

## Fifth plenary meeting of the 40th session of the General Conference

Thursday 14 November 2019 at 10.15 a.m.

President: **Mr Altay Cengizer** (Turkey)

### First report of the Bureau

#### 1.1 The President:

Excellences, honourable ministers, ladies and gentlemen, I wish you a very good morning, and I declare open the fifth plenary meeting of the General Conference. Before we start with the national statements, I wish to inform the delegates that, earlier this morning, the Bureau of the General Conference held its second meeting and that was the reason that we are a bit late. I will now read a brief report on this meeting. The Bureau resumed the discussion started yesterday about items **7.3**, **7.4** and **7.5**. Members of the Bureau took the floor to express their views on the issue. The debate continues and therefore the Bureau will hold its third meeting tomorrow at 9 a.m. in Room X. Ladies and gentlemen, may I take it that the General Conference takes note of the report of the Bureau? *It is so **decided**.*

### General policy debate (*continued*)

#### 2. The President:

We will now continue with national statements in the context of the general policy debate. In the afternoon, we will also hear a report from the Credentials Committee. Before we start, may I remind honourable speakers that each national statement will be limited to six minutes. I thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation in this regard. I now have the honour to call our first speaker, Her Excellency Ms Ester Vilarrubla, Minister of Education and Higher Education of Andorra.

#### 3.1 Andorre:

Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Madame la Directrice générale, Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs. Je tiens tout d'abord à vous féliciter, Madame Azoulay, pour tous les efforts déployés ces deux dernières années pour porter haut et fort les mandats de l'UNESCO de votre mission de combattre le monde que l'éducation, la science et la culture sont des piliers incontournables si nous voulons que notre civilisation progresse dans un modèle de développement durable, plus équitable et plus juste.

3.2 Au mois de septembre dernier, à New York, les chefs de Gouvernement de la Principauté d'Andorre s'adressaient à l'Assemblée générale des Nations unies pour réaffirmer l'engagement de notre pays envers le Programme 2030. En particulier, l'ODD 4 qui vise à l'action universelle à une éducation égalitaire et respectueuse des Droits de l'homme, mais aussi les objectifs qui appellent à l'action pour préserver l'environnement et lutter contre les changements climatiques.

3.3 En Andorre, la promotion des compétences nécessaires pour la vie dans le cadre d'une éducation par une citoyenneté démocratique est une priorité. C'est la clé de voute d'une société moderne qui doit faire face aux nombreux défis de notre civilisation actuelle. Au cours de ces dernières années, l'éducation de qualité a recentré une bonne partie de l'adoption de notre pays au sein de forums multilatéraux. Avec le soutien des autres organisations internationales comme le Conseil de l'Europe, nos professionnels travaillent sans relâche pour améliorer les mécanismes permettant d'évaluer ses compétences et pour générer des opportunités d'apprentissage tout au long de la vie. Cela ne laisse personne pour compte. En effet, nous sommes conscients de l'impact positif que peut avoir le talent bien canalisé. Étant un petit pays avec peu de ressources naturelles, nous dépendons en grande mesure du secteur service et, par conséquent, le savoir-faire et les valeurs de nos citoyens sont souvent les biens les plus précieux.

3.4 Après tout, éduquer, c'est une activité profondément humaine, et l'avenir d'un pays dépend de l'enseignement. Un défi global qui se construit localement mais qui contribue à bâtir un univers meilleur. Or, ne soyons pas dupes. Le temps presse, et les chiffres démoralisants sont là. Au rythme actuel, nous n'atteindrons pas les objectifs fixés. Il faut donc plus d'engagement, plus d'investissement, et surtout davantage de volonté politique. Le monde doit comprendre que les ressources mobilisées en faveur de l'éducation des enfants et des jeunes, surtout des filles, mais aussi des femmes, qui sont souvent oubliées, sont les meilleurs investissements que nos gouvernements pourraient faire.

3.5 L'innovation pour le développement durable, Objectif 2030, tel est le thème que nous avons décidé d'aborder pour le Secrétariat pour thème de la Conférence ibéro-américaine que l'Andorre présidera jusqu'en 2020 et culminera dans nos vallées d'ici exactement un an, le sommet des chefs d'État et de gouvernement des pays ibéro-américains. L'événement le plus important que notre pays n'ait jamais organisé.

3.6 Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs, cette 40<sup>e</sup> Conférence générale est l'occasion pour la Principauté d'Andorre de réaffirmer son soutien aux valeurs de l'UNESCO dont le mandat garde plus que jamais tout son sens et sa raison d'être. Forte de cet engagement, tous les deux ans, l'Andorre organise l'Art Camp : des couleurs pour la planète, une rencontre internationale de deux semaines ouvertes aux artistes venus de cinq continents, souvent de pays en conflit, cohabitent pour créer des œuvres d'art qui nous parlent d'un dialogue interculturel et de la paix entre les peuples.

3.7 L'Andorre accorde beaucoup d'importance aux conventions promues par l'UNESCO, et tout particulièrement à celles liées à la protection de notre Patrimoine commun, culturel et naturel. Les listes du Patrimoine mondial et du Patrimoine culturel immatériel sont une référence à l'échelle mondiale. Non seulement pour ce qui est de la sauvegarde de l'héritage et de notre passé, mais aussi en matière de diversité des expressions culturelles et des potentialités touristiques.

3.8 En Andorre, la Vallée du Madriu-Perafita-Claror inscrite au Patrimoine mondial depuis 2004, qui occupe 10 % de notre territoire, est un bon exemple de gestion qui cherche à trouver un équilibre entre l'activité humaine et la protection

de l'environnement et de la richesse naturelle. Dans ce sens, la Paroisse d'Ordino vient de présenter une candidature à l'UNESCO pour devenir territoire de la biosphère.

3.9 Finalement, l'Andorre, la France et l'Espagne travaillent ensemble pour mener de l'avant une candidature internationale qui témoigne de l'histoire singulière, unique au monde, de la construction institutionnelle de notre Principauté. Madame la Directrice générale, au nom de la Principauté d'Andorre, je vous encourage, vous et votre équipe, à poursuivre votre combat pour garantir que l'UNESCO continue d'être cet organisme sentinelle et multilingue, cet interlocuteur privilégié chargé de placer l'éducation, la science et la culture au service des progrès et de la paix partout dans le monde. Je vous remercie.

4. **The President:**

I now invite Her Excellency Honourable Riziki Pembe, Minister of Education and Vocational Training of the United Republic of Tanzania.

5.1 **Tanzania:**

*Bismillāh ir-rahmān ir-rahīm* (In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate). Honourable ministers and heads of delegations, your Excellency Ambassador Ahmet Altay Cengizer, President of the General Conference, Madam Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, Excellencies, Ambassadors and Permanent Delegates to UNESCO, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, *assalamu alaykum*. It is with great honour and pleasure that I stand here to address this 40th session of the General Conference of UNESCO on behalf of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania. On behalf of my Government I congratulate you Ambassador Ahmet Altay Cengizer for being elected to that well deserved position of the President of the 40th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

5.2 Mr President, I wish to reiterate that my Government will continue to value the work of UNESCO and commends the Secretariat under the able leadership of Ms Azoulay in ensuring that UNESCO implements its mandate as enshrined in its Constitution. Tanzania believes that UNESCO will continue to be a key stakeholder in our quest to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

5.3 Mr President, it remains a clear fact that there is a need to intensify the implementation of UNESCO's expertise and competencies in promoting the culture of peace in the minds of our people, alleviating poverty and fostering socio-economic development. The United Republic of Tanzania urges for increased collaboration in educational programmes for youth with a stronger linkage to technical and vocational training for job creation. It is an open truth that UNESCO can play a critical role in this vocational training for job creation. It is an open truth that UNESCO can play a critical role in these areas and it can really make a difference. My Government applauds UNESCO for its effective programme in basic, vocational and teacher education programmes that have been implemented in Tanzania. We strongly believe that the solutions to the challenges facing youth can be found within our policies, and through youths themselves. For that purpose, we congratulate UNESCO for creating a forum through which world leaders dialogued with young people on ways and means to deepen cooperation with a view of addressing the existing global challenges, including climate change. On this realization, UNESCO must continue to create opportunities for the young people to play an integral role in promoting and embracing the culture of peace, especially through education initiatives, as a tool for personal and social development and empowerment.

5.4 Mr President, while gathering here today to discuss important issues which fall under UNESCO's mandate, particularly promoting quality education, one of our Member States, Zimbabwe, has its education sector being negatively affected by the sanctions imposed since 2000. The imposition of these sanctions have had a severe impact on the country's economy. Thus, the primary and secondary education subsectors have failed to achieve the country's vision of increasing access and offering equitable and quality education. It is against this backdrop that the Heads of State and Government of Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) in a joint communiqué of their 39th summit held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in August 2019, called for an immediate lifting of sanctions to allow a socioeconomic recovery in the country. This call was also echoed by a statement issued on 25 October 2019 by the Chairman of the African Union Commission. The United Republic of Tanzania, therefore, appeals to all UNESCO Member States to support the SADC region in its call for the removal of all forms of sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe to pave way for a socioeconomic transformation and economic development of the country.

5.5 Last but not least, the United Republic of Tanzania congratulates the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, His Excellency Abiy Ahmed Ali for his efforts in promoting peace, particularly for his initiative to resolve the border conflict with neighbouring Eritrea which earned him the deserving award of the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize. I thank you for your kind attention.

6. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. Our next speaker is Her Excellency Ms Anna Ekström, Minister for Education of Sweden.

7.1 **Sweden:**

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, distinguished delegates, dear friends, it is a true honour for me to address the 40th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

7.2 Sweden fully aligns itself with the European Union statement and Sweden sees UNESCO's work in order to be a champion for high quality education, not only as a work for human rights but also as a work for sustainable development. Let me start by confirming Sweden's strong support for UNESCO and its increasingly important mandate. We are all so proud that Sweden is the largest donor of voluntary funds to UNESCO. I am also proud to be part of the first feminist government in the world. This means that the Swedish Government puts equality between women and men, girls and boys, at the very top of our agenda. Without gender equality we cannot truly have human rights or sustainable development.

Therefore, I was particularly pleased to see that the evaluation conducted by MOPAN in early 2019 confirms that UNESCO has made important progress on gender equality. UNESCO has a key role in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. However, a stronger focus on fewer working areas, reforms of the field network and strengthening of the corporate services are needed.

7.3 Mr President, Greta Thunberg has become the voice of millions of children all over the world, urging us to take action on climate change and indeed, we only have 10 years left to reach the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda. The next Medium-Term Strategy must therefore get it right. I would like to highlight a few issues that are of special importance to my Government regarding this strategy. First, we wish to see a continued strong human rights-based approach and a gender transformative perspective in all UNESCO sectors. The strategy must also be focused on the realization of the SDGs including on climate change.

7.4 Mr President, we expect UNESCO's leadership to be a strong and proactive voice on fundamental human rights including on gender equality. Human rights are the foundation of UNESCO's Constitution and should be promoted at every opportunity. We welcome UNESCO's leadership in comprehensive sexuality education, on academic and artistic freedom globally and nationally. UNESCO's mandate to promote freedom of expression has never been more relevant and UNESCO must continue to be at the forefront. Recently, we have seen a negative development across the world: journalists, artists and authors are increasingly threatened, especially women journalists are often harassed both for what they write and for being women who express themselves.

7.5 Mr President, we strongly support the peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and the opportunities this brings. We continue to stress that the imprisoned Swedish-Eritrean journalist Dawit Isaak should be released. Next year in October, Sweden will host a high-level international forum in Sweden on Holocaust remembrance and combating anti-semitism. The Forum, which will be held in the city of Malmö, will focus on three themes: Holocaust remembrance, Holocaust education and the new role of social media.

7.6 Mr President, UNESCO's regular budget has remained the same for more than a decade, while Member States continue to ask more from the Organization. With several key reforms in place and given the positive MOPAN assessment, UNESCO should have its regular budget normalized to a level that compensates for cost increases. Sweden supports the regular budget level of \$534 Million. Over the last years, Sweden has contributed with less earmarked and more long-term voluntary contributions to UNESCO. However, our support comes with high expectations, both on results and that UNESCO strengthens its communications on results. We encourage other donors to follow us to enable UNESCO to fulfil its important mandate and we really want the "Partners Forum" to continue.

7.7 Sweden has, together with more than 40 other countries, proposed an amendment to UNESCO's Constitution regarding improved measures for assessed contributions. Assessed contributions are the bedrock for funding in the United Nations and they ensure legitimacy and universality of its decisions. The Swedish Government counts on your support for a well-resourced multilateralism and I look forward to the final approval of this amendment during the General Conference. Sweden is a strong friend of multilateralism and a strong critical friend of the United Nations system and UNESCO. We need common institutions based on international law. We need each other. The founding principles of UNESCO might be almost 75 years old but they have never been more urgent than today. Thank you, Mr President.

## 8. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. I now invite Her Excellency Ms Li Andersson, Minister of Education of Finland.

### 9.1 **Finland:**

Mr President, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board. Madam Director-General, distinguished delegates, as an international community we are currently facing shared global challenges on an unforeseen scale. As we are striving towards carbon neutrality and witness the freedom of expression being challenged globally, we need to ensure that UNESCO is well-equipped to provide solutions to the challenges at hand. An extremely worrying trend towards shrinking democratic and civic space is taking place. Freedom of expression, media freedom and safety of journalists are being challenged in many parts of the world. Journalists are murdered and artists and scholars detained. Hate speech both offline and online is proliferating. Shockingly, as many as nine in ten journalists' murders remain unsolved globally. Freedom of expression is pivotal to free and open societies to meet the global challenges ahead of us. We need the voices of vibrant civil societies and principled journalists to echo strongly around the world. No country big or small is able to address these global challenges alone. We can solve our common problems such as the climate crisis and the global learning crisis only with determined multilateral cooperation.

