



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

205th session of the Executive Board Plenary Meeting

Opening Remarks

**H.E. Ambassador LEE Byong-Hyun
Chairperson of the Executive Board**

UNESCO Headquarters

Room X

8 October, 2018

Madam President of the General Conference,
Madam Director-General,
Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,
Excellencies,
Dear Colleagues,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to the 205th session of the Executive Board.

I am particularly pleased to extend a warm welcome to the new representatives to the Executive Board from Grenada, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, Mexico, Pakistan, Serbia, Spain, and the United States of America, and express our gratitude and best wishes to former colleagues. I would also like to take this occasion to welcome many of the new Senior Managers of the Secretariat to their first session of the Executive Board. Welcome!

(Remember the people – our sense of public service)

Early in September, on International Literacy Day, I personally witnessed the dedication of men and women around the world, in particular the 2018 UNESCO International Literacy Prize laureates from Afghanistan, Iran, Nigeria, Spain and Uruguay. Their tireless efforts in supporting the people of their community to become literate was truly inspiring. They reminded me once again of the daily challenges men and women around the world face to be educated and become full participants in society.

As the Chairperson of the Executive Board, I would like to express my sincere hope that our deliberations and decisions will be driven by the sense of public service to the citizens of the world. I hope for us to seek ways to engage with the world in a way that is relevant for the 21st century.

(Challenging world)

Things have changed since the end of World War II when this Organization was created. The world is full of uncertainties; the global economic climate continues to be unfavourable; and multilateralism is being questioned and challenged for many different reasons. International Organizations are competing with each other, not only for funding but also for their sphere of work. UNESCO is no exception.

The given mandate of UNESCO in the fields of education, culture and the sciences is not enough for the international community to be convinced of its added value. If UNESCO continues to simply go through the motions, not questioning itself, it can easily lose its leadership even in the areas of its mandate. It must adapt to the changing world and innovate so that it serves the peoples of the world today and prepares the next generation to take on future challenges.

It may seem like a daunting task, especially given the current budgetary situation of the Organization. Of course, financial resources are an important enabler of change. However, the real enabler is the attitude to embrace the challenge as an opportunity and being open to change. This change should take place in the minds of everyone in the UNESCO family – both the Secretariat and the Member States.

(All Engaged in Strategic Transformation of the Organization)

Given this context, the proposal for Strategic Transformation of the Organization is timely and appropriate.

Since our last Board meeting in April, we have voiced our agreement for the need and urgency for the strategic transformation of this Organization. We are still working to agree on the nature of the change and how to go about. As members of the Executive Board, we must come to these dialogues with a spirit of openness; togetherness; and most importantly, willingness to change.

Through open and honest dialogue, good faith consultations and cooperative spirit, we can all join our hands together to transform UNESCO that is so dear to all of us, for it to be ready to take on the challenges of this generation, such as artificial intelligence, climate change, and internet democracy.

The Member States and the Secretariat have been engaged in open and transparent dialogue through two meetings of the Preparatory Group of the Executive Board. This dialogue is not happening only amongst the Permanent Delegates at the Headquarters. In June, 95 National Commissions of UNESCO met in Kenya and discussed their role in the Strategic Transformation. Member States are guiding the Director-General with high-level eminent persons so that the best and the brightest can advise us on the future directions of the Organization. The Secretariat is doing its own internal reflections through the thematic working groups. I trust that the Director-General will continue to consult the Member States widely, all throughout the process. As we work together, I am confident that we will be inspired with new ideas and solutions.

Strategic Transformation means changing the way that we work, including the governance of this Organization. I want us also to take a positive look and draw inspiration from our own selves. We have moved away from biennial programmes to quadrennial programmes. More recently, we decided on integrated budget compared to the previous budgeting based on assessed-contribution-only. We, collectively have taken the risk and made leaps to move away from what we know.

As the Chairperson of the Executive Board, I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal commitment in engaging with every Member of the Board to facilitate dialogue and to provide support as necessary in this process of change.

(Our immediate task at the 205th session – 40 C/5budget)

Excellences,
Chers amis,

À chaque session du Conseil, nous adoptons des décisions sur une cinquantaine de points. Nous ne devons pas perdre de vue que nos décisions impliquent des engagements de la part des États membres et du Secrétariat. Elles ont des conséquences. Nous en sommes responsables et redevables.

