



UNESCO

Together with Member States

Professor Saleh Al Hasnawi

Republic of Iraq

UNESCO's longstanding commitment to promote peace, eradicate poverty, advance sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, and communication has been met with increasingly complex challenges.

UNESCO continues to face a rapidly changing and unpredictable world with uncertainty in the political, social, economic and environmental sectors.

UNESCO finds itself in a critical state as recent trends such as anti- globalization and populist movements, racism, discrimination, radicalization, terrorism, violent conflicts , refugees, IDPs, destruction of heritage, illicit trafficking of intellectual property, highly and rapidly developed communications and fake news phenomena, climate change and other emerging challenges .

As a reputable and sound UN organization, UNESCO must remain highly resilient in order to respond effectively and react dynamically to challenges, and to achieve its goals by implementing its programs in a transparent, cost-effective and productive way.

For someone coming from the land of Mesopotamia, arguably the birthplace of human civilization and the home of mankind's earliest culture heritage. UNESCO, the grand defender and custodian of the world heritage, should mean both home and refuge.

I believe that, the organization should continue to concentrate its efforts around fewer, more concise areas, whilst continuing to refocus on its core mandate and major programs.

The organization must focus on the actual needs and priorities of each Member State. Further strengthening the role of countries offices and national commissions will help to achieve this goal. Delegating enhanced authority to the field, in addition to executing feedback programs from the Member States and beneficiaries will ultimately lead to a more tailored and effective practical results.

Additionally, UNESCO must implement transparent financial policies, and fundraise through partnerships with international banks, NGOs, and the private sector. The main priorities in UNESCO's financial policies should be devising practical resource mobilization strategies for Member States while urging each state to provide timely financial contributions.

UNESCO must also recruit world-class experts and professionals on the basis of skills and competency, with workforce that fairly reflects the ever growing population of youth. Continuous capacity building of the organization staff is mandatory for effective programs delivery.

I believe that consulting with former director-generals and utilizing their expertise will be extremely valuable in the reform process of the organization.

A comprehensive, measurable strategy for partnerships with UN agencies, public and private partners, global networks, international banks, provincial authorities, municipalities, and NGOs are essential to achieving sustainable development goals.

I believe that reform should be an ongoing and endless process, to be monitored by independent external parties and implemented internally. Regular reviews should be a fundamental part of the continuous reform process.

The application of results-based management including results-based budgeting must be measurable to ensure accountability of all departments and staff.

Visibility and public perception of UNESCO is critical, and we should strive to maintain the organization's reputation and publicize its achievements in a strategic and creative manner taking into account the digital revolution.

UNESCO Global Priorities

Africa

UNESCO should continue to support the African Union's vision and address the obstacles, constraints and challenges for Africa's sustainable development, particularly the financial issues.

The organization should continue its ongoing fund-raising efforts through resource mobilization and partnerships with international donors, banks, foundations, and African financial institutions.

In order to build resilient, cohesive, and productive societies, it is critical to strengthen education system with integration of sustainable science, gender equality, mental health issues, sex knowledge education, and healthy life style.

Training and capacity building of traditional teachers in remote villages can overcome a shortage of teachers over time.

UNESCO should continue its effort to build institutional capacities for sustainable development, eradication of poverty and implementation of organizational programs.

The organization must urge the Member States to gear their legislation towards a greater participation of women in elected councils and in high executive positions, especially in states with a low representation of women.

Gender Equality:

UNESCO should take active measures to work with Member States to integrate the concept of gender equality and empowerment of women in all its policies, including all types of education, healthcare, and indeed in all aspects of work.

It is important to encourage Member States to legalize the participation of women in all elected councils and throughout the political process through the quota principle in the countries with least representation of women.

UNESCO should urge Member States to eliminate of all forms of discrimination and violence against women including harmful practice, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation through legislation and health education.

Third Priority:

I will suggest to the general conference to consider the possibility of adding a third global priority: youth empowerment. Young women and men are driving economic , political and cultural change through their access to information and media .They are the true agents for economic growth and, the force for social transformation and progress . Although UNESCO integrates youth issues in all of its programs, I strongly believe in adding a stand- alone (**Youth**) as a global priority for a safe and secure future.

UNESCO Overarching Priorities

Sustainable peace cannot be achieved worldwide without vigorous monitoring and contribution to mitigating the impact of violent conflicts. Focus on, solving its root causes and maintaining long lasting peace in conflict areas is an ongoing priority. For this important issue I suggest to the general conference to adopt a new emergency priority entitled (**Conflict and Post Conflict**)

Conflict and Post Conflict Priority:

More than 1.5 billion people live in countries affected by violent conflict, with women and children often being the main victims. Violent conflicts result in staggering numbers of refugees, IDPs, the global spread of terrorist attacks and all their devastating impact.

As part of the UNESCO mission to promote peace and prevent violence, the organization engages in the conflict and post conflict rehabilitation efforts, which can be developed further such as:

- Education: educational reform must emphasis the principles of human rights, diversity, and problem solving skills, cognitive and psychosocial development, and capacity building of teachers.

