

*Statement of Vice-President of the Electoral Group II*

President of the General Conference,  
Chairperson of the Executive Board,  
Director-General,  
Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Second Electoral Group, we would like, at the outset, to extend our warm congratulations to the newly appointed senior management officials and wish them successful mandates in their respective areas of duty. We hope they will contribute to the strengthening of the team in support of the Director General's future endeavors aimed at the revitalization of UNESCO's performance, presence and prosperity.

Director-General,

Your initiative for the Strategic Transformation of UNESCO is a new vision which marks our next biennium. It combines optimism and realism, promising not only to pursue innovative and reformative ways to improve the Organization, but also to respect, integrate and follow the results already achieved in various fields of UNESCO's management, programmatic and standard-setting work. As you said in your proposal, we are "not starting from scratch".

Our Group welcomes this encouraging beginning.

As the political will and dedication of Member States are *spiritus movens* of any change, the members of the Electoral Group II, with our regional networks

within the extended UNESCO family, are ready to join in the collective effort to further refine our Organization and to overcome existing and future challenges. But the success of the reforms is not possible without nurturing core principles guiding UNESCO: trust-building, dialogue, mutual understanding, transparency and inclusiveness. Only when they prevail, we can say we are on the right track.

Thank you.

Please allow me to now continue with the *National Statement of the Republic of Serbia*.

Cette session du Conseil exécutif contient un programme très ambitieux qui déterminera notre voie à suivre. C'est la raison pour laquelle nous pensons que tous les mécanismes de discussion informels et formels, y compris les réunions du Groupe préparatoire, sont essentiels pour favoriser un dialogue et des échanges plus amples entre les États membres et le Secrétariat, sous la nouvelle direction. Être informé en temps opportun et être capable de prendre une décision éclairée représentent des prérequis pour une confiance et une efficacité à long terme.

Les processus de réalisation de l'Agenda 2030 dans le cadre du mandat de base de l'UNESCO et de ses priorités globales, ainsi que les processus d'amélioration, qu'il s'agisse de centres et d'instituts de catégorie 2, du dialogue avec la société civile, de la préservation du patrimoine documentaire, des changements de structures, de l'engagement dans les enjeux de réhabilitation sur le terrain, ont besoin du fort soutien des États membres. En même temps, dans ces processus, il ne devrait pas y avoir d'efforts parallèles de la part des États Membres et du Secrétariat, mais ils devront constituer un front unique et unifié. Deux années de repenser la gouvernance, menées par les États membres, doivent aller de pair

avec les évaluations des services de l'UNESCO et des experts externes. Les nouvelles initiatives doivent communiquer avec les anciennes, mais aussi avec le système plus large des Nations Unies.

We appreciate the Director-General's intention to step up efforts within the Prevention of Violent Extremism initiative. In addition to education, further development of media and informational literacy should be the integral part of this initiative, in order to efficiently counter all forms of intolerance and hate.

The Republic of Serbia warmly welcomes the proposal “Reviving the Mosul Spirit”, which aims at the rehabilitation of devastated Iraqi social structure, cultural and educational institutions and capacities under UNESCO’s guidance. This, however, reminds us of vulnerability of other countries and regions in the conflict zones and in the post conflict situations, which is why there should be no selective approach in condemning extreme violence and destructions of their cultural and other forms of heritage.

Serbia is, in principal, supportive of "opening" UNESCO to the young people. Their participation in the reflections on the future role of the Organization is a step in a right direction when it comes to aligning the Organization to the demands of the 21st Century.

Finally, we would like to express our firm, unwavering commitment to what has been said by Director General in her introductory speech regarding the necessity to avoid issues which should be discussed elsewhere, and keep our Organization out of the claws of damaging politicization.

Thank you.