

Speech of the 201st EX Board Session

Mr. Chairman of the executive Board

Mme. Director General

Dear colleagues,

First of all, Oman wishes to align to the intervention made by Morocco on behalf of the Arab Group.

As you all know, 2017 is a pivotal year for UNESCO. This year we adopt our new programme and budget, which allows us to set our priorities. This year also, we elect our new director general. It is the year we engage, for the first time, in the initial steps towards an integrated budget framework. 2017 is thus a critical year for all of us, one that brings us opportunities for change, focus and boosted reform. We, as member states, must take responsibility and engage constructively in this exciting process.

One important part of this process is to carefully examine the indicators related to our new C/5. Oman welcomes the new Programme and Budget, which is well articulated around the SDGs; and we have insisted repeatedly, like many other countries, on the importance of setting, whenever possible, SMART indicators. These ought to include a strong and transformative Gender perspective, streamlined across all sectors.

The 39 C/5 indicators will contribute greatly to the monitoring of our evidence and research-based programmes, consequently ensuring their efficiency. We are looking forward to this constructive discussion within the Board. Indeed, dialogue, amongst us and with the secretariat, is, in our view, an important pillar of the UNESCO reform.

It has the potential to build much needed trust in this organization, and will also ensure enhanced transparency, essential for the good governance of UNESCO.

Therefore, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the secretariat for the transparency portal, as well as the countries that supported this project. In our view, such portal has the potential to greatly improve our understanding of UNESCO's programs, projects, and fund flows. It will moreover contribute to enhancing the visibility of UNESCO, possibly enlarge our donor base, and increase accountability. This, however, can only be done if sufficient, relevant, and accurate information is available in the portal.

Dear colleagues,

The transparency portal is only one example of how new technologies can improve the work of our Organization. We therefore strongly encourage UNESCO to improve, whenever possible, its Information Systems. This, to us, is a smart investment that will have long term benefits.

ICTs also help to enhance the efficiency of our programs. A good example is the newly launched UNESCO-IHP-WINS, a platform that provides open water-related data. The CI sector, in this regard, also plays an important role in enhancing ICTs for development. This includes building capacities and policies in ICTs, as well as exploring their ethical, social and economic dimensions- especially in our Big Data era. It also involves reducing the digital divide and improving Media Literacy.

Excellencies,

We all know that new technologies and innovation will not lead to development without adequate resources. A coherent and comprehensive fund-raising strategy is vital for our Organization. We hope UNESCO will continue to further harness and utilize all its networks, and to ensure, within the Integrated Budget Framework process, sustainable core funding, including non-earmarked or lightly earmarked funds.

Adequate resources also include adequate staffing, adequate human resources management, and adequate training to enhance our capacity to deliver, particularly in the field. With respect to the latter, we are looking forward to the results of the new performance assessment tool for field offices. Such assessment is indeed critical to further strengthen the field network and ensure its sustainability.

Dear colleagues,

Investing in our Organization is indispensable to preserve the fundamental values that UNESCO promotes. Tolerance, dialogue, diversity, inclusiveness are principles to be engrained from childhood, through our educational systems, through the involvement of our youth in decision making processes, through inclusive policies that truly leave no one behind. This is the soft power of UNESCO, this is what Oman lives by, and this is how we can build a peaceful and sustainable world.

Thank you.