9.2 UNESCO as a normative actor with strong convening power and with the right rights-based approach is in a unique position to help Member States find solutions to these global crises. We need cooperation beyond governments. Partnerships with NGOs, academia, cities and the private sector are crucial. Finland welcomes UNESCO's strategies on partnerships and resource mobilization. We welcome the inclusion of youth in decision-making as they are the ones that ultimately have to bear the responsibility of our decisions.

9.3 Excellencies, UNESCO is more relevant than ever. Illiteracy is a persistent challenge in many parts of the world. It is most common among the women in the poorest households as illiteracy is the root cause which leads to other hardships such as unemployment and social exclusion. Therefore, we need to ensure that every child acquires adequate skills in reading and mathematics. However, today it is not enough that everyone learns to read and count. In the midst of so-called fake news and disinformation, we need also to ensure that everyone has the chance to acquire strong skills in media literacy and in critical thinking. Finland supports UNESCO's leading role in reaching the SDG 4 on education as we are adapting to quick technological change and transition to a carbon-free world. Learning needs to be a lifelong journey. Quality education throughout life is an efficient way to combat poverty. It is also a powerful tool to reach other crucial goals such as gender equality, health, as well as water and ocean sustainability. UNESCO's role is unique in promoting diversity

of cultural expressions and protecting cultural heritage. This includes defending shared heritage from destruction, looting and trafficking. Finland hopes the Culture Forum will push the global agenda on cultural policies forward.

9.4 Ladies and gentlemen, we are starting the preparations of the Medium-Term Strategy as we are accelerating towards the critical stage in our determined efforts to reach the goals of Agenda 2030. UNESCO's strategy needs to be a part of the United Nation's system-wide efforts to tackle the global challenges and therefore it needs to be fully adjusted to Agenda 2030. It is also vital that the human rights-based approach is integrated. We also need data for evidence-based development strategies

9.5 Mr President, Finland supports the strategic transformation process, and the implementation of the comprehensive reform package of the United Nations Secretary-General also has our full support. We are pleased to see that assessments show that UNESCO is moving in the right direction. As Member States, it is our collective responsibility to ensure that there is a match between ambition, expectation and resources. To meet the extremely urgent and ambitious objectives we are setting for UNESCO, the Organization needs to be funded properly. This calls for the budget scenario of \$534.6 million. Finland and the other Nordic countries are long-standing supporters of UNESCO. It is crucial that UNESCO remains a key actor and strengthens its position in effective and rules-based multilateralism. This way we can overcome the global challenges that we are currently facing. Finland aligns itself with the European Union statement. Thank you.

10. **The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite His Excellency Mr Nataphol Teepsuwan, Minister of Education of Thailand to take the floor.

11.1 **Thailand:**

Mr President, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to represent Thailand and join previous speakers in congratulating your Excellency on being elected as President of this session of the General Conference.

11.2 Thailand has hosted the UNESCO Bangkok Office since its establishment in 1961. Ever since, we have continuously valued our cooperation and collaboration with UNESCO in all areas of UNESCO's mandate, in particular the area that supports all Sustainable Development Goals. We understand that resources to bring about the ideas into action require strong commitment from Member States. Therefore, we propose to adopt the Draft Programme and Budget for the next biennium with the zero real growth plus (ZRG+) scenario to ensure smooth transition of relevant programmes for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

11.3 As UNESCO is the leading agency of SDG 4, Thailand is ready to support UNESCO's activities related to SDG 4, focusing on inclusive, equitable, quality education and promoting lifelong learning. Our Constitution stipulates that all children in Thailand can have access to 15 years of quality education, from pre-primary level to upper secondary level, free of charge. In terms of improving educational quality, the Ministry has put great efforts into preparing Thai citizens for the twenty-first century and the digital era. We have given high priority to early childhood care and development to ensure the readiness of our children for higher levels of education. We encourage our students to develop critical thinking skills at a very young age and have promoted interactive learning by utilizing digital learning resources. We have taken a holistic approach to improve the teacher education and training system. Teachers will have more opportunities to select and to acquire additional new skills that are more relevant to their professional development. In addition, the linkage of education to the professional world of work is our priority. The engagement of the business sector in supporting vocational colleges in curriculum design, teaching, learning process and assessment will enable our students to learn theories in schools and gain on-the-job training experiences in companies, enhancing their employable skills in line with the labour market.

11.4 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, in the southeast Asian region, it is unfortunate to say that out-of-school children and youth is still a major issue with several Asian Member States. As this year Thailand is Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), we cooperated with ASEAN, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), UNESCO and UNICEF in convening a regional conference. The conference focused on out-of-school youth and children to enable our formal school systems to serve more children and youth, and to keep those who are presently in schools from dropping out and provide learning opportunities outside of schools.

11.5 Earlier this month, the ASEAN Summit adopted the Bangkok Declaration on Advancing Partnership in Education for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the ASEAN region. This is an initiative of Thailand aiming to work with all sectors including all partners inside and outside of the region, as well as the global community on the grounds of mutual benefit for the advancement and sustainable future for all. This year, Thailand also set up a regional centre – "SEAMEO Regional Center for Sufficiency Economy Philosophy for Sustainability" – aimed at strengthening education for sustainable development in our region.

11.6 In the field of science and social human sciences, Thailand also works closely with the Global Young Academy to promote and develop a new generation of scientists. We will continue to promote research and innovation in parallel with ethical issues to support inclusive and equitable society. We want to reduce harmful impacts that may result from science, technology and innovation. On this occasion, we appreciate UNESCO's representation in the two conferences held in Bangkok, and in joining the opening of the new International Training Centre in Astronomy, as a category 2 centre in Chiang Mai. This centre aims to strengthen research and educational capacity for the future.

11.7 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Thailand supports the role of UNESCO in promoting culture on cross-cutting issues for sustainable development. We attach great importance to nominating tangible and intangible cultural heritage on UNESCO lists as a way to protect and to preserve local and national wisdoms, arts, culture, tradition and customs. On a final note, Thailand would like to reaffirm our commitments to UNESCO. We will continue to collaborate with UNESCO in all of its areas of expertise to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Thank you for your attention.

**12. The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. I invite Her Excellency Ms Iselin Nybø, Minister of Research and Higher Education of Norway.

**13.1 Norway:**

Madam Director-General, Excellencies, dear friends of UNESCO, UNESCO inspires people all over the globe. Its mandate represents the value for the future and for achieving Agenda 2030. UNESCO inspires us to take knowledge-based action that affect our everyday lives. Its approach is human rights based. Quality education for all, freedom of expression and press freedom, open access to research, heritage and respect for diversity in cultures and languages, these are among UNESCO's most important contributions to the sustainable development agenda.

13.2 Gender equality must be an important part of UNESCO's work. UNESCO has an important normative role. Its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals gives it a critical position globally. Alignment with Agenda 2030 is key. This is why Norway strongly supports UNESCO. We welcome UNESCO's willingness to strategically transform. Changes in the Organization must be prioritized in such a way as to meet the ambitions of the United Nations Secretary General's reform agenda. The aim is a more coherent effective and efficient United Nations.

13.3 UNESCO cannot do everything. We as Member States must show willingness to prioritize within UNESCO's broad mandate. Full and timely payments of our dues is essential for the financial health of UNESCO. The Organization depends on predictable and stable financing to fulfil its mandate. As a founding member of the United Nation, Norway urges all Member States to make every effort to pay their outstanding contributions.

13.4 Dear friends of UNESCO, United Nations reports show that the ocean is increasingly affected by temperature changes. Marine science and knowledge-based strategies are central to achieving the SDGs, and Norway fully supports the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) is also a key player. We must work together in new ways so that science, technology and innovation can help sustain our global common in the best possible way. We must join forces to accelerate the transition to universal open access, so that research can truly fulfill its role as a global common good. How can we be serious about leaving no one behind, if we are not willing to share our knowledge?

13.5 The world has never been more interconnected and never before has there been more students studying abroad. I am therefore pleased that we will adopt a global convention on the recognition of higher education qualifications. We need this convention. Some migrants do not have degree documents. A UNESCO qualifications passport can help people continue their education or access decent work. I commend UNESCO for quickly launching a pre pilot. I am proud that the President of the Sámi parliament of Norway will participate in the General Conference and for her contribution to the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

13.6 Dear friends, we need collective actions to address the global challenges. Norway is a consistent supporter of the United Nations and a rules-based international order, and one of the largest financial contributors to UNESCO and to the United Nations as a whole. Our international order is under pressure. Norway wishes to defend the multilateral system and a rules-based multilateral order which we have all benefited from. We must work to strengthen institutions that matter to our security, economy and welfare. We must defend what we have and together become stronger for the future. Whatever the questions and challenge we have before us, education and science, culture and communication are all part of both the answer and the solution. Thank you for your attention.

**14. The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. The next speaker is His Excellency Mr Jernej Pikalo, Minister of Education, Science and Sport of Slovenia.

**15.1 Slovenia:**

Madam Director-General, Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, if one can say something it is that we live in times of immense transformation. Not just digital but societal transformation is the one that is ruling over our lives. So these are, as we always say, interesting times. The Republic of Slovenia remains committed to its position that UNESCO, with its 74 years of history, presents the most relevant, and with its expertise also the most unique of international organizations, where States can work together towards international peace and security. Through education, science, culture, heritage and so forth, these are missions that UNESCO does so well in terms of preserving what we have achieved after the Second World War.

15.2 Let me now reflect first of all on the key priorities that Slovenia set itself for its membership of the Executive Board from 2015 and 2019, and they have been successfully accomplished. First of all, we were and we will remain, strong advocates of multilateralism with the United Nations at its core because this is what we all need, and because this is what this world needs. Secondly, I think refocusing priorities to the mission of UNESCO is probably the most important part. UNESCO is the intellectual power of the United Nations system. UNESCO has the unique vision of inviting consultants, intellectuals, people from grassroots to come and work with us – not just politicians, but people from all walks of life, people from various intellectual backgrounds. This is what we need to do in our repositioning, because this is what we call in political language, a bottom-up approach. Thirdly, the sustainable development agenda can only be realized, as my Norwegian colleague has just said, through joint efforts. Our goals, the Sustainable Development Goals, cannot be and they will not be met by any single or several countries. They can only be met jointly. And that is our position.

15.3 In our societies, sometimes our people think that Sustainable Development Goals are not for us, that they are for some other countries. But what I keep saying to them is that "no, they are for us". They are something that we must achieve. This is something that, at least in my society, is not so widely known and is something that we must work towards.

15.4 Ladies and gentlemen, in this respect I would like to recall the importance of the open educational resources (OER). Slovenia was a leading country in this initiative and hopefully UNESCO will adopt the recommendation on OER at this session of the General Conference. This will help other States to work with policy issues, to work with people from all walks of life on open educational resources. This will also work towards SDG 4. We are ready and we are committed to go on with this because I think it is a great initiative and UNESCO has done so much about it.

15.5 Furthermore, Slovenia fully recognizes UNESCO's new efforts in the field of artificial intelligence because, humanity is at a crossroads. Artificial intelligence will bring new things that we have not seen so far. Therefore, we must work together to tackle the challenges that artificial intelligence represent. In this light, the Slovenian Government also proposed the establishment of the international centre on artificial intelligence under the auspices of UNESCO. I strongly hope that the final decision on this centre will be successfully pushed through at this session of the General Conference. We also consider that the strategic transformation of UNESCO should and must remain a top priority. A zero nominal growth budget – something that the Director General has proposed – also has our full support. Let me conclude by saying that we welcome the new dynamics of UNESCO. We see new ambitions. We see a lot of new visibility. In this, let us focus on the mandate of UNESCO, because for us and for humanity this will bring new, very positive things. Thank you so much.

16. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. I now invite His Excellency Dr Naron Hang Chuon, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports of Cambodia.

17.1 **Cambodia:**

Your Excellency, Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, Mr Chairperson of the UNESCO Executive Board, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Cambodian Delegation, I would like to thank Ms Audrey Azoulay for her commitment, devotion and achievements during her mandate. Likewise, I would like to congratulate His Excellency, Mr Ahmet Altay Cengizer, the newly-elected President of the General Conference. With your leadership and guidance, we are confident that the General Conference will yield fruitful results and reach a successful conclusion. I would like to thank UNESCO for its tremendous efforts to help promote education, science, conservation of culture and free press among others, making the world a better place.

17.2 It is my great pleasure to inform you that to construct the defenses of peace in the minds of our young people and educate them for the future, the Royal Government of Cambodia is fully committed to the Sustainable Development Goals and embarks on education reform by focusing on improving the quality of education through the implementation and expansion of the New Generation Schools (NGS) and equipping students with twenty-first century skills, including hard and soft skills to become good national and global citizens, introducing curriculum review and inquiry teaching methods, teacher education and school-based management. Cambodia promotes inclusive education through the expansion of multilingual programmes for ethnic minorities, and special education programmes for children with disabilities.

17.3 Cambodia continues to improve equitable access to education at all levels by expanding scholarship programmes, school meals to disadvantaged students and provision of dormitories to girls. Cambodia also promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all through online basic education for out-of-school children, with the support of UNESCO. In the area of higher education, Cambodia has launched a higher education reform focusing on improving teaching and learning capacity in STEM and agriculture, improving the quality and relevance of research and strengthening governance of higher education institutions, to produce graduates equipped with transferable skills and knowledge, especially in STEM and agriculture.

17.4 To respond to the rapid growth of globalization and technology in this digital age, we have established a centre for digital education to give our young people the opportunity to link up with the digital world by encouraging students to use technology to solve problems, and also with the participation of the business sector. To avoid skills mismatch, Cambodia has embarked on teacher reform to introduce new teaching methods to produce learning with twenty-first century skills.

