

Closer to people, closer to our mission

UNESCO was founded at a defining moment in history with one aspiring mission; “to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture”. Over the years, this organization has been touching billions of lives and creating positive developments around the world. It thus represents uplifting opportunities on which we can collectively build with renewed enthusiasm and innovation to benefit humanity.

We are yet again witnessing another defining moment. In today’s world of continuous turmoil from extremism, poverty, inequality, global warming, and violations to human dignity, massive forces are striking at the very heart of UNESCO’s mission. People are in desperate need -more than ever- for our immediate and impactful intervention. As Director General for UNESCO, I will ensure we stay true to our timeless mission, and we will do that with rigorous determination to address the root causes for a sustainable impact.

UNESCO’s mandate covers all the right *what* to meet this need. However, the real challenge resides less in the *what*, and more prominently in the *how*; how we implement those choices, how we bring them to life, and how we truly leave a lasting impact on our stakeholders through the right programs and initiatives.

This is precisely where my personal background, experience and passion intersect; leveraging the organization's deeply rooted strengths while bringing a totally fresh perspective to the equation, I will focus on what works on the ground, rather than what should work in theory.

Inspired by all my encounters throughout the campaign, I concluded that a reformed implementation process is needed through a game-changing approach that is closer to people, and therefore, closer to UNESCO's mission. And that is why my vision is for a focused, transparent, and effective organization, adequately resourced, empowered by its member states, and embraced by the people.

A DIFFERENTIATED APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION

The *HOW*

1- An in-touch UNESCO with its feet firmly rooted in the ground:

I built my career on the ground, close to the people, fighting many of the very problems UNESCO seeks to eradicate. I have been to the remotest of villages within my region and continue to hear the concerns of marginalized segments of society. Staying **closer to the people we serve** is crucial if we genuinely mean to touch their lives.

Staying **closer to member states** and the **Governing Bodies** is equally important; rallying their support is essential to empower and enforce the focus on UNESCO's mandate. In the same vein, I will expand UNESCO's assistance to empower and build the capacity of National Commissions, and provide them with technical assistance, as they are an indispensable link with the organization.

Staying **closer to our partners** is the way to build scale, introducing new partnerships, and strengthening existing ones with philanthropic foundations,

private sector, civil society, social entrepreneurs, international donor community, as well as governmental and regional partnerships that will include North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation.

Solid partnerships will help reduce financial vulnerability for UNESCO on the long term as well as promoting the transfer of technologies and capacity building for developing countries especially in Africa and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

We will work **closely with other UN Bodies** towards a collective delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Synergy with other **inter-governmental organizations** needs to be better rooted in the planning, implementation and follow up processes to ensure a bigger impact and a more efficient use of funds.

Internally, as far as the organization's secretariat is concerned, I will give special attention to the selection of the most competent candidates with an eye on improving geographical distribution and gender balance. I will adopt an inclusive and highly participatory management culture conducive to an environment closer to stakeholders

2- An accountable UNESCO that delivers on its promise:

UNESCO needs to maintain **effective governance, seamless efficiency**, clear choices, focused priorities, and impeccable stewardship, all to deliver on aligned Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), such as improvements in literacy, equal access to quality education and knowledge, cultural initiatives, freedom of expression, and gender equality. Governance is not about how many forums we have, as much as how effectively and efficiently we conduct them.

None of this can be achieved without proper and **sustainable funding**. My vision

for a reformed UNESCO is one with fundraising capacities that extend beyond contributions of states, expanding to more diverse revenue streams. This will fuel the organization's financial health for the long term in contrast to fire fighting remedies for the short term.

UNESCO is -in fact- the world's most compelling investment proposition; the closer UNESCO gets to achieving its mission of world peace, the more prosperous the world becomes. It is a very simple equation, yet not leveraged enough. An **effective focused and transparent** UNESCO leading viable partnerships with consensus on a shared bold vision will attract investments in-line with the credibility we build.

Recent external audit reports highlighted important management and governance recommendations, which I will follow in close coordination with member states.

An in-touch and accountable implementation

UNESCO should be nimble in the face of all challenges and not overwhelm itself by trying to reinvent the wheel in what to do, but focus on how best to implement. I will work largely on consensus building, avoiding biases and divisions.

As Director General, I will bring to UNESCO a blend of developing country experience coupled with international diplomatic expertise at the multilateral and bilateral levels. It is this combination that allowed me to identify grass-roots problems, and to rally the support of policy makers, donors, and civil society around causes such as girls' education, youth participation, gender equality and combating Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

ADVANCING THE MANDATE

The *What*

Mission Critical Priorities

UNESCO's mandate spans over multiple interdependent and equally critical domains. I will honor the mandate in its entirety, mainstreaming **Africa** and **Gender Equality**, in addition to **Youth Empowerment** in all programs, while prioritizing interventions with the highest returns across sectors. Africa is a global priority that needs more focus. Cooperation and coordination with the African Union within the Framework of Agenda 2063 is instrumental in that regard. I will operate with a multidisciplinary approach in a comprehensive and cost effective manner.

