوكالة الغوث الدولية، لتمكينها من الاستمرار في القيام بالمهام التعليمية والإنسانية تجاه اللاجئين في المناطق التي يتواجدون فيها سواء في المخيمات أو داخل المدن. يضاف إلى ذلك استضافة الأردن لآلاف الطلبة في مدارسنا من خمس وثمانين جنسية في العالم تتحمل خزينة الدولة جزءاً كبيراً من تكاليف دراستهم، وتقدم لهم خدمات تعليمية كما تقدم لأبنائنا. إننا ننظر إلى التعليم كخدمة عمالية عامة، ولذلك نحتاج إلى دعم عالمي لتقديم هذه الخدمة بالشكل الأمثل للأطفال اللاجئين والنازحين إلى الأردن، ورغم أن اللجوء يشكل عبئاً على الموارد الاقتصادية، فإننا لن نتوان عن تقديم كافة الإمكانيات والخدمات الإنسانية، لتوفير سبل العيش الكريم لفئات اللاجئين حتى عودتهم الطوعية إلى بلدانهم.

39.5 السيدات والسادة، إن النزاعات والصراعات التي تسود منطقة الشرق الأوسط بأسبابها المتعددة من فقر وبطالة وجهل وشعور بالظلم والاضطهاد وغياب العدل والمساواة تقود إلى نتيجة مشتركة، ألا وهي الكوارث الإنسانية: من فوضى، وكرهية، وطائفية وما إلى ذلك، يدفع ثمنها الفرد من إنسانيته وحضارته وثقافته، فيعكسها بصورة سلبية على مجتمعه مما يؤدي في النهاية إلى تراجع فكري وتموي خطير تخفني عندها النزعة الإنسانية. فلا مبادئ وطنية دون مواطن حقيقي.

#### 40. The President:

Thank you very much. I now have the pleasure to introduce His Excellency Mr Ayeid Mousseid Yahya, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Djibouti to UNESCO.

#### 41.1 M. Yahya (Djibouti) :

Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Madame la Directrice générale, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres, Mesdames et Messieurs les délégués permanents, Mesdames et Messieurs. Avant toute chose, qu'il me soit permis de vous féliciter, Monsieur le Président, pour votre brillante élection à la tête de la 38<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence générale de l'UNESCO. Je suis convaincu et persuadé que vous saurez diriger les travaux durant les deux années à venir avec le bon dosage d'autorité, de diplomatie et de sagesse que requiert votre fonction. Votre pays, la Namibie, s'est toujours distingué en s'acquittant brillamment de ses responsabilités quand l'Afrique les lui a confiées. Nos remerciements et notre gratitude vont également à l'endroit de votre prédécesseur, M. Hao Ping qui, durant les deux années passées, a su diriger notre Conférence avec brio, courtoisie et sagesse.

41.2 Monsieur le Président, en rappelant de l'UNESCO, je voudrais ici rendre un hommage appuyé et particulier à notre Directrice générale, Mme Irina Bokova, qui, malgré une situation budgétaire difficile, a su mener notre Organisation à bon port, et surtout elle a su lui donner le rôle catalyseur qui est le sien pour une meilleure visibilité. Qu'elle en soit vivement remerciée.

41.3 Au moment où nous célébrons le 70<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'UNESCO, le préambule de l'Acte constitutif – et je cite –, « Les guerres prenant naissance dans l'esprit des hommes, c'est dans l'esprit des hommes que doivent être élevées les défenses de la paix », ceci n'a jamais été aussi pertinent que ces deux dernières années où le contexte mondial est en ébullition, avec les guerres, l'extrémisme, la question des migrations et les problématiques climatiques.

41.4 Mesdames et Messieurs, il va sans dire que tout est prioritaire à l'UNESCO, dès lors qu'il s'agit d'éducation, de science et de culture. Mais je souhaiterais dans cette brève intervention mettre l'accent sur quelques points importants au plan national qui rejoignent en tous points les paragraphes des objectifs de développement durable adoptés à New York, en septembre dernier. Mon pays poursuit plusieurs priorités et l'éducation y figure en premier lieu.

