

Eleventh plenary meeting of the 40th session of the General Conference

Wednesday 20 November 2019 at 3.15 p.m.

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

1.1 **The President:**

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, I declare open the eleventh plenary meeting of the General Conference. Before we turn to the examination of items **7.3**, **7.4** and **7.5**, I would like to inform you that the Bureau of the General Conference held its fourth meeting yesterday morning. The Bureau heard progress reports on the work of the commissions and committees, and I am pleased to inform you that their work is fully on schedule.

1.2 Having said that, let us now turn to the items on the agenda for this afternoon's meeting. We will be considering the three items on the proposed draft amendments to the UNESCO Constitution. This is, of course, no ordinary task. The Constitution was last amended 18 years ago, when the Director-General's term in office was reduced. Article XIII of the Constitution concerning Amendments, indicates that "Proposals for amendments to this Constitution shall become effective upon receiving the approval of the General Conference by a two-thirds majority". Article XIII also indicates that "draft texts of proposed amendments shall be communicated by the Director-General to the Member States at least six months in advance of their consideration by the General Conference". The three amendments to the Constitution, which we will now examine, have all gone through that procedure and have been examined by the Legal Committee.

1.3 We will now proceed with the examination of each item one by one, starting with item **7.3** "Draft amendment to Article V of the Constitution". The relevant documents for this item are 40 C/70 and Addendum, 40 C/PLEN/DR.1, 40 C/PLEN/DR.6 and 40 C/114. Document 40 C/PLEN/DR.1 contains the list of its co-sponsors. I inform you that, after its publication, Palau and Papua New Guinea have expressed their support for this draft resolution. Document 40 C/PLEN/DR.6 also contains the list of its co-sponsors. After publication, Bahrain, Comoros, Liberia, Madagascar, Tajikistan and Togo have expressed their support for this draft resolution. I now invite the distinguished Chairperson of the Legal Committee to present the report of the Committee, in connection with this item. Excellency, you have the floor.

2.1 **M. Eisemann** (Président du Comité juridique) :

Je vous remercie Monsieur le Président. Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Madame la Directrice générale, Mesdames et Messieurs, permettez-moi de vous présenter le 17^e Rapport du Comité juridique contenu, comme vient de le dire Monsieur le Président, dans le document 40 C/114.

2.2 Ce Rapport porte sur les projets d'amendements à l'Article V de l'Acte constitutif et à l'Article 102 du Règlement intérieur de la Conférence générale, lesquels visent à la non-rééligibilité des membres du Conseil exécutif après deux mandats consécutifs. Ces projets ont été présentés à la Conférence générale dans les documents 40 C/70 et addendum.

2.3 Après s'être prononcés sur la recevabilité du projet d'amendement constitutionnel, en vertu des dispositions pertinentes de l'Acte constitutif et du Règlement intérieur de la Conférence générale, les membres du Comité juridique ont procédé à un examen du projet de résolution présenté par les auteurs des projets d'amendement dans le document 40 C/PLEN/DR/1.

2.4 Le Comité a donc procédé à des modifications d'ordre juridique et procédural sur le projet de résolution tout en prenant note du retrait par les auteurs du Paragraphe 5 figurant dans le document 40 C/PLEN/DR/1. Il est à signaler qu'un membre du Comité a exprimé ses réserves quant au libellé du huitième paragraphe du préambule du projet de résolution en ce qu'il se réfère et cite hors contexte une recommandation du Commissaire aux comptes.

2.5 Par la suite, les membres du Comité ont débattu des modalités d'entrée en vigueur de cet amendement constitutionnel, notamment quant à savoir si celui-ci comportait ou non des obligations nouvelles pour les États membres. Certains membres se sont prononcés dans ce sens, tandis que d'autres se sont prononcés dans le sens contraire. À l'issue d'un long débat, le Comité juridique a considéré qu'il n'était pas en mesure de trancher entre ces deux options, faute d'avoir pu atteindre la majorité des deux tiers requise par le Paragraphe 2 de l'Article 38 du Règlement intérieur de la Conférence générale. Je précise bien le Paragraphe 2 et non pas le Paragraphe 3 comme il a été indiqué par erreur dans le rapport écrit du Comité. Le Comité, ne pouvant donc donner un avis, il reviendra à la plénière de la Conférence générale de se prononcer sur cette question.

2.6 Toutefois, afin de faciliter le travail de la plénière, le Comité juridique a décidé de mettre à la disposition de celle-ci les deux options du projet de résolution tel que modifié par le Comité. Selon que la Conférence générale considérera que cet amendement constitutionnel n'entraîne aucune obligation nouvelle pour les États membres, c'est l'option 1, ou qu'il entraîne des obligations nouvelles, c'est l'option 2. Ces deux options figurent à la fin du Paragraphe 6 du rapport du Comité juridique. Je vous remercie Monsieur le Président.

3. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. The representative of New Zealand has requested to make an introductory statement on behalf of those Member States who have proposed the draft amendment to Article V, paragraph 4 of the Constitution and to Rule 102 of the Rules of Procedure for adoption by the General Conference. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

4.1 **New Zealand :**

Thank you very much, Mr President. *Kia ora* Mr President, *Kia ora* Honourable Ministers, *Kia ora* Excellencies, colleagues, thank you very much for giving me the floor to present the draft amendment on behalf of the co-sponsors. I really welcome this opportunity. While it is fresh in people's minds, I should like to also thank the Chairperson of the Legal Committee for his work and the work of the Member State representatives of the Legal Committee and thank them for pulling

together this report. I just wanted to begin by addressing the question of the legal obligation very briefly, and then I will go on to address some of the broader points. The point I wanted to make was that the Constitution has been amended over 20 times in this Organization, Mr President, and in only one instance has an amendment been considered to constitute a new legal obligation. This related to a change to the financial regulations. We consider that if we are to follow any semblance of fidelity to legal precedents within this Organization, it would, Mr President, be correct to consider that the proposed amendment to Article V does not constitute a new legal obligation. For New Zealand's part, we have looked at this very carefully and consulted our legal experts. Their advice was clear that this does not constitute a legal obligation – more about that later.