17.5 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, to provide a robust legislative framework to promote the rights to information and with support from UNESCO and relevant stakeholders, Cambodia has drafted a law on access to information and has commemorated World Press Freedom Day and the International Day for Universal Access to Information. We are committed to fostering freedom of expression, access to information and a vibrant media ecosystem through various initiatives, including combating fake news, hate speech and racial discrimination.

17.6 Cambodia is giving high-priority to cultural conservation as a means to promoting sustainable development by strengthening national identity and protecting traditional knowledge within the framework of the national policy for culture, developed in close cooperation with UNESCO. The International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historical Site of Angkor (ICC-Angkor) has invested over \$300 million through UNESCO and bilateral cooperation between 1993 and 2018, with the participation of more than 30 countries. The ICC-Angkor model is a unique forum of excellence and has also been successfully applied to other sites in Cambodia, including Preah Vihear and Sambor Prei Kuk temples.

17.7 Mr President, I cannot conclude my speech without mentioning Angkor, the jewel of world heritage. We would like to convey gratitude to UNESCO and the international coordination committee, chaired by France and Japan, which for 25 years have been committed to its preservation with wisdom and dedication. We look forward to further strengthening our close cooperation with the UNESCO Phnom Penh Office to jointly address challenges and capitalize on opportunities to promote sustainable development for the people of Cambodia and those of the globe. Thank you for your kind attention.

18. **The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. The next speaker is Her Excellency Ms Jeanne Simeon, Minister of Education and Human Resource Development of the Seychelles.

19.1 **Seychelles:**

Mr President of the Conference, Madam Director-General of UNESCO, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, my delegation and I would like to congratulate you, Mr President, on your election as President of the 40th session of the General Conference and express our deep appreciation to the outgoing President, Her Excellency Ms Zohour Alaoui, for her outstanding work. On behalf of the Seychelles Government, I also wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay, for her leadership of the Organization and her strong support for Africa and small island developing States.

19.2 Mr President, Seychelles is convinced that no serious development can be sustainable without a strong culture component. In this sense, Seychelles highly appreciates UNESCO's continued support in the protection and preservation of tangible and intangible heritage. Our country is currently investing in national capacity development in various aspects of culture. To this end, Seychelles organized two workshops this year in collaboration with UNESCO's regional office for the eastern region on the role of media in promoting cultural diversity and on the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural objects in Seychelles.

19.3 Our culture sector is also focusing on methodology and process in carrying out an inventory of Seychelles intangible cultural heritage (ICH). Seychelles submitted a nomination this year for the Moutia dance, originally associated with slaves and their direct descendants, to be inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity for consideration by the ICH Intergovernmental Committee in December 2019 in Colombia. This traditional dance has evolved into one of the main symbols of our shared culture as a nation and our national identity. Seychelles is seeking the valuable support of all in this nomination.

19.4 In the field of communication and information, Seychelles recently set up a national committee to establish a national register for the Memory of the World programme. This new structure will bring greater visibility to our documentary heritage for peace, access to information and sustainable development through cultural tourism.

19.5 In education, Seychelles is committed to implementing Agenda 2030 to provide quality education for all, thus leaving no one behind. This agenda has been integrated in the Ministry of Education's medium-term strategy for 2018-2022. Like other countries, Seychelles has been facing a shortage of qualified teachers at all levels of education. Strategies used to curb this problem include the continuous training of teachers with the assistance of international partners. In this context, the Seychelles is very grateful for the support provided by the International Institute of Capacity Building in Africa in the development of new policies, frameworks and relevant training to enhance the quality of education. TVET is indeed a top education priority for Seychelles, considering the country's increasing dependence on foreign labour and high unemployment rate among the youth. As part of its strategy plan in collaboration with World Bank and other partners the Ministry of Education is setting up a national technical school for upper secondary students which will open its doors in January 2022.

19.6 Seychelles demonstrated its commitment to the development of higher education on the African continent in October 2019 when it ratified the UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States 2014. I will be happy to hand over this instrument of acceptance during this General Conference to the Director-General of UNESCO. Over the years, the Minister of Education has received considerable technical assistance from the International Bureau of Education (IBE) in curriculum development, assessment, early childhood education, STEM and teacher education and continuous professional development. We are grateful.

19.7 Mr President, this year Seychelles is particularly grateful to the Executive Board for considering its proposal for the establishment of the Institute of Early Childhood (ICD) as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO. Our country has over the years fully committed itself to the provision of quality early childhood care and education. The final endorsement by the General Conference will allow ICD to proceed with its work in enhancing and ensuring the quality of early childhood development in Seychelles. It will also mean that our country will be in a better position to advocate and promote best practices in the eastern region and internationally. ICD has already hosted an international biennial early childhood care (ECC) conference to promote and share practices in early childhood care and education (ECCE).

*(The speaker continues in French)*

19.8 À ce point, nous voudrions exprimer notre profonde appréciation à tous les États membres qui nous ont apporté leur soutien. Un grand merci à tous. Nous sommes extrêmement reconnaissants à la Directrice du Bureau régional de l'Afrique de l'est de l'UNESCO et son équipe pour son soutien dynamique, son engagement et son sens de professionnalisme continu dans l'organisation de nombreux ateliers de formation nationaux et régionaux, dans notre pays et dans la région. Seychelles apprécie fortement l'action et les interventions de l'UNESCO dans ses différents domaines de compétence, et renouvelle son appui à l'Organisation dans la perspective d'aider les pays membres à atteindre leurs ODD. Je vous remercie de votre aimable attention.

20. **The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite His Excellency Mr Yero Balde Abdoulaye, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Guinea.

21.1 **Guinée:**

Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Madame la Directrice générale de l'UNESCO, Mesdames et Messieurs les Chefs de délégations, Mesdames et Messieurs, vous me permettez que mes premiers mots à l'adresse de cette auguste assemblée soit le message de paix, de concorde et de gratitude à l'endroit de l'UNESCO, et lui renouveler à l'occasion de cette 40<sup>e</sup> Session de la Conférence générale le salut fraternel et amical du peuple de Guinée et de Son Excellence le Président Alpha Condé. Il m'est aussi agréable au nom de la

Délégation de la République de Guinée, de féliciter chaleureusement Monsieur le Président pour sa brillante élection à la tête de cette 40<sup>e</sup> Session de notre Conférence générale.

21.2 Aujourd'hui encore, plus qu'hier, la vision du Gouvernement guinéen est de promouvoir une société où hommes et femmes s'épanouissent par le biais d'une politique nationale d'éducation intégrant une perspective d'apprentissage tout au long de la vie pour tous. C'est le lieu pour moi de renouveler les sincères remerciements du Gouvernement de la Guinée à la communauté internationale dont les divers appuis nous ont permis d'obtenir des résultats importants en matière d'enseignement, d'éducation, et de culture. Dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre du mandat de l'UNESCO visant notamment à diriger et coordonner la réalisation de l'ODD 4, Éducation 2030, mon pays sollicite que cette 40<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence générale définisse un cas de concertation, de coordination et d'action avec l'Union africaine pour une meilleure exécution de la stratégie d'éducation continentale.

21.3 Monsieur le Président, Mesdames et Messieurs, la multiplicité et la complexité des défis qui interpellent nos États dans le contexte d'un monde globalisé invitent certes à une mobilisation des ressources financières, mais aussi et surtout à des réformes de structure et de méthode tendant à mieux cerner les problèmes et les réalités à la base. C'est dans cette dynamique que le Gouvernement guinéen a engagé des réformes majeures dans tous les secteurs de développement, particulièrement ceux de la compétence de notre Institution, à savoir l'éducation, la richesse scientifique, l'innovation technologique, la culture et l'environnement dans le cadre de la réalisation des objectifs de développement durable.

21.4 C'est aussi dans ce cadre qu'il faut situer la vaste réforme du système éducatif dont les réflexions sont confiées à un groupe de cadres qui ont la mission de renouveler fondamentalement nos systèmes éducatifs en articulant les différents secteurs et en privilégiant l'atteinte d'objectifs économiques et socioculturels, qui serviront au fondement de la Guinée émergente que nous envisageons dans les prochaines années. Et c'est parce que nous voulons réaliser ce programme en respectant notre environnement et nos valeurs culturelles que nous restons mobilisés autour des projets phares de conservation des réserves de biosphères du Mont Amba, de la Forêt de Ziama, du Parc national du Haut-Niger, et du Parc national de Badiar, tous au Patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO.

21.5 Vous conviendrez avec nous que ce projet mérite une attention toute particulière et un soutien actif de la communauté internationale afin de sauvegarder ces éléments constitutifs du Patrimoine immatériel et scientifique de l'humanité, et d'assurer également le retour dans nos pays respectifs des biens matériels et immatériels vandalisés. En attendant, cette ambition des autorités politiques de faire de la Guinée un pays émergent est déclinée dans la vision Guinée 2035 articulée autour des différents composants de la société guinéenne, dans sa jeunesse. N'oubliez pas que près de 70% des guinéens ont moins de 35 ans.

21.6 En attendant des lendemains meilleurs pour nous, l'Afrique est pour le moment confrontée à des problèmes majeurs qu'il convient de prendre en compte. À commencer par les africains eux-mêmes. C'est à dire extirper du continent l'analphabétisme, la famine, les maladies, l'intolérance, et surtout la destruction de l'environnement. À ce titre, il serait souhaitable que l'apport de l'UNESCO, en plus de nos propres efforts, soit particulièrement requis pour renforcer la portée du système éducatif dans sa globalité. Aussi, il faut rappeler que c'est à travers un savant usage entre éducation, science et culture que l'Afrique pourra se doter des ressources humaines de qualité pour accélérer son développement économique et socioculturel.

21.7 Mesdames et Messieurs, afin de terminer, je remercie l'UNESCO pour l'accroissement de son financement au secteur de l'éducation en Afrique. Cela indique clairement que l'action de l'UNESCO en Afrique va s'amplifier et se consolider à travers des programmes et projets novateurs, porteurs de croissance soutenue, afin de contribuer à faire reculer les frontières de la pauvreté, de l'analphabétisme, et de l'ignorance. Avant de terminer j'aimerais aussi également adresser mes vives félicitations au Directeur régional Afrique de l'ouest de l'UNESCO pour tout l'appui qu'il nous apporte dans la mise en place de nos programmes d'éducation en Guinée. Je souhaite plein succès aux travaux de la 40<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence générale de l'UNESCO. Je vous remercie.

## 22. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. Thank you. I now invite His Excellency Ms Sengdeuane Lachanthboune, Minister of Education and Sports of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

### 23.1 **République démocratique populaire lao :**

Monsieur le Président, Madame la Directrice générale de l'UNESCO, Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs, au nom de la Délégation de la République démocratique populaire Lao, et en mon nom personnel, je félicite chaleureusement Monsieur Altay Cengizer pour son élection en tant que Président de la 40<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence générale de l'UNESCO.

23.2 Monsieur le Président, ces dernières années, le Ministère d'éducation et des sports de la République démocratique populaire Lao a accordé une attention particulière sur l'accès pour tous à l'éducation et améliorer de la qualité de l'éducation avec l'assistance des partenaires au développement et des organisations internationales à travers les projets de développement de l'éducation et des sports. Cependant, les résultats de l'exécution du programme du développement de l'éducation de l'année scolaire passée étaient loin d'être satisfaisants. Notamment le taux de redoublement dans le primaire, et le taux d'abandon dans les premiers cycle du secondaire restent plus élevés que prévu. Plus grave encore, durant ces trois derniers mois, 541 écoles dans six provinces du pays ont été détruites par les inondations de pluie les plus ravagées. Cela a causé de lourdes pertes sur les ressources matérielles et pédagogiques au secteur de l'éducation et des sports, aggravant ainsi les difficultés en notre pays à atteindre l'Objectif 4 au développement durable.

23.3 Pour résoudre ces problèmes le Gouvernement laotien a accordé des projets d'amélioration de la qualité de l'éducation et des sports prioritaires dans 40 districts et régions éloignés dont les indicateurs éducatifs sont au-dessous de standard national. Pour ce faire, le Ministère de l'éducation a détaché 138 de ses fonctionnaires pour aller assister ces



régions sur place. Une directive particulière est de piloter le groupement des établissements scolaires dans le but de partager les ressources humaines, matérielles et pédagogiques entre eux. En même temps, les programmes de formation au perfectionnement pédagogique seront réservés aux enseignants. Quant aux chefs des établissements scolaires de tous les niveaux, ils seront bénéficiés de programmes de formation au développement des capacités pour la gestion de l'éducation, y compris la gestion des risques du désastre naturel et l'utilisation du Guide STEM en considérant l'égalité des sexes.

23.4 En outre, l'éducation technique et professionnelle est encouragée par le Gouvernement à travers les politiques stimulantes. Toutes ces mesures ont pour but d'accélérer l'atteinte des objectifs du développement durable. À cette époque où le monde se connecte de plus en plus, il est nécessaire d'inculquer le concept de la citoyenneté mondiale aux élèves depuis le niveau préscolaire. La République démocratique et populaire Lao, avec l'assistance d'une spécialiste de l'UNESCO travaillent ensemble pour insérer le concept de la citoyenneté mondiale dans les programmes scolaires.

23.5 Dans le domaine scientifique, nous avons approuvé la loi sur la sécurité de la radiologie et la loi sur la signature électronique. Nous avons créé l'Institut de gestion des sciences et de la technologie, et l'Institut des sciences écologiques et de la technologie biologique. Nous avons conduit les études sur plus de 20 espèces de plantes médicinales et nous avons trouvé un certain nombre de nouvelles espèces de plantes. À part cela, nous avons mené une recherche sur l'utilisation des logiciels pour la gestion scientifique et technologique. Dans le domaine culturel, cette année la Plaine de Jars a été approuvée comme troisième site du Patrimoine mondial de la République démocratique populaire Lao. La cérémonie de célébration officielle de ce site aura lieu le 22 mars 2020. Vous serez tous invités à participer.

