



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

Message from Armoogum Parsuramen
Secretary of the Executive Board of UNESCO
(2004-2009)

I wish to commend you for the excellent initiative of marking the 200th session of the UNESCO Executive Board since UNESCO's inception in 1945. I would like to thank the Executive Board of UNESCO for giving me the opportunity to share my experience as Secretary of the Board.

I had the opportunity to serve in several capacities within UNESCO; but it is no exaggeration when I refer to my tenure as Secretary to Executive Board and General Conference as the 'crème de la crème' of my sojourn in the international arena. I would therefore like to seize this special moment to convey my heartfelt gratitude to the Director General Mr Matsuura who, after consulting the Chairman and members of the Board and the President of the General Conference, bestowed his full and unhesitating confidence upon me by entrusting me with the Secretariat of the Executive Board in 2004 and that of the General Conference in 2008. As Secretary of the Board and the General Conference, I also owe our debt to the Leaders of these Governing Bodies. They carry the light of action through so many sessions, provide constructive support to the Secretariat and thereby pave the way to the achievements of the Board.

In the years I spent in the Secretariat of the Governing Board and the General Conference, I have learnt several lessons. The importance of respect and understanding of each other and of our diversity in the quest for consensus being one of them. This is all truer as we live in a globalised world yet so diverse. We are bound to work together towards a common goal, towards a world of peace as our security are intertwined. Yet we do have human qualities that are different, making it all the more important to understand that "global solidarity" through "equal dignity" is necessary and can lead to the "convergence of minds."

We at UNESCO understand this. No matter how controversial and/or sensitive the issues and how heated the debates might have been during the sessions of the Board, we mostly have achieved consensus through respect and understanding of each other and our diversity.

I would like to finish by quoting Dominique Roger who symbolised the design of our meeting room so aptly by saying, "*The meeting room of the Executive Board, where the delegates sit in a circle, symbolises the equal dignity of the all the members, while the ceiling design represents the convergence of minds in a single keystone.*"