

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

Thursday 14 November 2019 at 3.15 p.m.

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

*Ms Brandt (Sweden) takes the Chair*

### General policy debate (*continued*)

#### 1. **The President:**

I declare open the sixth plenary meeting of the General Conference. We will proceed with the general policy debate this afternoon. Towards the end of the meeting, we will hear the report of the APX Commission on item **1.3**, as well as the report of the Chairperson of the Credentials Committee. Before we start with our list of speakers, may I repeat the appeal for good timekeeping. Thank you in advance. I now have the honour to call on our first speaker for this afternoon, His Excellency, Mr Clemente Engonga Nguema Onguene, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education of Equatorial Guinea.

#### 2.1 **Guinea Ecuatorial:**

Excelentísimo señor Presidente, excelentísimo señor Presidente del Consejo Ejecutivo, excelentísima señora Directora General de la UNESCO, excelencias, señoras y señores: mi delegación y yo nos sentimos altamente honrados por estar aquí, en nombre y representación de Guinea Ecuatorial, porque nuestro país se siente estrechamente vinculado con los principios, objetivos e ideales de paz, justicia e igualdad entre todos los individuos y Estados que preconiza la UNESCO. Nuestra condición de miembro de esta prestigiosa organización internacional nos interpela a asumir estos principios y valores que fundamentan la razón de ser de la UNESCO como institución del sistema de las Naciones Unidas que promueve la educación, la ciencia y la cultura. Es dentro de esta perspectiva que Guinea Ecuatorial, como Estado Miembro de la UNESCO, viene trabajando estrechamente con esta Organización en diferentes ámbitos de desarrollo.

2.2 Esta voluntad manifiesta de cooperación con la UNESCO ha quedado patentizada con la firma de un acuerdo de cooperación que, de entre otros componentes, incorpora el Proyecto de Gestión de la Universidad Afroamericana de África Central (AAUCA), institución universitaria con vocación de apertura no solo para los nacionales ecuatoguineanos, sino también para estudiantes y estudiosos de cualquier país del mundo.

2.3 Señor Presidente: para el Gobierno de Guinea Ecuatorial, la UNESCO es el principal organismo del sistema de las Naciones Unidas creado para lograr la paz mundial, el bienestar y la seguridad de los pueblos y naciones, la igualdad y la dignidad de los seres humanos; por eso, pensamos que todos los Estados de la comunidad internacional deben apoyar solidariamente su acción para alcanzar sus objetivos en la educación, la ciencia y la cultura, que deben constituir un patrimonio universal asequible para toda la humanidad, sin exclusiones. Por ello, el Gobierno de Guinea Ecuatorial ha concebido también, junto con la UNESCO, la institucionalización del Premio Internacional UNESCO-Guinea Ecuatorial para la Ciencias de la Vida.

2.4 Excelencias: me permito anunciarles que Addis Abeba, capital de Etiopía, albergará los actos de la próxima quinta edición de la entrega del Premio Internacional UNESCO-Guinea Ecuatorial, acto que se desarrollará al margen de la celebración de la cumbre de la Unión Africana. Guinea Ecuatorial se sentirá muy complacida si pudiese contar en dicho acto con el calor y la presencia de todos los países miembros de la UNESCO aquí presentes.

2.5 Señor Presidente: dado los desafíos que afronta nuestra Organización, Guinea Ecuatorial se alinea al presupuesto que permite a la UNESCO ejecutar todos los programas y proyectos que tiene diseñados. Excelencias: la presente ocasión es magnífica para que dirijamos en nombre de Guinea Ecuatorial los justos merecimientos y felicitaciones al presidente de la 40ª sesión de la Conferencia General de la UNESCO por su elección y por el estilo tan acertado de coordinar y dirigir las intervenciones de esta Conferencia General. Nuestra felicitación también va dirigida a la excelentísima señora Directora General de la UNESCO por su acertada iniciativa de impulsar una visión y práctica basada en la renovación estratégica del funcionamiento de la UNESCO. Nuestras felicitaciones y reconocimientos van igualmente dirigidos al Presidente del Consejo Ejecutivo y su equipo, a los miembros y jefes de las delegaciones aquí presentes, al personal directivo y empleados de la UNESCO, a todos y a cada uno, expresamos nuestro sentimiento de respeto y deseo de paz y prosperidad por una UNESCO siempre grande, fuerte y luchadora por el bienestar de la humanidad. Muchas gracias.

#### 3. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. Our next speaker is His Excellency Mr Laurent Anselmi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Monaco.

#### 4.1 **Monaco:**

Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Madame la Directrice générale, Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs, chers collègues, permettez-moi tout d'abord, Monsieur le Président, de vous adresser mes félicitations pour votre élection à la Présidence de cette 40<sup>e</sup> Conférence générale de l'UNESCO. Soyez assuré du soutien de la Principauté pour l'accomplissement de cette importante mission. Madame la Directrice générale, je tiens à saluer votre action durant les deux premières années de votre mandat. Vous avez réussi à réaffirmer l'importance de notre Organisation et à la rendre à nouveau incontournable sur la scène internationale. La Transformation stratégique et le lancement du processus pour l'Avenir de l'Éducation en sont des illustrations parlantes : elles démontrent votre capacité à faire vivre l'UNESCO, à la reformer, tout en conservant ses spécificités.

4.2 Je souhaiterais maintenant évoquer ce qui me semble, pour Monaco, essentiel. En sa qualité de Chef de file pour l'Objectif de développement durable 4, l'UNESCO incarne mieux que quiconque l'éducation. Monaco soutient pleinement

toutes les actions entreprises en la matière et en particulier celles dédiées à l'éducation des jeunes et des femmes. C'est pourquoi le Gouvernement princier a décidé de renouveler, pour 4 ans, son projet au Burundi en faveur de la promotion de la scolarisation des enfants vulnérables, et en particulier des filles. Son Altesse Royale la Princesse de Hanovre, en sa qualité d'Ambassadrice de bonne volonté de l'UNESCO, œuvre également pour la protection de l'enfance et de la famille, et contribue à la promotion des programmes de l'UNESCO pour l'éducation des filles et des femmes. Enfin, le Gouvernement princier se félicite de la remarquable évaluation faite par l'UNESCO au travers de son Rapport mondial de suivi sur l'éducation, qui montre les progrès significatifs ayant été accomplis.

4.3 Par ailleurs, nous nous réjouissons du succès de l'initiative « Faire revivre l'esprit de Mossoul », qui s'inscrit dans la grande tradition de l'UNESCO de sauvegarde du patrimoine mondial. Monaco est fier d'y avoir participé en contribuant au Fonds d'urgence pour le patrimoine, mécanisme précieux pour la préservation du legs des siècles passés et la reconstruction de la paix. Le Forum des ministres de la culture, qui se tiendra la semaine prochaine, est un événement de première importance que nous saluons et sur lequel nous savons pouvoir compter pour assurer la promotion de la diversité culturelle, de l'interculturalité et de la compréhension mutuelle entre les peuples.

4.4 Monsieur le Président, dans toutes les enceintes internationales, Monaco promeut le dialogue par le biais de la science. Le Prince Albert II rappelait lors de la dernière Assemblée générale des Nations unies que « Monaco a historiquement fait le choix de soutenir la science. En effet, il est essentiel que les politiques à mettre en œuvre puissent se fonder sur les connaissances scientifiques les plus fiables ». Quelle Organisation, quelle Organisation chers collègues, est plus légitime que l'UNESCO pour défendre la science ? Nous nous réjouissons, à ce titre, du dialogue sur une science ouverte qui anime ici nos discussions.

4.5 Comme vous le savez, le territoire monégasque est avant tout marin. La défense des océans est donc tout naturellement l'un des engagements prioritaires de la Principauté. Au sein de l'UNESCO, cet engagement s'exprime par une coopération visant à renforcer les activités du Programme marin du patrimoine mondial et par un soutien apporté à toutes les activités capables de nous aider à mieux comprendre les océans et notre planète. À cet égard, Monaco a accueilli, en septembre dernier, la 51<sup>e</sup> Session du Groupe d'experts intergouvernemental sur l'évolution du climat, le fameux GIEC, à l'occasion de laquelle a été présenté le Rapport spécial sur l'océan et la cryosphère dans le contexte du changement climatique. Ce rapport contribue à mettre en lumière le rôle de l'océan dans le système climatique planétaire. Le typhon qui a touché le Japon en octobre nous a tragiquement montré que, même dans les zones les mieux préparées, les dégâts sont considérables. C'est seulement ensemble et unis que nous pourrions faire face à des événements extrêmes d'une intensité inédite.

4.6 Pour toutes ces raisons, Monaco appuie les initiatives de l'UNESCO en faveur des petits États insulaires en développement, et notamment le partage efficace des connaissances liées aux catastrophes et les moyens d'y répondre, par le biais des programmes de la Commission océanographique intergouvernementale, la COI que vous connaissez tous. Les enjeux environnementaux ne pourront être relevés que par une communauté internationale solidaire et avec l'aide d'une science affirmée. En cette matière, nous encourageons le travail scientifique de l'Organisation, notamment dans le domaine de l'ODD 14 consacré aux océans. Monaco apporte un soutien à toutes les actions entreprises dans le cadre de la Décennie des Nations unies pour les sciences océaniques, comme en témoigne le message adressé par SAS le Prince Albert II à l'ouverture des travaux de la Première réunion de Planification de cette décennie, qui s'est tenue à Copenhague en mai dernier.

4.7 Chers collègues, dans le cadre de l'évolution numérique, Monaco s'est fixé pour objectif de faire de la Principauté une « smart city ». Ces changements d'une opportunité inédite, pour les monégasques comme pour nous tous, renouvellent la question de l'éthique. C'est ensemble que nous devons nous interroger sur le bouleversement des frontières, des limites et même des modes de vie qu'ils impliquent. La Principauté se réjouit, en conséquence, de l'adoption d'une feuille de route destinée à la création d'un outil éthique dans le domaine de l'intelligence artificielle, ici même, à l'UNESCO. Nous encourageons vivement l'Organisation à tenir ce rôle de précurseur en la matière.

4.8 Depuis plusieurs décennies, la Principauté mène une politique volontariste en matière de sport et d'éducation physique, persuadée que c'est essentiel pour le développement de la jeunesse. Un sport sans dopage en est évidemment la condition et mon pays soutient donc tout naturellement et activement la Convention qui s'y rapporte et la mise en œuvre du Plan d'action de Kazan.

4.9 Pour conclure je souhaiterais revenir sur ce qui est souvent le fond de nos débats et une priorité pour Monaco. Au moment où la mutation écologique devient un enjeu de civilisation, il me semble en effet que notre Organisation a un rôle éminent, particulier et novateur : articuler la science et la politique, éduquer toujours, maintenir le pluralisme des politiques face au solutionnisme fataliste, afin d'éviter de donner du corps à l'aphorisme cher à Heinrich Heine, selon lequel « Nous ne comprenons guère les ruines que le jour où nous-même le sommes devenus ». Je vous remercie.

## 5. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. Our next speaker is His Excellency Mr Dato Hamzah Sulaiman, Minister of Education of Brunei Darussalam.

## 6.1 **Brunei Darussalam :**

*Bismillāh ir-rahmān ir-rahīm* (In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate). Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General of UNESCO, Your Excellencies, heads and members of delegations, *as-salāmu 'alaikum wa-rahmat Allāhi wa-barakātuh* "Peace and the Mercy and Blessings of God be upon you". Good afternoon. I would like to begin by congratulating His Excellency Mr Ahmet Altay Cengizer, on being elected as the President of the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference. I should also like to express our deep appreciation to the Director-General, Ms Audrey Azoulay, for her leadership and for the excellent arrangement of this General Conference.

6.2 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, with the vision of “Quality education, Dynamic Nation”, Brunei Darussalam is committed in providing equitable quality education to develop future-ready citizens who are knowledgeable and skilled for the twenty-first century. As part of maintaining the country’s competitiveness towards a stable and sustainable economy, it is vital for us to equip our people so that they will be able to participate in a knowledge-based economy and also to be agile enough in responding to global challenges. In view of this, Brunei Darussalam recently formulated its “Education Strategic Plan 2018-2022” which signifies our commitment and dedication in providing quality and holistic education, in line with our National Vision 2035 which is to produce well-educated, highly-skilled and accomplished people. This new Strategic Plan is also well aligned towards achieving the Education 2030 Agenda.

6.3 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, one of the most important aspects in delivering quality and holistic education is through high-performing human resources, particularly teachers. On this note, we would like to share that Brunei Darussalam is committed to transforming its human resource towards a performance-driven culture by enhancing and improving our human resource capacity and competencies. Furthermore, in strengthening the provision of quality teachers, Brunei Darussalam is reviewing its teacher education programme and has introduced the Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Programme.

6.4 On another note, our second strategic objective focuses on providing access to equitable and quality education. Brunei Darussalam is amplifying its focus and efforts on our special-needs students by establishing centres of excellence that will maximize resources to provide an inclusive and effective education. Brunei Darussalam, through its various programmes such as “Children of Hope” and “Miftahun Najaah” also provides economic and other academic assistance to under-privileged students so that they will have equal and fair opportunities in education. We are also delighted to share that during this year’s teachers’ education day celebration in September, His Majesty the Sultan Yang di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has consented to the establishment of the Centre for Lifelong Learning at the Ministry of Education.

6.5 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Brunei Darussalam believes that education plays a vital role in ensuring a sustainable and better future for all. Hence, by conducting these initiatives and programmes, Brunei Darussalam continues to establish and create opportunities for our people to achieve the Education Agenda 2030 as well as other Sustainable Development Goals. Also, in response to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, we are embarking on efforts towards developing and integrating cutting-edge educational technologies in our curriculum to ensure our students and teachers continue to remain engaged learners. We will also continue to expand the use of technology in our schools that could reduce the gap for students in challenging geographical locations.

6.6 Brunei Darussalam also highlights the importance of strong and sustainable internal and external stakeholders support by strengthening and sustaining collaborations with parents and other non-governmental institutions. In relation to this, we see UNESCO as an important and relevant partner in developing the education, culture and science sectors. As such, we are pleased to share that we have successfully co-hosted the subregional meeting on SDG 4 for quality education 2030 and the 2019 annual education for sustainable development (ESD) countries’ report meeting in April this year. Leveraging on UNESCO’s technical expertise and contributions from cluster countries, Brunei Darussalam was able to draft its SDG national framework for K-12 and higher education.

6.7 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, in the fields of culture, the arts and heritage, Brunei Darussalam is committed to protecting, safeguarding and promoting its tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Since its ratification of the 1973 and 2003 conventions, Brunei Darussalam is continuously developing its capacity through training programmes with UNESCO, strengthening national legislation in monuments and treasure coves, and educational programmes through museology, exhibitions and road shows. This year is a special year for us. We are delighted to share that Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital city of Brunei Darussalam, was declared as the Islamic Culture Capital for the Asian region, a programme under ISESCO.

6.8 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we commend the dedication and commitment of UNESCO in assisting Member States in achieving their various educational, cultural and scientific agendas. We believe UNESCO will continue to remain relevant especially to countries like ours which need necessary technical assistance in capacity development especially in the areas of rapidly evolving technology and its impact on educational and cultural policies, in big data analytics and its application, in cultural preservation and in scientific research and development. We look forward to further collaboration with UNESCO and its Member States in these areas.

6.9 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, to conclude, I would like to reiterate our full commitment to UNESCO’s constructive engagement in the education, science and cultural fields around the world as part of its noble pursuit of world peace and solidarity. Thank you.

7. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. The next speaker is His Excellency Mr Elmaz Mammadyazov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan.

8.1 **Azerbaijan:**

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, at the outset I would like to congratulate Mr Altay Cengizer on his election as the President of the 40th session of the General Conference. We should also like to our gratitude to Ms Zahour Alaoui for all the way for the hard work in presiding over the 39th session of the General Conference.

8.2 Ladies and gentlemen, today in a globalized world, multilateralism and inclusive cooperation among Member States are the key factors to achieve such important areas of human life as quality education for all, open access to information, environmental protection, and better social and economic conditions for citizens without discrimination of race, religion or ethnic background. Therefore, UNESCO should be a catalyst of international cooperation in this regard. In order to increase the efficiency of our Organization to address current global challenges, the main directions should be based

on reforms, and these reforms should be in line with the United Nations reform process and in close consultation with Member States. With a very limited budget, the Organization has to avoid duplication within the United Nations agencies and rather focus on its core mandate clearly outlined in the Constitution. Therefore, we believe that the strategic transformation reforms launched by the Director-General will not be for the sake of reform, but rather the opportunity to make our Organization stronger, more result-oriented and visible in the international arena.

8.3 Mr President, Azerbaijan spares no efforts in applauding Member States in achieving the SDG goals by allocating its financial and in-kind resources, paying particular attention to addressing the special needs of the developing and least developed countries as well as those recovering from natural disasters. The Azerbaijan funds-in-trust established in 2013 is supporting UNESCO in advancing its core mission across the continent in such priority areas as girls' education, safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage, science and innovation technologies. It is also important to mention the Azerbaijan International Development Agency, which has been committed to providing humanitarian aid and international development assistance worldwide. Up until now, more than 90 countries have benefited from international aid and the number of aid-receiving countries is expanding every year. Azerbaijan will also continue its role as a staunch supporter of Africa's development, as well as South-South cooperation through capacity building activities. As an emerging developing country, this issue is a top priority for Azerbaijan during our chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) for the period of 2019-2022. As you all know, Baku successfully hosted the 18th summit of the Heads of State and Government of NAM last October.