23.6 Nous continuons à améliorer le Dossier Hin Nam No, réserve nationale à la frontière commune avec Phong Nha – Ke Bang du Viet Nam, et collecter des données complémentaires pour le patrimoine culturel intangible national dont la danse, lamvonglao, qui a été déjà soumise comme patrimoine culturel intangible de l'humanité et que le peuple Lao tout entier attend passionnément la bonne nouvelle de l'UNESCO.

23.7 Le Gouvernement Lao a accordé une attention particulière au sauvetage des objets antiques, du patrimoine national dans les lieux de l'exploitation des minerais dans une province au centre du Laos. Un comité de suivi est nommé et envoyé sur le terrain tous les mois pour l'enregistrement et la remise à l'État de ces objets. Le Gouvernement laotien a mis en place des projets de coopération avec les autres pays dans le domaine de l'archéologie, de la restauration et du développement des sites du Patrimoine mondial. Je saisis cette occasion au nom du Gouvernement laotien pour exprimer nos sincères remerciements et notre reconnaissance envers l'UNESCO, les gouvernements et les organisations étrangères qui soutiennent effectivement le Laos depuis toujours. Pour terminer, je souhaite à la 40<sup>e</sup> Conférence générale un beau succès.

24. **The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. The next speaker is His Excellency Dr Maszlee Bin Malik, Minister of Education of Malaysia.

25.1 **Malaysia:**

Mr President of the General Conference, Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, honorable ministers and heads of delegations, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, *selamat pagi, bonjour*, good morning. I would like to begin my speech by congratulating His Excellency, Mr Ahmet Altay Cengizer, on his appointment as the President of the 40th session of the General Conference. I would also like to congratulate Madam Director-General for her wisdom and perseverance in guiding this Organization for the past two years.

25.2 Honourable delegates, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan, once reminded us that ignorance and prejudice are the handmaidens of propaganda. Our mission therefore is to confront ignorance with knowledge, bigotry with tolerance and isolation with the outstretched hand of generosity. This quote aptly points out the current state we are in. The explosion of information has ironically brought about the rise of uncritical attitudes and mindsets in societies. Now we know more, but we appreciate each other less. We read more on the Internet and other devices but we have become less wise in dealing with our environment. As Richard Paul Evans, in his book "A Step of Faith" observes: "What a culture we live in. We are swimming in an ocean of information and drowning in ignorance". Our children are in the greatest danger of this epidemic of ignorance. They are the most susceptible to be swept away in the current of information overload. If they are not trained to think, complacency may weigh down their minds to be comfortable with what they know, without questioning anything, without digging deeper into the abyss of useless data. It is my conviction that education is the hope for humanity. The uncertain future can be secured through the values that I infuse in education. Education, more than the delivery of knowledge should provide students with the adequate instruments to develop critical and future proof minds. Education, too, must equip our children to be more inclusive and mutually respecting each other.

25.3 Ladies and gentlemen, the Malaysian laureate Zabar remarked that the leaders of today are responsible for moulding future individuals that are intellectually capable with vigorous characteristics. That is our rule today, to formulate the best possible remedy for intellectual ailments and to safeguard the values we hold dearly. This year's General Conference's theme of regeneration strikes a chord with us Malaysians. We are shaping our nation's direction with the help of our youth. Their voices, their opinions play a major part of who we are as a country. This is also one of the major pillars of our country's shared prosperity Vision 2030. Our people are our resources and our youth are our future. These are change makers for whom we are tailoring our learning systems.

25.4 In my speeches, at home, I often speak of education for all and education is everybody's responsibility. It is sort of a call to action for all education stakeholders and literally everybody in Malaysia to help us to ensure that initiatives for access to quality, inclusive and equitable education is methodically implemented. To pave the way for this, the Minister of Education is preparing an ecosystem that will enable all of our students, regardless of their abilities, locations, socio-economic background, to fully realize their potential. This is especially for inclusive education, for those with disabilities, the poor, indigenous communities and other marginalized societies. Our stance towards inclusive education is aligned with

our education policies and capacity building efforts with the current Fourth Industrial Revolution agenda. All students from pre-school to tertiary education should be equipped with the Fourth Industrial Revolution skills: communication, creativity, collaboration and critical thinking. We must change our lens to looking at education as part and parcel of an ongoing global efforts, and educating and re-educating the young and old to beware of the ignorance that can tear societies asunder. To achieve this, we are also resorting to big data and artificial intelligence, to ensure that our students choose the path suitable to their potential abilities and interests. The same tool is also used to avoid mismatching of future careers.

25.5 Ladies and gentlemen, I have faith at heart of our existence – our goals are aligned. We are all concerned for the future of our children. We also share overlapping values on the ethical use of information and the preservation of the planet. In this world of multilateralism, we must work as one team or one family of humanity under the banner of UNESCO and Sustainable Development Goals to overcome our mutual global problems. With that information I would like to quote the words of Jean Piaget: “The principal goal of education is to create men – and I should include here women too – who are capable of doing new things not simply of repeating what other generations have done. Men and women who are creative, inventive and discovers. The second goal of education is to form minds which can be critical, can verify and not accepting everything they are offered.”

25.6 Before I end my statement, I wish to thank UNESCO and the World Book Capital Advisory Committee for conferring the 2020 World Book Capital to the city of Kuala Lumpur. Kuala Lumpur World Book Capital 2020 will be an added attraction for visitors to Malaysia and 2020 will also be “Visit Malaysia Year”. I take this opportunity to invite all members to experience these events and I look forward to welcoming everyone to Malaysia. With that, thank you, *terima kasih, merci beaucoup*.

26. **The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite His Excellency Mr Ignazio Cassis, Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland.

27.1 **Suisse :**

Merci Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Madame la Directrice générale, Mesdames et Messieurs, je viens du côté sud des Alpes suisses, du Canton du Tessin. Ma langue maternelle suisse est l'italien, chaque semaine je me retrouve avec les collègues du Gouvernement, trois femmes et trois hommes, qui sont originaires d'autres cantons de la Suisse. Quatre parlent allemand, deux parlent français. Oui, Mesdames et Messieurs, la Suisse est multilingue. Et comme la langue n'est pas simplement une juxtaposition de mots et phrases, mais elle traduit une mentalité, un esprit, un moule, une culture, la Suisse est multiculturelle.

27.2 Vous vous demandez, mais, comment nous nous comprenons-nous ? Non, il n'y a pas de miracle, ni d'intelligence artificielle. Enfin, pas encore. Nous ne parlons pas non plus avec les mains. Tout réside en fait dans la volonté de nous comprendre. La rhétorique et l'humour sont mis à rude épreuve, je vous l'assure. Le fameux pragmatisme suisse découle d'ailleurs certainement de ce défi, tout au moins en partie. Mais cet effort de compréhension interculturelle est aussi un élément de notre stabilité et de notre prospérité en tant qu'État fédéral. C'est en ces mots que je défends constamment de ma position de Ministre issu d'une minorité.

27.3 Le multilatéralisme doit aussi incarner ce pluralisme, l'UNESCO et celle de tous ses États membres. Elle est l'enceinte de la diversité par excellence. Le droit à l'information, les échanges de jeunes, la protection des patrimoines culturels, sont autant d'enjeux à adresser ici. Je me réjouis de pouvoir représenter toutes les cultures de mon pays aujourd'hui, même en français plutôt qu'en italien. J'y suis habitué, aussi à l'allemand par ailleurs, la langue de la majorité, ou en anglais, comme Chef des Affaires étrangères.

27.4 Monsieur le Président, Mesdames et Messieurs, l'onde verte qui s'étend à travers les quatre coins du monde est issue d'un mouvement social soucieux pour notre environnement ; 7% de la surface émergée de la terre, soit la taille de la Chine, est sous protection d'un programme ou d'une convention de l'UNESCO. C'est dire combien notre Organisation est importante pour la biodiversité. La Suisse est engagée, avec trois sites naturels, bientôt quatre, inscrits au Patrimoine mondial, et deux réserves de biosphère.

27.5 Mais, qu'en est-il de la diversité culturelle, des langues, et des traditions ? Qu'en est-il de la diversité issue des minorités ? À tous les niveaux, global et local, les intolérances sont exacerbées. La standardisation de la pensée, ou le repli identitaire, entrent en conflit avec le respect de la liberté d'opinion et du droit à la différence. Le conformisme et la méfiance ont pris prééminence sur le dialogue. Où cela va-t-il mener ? Ou plutôt, où cela peut-il nous mener ? Il m'appartient aujourd'hui, il m'apparaît aujourd'hui important de s'engager aussi pour un climat de confiance, par le respect de la diversité des cultures, la tolérance, le dialogue et la coopération, qui sont un des meilleurs gages de la paix et de la sécurité internationale. Je viens de citer la déclaration universelle de l'UNESCO sur la diversité culturelle.

27.6 Monsieur le Président, Mesdames et Messieurs, la concentration des médias et l'uniformisation des contenus sont aussi au cœur de la préoccupation de pluralisme que j'ai partagée. C'est un des enjeux des progrès du numérique qui concerne le monde entier, et auquel mon pays n'échappe pas. La Suisse estime qu'il faut, qu'il est essentiel de préparer les sociétés au futur technologique et aux intelligences artificielles. Les questionnements sont nombreux. Une certaine crainte s'exprime devant l'inconnu, et les peurs ne sont jamais bonnes. Pour mieux dessiner les contours de ce futur, pour anticiper ces défis, notre pays soutient en particulier deux nouvelles initiatives.

27.7 Ces dernières lient le monde de la science à celui de la diplomatie, l'économie, à la politique au cœur de la Genève internationale et les deux initiatives sont la Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator, qui comme dit le nom, veut anticiper les effets de société liés à la numérisation et à l'intelligence artificielle, et la Swiss Digital Initiative, qui veut s'occuper des standards éthiques dans la gouvernance d'internet. Elles sont aussi pertinentes, ces initiatives, pour l'UNESCO, qui incarne la diplomatie de la connaissance. Je vous invite toutes et tous à développer toutes les synergies possibles avec ces initiatives.

27.8 Simultanément, il est nécessaire d'anticiper les savoirs et les compétences de demain pour la durabilité et le savoir-vivre ensemble. C'est le sens de la proposition suisse d'adaptation du mandat du Bureau international de l'éducation à Genève. Il doit permettre l'association des acteurs du travail, de l'économie, de la santé, des migrations, du numérique, ou encore de l'humanitaire, à l'architecture de l'éducation pour le XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle.

27.9 Monsieur le Président, Mesdames et Messieurs, fort de son expérience du fédéralisme et de son esprit de neutralité au point de vue national, politique, philosophique, et confessionnel, la Suisse continue à soutenir le mandat de l'UNESCO. Une UNESCO adaptée à ce nouveau siècle est toujours au service d'une coopération intellectuelle qui rapproche les peuples sans discrimination. Je vous remercie de votre attention.

28. **Le Président :**

Merci, Votre Excellence. Maintenant j'invite Son Excellence Monsieur Bruno Jean-Richard Itoua, Ministre de l'Éducation du Congo.

29.1 **Congo :**

Monsieur le Président de la 40<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Madame la Directrice générale de l'UNESCO, Mesdames et Messieurs, prenant la parole à ce haut moment du débat de politique générale, je voudrais, au nom de la Délégation de mon pays le Congo, et en mon nom propre, exprimer à vous-même, Excellence, Monsieur Ahmet Altay Cengizer, Président de la Conférence générale, ainsi qu'aux membres du Bureau de la 40<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence générale, mes très chaleureuses félicitations pour votre élection.

29.2 Estimant que l'UNESCO doit disposer de moyens financiers adéquats pour répondre aux objectifs de l'Agenda 2030, et analysant le Projet de budget 2020-2021 de notre Organisation, adopté dans le contexte de réductions budgétaires opérées en 2012, nous saluons l'efficacité de la Transformation stratégique de l'UNESCO, et le Congo se réjouit du budget de 1 329 115 300 dollars US dont 534,6 millions de dollars de contributions statutaires des États membres qui reflètent la prise en compte de l'ensemble des dépenses incompressibles.

29.3 Monsieur le Président, Mesdames et Messieurs, en dépit des efforts consentis, en vue du redressement et de l'ordre de diversification, les économies basées sur la production d'une matière première, comme celle du Congo, restent affectées par la persistance de la crise financière qui limite drastiquement les capacités des États à mobiliser les ressources idoines en vue d'atteindre les objectifs de développement durable.

29.4 Dans ce contexte, le Congo s'est doté en 2018 d'un plan national de développement PND 2018-2022, instrument de référence en matière de développement économique et social, concrétisation de la grande ambition de Son Excellence Monsieur le Président de la République Denis Sassou Nguesso dans son projet de société, la marche vers le développement. Ainsi, le développement du capital humain, avec l'éducation et la formation, sont retenus comme deuxième axe prioritaire, expression de notre ferme volonté d'en faire le premier levier du développement.

29.5 L'éducation et la formation sont donc des priorités que le Congo partage entièrement avec l'UNESCO. Le Congo continue à louer et à suivre les initiatives de l'UNESCO sur l'éducation. Éducation pour tous 2000-2015, Éducation inclusive et de qualité à l'horizon 2030, Éducation en priorité. Mais toutes ces initiatives n'ont de portée que si elles débouchent sur des projets concrets. C'est pourquoi le Congo se félicite des projets de coopération, et souhaite les voir se renforcer. Notamment le CFIT, China Fund Interest, lancé en 2012, portant sur la formation des enseignants aux technologies, l'information, la communication adaptées à l'éducation, l'appui à l'amélioration du système éducatif à travers le processus de 2019, axé sur l'amélioration de la gestion du système éducatif et la dotation pédagogique, la création de la chaire UNESCO en science de l'ingénieur à l'École nationale supérieure polytechnique de l'Université Marien Ngouabi à Brazzaville.

