

**ADDRESS TO 210TH SESSION OF UNESCO EXECUTIVE BOARD, THURSDAY 03
DECEMBER 2020**

[BEGINS]

Mr Chairman, Madame Director General, Distinguished colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, I am very pleased to address this 210th session of UNESCO's Executive Board.

Continuing to deliver on the organisation's mandate during a global pandemic presents multiple challenges. At the same time, our responsibility to act and the fundamental importance of UNESCO's mission is arguably greater than ever. The United Kingdom congratulates the Secretariat, Madame Director General. Across all of UNESCO's sectors, officials have worked swiftly, imaginatively and collaboratively – in Education with a successful Global Education Meeting advancing our work on SDG4 and girls' education, in Culture with Culture Ministers coming together to discuss important actions responding to the pandemic's impact on the cultural sector in C&I with vital and timely work to reinforce media freedom and fight disinformation and in Science with powerful initiatives to promote Open Science. I could mention other examples. But there is much to congratulate UNESCO on, and much to do. The UK will continue to support this important work.

Mr Chairman, allow me to conclude with a plea to all those members of the Executive Board who represent the 193 Member States. The world is watching us. The challenges are considerable – for UNESCO as for other UN agencies and international organisations. The Secretariat has stepped up to respond to these challenges. We have a duty to do the same. The fact that we are holding this Executive Board now is positive. But it has taken longer than it should have. If we are to fulfil our mandate, we need to put national political agendas to one side and work together. We wish you all a successful and productive board and continued success for 2021.

Thank you

(296 words)

[ENDS]