



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

207th session of the Executive Board

Plenary Meeting

Opening Remarks

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

UNESCO Headquarters

Room X

14 Octobre 2019

Madame la Présidente de la Conférence générale,
Madame la Directrice générale,
Mesdames et Messieurs les membres du Conseil exécutif,
Excellences,
Chers collègues,

C'est un plaisir pour moi de vous souhaiter la bienvenue à la 207^e session du Conseil exécutif. Je suis particulièrement heureux de souhaiter la bienvenue aux nouveaux représentants ainsi qu'aux nouveaux ambassadeurs. Je voudrais saisir cette occasion pour exprimer notre gratitude et adresser nos meilleurs vœux à nos anciens collègues.

Mesdames et Messieurs les membres du Conseil,

Lors de l'ouverture de ma première session du Conseil exécutif en tant que Président en avril 2018, j'avais exprimé le souhait que, lorsque la 40^e session de la Conférence générale arriverait, nous pourrions affirmer avec fierté avoir contribué à donner une nouvelle vitalité à cette Organisation, en suivant l'évolution du monde.

Or, je peux affirmer en toute confiance que nous avons beaucoup accompli depuis deux ans. Nous travaillons main dans la main avec la directrice générale à opérer la transformation stratégique de notre Organisation.

Nous avons guidé la préparation du rapport mondial sur l'avenir de l'éducation. Je voudrais saisir cette occasion pour exprimer nos grands espoirs pour les travaux de la commission internationale indépendante dirigée par la Présidente de l'Éthiopie.

Nous avons examiné minutieusement les études préliminaires de deux nouveaux instruments normatifs qui devraient permettre de relever un certain nombre de défis complexes du vingt-et-unième siècle – l'un sur l'éthique de l'intelligence artificielle et l'autre sur la science ouverte. Nous avons accompli ce travail dans le but de faire progresser cette Organisation afin d'en faire une actrice et pas simplement une spectatrice du changement.

Nous avons décidé de l'utilisation des fonds non dépensés du 38 C/5 ; et nous avons examiné les futures priorités de programme pour la période 2020-2021, telles qu'elles sont définies dans le projet de 40 C/5.

Nous avons travaillé avec le Secrétariat à maintenir une situation de trésorerie positive, de nombreux États membres ayant réglé leurs contributions à l'avance.

Nous avons également montré notre détermination à œuvrer ensemble, par le dialogue, sur les questions relatives au Moyen-Orient. Le climat positif de consensus qui règne depuis l'année dernière sur ces points, tant au Conseil exécutif qu'au Comité du patrimoine mondial, montre la détermination de l'UNESCO à accomplir son mandat de promotion de la paix par le dialogue.

L'inscription conjointe par les deux Corées d'une forme traditionnelle de lutte coréenne, le ssireum, au patrimoine culturel immatériel de l'humanité de l'UNESCO, a été rendue possible grâce au soutien de la communauté internationale au processus de paix dans la péninsule coréenne. Ceci a été mené dans le cadre d'un dialogue animé par l'UNESCO, à l'initiative de la directrice générale, Madame Audrey Azoulay.

Ce sont des exemples concrets de la contribution positive de l'UNESCO à la paix grâce à sa plate-forme de coopération multilatérale.

Excellencies,
Dear Colleagues,

I have no doubts that we all aspire to conclude our mandate on the Executive Board this biennium on a positive note. And to do so, we have much to do at this session of the Executive Board. Our main objective of this session is to prepare for the 40th General Conference which will start in one month time. During the next days, we will take decisions on 50 items and some 50 sub-items.

One item is of particular interest to all of us. It is in the interest of not only the members of the Executive Board, but of all the 193 Member States of this Organization. The Secretariat is waiting for our decision on this matter. And most of all, the people around the world benefitting from UNESCO's work are watching closely.

I am, of course, referring to item 17 - the draft 40 C/5.

We, the Member States, together with the Secretariat have done much work to prepare the programme and budget of this Organization for 2020-2021. I would like to extend my warm appreciation to all the Members who have worked between the sessions. Through the one-day working group meeting last month, under the able leadership of the Chairpersons of the PX and FA Commissions, the members of this Executive Board made progress on the addendum to the 40 C/6, containing the Executive Board's recommendation to the General Conference.

