

**INTERVENTION FROM DENMARK AT
39TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO
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**DELIVERED BY
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1. Introduction

- Thank you Madame President - Madame President of the General Conference, Madame Director-General, Mr. President of the Executive Board, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen
- I would like to congratulate Mme Azoulay with her designation as new Director-General of UNESCO.

- We have great expectations to your leadership and integrity, and we hope and expect to see strong UNESCO results and impact in the years to come.

2. Agenda 2030 and responsible follow-up

- The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals represent a strong vision of a more inclusive and sustainable world.
- The Danish government remains committed to deliver and ensure progress towards the SDG's – globally *and* nationally.
- In September our Prime Minister Mr. Lars Løkke Rasmussen launched a new global initiative: Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030, P4G.
- And we are proud to join forces with governments, cities, the private sector and civil society all over the world to move forward, including timely and meaningful involvement of Youth.

- This is also true at our national level. The government has set out an ambitious national action plan for the follow-up to the SDG's. Here we identify 37 areas for priority action.

[PAUSE]

3. Ensuring quality education for all

- And now, let me talk about education! Education is very close to my heart.
- Quality in education is about empowering children and youth to make the most of their opportunities and shape their life and education.
- Quality in education is about democratic citizenship – also with a view to prevent violent extremism.

- This is why I have invited all schools and children in Denmark to engage in a national campaign in March to focus on community, democracy and citizenship.
- And quality in education is also about ensuring comprehensive sexuality education for all, empowering students to master their own lives and shape their gender identities.
- Quality in education is unthinkable without committed and respected teachers. We need to set schools and teachers free to deliver quality education to all, duly reflecting professional standards and local needs.

4. Culture in conflict

- Over the last years we have seen horrible examples, as in Palmyra, of violent extremists destroying outstanding cultural heritage. Denmark acknowledges the important role and results of UNESCO in fighting these crimes.

- In full support of these efforts the Danish government has proposed to start the process of formal ratification of the second protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954.
- Also in relation to the 2003 Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage we are currently stepping up our efforts – opening up for communities to make proposals for a national register.

5. Pluralistic Media, Freedom of Expression and Artistic Freedom

- The work of UNESCO in strengthening free media and the safety of journalists is extremely important.
- Denmark supports these efforts, as an active member of the council and the bureau of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).

- In the same line, Denmark is supportive of artistic freedom, and we are co-organizing an important side event, next Wednesday: “Setting a New Agenda: Partnerships for artistic freedom”, and you’re all kindly invited.

6. Science for sustainable development

- Two weeks ago in the island of Møn in Denmark, the local church in Stege was completely crowded. People had come from near and far to participate in the launch of Møn and Nyord as a UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve.
- And Møn is not alone. We see the same pattern in a growing number of municipalities, schools and universities.
- Becoming a partner in UNESCO programmes, conventions or networks is a great inspiration. It contributes to local development, to

the quality and relevance of our efforts and it connects global challenges to local action in a very meaningful way.

7. Closing

- To conclude: For UNESCO to keep fit for purpose, we need to continue and deepen reform of the organization in line with the priorities set out by the UN Secretary-General. This includes governance reform.
- Thank you for listening!