



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF ALBANIA TO UNESCO

*Statement by the Permanent Delegate
Ambassador Ferit Hoxha
to the Plenary Debate of the 204th Executive Board of UNESCO
9 April 2018*

Mr. President,
Mme Director General,
Colleagues,

- Taking the floor for the first time in the Board and in my new capacity, I wish to start by sharing with you my pleasure to become part of this assembly. Albania aligns with the statement by the European Union.
- This Board meeting is of particular importance. Let me join our voice in welcoming the new Director General, Mme Audrey Azoulay, wish her a lot of success and assure her and her new management team, of our full cooperation in carrying out her mandate. In this respect, we feel very encouraged and welcome the clear and thoughtful views that the Director General expressed this morning regarding her vision, her plan of work, her ideas on how to reinvigorate the work of the organisation. This is important, necessary and timely. We will be pleased and ready to accompany and support the DG in this endeavour.

Mr. President,

- Albania considers UNESCO as an important pillar of the multilateral system. Education, science and culture, protection and promotion of the cultural heritage, support to freedom of expression, youth empowerment and intercultural dialogue are important tools to advance peace, promote and achieve sustainable development. They must be used wisely yet extensively.
- The 2030 Agenda represents the most ambitious project humanity has ever embarked upon. Albania is carrying extensive work in implementing SDGs, in all dimensions and we will be presenting next July, in New York, during the High Level Political Forum, our first voluntary report on the implementation of the SDGs.
- We think that the global commitment on SDGs should push and guide all UN entities, including UNESCO, in prioritising their efforts in an integrated

manner. To our view, "Delivering as One", to which Albania is particularly attached, is the right approach to ensure coordination, reduce the silo mentality within the large UN System, ensure a clear definition and division of labour based on the respective mandates and value added, but also, more than anything and wherever possible, on sustained joint efforts in order to achieve and maximise best results.

- UNESCO's work on SDG4, including through the Education 2030 Framework for Action, remains crucial. We highly value the work done by UNESCO on Global Citizenship Education and look forward to its contribution to the UN Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism through Education. Last year, we set up in Albania a National Centre to Counter Radicalisation and Extremism. We are already thinking and working to transform it into a regional hub of best practices in this respect, and probably into a regional PVE Center.
- At every point in history, Education has been and by the times that go by remains more than ever key for the advancement of humanity. A just, fair, all-inclusive and democratic values-oriented education is the foundation of building peaceful societies. Albania is strongly committed to work closely with the organisation to make Education for All a success. In line with other national efforts, the top 25 Albanian universities signed recently a Declaration of Commitment to play an active role in advancing Sustainable Development in the country.

Mr. President,

- Just a few weeks ago, Albania presented the File of the project on Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Lake Region. It is a regional project as it involves two neighbouring countries, which incorporate the same biodiversity resources and cultural heritage. We very much look forward to get it endorsed from the respective UNESCO Committee. Beyond the nature and the manifest importance of this particular project, we encourage UNESCO to attach special attention to projects with region-wide impact.

M. le Président,

- Je voudrais à présent dire quelques mots concernant la réforme de l'organisation, que la Directrice Générale selon ses propos, a appelée "la transformation stratégique". L'intention est noble et bienvenue; la terminologie est puissante, le moment est crucial.

- L'Albanie reste pleinement attachée à une vraie et profonde réforme. L'Unesco a un mandat très large, ce qui présente un grand avantage, assure une grande marge de manœuvre, mais ne peut être et ne doit point devenir en même temps son handicap.
- Nous devons être réalistes et lucides. L'UNESCO ne peut pas et ne doit pas prétendre de tout faire. Il est donc impératif de fixer des priorités dans la programmation en retenant les activités les plus pertinentes, celles qui assurent le meilleur impact, qui apportent une vraie valeur ajoutée.
- Il faut surtout éviter les dédoublements – une maladie hélas! chronique du multilatéralisme –, réduire la bureaucratie, accroître l'efficacité, adapter les méthodes de travail et surtout adopter une évaluation basée sur les résultats. Il a des exemples; il faut s'en inspirer. Parce que ce qui compte, ce qui importe ce sont moins les rapports, certes intelligemment rédigés, mais plutôt les résultats sur le terrain.
- Cela demande en premier lieu une planification attentionnée et réaliste et pas schématique. Le changement est donc une nécessité, un tournant indispensable pour être et rester pertinent. C'est, à notre avis ce qui pourra aider à freiner l'érosion du multilatéralisme qui a pris de la vitesse. Encore une fois, les propos de la Directrice Générale sont rassurants et je voudrais l'assurer de notre soutien.
- Enfin, Monsieur le Président, je voudrais informer que l'Albanie a rejoint l'UNESCO le 16 octobre 1958. Dans quelques mois nous célébrerons, avec vous tous je l'espère, le 60e anniversaire de l'adhésion à travers diverses activités ici à Paris et en Albanie. Les chocolats sont commandés...

Je vous remercie.