UNESCO is a key agency that should **lead the global efforts on the SDGs** with a right-based approach, through its work on Education, Culture, Science, Communication, Oceans, Water, Gender Equality and recently Climate Change as multipliers for sustainable development.

We must enhance measures to **combat extremism and radicalization**, and the ease with which they are infiltrating societies, posing the most dangerous threat to mankind with loss of life, cultural erosion, and destruction of irreplaceable heritage. An epic challenge, yet a call of duty for UNESCO to step up and reassert its leadership as the organization that can build sustainable peace and development.

Education is the core mandate that hallows its benefits on all priorities.

1- Quality Education for all

UNESCO must honor its primary mandate and lead the UN on Education. It is a

prerequisite for empowerment, global citizenship, socio-economic welfare, poverty alleviation, respect and protection of the environment, as well as fighting extremism, violence and radicalization. Education is a fundamental human right and a vehicle for realizing other rights. Investing in education, especially for women, children and youth will generate the highest return on all UNESCO programs.

I believe that access alone is not enough, and quality is crucial. UNESCO shall work to ensure equitable and inclusive quality education as a lifelong learning process for all as well as technical and vocational education and training in addition to higher education.

I am proud to have successfully initiated and coordinated a Girls Education initiative in Egypt that established 2200 girl-friendly schools and was hailed by UNICEF as a flagship model. This milestone created a paradigm shift in education, culture and legal reform, which today continues to work.

I will adapt such experiences to transform UNESCO's take on education, starting by growing education's share of Corporate Social Responsibility (including developing the *Business Backs Education* program). Bridging the educational divide will be a priority, by making sure equitable education transcends gender bias and caters to vulnerable segments of society.

Education is the leading path to a culture of peace, human dignity and sustainable development, and while it takes time to reap fruits, this should not weaken our resolve on investing in education as a strategic priority.

2- Science for sustainable development

UNESCO must work with states to bridge the gaps in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). I will work together with member states

to further bring access to knowledge, science, research, technology and innovation to those who are most in need.

In this digital era, UNESCO should use latest technologies to give unprecedented insight into the efficacy of the organization's development initiatives. ICT is an indispensable tool in supporting UNESCO's diverse actions, such as distance learning, heritage preservation, and environmental protection.

UNESCO's role as an international forum for scientists, philosophers and academia is highly valuable and needs to be reinvigorated. UNESCO is also playing a leading role through its many specialized programs such as The International Hydrological Programme (IHP), Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) and The International Geoscience Programme (IGCP). Increased coordination between these programs will achieve synergies and enhance their respective results on the overall outcome.

Never before have natural sciences been more necessary to establish a solid base for sustainable development, to enable better management of shared resources including water and the oceans, and to address the adverse effects of climate change. In this regard, I will give special attention to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), not only in science but also across sectors.

Social sciences and humanities field should remain an active pillar of the organization, enabling UNESCO to play the leading role in today's intellectual challenges.

3- Inclusive Culture that shapes minds and hearts

The rise of extremism is a war on cultural diversity and cultural heritage, where UNESCO is in a unique position to help stop its progression through dialogue, educational systems, media and art.

I will leverage my experience to assist states in translating respect for cultural diversity to national policies, and implementation of cultural rights for all.

The promotion of culture diversity and the “rapprochement of cultures” as well as the preservation and protection of heritage, tangible and intangible, are a hallmark of UNESCO and I commit to build on the immense work achieved in this domain, and to inspire the people to be the guardians of diversity and heritage.

Coming from Egypt, a country that gained UNESCO great fame in heritage protection, I appreciate all the achievements made in the field, but despite those efforts, valuable and irreplaceable heritage is destroyed and trafficked every day. I will focus on building the capacities of member states to promote, manage and protect cultural, natural and intangible heritage. Moreover, I will make sure UNESCO’s assistance is extended to countries in need for registering their cultural heritage on relevant lists.

4- Free-flowing Communication

Every individual has the right to access information and be informed. I will build on UNESCO’s pivotal role in setting standards guided by the right of promoting the “free flow of ideas by word and image” as well as promoting freedom of expression and ensuring the safety of journalists.

Access to ICT has become an undeniable right and an empowerment tool. I will ensure its inclusion in UNESCO’s programs while combatting negative aspects, such as radicalization of youth, and cyber bullying.

As media plays a key role in helping UNESCO achieve its goals by serving as a powerful information tool, UNESCO will need to develop a comprehensive communication strategy for external outreach and better visibility of the organization and its activities.

a focused, transparent and effective UNESCO that delivers
“Together we will be closer to people, closer to our mission.”

Moushira Khattab