29.6 La dernière initiative lancée, Réflexions sur l'avenir et l'éducation, qui intervient au tiers de la période 2015-2030 est de nature à réinventer de nouveaux modes d'éducation et de formation face aux nouveaux défis relatifs à l'accès à une éducation inclusive et de qualité pour tous. Ces défis sont pour le cas du Congo, le financement de l'éducation dans un contexte de crise financière, la problématique des enseignants face à une démographie scolaire galopante, l'amélioration de la qualité des programmes, des ressources éducatives et des enseignements, confrontés au renouvellement incessant des connaissances et aux besoins sociétaux en perpétuelle mutation, l'arrimage du système éducatif aux technologies, à l'information, et la communication pour l'éducation, à travers un programme de numérisation de l'enseignement supérieur dénommé TIC'sup.

29.7 Dans le domaine des sciences, des technologies et innovations, la nouvelle politique scientifique du Congo élaborée grâce au précieux concours de l'UNESCO, comporte cinq axes majeurs : le renforcement des capacités, l'amélioration de la gouvernance, le déploiement d'infrastructures sur l'ensemble du territoire, l'appui au développement économique et social, et enfin l'innovation technologique.

29.8 Le Congo, pays forestier, mise également dans son Plan national de développement PND 2018-2022, sur l'agriculture et l'élevage, la sécurité alimentaire, la santé humaine, l'eau, la conservation des forêts, l'énergie, et la prévention des risques dus au changement climatique. Ces domaines constituent les matières cibles sur lesquelles sont orientées les sciences, les technologies et l'innovation.

29.9 Dans ce domaine, certains programmes intergouvernementaux de l'UNESCO comme le PHI, le MAB, le Programme MOST, ont vu leurs comités nationaux revigorés afin d'en faire des leviers efficaces de la maîtrise des questions cruciales de l'eau, de l'environnement, et surtout de l'épineuse question des mutations sociales, notamment en milieu urbain, mis en exemple dans l'Agenda du Comité national MOST.

29.10 Dans le cadre de la lutte contre le changement climatique, la création d'un Fonds bleu pour le Bassin du Congo par le Président Denis Sassou Nguesso participe de la protection de l'environnement. S'agissant particulièrement du Bassin du Congo, deuxième poumon économique du monde, ce Fonds bleu mérite le soutien pluridimensionnel de

l'UNESCO pour être pleinement opérationnel. Nous saluons par ailleurs la tenue à l'occasion de cette session d'un Forum des Ministres de la culture visant à stimuler la réflexion sur les politiques culturelles et spécifiquement de leur rôle dans la consolidation de la paix et la promotion des éléments du Patrimoine immatériel de l'humanité.

29.11 Monsieur le Président, mesdames et messieurs, face aux restrictions de plus en plus accentuées des ressources budgétaires, le Congo note avec satisfaction que l'UNESCO a entrepris une transformation stratégique, à la fois courageuse et intelligente, ce pour lui permettre de continuer à jouer son rôle de laboratoire d'idées, l'organisme de référence et de veille sur les valeurs d'humanisme donnant toujours du sens à des thématiques majeures telles que la dimension culturelle du développement, la liberté de la presse, le libre accès à l'information, le développement des TIC, la construction de la société du savoir, la question du genre, du multilatéralisme et la promotion de la parité homme-femme. Ces thématiques constituent également le socle du programme du développement de notre pays. Mesdames et Messieurs, je vous remercie pour votre attention.

### 30. Le Président :

Merci Votre Excellence. Maintenant j'invite Son Excellence Monsieur Abdelhakim Belaabed, Ministre de l'Éducation nationale de Algérie.

### 1-31 الجزائر:

السيد رئيس المؤتمر العام، السيدة المديرية العامة، السيد رئيس المجلس التنفيذي، أصحاب المعالي، أصحاب السعادة، السيدات والسادة الحضور، بسعادة وفخر كبيرين أتشرف اليوم بإلقاء كلمة أمام هذا الجمع المتميز من الشخصيات القادمة من مختلف ربوع العالم ناقلاً تحيات وتقدير الجزائر حكومة وشعباً لمنظمة اليونسكو العريقة التي جعلت من التربية مرتكزاً ومن ثقافة سلوكاً ومن السلام منهجاً ومن تعزيز مثل الحرية والديمقراطية رسالة.

31-2 إننا في الجزائر قد قطعنا شوطاً معتبراً في مجال تحقيق الهدف 4 من أهداف التنمية المستدامة. فمنذ اعتماد المجتمع الدولي لخطة التنمية المستدامة لعام 2030، بادرنا بتشكيل لجنة وزارية مشتركة للتنسيق تتولى رصد وإعداد التقارير الوطنية بشأن تنفيذ أهداف التنمية المستدامة لتتواءم وأهداف البرامج الوطنية للتنمية. ويبدو ذلك واضحاً في حرص الدولة على حصول جميع المتعلمين على تعليم ذي جودة على جميع المستويات، وهذا ما تضمنه التقرير الوطني الطوعي لهذه اللجنة بعنوان 2019، الذي تم عرضه في أشغال الاجتماع الرفيع المستوى للمجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي بنيويورك في 16 تموز/جويلية 2019. ولا تزال الجهود متواصلة لتطوير أداء منظومة التكوين الوطني من أجل تجويد عروض التكوين وجعلها مواكبة لعالم المعرفة وسوق العمل. ولذا تم استحداث البكالوريا المهنية كشهادة يُختتم بها المسار المهني للمتعلم، والشروع في مراجعة قانون التوجيهي للتعليم العالي بهدف إرساء نموذج جديد ومتكامل للجامعة الجزائرية التي تعكس في مضمونها رؤية الدولة المستقبلية لتكون حاضنة للإبداع والابتكار.

31-3 السيدات والسادة الحضور، تسجل الجزائر بارتياح وتقدير كبيرين احتضانها بالتعاون مع اليونسكو لمقر المركز الإقليمي من الفئة 2 لصون التراث الثقافي غير المادي في أفريقيا. فبالإضافة إلى المجهود الوطني في مجال الثقافة، يأتي هذا الإنجاز ليشكل بالنسبة إلى البلدان الأفريقية مركز إشعاع لحماية التراث الثقافي غير المادي، ويرسخ دور اليونسكو في صون التراث الثقافي والطبيعي والمحافظة عليهما.

31-4 السيدات والسادة الحضور، أود أن أشير إلى أن تعزيز النهوض بحرية التعبير والصحافة كان ولا يزال يشكل أولوية في اهتمامات الدولة الجزائرية، وهذا ما ترجمته أحكام الدستور الأخيرة. فبالإضافة إلى المكتسبات المحققة في هذا المجال، إننا اليوم مقبلون على تكييف منظومتنا القانونية بما يعزز أداءها ويحقق الاستجابة لتطلعات شعبنا في مرحلة واحدة تُؤهل لممارسة ديموقراطية حقيقية. ومن جهة أخرى، فإن الواقع يظهر لنا وجهاً آخر يتمثل في توق شبابنا، من ذكور وإناث أظهروا للعالم الوجه المشرق والحقيقي والواعد للجزائر، إلى المساواة العامة والإصرار على تحقيق التقدم المادي والعدالة الاجتماعية ونبذ العنف والتطرف بكافة أشكالهما. ومن هذا المنطلق، أصبح الشباب يشكل قوة وفرصة ديموقراطية حقيقية وثمينة تجسد قيم السلم وتمكن من إرساء نظام حكم جديد يلبي تطلعاته المشروعة والملحة.

31-5 وبهذا الخصوص، السيدات والسادة الحضور، يُصنع الآن في بلد الجزائر تاريخ جديد لمجد تليد، صناعه شباب أحرار عقدوا العزم على رفع الأوزار ودفع الجزائر إلى مصف الكبار، تكريماً لحلم شهدائنا الأبرار الذين هم ليسوا أمواتاً بل أحياء عند ربهم يرزقون، وسائر الجزائريين المخلصين الأحرار برعاية صفوة مجاهديننا الأشاوس الأخيار الذين صدقوا ما عاهدوا الله عليه وانحازوا كمجاهدين شرفاء صناديد وكقياديين عسكريين وأبطال قوميين إلى مصلحة الأمة والوطن، وأمطوا اللثام عن المتربصين والكاندين والمتحدثين زوراً باسم الآخرين. فمنذ 22 شباط/فبراير الفارط، أخذ شعبنا الأبى على عاتقه مسؤولية التأثير في مجرى التاريخ للمطالبة بصوت عالٍ ورأس مرفوع وقلب مفتوح وبطريقة سلمية وحضارية من خلال مشاركة رصينة ومسؤولة لمختلف فئاته في مسيرات سلمية منتظمة في شأن جزائري - جزائري يخص الجزائريين دون سواهم، عكست نضجاً ووعياً كبيرين للمجتمع الجزائري وحساً مواطنياً رفيع المستوى من خلال دعوات المحافظة على الطابع الإنساني والسلمي للحراك الشعبي، ورفع شعارات الأخوة والتلاحم مع جيشه الوطني الشعبي لسلي جيش التحرير الوطني، وتقديم الورد لرجال الشرطة والأمن وتنظيف الأماكن بعد المغادرة لإثبات أن الجزائريين لم يخرجوا لشوارع البلاد بهدف التخريب أو بغية التاليب، وإنما من أجل التعبير عن تطلعاتهم إلى التغيير والإصلاح والمشاركة الفعلية من أجل المرور إلى جزائر جديدة. ولقد أبهر بذلك الشعب الجزائري العالم مقدماً درساً آخر من دروسه التاريخية وبطولاته القومية، ترسخت فيه وحدة الشعب التي جعلت كل أطرافه تنطق بكلمة سواء تجلت فيها الوطنية والقيم الجمهورية في ظل التمسك بالثوابت القومية ومقومات الهوية الوطنية من إسلام وعروبة وأمازيغية، ففتح لبلادنا أفق ديمقراطي جديد وبعثت روح متجددة في مشروعنا الوطني المبني على مبادئ ثورة أول نوفمبر المجيدة وقيمها النبيلة.

31-6 السيدات والسادة الحضور، في زخم هذه الوثبة التاريخية جاءت هذه المكاسب متناغمة مع مبادئ وأهداف منظمة اليونسكو الرامية إلى تعزيز مثل الحداثة والديمقراطية والعدالة والتنمية لتؤكد أن الجزائر متجهة بقوة وحزم وعزم نحو تأسيس نظام سياسي جديد كفيل بمعالجة التحديات الجسام التي تواجهها، عازمة على المضي قدماً من أجل تجسيد منهجي للتغيير المنشود عبر مكافحة الفساد واستعادة السير الطبيعي للمؤسسات وفق انتخابات محاطة بكل ضمانات النزاهة والشفافية، ستجرى بحول الله يوم الخميس 12 كانون الأول/ديسمبر 2019.

31-7 وبهذه المناسبة السعيدة، لا يسعني إلا أن أتقدم إلى السيد الوزير الإثيوبي السيد أبي أحمد على حصوله على جائزة نوبل للسلام، فله كل التحية والتقدير والاحترام نظير ما قدمه من جهود لترقية قيم السلم والحوار والمصالحة التي هي في صميم ولاية

منظمتنا. وفي الختام، يهمني أن أؤكد أن الجزائر تلتزم دائماً بتحقيق أهداف ومقاصد ميثاق اليونسكو، وتتطلع من هذا المنطلق إلى انتخابها لعضوية المجلس التنفيذي للمنظمة، والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله تعالى وبركاته.

**32. The President:**

*Merci Votre Excellence.* The next speaker is His Excellency Mr Vicente Abraao, Minister of Culture and Creative Industries of Cabo Verde.

**33.1 Cabo Verde:**

*(address delivered in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation):*

Mr President, Cabo Verde comes to the UNESCO 40th session General Conference imbued with a spirit of optimism and convinced that we are making our contribution for sustainable development, quality education accessible to all, diverse cultural services, development of creative industries, respect of copyright and the recognition of the creators' and artists' works. We are also optimistic about the country's efforts in regards to environmental protection and the ecosystem despite the adverse conditions over the past three years of poor agricultural yield due to the lack of rainfall.

33.2 Mr Presiden, Cabo Verde has made a strong commitment on qualifying its citizens. Our commitment to greater press freedom and freedom of speech in our society is also visible. It has been transposed into laws, and government actions that seek to promote the quality of our institutions through the implementation of best practices. We come to the General Conference confident in the belief that UNESCO can be a partner and an Organization even more profitable and central for the accomplishment of a humanity better prepared for the challenges of the century.

33.3 Excellencies, in the sector of culture and creative industries, Cabo Verde has invested in the last three to four years a strong rehabilitation programme of cultural heritage. We have an ongoing programme of \$8 million financed 100% by the Government. Cabo Verde ratified the Treaty of Marrakesh, the Copyright Treaty and the Performances and Phonograms Treaty, and it will soon ratify the Beijing Treaty. We also approved in 2017 the Copyright and Related Rights Law, a new law concerning collective management entities, and we also implemented a private copying law that allows better management of financial entities and artistic associations. We have also been focused on artistic training. We have founded the Cesária Évora Academy of Arts and have an innovative programme for financing students in need, which currently reaches more than 3,000 children in 22 country municipalities. This financial support programme proves the power of art and culture in transforming communities. In culture, we also have a structured programme to build cultural infrastructure in all the islands and communities. In Cabo Verde, cultural policies are implemented in a double sense: continuous training, union, transformation and empowerment of the communities, and on the other hand, as an auxiliary service to tourism. The results are evident in the creation of new employment. No less important is the work that is being carried out in the process of national crafts certification and in the creation of a job qualification system linked to the creative sectors through their introduction into the social security system.

