

Check against delivery!

**National Statement in Plenary of the Republic of Bulgaria
at the 210-th session of the Executive Council
/ Paris, December 2, 2020 /**

**Madam Director-General,
Mr. President of the Executive Board,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Bulgaria commends the efforts of the Secretariat, despite the unprecedented sanitary conditions related to the global health crisis, for holding open and inclusive consultations, with all stakeholders on the preparation of the Draft Medium-term strategy (41 C/4) and the Draft Programme and Budget (41 C/5) which will define UNESCO's future strategic orientation and programmatic focus.

We welcome the Preliminary proposals of Director-General focused on UNESCO's core mandate and on a limited number of SDGs, reinforcing its positioning within the UN system in the fields where its comparative advantages and global leadership are recognized.

My country took part in this consultative process and will actively contribute to future deliberations.

Bulgaria welcomes the continuity with the previous Medium-Term strategy through the renewed commitment to the two **global priorities Africa and gender equality**, as well as the special focus on **two priority groups Youth and Small Island Developing States /SIDS/**. We support the consolidation of transversal initiatives and the deepening of new partnerships.

My country commends the efforts of UNESCO to navigate in this difficult context imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the objective restrictions Bulgaria also

managed to implement several projects within UNESCO's programs - at the end of September in Burgas was held a national hybrid conference dedicated to the digital presentation and preservation of cultural and scientific heritage; a department of bioethics has been established at the Medical University in Sofia, which we hope will become UNESCO chair; we made the selection among more than 50 candidates - young women scientists, for the UNESCO L'Oréal Awards.

Bulgaria underlines its support for UNESCO's leading role in the field of education and reiterates our joint engagement for the achievement of the SDGs 4. We reaffirm our support and commitment to the initiative for the Future of Education, the launch of which was joined by the President of Bulgaria.

Bulgaria, through its Funds-in-Trust with UNESCO, is financing a project to combatting anti-Semitism through education, which we hope will be launched soon with six modules for the countries of the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership. We declare our strong commitment to the activities of the Organization aimed to the prevention of violent extremism.

For Bulgaria, the cultural heritage - both tangible and intangible, as well as underwater, is a key aspect of the Organization's activities. Underwater cultural heritage can become part of the activities included in the Ocean Decade.

We congratulate Greece for the initiative on the impact of climate change on the cultural heritage and we would like to announce that Bulgarian Government is considering financing a project, prepared on its request by the Regional Bureau of UNESCO for South East Europe, aimed at developing capacities on climate change adaptation and disaster risk management in UNESCO designated cultural and natural sites, as well as Biosphere Reserves in the region

We would like to express our satisfaction of our joint work with the UNESCO Office in Venice / BRESCHÉ /. In this regard, Bulgaria expresses its support for optimizing and strengthening UNESCO's future field presence while taking into account the regional particularities and the established good practices.

Chers collègues,

Les sciences naturelles, et en particulier les recherches fondamentales, sont d'une importance primordiale. La crise actuelle le prouve. Il est impératif, aujourd'hui plus que jamais, de renforcer la coopération scientifique internationale pour une approche multidimensionnelle contre les défis contemporains.

Nous nous engagerons sur des projets concrets sous les auspices de l'UNESCO sur l'application des sciences fondamentales au bénéfice de la santé humaine.

Nous nous félicitons du travail accompli et le progrès atteint à l'élaboration de la recommandation sur la Science ouverte, en soulignant le rôle clé de l'Organisation à l'appel conjoint du 27 octobre 2020.

Nous apprécions aussi le progrès sur l'éthique de l'intelligence artificielle, qui est également une priorité pour la Bulgarie dans le cadre de notre coopération avec l'UNESCO. Dans ce domaine, nous coopérerons également avec le Centre de catégorie 2 en Slovénie sur les aspects éthiques de l'intelligence artificielle.

Bulgarie voudrait également exprimer sa satisfaction du Programme de participation de l'UNESCO, qui est un mécanisme supplémentaire très important et contribuant pour la visibilité des programmes de l'Organisation.

La Bulgarie a toujours été un supporteur des programmes et des activités de l'UNESCO dans le domaine des droits de l'homme. Le ministre des affaires étrangères Mme Ekaterina Zaharieva va assister à la Conférence sur la liberté des médias, qui se tiendra le 9 Décembre sous les auspices du gouvernement du Royaume des Pays-Bas .

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Dans le contexte difficile de la crise sanitaire l'UNESCO sous la gouvernance de la Directrice-Générale est en premier rang en mobilisant la communauté internationale pour diminuer les conséquences négatives de la pandémie sans oublier ceux qui sont les plus touchés.

Bulgarie voudrait féliciter la Directrice générale pour son leadership et son engagement dévoué et constant en vue de renforcer la visibilité de l'UNESCO, d'améliorer son efficacité, et mieux l'adapter au service de nous tous.

Merci pour votre attention.