41.5 L'Afrique a sans aucun doute parcouru un long chemin depuis le Forum de Dakar en 2000 dans le domaine de l'éducation, et mon pays n'a pas été en reste car la République de Djibouti a depuis lors entrepris des réformes en profondeur afin de s'adapter aux grandes mutations dans le monde de l'éducation. Sous l'impulsion du Président de la République, S. E. Ismaïl Omar Guelleh, cette réforme de notre système éducatif a eu pour conséquence l'élargissement de l'accès à l'école conforme aux valeurs républicaines, tant aux zones urbaines que rurales. On a vu une augmentation très significative de la scolarisation des filles ; on est parvenu même à la parité totale dans l'éducation primaire, et l'on s'achemine vers le même schéma pour le secondaire. Nous avons connu l'augmentation des capacités de formation continue en faveur des enseignants, par la création du Centre de formation des enseignants de l'enseignement



fondamental, ainsi qu'une capacité de produire des manuels scolaires adaptés, de qualité, au contexte local, du primaire au secondaire.

41.6 Les nations du monde se retrouvent dans cette enceinte aujourd'hui pour réaffirmer une conviction commune : le savoir et la culture sont le propre de l'homme, leur protection, leur transmission et leur partage constituent pour nous tous un devoir supérieur. Et l'UNESCO est précisément l'instance qui garantit cet engagement commun. Nous pensons en effet que la culture de la paix, intellectuellement nourrie de tolérance et de respect réciproque, organisée thématiquement autour d'activités et de projets concrets, doit être l'un des piliers de cette prestigieuse organisation. Notre pays, et au-delà la sous-région de la Corne de l'Afrique, souffre des conséquences des conflits dans la région, des risques de l'extrémisme violent, du terrorisme et du fondamentalisme. Nous soutenons les actions de promotion de la diversité culturelle, de l'acceptation de l'autre dans ses différences religieuses, culturelles, sociales ou politiques. C'est pour cela que notre pays s'est associé à la proposition des États-Unis d'Amérique pour lutter contre l'extrémisme violent à travers l'éducation.

41.7 Mesdames et Messieurs, la République de Djibouti que je représente se réjouit de sa coopération fructueuse avec l'UNESCO dans le domaine des sciences et vous informe, alors que s'ouvre aujourd'hui le Forum mondial sur la science, que mon pays prendra en charge complètement la traduction française, la mise en page et la publication du Rapport de l'UNESCO sur la science 2015. Ceci témoigne, si besoin en était, de notre attachement au multilinguisme et permettra à n'en point douter une meilleure vulgarisation dans l'espace francophone. À trois semaines de l'ouverture de la COP 21, dans le pays hôte de l'UNESCO, notre Organisation doit jouer le rôle qui lui revient, et je tiens à féliciter notre Directrice générale pour son rôle proactif dans ce domaine. Mes remerciements vont également pour sa participation au Sommet, que mon pays a abrité en mai dernier, sur le changement climatique et sur la résilience, la recherche et l'innovation. L'objectif de ces deux sommets a été d'offrir une tribune aux pays de la région à engager un débat de fond autour des risques et opportunités d'une riposte commune contre le changement climatique et de préparer la COP 21. La République de Djibouti est durement affectée par les conséquences du changement climatique : sécheresse récurrente, inondations, rareté des pluies et baisse de la production agricole. Ces deux conférences avaient pour objectif d'identifier les projets et les programmes ciblés afin de lutter contre les impacts et les conséquences négatives. En conclusion, je voudrais réaffirmer ici la foi de la République de Djibouti aux idéaux de l'UNESCO et à la coopération multilatérale pour léguer un avenir meilleur aux générations futures. Je vous remercie.

42. **The President:**

*Merci beaucoup.* I now have the pleasure to introduce Her Excellency Ms Vilma Kathleen McNish, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Delegate of Jamaica to UNESCO. Thank you very much, Ambassador.

43.1 **Ms McNish** (Jamaica):

Madam President, Madam Director-General, Honourable Ministers, Permanent Delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I bring you greetings from Jamaica. To Mr Stanley Simataa, I offer sincere congratulations on his election as President of the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO. He is assured of Jamaica's full support and cooperation during his tenure. To the Chair of the Executive Board, we are deeply grateful for your diligent stewardship over the last biennium.