33.4 We believe that culture and education are the most important instruments to promote peace and sustainability. It is worth the investment. In the education sector, the Government's objective is to build quality education where everyone has equal opportunities in building their future. The aim is for an education system that leaves no one behind and that is able to guarantee that no child, adolescent or young person leaves the education system due to financial difficulties and that has the capacity to effectively combat failure and school dropout. The focus of the country continues to be within the framework of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals: ensure quality education, gender equality, employment and decent work, innovation and the reduction of inequalities, aimed at achieving the dream of a developed Cabo Verde – one that is inclusive, democratic, open to the world, modern, safe, with full employment and full freedom.

33.5 In this sense, the country has been undertaking a profound reform of the education system that includes pre-school education, basic, secondary and technical education, extracurricular education, higher education, scientific research, technological development and innovation, as well as school social action. Cabo Verde is also experiencing progress in developing communication in the digital transition era. The country has invested more than 1 billion Cabo Verde escudos for the implementation of digital terrestrial television. At this time, some 70% of the population can receive the digital television signal. By 2020, the whole process will be completed, transforming Cabo Verde into one of the first countries in Africa with the transition completed. This step represents not only the improvement of quality and access to various types of content by the population, especially the most isolated, but also the promotion of plurality of information important to our democracy.

33.6 In terms of consolidating freedom of the press, important steps are being taken to ensure the full independence of the media and to consolidate the conditions of journalism to be free, impartial and exempt. We have strengthened the role of the regulatory authority for the media, and increased funding of public media companies. We have also increased the annual values of the State's incentive to private media. Cabo Verde is ranked 25th of 180 countries in the world ranking of press freedom. We would like to emphasize that Cabo Verde approved on 31 October 2019 the project of parity law that responding to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, which highlights the need to prioritize an integrated and crosscutting approach to gender policies to ensure that the specific needs of men and women are addressed in all spheres of governance. This important instrument will contribute to the consolidation of Cabo Verdean democracy.

33.7 Excellences, Cabo Verde has made an interesting journey in the protection and conservation of its natural heritage, which due to our archipelagic and insular condition is fragile and extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change. In 2003 we established a national network of 46 protected areas covering 18% of the land territory and 5.6% of the territorial sea. The goal is to reach 30% of the national protected territory. In addition, we have submitted two applications to the UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, the islands of Fogo and Maio, which we await with optimism for their approval. We are also committed to the international recognition of our geodiversity, through applications to the geopark category of some of the geosites of world interest for their historical, scientific and cultural value.

33.8 In conclusion, I would like to say that it is with joy that Cabo Verdean people have received the news that the expert commission of UNESCO recommended the inscription of the musical genre *Morna* on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. I would like also to stress here that this achievement in December at the 14th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Bogotá, Colombia, will be an honour and a pleasure for all Cabo Verdeans. It will represent the recognition of our journey and our historical legacy as a people and, as a nation. Thank you for your attention.

34. **The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. Thank you Excellency. I now invite His Excellency Mr Søren Hartman Hede, Deputy Minister of Education of Denmark.

35.1 **Denmark:**

Mr President of the General Conference, your 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. 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 proposals for amending UNESCO's Constitution and introduce term limits.

35.2 To many of us, and not least in the public domain, UNESCO is mostly known for its sites and designations such as the 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.

35.3 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 as 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 protected and taken the side of those on who we all depend to expand our knowledge and 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.

35.4 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 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.

35.5 UNESCO has a broad range of instruments that promote international recognized norms and standards. This function as a compass for the values we share. UNESCO plays an important role assisting States to implement conventions. In order for it to have a real impact we need to have guidelines and standards that we agree upon. Denmark is strongly committed to the strengthening of the global anti-doping system. We therefore regret that the recently held Conference of Parties to UNESCO's anti-doping convention was not able to adopt the proposed rules for consequences of non-compliance.

35.6 Climate change presents one of the greatest challenges ever faced. We need to transform our societies. We need new green industries and we need to be greening existing industries. 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 and 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.

35.7 UNESCO is responsible for SDG 4 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. And we need UNESCO to assist with concrete tools in order to accelerate local action across the world towards 2030. We look forward to collaborating with UNESCO and its Member States on all these issues. Thank you for your attention.

*Ms Monteith (Jamaica) takes the Chair*

36. **The President:**

I thank his Excellency for his statement and I now have the pleasure of giving the floor to His Excellency Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Union Minister for Education of Myanmar.

37.1 **Myanmar:**

Mr President, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Government and the people of Myanmar, I would like to congratulate Excellency Ahmet Altay Cengizer for being elected as President of the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference.

37.2 In Myanmar, the Ministry of Education has been implementing the National Education Strategic Plan 2016 to 2021 and the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP) 2018 to 2030. To ensure success, our Government has

increased expenditure on education every year in order to increase equitable and non-discriminatory access to quality education, significantly reduce dropout rates and improve completion rates of basic education. The Ministry has carried out free basic education programmes and provided free textbooks. One of the prominent educational reforms is that the basic education system has been transformed to a new K-12 programme. New curriculums equipped with twenty-first century schools were complete for all grades in 2022. From 2016 to 2019, new schools were opened and new school buildings constructed. As a result the number of students at all levels increased every year. The Ministry has also implemented the education recommendations put forward by the late Kofi Annan in the final report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. We would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the late Excellency Kofi Annan and thank the Advisory Commission.

37.3 Mr President, the Ministry also pays close attention to children in disadvantaged and marginalized areas as well as promoting inclusive education. Non-formal education and adult literacy programmes are carried out throughout the year. It encourages ethnic languages and 54 languages are taught in respective schools. It continuously expands the quality of TVET by offering competency-based short modular courses to meet the local labour market needs. The Ministry has been implementing a higher education reform process which encourages research and innovation. The Ministry is going to upgrade the two-year education colleges to four-year education degree colleges. It is planning to update the higher education curriculums' pedagogy and offer new programmes focusing on local needs. Members of the teachers' and students' unions are cooperating with the universities for quality learning. The Writers Committee, which was founded in April 2018, is working together with the Ministry to build capacity of our universities.

37.4 In the culture sector, again our unique cultural landscape with ancient monuments were inscribed on the World Heritage List at the 43rd World Heritage Committee Meeting in July 2019. At this point, please allow me to take the opportunity to thank UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee for their support. We would also like to express our appreciation to UNESCO for the technical support to the development of news media law, broadcasting law, national heritage law, STEM, International Hydrological Programme, and other projects.

37.5 Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has presented its candidature for the first time to the Executive Board of UNESCO representing the group of Asian and Pacific states for the term of 2019 to 2023. The candidature of Myanmar to the Executive Board reaffirms our commitment to ensure quality education in line with SDG 4 and join hands with the ongoing efforts of its Executive Board in steering the Organization's work for quality learning.

37.6 In conclusion, the demand for high-level knowledge skills, attitudes and values will grow in the twenty-first century, so the Ministry of Education of Myanmar is strengthening the existing education system and improving the learning outcomes for all to enable them to face the challenges for a better future. We are also determined to cooperate regionally and internationally for peace, stability and sustainable development. Thank you very much.

### 38. The President:

I thank His Excellency for his statement and now welcome His Excellency, Abdulmunem Abulayha, Secretary-General of the Libyan National Commission.

### 1-39 ليبيا:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، السيد رئيس المؤتمر العام، السيد رئيس المجلس التنفيذي، السيدة المديرية العامة لمنظمة الأمم المتحدة للتربية والعلم والثقافة، السادة رؤساء الوفود المحترمين، السلام عليكم ورحمة الله، يسرني بادئ ذي بدء أن أقدم بالتهنئة للسيد أحمد ألتاي على انتخابه رئيساً للمؤتمر العام متمنياً له كل التوفيق والسداد في أداء مهامه على الوجه الأكمل، وبما يليب طموحاتنا وتطلعاتنا نحو مستقبل زاهر.

39-2 السيدات والسادة، تمر بلادي هذه الأيام بمرحلة صعبة ودقيقة في تاريخها الحديث، يتطلب الخروج منها جهوداً مضنية ووقفة جادة من كافة المنظمات الدولية وفي مقدمتها منظمة اليونسكو. وعلى الرغم من ذلك، فقد تمكنا من اجتياز العديد من الصعوبات واستطعنا إنجاز خطوات مهمة في تحسين العملية التعليمية. وتبنت في هذا الشأن وزارة التعليم خطة إصلاحية موائمة لغايات ومقاصد الهدف الرابع.

39-3 السيدات والسادة، كما تعلمون فإن الدول التي تتعرض إلى مشاكل أمنية لن تكون منشآتها ومؤسساتها التعليمية بعيدة عن الأخطار. وقد تضررت المؤسسات التعليمية نتيجة للوضع الأمني الراهن في بلادي وأصابها ما أصابها من تدمير كلي أو جزئي نتيجة النزاعات والاشتباكات المسلحة. كما استخدمت بعض المدارس ملاذاً ومأوى للنازحين والمهجرين من مناطق الاشتباكات. وترتب على ذلك نزوح أعداد من الطلبة مع ذويهم. وأصبح من الواجب علينا تمكينهم من الالتحاق بمدارس أخرى في المناطق الآمنة، مما سبب ضغوطاً في استيعابهم بمستويات الدراسية وتوفير اللوازم الدراسية لهم.

39-4 أيها الحضور الكريم، أدى أيضا الوضع الأمني المضطرب في بلادي إلى أضرار متفاوتة في بعض ممتلكاتنا الثقافية من تشويه ونهب للآثار والمتاحف والمواقع الأثرية، الأمر الذي جعل لجنة التراث العالمي تضع مواقعنا الأثرية على قائمة التراث العالمي المعرض للخطر، حتى تلك التي لم تتعرض إلى أضرار تذكر. ومع ذلك، فقد نجحنا في تحييد المواقع الأثرية والتنبيه على أهمية حمايتها والمحافظة عليها. وقامت بلادي بجهود استثنائية من أجل المواقع الأثرية الخمسة المدرجة على قائمة التراث العالمي. وقدمنا التقارير الفنية إلى الجهات المعنية والمختصة بمنظمة اليونسكو، مع الخطوات والإجراءات التي تم اتخاذها لرفع تلك المواقع من قائمة التراث العالمي المعرض للخطر. وقامت منظمة اليونسكو مشكورة بمباركة هذه الجهود.

39-5 السيدات والسادة، ترتبط بلادي مع منظمة اليونسكو بعدة اتفاقيات علمية وثقافية تم تنفيذ بعضها ولا يزال بعضها الآخر قيد التنفيذ بعد أن تم مراجعتها من القطاعات المختلفة بالمنظمة، إلا أن الظروف الصعبة التي نمر بها تحتم على القطاعات داخل المنظمة مضاعفة الجهود لاستكمال تنفيذ اتفاقيات التعاون خاصة في مجال الآثار والبحث العلمي الذي لم تسلم مركزه من أضرار في المعدات والأجهزة العلمية. وفي الختام، لا يسعني إلا أن أقدم بمزيد من الشكر والعرفان للسيدة المديرية العامة للمنظمة على جهودها في تحقيق الأهداف الإنسانية النبيلة، وأملنا كبير في المنظمة بقطاعاتها المختلفة لزيادة حجم التعاون مع مؤسساتنا التربوية والثقافية وصولاً للغايات المنشودة. أشكر لكم حسن الإصغاء، والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته.

**40. The President:**

I thank His Excellency for his statement and now welcome His Excellency Mr Esteban Moctezuma Barragan, Minister for Public Education of Mexico.

**41.1 México:**

Señora Presidenta, señora Secretaria General, colegas todos, señoras y señores: México ha caminado hombro con hombro con la UNESCO desde su creación en 1946. Fue el séptimo país en firmar el acta constitutiva de la UNESCO. En 1947, la segunda Asamblea General se llevó a cabo en la Ciudad de México. En 1948, el Secretario General de la UNESCO fue un distinguido mexicano, Jaime Torres Bodet. Desde entonces, México respeta y trabaja hombro con hombro con la UNESCO.

41.2 A la fecha, estamos trabajando para llenar la Agenda del Desarrollo Sustentable 2030 y cumplir con los objetivos del ODS 4 que, como todos sabemos, son equidad, inclusión, calidad, educación para todos y para toda la vida.

41.3 ¿Qué es lo que hemos hecho en el nuevo Gobierno de México? El pasado mayo, reformamos la Constitución de nuestro país, precisamente para que los dos ejes de la educación sean la equidad y la excelencia; creamos lo que llamamos “la nueva escuela mexicana”. ¿Qué estamos haciendo en “la nueva escuela mexicana” en términos de equidad? Para la población más pobre, fundamentalmente en áreas indígenas, se están distribuyendo 10 millones de becas con objeto de que el tema económico no sea un obstáculo para estudiar. Se están creando además 100 escuelas universitarias en todo el país, con especialidades en los lugares más retrasados, que permitan solucionar problemas locales. Y se creó un programa llamado “La escuela es nuestra”, en donde el Gobierno federal está distribuyendo 1 000 millones de dólares directamente a las escuelas a través de un comité escolar de administración participativa.