4.2 But Mr President, if it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed, it must be done so in the minds of men and women from all regions of the world, from all States – big States, small States, developed States, developing States, landlocked States and small island developing States, including those from our part of the world, the Pacific, those States whose existence is at peril due to the crisis of climate change. This amendment is underpinned by principles of diversity and inclusivity. It is the view of the co-sponsors that UNESCO and its three organs should reflect the membership of the global community it serves. This amendment will facilitate the participation of all States in the governance of this important Organization.

4.3 This more inclusive approach will in turn increase the effectiveness of UNESCO's governance, its legitimacy and its impact in the multilateral system. Mr President, if we are to ensure that UNESCO remains relevant and agile and is able to provide solutions to today's contemporary challenges, we need to bring fresh ideas to the table. We need to bring diverse perspectives to the table. The amendment before you today proposes a modest and reasonable two-year stand down period for States that are elected for consecutive terms of eight years on the Executive Board. Those States that are re-elected for a second four-year term in succession would be required to step aside for two years to facilitate the election onto the Board of new Member States where those States that have not served in a very long time.

4.4 This measure will not be applied retroactively. Members elected during today's proceeding will be eligible to seek re-election for a further four-year term in 2023. Thereafter in 2027, they would be required to stand down for two years prior to starting the cycle again, in this case, 2029. Mr President, this amendment is by no means an innovative or new initiative across the United Nations system and within UNESCO. Term limits are imposed to encourage rotation. This is the case within the World Heritage Committee. A six-year term is imposed and the Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee, which is limited to two consecutive terms of four years. Term limits have also been imposed on the Executive Board. At its foundation in 1945, the UNESCO Constitution stipulated that individual members of the Executive Board shall serve a term of three years but shall not serve consecutively more than two terms. Then in 1952, a system of two consecutive terms of four years was implemented. In 1968, the mandate of Board members was shortened to a single non-renewable term of six years. In 1972, this was reduced to one term of four years. In 1991, term limits were removed altogether. In practice, this has been detrimental to the principle of rotation that is so crucial to UNESCO's legitimacy and effectiveness. One consequence was that some Members served on the Executive Board for very long periods of time, many for consecutive terms of over 20 years. More than 20 years, Mr President. We acknowledge the tremendous contribution, including resources that these Members make to this Organization.

4.5 All UNESCO Member States, however, contribute their dues under the system of mandatory assessed contributions, which take account of economic relativities. There is no differentiation according to the quantum of our contributions. There is likewise no conditionality attached, including with respect to representation on the Executive Board. We are equal participants, although we do acknowledge that there is a gap between the theory and the practice.

4.6 Mr President, we consider that maintaining this practice of de facto permanent membership erodes the bedrock principles of diversity and rotation. It also diminishes UNESCO's legitimacy and effectiveness in forging solutions to today's most pressing global challenges. The reality is that the prospects of successful election for new States or for those States that have not served in a very long time are severely limited by the advantage held by those already on the Board. Mr President, in 2015, the Working Group on Governance was established and deliberated in open consultations in 2016 and 2017. This culminated in a series of recommendations to enhance governance within UNESCO. This included Recommendation 20, which I quote as follows: "With respect to term limits to promote equitable geographic rotation and opportunities for smaller countries. A general rule for all Member States should be pursued, specifically amending the Constitution, Rule 9 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board and Rule 102 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference. This particular recommendation was subject to robust discussions and was left in square brackets during the 39th session of the General Conference. After a 12-hour debate in the APX Commission the recommendation was subject to a vote.

4.7 The recommendation was adopted by a very strong majority, with 112 States voting in favour and 12 States voting against. All recommendations in the Working Group on Governance, including Recommendation 20 on term limits, were subsequently endorsed when the General Conference adopted 39 C/Resolution 87. This resolution was adopted by consensus. What 39 C/Resolution 87 asked us to do was for all the governing bodies and the Director-General to implement the recommendations as appropriate.

4.8 Mr President, following a further two years of extensive, open, robust and constructive deliberations within the Working Group, we the co-sponsors are fulfilling our collective duty to implement Recommendation 20 as endorsed by the 39th session of the General Conference. A failure to act on this during the 40th session of the General Conference will represent a failure to implement what has already been decided. This modest and reasonable two-year stand down period promotes a fair system of rotation and equitable geographic representation. It reflects core values of multilateral diplomacy, democratic governance, inclusiveness and diversity. Greater representation of Member States on the Executive Board, enhanced rotation and democratic alternance, will in our view, better enable UNESCO to continue to build the spirit of consensus as it addresses today's contemporary challenges and seizes future opportunities to construct the defences of

peace. We therefore ask that the General Conference unite behind this important constitutional amendment in a spirit of consensus. Thank you very much, Mr President.

5. The President:

Thank you your Excellency. I will now open the debate on item **7.3** “Draft Amendment to Article V of the Constitution”. I would kindly ask you remain constructive and earnest in your deliberations, and to keep your comments on the other two draft amendments for the next debates. Would those delegations who wish to speak kindly indicate their interest by raising their name plates. I will read those countries that wish to take the floor and if you do not see your name coming up please remind us. Japan, China, Denmark, Spain, Canada, Afghanistan, Argentina, Brazil, Armenia, Australia, Germany, Finland, Slovenia, Colombia, Serbia, Uruguay, Cook Islands, Egypt, France, Kiribati, Paraguay, Syria, Morocco, Iceland, Republic of Korea, Hungary, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Mexico, Portugal, Tonga, Benin, Ethiopia, South Africa, Cambodia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Lithuania, Samoa, Palau, Kazakhstan, Italy, Sweden, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, the Netherlands, Tonga, Luxembourg, Islamic Republic of Iran, Saint Lucia, Indonesia, India, Algeria, Zimbabwe, Vanuatu, Fiji, Switzerland, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Jordan, United Kingdom and Cameroon. I think we have written the provisional list of the speakers. The list is open for a few more minutes, so just to let you know that if you decide to take the floor you can still have your name on it. I am now giving the floor to the first speaker on our list, the representative of Japan to be followed by China.