8.4 Ladies and gentlemen, today when we witness increased cases of deliberate destruction of cultural heritage during armed conflict, we can clearly state that overall the mandate of UNESCO, as the main United Nations agency dealing with protection of heritage, is more relevant than ever before. As a country suffering from the ongoing military occupation of its territory and destruction of its heritage by Armenia, Azerbaijan strongly supports the effective implementation of UNESCO's standard-setting mechanism in the field, most particularly the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. With this in mind, Azerbaijan funded the publication of a military manual for the protection of cultural heritage, which has become an educational material in military institutions and has been translated into several languages, including Azerbaijani.

8.5 Honourable delegates, in the cultural sector Azerbaijan focuses on cultural and creative industries as well, as we believe that these industries are a driver and enabler of sustainable development and key contributor of the 2030 SDGs. As an outcome of this State policy, just a few days ago UNESCO designated Baku as "Creative City of Design". Another area of our shared commitment is the protection of both cultural and natural heritage. We were proud to host this year the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee, which was the first ever session to give special emphasis to sustainable development in Africa. Azerbaijan is the main partner of UNESCO in the promotion of intercultural dialogue. The Baku Process, launched in 2008 as an initiative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, His Excellency, Mr Ilham Aliyev, has become an important framework fostering the rapprochement of cultures. It is no coincidence that in his annual report the United Nations Secretary-General has stressed the role of the Baku Process as a key global platform for promoting intercultural dialogue. Thanks to the First Vice-President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, Madam Mehriban Aliyeva's tireless efforts, cooperation between Azerbaijan and UNESCO reached an even more intensive and dynamic level, opening new horizons of partnership for the advancement of high ideals of peace and security.

8.6 Dear Mr President, Azerbaijan is strongly committed to the values and ideals of UNESCO and will continue to support the noble mission of the Organization. We believe that UNESCO as a laboratory of ideas should be a genuinely multilateral environment where all the Member States can stand together for the preservation of our common heritage, respect for diversity and promotion of the culture of peace. Thank you very much.

## 9. **The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite Her Excellency Ms Kandia Camara, Minister of National Education, Technical Education and Vocational Training of Côte d'Ivoire.

### 10.1 **Côte d'Ivoire :**

Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Madame la Directrice générale, chers collègues, Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs, Mesdames et Messieurs. Avant tout propos, je voudrais adresser les félicitations de la Côte d'Ivoire à Son Excellence Monsieur Ahmet Altay, Délégué permanent de la Turquie, pour son élection à la Présidence de la 40<sup>e</sup> Session de la Conférence générale de l'UNESCO.

10.2 Mesdames et Messieurs, il y a huit ans, mon pays, après une double décennie de crise militaro-politique, entamait sous le leadership de Son Excellence Monsieur Alassane Ouattara, Président de la République, une spectaculaire remontée économique et sociale dans un climat de paix. Cette remontée a été également possible grâce aux efforts multiformes que vous tous avez bien voulu déployer pour venir au chevet de notre pays, alors à l'agonie. Je voudrais en ce moment précis, vous réitérer la gratitude de la Côte d'Ivoire, de son Président et de son Gouvernement.

10.3 Mesdames et Messieurs, depuis la chute du mur de Berlin, il y a exactement 30 ans, l'UNESCO ne s'est jamais autant sentie interpellée dans le cadre de son mandat, que maintenant par les défis et enjeux du monde. Ces défis demandent, pour être relevés par l'Organisation, des engagements forts, cohérents et constants de notre part auprès de la Direction générale à qui nous avons confié de difficiles missions de réforme et de mise en œuvre de programmes hautement ambitieux. L'instrument essentiel de son action dans ce cadre réside dans la mise en place d'un budget conséquent et sécurisé, à même de lui permettre de réaliser de façon idoine son mandat. C'est pourquoi mon pays réaffirme son appui à l'hypothèse la plus haute du budget proposé par la Directrice générale au titre du 40 C/5, pour la période 2020-2021.

10.4 Mesdames et Messieurs, dans ce monde où tout, ou presque, devient un produit marchand, l'éducation, premier socle du mandat fondateur de notre Organisation, doit continuer d'être revêtu par nos États et gouvernements, du sceau régalien afin, d'une part, de garantir à tous l'accès équitable à la formation et à l'apprentissage, et d'autre part, de faire de

l'école un instrument d'inclusion sociale et non d'exclusion. L'implication, fort bien compréhensible, du secteur privé dans son champ doit à cet égard, être régulée, comme c'est le cas en Côte d'Ivoire. C'est pourquoi mon pays souhaite à nouveau que l'UNESCO s'approprie les « Principes d'Abidjan sur le droit à l'éducation », principes adoptés en juin dernier par consensus par le Haut Conseil des Nations unies pour les Droits de l'homme. Par ailleurs, au regard de leur convergence de visions dans le domaine de l'éducation, mon pays en appelle à une concertation entre l'UNESCO et l'Afrique, afin qu'elles conviennent d'une stratégie commune dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de l'ODD 4.

10.5 Mesdames et Messieurs, face au fléau des changements climatiques et de la dégradation de l'environnement qui frappe le continent africain, la Côte d'Ivoire réitère son appel pour la mise en œuvre d'un Programme spécial d'urgence pour la préservation des fleuves, des rivières et des mers et océans d'Afrique et encourage l'UNESCO à poursuivre son appui au Projet biosphère et patrimoines du Lac Tchad (*BIOPALT*).

10.6 Mesdames et Messieurs, l'éradication des facteurs de résurgence des conflits en Afrique et dans le monde, demeure une préoccupation majeure pour la Côte d'Ivoire, pays où est né en 1989 le concept de la culture de la Paix. Aussi mon pays encourage-t-il la poursuite de la mobilisation et du renforcement des partenariats et des réseaux à l'appui d'une culture de la paix en Afrique, tel que stipulé dans le projet de document 40 C/5.

10.7 Mesdames et Messieurs, la Côte d'Ivoire voudrait saisir l'opportunité de la présente Session pour réitérer sa gratitude à l'UNESCO pour les nombreux et divers appuis dont elle a bénéficié de sa part. Elle apprécie particulièrement l'octroi d'une assistance financière pour l'inventaire de son patrimoine culturel immatériel, tout comme elle salue les appuis significatifs à lui accordés pour la sauvegarde du Parc national de Tai et du Mont Nimba, dans le cadre des fonds d'urgence ainsi que ceux dédiés à la réactivation du Projet de la route de l'esclave. Enfin, la Côte d'Ivoire félicite l'UNESCO d'avoir fait de l'Afrique une priorité. Mon pays souhaite toutefois une évaluation des actions menées et des dispositions prises dans le cadre de cette priorité afin que soient prises les mesures qui s'imposent pour la rendre effective dans les délais. Je vous remercie.

#### 11. **The President:**

Merci. Thank you, your Excellency. Our next speaker is His Excellency Mr Brian Mushimba, Minister of Higher Education of Zambia.

#### 12.1 **Zambia:**

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Zambia wishes to join UNESCO Member States in congratulating you, Mr President, for being elected as President of the 40th session of the General Conference. Zambia also wishes to thank the outgoing President of the General Conference, Her Excellency Ms Zohour Alaoui, for her unwavering efforts in advancing the agenda of UNESCO. We also thank all the Member States for supporting Zambia's candidatures as one of the Vice-Presidents of the General Conference, and also President of the Natural Sciences Commission.

12.2 Mr President, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the aspiration of Zambia is to realize the tenets articulated in the Education 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, we have continued implementing interventions outlined in various national development plans and international conventions and protocols that we have acceded to. To enhance pupil attendance and nutrition among pre-primary and primary school learners, my Government has continued funding the "Home-Grown School Feeding Programme". At secondary school level, increasing access and participation of girl is being realized through the "Keeping Girls in School" initiative which is part of the girls' education and women's empowerment and livelihood project.

12.3 Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, Zambia continues to benefit from UNESCO and SIDA support in the implementation of comprehensive sexuality education targeted at young people between the ages of 10-24 through the project entitled "Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future – 03 Zambia". The 03 Zambia programme is improving sexual and reproductive health, gender and education outcomes for adolescents and young people through sustained reductions in early and unintended pregnancy, and gender-based violence. The 03 Zambia is an important intervention for Zambia and is aligned with SDGs 3, 4, 5 and 16. In order to reduce the cost of providing teaching and learning materials, my Government is developing open educational resources (OERs) for the secondary school curriculum with the support of UNESCO through the formulation of an OER strategy. In efforts to enhance provision of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education in schools, we have transformed the National Science Centre and also established a research and innovation section responsible for conducting and promoting research and innovation in STEM. Recognizing the significant role qualified teachers play in the provision of quality education, Zambia with support from UNESCO has developed teacher professional standards and has also customized the UNESCO-ICT Teacher Competence Framework. In view of this, we commend UNESCO for the role the Organization keeps playing in the implementation of SDG 4.

12.4 Mr President, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, quality assurance in higher education has gained significant momentum in recent years due to rising public demand for better performance of higher education institutions. In responding to this need, the "UNESCO-Shenzhen Municipality Government Funds-in-Trust" project on "Strengthening Quality Assurance and Recognition Tools and Mechanisms in Higher Education in Africa" is being implemented in Zambia. My country, working with stakeholders such as the UNHCR, has provided a safe haven and a home to over 82,000 refugees and displaced persons from neighbouring countries. In this light, it was important, and rightly so, that Zambia is the first country globally to pilot the UNESCO qualifications passport and started awarding this UNESCO qualifications passport to refugees and vulnerable migrants.

12.5 Mr President, Zambia wants to pay tribute to UNESCO for financing an intervention to mitigate child marriages, pregnancies, HIV/AIDS, and to enhance living a positive quality lifestyle for netballers. This has provided them with information on how to handle varying issues they come into contact with as they participate in this sport. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the implementation of the village television project reported during the 39th session of the General Conference has contributed greatly to the widening of access to information in Zambia. This is because in areas that are

not serviced by transmitters of the digital terrestrial transmission system, the Government has provided a direct-to-home transmission system, a platform that uses satellite transmission.

12.6 Mr President, as I conclude, this session of the General Conference will examine very important matters and some issues that will have great bearing on the future of UNESCO. The Programme and Budget of UNESCO and the future of the International Bureau of Education are among the items that will require serious reflection before taking decisions. I would therefore like to urge Member States to reach consensus so that UNESCO can implement its programmes. I further wish to urge UNESCO to continue being transparent and consultative, especially during the strategic transformation process, which will impact all Member States, and to come up with an agenda that speaks to the desires of all Member States. I thank you.

13. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. The next speaker is Her Excellency, Honourable Ms Jorien Wuite, Minister Plenipotentiary of Sint Maarten.

14.1 **Sint Maarten:**

Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, our sincere greetings from the friendly Island of Sint Maarten. It is an honour, as Minister Plenipotentiary of Sint Maarten, that I stand here on behalf of the Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, at the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference to share the progress of Sint Maarten on behalf of our Government and our people. I am pleased to join my esteemed colleagues before me in congratulating you upon your election as President of this General Conference and I wish you every success during your presidency.

14.2 Ladies and gentlemen, two months ago, we were reminded once more of our own ordeal; as we witnessed the horrific destruction of Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas. Our sympathies are with our sisters and brothers who were impacted, and our prayers are with them as they go through their recovery. At the 39th session of the our island was reeling from the devastation caused by Hurricane Irma in September 2017. We are advancing in our recovery, thanks to the resilience of our people and the assistance of many global partners. The hurricane seasons have been increasingly active. This is evidence of the disastrous impact of climate change. As small island developing States (SIDS), we will not shrink in the face of such challenges. Adapt and mitigate is our mantra. Sint Maarten therefore is in strong support of the UNESCO SIDS Action Plan and UNESCO's initiatives aimed at promoting the importance of mitigation and adaptation, as well as building the resilience of SIDS to impact climate change. We thank UNESCO for the support given to our island after Hurricane Irma and for the emergency funds that were made available. This has allowed the Division of Public Education to purchase instructional and sport materials, as well as educational methods.

14.3 Mr President, the Department of Culture and the Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO officially launched Sint Maarten's first intangible cultural heritage (ICH) inventory. The ICH inventory was released under the awareness campaign "I Remember Intangible Cultural Heritage". There are 215 ICH elements thus far in the inventory. Some of the elements submitted by the people of Sint Maarten include our S'Maatin English, the story of the Diamond Estate 26 Run/Escape, and the Ponum dance, to name but a few. The ICH inventory is available online to the public. We would like to thank UNESCO, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science in the Netherlands, and the Cluster Office for the Caribbean for your invaluable contribution towards making this a reality.

14.4 Ladies and gentlemen, Sint Maarten reaffirms its commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Several SDGs workshops are being conducted by the Department of the Interior and Kingdom Affairs and the Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO for secondary and elementary teachers since February 2019. In collaboration with the University of Sint Martin, lectures have been hosted to educate the public. A creative expression SDGs project allows secondary education students to express their knowledge of the SDGs using various art forms such as poetry, living statues, posters and dance. With reference to SDG 4, Sint Maarten has executed several activities to achieve the goal of quality education. With the passing of our study financing law in 2018, our Government reconfirmed our commitment to enhance equal access to higher education, and to those who choose to pursue vocational education at our local TVET institution.

14.5 The execution of the iSTEP (Inspiring our Students with Technology in Education Project) continues to assist with the implementation of twenty-first century learning. In 2018 and 2019, two successful TecXperience conferences were organized and training sessions for music and physical education teachers, and school counsellors were well received. The UNESCO Associate Schools Network (ASPnet) programme has expanded from one to three at both the secondary and elementary levels. A sustainable school waste management programme is being piloted at these schools. The programme's emphasis is on the need to conserve, sustainably use, and manage our environment, ocean, and seas in accordance with the 2030 Agenda (SDGs 14 and 15). Our students have become ambassadors for recycling and protecting our environmental resources in their schools, homes, and neighbourhoods.

14.6 Sint Maarten supports and embraces anti-doping practices. NoDoping/No Drugs (ND2) is an awareness campaign that received support and will be executed by the Department of Sports in collaboration with our stakeholders in sport. Mr President, as we continue to develop our country and pursue the SDGs, Sint Maarten is being rebuilt stronger and better. Our spirit of resilience will propel us to fulfil our motto – *Semper pro grediens* – which means we are "always progressing". Since we are disproportionately affected by global concerns such as climate change, we join the messages of other SIDS: only by working together and granting SIDS an equal platform within global platforms such as UNESCO can we ensure the creation of a desirable future for all our children. Thank you.

15. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. The next speaker is His Excellency Mr Mamadou Talla, Minister of National Education of Senegal.

**16.1 Senegal:**

Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Madame la Directrice générale, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres et Chefs de délégations, Mesdames, Messieurs. Monsieur le Président, à l'instar de ceux qui m'ont précédé, je voudrais vous féliciter pour votre élection à la Présidence de notre présente Session et vous souhaiter plein succès dans vos fonctions. Permettez-moi également de saluer le travail remarquable accompli par votre prédécesseur, l'Ambassadeur Zohour Alaoui. Je voudrais aussi saluer le leadership du Président du Conseil exécutif, remercier Madame la Directrice générale, qui a largement contribué à donner un souffle nouveau à l'Unesco.

16.2 Monsieur le Président, notre monde est actuellement confronté à des défis majeurs. Réchauffement climatique, montée de l'extrémisme violent, destruction de notre patrimoine commun, pour ne citer que ceux-là. Dans un tel contexte fait d'incertitudes, le Sénégal, qui fonde sa politique internationale sur le dialogue constant, entend contribuer au renforcement du multilatéralisme. À cette fin, mon pays reste profondément convaincu que le mandat fort louable de l'UNESCO pour la construction de la paix doit nous conduire à une introspection sur la finalité de notre action. En effet, pour l'atteinte des objectifs de développement durable, notamment l'ODD 4, nous devons faire montre de plus de pragmatisme afin de respecter nos engagements.

16.3 Pour une paix sociale durable, il faut assurer à tous un accès équitable à une éducation de qualité, par une promotion des langues nationales, de l'alphabétisation, des alternatives au système scolaire classique (comme les *daara* modernes au Sénégal), et de l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie. Une attention toute particulière doit être accordée à la question du genre, aux personnes vivant avec un handicap et aux jeunes déscolarisés. Aussi, le Président de la République du Sénégal, Son Excellence Monsieur Macky Sall, s'est-il personnellement engagé à réaliser, avant 2030, l'accès à l'éducation pour tous en mettant l'accent sur les filles. Pour atteindre cet objectif, il a considérablement investi dans le secteur de l'éducation. Plus de 25% du budget national du Sénégal y est consacré, dépassant ainsi la recommandation de 20% préconisée dans l'Agenda éducation 2030.

16.4 Dans cet esprit, le Sénégal s'emploie à développer un modèle éducatif plus inclusif, qui offre les mêmes chances de réussite à tous, y compris les élèves des zones défavorisées. C'est ce qui justifie d'ailleurs la création de Lycées d'intégration nationale pour l'équité et la qualité et la mise en place d'une Fondation pour l'éducation. S'y ajoutent les améliorations continues apportées dans la formation des enseignants. Pour une école de la réussite, il est essentiel de disposer d'enseignants bien formés, motivés et engagés car « qui veut atteindre l'élève, doit viser l'enseignant ».