41.4 ¿Qué estamos haciendo en términos de inclusión? México tiene una población indígena importante, 68 lenguas indígenas. Antes sólo se enseñaba en español y hemos incluido en la Constitución la obligación de enseñar en la lengua materna a todos los mexicanos, independientemente de su idioma. Estamos impulsando de una manera prioritaria la educación indígena y trabajando con un lema que ha sido el lema del presidente Andrés Manuel López Obrador: “Por el bien de todos, primero los pobres”. Hemos también desarrollado el programa de educación especial para darle un tratamiento a las personas con discapacidad y, al mismo tiempo, a las niñas y a los niños con cualidades sobresalientes, dividido en áreas académica, artística y deportiva. Finalmente, en materia de inclusión, hemos llevado a cabo el programa “Rechazo Cero”, que busca que cualquier persona que busca una educación universitaria llegue a tener un espacio para poderse desarrollar.

41.5 ¿Qué estamos haciendo en materia de calidad? En materia de calidad, hemos definido la excelencia como el logro de aprendizaje máximo de cada alumno. Esto quiere decir que estamos moviéndonos hacia una educación personalizada que se basa fundamentalmente en la capacitación de los maestros y hemos desvinculado la evaluación educativa de temas laborales, como es la permanencia en el empleo, para darle énfasis a la educación diagnóstica para una mejor capacitación.

41.6 En la Educación para todos, estamos creando el concepto de que la escuela se convierta en un centro de aprendizaje comunitario, de manera que las instalaciones escolares sirvan también de escuela de padres.

41.7 Quiero decir que, en materia de igualdad de género, el ejemplo viene desde el propio Gobierno, en donde el gabinete del señor Presidente es 50 por ciento de hombres, 50 por ciento de mujeres, y este trabajo de México con la UNESCO seguirá siempre con todo compromiso, porque creemos en esta Organización y en sus principios y le agradezco a todos los colegas con quienes he tenido reuniones bilaterales por el aprendizaje de todos ustedes. Muchísimas gracias.

**42. The President:**

I thank His Excellency for his statement and now give the floor to His Excellency Dr Eugene Mutimura, Minister of Education of Rwanda.

**43.1 Rwanda:**

Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General of UNESCO, distinguished heads of delegations, honourable ministers of education, on behalf of the Government of Rwanda. I congratulate you Mr President on your election as President of the 40th session of the General Conference of UNESCO. I also thank the Director-General Madam Audrey Azoulay for leading UNESCO and its partners' contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

43.2 Mr President, Rwanda believes that education is a fundamental human right, a tool to ensure that all citizens women and men, girls and boys, can contribute to national development. Education is at the centre of Rwanda's long-term strategy to become a knowledge-based and private sector led economy. In partnership with UNESCO and other partners, substantial achievements have been made in Rwanda towards education for all, in the Millennium Development Goals 2015, with a significant increase to access of education from basic to higher education and introduction of mandatory basic education. Policy priorities include ensuring access to pre-primary education, strengthening quality of education in primary and secondary education, implementation of competence-based curriculums and increasing use of ICT in education through one laptop per child in primary school and scaling up of laptops and ICT devices in smart classrooms.

43.3 In Rwanda, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is an engine to support employment for youth, and in 2018 Rwanda hosted the Africa TVET competitions as an educational skills exchange on the continent. In 2024, the number of students enrolled in TVET will be 60% versus 40% in general education. In fact, TVET graduates are among the best innovators nationally. For example, the \$20 million “tap and go” technology used as the electronic system for city transport by ACG Group is a product of a TVET graduate who has exported it to African countries including Cameroon and elsewhere.



43.4 Mr President, distinguished delegates, to promote higher education mobility, Rwanda has invested in globally known best universities, with African headquarters in Rwanda for institutions such as the Carnegie Mellon University Africa, the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), and the University of Global Health Equity, among others. The University of Rwanda, with 13 centres of excellence, among them we have received support from UNESCO for two centres of excellence – the International Centre for Theoretical Physics and the East African Institute of Fundamental Research, which has been granted UNESCO category 2 status as a centre of excellence in biodiversity and natural resource management. The UNESCO Volcans Biosphere Reserve in the north of Rwanda is now well known for *Kwita Izina*, the tradition of giving a name to a newborn gorilla, which contributes to tourism income and benefits the local community through benefit-sharing income.

43.5 The Government of Rwanda reaffirms its support for education mobility and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025, to set up a qualitative system of education and training, to promote the African continent with efficient human resources adapted to African core values and ambitions of the African Union. Because Rwanda provides equal opportunity of education to girls and boys, 52% of women have the capacity and competence to be in political leadership positions and are members of the cabinet, while 61% of women are members of Parliament.

43.6 Under the leadership of the President of Rwanda, His Excellency Paul Kagame, and with the support of the Chair of the International Telecommunication Union and the International Commission on Broadband for Sustainable Development, Rwanda has developed a national fibre-optic broadband network of Internet connectivity reaching remote rural schools. We welcome partnership with UNESCO and other partners to foster high-quality education for all. Rwanda will continue to be a committed Member State of UNESCO for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. I thank you.

#### 44. **The President:**

I thank His Excellency for his statement and now give the floor to His Excellency Mr Mikhail Kotyukov, Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation.

#### 45.1 **Российская Федерация:**

Уважаемый г-н Председатель, уважаемая г-жа Генеральный директор, уважаемые коллеги, сегодня на фоне растущей разобщенности международного сообщества перед лицом острейших вызовов, когда международный терроризм угрожает общему культурному достоянию, увеличивается всеобщее неравенство, в том числе информационное, а проблема радикализации молодежи приобретает угрожающие формы, благородная миссия ЮНЕСКО – «укоренять идею защиты мира в умах людей» – необходима человечеству как никогда.

45.2 Как страна, глубоко приверженная идеалам ЮНЕСКО, Россия заинтересована в том, чтобы эта ведущая гуманитарная межправительственная организация работала без политизации, строго в рамках своего мандата и приоритетов, утвержденных государствами-членами. Необходимо, чтобы, продвигая идею мира, основанного на «нравственной и интеллектуальной солидарности человечества», эта авторитетная площадка содействовала сохранению традиционной атмосферы доверия и взаимопонимания, культуры консенсуса, уважения самобытности народов и учета их законных интересов.

45.3 Огромная роль в этом принадлежит образованию. Следует повысить уровень осведомленности о задачах и мандате Руководящего комитета «Образование-2030» как глобального механизма консультаций и координации. Наши усилия необходимо направить на укрепление таких направлений, как воспитание детей дошкольного возраста, техническое и профессиональное образование, внедрение информационно-коммуникационных технологий, программа ЮНИТВИН/кафедры ЮНЕСКО и Сеть ассоциированных школ ЮНЕСКО. Особый акцент необходимо делать на подготовке учителей, важнейшем стержне всего образовательного процесса.

45.4 Ожидаем успешного принятия Генеральной конференцией Конвенции о признании квалификаций, относящихся к высшему образованию. Наши эксперты активно участвовали в ее разработке. Чрезвычайно актуальной остается Конвенция о борьбе с дискриминацией в области образования. Рассчитываем, что Секретариат не будет мириться с грубыми нарушениями ее положений отдельными государствами-членами, прежде всего Украиной и Латвией, которые планомерно «зачищают» свое образовательное пространство от русского языка. На этом фоне придаем большое значение развитию многоязычия и межкультурного диалога. В августе 2020 г. в России в Республике Татарстан состоится масштабный международный форум «Роль образования в развитии межкультурного диалога».

45.5 Полагаем, что всемерной поддержки требует Международная программа по фундаментальным наукам, являющаяся базовым инструментом достижения ряда целей в области устойчивого развития. Предлагаем проработать вопрос повышения ее статуса до уровня межправительственной. Крайне важна широкая популяризация научной деятельности, в том числе среди молодых ученых и женщин-ученых. Этой задаче призвана отвечать новая Международная премия ЮНЕСКО-России имени Д.И. Менделеева, которая станет достойным итогом текущего Международного года периодической таблицы химических элементов. Уважаемая г-жа Генеральный директор, я хочу еще раз поблагодарить Вас за поддержку этой идеи и активное участие в ее проработке. Спасибо Вам!

45.6 Приветствуем ключевую роль Межправительственной океанографической комиссии в разработке научной программы и плана проведения Десятилетия ООН, посвященного науке об океане в интересах устойчивого развития. Видим большой потенциал таких естественнонаучных программ, как «Человек и биосфера», Программа по геонаукам и геопаркам и Международная гидрологическая программа.

45.7 Надеемся, что Генеральная конференция даст зеленый свет разработке рекомендации по этике искусственного интеллекта. Готовы поделиться экспертным потенциалом в этой сфере, наработанным в ходе подготовки в России Национальной стратегии развития искусственного интеллекта. Стремительное развитие

новых технологий влечет за собой кардинальные изменения в структуре общества, что повышает роль и востребованность социальных наук. Убеждены, что Программа «Управление социальными преобразованиями (МОСТ)» должна фокусироваться на глобальных междисциплинарных проблемах, обеспечивая лидирующую роль ЮНЕСКО в качестве лаборатории идей. Организации следует уделять больше внимания этике информационного общества, ответственному поведению участников медийного поля, безопасности цифровой инфраструктуры, повышению качества журналистского образования и профессиональных стандартов.

45.8 Подтверждаем настрой активно работать на спортивном и антидопинговом направлении в строгом соответствии с положениями Международной конвенции о борьбе с допингом в спорте.

45.9 Поддерживаем активное вовлечение молодежи в деятельность ЮНЕСКО. Убеждены, что такая работа должна вестись прозрачно и инклюзивно в тесном взаимодействии с национальными комиссиями и на основе справедливой географической представленности.

45.10 Опираясь на традиционно дружеские связи с африканскими странами, поддерживаем укрепление сквозного приоритета «Африка». Как подчеркнул Президент Российской Федерации В.В. Путин в ходе недавнего саммита Россия-Африка в Сочи, «неизменно следуем принципу «африканским проблемам – африканские решения».

45.11 В заключение хотел бы в очередной раз с этой трибуны призвать к активизации усилий по восстановлению памятников Сирии, пострадавших от действий террористов. Именно перед лицом этого вызова мы должны проявить упомянутую «интеллектуальную и нравственную солидарность», основанную на идеалах и принципах ЮНЕСКО. Спасибо за внимание.

46. **The President:**

I thank His Excellency for his statement and now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms Khatuna Totladze, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

47.1 **Georgia:**

Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, distinguished delegates, on behalf of the Government of Georgia I am pleased to address the 40th session of the General Conference. We recognize the importance of the reforms the Organization has been carrying out in the recent challenging years and express our readiness to provide full support to its future work. We all agree on the indispensable role of UNESCO in preserving international peace and security through cooperation in the fields of its competence. At the same time, we expect UNESCO to be more responsive and proactive than ever. In this respect, we mostly welcome the strong focus on strategic transformation of UNESCO that will ensure greater efficiency in the contribution of the Organization in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The successful outcome of the process is based on multilateral collaboration within the United Nations and effective dialogue with all its Member States. I am confident that only through shared responsibilities and joint efforts shall we be able to respond to the world's major challenges.

47.2 Ladies and gentlemen, we fully share new approaches and ambitious steps towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Quality education is crucial for the development of societies. The national strategy on education and science of Georgia for 2017-2021 as well as comprehensive education reform is ensured by the Government initiative to gradually increase funding of the sphere of education to 25% of the Georgian budget and 6% of total GDP by 2022. Using information and communication technologies in education is an essential part of modern study. In this respect and as a part of complex education reform, Georgia works with UNICEF and UNESCO in creating new cooperative relations. Our further efforts will be focused on supporting competency-based learning. ICTs have a huge impact on youth and play a crucial role for learning and skills development and ensures better adaption to modern challenges. Our approach to policy development in the field of ICT is demonstrated by the success of the project to have Tbilisi designated as World Book Capital for 2021. With a focus on innovation and use of modern technologies, it is intended to have a positive impact on literacy rates among young people and instigate their interest in books. I am very pleased that upon the decision of the Director-General, Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, for the first time gained this prestigious title. You are all warmly welcome to come to Tbilisi to be part of this special event for Georgia.

47.3 Mr President, we continue our firm and fruitful cooperation with the World Heritage Centre. Georgia has nominated the Colchic Rainforests and Wetlands as the first natural world heritage property to be nominated by our country. It granted the prestigious status. This site will enhance the recognition of Georgia's protected areas and improve socioeconomic conditions of the local population. Cultural and creative industries are among the fastest growing sectors in the world. The Cultural Strategy 2022 adopted by the Government of Georgia acknowledges the role of cultural and creative industries for economic growth. As part of the 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, Georgia continues to advance in the effective implementation of the convention. We are pleased that Georgia is among the first beneficiaries of the EU-UNESCO joint project urging the further development of creative and cultural industries in Georgia.

47.4 Dear colleagues, just about a week ago we also celebrated the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Today, 30 years later, we see the return to the dividing lines, the ongoing creeping annexation, installation of barbed wire fences along occupation lines, to cut off remaining links between divided societies which significantly affect the livelihoods of local populations. We are deeply concerned of the situation in Georgia's occupied regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region in South Ossetia. Deliberate eradication of cultural heritage as an attempt to erase Georgian traces, looting and illicit trade of cultural artefacts, grave human rights violations, including prohibition of education in native language for ethnic Georgians, double our concerns and highlight the vital need for urgent counteractions. Georgia considers UNESCO as a key stakeholder and strongly expects sufficient involvement in the process, especially regarding the monuments of cultural heritage. With this in mind, it is only through joint efforts of the international community that it will be possible to eliminate targeted violations in different parts of the world. Thank you for your attention.

48. **The President:**

I thank Her Excellency for her statement and now give the floor to the Honourable Mr Saud Alharbi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education of Kuwait.