6.1 Japan:

Thank you Mr President, it is a great honour for me to contribute to the discussion on the matter of critical importance on the future of UNESCO. Japan requested together with many other countries, ever since we sent a letter to you in June, that we should have a thorough discussion on this very important issue in view of achieving possibly consensus and that is a very important principle of UNESCO. That is why first of all I would like to request, Mr President, as you have been doing, please give the floor to all the countries who are willing to speak and intervene on this very important issue for UNESCO. That is a critical component – to have a fair and transparent discussion on this matter. Nevertheless, although we have presented our own draft resolution (DR) yesterday, together with the co-sponsors who have now increased to 44, decreasing for the deliberate and discreet conversation on this matter. But I am very happy to start the discussion based upon the draft resolution presented by the representative of New Zealand, because we know that it is the rule of UNESCO based upon Rule 90. So we are very happy to have a free, open and solid discussion on this DR.

6.2 Mr President, Japan has been coordinating this process because this is a very important process, and so Member States should be ensured to have the opportunity to express their views. We started to organize the informal consultation on 11 September, together with the Ambassador of El Salvador, and I co-chaired it. There was a very good discussion in the Working Group on Governance on 1 October and in the subsequent Executive Board session there have been very intensive discussions in the Special Committee. Despite all those efforts, I am afraid there has been no convergence of views on this critical item, because we need to clearly see that there are still many important issues which are unsolved, and we could not have reached any convergent views on those points.

6.3 As for the impact of governance, proposers of the amendment insist that the interference could be moderated, but in our view it may have pretty grave consequences to the governance of UNESCO, which is essential for the Organization to fulfil its noble objectives. Yes, it may be two years, based upon the proposal that the countries who substitute more than two terms would lose their place in the Executive Board. But if we see things from the perspective of the governance of UNESCO, it is not two years, but four years. Once the amendment applied in the first election, after that one half of the Member States who served more than two terms will lose a place on the Board. In the next election, the other half will lose seats on the Board. If we see what we have experienced for the past four years in UNESCO, we have lost the two major partners and we are facing a lot of strategic political challenges. Without the capacity to deal with all the challenges. how can we fulfil the very important noble mission that we are requested to do? This is actually a starting point, and this point should be seriously addressed. Number two – yes, there was a recommendation about it in the General Conference two years ago with a majority support. But at the same time, it may be said very clearly that what the recommendation asks Member States to do is to examine the ways to implement the recommendation, spending four years, not two years. It is clearly indicated that we can spend four years until the 41st session of the General Conference. That is why we just presented the Medium-Term Report to the APX of this General Conference. So this is not the end of the time period, and I think given the situation that there are still divergent views on this issue. We need to be discreet and, if necessary, we should spend more time for discussions. Also, I would like to point out the fact that rotation is maybe an important principle and we strongly support the credibility and inclusiveness, and many countries who are willing to participate and contribute to the Organization should be given an opportunity, and their intentions are noble and should be respected. But at the same time, as a system, term limits is a very unique proposal. If we look at the systems of other United Nations organizations, we could find only one example in other United Nations organizations and this should also be taken into account.

6.4 Mr President, finally, I would like to mention the legal point. I appreciate the discussions that took place in the Legal Committee and I appreciate all those who contributed to that debate. But the other reason why the views are so divided is we have a genuine concern from a purely legal perspective. If this amendment is creating a new obligation, if I am asked to define the view, this is clearly a new obligation because Article V.4 (b) of the Constitution clearly stipulates that every Member State of the Executive Board is eligible for re-election. The amendment is proposing to limit the right already given to Member States with the existing provision. This is a view clearly shared by every expert on the part of Japan that there is a genuine question that this is creating and constituting a new legal obligation.

6.5 Mr President, as I have said I would like to hear the views of every State who would like to contribute, and discussion is everything for UNESCO. But at the same time, if there is no convergence after exhausting all the debate, we believe this may not be the time ripe enough to make a decision. That is why, with the support of 45 countries – you mentioned the names so I do not like to repeat it here, but even today actually the number is increasing – this is a token that genuine concern is shared by the Member States that on this matter the unity of UNESCO, which is fundamental and crucial, could

be affected. So, Mr President, I am very happy to join this debate sincerely, fully. After the completion of the discussion, I hope that we can make the right decision for the future of UNESCO and for the unity of UNESCO. Thank you very much.

7. The President:

Thank you your Excellency. Thank you. Now China please, followed by Denmark.

8.1 中国:

谢谢主席。《组织法》是教科文组织的根本大法，会员国是基于共同认同组织法而团结在一起的。《组织法》是本组织稳定健康发展的根本保障，因此，修订《组织法》应持极其审慎和高度负责的态度，应全面评估各方面影响，在充分对话协商达成共识的基础上稳步推进，而不能盲目推动，更不能搞零和游戏，在存在严重分歧的情况下强行推动，破坏本组织合作的根本基础。

8.2 目前，会员国对议题 7.3 所列修正案的意見有严重分歧。正如法律委员会的报告所阐明的、关于修正案涉及的是否增加会员国的义务这一关键性法律问题，会员国尚存在深刻分歧，远未达成共识。这已经在会员国间造成了一定程度的分裂。我们不能任由这种情况发展下去，影响本组织重大计划项目的实施，损害广大会员国，特别是发展中国家的根本利益，给本组织造成长远破坏性影响。因此，我们认为不应该急于就此修正案作出决定，而应进一步对话协商，为寻求共识方案争取时间和空间；为开展凝聚集体智慧的集体行动奠定坚实基础。

8.3 中方认为平等的选举权和被选举权是会员国的基本权利，不应受到损害。中方愿秉持开放灵活的态度，呼吁会员国在改善执行局委员代表性方案的既有讨论基础上，通过充分对话协商寻求周全、稳妥、各方都能接受的方案。因此，中方认为，应将议题 7.3 所列修正案推迟到下一届大会讨论。谢谢主席。

9. The President:

Thank you Excellency. Thank you. I now invite Denmark followed by Spain.

