



***Statement of I.R. of Afghanistan
to
210th Session of the UNESCO Executive Board
Plenary Debate***

***presented by
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Statement of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

210th Executive Board Session, UNESCO

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Mr. Chairperson of the Executive Board,

Madame Director-General,

Mr. President of the General Conference,

Distinguished Delegates and Dear Colleagues,

1. At the outset, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you Mr. President and members of the Bureau for your tireless efforts to ensure the continuity of the work of the Executive Board during these challenging times. We are also grateful for the hard work of the Madam Director General and the Secretariat for keeping our organization active and relevant in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Chair and Dear Colleagues,

2. The pandemic taught us to seek more innovative measures to achieve our common goal, quality education SDG4. We have to accept that some of our efforts did not meet the reality of our communities on the ground. Learning from experiences of “distance education”, it is vital that at UNESCO, we focus more on practical means of this distance education to ensure that students and their families have access to the resources considering the different infrastructure, means and abilities of different societies.
3. It's not just the pandemic that affects our daily lives and educational systems, there is also another dangerous phenomenon which is named **Violent, Extremism and Targeted Attacks** that are affecting our lives on a daily basis. The past months' violent attacks which took place in Afghanistan, France and Cameroon targeted our teachers, students, pupils and educational institutions, were not the first of their type and if not stopped won't be last either.
4. Just as terrorism and extremism, under any name, are the enemies of humanity and are condemnable and punishable acts, we believe that those who's indifferent and behaviour undermine the environmental sustainability of our planet must be held accountable. These types of attempts and violence around the world carries out one clear message which is: To silence the voice of peace! Therefore, it is our responsibility in this organization to find applied solutions on how to safeguard our education and cultures from these existing threats.

5. We are pleased to see the report of UNESCO's inter-sectoral contribution to the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) conducive to terrorism since 2019. We call for a more inclusive approach and want that these efforts should expand to provide tangible support to those countries that are the subject and victims of such violence in principle of leaving no one behind. In this regard Afghanistan is ready to contribute and align itself with UNESCO's efforts.

Mr. Chair,

6. We appreciate UNESCO's enhanced efforts to confront the threats of racism and racial discrimination dilemma through its constitutionally mandated mission of "building the defenses of peace" in the minds of men and women. Afghanistan as a member of the "Group of Friends on Solidarity and Inclusion with Global Citizenship Education", supports the Global Call against Racism in the initiative launched by the Republic of Korea. We must double our efforts in the fight against racism, discrimination including the fight for gender equality.
7. We align ourselves with UNESCO's efforts on the actions undertaken and additional activities including the action plan for implementation and for celebration of the "International Indigenous Languages 2019. Our organization as the leading agency for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032, has a huge responsibility ahead of it to ensure a multi-disciplinary approach to achieve our common goal of making our societies inclusive. I am pleased to inform you that the government of Afghanistan as part of its responsibilities towards its citizens and with belief that understanding of languages paves the way towards national unity and strengthened regional relations, has declared the 20th October as the National Day of Uzbek Language.
8. Afghanistan as a member of the IPDC, reaffirms its commitments to the guidelines to provide safety for journalists, media personnel and to combat impunity. We ask UNESCO to double their efforts to secure a healthy environment for the growth of a free and pluralistic media, so that young democracies, such as Afghanistan continue to grow.

Mr. Chair and Distinguished Delegates,

9. The current global economic and political set up exacerbates economic disparities, and accelerates the growing burden of poverty and conflict in many corners of the world. In today's world, few wealthy states continue to employ economic and industrial supremacy as means of gaining or imposing their hegemony. Similarly, the current globalized culture promotes the so-called modern culture, albeit with an enormous backing from wealth, science and technology, often at a cost of undermining or disregarding national, ethnic and religious values and customs.
10. Unfortunately, every now and then, such hegemonic behaviour is perceived as provocative by certain societies or groups of societies, leading to the emergence of reactive extremism nurtured out of a predisposing context of widespread poverty and illiteracy.

Over the course of mankind's history, respect for one another's cultures paved the ground for positive exchanges and interactions thus promising all a chance to grow and prosper.

11. Another worrisome complication of the existing culture which is rooted in indifferent economic or financial superiority, is the fact that it severely undermines the sustainability of our shared planet; such that environmental vulnerabilities and global warming are unequivocally going to be the biggest future challenge of mankind.

Mr. Chair and Dear colleagues,

12. The ongoing challenges are bringing us to the critical moment to re-think and to think differently about how to overcome all challenges that are targeting our areas of responsibilities which are assigned by the mandate of UNESCO.
13. Our organization needs to institute a strategy to help promote sensible and constructive exchanges across different national ethnic and religious cultures, and thereby countering the hegemonic dominance of few wealth-centered entities.
14. UNESCO can play an important role to advocate with key global actors, partners, and activists to help alleviate poverty so that the third world man regains the essence of his humanity and grows in the context of social justice. We must continue this momentum to further work on the de-politicization of our organization and to further contribute to peace and stability.
15. I reiterate what we have always emphasized on that it is more important than ever to question our priorities and build a better normal from the one left behind, a world where multilateralism thrives and we remain united in our shared humanity.
16. Finally, I would like to extend our appreciation to Madam Director General and your capable team's efforts particularly in the field of education, culture and gender equality during your tenure and being an active supporter of Afghanistan. Please rest assured, that Afghanistan will continue to be a committed and constructive partner over the period ahead and we support your candidacy for the next coming term.

Thank you