I would also like to express my warm gratitude to the Chairperson of the Preparatory Group for having sought the viewpoints of the Member States at large in an inclusive manner, on the draft 40 C/5, including at the session held just a few weeks ago.

As you know very well, we have the responsibility to decide on one final crucial aspect of the draft 40 C/5 – and that is the budget ceiling. With one month left to the start of the General Conference, we still have several budget scenarios in front of us. But I have no doubts that, 10 days from now, by the end of this session, we will have one recommendation to the General Conference for the budget of the 40 C/5. In fact, it would be inexcusable for us to not agree on a budget.

Because it is the duty of the Executive Board to recommend the budget that we consider most desirable to the General Conference. As you know very well, it is the first of the ten functions laid out for the Executive Board by UNESCO's Constitution.

As Chairperson of this august body, I would like to urge you to have sharp, pointed debates on the budget, and to refrain from being distracted to discussing other seemingly related issues such as restructuring or human resource aspects.

Because, if we do not live up to the responsibilities that our fellow Member States have entrusted upon us to take executive decisions on their behalf, we would be undermining the credibility of our Executive Board as a solid governance mechanism of this Organization.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The founding principle of this Organization to build peace in the minds of men and women still resonates strongly today.

Our membership in this international organization represents our enduring commitment and belief in *“full and equal opportunities for free education for all, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge”*.

But, the world is not the same now as it was in 1945.

This institution set up more than 70 years ago needs to reinvent itself. Because an organization is not built once, like a monument, to stand there for eternity. An organization is built every day. And that is why we have been engaged in collective efforts to undertake Strategic Transformation of this Organization.

In parallel, the governance of this Organization must evolve with the changing times. In the world at large outside these walls and here at UNESCO, there is a call for a renewed sense of inclusive multilateralism. I cannot agree more that multilateralism must benefit all its members. The General Conference, under the able leadership of its President, Mme. Alaoui here with us today, is working tirelessly to this end.

Fundamentally, multilateralism is about cooperation; solving common problems together. We are here, united by this Organization that we have built collectively, based on our common commitment to peace.

But the nobility of this goal does not mean that we will always agree on how to achieve it. At times, it might feel as though the endless debates based on our different world views leave everyone unsatisfied.

But, in fact, our Organization is richer because of this diversity of views. And when we listen closely to our debates, we will see that there is far more that unites us than divides us. And the role of this Executive Board is to find common actions to our problems through reasoned debate.

While engaging in our discussions, we must not make the mistake of taking adversarial positions and engaging in power struggles to advance our view points or national interests, based on the false notion that it must be a natural process of negotiation. Quite the contrary! Collaborative problem-solving to reach consensus is the best way - and the only way - for us to work together.

Because, the world is more connected than ever before.

In 2019, and probably even more so in the years to come, there is probably not one single issue that is not multilateral.

And our collaborative engagement here today will ensure that UNESCO will continue - as it has been for more than 70 years – to be an invaluable multilateral forum; a place for us to share our values; and for us to cooperate on our common challenges in education, culture, the sciences, and communication and information.

Distinguished delegates,
Dear colleagues,

As elected members of the Executive Board, it is our duty to bring the voices of the 193 Member States at large to this chamber and to make recommendations to the General Conference, in the best interest of all Member States and the Organization.

I look forward to our discussions and decisions that will bring about new positive energy to this Organization now and in the years to come.

I would like to thank in advance the leadership of the Chairpersons of the Committee and Commissions, as well as the tireless efforts of the Vice-Chairs working behind the scenes, and the 57 members around this table for engaging in constructive and reasoned debates to take sharp decisions.

The world around us is expecting us to build a stronger UNESCO so that it can deliver on education for all, ensure freedom of expression, cooperate on climate change, and promote cultural diversity, leaving no one behind.

And we should remind ourselves what a great privilege it is for us to be around this round table, in times of peace, working towards constructing peace in the future.

We have the solemn responsibility to do this for our children and for the generations to come. They do not want us to play 'blame games'. Because the world is changing too fast for that.

With these words, I declare open the 207th session of the Executive Board!