



**Celebration of the 200th session of the Executive Board of UNESCO
04 - 18 October 2016**

**Message from Federico Mayor
Director-General of UNESCO
(1987 To 1999)**

The crucial role of UNESCO into the frame of the United Nations System is now particularly relevant and urgent because humanity faces processes of potential irreversibility in which points of no return can be reached, particularly in social and environmental issues.

UNESCO, the intellectual institution of the UN, must be at the forefront of the actions and measures to be adopted without delay. As it is enshrined in the most inspiring UNESCO's Constitution, "humanity must be guided by democratic principles" and promote sharing and "intellectual and moral solidarity" in order to redress the present trends.

The article number one, states the role of the Organization in order to guarantee the freedom of expression and the "free flow of ideas through word and image", as well as a clear-cut definition of those who are educated: they are "free and responsible". Learn to be, to be able to fully exercise the distinctive capacities of the human race: to think, to imagine, to anticipate, to invent, to create!

From the origin of times, always under a male absolute power, the human beings have been invisible, anonymous, fearful, obedient, silent. Now, around two decades, because of the digital technology, they can express progressively their views, they can participate, they are aware of what happens in the world.... and, above all, the women, the "cornerstone" of the new era as President Nelson Mandela told me in Pretoria in 1996, is taken their essential role in the decision-making.

There are many challenges but, as President John Fitzgerald Kennedy proclaimed in June 1963, "there is no any challenge beyond the human distinctive creative capacity".

The role of the Executive Board is, therefore, more essential than ever.

Best wishes to you, Mr. President, the Members of the Executive Board, and the Director General.

Federico Mayor
September 21st, 2016