16.5 Monsieur le Président, s'agissant de la culture, le Sénégal salue la tenue du Forum des Ministres de la culture, en marge de notre présente Session, près de deux décennies après la Conférence sur les politiques culturelles pour le développement qui s'était tenue à Stockholm. Les conclusions attendues de cette rencontre contribueront, sans doute, à la mise en œuvre des orientations du Gouvernement sénégalais visant à faire de l'économie de la culture un levier de développement local durable.

16.6 Dans le secteur de la communication et de l'information, ma Délégation réitère sa position en faveur du développement des médias et l'accès à l'information. Avec près de 400 organes d'information libres, mon pays s'est doté d'un cadre institutionnel qui fonde la liberté d'expression.

16.7 Le Sénégal appuie également les initiatives de l'Organisation dans les domaines de l'intelligence artificielle, des sciences, des sports et de la jeunesse. C'est le lieu de magnifier l'expertise de l'UNESCO dans les sciences de l'eau. Disposant d'une compétence unique dans le système onusien, notre Organisation devrait être en mesure de consolider sa position de leader dans les questions de l'eau, ressource devenue rare et en même temps porteuse de conflits. Je saisis cette occasion pour inviter tous les membres de nos États membres au 9<sup>e</sup> Forum mondial de l'eau « Dakar 2021 », ainsi qu'aux Jeux olympiques de la jeunesse qui se tiendront en 2022 au Sénégal.

16.8 Monsieur le Président, Mesdames, Messieurs, je voudrais réaffirmer le soutien du Sénégal au processus de Transformation stratégique. Les fondements de l'UNESCO sont à consolider. Il est donc nécessaire de poursuivre les démarches de restructuration engagées, pour lui permettre de mener à bien ses missions, en renforçant son efficacité dans le sillage de la réforme globale du Système des Nations unies. De même, dans le cadre du projet de programme et de budget 2020- 2021, le Sénégal soutient le plafond budgétaire à 534,6 millions de dollars. Notre ambition pour les deux priorités globales, Afrique et Égalité des genres, et le Plan d'action en faveur des petits États insulaires en développement (PEID), ne peut être réalisée sans des moyens financiers conséquents. Je vous remercie de votre aimable attention.

*Mr Altay Cengizer resumes the Chair*

**17. The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. The next speaker is His Excellency His Excellency Mr John Dean Kuku, Minister of Education of Solomon Islands.

**18.1 Solomon Islands :**

Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it is my distinct honour to be present today at this 40th session of the General Conference of UNESCO. First, and foremost, allow me to register my appreciation to the Director-General of UNESCO for the apt administration at UNESCO Headquarters and throughout the UNESCO system as a whole.

18.2 Today, Mr President, when the world is faced with many challenges such as climate change, internecine wars, interminable violence, and unrelenting poverty – just to name a few – the role of UNESCO, as a platform for intellectual debate to foster peace and sustainable development through education, science, social and human sciences and culture remains more critical than ever. Mr President, I cannot stress enough the importance of education as part of my Ministry's portfolio. The Government of the Solomon Islands has made the decision to move actively in this domain that include:

literacy and numeracy and lifelong learning. We have also made important progress in primary and secondary education. We also expand and progress early childhood education development. Concomitant to all these, we have initiated focus on our school-to-work programme.

18.3 Mr President, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is a key area where Solomon Islands needs further cooperation and development assistance. In this important area, I renew our appeal to UNESCO to get a substantial programme on the road in the Pacific Island countries. We await your response on such a programme. As with all areas of education, the quality of teaching by teachers is key to quality learning. To train teachers, we need excellent higher education institutions and, of course, educators and academics. At this juncture, Mr President, I am pleased to report that Solomon Islands has established its first national university (the Solomon Island National University – SINU) in 2012. This is progress we have made towards achieving target 4.3 of SDG 4. As such, we are now able to accommodate a greater number of students who wish to do tertiary training. These trained people are essential for our labour market.

18.4 In the area of culture, Mr President, we are making progress, especially in the areas of intangible heritage and creative industries. Mr President, Solomon Islands ratified the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage on 11 May 2018. This Convention entered into force on 11 August 2018. Solomon Islands is the 178th UNESCO State to join the Convention and the 13th State in the Asia and Pacific region to do so. But Mr President, we further and better-focused support from UNESCO is needed.

18.5 Mr President, I wish to reiterate, again, that climate change and particularly natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and cyclones are life-threatening realities to vulnerable small island developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific, including Solomon Islands. I would like to, once again, to call on UNESCO and our development partners to assist us in strengthening our early warning systems and support for disaster preparedness programmes.

18.6 Mr President, Solomon Islands is concerned about the budget cuts affecting our region. This has drastically affected the services provided by the field office in Apia, Samoa. Mr President, this is the only office responsible for UNESCO's work in the 17 Pacific Island countries we come from. Here, Mr President, I wish to make a strong appeal for UNESCO to strengthen the regional office and make good on previous promises to be more effective on the ground.

18.7 Mr President, although we come from small island States in the Pacific, our peoples are burdened by some of the largest problems in the world. Make very sure, Mr President, that your view of us is not jaundiced by the continental bias and prejudice most non-Pacific Islanders have held of us for umpteens years. Mr President, as you would well appreciate, Pacific Islanders are no less important than others. In conclusion, I wish to categorically state that the Solomon Islands assures UNESCO of the support, continuation and ongoing educational programmes towards the achievement of SDG 4 for quality education for all Solomon Islanders. I wish UNESCO every success in all its work now and in the coming years. I thank you.

19. **The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite His Excellency Dr Tilaye Gete, Minister of Education of Ethiopia.

20.1 **Ethiopia:**

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General of UNESCO, Excellencies, dear friends, first of all allow me to congratulate you, Mr President, upon your deserved election as President of the General Conference. I also applaud the Director-General and the Secretariat for the great work they are doing and their tireless effort in ensuring the successful conduct of our session. I would also like to convey the warm greetings of the President of Ethiopia, Her Excellency Sahle-Work Zewde, who is honoured to chair the Commission on the Futures of Education of UNESCO, and our Prime Minister, His Excellency Abiy Ahmed, who is the recipient of the 2019 UNESCO Houphet-Boigny Peace Prize and the 2019 Nobel Peace Laureate. Ethiopia is indeed proud of these prestigious international recognitions. They are vivid testimonies of the positive and momentous changes that are currently ongoing in our country.

20.2 We are building democratic institutions, we have levelled the playing field for open, fair and free political competition. We are strengthening the rule of law, the respect for human rights including freedom of expression and pluralistic media. As a testament to these momentous political changes, we were given the honour and have successfully hosted the 2019 World Press Freedom Day in our capital, Addis Ababa. We appreciate the confidence and the honour bestowed upon us by UNESCO and the international community.

20.3 We are undertaking momentous economic reforms guided by home-grown policies targeting inclusive prosperity and have created conducive conditions for the continuation of fast and inclusive economic growth. Education, science, technology and innovation are at the heart of our strategy to transform our society through developing a new education and training roadmap. We have made, and are continuing to make, great strides in making education accessible to all throughout our country. We are working hard to improve quality at all levels.

20.4 Our transformative prosperity agenda is based on sustainable development, including the protection of our environment and the tackling of climate change. We have undertaken a massive tree planting campaign spearheaded by His Excellency the Prime Minister in person, with the planting of billions of trees. We are also safeguarding our rich tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage sites. Our aspiration for inclusive sustainable development is mainly dependent on ourselves, and we are very grateful for all the support we receive from UNESCO.

20.5 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Ethiopia, a founding member of the League of Nations, the United Nations and many international institutions including UNESCO, is a firm believer in the multilateral system. The pressing global challenges we face, mainly the eradication of poverty and the reduction of global inequities, tackling climate change, combating of hate speech and fake news, and narrowing of the growing digital divide, require global solidarity. We should all unite to fight against these global challenges that affect all humanity. The eradication of poverty is predicated on the



achievement of SDGs in general, and the access to quality education by all in particular. We encourage UNESCO to work with Member States to optimize and prioritize its activities so as to improve learning outcomes, especially for women, girls and marginalized communities in vulnerable locations.

20.6 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we all agree that UNESCO's mandate is more relevant today than at any time in its long history. Yet, we have consistently under-invested in its work, particularly in its programme in developing countries and in Africa. We fully support the ongoing strategic transformation of the Organization with a view to better respond to the needs of Member States. However, as governing body, we need to give the Secretariat the necessary resources to undertake its activities and fulfil the important mandate we have entrusted to it. We need to increase voluntary contributions, particularly in support of the Priority Africa programme, the work of the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) and the African World Heritage Fund.

20.7 Last but not least, we need to reform the governance system of our Organization much more deeply than what we have attempted or are proposing to date. We need to have bigger ambitions by undertaking consensus-based, inclusive, comprehensive and transformative reform of the governance system with the objective of strengthening UNESCO and ensuring its success in the twenty-first century. Thank you very much for your attention.

## 21. The President:

Thank you your Excellency. The next speaker is His Excellency, Mr Mohamed Elamin Eltom, Minister of Education of Sudan.

### ١-٢٢ السودان:

السيد رئيس المؤتمر العام، السيد رئيس المجلس التنفيذي، السيدة المديرية العامة لليونسكو، السيدات والسادة الوزراء وأعضاء الوفود المشاركة، السلام عليكم ورحمة الله، أجمعت الأسرة الدولية على إنشاء منظمة الأمم المتحدة بعد حروب ضروس آحرها الحرب العالمية الثانية وكان هدف إنشائها هو إدارة العلاقات الدولية عبر مناهج سلمية تقي البشرية ويلات الحروب وتحقق التنمية وكرامة الإنسان. إن بلاد السودان كانت ومازالت تؤمن بدور الأمم المتحدة وأهمية الدبلوماسية المتعددة الأطراف لتعزيز التعاون الدولي في تحقيق السلام والأمن والرفاهية للبشرية. وبعد ميلاد الأمم المتحدة وتبني ميثاقها عام ١٩٤٥ بقليل، جاء ميلاد منظمة اليونسكو كأقدم منظمة دولية عُهد لها تعزيز التعاون الدولي في مجال التربية والعلوم والثقافة كأساس لبناء السلام. ومن هذا المنطلق، إننا في السودان نشم دور اليونسكو، ودعوني في هذا السياق أفتبس ما ذكره فخامة رئيس جمهورية مالي السيد إبراهيم أبو بكر كيتا، مؤمنا على أهمية المنظمة عصر أمس عندما قال "إن لم تكن اليونسكو قد أنشئت، كان واجباً علينا إنشاؤها". ومن هنا يأتي دعمنا لجهود السيدة المديرية العامة الرامية إلى الإصلاح والتحول الاستراتيجي.

٢-٢٢ السيد الرئيس، أود أن أعرب عن سعادتي لمخاطبتكم اليوم ونحن نتحدث بلسان سوداني جديد شعاره الحرية والسلام والعدالة والديمقراطية، حيث نجحت ثورة السودان في القضاء على ثلاثة عقود من الحكم، عاش خلالها الشعب تحت ويلات الظلم والقمع وقهر الحريات فضلاً عن التدهور الاقتصادي المريع، مما انعكس في تدهور مؤسسات التعليم والثقافة والعلوم والإعلام والاتصال، وألقى بظلاله السالبة على الحياة الاجتماعية. كما أنتهز هذه السانحة لأعرب عن خالص شكري وتقديري للسيدة المديرية العامة لليونسكو التي أكدت للسيد رئيس الوزراء السوداني، الدكتور عبد الله حمدوك، خلال لقاءها بسيادته في نيويورك وبخطابها له الذي أبدت فيه تعاطفها مع ما يدور في السودان واستعدادها للوقوف معه حتى تحقق الثورة أهدافها النبيلة المجيدة.

٣-٢٢ السيد الرئيس لقد وقفنا على جهود منظمة اليونسكو في مراجعة سياسات التربية والتعليم في السودان تمهيداً لبلوغ هدف التنمية المستدامة الرابع في عام ٢٠٣٠ ميلادية، إلا أن بلوغ هذا الهدف في السودان تعارضه ثلاثة تحديات أساسية: أولاً، إن أكثر الفئات التي تعاني الحرمان من حقها في التعليم الجيد هي البنت الريفية الفقيرة، ويلزمنا إذا استهداف هذه الفئة الهامة بصورة خاصة. وثانياً، تتطلب مواجهة الآثار السالبة للحروب الأهلية الطويلة التي عانينا منها تعزيز الوحدة الوطنية في ذات الوقت الذي نعزز فيه الخراط طلابنا في مناهج المواطنة العالمية. وثالثاً وأخيراً، يتوجب علينا مواكبة الثورة الصناعية الرابعة في الوقت الذي نركز فيه جهدها في القضاء على الفقر والجهل. وإننا نتطلع لترافقنا المنظمة بمخارمها وجهودها في مواجهة هذه التحديات.

٤-٢٢ يعد تطوير تعليم العلوم من الأولويات لنهضة الدول والمجتمعات، وذلك لإحداث التنمية المستدامة والشاملة. لذا فإن وزارة التربية والتعليم شرعت في وضع الرؤى المستقبلية لتطوير تعليم العلوم والرياضيات والتكنولوجيا مع تطوير بناء القدرات البشرية. ونأمل في دعم اليونسكو والشركاء في هذا المجال. كما نتطلع لمواصلة دعم اليونسكو في ترجمة وثيقة سياسات العلوم والتكنولوجيا والابتكار، وبرنامج الإنسان والمحيط الحيوي لوضع برامج عمل ملموسة تحقق أهداف الحكومة الانتقالية.

٥-٢٢ السيد الرئيس، نؤكد حرصنا على موامة تشريعاتنا وبرامجنا الوطنية مع الجهود الرامية للحد من آثار التغيرات المناخية، ولا سيما أن السودان يتعرض لموجات كبيرة من الفيضانات الموسمية التي تتوقع ازديادها مع تلك التغيرات. ونتطلع أيضاً لتقدم مشروع متكامل بمساعدة اليونسكو لمقابلة تحديات الفيضانات والاستفادة من تلك الموارد عن طريق حصاد المياه.

٦-٢٢ السيد الرئيس، يتميز السودان بتنوعه الثقافي والمادي وغير المادي مما يتوجب علينا صونه وحمايته والحفاظ عليه واستمراره بنقله من جيل إلى جيل خاصة والبلاد تشهد تحولاً ثقافياً كبيراً يدفع بنا نحو مرفئ الوحدة والتضامن والعيش بسلام. كما أن السودان غني بالمواقع الأثرية والتاريخية والطبيعية التي أدرجت بعضها في قائمة التراث العالمي والبعض الآخر في القائمة التمهيدية.

٧-٢٢ السيد الرئيس، نستشرف اليوم في بلادنا تحولاً اجتماعياً كبيراً مما يستدعي عملاً كبيراً مع الشركاء لوضع سياسات منصفة للشباب والنساء وتأهيلهم تعزيزاً للسلم الاجتماعي والمشاركة بشكل فعال في مناحي الحياة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والسياسية وتعزيز ثقافة السلام. وإن الحرية التعبير وحرية الصحافة دوراً بارزاً في المجتمعات الديمقراطية. وخطا السودان في هذا الاتجاه خطوات هامة حيث بدأنا بمراجعة سياسات وقوانين قطاع الإعلام لضمان إعلام حر وشفاف وقادر على أن يعبر عن قضايا المواطنين. ونتطلع للعمل معكم لسد الفجوة الرقمية.

٢٢-٨ السيد الرئيس، إننا نثمن وجود اليونسكو في الميدان. وفي هذا السياق، نشيد بالدور الكبير الذي يضطلع به مكتب اليونسكو في الخراطيم والذي حقق حضوراً للمنظمة في بلادي، ونتطلع إلى دعم هذا المكتب بما يمكنه من القيام بدوره كاملاً. وختاماً، أتمنى لمؤتمرننا العام النجاح بما يجسد الأهداف السامية لمنظمة اليونسكو، ولكم جزيل الشكر لحسن استماعكم.

**23. The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. Our next speaker is Her Excellency Ms Lilja Alfredsdottir, Minister of Education, Science and Culture of Iceland.

**24.1 Iceland:**

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, distinguished delegates, it is a great pleasure to be with you here today. As you know, since the establishment of this Organization, human rights and dignity, have been the core of its mandate. Today, this mandate is as vital as ever. Moreover, UNESCO's contribution to building peace, addressing poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, science, culture and communication and information is of fundamental importance as we all work towards a sustainable future and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

24.2 Mr President, there is no question in my mind that education is key – key to contributing to lasting peace, key to contributing to sustainable development and key as regards to addressing poverty. It is my belief that education is a fundamental human right of which nobody should be deprived. Iceland strongly supports the new global convention of the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education. By providing such a global regulatory framework, we not only provide greater opportunities for students, staff and workforce, but we also promote increased quality and cooperation in both higher education and research. In doing this, we strengthen dialogue, knowledge and responsible citizenship globally.

