

Statement

**By H.E. LE HOAI TRUNG, VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
PRESIDENT OF THE VIET NAM NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO
AT THE 40TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO**

Mr. Altay Cengizer, President of the 40th General Conference,

Madam Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate Mr. Altay Cengizer on his election as the President of the 40th General Conference of UNESCO. I am confident that your able and wise chairmanship will guide our General Conference to a great success.

My immense gratitude and appreciation goes to Ms. Zohour Alooui for her vital contributions as President of the 39th General Conference.

Ladies and gentlemen,

2020 will mark an important milestone as UNESCO celebrates its 75th anniversary. After three quarters of a century, UNESCO and its member states have made tireless efforts to advance “the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind” and promote “collaboration among nations through education, science and culture”. The organization’s mission is performed through the promotion of a Culture of Peace on the basis of tolerance, knowledge, and respect for diversity. The member states are placed front and center in its every area of cooperation. Education is the instrument for promoting development and co-existence, science helps narrow the gap among countries and contributes to peace, culture paves the way for mutual understanding, and communication builds knowledge societies. Today UNESCO remains immensely relevant, as certainly political, economic and trade agreements are not enough to build sustainable peace.

UNESCO in the past years has scored numerous achievements in performing out its mission, thereby making vital contributions to the realization of the UN 2030 Agenda. Its educational initiatives have left a lasting impression in combating illiteracy, providing education for all, promoting lifelong learning, and enacting

education for sustainable development. Its prestigious titles play a significant role in preserving the heritages of humanity and bringing nations closer together, and has become an asset contributing directly to social and economic development among its members. UNESCO's science programs are widely lauded for their promotion of the development of various sciences and the sharing of knowledge, and their contributions to the preservation of the environment and ecosystem of our Earth.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To enable UNESCO to better fulfill the expectations of its member states in the years ahead, we support every initiative that would enhance the democracy, transparency and effectiveness of the organization. We believe that reforms may only succeed through the unity and one-mindedness of all members and the Secretariat. Thus, in the ongoing process of reforms and adjustments, we urge member states to be mindful of dialogue and the interests of each party to find a common voice and strengthen unity and consensus.

Viet Nam welcomes the initial results in the implementation of the strategic transformation. We would like to emphasize that the establishment and performance of this strategy should be based on substantive consultations with member states and effective use of resources. Viet Nam applauds the efforts of the Secretariat in maintaining financial stability, and urges member states to continue contributing to UNESCO without conditions attached.

We believe that the role and standing of the organization is built on its ability to meet the needs of member states. Thus, we fully support the organization's upcoming priorities regarding ethical artificial intelligence, open science, futures of education, and ocean sciences, to name just a few. In addition, we also recommend that UNESCO proceeds in the tried-and-true direction of strengthening its flagship programs that have become the organization's "signature", such as Lifelong Learning, World Heritage, Global Geoparks, and Memory of the World.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Viet Nam has been making every effort for equality, sustainable and inclusive development. Given these policies, Viet Nam strongly supports UNESCO's role and actively contributes to the realization of the organization's goals. In 2015, Viet Nam realized 5 out of 8 Millennium Development Goals, being one of the very few countries having so accomplished. In July 2019, Viet Nam was selected to present its Voluntary National Review on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals to the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Many of Viet Nam's achievements within these frameworks are closely linked to UNESCO's priorities.

From a poverty-stricken and underdeveloped country, Viet Nam has maintained a steady GDP growth of 6% over the last 20 years, and became a middle-income country in 2010. Economic development has facilitated other development goals, including universal primary education, gender equality, environmental sustainability, poverty reduction and hunger eradication, healthcare, protection of cultural and natural heritages, and the creation of an advanced culture grounded in its traditional character.

Viet Nam's achievements are also the result of its extensive integration in the spirit of "being a reliable partner and a responsible member of the international community". Viet Nam has actively participated in most major international and regional mechanisms and forums. Through this process we have both secured resources for national development, and made contributions to international issues. Notably, Viet Nam has consistently shown its willingness in promoting peace. Since 2014, Viet Nam has dispatched personnel to UN peacekeeping operations. In February 2019, Viet Nam hosted the second DPRK - U.S. Summit. In July 2019, 192 out of 193 UN member states voted for Viet Nam to become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, demonstrating the high level of confidence in the role Viet Nam plays.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Looking back, the cooperation between Viet Nam and UNESCO has been substantive, comprehensive and effective. There have been various programs and

activities in every area under the auspices of UNESCO, contributing to national development and garnering high praises from Vietnamese agencies and people. As we speak, Viet Nam and UNESCO are enjoying numerous ongoing cooperation activities in elevating the quality of national education, preserving heritages, and promoting cooperation in ocean sciences.

Viet Nam has been a responsible member in UNESCO and shall continue as such. We have made active contributions to the work of the organization as a member of the UNESCO Executive Board, the World Heritage Committee, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the Global Geoparks Network, the Man and Biosphere Program, and the the Intergovernmental Committee for the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, among others. In 2019, Viet Nam hosted a number of major UNESCO events such as the International Forum on Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education, and the Regional Conference on Maritime Spatial Planning. Viet Nam also implements UNESCO's recommendations in various areas in earnest. If I should cite one example, that would be the opinion of UNESCO experts that the preservation of Complex of Hue Monuments World Heritage Site and the Hoi An ancient town have been carried out outstandingly and serve as an example for others to follow.

On this occasion, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for the close cooperation and assistance that UNESCO and its member states have given to Viet Nam. We wish to make further contribution to the common goals, and to build a strong UNESCO together with other member states, and renew our pledge to these ends.

Thank you./.