



*Arab League Educational,
Cultural and Scientific Organization*

Address by

*H.E. Dr. Mohamed Ould Amar
Director-General of the Arab League Educational,
Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO)*

at the

40th General Conference of UNESCO

Paris – November 18, 2019

Your Excellency Mr. Ahmet Altay CENGIZER, President of the General Conference,

Your Excellency Ms. Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be among you today and to express, on behalf of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), sincere congratulations to H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Altay CENGIZER on his election as President of the General Conference of UNESCO, wishing him every success in fulfilling his mandate.

I also would like to extend sincere thanks to Ms. Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, for her kind invitation to take part in the 40th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, this international organization whose lofty mission will certainly remain alive in an ever-changing world plagued by constant threats to security and peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting of ours offers a renewed opportunity to share viewpoints on issues relevant to education, culture and science. In this regard, we wish to express our support to UNESCO's efforts in implementing Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For its part, ALECSO is working to translate this Goal into concrete achievements in the Arab countries, especially in the fields of literacy and adult education, and also through many other ongoing projects implemented by the Organization, such as the plan for the development of education and the renewal of educational curricula and for the building of Arab capacities.

At this point, one can only wonder about the fate of millions of innocent, defenseless children in some Arab countries, who, bearing the brunt of conflicts, are forced to leave their homelands and abandon their schools, while being deprived of their most basic right to a decent life.

For that reason, we have initiated a pilot project on the use of Open Educational Resources (OERs), which involved developing a training package for teachers and hosting it on ALECSO's platform. Moreover, in coordination with the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, we have launched an initiative for the education of children in conflict zones; and we count on the international community to help make this initiative a success.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Firmly convinced that culture is a key factor in entrenching universal human values, ALECSO has launched the "Arab Decade for the Cultural Right" (2018-2027), a framework for joint Arab action to strengthen human rights through culture and to promote the use of culture in the service of sustainable development. On the other hand, we are working on developing a "Strategy for crisis and disaster preparedness and mitigation of impact on cultural property in the Arab countries". In this context, we wish to express our deep concern about the persistent violations by the Israeli occupation authorities against the City of *Al-Quds* (Jerusalem). From this rostrum, we reiterate our call for urgent intervention to implement the relevant resolutions of the World Heritage Committee, and thus to keep universal cultural heritage, wherever it is, away from conflicts and disputes.

While commending the “Revive the Spirit of Mosul” initiative launched by UNESCO, we wish to propose to the Director-General of UNESCO to expand this initiative so that it encompasses all affected areas in the world. On our part, we reaffirm our readiness to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders for the protection and restoration of this common heritage of humanity. We will also work jointly with the Iraqi relevant authorities to develop a plan for the management of the site of Babylon, with the involvement of local populations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are called upon today to modernize our means of action so that we can counter threats to global peace, human rights and development, enable our societies to assimilate major transformations in today’s world and meet climate change challenges, and contribute to the building of a smart human individual who masters new technologies and is fully capable of keeping pace with his time.

In keeping with UNESCO’s interest in promoting cultural and linguistic pluralism and diversity, we seek support for ALECSO’s proposal to proclaim a “World Novel Day”. We also call for expanding the use of the Arabic language in all the activities of UN institutions; and we, at ALECSO, are ready to provide the needed technical backstopping in this regard.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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