10.1 Denmark:

Thank you Mr President of the Conference. Let me start by paying tribute to you personally for your effective and very fair leadership of the discussions in the Bureau and of course also in the General Conference. We greatly appreciate that, and we of course are sure that this will continue in the next few very important days when we are deliberating on the three amendments proposed.

10.2 Amending the Constitution of UNESCO and the Rules of Procedure for the General Conference in order to introduce term limits for the Executive Board is not a new issue. We are not working in a hurried manner in our consideration of this. The latest discussion of term limits, rotation and equitable representation in the Executive Board started four years ago. As was recalled by my colleague from New Zealand two years ago at the 39th session of the General Conference in 2017, Recommendation 20 was adopted with an overwhelming majority and the amendment before us now, 40 C/PLEN/DR.1, is the implementation of this recommendation by the General Conference put before this Conference to decide upon.

10.3 I will try to limit myself to a few key observations. First of all, the co-sponsors of this amendment which come from all regions, want to deepen the sense of ownership in UNESCO and of UNESCO, to have UNESCO for all Member States, as so eloquently stated by New Zealand, who want an inclusive and diverse UNESCO. We want an Executive Board which reflects this diversity, this cultural and societal richness. We therefore want small countries and the majority of States in this hall to be able to serve as Board Members, not only in theory but in practice. We need an equitable and inclusive system of rotation in the Executive Board. This amendment will provide that and it, of course, will also provide a gradual and long transitional arrangement as it will only take effect in eight years' time in 2027. So we encourage all Member States to support 40 C/PLEN/DR.1. We have taken a decision two years ago and we will have to take it again at this Conference. We need term limits done to paraphrase the political discussion in an important Member State.

10.4 We clearly believe that the amendment will strengthen the Executive Board and UNESCO as it will create a fair, transparent and equitable system of geographical rotation in which more countries will be empowered to participate in the governance of the Organization. This will promote a more open and inclusive and multi-faceted UNESCO and a more open, inclusive and multifaceted Executive Board.

10.5 On the legal aspect, let me just limit myself to saying that the Constitution of UNESCO, contrary to many other Constitutions in international organizations has been amended many times. Also I refer to the presentation made by New Zealand. Many of these amendments have been voted upon – the last one in 2001. Voting is definitely not unusual when it comes to adoption of amendments. We all like consensus, but that presupposes that all will have the will to compromise. Consensus does not mean veto power for one or even a few big powers. In this case, and for many years, we have sought a solution through negotiation, but we have been met with very limited flexibility from our counterparts. Postponement seems to be, if not the only, then the most prominent word in this regard. Postponement as such, not offering alternatives, when a number of co-sponsors have submitted their proposals. We did that a long time ago, but no counter proposal has been offered within the time-frame established by the Constitution. That is not the road to consensus.

10.6 I would also like to recall that voting is the normal decision-making process in UNESCO. It is stated very clearly in Rule 86 of the Rules of Procedure. My third point would be on whether this amendment entails due legal obligation. I am sure we have all asked our legal experts on that. In our view, and we share the same assessment of New Zealand, our legal experts have been thoroughly reviewing the issue, and have been not able to find any substantial arguments for a claim that this should entail new legal obligations. The UNESCO Constitution has been amended 30 times. It has been amended at 22 sessions of the General Conference. That means that we have had more Conferences voting on amendments than we have had conferences not voting on amendments to the Constitution. It is a normal thing in UNESCO and the rules are set out to facilitate amendments. Only once, and only one time out of 30, have new legal obligations been created by

amendments to the Constitution and that was a particular financial issue. All in all, there have been 11 amendments in respect of Article V – none of these have created new legal obligations, of course not. The arguments are political and not legal. So, for us it is very clear that there will be no legal obligations for Member States as a result of the amendments being adopted. For us, it is a very simple analysis and we all want all Member States to recognize this simple fact in the votes they cast.

10.7 My final point, I come from a region which for many years have been walking the talk. The five Nordic countries – Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark – already practised a rotation scheme much tougher than the one proposed here. The five countries rotate as candidate for one Board seat in group I, which means that one country follows each other, and in due course Denmark will also be a member. We were last a member from 2009-2013. We will only stand again in 2029 with a hiatus of 16 years. However, that does not affect our commitment or engagement in UNESCO and it does not have a negative effect on our voluntary contributions. You will find some of my Nordic colleagues on the very top of that league. We all work closely with UNESCO, whether we are Executive Board members or not, but it helps being part of the Board from time to time. It only deepens our engagement.

10.8 Now I recognize fully that I am new as a Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, but I have served before this as Permanent Representative, both in New York and Geneva, and before coming here last year I had the pleasure of serving for five years as Permanent Representative in Geneva working at the Human Rights Council, where term limits were actually introduced from the very beginning of 2006. Each country can serve two consecutive three-year terms in the Human Rights Council and then they have to leave for at least one year. That has worked extremely well. Term limits by definition increases the prospect of membership, thus strengthening Member States' commitment and resolve to work actively within the Council. It has had no negative effect on the engagement of Member States seeking consecutive terms in the Council. They have all stayed engaged and worked very effectively from an observer position in the years when they are not members. Observers are pushing issues as hard and diligently as members. Thus, it is difficult to see the downside to term limits. But there is a strong and permanent upside, with more Member States undertaking and sharing the responsibility of Executive Board membership. On that basis, I would like to appeal to all of you to support 40 C/PLEN/DR.1 as proposed by the co-sponsors. It is not a revolution. It is a democratic evolution in the governance of UNESCO and in the interests of all Member States. Thank you.

11. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. I now invite Spain, followed by Canada.

12.1 **España:**

Something is rotten in the state of UNESCO. Algo huele a podrido en el estado de la UNESCO. Parafraseando a Marcelo en el acto primero de Hamlet de Shakespeare, si el debate sobre la enmienda de Filipinas no es un debate de ideas en profundidad, de argumentos, de razonamientos a favor y en contra, como la de la delegación española creía, sino que se convierte en lo que vemos desde hace unas semanas, desde hace dos meses. Y nos preocupa que no estamos ante un debate de ideas, sino ante una muy preocupante situación de presión de unos países sobre otros, de maquinaciones secretas, de intrigas, de traiciones a los compromisos adquiridos, de candidatos a puestos directivos para poder sentarse en la silla a cualquier precio. En definitiva, de un funcionamiento que lo más suave que podemos llamar es sucio, palabra proveniente del latín *sucus*, que significaba húmedo, y que no nos gusta, no nos gusta este funcionamiento húmedo. No nos gusta que, por ejemplo, no esté hoy sentada la delegación de Filipinas en esta sala que tanto ha encabezado esta propuesta. No nos gusta no ver a Hendrik García que aprovechamos para saludar cuando, con toda la ilusión, ha tratado de introducir un debate porque él creía en estas ideas.

12.2 España cree que esta situación es mortal para la UNESCO, para la Organización, porque España apuesta por un multilateralismo limpio, abierto a todos, donde los Estados Miembros podrán tener tamaño y poder distintos, pero todos tienen la misma dignidad. Por todo ello, para hacer de la UNESCO una institución más limpia y más digna, es decir, por sanidad, por decencia y por dignidad, España pide que exista realmente un debate libre y profundo de ideas sobre las enmiendas, y la enmienda de Filipinas. Y que, si se llega a un consenso, sería el ideal, hay que buscarlo, pero si no que cada Estado Miembro pueda votar libremente lo que considere mejor para la UNESCO, sin chantajes, sin amenazas, sin presiones de ningún otro país. Y por favor, nunca olviden lo que escribió en una frase Heráclito de Éfeso en el siglo VI antes de Cristo: "Lo único permanente es el cambio". Muchas gracias.

13. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. Now I invite Canada, followed by Afghanistan.

14.1 **Canada:**

Merci Monsieur le Président. Après l'éloquence de notre collègue espagnol, je vais tenter quand même d'énumérer quelques points qui sont importants pour nous, le Canada, et vous dire d'emblée que nous souscrivons entièrement à la déclaration faite par Son Excellence l'Ambassadeur de Nouvelle Zélande. Alors, pour le Canada, la rotation au sein du Conseil exécutif est une représentation géographique équitable sur des questions précises qui reflètent les valeurs fondamentales de la diplomatie multilatérale et de la gouvernance démocratique.

14.2 La 39^e session de la Conférence générale a adopté avec une large majorité, une majorité claire, limpide, la recommandation du Groupe sur la gouvernance relative à la durée du mandat des membres du Conseil exécutif. Et pour cette raison, il allait de soi qu'un grand nombre d'États membres issus des six groupes électoraux de l'UNESCO présentent cet amendement à l'Acte constitutif afin de mettre en œuvre la résolution adoptée à la 39^e session de la Conférence générale. Il n'y a pas de surprise à cet effet. Cela fait deux ans que nous sommes au courant et que nous avons voté en ce sens.

14.3 À notre avis, l'amendement offre une option très raisonnable pour la mise en œuvre de la résolution de la Conférence générale. Il permet aux États membres qui le souhaitent de siéger au Conseil, et la possibilité de siéger pour une durée de huit ans tous les 10 ans. En tant que membre fondateur de l'UNESCO, comptant parmi les 10 plus grands contributeurs au budget de l'UNESCO, nous sommes convaincus et nous espérons humblement le démontrer depuis 12 ans

qu'il est possible pour un État de participer pleinement aux travaux de l'UNESCO sans être un membre permanent de ce Conseil exécutif.

14.4 D'ailleurs, une pause de deux ans est très positive pour permettre aux membres de ce Conseil de se ressourcer, de retrouver la motivation pour toutes les questions que traite le Conseil, pas seulement pour quelques projets qui leur tiennent à cœur.

14.5 L'Acte constitutif est clair, Monsieur le Président. Tout État membre peut engager un processus d'amendement à l'Acte constitutif. Les États membres ont appliqué ceci à de nombreuses reprises, pour modifier l'Acte constitutif plus de 20 fois, souvent par le biais d'un vote. Comme le Danemark, nous rappelons que plusieurs options de consensus ont été proposées et n'ont pas recueilli un soutien unanime. Bien que nous chérissions le consensus et travaillions en ce sens, il faut se rendre à l'évidence dans ce cas-ci, il s'agit d'une question qu'il faudra résoudre par vote sans plus attendre. Et, en terminant, pour nous, ce n'est clairement pas une obligation nouvelle. Merci Monsieur le Président.

15. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. Afghanistan, you have the floor.

16.1 **Afghanistan :**

Merci Monsieur le Président de me donner la parole pour contribuer à ces débats très importants. Je voudrais commencer par une citation de Victor Hugo, qui disait « la forme n'est que le fond qui remonte à la surface ». Donc, je comprends parfaitement que tous les débats reflètent des soucis parfaitement légitimes de la part de tous les distingués collègues. De ma part, je voudrais que la forme vraiment représente le fond important, parce qu'en ce moment, nous allons vers le vote. Le vote est un moyen de prendre des décisions mais, comme ma collègue qui a pris la parole juste avant moi, je chéris vraiment le mode qui doit être retenu au sein de notre Maison, qui est le consensus.