24.3 Excellencies, UNESCO has strengthened its work in the past few years, as was reflected in the strong Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessment presented earlier this year, not only on the programme level, but also showing clear strategic vision aligned with the 2030 Agenda and a results-oriented leadership. My Government has confidence in UNESCO's capacity to deliver on its objectives. This year, we signed the first partnership framework agreement with UNESCO, which will serve as a foundation for Iceland's enhanced engagement with the Organization in the coming years.

24.4 Iceland's new international development cooperation policy sets forth priorities that align well with UNESCO's mission and mandate. For the first time UNESCO is included in the policy as one of our partner organizations in supporting the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. Emphasis will be placed on the quality of basic education and improved access to education in developing countries – hence UNESCO plays a key role through its capacity development of education. This provides capacity building and education systems will be strengthened as a result.

24.5 Iceland was one of the founding members of the CapED programme in 2003 and we are happy to show our renewed support. In addition, we are bringing the flagship of Iceland's international development cooperation under the auspices of UNESCO with the proposed establishment of the International Centre for Capacity Development in Reykjavik, a category two centre under the auspices of UNESCO. The Centre will work in the fields of geothermal energy, fisheries, land restoration and gender equality. In bringing these training programmes together under one umbrella, Iceland will, in partnership with UNESCO, work on increasing the capacity of developing countries and contributing to their achievement of the SDGs.

24.6 Mr President, nature is highly valued in my country and combating climate change is a priority for our Government. The effects of climate change are very visible in Iceland, where we are witnessing rapid melting of the ice caps and even the disappearance of some glaciers in one generation. Hopefully, focus and awareness of the importance of ice caps will help towards finding a response to this pressing issue. We were very pleased to see Iceland's Vatnajökull National Park added to the UNESCO World Heritage List at the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee in Baku. The Park includes an iconic volcanic region and a dynamic nature of fire-ice which covers an area comprising nearly 40% of Iceland's territory, as well of Europe's largest glacier. Close to Vatnajökull, we can actually see by visiting the area each summer that the glacier getting smaller and smaller. It is unbelievable to see the power of the rapid climate change in Iceland.

24.7 Ladies and gentlemen, let me conclude by saying that UNESCO's role as champion of peace, understanding and tolerance is as urgent and vital as ever. Quality education, gender equality and sustainability must be cross-cutting themes in all our work. Iceland is firmly committed to playing an active role in contributing to UNESCO's role and thereby working towards a common good. Thank you very much for your attention.

**25. The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite His Excellency Mr Oscar Hugo Lopez Rivas, Minister of Education of Guatemala.

**26.1 Guatemala:**

Señor Presidente de la Conferencia General, señor Presidente del Consejo Ejecutivo, señora Directora General, señoras y señores ministros, secretarios de Estado y jefes de delegación, honorables embajadores, delegados permanentes, señoras y señores amigos de Guatemala: quiero expresar un saludo fraternal en nombre del Gobierno de Guatemala y especialmente del presidente constitucional de la República, Jimmy Morales Cabrera. Es un honor, como ministro de Educación, representar a mi país en ocasión de la 40ª reunión de la Conferencia General de esta Organización, la cual consideramos inmensamente significativa para contribuir a la paz y a la seguridad en el mundo. Guatemala ha realizado acciones en el seno de esta Organización que demuestran un claro compromiso con la promoción de la paz y la construcción de sociedades fuertes a través de la interconexión de la educación, la ciencia, la cultura, la comunicación e información, pilares fundamentales de la UNESCO.

26.2 Guatemala se distingue por su diversidad lingüística y cultural, en donde conviven cuatro pueblos: mestizo, maya, xinka y garífuna, con sus idiomas y tradiciones que son un importante patrimonio inmaterial para la humanidad. La herencia patrimonial de la cultura maya dejó un legado de sitios arqueológicos, centros ceremoniales, observatorios astronómicos y arte milenarios que, junto con la arquitectura de la época colonial, constituyen un valioso patrimonio nacional y mundial. Guatemala está comprometida con la protección del patrimonio cultural, muestra de ello es la participación activa en los comités de patrimonio mundial y patrimonio inmaterial en los que participamos. Aprovecho para hacer un llamado a la comunidad internacional a intensificar y visibilizar los esfuerzos para la lucha contra el tráfico ilícito de bienes culturales, así como a reflexionar en innovadores y eficaces mecanismos para la restitución de bienes patrimoniales a sus pueblos de origen.

26.3 Reiteramos nuestro apoyo para la protección de los periodistas. La libertad de expresión es un elemento fundamental para la democracia. El desarrollo y el diálogo constituyen un derecho universal, por lo que ninguna voz debe ser apagada y mucho menos por causa de la violencia.

26.4 Para Guatemala, el fortalecimiento de la educación es importante y su aporte es esencial para el cumplimiento de la Agenda 2030, especialmente del ODS 4 que se refiere a la educación de calidad. Es oportuno señalar que la política educativa de Guatemala se armoniza con el ODS 4 al enfocar sus planes e implementar procesos educativos dirigidos a una educación inclusiva, equitativa y de calidad para todos los guatemaltecos. Guatemala ha dado pasos importantes en materia de educación, evitando la caída de la tasa neta de escolaridad, haciendo eficientes los procesos de acceso a la misma, incrementando la cobertura educativa en todos los niveles, desarrollando textos escolares en 14 idiomas mayas para educación primaria y, por primera vez, textos para el nivel secundario, creando un programa de alimentación escolar que ha permitido dignificar a los estudiantes con la posibilidad de recibir en la escuela un tiempo de comida. Por primera vez en la historia, finalizamos el ciclo escolar 2019 con 193 días de clases, sin interrupciones, sin huelgas magisteriales. Hemos retomado la rectoría de la educación para la primera infancia y con apoyo de Unicef, hemos abierto los primeros 382 centros comunitarios para el desarrollo infantil temprano.

26.5 Se aprobó la reforma del currículo nacional base para secundaria, dando énfasis a la preparación de los jóvenes para su inserción en el mundo laboral. Se impulsa el proyecto de inserción educativa y laboral para jóvenes con discapacidad. Se desarrollan y fortalecen los programas de inclusión, educación bilingüe intercultural y se promueve la igualdad para la educación de las niñas y las mujeres. Se creó el Viceministerio de Educación Extraescolar y Alternativa para dar cumplimiento a que toda la población tenga derecho a la educación a lo largo de la vida. En él, se impulsa la certificación de competencias laborales para las personas que no han ido a la escuela, pero han logrado *expertise* en alguna ocupación u oficio. La profesionalización y dignificación del magisterio de Guatemala es uno de los rubros con mayor atención, por lo que se fortaleció la formación inicial de los docentes y se profesionaliza actualmente a los docentes en servicio para llevarlos a un nivel de licenciatura. Se creó el programa de mantenimiento de edificios escolares para garantizar espacios dignos y saludables. Es satisfactorio hacer mención de que se está destinando esfuerzos y recursos para la elaboración del Plan Nacional de Educación para el Desarrollo Sostenible 2020-2032, como una apuesta sólida a favor del desarrollo educativo integral para Guatemala y en cumplimiento de nuestros compromisos internacionales. Todos estos esfuerzos tienen como objetivo el dignificar e impulsar la educación tanto de niños, jóvenes y adultos, sin distinción alguna. Asimismo, se está revisando el currículo nacional, incluyendo temas de educación sexual y reproductiva y cultura de paz y no violencia. Todas estas acciones se enmarcan en la Estrategia Nacional de Formación Ciudadana, que corresponde a la educación para la ciudadanía mundial.

26.6 Guatemala, por su naturaleza diversa y su situación geográfica, la hacen vulnerable ante los fenómenos naturales y el cambio climático, por lo que reiteramos nuestro compromiso con el Acuerdo de París y los programas de la UNESCO para buscar combinar la conservación y el uso sostenible de los recursos naturales para maximizar los beneficios ecológicos, económicos y sociales, como el Programa del Hombre y la biosfera. Aprovecho para agradecer a la UNESCO, en general, y a su oficina en Guatemala, en lo particular, por todo el apoyo proactivo y esencial que brinda en el desarrollo de capacidades dentro de las instituciones gubernamentales en las áreas de su competencia, por lo que su continuidad es clave para nuestro país. Como jefe de la delegación de Guatemala, ratifico nuestro compromiso como país para seguir trabajando en conjunto en la construcción de un mundo más justo y pacífico, especialmente por la labor que realizamos todas las naciones aquí representadas. Deseo finalizar con esta declaración que no deja de tener vigencia y que está plasmada en el preámbulo de la Constitución de la UNESCO: “Puesto que las guerras nacen en la mente de los hombres, es en la mente de los hombres donde deben erigirse los baluartes de la paz”. Muchas gracias.

27. **The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite Her Excellency Ms Niki Kerameos, Minister of Education and Religious Affairs of Greece.

28.1 **Greece:**

Mr President, on behalf of the Greek delegation, allow me to congratulate you, on your election. We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to the Director-General, Ms Azoulay, for her important contribution in promoting, *inter alia*, education for all, and placing culture at the very heart of development policy.

28.2 Greece, as an elected member of the Executive Board from 2015 to 2019 and as the Chair of the APX Commission of the General Conference, has actively taken part in the execution of the programmes adopted by the General Conference. Greece currently stands for election in three committees – the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation (ICPRCP), the Committee on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the World Heritage Committee for the term 2021-2025 – and looks forward to the support of Member States:.

28.3 Ladies and gentlemen, our country fully aligns with the European Union statement to be delivered in the coming days. Additionally, I would like to focus on four issues. First, education: regarding SDG 4 and the Framework for Action of

Education 2030, we have already introduced two-year compulsory pre-school education, in recognition of the immense value of early childhood education on the healthy psycho-social and pedagogical development of children. We are increasing the autonomy of the school unit and placing more trust on our teaching staff while taking concrete steps to enhance educational tools that will enable our teachers to thrive. We support the efforts undertaken by UNESCO for implementing Education 2030 and the Framework for Action, including education for sustainable development, inclusive education and global citizenship education. Under this umbrella, Greece has implemented the Associated Schools Network, which numbers over 150 participating schools across the country. Meanwhile, UNESCO Chairs have been established in 13 Greek universities. In the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, we are seeking to enrich school curricula and equip our students with the knowledge, skills and values to become active citizens in a sustainable society. In this direction, we are promoting the enhancement of soft skills and digital skills, given the significant gap between what the educational system produces and what the labour market actually needs. We aim to bridge this gap through interventions at every educational level including vocational educational training and lifelong learning. We are making our universities more autonomous and we are seeking to further enhance the function by introducing evaluative tools that will render them more competitive in the global market. Finally, we are exploring ways to integrate technological innovations within the classroom and to harness the power of artificial intelligence to make education more accessible and engaging.

28.4 The second issue: the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural property. Lately, the rise of the cross-border movement of objects and the increased accessibility of archaeological sites, coupled with international organized crime and armed conflicts, have unfortunately increased the illicit trafficking of cultural objects. For decades, Greece has played an active role in the combat against the illegal trade of antiquities by organizing international conferences, raising public awareness and establishing an international network through bilateral agreements. Every three years, the United Nations General Assembly adopts a resolution on the return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin, which is issued upon the initiative and following the coordination of Greece. The resolution recognizes the leading role of UNESCO in the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural property, reaffirms the importance of the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, and takes note of the role of the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of the State Parties. Greece looks forward to the adoption in this session of the resolution on strengthening the implementation of the 1970 Convention in view of the celebration of its 50th anniversary.

28.5 The third issue: climate change and its impact on cultural and natural heritage. Recognizing that climate change is one of the great challenges of our time and deeply concerned about its impact on our cultural heritage, Greece is aiming at encouraging global action on this issue. Last June, our country convened the international conference "Impacts of Climate Change on Cultural Heritage: Facing the Challenge in Athens". In the framework of the 2019 Climate Action Summit at the United Nations, Greece, with the support of UNESCO and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) presented the proposal entitled "Addressing climate change impacts on cultural and natural heritage". So far, more than 60 United Nations Member States have already committed to the Greek proposal, in addition to the United Nations Secretary-General and the Council of Europe. Our Prime Minister, Mr Kyriákos Mitsotakis, announced that Greece will host a high level meeting in 2020 encouraging further action on the matter. This meeting will precede the official ceremony for the adoption of the Declaration that includes the above-mentioned proposal.

28.6 The fourth issue: restitution of the Parthenon Sculptures and Melina Mercouri. Next week, the UNESCO-Greece Melina Mercouri Prize will be awarded to an outstanding action that safeguards and enhances the world's cultural landscapes. The Prize, supported by the Greek Government, bears the name of our former Minister of Culture, who 37 years ago raised the issue of the return of the Parthenon Sculptures to Athens. The request for the return of the Parthenon Sculptures constitutes an important agenda of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation (ICPRCP) and is still pending. Between 1984, when the request was lodged, and 2018 the ICPRCP adopted 16 recommendations. Among others, it called upon Greece and the United Kingdom to intensify their efforts to reach a satisfactory settlement on this issue, while taking into account its historical, cultural, legal and ethical dimensions. Thank you very much.

29. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. The next speaker is His Excellency Honourable John Chrysestom Musingo, Minister of State for Higher Education of Uganda.

30.1 **Uganda:**

Thank you very much, Mr President. My delegation congratulates you upon your election to chair the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference. We trust and have full confidence in you to steer the Conference for consensus and agreement on the matters before us. We thank the Director-General, the Secretariat and the Executive Board for the preparation of the Draft 40 C/5 and the other documents for this Conference.

30.2 Mr President, Uganda applauds the efforts of the Director-General to rationally allocate the meagre resources towards achieving the goals of UNESCO. We further applaud the Director-General's aspirations for the strategic transformation based on the three pillars: changing the structure to strengthen management culture; improving the efficiency of UNESCO's means of action; and informing UNESCO's strategic positioning for 2030. We believe this will take UNESCO to greater heights.

30.3 Mr President, we register our appreciation to UNESCO for continued support through a number of interventions in our country during the last biennium in all areas of focus and mandate with significant results, as follows: the Education Programme has strengthened the Multi-partner Cooperation to Support Teachers Policy and improve learning with support of the Norwegian Teacher Initiative. This has resulted in development of a functional teacher management information system, a quality assurance system for teacher education. In the area of HIV and health education, the Ugandan Government, with support from UNESCO, has developed the national sexuality education framework for Uganda, which was approved and launched in May 2018.

30.4 In line with its objective of helping its population to develop skills, the Government has developed a technical and vocational education and training policy with support from the Better Education for Africa's Rise (BEAR II) project. In response to refugee education, the Ministry of Education has put in place policies and practices where teachers were provided with skills to implement conflict-sensitive education in refugee settlements and local communities. In order to improve the teaching profession, the Government of Uganda, with the support from UNESCO through the CapED programme, has developed the national teacher policy which was launched on World Teachers' Day. The policy envisions transforming the teaching profession and learning environment for skilled and globally competitive human resources.

30.5 Mr President, UNESCO's flagship programme on fostering science for sustainable management of natural resources continues to be pursued in Uganda. More than 20 sites of outstanding significance have been identified and are being prepared for nomination to UNESCO for designation in as biosphere reserves or geoparks, or both, for their rich biodiversity and heritage value. Uganda also wishes to be considered for the Global Observatory of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Instruments (GO-SPIN) programme that UNESCO has supported in some countries. Uganda welcomes both technical and financial support from UNESCO in the impending review and consensus-building for better science, technology and innovation (STI) and natural resources management framework in the country, since the time for review of our 2009 STI policy is due.

30.6 Uganda appreciates UNESCO's support in the promotion of the culture of peace and non-violence and application of the principles laid down in the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures as a means of attaining the targets in the 2030 Agenda. The support promoted some commonly shared traditional values and practices as foundations for peace in the refugee settlements and host communities in Uganda. Uganda also hosted an eastern African Management of Social Transformations (MOST) workshop at Makerere University on the theme "Youth, Peace and Security in the Horn of Africa", which took place between 2 to 5 April 2019. The workshop was a demonstration of strategic partnership among stakeholders.

30.7 Mr President, Uganda is party to three UNESCO conventions, those of 1972, 2003 and 2005. Currently, we are implementing several interventions focusing on revitalizing intangible cultural heritage (ICH) elements listed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, introducing ICH in our universities as an academic programme at undergraduate level, preparing the quadrennial report under the 2005 Convention and implementing the 2015 Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, among others. We are very grateful for the support we have received from UNESCO and the Government of Japan towards the reconstruction of the world heritage site Kasubi Tombs. We also thank the Republic of Korea for its support towards the strengthening of the capacity of the crafts sector, and the Swedish Government for support in the preparation of the quadrennial report, among others. We are committed to the continued conservation and safeguarding of heritage in all its manifestations and working towards the completion of the restoration of the Kasubi Tombs.

30.8 Uganda recognizes the diversity of content shared on the liberalized airwaves and promotes community participation and dialogue. We are promoting the use of community multimedia centres and the safety of journalists as stated in the United Nations Plan of Action by establishing and strengthening the national mechanism for the safety of journalists. The recently concluded conference for African judges in Kampala, on freedom of expression for journalists is a demonstration of Uganda's commitment to harness the benefits of the subject through the proposed curriculum intervention. We call for an increase in the diversity of content for public access, safeguarding of the documentary heritage and increase in the respect for freedom of the media. Mr President, I wish the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference fruitful dialogue that will reaffirm UNESCO's status as a beacon of hope and an agent of sustainable development and peace. I thank you.

