

Statement of H.E. Mr. Mansour Gholami
Minister of Science, Research and Technology
of the Islamic Republic of Iran
General Policy Debate
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Paris, 13 November 2019

Mr. President of the General Conference,
Mr. Chairperson of the Executive Board,
Madam Director-General,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, congratulations to H.E. Mr. Cengizer upon his election as President of the General Conference. I would also like to extend my profound gratitude to H.E. Madam Alaoui, the esteemed outgoing President of the General Conference, for her unsparing efforts during her tenure.

Dear colleagues,

UNESCO was founded as a unique soft power for the defences of peace beyond the political and economic arrangements of the governments. To safeguard an efficient multi-lateral approach for a better world, we adore its uniqueness in the United Nations system. Such an intellectual watchtower is expected to distance itself from politicization. The visionary wish of UNESCO's founders was aimed at a moral and intellectual paradigm embraced by a collective politics of the mind.

Today, we witness the phenomena of extremism, violence, and the widespread and unprecedented destruction of cultural heritage in some parts of the world, which mainly stem from deficiencies and inappropriate educational practices. One example is the accessibility of computer games which propagate hatred and psychologically prepare children for violent behaviour. UNESCO can inspire the worldwide educational systems and media networks by launching a global campaign entitled "The Next Generation, the More Committed Generation" (NG-MCG) to create and disseminate free virtual games promoting sensitivity towards human dignity, respect for nature and cultural heritage.

Madam Director-General,

I am aware of your efforts to introduce the Strategic Transformation, which has been under discussion by Member States. What is needed here is an intensified orientation towards the promotion of UNESCO's ideals in their totality for the

sake of a renewed focus on the *raison d'être* of this House. A standing dialogue would definitely help to keep that spirit. It is clear that all conventions, resolutions, programmes and documents approved here should successfully find their ways in which to realize UNESCO's ideals; otherwise, in practice, there may be a danger that they create unhelpful controversies rather than serve as an element of rapprochement among nations. The periodic review of documents adopted can clarify the extent to which the Organization's ideals are being fulfilled.

Nowadays, the intersectoral capacity of UNESCO is recognized. As the Minister of Science, Research and Technology of my country, I would like to wish and emphasize that UNESCO should support policies aimed at preventing scientific discrimination in education and to enable the countries of the South to access educational and scientific resources, thus reducing the scientific gap between North and South.

Dear colleagues,

Climate and environmental changes have pronounced effects in many regions, with extensive negative consequences to the social, cultural and economic infrastructure of the countries. Fortunately, this issue has been placed on UNESCO's agenda. In this context, the 2019 edition of the UNESCO Avicenna Prize for Ethics in Science is dedicated to ethics-related activities on climate change, to reward activities in the field of "Ethics of Environment", with a special thematic focus on the ethics of climate change and environmental sustainability.

Iran is proud to have proposed and sponsored the UNESCO Avicenna Prize for Ethics in Science, a unique initiative which highlights the critical importance of ethics in our fast-moving and technologically enamoured world. It is my pleasure that the 5th edition of the Avicenna Prize will be awarded during this General Conference.

Thank you.