16.2 Donc, pour qu'il y ait consensus dans cette Maison de paix, de science, de culture, je ne doute pas de notre capacité ensemble à trouver une solution sans attendre l'intelligence artificielle pour faire mettre ce consensus à travers des solutions novatrices. Donc c'est pour cette raison que l'Afghanistan, qui a payé, qui paie ses contributions, qui ne risque pas, si on considère ça comme une charge, de devenir Membre permanent, ou si on le considère comme un privilège, qu'il soit privilégié au point d'être aussi Membre permanent, mais je pense que surtout à cette période difficile, nous avons plus que jamais besoin de consensus entre nous, et c'est pour cette raison que ma Délégation voit d'un meilleur œil le report de ces discussions. S'il faut voter, il faut voter en prenant en considération tous les points à discuter. Merci Monsieur le Président.

17. **The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. Now I invite Argentina, followed by Brazil.

18.1 **Argentina :**

Gracias, señor Presidente: consideramos que el problema de la Constitución no es su reforma, sino su aplicación. Estos debates que estamos teniendo tienen algo muy positivo, que es que nos obligaron a leer y a estudiar un documento muy poco conocido, casi un incunabulo. Nos jactamos, perdón, no nos jactamos, algunas delegaciones se jactaron de las numerosas reformas que tuvo la Constitución, sobre todo el artículo V. Nuestra delegación se avergüenza de tener que haber modificado tantas veces un artículo tan importante como es el que trata de uno de los tres órganos principales de nuestra Organización. Hay un tema que a veces olvidamos, que es cuál es el origen del Consejo Ejecutivo que crearon nuestros predecesores. Crearon un organismo de reflexión, de diálogo y de ideas, que tenía una Constitución personalísima y por eso se le pusieron muchas limitaciones a esta Constitución. No podían estar de por vida, lo que se quería eran nuevas ideas todo el tiempo para poder reflexionar y que luego la Conferencia General adoptara las decisiones que tenía que tomar de carácter político o jurídico. Esto cambió, fue una de las reformas, ya fue hecha, pero sucesivamente fuimos cambiando más, y más, y más nuestro querido artículo V. En esta Organización tan querida cada vez se vota más y cada vez se habla menos. Voy a mencionar un tema que es un tabú en esta sala, y es algo que lo hago muy expresamente. Nunca hablamos de Jerusalén, simplemente votamos sobre Jerusalén y tomamos medidas y todos quedamos contentos. Yo quisiera una Organización donde se discuta muchísimo más y se decida muchísimo menos para representar lo que representamos, que son la totalidad de las culturas, no con algunas excluidas.

18.2 Hay efectos no queridos en las leyes, en las normas, en los convenios y en las constituciones. Si nosotros queremos cambiar la Constitución, tenemos que tener presente que el derecho tiene varias aristas. En filosofía del derecho se estudia permanentemente y les recuerdo que existe un derecho positivo, pero también existe un derecho natural y hay una gran discusión sobre qué debe prevalecer. Aquí, lo que queremos, aparentemente, es que prevalezca el derecho positivo. Lo que está escrito y que tal vez después no se cumpla. Nos gustaría mucho tener una Constitución menos perfecta, pero que se cumpla.

18.3 Nosotros representamos a todas las culturas sin ninguna exclusión. Intervenir o participar en el Consejo Ejecutivo no es una condecoración que recibimos, es una carga, una carga que nos dan nuestras propias culturas, nuestros grupos regionales. Nuestro país entra y sale del Consejo Ejecutivo y el hecho de salir por votación o por consenso dentro de nuestro grupo nos enseña que algo habremos hecho mal para representar al grupo, y aprendemos y volvemos, pero consideramos que las culturas principales tienen que estar representadas sin ninguna exclusión. Este es un tema que consideramos se debe arreglar en cada grupo regional y no pasarnos la responsabilidad a quienes no representamos a una determinada cultura de saber quién está o quién no está. Tal vez por temas que no tengan que ver con la UNESCO. Aumentar y mejorar la participación no quiere decir excluir ni limitar, sino todo lo contrario. Tal vez podamos tener y abogamos por un diálogo mucho más intenso para aumentar la participación, para dar las oportunidades a todos aquellos que creen que no son escuchados, de ser escuchados mejor. Pero esto no se logra cerrando puertas. Creemos firmemente. Perdón, quiero aclarar por la interpretación. Es positiva la frase. Creemos firmemente que hay una nueva obligación y esa nueva obligación que imponemos a los Estados es la de autoexcluirse, retirarse, restringir su capacidad y su derecho. Ya se evocó que hay Estados que tienen, por cuestiones diversas, tal vez por una situación económica, tal vez por el peso específico que tengan sus poblaciones, tal vez por circunstancias que pueden cambiar con el tiempo, tienen mucha más

capacidad para hacer lo que tal vez otros no podemos hacer y queremos que estén presentes sin ninguna exclusión. El Consejo Ejecutivo ya es participativo y los miembros son elegidos y representan a la totalidad de los miembros de la UNESCO, ni siquiera a su propia región, a la totalidad, la UNESCO en su conjunto. Por lo tanto, abogamos que cualquier tipo de cambio que se haga a la Constitución de la UNESCO sea luego de un consenso completo. No queremos una victoria a lo Pirro, no queremos que haya ganadores y perdedores. Creemos que una votación haría que todos perdimos a pesar de haber ganado una elección sin importar el número de votos. Muchas gracias, señor Presidente.

19. The President:

Thank you. I will now invite Brazil, followed by Armenia. But I have one predicament. The Nominations Committee is ready to announce the results of the Executive Board elections and the tellers are naturally locked in. So I might ask for the understanding of Armenia please. Maybe after Brazil, we allow the tellers to come here with the results, if it is okay with you. Otherwise after your speech, I can ask the same of Australia. Okay, let us do that. I now invite Brazil followed by Armenia.

