

**201<sup>st</sup> Session of Executive Board**

**OF**

**UNESCO HEADQUARTERS  
PARIS**

**PAKISTAN  
NATIONAL STATEMENT**

**BY**

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**Paris – 25 April 2017**

Director-General Madam Irina Bokova,  
Chairperson,  
President of the General Conference,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is an honour for me to represent my country at the 201<sup>st</sup> Session of the UNESCO Executive Board.

Let me begin by expressing our gratitude to the Director General Madam Irina Bokova for her leadership and for her able stewardship of the work of UNESCO and its governing bodies.

We would also like to compliment the Chairman of the Executive Board Ambassador Michael Worbs for his positive and efficient conduct of the Executive Board meetings.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Created after the horrors of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, the founding fathers envisioned UNESCO to be a body for healing the wounds, for making a fresh start and for recasting the international relations. UNESCO provided a soul to the multilateral diplomacy through means of education, culture and scientific cooperation.

Over these past years, UNESCO despite many challenges has carried out its functions with a great degree of professionalism, resilience and efficiency.

In a divisive world, UNESCO continues to serve as a house of global peace, constructive debate and meaningful cooperation. Its mandate and role of fostering peace and promoting inter-cultural understanding is still important and relevant today. Pakistan fully supports UNESCO's role and believes in its mission as vital for our world today and humanity at large.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Pakistan Government duly recognizes the importance of societal development and empowerment of people. It has embarked on a broad based programme for social sector development.

Education and especially girls education remains an area of priority for us in Pakistan. We believe that education is an enabler for peace and development, helps in reduction of poverty and inequalities, address extremist tendencies and thus lead to better, peaceful, sustainable and inclusive societies.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

We fully support UNESCO's commendable efforts in the field of education. The 10 million dollar Malala Fund is our humble contribution to UNESCO to supplement its efforts for promoting girl child education globally. We have also recently offered 30 scholarships for Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) for Masters and PhD studies.

Empowerment of women and promotion of gender equality is also important for our government. A number of legislative, financial and administrative measures have been taken to raise awareness among women about their rights, and participation and protection in public place. The women in Pakistan are playing their due role in development of our society and national building.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the world still faces the challenges of poverty, inequality and extremism. There are still millions without access to education, millions who die of hunger and disease and millions who are displaced due to conflicts. Many of us are still swayed by narrow political considerations and thus directly or indirectly perpetuate these inequalities and conflicts. UNESCO's requires a strong political commitment and financial support from the member states to enable it to carry out its functions and fulfil its mandate.

Tomorrow the Executive Board would start the selections process for the new Director General. We do hope that the new Director General, besides carrying forward the good work of Madam Bokova, would provide an effective leadership in taking forward UNESCO in these challenging times. For its part, Pakistan would continue to work together with the global community in striving for an equitable, just, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world. Let us all resolve to make the world a better place for our future generations.

Thank you.

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