

Speech 204th session- last Draft

Mr. Chairman of the Executive Board
Mme President of the General Conference
Mme. Director General

Excellencies,

In recent years, we have had regular discussions about the reform of UNESCO and its new vision. We shall use this momentum - the election of a new director general, as well as the adoption of the new C5 - to bring efficient change, and enter an era that is more responsive to the global challenges of our times. In this first Board session, with a new programme and a new management, we can begin our carefully planned work, and tackle reform conclusively, from results based management, a culture of evaluation and a strong field delivery, to transparency, ethics and accountability.

This reform has to be first and foremost within the spirit of the whole reform of the United Nations System. As the UN Secretary-General stated at the UN Reform Event of September 2017: “Our shared objective is a 21st century UN focused more on people and less on process, more on delivery and less on bureaucracy”. UNESCO needs to do exactly that, in order to keep a strategic role with a strong comparative advantage within the UN system. Indeed, we need a well-functioning organization with efficient processes for an enhanced delivery. This is also an important aspect of raising the visibility of UNESCO, as visibility comes when impactful work on the ground is undertaken.

In this respect, we support the efforts of the Director general to streamline, simplify and rationalize our processes, and look forward to seeing the tangible results of the Invest for Efficient Delivery Plan. However, we should look back at our past experiences, and make the best use of what has been done well instead of constantly recreating new processes, which are not always that new. We therefore need to use the little resources we have for implementation. The IOS and external auditor’s reports, also to be discussed at this session, provide a good basis for this work.

Another crucial aspect of reform, which Oman has stressed repeatedly for the past two years, is the dimension of ethics in the Organization. We need a strong and independent ethics office, and a solid ethical behaviour within the Organization at all levels, reinforced by an efficient legal framework, to ensure that our actions are both legally and ethically compliant. We also stress the importance of having a strong ethical leadership based on a top-down approach. Indeed, research demonstrates that an exemplary ethical conduct at the highest levels inspires and impacts the rest of the organization. Moreover, it has been found that ethical leadership brings better results, according to a Harvard business review article, which states that “highly principled leaders and their organizations perform especially well”. In this regard, we look forward to the discussion of the Ethics annual report at this Board session.

Moreover, a well-functioning Organization needs adequate resources. We need to engage firmly in the structured financing dialogue, as part of a wider coherent and comprehensive resource mobilization strategy, perfectly aligned with the C5. ECOSOC's 2018 Report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development could be a helpful framework for the financing of UNESCO. All internal processes such as the financial regulations and the cost recovery policy should be carefully examined for all our benefit as countries, in particular the most vulnerable amongst us.

Human resources are of equal importance, and we are looking forward to the implementation of the newly adopted human resources strategy. Indeed, fostering a stimulating working environment and encouraging merit, will enhance the delivery of our Organization. This has to be achieved while respecting the principles of geographical distribution and gender equality, since merit is not limited to one gender or one region.

Excellencies,

Rationalizing structures would be pointless without well-functioning programs, specifically evidence and evaluation based efficient programs, including field ones. We should use the analytical programme implementation report and other evaluation reports, to draw the right lessons, and correct trajectories, working with the secretariat as needed.

In conclusion, let us all embrace our new beginnings and contribute concretely to the implementation and follow-up of our reform, and achieve an ethical results-based management as well as a more streamlined effective UNESCO able to efficiently address 21st century global challenges.

Thank you