### 31. **The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite His Excellency Mr Bence Rétvari, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Deputy Minister of Human Capacities of Hungary.

### 32.1 **Hungary:**

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, let me start by congratulating Mr Altay Cengizer for his election as President of the 40th session of UNESCO's General Conference. On behalf of the Hungarian Government, I wish you a successful presidency. Hungary supports the European Union (EU) statement to be delivered by the EU delegation. Hungary presents its candidacy to the Executive Board of UNESCO for the next term after a pause of 10 years. We look forward to returning to the Board, if elected, to work together with all Member States during our term.

32.2 Ladies and gentlemen, I want to take this opportunity to call your attention to two very serious and alarming situations and to take a stand against the continuous violation of the rights of the Hungarian minority living in Subcarpathia, Ukraine, on the one hand, and for the helping of persecuted Christians worldwide on the other hand. The Hungarian community of 150,000 people lives in the western part of Ukraine, neighbouring Hungary. They live in a very difficult situation, facing repeated violations, limitations on their rights and atrocities. Let me cite but a few of these. The so-called law on education adopted two years ago in Ukraine seriously violates the fundamental rights of national minorities – the right of the Hungarian minority to participate in education in their mother tongue was repealed. The law on Ukrainian language was adopted this year, which makes the use of Ukrainian language obligatory in practically all spheres of life except private conversation and church services. They punish the use of the Hungarian language. In Ungvár, a city near the Hungarian border, the headquarters of the Hungarian Cultural Association was set on fire last year. It is unacceptable that 15 kilometres from the border of a European Union and NATO Member State, the court trial of the criminals is still delayed. Hungarians living there cannot feel secure if such a criminal act may go without anyone being called to account. Hungarian sites of memory, statues and name plates have been damaged by Ukrainian nationalists. On several occasions, Ukrainian nationalists have marched in Subcarpathia in the western part of Ukraine, which fears the Hungarian minority. It is unacceptable that the participants in the "Petöfi Sándor Program", a cultural initiative for Hungarian communities, have

become targets of the security service. On the website of a Ukrainian nationalist organization, the names and addresses of Hungarian citizens living in Ukraine have been made public and they have been accused of violation of the law. In the protection of the rights of the Hungarian minority, I ask UNESCO and its Member States to take action in order to regain the educational and cultural rights of the Hungarian minority in Ukraine.

32.3 Ladies and gentlemen, the world's most persecuted religion is Christianity. Therefore, the Hungarian Government is taking measures for the protection of persecuted Christians in the world. We launched the "Hungary Helps" programme in the framework of which we rebuild settlements and build schools, provide medicines to healthcare institutions and support other humanitarian projects as well. Such assistance is provided primarily through the local Christian leaders. Our basic principle is that instead of organizing migration, we have to stop it. Hungary takes aid to the countries in crisis instead of bringing the problem to Europe. Persecuted Christians must receive aid in their own homeland.

32.4 Hungary hosted the third Budapest Water Summit as well in October, under the motto "Preventing Water Crisis". The summit provided a platform for political decision-makers, representatives of business and finance sectors as well as the academic community to discuss ways of getting closer to a water-secure world. The key outcome of the meeting was a document entitled "Budapest Appeal" that identifies priority areas on water security and outlines recommendations as well as solutions for the international community to consider at relevant international fora, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the next World Water Forum and the United Nations High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Thank you for your attention.

33. **The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite Her Excellency Ms Emmalin Pierre, Minister for Education, Human Resource Development and Religious Affairs of Grenada.

34.1 **Grenada:**

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I bring you warm greetings from the Government and people of Grenada. Mr President, I am pleased to congratulate you upon your election as President of the 40th session of the General Conference and I want to assure you that Grenada is committed to working with you. I wish you every success during your Presidency.

34.2 Firstly, I must convey Grenada's sympathy to all the victims in our Caribbean region and across the world who are presently suffering from the negative effects of climate change. As small island developing States (SIDS) we saw only recently in our neighbouring island, the Bahamas, how one monster hurricane can cause catastrophic destruction, causing loss of lives and biological diversity. Mr President, this is something we live with every day as a small island developing State – the knowledge that in one day, or in one hour, we can potentially face severe threats from the impact of climate change. We believe that SIDS must be given priority because we are vulnerable. We have small economies and we face the effects of climate change daily, even though we are the least contributors to threats of climate change. We commend UNESCO on its role in its fight against climate change, and support UNESCO's SIDS Action Plan, which outlines mitigation and adaptation strategies and steps to build resilience. We reiterate our plea for allocation of adequate resources for the successful implementation of the SIDS Action Plan.

34.3 We welcome the measures put in place by the Director-General for the implementation of the third pillar of the strategic transformation in view of defining a new vision to shape the future action of the next school in the framework of its future Medium-Term Strategy. In this regard, therefore, we reiterate our commitment to the two global priorities, Africa and gender equality, and underline the importance of continuing to give special attention to youth and SIDS as priority groups. In addition, the restructuring of the programme sector should be aligned to the new Medium-Term Strategy in order to best reflect its priorities. We also reiterate our call for an improved human resource strategy for the Organization with full respect to its rules and regulations in order to advance the programme delivery and balance geographical representation.

34.4 Mr President, Grenada believes that education is a fundamental right and is one of the most powerful and proven vehicles for achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Grenada supports the implementation of SDG 4, as evident in our participation in the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Steering Committee and its commitment to the collective work of implementation of the Education 2030 Roadmap for the benefit of the region and successful implementation of SDG 4. We welcome the Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications and a new convention for the recognition of studies, degrees and diplomas in higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean, which we believe will strengthen international and regional cooperation in higher education. Grenada understands the importance of technical and vocational education training and lifelong learning opportunities in preparing our youth to meet the demands of the future. We would therefore like to thank UNESCO for its support in developing Grenada's national TVET policy. Grenada recognizes the important role that science and technology plays for sustainable development.

34.5 Accordingly, Grenada is committed to actively participating in the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), since as an island State, oceans are of great importance to our livelihoods. We commend the work of IOC in the preparation of the International Decade of Ocean Sciences. We therefore urge UNESCO to continue to support the implementation of early warning systems for tsunamis and other marine hazards. We believe that in order to solve the problems related to climate change, we must utilize a cross-sectoral approach looking at research and science, technology and innovation and building upon UNESCO's programmes such as the Man and the Biosphere Programme and the international geoscience and geoparks programmes. We value UNESCO's commitment to the protection and safeguarding of world heritage and intangible cultural heritage, and we look forward to support for the implementation of its cultural conventions for the promotion of culture and shared heritage and values. We are committed to the support of the Organization's programmes and activities through our active participation in the Information for All Programme, the International Programme for Development of Communication and the International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Mr President, I thank you.

**35. The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. The next speaker is His Excellency Dr William Suswele-Banda, Minister of Education, Science and Technology of Malawi.

**36.1 Malawi:**

Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General of UNESCO, distinguished delegates. Mr President, allow me to add my delegation's sincere congratulations on your accession to the Presidency of this 40th session of UNESCO's General Conference. I trust that the General Conference will benefit a lot from your wisdom and able leadership. I bring greetings from His Excellency, Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi. He wishes all delegates to this conference fruitful deliberations.

36.2 Mr President, this 40th session of the General Conference is taking place at a crucial time when UNESCO is closing the cycle of its Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021. This offers us an opportunity to reflect on the achievements that UNESCO has made and it gives us an opportunity to start thinking about the next Medium Term Strategy for 2022-2029. Malawi appreciates the results of the reform process that UNESCO has gone through since the work on the reform process began. We have witnessed acceleration of extrabudgetary resource activities. I am pretty sure that the set target of increasing extrabudgetary resources by 30%, as stated in the draft 40 C/5 document, will be met. It is through establishment of strong partnerships that such a target can be met. I would like to acknowledge the role of the field office in our region, the Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA), in this drive. We have seen partners such as the European Union collaborating with UNESCO in supporting our programmes. I would also like to acknowledge and thank in a very special way the role played by National Commissions for UNESCO and their respective Governments in Germany and South Korea. These UNESCO Commissions have collaborated with their sister National Commissions from our region in promoting UNESCO's mandate and added value. Such collaboration has demonstrated that within the architecture of UNESCO, National Commissions constitute one of the most capable actors that can appropriately position UNESCO to respond to the challenges of today's world. The work of these National Commissions in the region has responded very well to UNESCO's mandate and to the global priorities set out in the Medium-Term Strategy.

36.3 Mr President, Malawi continues to place emphasis on the areas of focus of UNESCO's mandate in education, culture, the sciences, communication and information. Malawi prioritizes its budget spending towards education. Since the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the Government has allocated not less than 26% of its voted recurrent budget towards the education sector, the largest allocation per sector amongst all sectors. In science, I wish to thank the German Commission of UNESCO for the work done in the science sector in the region through the Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme and the work done to support the review of science, technology and innovation.

36.4 Mr President, culture defines people. Culture has lasting effects on how people approach and addresses life's challenges. It is gratifying to note that the importance that UNESCO has always placed on culture in development is now widely acknowledged. I wish to congratulate the Director-General and UNESCO on this.

36.5 Mr President, under the current leadership of Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika, Malawi fully subscribes to the tenets of freedom of expression and free access to information as of major importance to functioning democracies. It is in view of this that Malawi now has an access to information law which is a product of very wide consultations. Malawi fully supports the suggested lines of action under the communication and information programme in the 40 C/5 document.

36.6 Mr. President, on behalf of the people of Malawi, I should like to thank the Director-General and UNESCO for providing emergency assistance towards the supply of teaching and learning materials to schools and learners affected by Cyclone Idai. We also thank all Member States, development partners and all well-wishers that came to our rescue during the disaster. Cyclone Idai caused devastating damage in Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe in March this year. More than 800,000 people were affected with 59 recorded deaths in Malawi. I thank you very much for your attention.

**37. The President:**

Thank you Excellency. I now invite His Excellency Mr Alejandro Finocchiaro, Minister of Education, Culture, Science and Technology of Argentina.

**38.1 Argentina:**

Señor Presidente de la Conferencia General, señor Presidente del Consejo Ejecutivo, señora Directora General, señora Azoulay, señores ministros, señores embajadores y delegados: es para mí un gran honor estar aquí con ustedes por segunda vez representando a la República Argentina ante esta 40ª Conferencia General de la UNESCO. Vivimos en una época de grandes transformaciones y desafíos: la paz, la prosperidad y la población mundial. Para hacer frente a los mismos, contamos con las herramientas más poderosas: la educación, la cultura y la ciencia, pero fundamentalmente contamos con el poder transformador de la educación, educación que debe ser inclusiva y de calidad, en tanto derecho humano básico y fundamental que prerrequisito para el desarrollo humano. Desde la República Argentina, sostenemos la relevancia estratégica que la educación tiene para poder alcanzar cada uno de los objetivos de la Agenda 2030. Nuestro país ha hecho y continúa realizando esfuerzos internacionales para que así sea.

38.2 En el plano global, Argentina ha tenido un rol constructivo en la Conferencia Mundial de Educación y en el Comité de Dirección de la Educación 2030, donde representamos a América Latina y el Caribe desde el 2016 a la fecha. Durante la presidencia argentina del G20 en 2018, decidimos por primera vez en la historia posicionar a la educación en el centro del debate y organizar la primera reunión de ministros de Educación. Oportunidad que permitió la participación activa e inédita de la UNESCO a través de su Directora General.

38.3 En octubre de este año, hemos renovado el acuerdo del Centro Internacional para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos, con sede en Buenos Aires, un centro de categoría 2 de la UNESCO que se constituye como bien político global y que ha desarrollado una agenda intensa, variada y profunda. Asimismo, este mes de noviembre, hemos lanzado Desafío Global, el primer juego digital, multiplataforma y multilingüe diseñado para enseñar los ODS. Es una iniciativa de la

Argentina que tiene el objetivo de promover la ciudadanía global que construye un mundo sostenible. Organizamos en solo 13 años tres grandes conferencias que han puesto a la región en marcha: en 2017, la primera reunión de ministros de Educación bajo la agenda 2030; en 2018, la Tercera Conferencia Regional de Educación Superior y en 2019, la conferencia internacional que permitió adoptar el Convenio Regional de Reconocimiento de Estudios o Convenio de Buenos Aires. Este acuerdo histórico puso a la región en condiciones de adoptar hoy el convenio global, integrándonos al mundo. También trabajamos estrechamente junto al Instituto Internacional de Planificación Educativa, cuyo acuerdo de sede renovamos en 2017.

38.4 En el plano nacional, en estos cuatro años que he acompañado al presidente Mauricio Macri, desde el Ministerio de Educación, Cultura, Ciencia y Tecnología, conseguimos que estos compromisos internacionales tengan como contracara reformas profundas en beneficio de todos los que habitan en suelo argentino. El balance de estos años de trabajo es significativo. Hemos recuperado la capacidad del Estado para diseñar e implementar las políticas públicas en materia educativa. En lo que respecta a la calidad educativa, hemos creado las evaluaciones “aprender”, un dispositivo nacional de evaluación de lo que antes carecía mi país. En base a políticas activas y a los resultados de esa evaluación, hemos logrado mejoras en la lecto-comprensión y hemos desarrollado un nuevo método de enseñanza y aprendizaje de la matemática más dinámico, atractivo e innovador. Para fortalecer las habilidades digitales, conectamos el 60 por ciento de la matrícula de todo el país y desarrollamos el programa Aprender Conectado, que ha sido reconocido por la UNESCO, el cual integra programación y robótica en su currículum. También, a fin de fortalecer las habilidades blandas, desarrollamos el Modelo Secundaria 2030, que busca adaptar las escuelas a los desafíos del siglo XXI. En el campo de la inclusión, diseñamos el programa Asistiré, el cual garantiza la inclusión buscando a los chicos y chicas que no deserten en el colegio y reintegrándolos. Desarrollamos el programa de becas Progresar para dar oportunidades a más de 500 000 personas en situación de vulnerabilidad, pero, además, ofreciendo incentivos en carreras con mayores perspectivas de empleabilidad y necesarias para el desarrollo del país. Para promover la equidad de género, incentivamos nuevas formas de enseñar que eliminen las disparidades y prejuicios y promovimos la educación sexual integral. Y finalmente, algo que nos enorgullece, porque la equidad educativa no sólo se declama, sino que debe llevarse adelante con hechos concretos, creamos el programa de Escuelas Faro, focalizado en 3 000 escuelas con los menores niveles de aprendizaje según nuestras evaluaciones. Gracias a una política docente activa, recursos pedagógicos y un nuevo proyecto institucional, logramos revertir la tendencia y lograr mejoras en los aprendizajes por encima de la media nacional, probando que la educación sigue siendo una herramienta de transformación habilitadora de la movilidad social ascendente.

38.5 Para finalizar, quiero destacar y agradecer a la Directora General y su equipo y a todos los países miembros por trabajar junto a la Argentina para lograr el desarrollo sostenible y la paz. Muchas gracias.

39. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. I now invite Honourable Deng Hoc Yai, Minister of General Education and Instruction of South Sudan.

40.1 **South Sudan:**

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General of UNESCO, your Excellencies, heads of delegations, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, today the world is confronted by many formidable challenges. Too many negative forces are waging wars and threatening our peace and security. Our country, the Republic of South Sudan, has not been spared the tyranny of such forces. In this harsh climate, UNESCO is expected to construct the defences of peace in the minds of men. The Member States are also expected to double their efforts. Against this backdrop, the Republic of South Sudan has made peace our top priority, thanks to the solid commitment and wise leadership of our President, His Excellency Salva Kiir Mayardit.

40.2 Since the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in Addis Ababa in September 2018, the Government has achieved important milestones, including assembling, containment and screening of opposition forces, amendment of the laws related to the organized forces, incorporation of the agreement into the Constitution and dissemination of the agreement to citizens. The Government is also supporting the National Dialogue Initiative of our President. We have made significant progress. A number of local and regional conferences have been convened, and the national conference, which is the last one for this year, is scheduled to take place in Juba from 2-10 December 2019. The conference is expected to address national issues of concern and broker a national consensus on the way forward, and in so doing consolidate peace and national cohesion.

40.3 Mr President, distinguished delegates. President Nelson Mandela once said, and I would like to quote, “Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that education continues to change and transform our world”. Therefore, UNESCO and the Member States must do more to end the global learning crisis and achieve SDG 4 and the rest of the 16 SDGs. We must leave no one behind. The hundreds of millions of out-of-school children and youth must go to school. The Republic of South Sudan is using the power of education to promote peace through education, and prepare our children and youth for work and life in the twenty-first century. I am delighted to report that the Government has implemented many educational reforms and made significant progress with the support of our development partners. We have developed a new national curriculum to meet the needs and aspirations of our new nation. We have trained over 24,000 teachers to teach the new national curriculum. We have written over 120 textbooks and teacher guides to facilitate learning for our children and youth. We have printed and distributed almost 2 million copies of these new learning materials for our schools. We have increased enrolment to over 3 million learners and we have narrowed the gender gap in formal education. We have also included peace education and human rights education in our national curriculum and established school peace and human rights clubs to promote a culture of peace, respect for human rights in our schools and local communities. Moreover, we are building the capacity of our universities to achieve quality education.