43.2 To you Madam Director General, I extend the Government of Jamaica's commendation on your astute leadership of UNESCO amidst the unprecedented challenges facing the Organization. You have been steadfast and resolute in your efforts to steer the Organization despite the financial difficulties. We applaud your tenacity and resolve on behalf of UNESCO to respond to the complex humanitarian crises and cultural tragedies that have resulted from violent extremism and religious intolerance manifested so acutely in the wanton destruction of world heritage sites, in Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic and elsewhere. We are squarely behind your "#Unite4Heritage" campaign. I also take this opportunity to welcome our sister Caribbean island, Monserrat, as an Associate Member of UNESCO. You can count on Jamaica's support and collaboration.

43.3 Madam President, 70 years ago at the founding of UNESCO, there was a shared and fervent vision of a multilateral institution that would harness the creativity, collective will and determination of the international community, to solve some of the world's most pressing problems and contribute to sustainable peace and prosperity. That vision remains as relevant today as it was seven decades ago. Now more than ever, UNESCO is playing an increasingly defining role in pursuit of a more diversified, dynamic and inclusive global agenda. This milestone in UNESCO's history occurs at a crucial moment for the international community. It coincides with the international efforts to chart a new global agenda for sustainable development and to reach a legally binding consensus on climate change.

43.4 The global effort to elaborate an inclusive post-2015 development agenda is a poignant reminder of our capacities as humans for a compassion which transcends national boundaries. This humanistic approach resonates with millions of people, who sadly still live in extreme poverty or are otherwise marginalized by inequities in global progress and prosperity; with those marginalized by religious intolerance, xenophobia and gender inequality.

43.5 With its core mandate to promote international cooperation in education, the sciences, culture, communication and information, UNESCO remains well-placed to play a significant role in the fulfilment of the development aspirations of millions around the world. This is reflected in its leadership in three seminal programmes: Culture for the Future; Education for All; and Sciences for the Future.

43.6 As a country whose culture is world-renowned, Jamaica recognizes UNESCO's invaluable role in promoting the cultural and creative industries as key drivers of development. The cultural and creative industries are a significant contributor to Jamaica's gross domestic product (GDP). Indeed, a national cultural and creative industries commission was established last year to undertake the development and implementation of a policy and master plan for the sector.

43.7 Madam President, the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States held in Samoa last September focused the world's attention on a group of countries that remain a special case for sustainable development

in view of their unique and peculiar vulnerabilities. I refer, in particular, to their vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change. Perhaps more than any other countries, SIDS have a vested interest in a legally binding agreement emanating from COP 21 in Paris later this year – an agreement that includes innovative and sustainable climate change financing that will enable our countries as well as our development partners, such as UNESCO, to continue their efforts to boost climate education as well as build capacity for adaptation and mitigation.

43.8 While we lament the demise of the dedicated SIDS intersectoral platform due to the financial crisis facing the Organization, Jamaica commends UNESCO for its creativity in responding to the unique vulnerabilities of small island developing States and welcomes the priority attention that continues to be accorded to SIDS in UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy.

43.9 Madam President, the Government of Jamaica is deeply committed to improving our people's lives and ensuring prosperity and sustainable development. These efforts have been aided, in no small part, by UNESCO's active engagement in Jamaica. I should mention that this year the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO celebrates its 50th anniversary.

43.10 On behalf of the Government of Jamaica, allow me to express our appreciation to UNESCO for its continuing focus on social inclusion, on building the skills of our people through technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and in supporting our efforts to ensure greater gender balance, eradicating illiteracy and poverty and promoting youth empowerment and science and technology.

43.11 Madam President, at the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee in Bonn, Germany, in July, Jamaica was honoured and privileged to have its first site, the Blue and John Crow Mountains, inscribed on the World Heritage List, the first mixed site in the Caribbean region and one of 32 in the world. We are mindful of the trust placed in us to protect and preserve this unique landscape as part of the common heritage of mankind. I end by renewing the Government of Jamaica's commitment to and support for UNESCO in advancing the progress of our community of nations as well as to our values of peace and prosperity for the benefit of present and future generations. Thank you.

*Mr Simataa resumes the Chair.*

**44. The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Our next speaker is Her Excellency Ms Ursula Plassnik, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Austria to UNESCO. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

**45.1 Ms Plassnik (Austria):**

Mr President, Madam Director-General, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, ladies and gentlemen. Mr President, let me first congratulate you upon your election as President of the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

45.2 Anniversaries, ladies and gentlemen, are a welcome occasion to reflect about achievements and future directions. Seventy years ago UNESCO was created to enhance intellectual cooperation including education, science, culture and communication. Its founding principles and standards have perhaps never been so in tune with the needs of our societies as today.