1-49 **الكويت:**

بسم الله والحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله، السيد رئيس الدورة الأربعين للمؤتمر العام، السيد رئيس المجلس التنفيذي السيدة المديرية العامة لمنظمة اليونسكو، أصحاب المعالي والسعادة، السيدات والسادة الحضور، السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته، يطيب لي في بداية كلمتي هذه أن أنقل لكم تحيات صاحب السمو، الشيخ صباح الأحمد الجابر الصباح أمير دولة الكويت، وخالص تقديره لما تبذله منظمتكم العريقة من جهود كبيرة في خدمة العالم أجمع في مجالات التربية والعلوم والثقافة والاتصال. وفي الإطار ذاته، إننا في دولة الكويت نقدم الشكر الجزيل للسيدة زهور العلوي، رئيسة الدورة التاسعة والثلاثين، على جهودها الكبيرة والمقدرة التي أثبتت من خلالها قدرة المرأة العربية على العطاء والعمل بجد وإخلاص. وكذلك نبارك للسيد أحمد ألتاي توليه منصب رئيس الدورة الأربعين، متمنين له التوفيق والنجاح في مهام عمله، مؤكداً دعمنا المستمر والمطلق للمنظمة.

2-49 السيدات والسادة الحضور، يواجه العالم أجمع في هذه الفترة العصبية من تاريخ البشرية تحديات كبيرة، يرتبط بعضها بمشكلات سياسية واقتصادية واجتماعية، ويرتبط بعضها الآخر بالتطورات العلمية والتكنولوجية وما تركته من آثار وما تتطلبه من إجراءات. وعليه فإننا نتطلع اليوم إلى تعليم عالي المستوى، يمكن الإنسان من حقوقه وينهض به ويطور حياته ومعيشته، تعليم يعزز التعايش السلمي والأمن والسلام والانفتاح على الآخر أياً كان هذا الآخر، إنسان أو دين أو معتقد أو فنون أو طريقة معيشة، تعليم يساعد الإنسان على حل مشكلات البيئة والتنمية وكل ما يمس حياته.

3-49 السيدات والسادة الحضور، لقد جاء الهدف الرابع ليقدم الحلول والإجراءات المناسبة لكل مشكلات التعليم وليكون خارطة الطريق للجميع، يساعد على تحقيق التقدم والرفاه وتجاوز الفروق البشرية القائمة على الأصل واللون والدين والعرق. ومن هذا المنطلق، نرى أن تحقيق الهدف الرابع يتطلب إعادة النظر في السياسات التعليمية التي بدورها تحول الغايات والأهداف إلى إجراءات عملية واقعية، بل إننا نعتقد أن نجاح التعليم يقوم في أساسه على سياسات تعليمية رصينة وواضحة المعالم.

4-49 السيدات والسادة الحضور، لقد سعت دولة الكويت جاهدة لتحقيق الهدف الرابع بشكل كبير ومتواصل، خصوصاً أن التعليم في دولة الكويت يستند إلى قوانين وتشريعات جعلته حقاً من حقوق الإنسان كما هو في جوهره، لذلك نجد أن مواد الدستور 10 و13 و40 تنص صراحة على حق الجميع في التعليم دون تمييز، بل أنها أصدرت قانون التعليم الإلزامي عام 1965 وتم تعديله عام 2015. وبذلك تحققت غاية الإنصاف والعدالة وديمقراطية التعليم. ولقد ساعدت تلك البنية القانونية على تحقيق الغايات الأخرى التي منها الطفولة المبكرة، حيث تم وضع برامج جديدة تتلاءم مع متطلبات هذه المرحلة، خصوصاً أن نسبة الالتحاق عالية جداً في هذه المرحلة حيث تتجاوز 80% في التعليم الحكومي والباقي يلتحق بالخصائص الخاصة، وضمان حق المرأة في التعليم ومساواتها بالرجل دون تمييز في جميع المراحل الدراسية. وكذلك مكن القانون 2005/8 ذوي الإعاقة من الحصول على الحق في التعليم أسوة بغيرهم من الطلاب، مع التوسع في دمجهم في مدارس التعليم العام، والذي بدأ من عام 1995.

5-49 وفي سياق تطوير التعليم العالي، أصدرت دولة الكويت قانون الجامعات الخاصة عام 2000 والجامعات الحكومية عام 2019، بالإضافة إلى افتتاح مبنى حديث ومتطور في جامعة الكويت. وتقدم دولة الكويت المنح الدراسية في التعليم العالي وفق معايير محددة بالإضافة للمنح الدراسية في التعليم العام الذي شمل خلال السنة الماضية أكثر من أربعين دولة.

6-49 السيدات والسادة الحضور، إن دولة الكويت تؤمن إيماناً راسخاً بدور الجهود الإنسانية في حل المشكلات التي تواجهها بعض الدول المحتاجة والمتضررة، لذلك دأبت منذ استقلالها على السير في هذا النهج أي دعم الدول بعيداً عن الحسابات السياسية والمصالح الضيقة، بل كان دعمها من منطلق إنساني يحث يؤمن بحق الشعوب في العيش الكريم الآمن في الحدود والوجود. وفي هذا السياق، نجد أن دولة الكويت عقدت وترأست العديد من المؤتمرات الخاصة بدعم الدول، كان منها على سبيل المثال مؤتمر عام 2013 و2014 و2015، وهي خاصة بدعم الشعب السوري الشقيق، وترأست مؤتمر لندن عام 2016 وبروكسل عام 2017 الخاص بالمانحين. وكان مجموع ما قدمته الكويت مليار وستمئة ألف دولار، خصص منها 250 مليون دولار للخدمات التعليمية. وهذا بالإضافة لما تقدمه المؤسسات الخيرية الأهلية في دعم مستمر للشعوب المحتاجة والفقيرة.

7-49 السيدات والسادة الحضور، في ختام هذه الكلمة نؤكد دعم وتقدير دولة الكويت لهذه المنظمة العريقة، صاحبة الرسالة الإنسانية الكبيرة، منبهين لما يعانيه العالم من مشكلات كان لها أثر بالغ في التعليم والتربية على حد سواء. فبالإضافة إلى مشكلات الجوع والفقر والأمية والتسرب المدرسي وضعف الإمكانيات وغيرها، نجد أن الحروب والصراعات وما نتج عنها من دمار بالغ الأثر ليس في البنى التحتية فحسب، ولكن أصابت أيضاً الوجدان الإنساني بجروح عميقة، أفرزت مفاهيم العنصرية والتطرف والغلو والإرهاب. ولا شك أن تدميرها كان بالغاً وسيستمر إن لم نتدارك الأمر ونعمل بجهود واحدة من خلال برامج وسياسات تعليمية وتربوية تشاركية يكون لليونسكو والمنظمات الإقليمية ذات الصلة دور كبير في رسمها وتنفيذها وتقييمها. فالأمل، بعد الله، معقود على تلك الجهود لعلها تنير الظلام وتساعد الجميع على التقدم والرخاء، والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته.

50. **The President:**

I thank His Excellency for his statement and now give the floor to Her Excellency, Ms Irena Vaisvilaitė, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Lithuania to UNESCO.

51.1 **Lithuania:**

Mr President, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Lithuania aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union. Lithuania has always been a strong advocate of multilateral cooperation. It strengthens our commitments to maintain peace and security, achieve Sustainable Development Goals, promote and protect human rights, ensure gender equality and provide education for all. Multilateral institutions are helping countries around the world to avoid catastrophic wars, achieve unprecedented levels of development and ensure protection of culture, even in the times of conflicts.

51.2 The United Nations was created to provide the foundation and framework for a rules-based multilateral system, that nowadays comes under immense pressure. We need action to reform the whole United Nations system in order to preserve and reinforce the relevance of credibility of the United Nations, and to ensure that it would be more efficient and

transparent. In this regard, UNESCO has to play its part to improve accountability, transparency, efficiency and risk management to keep the pace of today's society. The activities and resources of the Organization need to be prioritized through strategic transformation exercise and avoiding micromanagement.

51.3 Ladies and gentlemen, in the context of global challenges, UNESCO's mandate in the United Nations remains of utmost importance. The Organization's work on education, science and the protection of cultural heritage, as well as promotion of freedom of expression and protection of journalists have crucial impact for the future of our societies. Nevertheless, the future brings not only challenges but also new opportunities in the field of open science, future for education and artificial intelligence.

51.4 We believe that the Organization has expertise in creating open and ethical environment and therefore should have a mandate to ensure ethical use of artificial intelligence at regional and national levels within its competencies. On the human rights based approach, artificial intelligence can lead to great achievements in sustainable development, education and science.

51.5 Excellencies, we firmly believe that respect of human rights is a precondition of peace and security and is essential for sustainable progress. Lithuania is a vocal advocate of safety of journalists and protection of human rights defenders. These are indispensable elements of the right to freedom of expression. Our societies increasingly face hybrid threats, distorted information which leads to distrust in media. No more than ever it is important to promote and encourage high quality independent journalism and strengthen critical thinking and resilience, which is key in countering disinformation.

51.6 Therefore, Lithuania actively engages in the activities of the Communication and Information Sector of UNESCO, through earmarked and un-earmarked contributions. We are committed to uphold press freedom and protect journalists to keep truth alive. Human rights include women and girls' empowerment, as well as girls' education which are the driving forces for gender equality. Lithuania supports and takes part in the regional and national initiatives within the global L'Oréal UNESCO Programme For Women in Science. The successful partnership between UNESCO and the private sector sets the example of excellent communication and spreads important messages to society regarding science and young woman inclusiveness in science technology, engineering and mathematics.

51.7 Ensuring access to information and knowledge for marginalized social groups is also important. Lithuania actively engages in the Information for All Programme. We use this platform to share ideas and projects with international partners, as well as to developing guidelines to create knowledge society.

51.8 Ladies and gentlemen, UNESCO is a unique organization with the role to preserve not only cultural but also historical heritage in different parts of the world. Therefore, UNESCO's established Memory of the World Programme is an exceptional opportunity for countries to keep their history alive. Ten years ago the document collection of one of the greatest events in the Lithuanian history, the Baltic Way, was inscribed in the Memory of the World Programme.

51.9 Thirty years ago, in 1989, our nation demonstrated to unite together with Latvia and Estonia and proudly stood on the Baltic Way. An epic demonstration of two million people holding hands from Vilnius via Riga to Tallinn demanding independence, freedom and human rights. We are proud that UNESCO recognized this as a historic event.

51.10 Distinguished colleagues, allow me once again to express our full support for UNESCO in its innovative initiatives and commitment over constructive and fruitful work through dialogue and cooperation. Madam Director-General's leadership in strengthening UNESCO for the last two years is significant. You can count on our future support and contribution to UNESCO's work. Thank you.

52. **The President:**

I thank Her Excellency for her statement and now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms Irita Burmestre, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Latvia to UNESCO and the OECD.

53.1 **Latvia:**

Madam Director-General, Ministers, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour for me to address the 40th session of the General Conference. Latvia fully aligns itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the European Union.

53.2 Last year, Latvia celebrated 100 years since the establishment of its Statehood and this year Latvia celebrates the 30th anniversary of the Baltic Way, a unique peaceful mass demonstration when approximately 2 million people joined hands to create a 600 kilometres-long human chain through the three Baltic States uniting Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in regaining their freedom. This impressive act of nonviolent protest and solidarity was a living example of the culture of peace, democracy and the revival of freedom of speech. The values which we stood for 30 years ago are still important today when Latvia stands proudly in the UNESCO family of nations.

53.3 Latvia is a champion in defending multilateralism, continued engagement and cooperation in all international fora including at UNESCO. We strongly believe that in an interdependent and globalized world we can address and resolve global challenges only through multilateral means.

53.4 Today we embrace the diverse opportunities of the twenty-first century – the transformative power of digitalization and new possibilities and freedoms it brings in education, science, culture and media. Latvia is a strong defender of freedom of expression, both online and offline. We place high priority on media freedom, quality journalism, safety of journalists, women's empowerment in the media, as well as media literacy. Through our membership in international organizations and with our financial commitment to UNESCO's international programme for the development of communication, Latvia will continue its active work on these important topics.

53.5 We note with satisfaction that youth is taking the lead and contributing energy, passion and creativity in all matters of concern to them. Young people grow in a world full with digital media. Digitalization has changed the way we perceive education. Latvia's newly-adopted school curriculum enhances the use of digital tools in the classroom to offer new

innovative more interactive ways of learning. In our schools, we also empower both girls and boys to take up the professions of their dreams. We encourage young women to undertake STEM education at universities to have equal opportunities in the digital universe.

53.6 Latvia supports UNESCO's recommendation on open education resources. We welcome UNESCO's recommendation on Open Science which will facilitate the process of adopting the Open Science Policy at the national level. While recognizing technological progress and embracing new digital opportunities, we would like the technologies to be developed with a great sense of responsibility and accountability. We should also remain vigilant to the challenges they may bring to human rights, safety, privacy and human dignity. We praised UNESCO's commitment to develop a new global standard-setting instrument for human-centred and ethical artificial intelligence. We also support UNESCO's essential role in safeguarding the ethics of bio-research and technologies as well as in promoting gender equality in the international bioethics debate. Latvia is committed to financially supporting UNESCO in the development of new capacity building tools on gender issues in bioethics and ethics of science and technology. Latvia highly appreciates the work of UNESCO on the global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications and the inclusive cooperation process with the Member States.

53.7 Let me conclude by expressing our appreciation to the Director-General for her tireless efforts to advance her strategic vision and to transform this Organization to be fit for purpose. Ladies and gentlemen, today 30 years after the Baltic Way, Latvia joined hands with all the nations to guard the values of freedom, peace and democracy. These values should be our compass in implementing the sustainable development agenda, which is a map that charts our way to a more inclusive and more sustainable future. Thank you very much.

54. **The President:**

I thank Her Excellency for her statement. Ladies and gentlemen, this was our last speaker for this morning. The plenary will reconvene at 3 p.m. this afternoon to continue with the national statements and hear a report from the Credentials Committee. I wish you all a pleasant lunch. The meeting is now adjourned. Thank you.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*