20.1 Brazil:

Thank you, Mr President. Mr President, Madam Director-General and my dear colleagues, Brazil, as a founding Member of UNESCO, believes that changes to the Constitution of this Organization are extremely serious decisions, since those changes to the Constitution seriously affect the future of UNESCO. Such decisions need to be taken only when Member States are convinced that those changes will come to the benefit of the Organization. Brazil was among the 12 countries that since the beginning of the discussions of the Working Group of Governance were against eliminating for some countries the sovereign and democratic right to dispute an election at the most universal and representative organ of this Organization, which is the General Conference.

20.2 Amendments to the Constitution should be constructive and necessary. We cannot change the Constitution only because it has been changed many times before. We should change the Constitution if it is to the benefit of the Organization and not to satisfy the specific interests of individual countries. We have to be sure in order to change the Constitution that we are equipping UNESCO to accomplish its mandate of promoting international cooperation in education, science, culture and communication. There are, Mr President, so many amendments to the Constitution at this time that we cannot even see coherence as to the direction in which we want to take UNESCO. On one hand it is proposed to limit the democratic right of countries to launch candidatures to the Executive Board under the argument of – and I quote “having more diversity” and inclusivity at the Board”.

20.3 On the other hand, new obligations and penalties are imposed to Member States with the suppression of the right to vote at the Executive Board and the suppression of the right to be elected to the Board. This is a contradiction to the same principles of diversity and inclusivity that we use to defend one amendment. Our dear colleague from New Zealand was very clear in mentioning in defence of those principles. If we eliminate at the Board the right to vote, we of course severely damage geographical representation – therefore, severely harming diversity and inclusivity. So we do not even see coherence between those amendments, and at the same time another amendment proposes to reduce the powers of the Board. So we really do not understand where we want to take UNESCO in the future with those conflicting movements. Brazil therefore believes that changes to the Constitution needs the broadest consensus possible and we do not have this consensus at this General Conference. I therefore support the amendment proposed by Japan concerning this specific proposal of this amendment. Thank you very much Mr President.

21. The President:

Thank you Your Excellency. Now Armenia will speak and then while Armenia is speaking we will unlock the tellers to receive the results of the Executive Board. The Nominations Committee will announce the results and then we will continue with Australia. Armenia, you have the floor.

22.1 Arménie :

Merci Monsieur le Président. En prenant la parole dans ce débat, l'Arménie n'intervient pas pour marquer son opposition aux préoccupations exprimées par les signataires dudit amendement. Que les Délégations aspirent à porter plus fréquemment leurs contributions au service de notre Organisation au sein de son organe directeur le Conseil exécutif, quoi de plus naturel ?

22.2 Ce que nous trouvons contestable c'est la démarche et la voie empruntée. Une démarche qui aboutit à créer des divisions au sein de la communauté de nos États membres au moment même où notre Organisation se relève d'une crise grave. Et le débat auquel nous assistons l'atteste. Nous exprimons cette conviction, partagée par un grand nombre, que la création de clivages artificiels est contraire aux intérêts de notre Organisation. Que dans le contexte présent, nous devons nous garder de mettre à l'index certain de ces États membres.

22.3 L'Arménie veut aussi signifier son attachement au dialogue et à des prises de décision consensuelles, surtout lorsqu'il s'agit de modifier l'acte le plus important de notre Organisation qu'est sa Constitution. Cet attachement au dialogue, l'Arménie a voulu réaffirmer en soutenant le projet de résolution recommandant le report de l'examen sur cette question et la poursuite des discussions qui verront peut-être émerger d'autres solutions. Cela doit se faire dans le cadre d'une atmosphère sereine, propice à un dialogue franc et constructif. « Donnons du temps au temps », disait un ancien Président de la République française. Gardons-nous de précipiter des décisions qui ne manqueraient pas d'avoir des conséquences dans la vie de notre Organisation. Je vous remercie.

23. The President:

Merci votre Excellence. I will ask Australia to take the floor because the tellers have not yet arrived. Please, and then Germany after Australia with the announcement of the results.

24.1 Australia:

Mr President, thank you for giving me the floor. Australia wholeheartedly supports the adoption of 40 C/PLEN/DR.1. As we have heard this afternoon, the reintroduction of term limits for membership of the Executive Board is not a new issue. Member States of the General Conference have regularly addressed this matter and Article V has been amended 11 times. All of these points we have already heard, but importantly the fact that we have come back to this article of the Constitution so often reflects the importance of the composition of the Executive Board to Member States. The reality of our Organization is that it must be able to adapt to the times and to the will and needs of Member States who have to seek to ensure that it remains fit for the purpose for which Member States created it in the first place. As also has already been said, this particular amendment we are considering today does not emerge unheralded. Indeed, it is the implementation of a decision of the General Conference in 2017 in which an overwhelming majority of Member States expressing their views in the debate and ultimately by their votes supported the introduction of term limits. It is, in other words, the implementation of our collective decision taken only two years ago.

24.2 This draft resolution we have before us today is a proposal to establish an equitable system of rotation for membership of the Executive Board. Its requirements are modest and its aim is to promote the principles that lie at the heart of multilateralism, inclusivity, equity, representivity, balance and unity in adversity. In the view of our legal experts, it imposes no new obligations. It furthermore disenfranchises no one. Nor does it infringe on their rights in any way unreasonably. Indeed, this draft resolution is a proposal that strengthens the governance of UNESCO by ensuring the universality and democratic nature not only of the Organization itself, but of its governing bodies. It was circulated well in advance of the General Conference, and its substance itself was the subject of extensive debate and discussion, reflecting the desire of its co-sponsors to ensure that no avenue for dialogue, no effort to achieve a convergence of views on this very important issue was left unexplored. And yet no clear, concrete counter-proposals were ever presented. The only suggestions made, and we continue to hear them, were for postponement, delay and further frustration of the expressed will of the General Conference.

