

**UNESCO's General Conference, 14 Nov. 2019, General Policy Debate**

Statement of Denmark by Deputy Minister Mr. Søren Hartmann Hede

[REFORMER)

Mr. President, Excellencies

Denmark believes in multilateralism and a rule-based international system. We want to develop a UNESCO – with more Member States undertaking and sharing the responsibility. We want a UNESCO for all Member States.

Denmark therefore supports the proposed amendments of UNESCO's Constitution:

- To ensure the full and timely payment of mandatory contributions by Member States.
  
- And to introduce term limits to enable more rotation in the Executive Board. The issue of term limits is not a new issue. Time is ripe. We need to demonstrate that we are able to accommodate the longstanding call for more inclusivity and diversity.

We appeal to all Member States to support the proposal for amending UNESCO's constitution and introduce term limits.

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[NORMATIVE INSTRUMENTER]

Mr. President,

To many of us, and not least in the public domain, UNESCO is mostly known for its emblematic sites and designations – such as World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks, all constituting our global observatories and serving to set global standards that protect nature and reduce the risks of degradation.

This is indeed one of the most important work-streams of the organization. But UNESCO is so much more than that.

Denmark was one of the 20 countries that enabled the entry into force of the UNESCO Constitution in 1945.

We highly appreciate the foundation of this organization where international collaboration in education, science and culture is seen a mean to further universal respect for justice, the rule of law, and human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The UNESCO Constitution underlines the responsibilities, rights and obligations of educators, scientists, artists and journalists that are bound by the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth and the free exchange of ideas and knowledge.

Throughout the years, UNESCO has been charged with protecting and expanding the remit of those on who we all depend to deepen our knowledge, expand our horizons and connect the dots in a free and informed public debate.

UNESCO's normative tools in relation to artists, scientists, teaching-personnel and journalists all emphasize the necessity to fully respect the human rights,

and not least, the freedom of expression, of those engaged in these endeavours. The norms, standards and values of the organization are clear and indisputable.

[UDFORDRINGER]

Regrettably, we see in many countries educators, scientists, artists and journalists - that may express dissenting voices or 'uncomfortable' insight - are under pressure.

We see an important role for UNESCO in countering this development. Whether the issue at hand is the academic freedom, the freedom of scientists, artistic freedom, or the rights of journalists, UNESCO must monitor developments both globally and at country level. UNESCO must intervene, and UNESCO must reinforce its efforts.

UNESCO has a broad range of instruments that promote international recognized norms and standards. This function as a compass for the values we share.

Concretely UNESCO play an important role assisting States Parties to implement Conventions. A prerequisite for it to have a real impact is that we have guidelines and standard that we agree upon.

Denmark is strongly committed to the strengthening of the global anti-doping system. We therefore regret that the Conference of Parties to UNESCO's anti-doping Convention, recently held, was not able to adopt the proposed rules for consequences of non-compliance.

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[ERHVERVSUDDANNELSE]

Mr. President,

Climate change presents one of the greatest challenges ever faced by the countries of this world. We need to transform our societies. We need new green industries and the greening of existing ones. We need multiple actions to reduce the environmental impact of industrial processes and products.

If we are to succeed, we need new green skills in key economic sectors. We need more education for sustainable development – and in particular in Vocational Education and Training. We need to increase skill levels, as well as the quality and relevance of TVET education content. And we want to cooperate with UNESCO on this agenda.

[UDDANNELSE]

UNESCO is responsible for goal number four on education. As Member States, we need UNESCO to outline the strategic direction; to provide a global road map; to mobilize key stakeholders, including schools, municipalities, civil society and private sector actors; to assist with concrete tools – in order to accelerate local action across the world, throughout the upcoming decade towards 2030.

We look forward to collaborating with UNESCO and its Member States on all these issues.

Thank you for the attention.