À la présente session du Conseil exécutif, nous sommes confrontés à une question majeure que nous devons étudier avec soin et discernement. Il s'agit du plafond global fixé au budget ordinaire du 40 C/5 pour 2020-2021. Nous devons également nous pencher sur une autre question étroitement liée à celle-ci et qui est celle de l'usage à réserver aux crédits non utilisés de la période 2016-2017. La question fondamentale est de savoir comment nous allons permettre à cette Organisation, dont nous sommes membres, de s'acquitter de sa mission et

de mettre en œuvre les travaux que nous avons demandés. Il en va de notre responsabilité collective.

Au cours des discussions, je vous encourage à vous concentrer sur l'orientation stratégique globale de l'Organisation sans vous perdre dans les détails. Je vous invite à tenir compte des rapports du Groupe préparatoire et à éviter les redondances. Nous devons utiliser pleinement le gain de temps que les travaux du Groupe préparatoire nous permettent de réaliser et nous consacrer à des discussions stratégiques.

En plus des contributions mises en recouvrement, nous devons réfléchir ensemble à la manière d'attirer des partenaires et de maintenir une relation durable avec eux. À cet égard, je voudrais féliciter la Directrice générale d'avoir organisé avec succès le premier Forum des partenaires de l'UNESCO, qui a remarquablement illustré le pouvoir du travail collectif entre les États membres, le Secrétariat et ses partenaires. À partir de l'idée modeste d'un dialogue sur le financement, l'UNESCO s'est présentée à ses partenaires, à ses bénéficiaires et aux citoyens du monde entier. J'espère que le Secrétariat mènera une réflexion approfondie sur cette première expérience, qu'il en reproduira les bonnes pratiques et en corrigera les défauts en prévision des prochains forums.

(Les défis à venir)

Chers collègues,

En plus des questions qui demandent notre attention immédiate, je tiens à vous rappeler quelques décisions majeures qui seront soumises au Conseil exécutif en 2019. Je pense par exemple à la réforme du dispositif hors Siège de l'UNESCO ; à l'impact de la réforme de l'ONU et à la place qu'y tient l'UNESCO.

En fin de compte, ces questions concernent la pertinence et l'avantage comparatif de notre Organisation. Comment pouvons-nous faire en sorte que l'UNESCO apporte sa contribution aux États membres et à leurs citoyens, tout en utilisant efficacement les ressources limitées dont elle dispose ? Voilà des discussions qui nous imposent de nous projeter au-delà du court terme, car il s'agit de notre avenir commun.

À cet égard, je voudrais demander à la Directrice générale et à son équipe de consulter les États membres sur ces questions dès que possible, afin que le Conseil exécutif puisse prendre une décision éclairée lors de ses prochaines sessions. Je voudrais également encourager mes collègues, les délégués permanents, les ambassadeurs et les représentants non-résidents à dialoguer avec la Directrice générale et le Secrétariat, ici, à Paris, et sur le terrain.

Alors que l'Organisation met en œuvre le programme du 39 C/5 approuvé par la Conférence générale, le Conseil exécutif doit appuyer le Secrétariat, assurer le suivi des progrès accomplis et gouverner l'Organisation, surtout quand elle est confrontée à des défis.

À ce propos, je voudrais adresser quelques mots d'encouragement au personnel du Secrétariat qui travaille sans relâche, malgré le manque de ressources. Je tiens à rendre hommage au dévouement du personnel, qui œuvre à défendre les valeurs et le mandat de l'UNESCO partout dans le monde.

(Closing)

Distinguished colleagues,

The world has changed since the foundation of this Organization. However, the means of seeking sustainable solutions to problems remain the same. It is only through dialogue and co-operation.

In 1989, in his address to august body, Willy Brandt, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany had eloquently said, and I quote *'None of the major problems prevailing between industrialized nations and developing countries can be effectively solved by means of confrontation. Reasonable solutions can only be based on dialogue and co-operation. [...] and they are equally interested in an improved capacity to tackle global problems'*

With these words, I would like to conclude by saying that I hope that during this session, we will be inspired by UNESCO's mandate and seek ways, through dialogue and co-operation, for the Organization be prepared to tackle the challenges of the 21st century.

I now declare open the 205th session of the Executive Board!