45.3 Across the globe, we are witnessing frightful attacks against human rights and fundamental freedoms. We see a growing number of crimes against journalists, the destruction of our cultural heritage, the dislocation of millions of people uprooted from their homes and the denial to children of their right to education. Currently, there are some 60 million people worldwide fleeing from their countries. This is the highest figure ever recorded and will lead to a lasting transformation of all our societies. It is important to show solidarity and to face this challenge in a humanitarian spirit. We have to perceive change as an opportunity and actively steer and shape it. We appreciate and value the vital role and participation that civil society and NGOs play in achieving this change.

45.4 Quite rightfully, on a political level the new 2030 Agenda places education as one core element of the Sustainable Development Goals. Education is an important enabler and driver to "transform our world", for successfully combating global poverty, building a life of dignity for all and leaving no one behind. This is inclusive development. Austria is fully committed to free and comprehensive basic education that integrates the pillars of education for sustainable development as well as global citizenship education. Our initiative in the Executive Board to further UNESCO's role in promoting global citizenship education was supported by a large number of countries and continues to grow. Global citizenship education enables individuals to engage with complex global topics and with an increasingly interconnected global society. Global citizenship education can help pupils and students to reflect on their potentials in supporting democracy and social participation, to appreciate diversity and define their identity in a way that it is not distorted by fanatical and fundamentalist ideologies.

45.5 Likewise, we have culture as an enabler and driver of development. Every development approach needs to build upon its specific historical, economic and cultural contexts. UNESCO has undertaken tremendous efforts to highlight the impact of culture on social cohesion, inclusion and growth. With a number of conventions UNESCO has set milestones to highlight the intrinsic value of culture for individuals as well as for societies, in particular the diversity of cultural expressions and the protection of cultural heritage. Through her tireless efforts, the Director-General succeeded in raising global awareness for the protection of our common heritage, especially in armed conflicts, as well as the promotion of cultural diversity.

45.6 Austria, ladies and gentlemen, is committed to respecting the aspiration of countries to shape their cultural policies, in conformity with the universally recognized human rights instruments. It is our task to promote and protect an enabling environment which allows a diversity of cultural expressions and safeguards fundamental freedoms. Sadly enough, we are witnessing emerging threats and deliberate destruction of heritage in a number of countries. Culture and cultural heritage are at the frontline of many armed conflicts today because of their symbolic values. In line with the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict we think it is extremely important

to take measures already in time of peace, including international and national awareness-raising efforts, enhanced technical assistance and capacity-building. We thus endorse UNESCO's Action Plan for Safeguarding Syrian Cultural Heritage and we are pleased to financially support this project. In Austria, the federal Ministry of Culture and Communication is currently organizing a multi-stakeholder dialogue forum to draw public attention to the problem of illicit trafficking of cultural objects and financing of terrorism.

45.7 Austria is an outgoing member of the Executive Board. We have placed our work in the Organization above particular national interests. We have actively supported all initiatives to enhance UNESCO's focus and relevance, visibility and impact – and we are at the end of our four-year term convinced that the Organization is better positioned than before. Thank you for your kind attention.

46. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Our next speaker is His Excellency Mr Bernard Shamlaye, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Seychelles to UNESCO. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

47.1 **M. Shamlaye (Seychelles):**

Monsieur le Président, Madame la Directrice générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs. Monsieur le Président, les Seychelles vous félicitent de votre élection et vous souhaitent un fructueux mandat.

47.2 Nous saluons la Directrice générale et la félicitons pour son travail, pour la conduite des réformes nécessaires pour une plus grande efficacité et efficacité de l'Organisation et pour faire que la voix de l'UNESCO compte dans les délibérations internationales. Alors que nous célébrons le 70<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'UNESCO, nous saluons ses nombreuses réalisations et sa contribution au progrès dans le monde. Si nous nous tournons vers le passé, c'est pour agir avec sagesse aujourd'hui afin de mieux préparer l'avenir. Le monde sera-t-il meilleur lorsque les enfants et les jeunes d'aujourd'hui vont commémorer le 100<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'UNESCO ?

