



Celebration of the 200th session of the Executive Board of UNESCO
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Message from Hans-Heinrich Wrede
Chairperson of the Executive Board of UNESCO
(2003-2005)

*" ... You can't always get what you want
But if you try sometimes you might find
You get what you need ."*

Chairing the Executive Board from 2003 to 2005, I found out - probably like everyone else serving a cause that is nobler than its defenders that is the mission of UNESCO - that two years might be long enough to understand the (often unwritten) rules of the Organization, but two years are far too short to bring about change.

In my time, consensus, the principal task of the Chair, could fortunately be achieved in many vital fields, e.g., the focus on Africa and " Education for All " around the world. Obviously, the commitment to these and other objectives remains relevant, but scarce resources require setting priorities, require the courage to say "No!" to many worthy ideas. In this respect, we adopted a small amendment to the Executive Board's rules of procedure (Rule 35 A) at the 170th session:

The Board shall not take a decision involving expenditure unless it has before it a report by the Director-General on the administrative and financial implications of the proposal." Is it always respected?

The Board's successful preparation of the "Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions", adopted by the General Conference in Oct. 2005, is a true milestone, its implementation an on-going process. Not to forget: No-one may invoke the Convention in order to infringe human rights (Art.2). Nor let us forget, with regard to current global trade negotiations. When entering into other international obligations, the Parties shall take into account the relevant provisions of the Convention (Art.20).

Today, more than ever, UNESCO must reassert itself as guardian of its ideals. I am certain: in the future, the 58 members of the Board would --not-- be "convicted by a jury of their peers", - -if-- they continue to make their contribution to a practical peace, based on concrete actions and feasible projects, in a confident "Esprit de Corps"; for "man- made problems are open to man-made solutions «! - Then, we might even dream: "Imagine all the People living Life in Peace ".