

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Ahmad Jalali**  
**Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the I.R. of Iran to UNESCO**  
**on the Occasion of the 201<sup>st</sup> Session of the Executive Board**  
**UNESCO Headquarters, Paris**  
**25 April 2017**

Mr. President of the General Conference,  
Mr. Chairperson of the Executive Board,  
Madam Director-General,  
Excellencies,  
Dear colleagues,

1) First of all I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for the very well-designed overall arrangements for the conduct of interviews of the candidates for the post of our Director-General.

2) May I recall what I said in April 2016 in this Board: we are members of the Executive Board not only because we are members of UNESCO, but rather because we have been voted for by others. Therefore, we carry a collective responsibility which cannot be merely driven by our national positions. The correct title of this part of our agenda is General Debate, and not National Statements. It is supposed to be focused on the three strategic items 4, 5 and 15 of the Board's agenda, namely the execution of the programme adopted by the General Conference, follow-up to decisions and resolutions of the Board and the General Conference at the previous sessions, and the future C/5. It serves as a launching pad for other items that we will discuss in PX and FA. To retain the General Debate is not the only point that I share with my distinguished charming neighbour, India; but also the need for depoliticization and prioritization in this House, as mentioned by her and some other distinguished colleagues.

3) There are many international institutions preoccupied by politics, but our Constitution hints that the exclusively political and economic arrangements of governments are insufficient to ensure lasting peace. I know that practically we cannot completely avoid politics, but at least let us try to reduce that and halt its trend of intensification. Instead, let

us recognize the weight of the solidarity we have to construct here, which is supposed to be that of an intellectual nature. UNESCO is suffering from the lack of continuous engagement with intellectual circles bearing in mind that, in modern times, intellectual performance has become interdisciplinary. The perspective shift we need here is only obtained through dialogue, and to give substance to this dialogue, we do need intellectuality.

4) I am aware of the budgetary constraints and would like to thank the Director-General who has done her best to continue despite the crisis. Internal and external auditing and structured financing dialogue have been a helpful move. It is true that we strive to attract new budgetary sources, but to maximize the efficiency of our current budget we have to both prioritize and avoid duplication with other UN agencies.

5) Resolution 2347 of the Security Council concerning provision of effective protection of cultural heritage in conflict zones was significant. UNESCO's action in this field is essential for its implementation. I believe that the fully structured Action Plan that will be discussed by the PX Commission in the coming days represents a major step forward for UNESCO in this endeavor, preventing damage and providing support for restoration. This mission is at the core of UNESCO's mandate.

6) In one of our meetings in Room XI, I suggested that UNESCO think of encouraging Member States to include one page in their school textbooks concerning the protection of heritage. The Director-General welcomed this idea. I would like to know her comments as well as those of dear colleagues of this Board on how we can proceed to give shape to this. Dear colleagues, please think of its huge educational dimensions if we can manage it for billions of our children.

7) I would like to draw your attention to the importance of the creation of an enabling environment for inclusive policies to fully harness science and knowledge for sustainable development, which I am happy to see is reflected in Main Line of Action 1, and detailed in Executive Board documents on climate change strategy, the SIDS

action plan, indigenous peoples, and the Basic Science program. This is also the case for Main Line of Action 2, advancing science for sustainable management of natural resources, disaster risk reduction, and climate change resilience in Member States, as seen in Executive Board documents on IHP and climate change, Geoparks, and support to Haiti. I would also like to mention the importance of the World Humanities Conference for the essence of Agenda 2030 and the realignment of UNESCO's programmes internally.

8) The creation of a Working Group on Governance and Procedures and Working Methods of the Governing Bodies of UNESCO was a useful initiative, but we are waiting for, I hope, its tangible results on the efficiency of the House.

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Mr. Chairman, if the Board is sympathetic  
Why not present remarks in a form that is poetic.  
Am I right when I say I find it only rational  
That our statements in the Board should not be merely national?  
In the General Conference we proclaim the stances of our own state  
In the Board we should conduct a more genuine debate.  
Politics detracts from the unique charms of our Organization  
Therefore, let's adorn it through its depoliticization.  
Why not respond to our Constitution, which is now well known,  
That cries a lasting peace cannot be based on politics alone.  
It is debate and dialogue that bring a refreshing breeze  
To intoxicate us so that we perform our tasks with ease;  
Indeed, they are a wave that propels us in our ambition  
To fulfill all the facets of UNESCO's sacred mission.  
The Executive Board can surely be most effective  
When our intellectual endeavours become more collective.  
I may say we owe it to the future of our youth  
To freely exchange our ideas in pursuit of truth.  
Colleagues, dear friends, I hope I have struck a chord  
In calling for enrichment of the work of our dear Board.