47.3 Les Seychelles accueillent l'adoption de l'Agenda 2030 pour le développement durable qui a souligné le travail collectif à accomplir pour les 15 prochaines années. En même temps, il est crucial que la Conférence sur les changements climatiques soit une réussite et parvienne à des accords nécessaires pour la sauvegarde de la planète et pour un développement durable et inclusif. C'est dans ce contexte que nous reconnaissons la nécessité de l'UNESCO et la contribution qu'elle apporte à la paix, à la sécurité et au développement. Nous reconnaissons tous qu'elle doit pouvoir compter sur les ressources nécessaires pour son travail. Nous devons tous y apporter notre part.

47.4 Les Seychelles saluent la contribution de l'UNESCO à la 3<sup>e</sup> Conférence internationale sur les petits États insulaires en développement et pour ses actions de suivi. Nous attendons la version finalisée du Plan d'action pour les PIED, accompagnée d'une stratégie de mise en œuvre. Nous soulignons aussi la nécessité de la mobilisation des ressources par l'UNESCO et les États membres.

47.5 Les Seychelles accordent une grande importance à la coopération avec l'UNESCO. Nous exprimons ici notre reconnaissance pour le soutien apporté par l'IIEP (l'Institut international pour la planification de l'éducation) dans la formulation de la Stratégie de l'éducation à moyen terme) et l'appui du BIE (Bureau international de l'éducation) aux activités liées à sa mise en œuvre. Aujourd'hui, les Seychelles offrent une éducation gratuite et obligatoire de 10 ans à tous ses enfants – filles et garçons. À partir de 2016, celle-ci sera étendue à 11 ans. Les réalisations sont certes considérables mais les défis demeurent. Parmi les priorités, figurent le recrutement, la rétention et le développement professionnel des enseignants ; la réforme des curricula en vue d'améliorer la qualité et d'assurer une plus grande pertinence ; et l'amélioration de l'enseignement et la formation techniques et professionnels. La jeune Université des Seychelles contribue de manière significative à l'enseignement supérieur : un domaine qui demande davantage d'attention.

*(L'orateur poursuit en anglais.)*

47.6 Mr President, Seychelles was pleased to participate in the World Oceans Day event in June organized by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) which helped to draw attention to the importance of the ocean to the earth's climate. We appreciate IOC's support in the organization of the second "Blue Economy" summit that Seychelles will co-host in Abu Dhabi in January 2016. Coastal management and ensuring the health and productivity of oceans are crucial for SIDS.

47.7 Seychelles is finalizing a marine spatial plan for its exclusive economic zone of 1.3 million square kilometres. Some 30% of this will be made marine protected areas as a measure to adapt to climate change that will also promote ocean research and protect the livelihood of artisanal fishermen and fisheries generally.

47.8 We look forward to continued and increased support in strengthening our capacity to better implement the provisions of the culture conventions, in safeguarding the tangible and intangible cultural heritage and the development of creative industries.

47.9 Seychelles has recently adopted a science, technology and innovation (STI) policy. The challenge is now to put it into operation. Learning from good practices elsewhere and the support of UNESCO and other partners will be of great help. Seychelles will also engage more closely with the social and human sciences programmes of UNESCO as we work to maintain and strengthen the social cohesion, inclusiveness and social justice that are so important, especially in a small population, in the context of an increasingly complex world.

47.10 We commend the work of the UNESCO Institute of Statistics. We recognize the need for improved data collection and sharing and for greater analytical skills in order to better use evidence for decision-making. Disaggregated data is required for a better apprehension of situations, both by national bodies and international organizations and development partners. ICTs provide us with the tools to achieve many of our objectives. We must acquire the means and the capability to use them effectively. We look to UNESCO's support in attaining our objectives and in facilitating South-

South cooperation which, together with North-South cooperation, can make a telling contribution to addressing the priorities of developing countries.

47.11 Africa and gender equality are the Organization's global priorities. Youth, small island developing States (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs) its priority groups. We encourage UNESCO to give focused attention to these priorities in order to obtain transformative results. Mr President, Seychelles renews its commitment to UNESCO. We believe that it is more than ever needed for the promotion of peace, stability and development; for international understanding, solidarity and development. We thank you.

48. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Ladies and gentlemen, this was our last speaker for the day. We had a very productive day today and I wish to thank you all for your wisdom in speaking but at the same time your patience in listening. The plenary will convene again tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. I am appealing to you all to be here at least by 9.45 a.m. because tomorrow's list of speakers will be fairly long. I wish you a pleasant meeting. *This meeting is now adjourned.* Thank you very much.

*The meeting rose at 5.52 p.m.*