

*Republic of Serbia*

*National Statement*

*Plenary Debate, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017*

Dear Chairperson of the Executive Board,  
Dear Director-General,  
Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,

We warmly welcome the effort of the Director General and the Secretariat in the fulfillment of UNESCO's core mandate and in the pursuit of the vision we have decided to share for this Organization. The Republic of Serbia reiterates its full commitment towards enabling UNESCO to be a leader in the areas of its competence, coherent with the principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. But all our goals, such as the safeguarding of heritage, the fight against violent extremism and radicalization of youth, gender equality, dialogue of cultures, education for sustainable development, and others, demand sincerely devoted Membership. Obstructions arising mainly from unfulfilled obligations and disruptive and dividing political agendas, will never take us forward, and will always pose a threat to the Organization's financial independence and ability to fight for a culture of peace. In the system where each Member State, regardless of its size, has a possibility, as an equal subject, to contribute to its equilibrium, Serbia decided to pay its annual contribution early and is energetically promoting the activities in many programmatic and standard-setting areas. We are a firm believer in the universal access to education, because we see it as an indispensable tool in combatting extremism, intolerance and discrimination. Combatting violence in schools is a necessary prerequisite to achieve access to quality education. It is for this reason that the relevant institutions in Serbia, in cooperation with the civil sector, developed educational materials aimed at empowering of all the stakeholders in the education process to recognize and react to any form of violence and discrimination. In time when it is difficult to draw the line between real and fake news, we are strongly committed to developing media and information literacy, as a tool to create a critical and analytical assessment of information. Having this in mind, a roadmap for media and information literacy in Serbia has

been developed, a part of which is the inclusion of the media literacy segment in the school curriculum.

When it comes to the Program and Budget for the final quadrennium of Medium-term Strategy, we witness a positive shift embodied by four goals and main principles, which Director General pointed to in her speech. "The foot is now in the door", so we need to continue to adapt to the new comprehensive and integrated framework, while we also shape it to UNESCO's specificities. There is one issue, though, where we would like to seek Director General's competent opinion. In the current circumstances, a greater reliance on the extra-budgetary contributions to help us achieve all our priorities is logically expected. At the same time, despite the diversification of extra-budgetary funding sources, the attractiveness of UNESCO's activities varies, as we see in the case of the Heritage Emergency Fund. Could we expect that, in the integrated budget framework, the popularity of certain programs among the potential donor community becomes a principal determining factor in the future prioritizing exercise? Thank you.