40.4 Mr President, distinguished delegates, the Republic of South Sudan is proud of its cultural diversity. Our 64 tribes speak 52 indigenous languages, and that is an important part of our cultural heritage. For this reason, our Constitution



provides for these national languages to be respected, developed and promoted. In 2020, our schools will change the medium of instruction in early childhood development (ECD) and primary levels 1 to 3 to our national languages. The schools will also teach these 52 languages as subjects from ECD to primary level 8. The objective is to promote a cultural renaissance and to develop good citizens who can embrace and celebrate our cultural diversity. The Government is also promoting our cultural expressions by creating opportunities in official events and through co-curricular activities in our schools. The Republic of South Sudan is also proud of its natural heritage. Our biodiversity is a national treasure. For example, our wildlife migration provides an incredible experience to tourists and you can watch the videos on YouTube. Therefore, we are seeking the approval of UNESCO for the migration route to be recognized as a world heritage site.

40.5 Mr President, distinguished delegates, in conclusion, climate change has become the biggest threat to our planet and the human race. Natural disasters have become more frequent and more devastating as we speak. One third of my country, South Sudan, is flooded by excessive rains and our citizens are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance. So I take this opportunity to appeal to the Member States of UNESCO to support the estimated 900,000 internally displaced persons in South Sudan. We strongly believe in the full implementation of the Paris Agreement 2015 as the way forward. The parties have a legal duty and moral obligation to tackle climate change. For our part, the Republic of South Sudan will pursue Goal 4 of the national curriculum which is to develop environmentally responsible members of our society, by teaching environmental awareness as a new cross-cutting subject in our schools, as well as facilitating the activities of the school environment clubs.

40.6 Mr President, distinguished delegates, finally, we are delighted that Africa will remain a priority of UNESCO. The youth of Africa will constitute more than 50% percent of the global workforce in 2050. We call upon UNESCO to support the African Member States, to empower the youth, to tackle youth unemployment and to manage migration. Together we can transform a world and achieve prosperity for all. So let us do our best and pray that God will do the rest. Thank you, Mr President.

41. **The President:**

Thank you Your Excellency. I now invite His Excellency Mr Antonio Paulo Vogel, Vice Minister of Education of Brazil.

42.1 **Brazil:**

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

- Mr President of the General Conference, please accept my compliments on your election and my best wishes for your work. Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, to whom I extend my most sincere recognition for conducting this important decision-making body of UNESCO, Madam Director-General of UNESCO, whom I congratulate for the successful efforts to revitalize this Organization over the past two years, your Excellencies, heads of delegations, ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured to speak here at the 40th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, and I appreciate the opportunity to address you as one of the key organizations in the United Nations family.

42.2 Building a culture of peace based on international cooperation in education, culture, sciences and communication, has always guided the constructive work of Brazil in UNESCO since its creation in 1945. Our partnership with UNESCO is essential to improve the quality of education, at all levels. Education, a central pillar of UNESCO's mandate, has an unquestionable impact on all sectors of human activity. It is imbued of this responsibility that I represent here the Government of Brazil. I congratulate the Director General for organizing a ministerial meeting on inclusion and mobility in higher education. This is an important initiative for the exchange of ideas and good practices among Member States of UNESCO from all continents. In times of simultaneous challenges, such as the struggle against illiteracy, still unresolved in the twenty-first century, and the advances of artificial intelligence, the role of UNESCO is essential to achieve Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Brazil is implementing result-oriented policies, aware that the resources allocated to this sector generate social and economic benefits with high impact on human development. We are committed to optimizing the allocation of resources for education and to encourage partnerships with institutions and the private sector.

42.3 Mr President, Brazil welcomes the organization of the Forum of Ministers of Culture. The active role of Brazil as Vice-President of the World Heritage Committee reflects our commitment with the preservation of our 22 sites inscribed in the World Heritage List. This commitment is also reflected in the attention given to the Creative Cities project, whose General Conference Brazil is pleased to host in the city of Santos in 2020. We have received with great satisfaction the selection this year by UNESCO of two Brazilian cities, Fortaleza and Belo Horizonte, to integrate UNESCO's network of Creative Cities, in the fields of "design" and "gastronomy". We now have 10 cities represented in the network.

42.4 We also recognize the role of UNESCO in the preservation of the geological heritage. In 2019, Brazil submitted two new applications to the Global Geopark Network: the projects "Canyons of the South", and "Serido". With these initiatives, we hope to contribute to the dissemination and protection of the Brazilian geological heritage which of special beauty and scientific relevance. In 2020, Rio de Janeiro will be the first UNESCO World Capital of Architecture. The events we are organizing in this context will allow us to integrate conservation policies into the broader goals of urban development. Brazil will also host in December 2019 the Regional Forum on Artificial Intelligence (AI), which will be an opportunity to discuss national strategies on artificial intelligence and the challenges posed by AI to societies, governments, organizations and citizens. I reaffirm the interest of the Brazilian government in the United Nations Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Rio de Janeiro will host the South Atlantic Workshop in November 2019 to assess the framework of scientific research in the region and identify priorities in terms of studies, training and capacity development. Brazil hopes to count on strong participation in all these events, which illustrate the strength of our partnership with UNESCO and our commitment to its mandate.

42.5 Mr President, the strategic transformation proposed by the Director-General, and welcomed by all members, is reaching its third and most decisive phase, which aims at defining long-term programmatic priorities. As the seventh largest

contributor to UNESCO's regular budget, Brazil is committed to a transparent, democratic, efficient and representative Organization. We must join our forces to strengthen UNESCO. Amendments to its Constitution must be conceived respecting the sense of responsibility that we all share. It is necessary to gather the widest consensus in order to change our "Magna Carta". Removing the right of countries to run for posts in this Organization undermines the democratic spirit of UNESCO. Removing Members States' right to vote at the Executive Board because of arrears in their contributions to UNESCO's budget will disproportionately penalize developing countries, the most vulnerable to economic crisis and natural disasters. Madam Director General, Brazil is ready to continue to contribute in a constructive manner to the strengthening of UNESCO, as it has been doing over the past 74 years of the Organization's existence, through the promotion of cooperation, for the benefit of all its members. Thank you.

**43. The President:**

Thank you Your Excellency. I now invite His Excellency, Mr Tian Xuejun, Vice-Minister of Education of the People's Republic of China.

**44.1 中国:**

大会主席先生，总干事女士，阁下们，女士们、先生们：首先祝贺土耳其常驻代表阿尔泰·坚吉泽尔阁下当选新一届大会主席；同时感谢前任大会主席阿拉维女士两年来为领导教科文组织事业发展所做出的卓越贡献。

**44.2** 两年一次的大会是会员国秉持团结合作精神、共商教科文组织发展大计、共同应对全球治理挑战的宝贵契机。五年前，习近平主席在教科文组织发表演讲中指出：在世界人民心灵中，坚定和平理念，扬起和平风帆是教科文组织的初衷和使命。我们今天不仅要坚守这样的憧憬、这样的期待，更要通过跨国界、跨时空、跨文明的教育、科技、文化活动让和平理念的种子在世界人民心中生根发芽。中方希望广大会员国共同思考如何把教科文组织打造成为一个思想之家、和谐之家、创新之家，共同把握教科文组织这艘航船的正确前进方向，共同反对一切破坏航船和将我们引向巨大漩涡的做法。中方愿同各国一道绘制并落实本组织下一个双年度计划及中期战略的蓝图，以实际行动支持加快非洲地区教育发展，帮助更多女童和妇女获得公平、有质量的教育，共同推进“一带一路”建设，促进民心相通，更好地保护世界遗产，维护文化多样性，应用人工智能等前沿科技，促进更加均衡、包容的发展。

**44.3** 本届大会将要审议第三十九届大会通过的一系列关于内部治理改革的建议。两年来，中方一直呼吁就尚存严重争议的限制执行局委员任期问题开展充分对话协商，并为在协商一致基础上寻求解决之道付出了巨大的努力。

**44.4** 中方的立场是清楚、一贯的：第一，修订《组织法》事关重大，要秉持极其审慎和高度负责的态度；第二，限制执行局委员任期将剥夺会员国平等参与教科文组织事务的基本权利。从长远看，对本组织具有破坏性的影响；第三，《组织法》是本组织存在发展的最重要的基础，存在严重分歧的修正案不应强行推动票决，否则将给本组织带来分裂的危机和灾难性的后果。

**44.5** 正如许多会员国在第二〇七届执行局会议上所呼吁的：只有凝聚最广泛共识的方案才契合会员国最广泛利益，才能实现教科文组织内部治理的持续有效改善。中方再次强烈呼吁会员国采取冷静、理性、审慎的态度，不要急于在本届大会对修正案作出决定，为寻求各方都能接受的方案争取更多的时间和空间。以对话增互信，以对话解纷争，以协商化分歧。

**44.6** 主席先生、女士们、先生们，今年是中华人民共和国成立七十周年。七十年来，中国人民在中国共产党领导下，众志成城，艰苦奋斗，把一个积贫积弱的落后国家建设成为了世界第二大经济体，8.5亿人民摆脱贫困，人民生活显著改善，成为人类发展史上的奇迹。长期以来，中国为教科文组织事业发展作出了重要贡献；中国的贡献不仅仅体现在持续大幅上涨的会费和预算外资金上，还体现在与教科文组织不断深化的务实合作中。中方将继续为本组织和人类共同利益贡献力量。教科文组织何去何从取决于会员国的选择。期待并相信广大会员国在涉及本组织前途命运的关键问题上作出正确的选择。谢谢大家。

**45. The President:**

Thank you Your Excellency. I am now inviting His Excellency Mr Sunday Sylva Togo Echono Fnia, Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education of Nigeria.

**46.1 Nigeria:**

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I bring you warm felicitations from the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as well as the best wishes of President Muhammadu Buhari, for a successful 40th session of the General Conference. We congratulate His Excellency Altay Cengizer on his election as President of the Conference. I look forward to working with you in this session and the biennium. We also appreciate Her Excellency, Ambassador Zohour Alaoui, President of the 39th session of the General Conference, for the successes recorded during her presidency.

**46.2** Madam Director-General, the past two years have been impactful with you at the head of the UNESCO Secretariat. Nigeria appreciates your laudable efforts in repositioning the Organization to improve its overall efficiency as a vital organ of the United Nations family. We therefore commend the process of strategic transformation, which continues to gather momentum and is already producing some visible outcomes. As we move on to the implementation of the STI, Nigeria eagerly awaits the report on UNESCO's presence worldwide, which is to be submitted to the Executive Board next April. Nigeria is convinced that the report will mark a positive step towards improving the structure, efficiency and visibility of UNESCO's field network, particularly in Africa. We also believe that the report will afford the Executive Board the opportunity to reconceptualize its priorities in Africa, given the continent's urgent needs for the actualization of UNESCO's lofty ideals, of promoting functional education, social cohesion, global peace and understanding.

**46.3** Your Excellencies, two years ago, on this same podium, Nigeria solicited UNESCO's technical support towards hosting a crucial international conference on Lake Chad. This was successfully organized from 26 to 28 February 2018 in

Abuja, our nation's capital. It should be recalled that this project sprang from the long-standing mutually-benefiting programme of the "Nigeria-UNESCO Special Plan of Cooperation". Nigeria remains committed to the continued development of phase two of this plan, particularly the implementation of the consortium of intersectoral projects that have been put together with the assistance of the UNESCO Secretariat. Similarly, Nigeria is pleased to play host to the 32nd session of the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere programme, one of UNESCO's major programmes in ecological and earth sciences, scheduled to be held in Abuja from the 22-26 June next year. I take this opportunity to invite Member States of the MAB-ICC to Abuja for the event.

46.4 In the field of education, Nigeria is committed to achieving the SDGs, particularly Goal 4 on Education 2030. In this regard, Nigeria is making every effort to promote inclusive education by upholding the SDGs slogan of "Leave no child behind". We shall ensure that every child of school age has unfettered access to basic education. Nigeria has also developed a skills acquisition framework for the promotion, standardization and recognition of employability skills irrespective of where and how the skills were acquired in order to enhance SDGs 8 and 9. To this end, a National Council on Skills has been established. Following the successful hosting of the UNESCO Regional Workshop on Online Learning and MOOCs at the National Open University of Nigeria in June earlier this year, Nigeria is already working with UNESCO's regional office to organize in June 2020 an international conference on the future of higher education in Africa. Again, we invite the Director-General and other dignitaries to join us for what promises to be an invaluable knowledge festival.

46.5 Mr President, I should add that Nigeria is working with the World Bank and other strategic development partners such as the French Agency for Development as well as captains of industry to advance the cause of skills acquisition and entrepreneurship, and for which our entire curriculum is currently being reviewed. In addition to launching Nigeria's first-ever national policy on open educational resources (OER), new guidelines on cross border higher education have just been approved to align our higher education landscape with international best practices. With these guidelines, our Government has undertaken to provide the requisite eco-system for the import and export of educational partnerships, developmental cooperation projects, and academic exchange programmes, which would create and strengthen collaboration between our higher education institutions and their foreign counterparts.

46.6 Concerning Global Priority Africa, Nigeria appreciates the efforts of the Priority Africa and External Relations Sector in strategizing for new partnerships to support the provision of strategic guidance for the implementation of the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa. However, we note the challenge of underfunding also indicated in the summary strategic assessment of the implementation of this programme. The impact of Global Priority Africa cannot be fully felt if, at this stage, it is hampered by the challenge of underfunding. We therefore urge the Secretariat and Member States to join hands in overcoming this challenge. Finally Mr President, Nigeria is pleased to inform the General Conference that the United Nations building in Abuja which houses the UNESCO Cluster Office and other United Nations agencies, that was damaged by terrorist attack in 2011 has been fully reconstructed by the Nigerian Government and re-opened at a grand ceremony to commemorate United Nations Day in October 2019. I thank you for your attention.

47. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. The next speaker is Mr Hernâm Viterbo Da Costa Soares General Director of Administration and Finance of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Culture of Timor-Leste

48.1 **Timor-Leste:**

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

Senhor Presidente da 40a Conferência Geral da UNESCO, Senhora Diretora Geral da UNESCO, distintos chefes de delegação, minhas senhoras e meus senhores, em representação do Governo da República Democrática de Timor-Leste, liderado pelo Primeiro-Ministro Senhor Taur Matan Ruak, tenho a honra de cumprimentar e felicitar todos os membros presentes na 40a Conferência Geral da UNESCO.

48.2 Timor-Leste é uma jovem e dinâmica nação, localizada no Sudeste-Asiático, e que celebrou, recentemente, o 20o aniversário da Restauração da sua Independência. Estamos no início de um novo capítulo da nossa história, em que, após garantida a paz e estabilidade, assumimos, em exclusivo, as rédeas do nosso destino. Timor-Leste beneficia hoje de paz, estabilidade e de uma economia em franco crescimento que, gradualmente, tem vindo a refletir-se na melhoria geral do bem-estar do povo.

48.3 Hoje, mais de uma década depois da independência, a qualidade dos professores em Timor-Leste continua a ser a grande prioridade do sistema educativo. Somente, através da formação de professores de qualidade e de uma melhoria radical na qualidade do sistema de ensino, poderemos mudar as práticas educativas, deixando o ensino tradicional para uma aprendizagem orientada, dinâmica, inovadora e participativa, onde se estimule o pensamento crítico, a criatividade e o raciocínio lógico. No plano da nossa inserção regional, estabelecemos relações de amizade com os países vizinhos no Sudeste Asiático e no Pacífico, em particular a Austrália e a Indonésia, vizinhos mais próximos, com quem mantemos cooperação intensa.

48.4 Em face da nossa situação geográfica, queremos também fazer parte da ASEAN e juntos contribuir para o crescimento regional, o progresso social e o desenvolvimento cultural, dentro de um espírito de parceria. Adicionalmente, temos fortes ligações históricas e afetivas com o grupo de países que conosco integram a Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP). Em relação à implementação da Agenda de Desenvolvimento Sustentável, Timor-Leste já assinou "Um Apelo à Ação" num evento para o lançamento do Grupo de Alto Nível para a Implementação dos Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (ODS).

48.5 De um modo geral, todos os países do mundo estão focados em alcançar uma Educação de qualidade. Quando falamos em Educação de qualidade, referimo-nos a muito mais do que ler, escrever ou memorizar factos. Referimo-nos à capacidade de ler o mundo, à capacidade de aprendizagem contínua para o conhecimento e para a mudança. Hoje em dia, exige-se que, aliado ao conhecimento técnico e científico, os estudantes possuam elevadas competências comportamentais, espírito de empreendedorismo, raciocínio analítico e espírito crítico. Gostaria de aproveitar esta

oportunidade para expressar a nossa sincera gratidão a Vossa Excelência, Diretora-Geral da UNESCO, pelo contínuo apoio concedido à Comissão Nacional da UNESCO de Timor-Leste, nas suas iniciativas no campo da educação, ciência, comunicação e cultura.

48.6 Destaco em particular o apoio ao setor da Educação, sobretudo ao programa Rede de Escolas Associadas da UNESCO (ASPNET). Este programa realiza importantes atividades relacionadas com o 4.7 dos Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável, nomeadamente a Educação para a Cidadania Global e a Educação para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável. Estas atividades visam elevar os conhecimentos e habilidades dos estudantes, relativamente à promoção do desenvolvimento sustentável e incluem a Educação Sustentável, os Direitos Humanos, a Cidadania Global, a Igualdade de Género e a Diversidade Cultural. O programa procura ainda elevar o conhecimento dos alunos sobre a resposta aos desafios comuns que afetam a humanidade, tais como conflitos, terrorismo, alterações climáticas, degradação ambiental e desastres naturais.