It is vital to refocus on the integration of the principles of active responsible inclusive citizenship principles in education system.

It is a fact that, education is the most effective factor in protecting vulnerable youth from radicalization.

- Long-term recovery policies: which include, TVET and life skills for demobilized ex-combatants, and the rehabilitation IDPs and refugees.**
- Partnerships: partnerships with UN peace building mechanisms of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, in addition to supporting reconciliation and development of independent, unbiased neutral media.**
- Youth Outreach: social media education and empowering youth to have effective action against Internet violence and radicalization. Establishment of youth communication network can served as platform to support education and exchange of ideas.**

All these measures go to the core responsibility of the organization, and UNESCO can play a major role in conflicts prevention, serving people in post conflict situation, and helping to prevent the resurgence of violence.

Organizing UNESCO programs, activities and initiatives under the umbrella of conflict and post conflict situation priority will definitely serve the global peace in the long and short run.

UNESCO Programs:

Education is the springboard of sustainable development, and living conditions cannot be improved without significant investments in education.

I believe, that understanding the specific educational context of each country while applying flexibility and a tailored delegation of authority to the national commissions and field offices, will impact the development of equitable, quality education and promote lifelong learning for all.

UNESCO should urge natural disaster prone countries to implement school safety measures, including the construction of safe school buildings to protect the lives of children and teachers during times of disaster.

Integrating mental health programs in education system is a fundamental cornerstone for changing behavior and attitude toward achieving the concept of responsible, active, resilient and creative citizenship capable of responding effectively to the challenges of the twenty first century.

UNESCO should continue to provide support to the countries with high illiteracy rates, including the E-9 countries, in order to implement a national literacy program until SDG 4 is achieved.

An additional effort needed to create more mechanisms towards transformation of higher education systems for more research and innovation based, with integration of sustainability sciences.

The organization should support the countries, which have a gap in (TVET) to facilitate smooth transition of students from schools to the professional world of work.

The concept of global citizenship should be reviewed alongside the new global trend of anti-globalization and populism to adopt a concept of active, creative and responsible citizenship with respect for human rights, diversity, gender equality and active participation in democratic processes.

UNESCO should urge Member States to integrate natural and social science principles, technology and innovation systems in all national policies and strategies. It should also encourage establishment of research centers and institutions for capacity building, fair financing, development of standards and indicators in addition to supporting equal access for women and men with active participation of youth.

UNESCO should continue its eminent role in promoting international scientific cooperation and efforts to address critical challenges facing sustainable development. This effort should support Member States in the effective management of their natural resources and mitigating man made hazards to our planet.

The majority of countries today are undergoing profound social transformations, UNESCO should support Member States in reviewing and integrating the inclusive evidence- based public policies and measures that accompany social transformation in national policies.

UNESCO should continue its global leadership efforts in promoting the highest international ethical standards for research, science and technology, with particular attention to bioethics.

UNESCO should establish a high spiritual, multi-religious committee, which includes the representatives of major religious groups to facilitate inter religious and inter cultural dialogue. This will help in tensions reduction and spread of 'living together' principle.

The organization should strengthen professional and institutional capacities at the national level to better conserve, safeguard, manage and promote in-country heritage, especially in conflict situations. UNESCO should cooperate with the Security Council for tougher sanctions for illicit trafficking and the destruction of cultural heritage.

UNESCO should engage in programs that collect looted and illegally transported cultural objects from conflict regions. In addition, UNESCO should develop short-term emergency measures to

conserve cultural relics such as establishing a museum administered by UNESCO during times of conflict until peace prevails in the country of origin.

Low-income countries are underrepresented in the World Heritage List. UNESCO should support Member States in strengthening their capacity to enlisting their heritage sites in the World Heritage List.

UNESCO should encourage the role of cultural and creative industries in developing countries for poverty alleviation through job creation and income generation.

The organization must continue to support the rights of indigenous peoples and recognize the value of their knowledge systems as an important part of world cultural diversity and heritage.

UNESCO should work closely with Member States to achieve the model of creative cities with at least one in each country, and urge the Member States to support artists' rights.

UNESCO should continue its efforts with Member States especially in Africa and LDCs in building strong independent, professional, neutral, and unbiased media landscapes.

UNESCO should address the escalating 'fake news' phenomenon and develop ethical standards for the media. The organization should encourage public awareness, media literacy and citizen competencies to utilize information more intelligently.

The organization should continue its leading role with various national and international organizations, as well as civil society and the media, to preserve and protect the safety of journalists and combat the impunity with which attacks are conducted against them. This can be done through enhancing national policies, in addition to institutional and personal capacity building.

UNESCO should encourage Member States to empower its citizens by securing access to information and knowledge and take advantage of the digital revolution to create knowledge based society.

UNESCO will continue its leading role in the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, and sustainable development with the efforts of all Member States.

Thank you