48.7 Na área da Cultura, igualmente com o apoio da UNESCO, estamos empenhados na preservação da nossa rica herança e património cultural. A nossa cultura é fundamental para fortalecer a unidade e a coesão nacionais, e é importante que seja salvaguardada e celebrada. Contamos, com a contribuição da UNESCO para alcançarmos os nossos objetivos culturais e educacionais em benefício do nosso povo. No dia 15 de Junho de 2015, Timor-Leste ratificou 3 Convenções: Convenção da UNESCO de 1972 sobre a proteção do património cultural e natural mundial; Convenção da UNESCO de 2003 sobre a salvaguarda do património cultural intangível; Convenção da UNESCO de 2005 sobre a proteção e promoção da diversidade das expressões culturais.

48.8 Com base na Convenção da UNESCO de 2003, relativamente à salvaguarda do património cultural imaterial, o Ministério do Ensino Superior, Ciência e Cultura, através da Secretaria de Estado da Cultura e da Comissão Nacional da UNESCO, em colaboração com as agências de desenvolvimento que atuam nas áreas relevantes, tem trabalhado no desenvolvimento das línguas nativas ou línguas nacionais timorenses, que estão em risco de extinção. Neste caso, o esforço do Governo concentra-se nas pesquisas e escrita de histórias e na consciencialização dos cidadãos timorenses sobre a importância da preservação da identidade, valores e património cultural timorense. Na área do Comunicação estabeleceu-se o Comité Nacional da Memória do Mundo de Timor-Leste, que funcionará no âmbito e de acordo com os objetivos especificados nas Diretrizes Gerais da Memória do Mundo. O Comité Nacional da Memória do Mundo de Timor-Leste será responsável: pela gestão e acompanhamento do Programa da Memória do Mundo em Timor-Leste; por estabelecer e manter o Registo Nacional da Memória do Mundo de Timor-Leste, bem como incentivar, receber e avaliar as nomeações do património documental para inclusão nesse registo; por trabalhar em estreita colaboração com a Comissão Nacional de Timor-Leste para a UNESCO, com o órgão do Governo responsável pela área da Cultura e com o Comité da Memória do Mundo na região.

48.9 Senhor presidente, antes de finalizar, quero aproveitar esta oportunidade para agradecer e reiterar o empenho de Timor-Leste em colaborar com a UNESCO nos muitos e diversificados meios de promoção e manutenção da Paz, objetivo primordial desta Organização. Muito obrigado.

49. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. I now invite Her Excellency, Ms Viviane Morales Hoyos, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to France Permanent Delegate of Colombia to UNESCO.

50.1 **Colombia :**

Señor Presidente de la Conferencia General, a quien felicito por su designación y excelente conducción de esta reunión. Señor Presidente del Consejo Ejecutivo, señora Directora General, señores ministros, señores embajadores, distinguidos representantes de los Estados Miembros: inicio mi intervención expresando el respaldo de Colombia a la propuesta de la Directora General de Transformación Estratégica de la UNESCO. Sin duda este es un momento en que el multilateralismo y las instituciones que lo representan deben ser fortalecidos, fortalecidos en su legitimidad a través de la transparencia en su gestión, de la eficacia de su acción y de la claridad de sus tareas. Es en ese sentido amplio en el que nuestro país da su apoyo a la iniciativa que pretende mejorar sustantivamente la cultura de gestión de esta Organización. Valoramos la reciente creación del sector de administración y gestión. La relevancia que se le ha dado a la comunicación y a la búsqueda de aliados y los esfuerzos para evitar la duplicidad y la superposición de funciones entre oficinas regionales, oficinas clúster y oficinas nacionales. Concentrar a la UNESCO en su mandato debe ser una prioridad, superando la dispersión y estableciendo innovadores modos de gestión que garantizan que cada uno de los sectores de la Organización desarrolle programas de vanguardia. En este contexto, la educación en la perspectiva de la Agenda 2030 ofrece inmensas posibilidades para asegurar el posicionamiento global de la UNESCO, de acuerdo con los lineamientos de la Transformación Estratégica.

50.2 Justamente, el Foro Internacional de Inclusión y Equidad en la Educación: Todos los Estudiantes Cuentan, realizado en Cali en septiembre, nos reveló esa creciente movilización que hoy reúne a miles de personas en todo el planeta alrededor de la educación. Ese foro dio lugar al Compromiso de Cali, un documento que da alcance, 25 años después, a la Declaración de Salamanca sobre necesidades educativas y especiales y que demuestra que la inclusión en la educación ha dejado de ser un concepto para convertirse en un movimiento social que parte del convencimiento de que la educación inclusiva debe enfrentar los detonantes de la exclusión. En materia de inclusión y equidad, Colombia ha abierto su sistema educativo a 200 000 niños venezolanos que han llegado a nuestro país como producto de la crisis política, social y económica de Venezuela. Colombia ha acogido a más de 1 300 000 venezolanos en los últimos dos años, entre los cuales se encuentran niños, niñas y jóvenes, para los cuales, y aquí permítanme referirme al título del último Informe Mundial de la Educación de la UNESCO 2019, hemos construido puentes, no muros, y hemos generado soluciones a retos ante los que ninguno de nuestros países estaba preparado.

50.3 La transformación estratégica debe también situar en el centro de las prioridades programáticas a las ciudades creativas y a las industrias culturales y creativas en cuanto a temática contemporánea, asociada a la producción de

contenidos capaces de enriquecernos individual y colectivamente, de hacer nuestras sociedades más plurales e informadas, de generar oportunidades de goce y disfrute de la cultura, produciendo empleo y crecimiento económico. En Colombia, hemos construido una política pública audaz para el desarrollo de la economía naranja, es decir, de la economía creativa. El fomento a la creatividad es hoy una política transversal que agrupa la cultura, la educación, las ciencias, el trabajo, el comercio, la industria, el turismo y tecnologías de la información y la comunicación. Invertimos en la creatividad para generar más oportunidades de empleo, más bienestar y mayor pluralidad de contenidos que enriquezcan nuestra sociedad.

50.4 De otra parte, consideramos fundamental dentro de la transformación estratégica la participación de la juventud en la organización. En los últimos meses hemos visto el creciente ascenso de la poderosa voz de los jóvenes, conscientes de la necesidad de un cambio profundo en nuestra sociedad. También hemos sido testigos de su compromiso con los desafíos mundiales señalados por los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible, así como de su capacidad de convocatoria, que ya no encuentra límites en las distancias geográficas. Jóvenes que crean, que innovan, que inventan, que reclaman su derecho a heredar esta tierra y a frenar la demencial carrera de su destrucción. Debemos atender sus voces, sus reclamos, sus propuestas y apoyar todos los programas de la organización que contribuyan a desarrollar plenamente sus capacidades y que incorporen la fuerza de sus iniciativas. En esta Conferencia General, tengo el honor de presidir la comisión de ciencias humanas y sociales, gracias al mandato que he recibido de ustedes. Agradezco este encargo y los invito a participar activamente en sus sesiones que, entre otros temas, abordarán el estudio preliminar de un eventual instrumento normativo sobre la ética en la inteligencia artificial.

50.5 Desde hace ya algún tiempo, se vienen formulando preguntas esenciales para asumir los retos que enfrentamos como humanidad ante el acontecer vertiginoso de las transformaciones tecnológicas. En diversos escenarios de índole académica, de sociedad civil, de naturaleza pública o internacional se han elaborado más de 67 documentos con estudios o recomendaciones tales como los de la OCDE en su reunión ministerial de mayo pasado. Sin embargo, subsisten las dudas, las contradicciones, las incertidumbres, como bien lo señala Jean-Gabriel Ganascia, presidente de ética del CNRS, a la par que se expresan exigencias indiscutibles como la protección de la vida privada, de la autonomía del sujeto, de la seguridad y la democracia, de la transparencia, de la inclusión y la equidad, esas mismas exigencias entran en terrenos de disputa cuando se plantean preguntas como la de ¿cómo hacer practicables estos principios sin estrangular la creatividad?, o ¿cómo proteger la vida privada y, al mismo tiempo, la transparencia?, o ¿cómo garantizar la libertad y la autonomía de la persona frente a la utilización de la omnipresente *big data* que preforman nuestras decisiones cotidianas o políticas como ciudadanos?.

50.6 Por último, quiero referirme a la constitución de la UNESCO y a las propuestas de reforma, sin desconocer las buenas intenciones de las diferentes iniciativas de cambio planteadas, reitero la convicción en el poder de los principios consagrados en el texto fundador y en las garantías que ofrece en materia de inclusión, participación, representatividad geográfica y diversidad. El consenso debe seguir siendo el procedimiento privilegiado en la construcción del presente y el futuro de la UNESCO. Muchas gracias.

51. **The President:**

Thank you for your statement Your Excellency. I now invite His Excellency Mr Dermot Nolan, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Ireland to UNESCO.

52.1 **Irlande:**

Monsieur le Président, Madame la Directrice générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Ministres, Ambassadeurs et Ambassadrices, mesdames et messieurs, permettez-moi tout d'abord de vous féliciter, Monsieur le Président, pour votre élection. L'Irlande se réjouit à la perspective de travailler de manière constructive au cours de la 40<sup>e</sup> Session de la Conférence générale de l'UNESCO pour faire progresser les priorités communes et relever certains des défis auxquels l'Organisation est confrontée. L'Irlande soutient fermement le multilatéralisme. En tant que petit État, nous avons toujours cru que notre souveraineté était renforcée et non diminuée par notre participation aux organisations multilatérales. Notre engagement se reflète dans notre appui constant de longue date à l'ONU depuis 1955.

*(L'orateur poursuit en anglais)*

52.2 Mr President, Ireland has always been a strong and consistent supporter of the three pillars of the United Nation's work: peace and security, development and human rights. The principles and values enshrined in the United Nation's Charter are those we have always striven to promote and protect as we engage across the breadth of United Nations activities in pursuit of our goals, including here at UNESCO. Ireland greatly values the line in UNESCO's Constitution that refers to the building of peace in the minds of women and men. We have a considerable experience of building and sustaining peace and promoting reconciliation on the island of Ireland. We believe that the protection and promotion of education and culture are key to building sustainable and lasting peace.

52.3 UNESCO provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens education systems worldwide and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with gender equality as an underlying principle. Ireland is committed to the promotion of education as a fundamental human right for all throughout life and provides a right for education for all children in our own Constitution. We also believe that access to education must be matched by quality.

52.4 Education interventions are at the heart of Ireland's international development cooperation programme, which works towards the provision of increased and improved education in developing countries. Our aid programme focuses on girls' education beyond primary school level in the knowledge that equal access to quality education for women and girls leads to improved health and nutrition in society. Indeed, we are proud to make a substantial financial contribution to the UNESCO Comprehensive Sexuality Education programme entitled "Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future". Ireland will also invest at least €250 million over the next five years as part of our international development cooperation programme, to improve access for those children who are currently denied an education, and to ensure a better quality of education for all throughout life.

52.5 UNESCO plays an indispensable role in the protection and promotion of cultural heritage and diversity. In particular, Ireland is a huge advocate of the work of UNESCO in relation to intangible cultural heritage. Since ratifying the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2015, we have succeeded in having two of our cornerstone cultural activities inscribed under the convention – that is uilleann piping and the sport of hurling. UNESCO's work in recognizing, validating and supporting intangible cultural heritage in the world plays a vital role in helping people recognize and celebrate their place in what can often seem a radically globalizing world.

*(The speaker continues in French)*

52.6 Excellences, mesdames et messieurs, ces dernières années nous avons été témoins de nombreuses attaques contre le patrimoine culturel commun de l'humanité. Préserver ce patrimoine de la destruction est un objectif clé de l'UNESCO, et nous saluons le travail accompli par cette Organisation dans ces circonstances des plus difficiles. Je souhaite donc ici exprimer notre soutien au Projet de l'UNESCO « Ranimer l'esprit de Mossoul » qui vise à reconstruire et développer l'ancienne ville de Mossoul en Iraq. Longtemps considérée comme un carrefour culturel au Moyen Orient, Mossoul a été ravagée par le conflit entre 2014 et 2017. La reconstruction et la restauration de ce patrimoine culturel est donc nécessaire au rétablissement de la sécurité et à la construction de la paix dans l'esprit des hommes et des femmes à Mossoul. Sur cette note, je tiens à féliciter l'UNESCO pour son travail et je me réjouis à la perspective d'une coopération future dans la construction d'un monde durable. Je vous remercie.

53. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. I now invite His Excellency His Excellency Peter Reuss, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Germany to UNESCO.

54.1 **Germany:**

Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Madame la Directrice générale, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres, Excellences, mesdames et messieurs. Je tiens tout d'abord à féliciter l'UNESCO et sa Directrice générale pour les progrès réalisés depuis la dernière Conférence générale il y a deux ans. Des conflits majeurs ont été désamorcés, l'Organisation s'est stabilisée politiquement et financièrement, et sa réforme a bien avancé. D'un autre côté, le retrait de deux États membres importants a malheureusement montré que des organisations multilatérales, telle que l'UNESCO, risquent de perdre le soutien si elles ne trouvent pas de réponses crédibles aux questions politiques urgentes. Nous regrettons profondément que les États-Unis et l'Israël aient quitté l'UNESCO et prions les deux partenaires de reconsidérer leur décision.

*(L'orateur poursuit en anglais)*

54.2 Mr President of the General Conference, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Germany is a firm believer in multilateralism. Global problems cannot be solved by one country alone. We need to work together in the context of strong international institutions. It is for this reason that Germany, together with a number of important partners, has started the Alliance of Multilateralism, a network of countries coming together in flexible formats to address concrete policy challenges. UNESCO is an especially important element of the multilateral system. The Organization works with the most comprehensive human development mandate of all United Nation's agencies and it is the sole organization with a mandate for fostering mutual understanding based on transcultural cooperation and exchange. This development and understanding relies on our societies and on the human rights and freedom of its individual members. Every day images of violence make us painfully aware of how much remains to be done to anchor peace in the minds and hearts of people. Against this background, we the world community have set ourselves ambitious goals. The effort put into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development showed the great power of multilateralism. UNESCO is at the centre of this effort. It has rightly taken the lead of SDG 4. If we look at the other goals, we cannot find a single one that is not linked with a mandate of UNESCO.

54.3 Mr President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Germany pulls its weight in UNESCO. We support the Organization and participate vigorously in its debate. We want to participate in the development of the Organization by presenting ourselves as a candidate for the Executive Board. It goes without saying that we live up to our financial obligations as one of the major contributors to UNESCO. We are happy to support UNESCO's budget of \$534.6 million for the next biennium.

54.4 Our financial support for UNESCO needs to match our political demands to the Organization. For Germany, UNESCO's convention's programmes and instruments have two key strengths. First, the way they intensify cooperation at the civil society level, and second, the way they help to develop credible answers to political challenges, present and future. Let me mention a few major initiatives. In a few days, German Chancellor Angela Merkel will open the National Internet Governance Forum in Berlin. The participants will discuss under the headline "One world, one vision." UNESCO plays a key role in promoting the human rights-based universal and open development of the Internet. Its valuable work on artificial intelligence must follow the very same principles.

54.5 In June 2020, Germany will host the conference to globally launch the new Framework for Education for Sustainable Development for 2030. Education and lifelong learning are key factors for the success of a modern society. We are proud to see the international reputation earned by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning in Hamburg. In 2019, we have increased fourfold our external budgetary contribution for the Institute. We are also proud that Hamburg will receive the UNESCO-Japan Prize for Education for Sustainable Development. UNEVOC in Bonn does excellent work in managing a network of 290 technical and recreational training centres all over the world. Next November, we will mark the 50th anniversary of the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transport of Ownership of Cultural Property by hosting an international conference in Berlin. Major challenges remain as the illicit trade of cultural objects persists in a world plagued by an increasing number of crises and armed conflicts. In 2021, the Decade of Ocean Science will kick off with a conference in Berlin.

*(The speaker continues in French)*

54.6 Monsieur le Président, Excellences, l'Allemagne souscrit pleinement à la déclaration de l'Union européenne. L'UNESCO ne peut réussir dans sa mission qu'en associant la société civile et les communautés à ses délibérations. L'Allemagne est fermement attachée au système unique des commissions nationales. Nous souhaitons renforcer davantage ce réseau à la fois gouvernemental et non-gouvernemental spécifique à l'UNESCO, et nous avons considérablement augmenté le financement de notre propre commission nationale.

54.7 Le mandat de l'UNESCO est vaste, et son travail souvent d'une haute importance politique. Nous exhortons tous les États membres à ne pas exploiter ce forum précieux pour des questions bilatérales extérieures au mandat immédiat. Nous félicitons la Madame la Directrice générale d'avoir réussi à atténuer certaines disputes qui ont beaucoup nuit au travail de l'UNESCO. Nous continuerons de soutenir tous les efforts de la Directrice générale visant à renforcer l'efficacité de l'UNESCO. La Transformation stratégique de l'UNESCO doit se poursuivre. Il faut des décisions audacieuses pour permettre à l'UNESCO de mettre en œuvre ce qu'elle fait le mieux. Pour finir, l'Allemagne est prête à être membre du Conseil exécutif. Voilà pourquoi je voudrais solliciter votre vote. Merci.

**Report of the APX Commission on item 1.3 “Report by the Director-General on communications received from Member States invoking the provisions of Article IV.C, paragraph 8 (c), of the Constitution”**

**55. The President:**

Thank you Excellency. Ladies and gentlemen, this statement by Ambassador Reuss concludes our list of speakers for this afternoon. As mentioned earlier, the plenary will now examine the Report of the APX Commission on item 1.3 “Report by the Director-General on communications received from Member States invoking the provisions of Article IV.C, paragraph 8(c), of the Constitution”. I now give the floor to Madam Chairperson of the APX Commission, Her Excellency, Ms Maria Diamantopoulou of Greece. Madam, you have the floor.

**56.1 Ms Diamantopoulou (Greece) (Chairperson of the APX Commission):**

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, allow me to submit to you the report on the work of the APX Commission on item 1.3 “Report of the Director-General on communications received from Member States invoking the provisions of Article IV.C, paragraph 8 (c) of the Constitution”.

56.2 In accordance with Article 83 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, the APX Commission started its work on the item related to the communications received from Member States invoking the provisions of provisions of Article IV.C, paragraph 8 (c) of the Constitution. I wish to draw your attention to the amendment of Rule 82 adopted at the last session of the General Conference. This was the result of the proceedings of the open ended working group on governance, procedures and methods of work of the governing bodies of UNESCO. For your recollection, the two main changes resulting from this amendment are as follows: first, instead of an ad hoc working group on voting rights, Rule 82 now establishes a formal working group called “Working Group on Contributions”. The group still has one representative from each electoral group, but with a term of office of four years. Half of the members of the working group shall be replaced at each ordinary session of the General Conference. Second, the deadline for Member States to submit their communication is now the opening day of the Executive Board session preceding the General Conference instead of three days after the commencement of the General Conference session. This amendment aims at ensuring more continuity and more efficiency in the work of the working group. This fourth session is the first session with this new mechanism in place. Consequently, the working group was composed as follows: Germany (Group I), Slovenia (Group II), El Salvador (Group III), Philippines (Group IV), Mozambique (Group V(a)), and Oman (Group V(b)).

56.3 Mr President, the working group met five times on 12 September, 24, 29 and 30 October, and 7 November 2019. At its first meeting, the working group elected the representative from Germany as its Chairperson. In its report presented by the Chair of the working group yesterday morning, he reminded delegates that the mandate of the working group is only to examine the communications received. Thus, the working group does not assess the situation of Member States that do not submit any communication. In the absence of such communication from the Member States concerned, the latter may no longer be authorized to take part in voting, unless the required payment is received. In light of the above, the working group reviewed carefully the communications received in order to assess two elements. First, to assess whether the conditions involved are generally beyond the control of Member States. For this purpose, the General Conference adopted three criteria in its 30 C/Resolution 82 – namely, first, wars and armed conflicts, second, economic and financial criteria and third, natural disasters. The situation involved should have had proven effects over the two preceding years. Second, to assess the real intention of the Member State to pay its total financial contributions to UNESCO. This is done by examining the undertaking made by the Member State to settle its arrears. Particular attention is given to the commitment made to reduce the total amount of arrears and to the respect of existing payment plans.

56.4 By a deadline of Monday, 14 October 2019, the working group received seven communications from the following Member States: Comoros, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Venezuela, and Yemen. Subsequent to the submission of their communications, Sudan and Yemen made the required payments. As customary, the working group decided to invite representatives from the Member States concerned to make an oral presentation of their cases. The working group reminded the representatives of these Member States that the work of the group is of a purely technical nature based on the criteria defined by the General Conference. Having carefully examined the communications received and taking into account additional information provided by the representatives of the Member States, the working group came to the conclusion that five Member States could be granted voting rights. Based on the recommendation made by the working group, the APX Commission considered favourably the following requests. Comoros, Iran, Libya, Somalia and Venezuela.

56.5 In so doing, the working group proposed to grant their voting rights on the basis of contributions. In addition, the working group informed the APX Commission that it further took note of seven Member States in arrears which had not

sent any communication. Therefore, the APX Commission endorsed the recommendation of the working group that according to Rule 82 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, that voting rights cannot be granted on the basis of contributions to Antigua and Barbuda, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, South Sudan and Timor-Leste.

56.6 Mr President, in closing, allow me to inform this distinguished assembly that three of the members of the working group expressed their interest in voluntarily finishing their term in advance. In light of this, the APX Commission agreed to accept their proposal to end their term at this session of the General Conference. Subsequently, when opening the floor for volunteers per electoral group, to proceed to elect the three vacant members of the working group on contributions, no Member State expressed any interest, leading to a postponement of the election which will happen before the closing of the APX Commission. I encourage members of the commission from electoral groups I, II and IV to ensure this important membership and that it is promptly defined.

56.7 Mr President, in my capacity as chairperson of the APX Commission, I am submitting the resolution recommended by the APX Commission for adoption by the plenary meeting of the General Conference. With your indulgence, I propose that this decision be taken without debate in line with best practice. I thank you for your attention.

57. **The President:**

Thank you very much your Excellency. Dear colleagues, may I consider that the General Conference approves by consensus the recommendations made by the APX Commission? Thank you. If there are no objections, I will consider that the General Conference approves the recommendations. *It is so **decided**.*

#### **Item 1.2: First report of the Credentials Committee**

58. **The President:**

Ladies and gentlemen, we will now examine the first report of Chairperson of the Credentials Committee. I give the floor to Her Excellency, Ms Denise Houphouet-Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire.

59.1 **Mme Houphouet-Boigny (Cote d'Ivoire) (Présidente du Comité de vérification des pouvoirs) :**

Merci Monsieur le Président. Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Madame la Directrice générale, mesdames et messieurs les Ministres, mesdames et messieurs les Ambassadeurs, chers délégués, j'ai l'honneur de vous présenter le premier Rapport de la Présidente du Comité de vérification des pouvoirs.

59.2 Depuis la lecture du premier Rapport du Comité de vérification des pouvoirs en séance plénière, le mardi 12 novembre 2019, le Comité a reçu les pouvoirs en bonne et due forme des Délégations des États membres dont les noms s'affichent à l'écran. En outre, le Comité a reçu les pouvoirs provisoires des Délégations des États membres dont les noms s'affichent à l'écran. Le Comité a également reçu les pouvoirs en bonne et due forme des Délégations des États membres dont la liste s'affiche à l'écran, qui avaient auparavant présenté des pouvoirs provisoires. Le Comité a également reçu les pouvoirs en bonne et due forme des Délégations des membres associés, dont la liste s'affiche à l'écran.

59.3 Conformément à l'autorisation qui m'a été donnée par le Comité de vérification des pouvoirs, je propose que la Conférence générale accepte ces pouvoirs. Par ailleurs, les Délégations des États membres dont la liste s'affiche à l'écran n'ont pas encore présenté de pouvoirs. Les Délégations de membres associés dont la liste s'affiche à l'écran n'ont pas encore présenté de pouvoirs. Enfin, la Délégation d'observateurs dont le nom s'affiche à l'écran n'a pas encore présenté de pouvoirs. Je vous remercie de votre attention.

60. **The President:**

I thank you Madam Chairperson for your report. May I take it that the General Conference agrees to take note of the report? Brazil, you have the floor.

61. **Brazil:**

Thank you, Mr President. I am not sure, but I am pretty sure that Brazil was on the first list of the countries that presented in due form their credentials when you listed the names in the meeting of the committee. I did not see our name here. Please confirm to me if we are not in good position. Thank you.

62. **The President:**

In the meantime, I will give the floor to the distinguished representative of Afghanistan.

63. **Afghanistan:**

Merci Monsieur le Président. Comme mon collègue qui a pris la parole juste avant moi, je n'ai pas vu le nom de ma Délégation dans la liste, alors que le premier jour, il apparaissait bien sur la liste des pays, des Délégations qui avaient présenté leurs pouvoirs. Merci de confirmer ça. Merci.

64. **The President:**

Excuse me Madam Chairperson, maybe you can answer after I give the floor to a third delegation, which I see asking for the floor. Burundi, please?

65. **Burundi :**

Merci Monsieur le Président, c'est le même cas. Avant on était sur la liste et maintenant on ne figure pas sur la liste. Merci.

66. **The President:**

Thank you Excellency. Madam Chairperson do you have anything to add?



67. **Mme Houphouet-Boigny** (Cote d'Ivoire) (Présidente du Comité de vérification des pouvoirs) :  
 Merci Monsieur le Président. Nous avons, dans la liste des pouvoirs en bonne et due forme, l'Afghanistan figure bien, le Brésil figure bien, et le Burundi également figure sur la liste des pays qui ont donné leurs pouvoirs en bonne et due forme.
68. **The President:**  
 Thank you. So I take it that the General Conference agrees to adopt the report of Madam Houphouet-Boigny. *It is so decided.* Sri Lanka, please you have the floor.
69. **Sri Lanka:**  
 Thank you, Mr President. Our name also was not there. I am not sure what happened.
70. **Mme Houphouet-Boigny** (Cote d'Ivoire) (Présidente du Comité de vérification des pouvoirs) :  
 Merci Monsieur le Président. Le Sri Lanka figure bien sur la liste des pays qui ont donné leurs pouvoirs en bonne et due forme.
71. **The President:**  
 Thank you for your answer as well. Following the reports by the chairpersons of the APX Commission and the Credentials Committee on the valid credentials submitted to date, I will now read the list of the Member States that will not have the right to vote at the 40th session of the General Conference: Antigua and Barbuda, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Guinea Bissau, Kiribati, Philippines, Sao Tome and Principe, South Sudan, Timor Leste, Trinidad and Tobago and finally Yemen. Now we have a few rights of reply. I wish to inform you that I have received four requests for the right of reply and I decided to grant these rights of reply. The delegation of Pakistan has asked for the right of reply to the statement made yesterday by India. In accordance with Rule 72 of our Rules of Procedure I am according the right of reply to Pakistan for two minutes. Your Excellency, the representative of Pakistan, you have the floor.
- 72.1 **Pakistan:**  
 Mr President, the Indian delegate's malicious and self-contradictory statement yesterday was hardly surprising. Such a vitriolic outburst smacks of the self-created delusion of grandeur and a false sense of righteousness. We have no intention to politicize this august Organization. Pakistan's statement highlighting the ugly reality of India's annexation and occupation of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as trampling of the fundamental rights of the principles of its people, was completely in line with UNESCO's mandate and the principles of its Constitution. Perhaps the Indian delegates could have taken another careful look at UNESCO's Constitution. We, however, sympathize with them as some years ago they were singing the praises of a shining India, a land of pluralism and cultural diversity. Today, they are reduced to defending with hollow arguments a regime based on fascist ideology and a history of inciting communal violence, which is fast turning India into a land of hatred and intolerance with no room for minorities and religious freedom. India's convenient denial of the disputed nature of Jammu and Kashmir cannot change history. Its false and illegal claims that it is an internal matter cannot hide the truth. Dozens of United Nations Security Council resolutions have called for self-determination for the people of Kashmir, and these are still valid.
- 72.2 Mr President, imagine a land in this twenty-first century where eight million people are caged in their houses for over 100 days, where over a million children cannot go to school out of fear, where people cannot celebrate religious festivals, where journalists are not allowed, where human rights organizations are denied access. This is today's Jammu and Kashmir under repressive and illegitimate Indian occupation – a worst example of State terrorism. Should this not be enough to shake our conscience? Should we not raise our voices for justice. Silence and appeasement would only lead to humanitarian catastrophe. It could also threaten regional peace and security. In the end, Mr President, we hope UNESCO's moral authority could be invoked to avert this disaster. I thank you all.
73. **The President:**  
 Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to inform you that the delegation of India has asked for the right of reply to the statement just made by Pakistan. In accordance with Rule 72 of our Rules of Procedure I will accord the right to reply for two minutes. Your Excellency, the representative of India, you have the floor.
- 74.1 **India:**  
 Thank you, Mr President. I take the floor once again to condemn and reject the fabricated falsehoods pedalled by Pakistan in its statement and reiterate India's sovereignty and territorial integrity over the Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Pakistan's tiresome tale is a fake attempt overflowing with hypocrisy to hide its own pathetic and pitiable record as a nation, including its own treatment of minorities, spread of hate speech and glorification of terrorism. Here are some facts: from 1947 when minorities formed 23% of Pakistan's population, they have now dwindled to merely 3%. It has subjected Christians, Sikhs, Ahmadiyyas, Hindus, Shias, Pashtuns, Sindhis, Baluchis to draconian blasphemy laws, blatant abuse and forced conversions. The gender-based crimes against women, including honour killings, acid attacks, forced conversions, forced marriages and child marriages remain a severe problem in Pakistan today.
- 74.2 Mr President, it is a country whose leadership uses a United Nations platform to openly preach nuclear war and issue calls to arms against other nations. Would this gathering believe it if I told them that one of Pakistan's former presidents, General Musharraf, recently called terrorists such as Osama bin Laden and the Haqqani network as Pakistan's heroes. Pakistan is home to all shades of darkness. From dark extremist ideologies, darker powers of radicalization, radicalized behaviour to the darkest manifestations of terrorism.
- 74.3 Mr President, in 2018 Pakistan ranked 14th on the fragile states index. Pakistan's neurotic behaviour has resulted in its decline to a nearly-failed State with a weak economy, radicalized society and deep-rooted DNA of terrorism. We condemn Pakistan's disappointing misuse of UNESCO to spew venom against India and politicize UNESCO. We sincerely hope that UNESCO's membership would come together to reject such a gross misuse of the UNESCO platform. Thank you.

75. **The President:**

Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to inform you that the delegation of the People's Republic of China has asked for a right of reply in accordance with Rule 72 of our Rules of Procedure. I will accord the right to reply for three minutes. Your Excellency, the representative of China, you have the floor.

76. **中国:**

谢谢主席先生。印方在发言中提到拉达克和克什米尔中央直辖区，并说是印度不可分割的一部分。中方不承认、不接受所谓这两个直辖区；印方以单方面修改国内法律的形式，将部分中国领土划入印行政管辖范围，侵犯中方的领土主权，中方对此坚决反对。印方这一做法不可接受，也不会产生任何效益。我们敦促印方尊重中方的领土主权，严格遵守双方达成的相关协定，避免采取导致边界问题进一步复杂化的举动。谢谢主席先生。

77. **The President:**

Thank you. I wish to inform you that the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has asked for a right of reply in accordance with Rule 72 of our Rules of Procedure I am according that right of reply for three minutes. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

78.1 **República Bolivariana de Venezuela:**

Gracias, señor Presidente. Lamento utilizar esta tribuna para constatar nuevamente que la delegación de Colombia, que recién interviene, utiliza el podio de la UNESCO, dedicado a los desafíos de la Organización, para mencionar a los migrantes venezolanos que están recibiendo producto de una supuesta crisis política existente en mi país. Esta acción, que politiza indebidamente esta tribuna, obviamente, se separa de los objetivos y de los debates que hemos construido en nuestra Organización. Venezuela desea recordar que, durante más de cinco décadas, ha recibido a más de 5,6 millones de hermanas y hermanos colombianos que han llegado a nuestro territorio como consecuencia del penoso conflicto armado que aqueja a esa nación. A estos millones de individuos, Venezuela ha garantizado y seguirá garantizando los derechos sociales, económicos y culturales que hemos inscrito y aceptado mediante pactos internacionales, sin solicitar, por cierto, ninguna ayuda financiera internacional ni realizar un constante ejercicio mediático, erigiéndose con una falsa autoridad moral que lo único que ha generado es el establecimiento de un clima de xenofobia e intolerancia hacia mis compatriotas, como quedó demostrado con el lamentable fallecimiento del músico Fernando Colina en agosto pasado, que no fue atendido en un hospital de Santander, Villa del Rosario, por el simple hecho de ser venezolano. Tal como fue debidamente denunciado por mi delegación ante la Directora General de la UNESCO por contravenir la recomendación relativa a la condición del artista.

78.2 Estamos, pues, en presencia de una vergonzosa estrategia de criminalización de venezolanos y de nuestro Gobierno por parte del Gobierno de Colombia, que incluso utiliza espacios como la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas para presentar datos falsos con el solo fin de mal ponernos bajo mentiras. Datos falsos que, por cierto, fueron desmontados por los propios medios colombianos. Finalmente, invitamos, con el mismo respeto y aliento hacia la paz que siempre ha manifestado el Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela, a continuar trabajando en defensa de los objetivos comunes de la Organización y no bombardear con la creación de falsos positivos, a inocentes niños, lamentablemente muertos recientemente a finales de agosto de este año 2019, evitando con ello que la infancia pueda garantizar el respeto de sus propios derechos consagrados por los distintos instrumentos internacionales que la UNESCO vela y continúa hoy en día incrementando su compromiso. Gracias, señor Presidente.

79. **The President:**

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. This concludes our work for today. The Plenary will reconvene tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock. Before I adjourn the meeting, I wish to remind members of the Bureau of the General Conference that the third meeting of the Bureau will be held tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock in Room X. I wish you a pleasant evening. This meeting is now **adjourned**.

*The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.*