24.3 Australia very strongly supports the idea of seeking consensus in UNESCO whenever and wherever possible. But this cannot be at the cost of according a veto to those who are not willing to compromise. This is an issue that demands a decision at this General Conference. We appeal today to those Member States who have been urged to reject or to postpone consideration of this draft resolution to reflect on the message that this would send, particularly to those countries and regions of the world that have been chronically underrepresented on the Executive Board over many years.

24.4 Do we really wish to say that there are some countries that deserve to be on the Executive Board in quasi perpetuity? Do we wish to tell those countries faced by the limited availability of open seats in their electoral groups or by their own limited resources to campaign that they must accept that they do not deserve to serve on the Executive Board? We have heard at different times that nothing in the current arrangements in the current Constitution prevents any Member State from standing for election to the Executive Board, and that therefore the composition of the Board is simply an expression of the unfettered democratic will of UNESCO's membership. While in theory all Member States are equal before the electorate, it is demonstrably not so in practice. Size, resources, status and willingness to act more or less ruthlessly also play their part. It will not escape the notice of Member States that this situation results for some in an Executive Board that is little more than an exclusive club, a club with a core of quasi-permanent or long-term members accustomed to consulting amongst themselves and determining the outcomes of big decisions with little regard for the views of the wider membership. It is deeply regrettable that this approach has spilled over at times into the current debate around term limits and this draft resolution. We have felt ourselves the pressure and have seen and heard the impact of politicization of this debate.

24.5 The references to dire but rather unspecified consequences, the highlighting of the potential impact on bilateral relations or the willingness of this country or that to continue its current level of support to the Organization if term limits are adopted. It should not and need not be this way. This is an important issue, where genuinely held differences of view should be openly discussed and fairly heard. UNESCO's mandate calls on us all to work towards this in a spirit of mutual understanding, assistance and concern, to demonstrate solidarity and not to attach conditionality to our positions or to our contributions. Membership of the Executive Board is not and should not be seen as a necessary shield behind which to defend narrow national interests, nor to seek to continue within this Organization the divisive political debates begun elsewhere which are best left there. The founders of this Organization set for it a noble mission and the introduction of term limits for the Executive Board, ensuring genuinely participatory governance and shared ownership and responsibility for the implementation of the decisions of the General Conference, is an occasion for us all as Member States to come together in pursuit of this mission to unite behind this proposal. It is in this spirit that the proposal is made by its co-sponsors and in which it commands my country's support.

Election of Members of the Executive Board

25. The President:

Thank you, your Excellency. We will continue with Germany but after having received the results of the elections. In the meantime, we added Norway to the speakers list. The election of Members of the Executive Board took place this morning from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Room V under the supervision of His Excellency Mr Mounir Anastas, Chairperson of the Nominations Committee, and of Bangladesh as Vice President of the General Conference. I now invite Ambassador Anastas to present the results of today's ballot, starting by Group I. Excellency, you have the floor.

26.1 Mr Anastas (Chairperson of the Nominations Committee):

Thank you Mr President. Mr President, I know you are addressing a very important and very difficult issue and it is tense, but maybe with this suspension we will change a little bit the mood of the room. Mr President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, allow me first to thank you for entrusting me with this very difficult task of reporting to the plenary of the General Conference on the detailed results of the elections of members to the Executive Board.

26.2 The election took place this morning in conformity with the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference. I would like also to extend my sincere thanks to the many staff of the Secretariat who made this election possible and the six tellers who supported the process, as well as the Vice-Chairperson that you designated Mr President, Ambassador Hossain Imtiaz from Bangladesh. I express my particular gratitude to His Excellency Hossain Imtiaz, Vice-Chairperson, for his time. He dedicated the whole day for this issue. Thank you so much.

26.3 Ladies and gentlemen, the number of States entitled to vote in the present session of the General Conference was 183 Member States. I am pleased to inform you that 180 Member States participated in the election of Members of the Executive Board. I shall now read out by electoral group the detailed results of today's ballot for the election of the Board. I see that everybody is ready and you know the results, but you are expecting the figures: Group I, in which there are 6 seats to be filled and we have 6 candidates. Absent: 3. Abstentions: 1. Invalid ballot papers: 1. Names of the Member States candidates and the number of votes secured by each of them in descending order of the number of votes: Switzerland: 175; Italy: 162; Netherlands: 159; Germany: 154; Spain: 150; France: 140. These are the results for Group I Mr President.

27. **The President:**

Thank you. Our hearty congratulations go to the new Members, or rather new and already incumbent Members of the Executive Board. We shall now turn to Group II. Excellency, you have the floor.

28.1 **Mr Anastas** (Chairperson of the Nominations Committee):

Thank you Mr President again. Group II, in which there are 4 seats to be filled. Abstentions: 1. Invalid ballot papers: 2. Names of the Member States candidates and the number of votes secured by each of them in descending order of the number of votes. There were many *ex aequo* results and in that case we will mention them following the alphabetical order. Hungary: 155; Serbia: 155.

(The speaker continues in French)

28.2 Et puis nous avons la Fédération de Russie : 152 ; et la Pologne également : 152.

29. **The President:**

Thank you Excellency. I therefore declare France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Hungary, Poland, Russian Federation and Serbia as the elected members of the Executive Board from respectively Group I and II. Now we shall turn to Group III please.

30.1 **M. Anastas** (Président du Comité des candidatures) :

Pour Groupe III, il y a quatre sièges à remplir. Abstention : 1. Bulletins invalides : 2. Le nombre des États membres candidats et le nombre de votes acquis par chaque candidat dans un ordre décroissant est pareil lorsqu'il s'agit d'*ex aequo*, nous procéderons par ordre alphabétique.

(L'orateur poursuit en anglais)

30.2 Dominican Republic: 161; Uruguay: 161; Argentina: 153; Brazil: 153. These are the results, Mr President.

31. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. I therefore declare the following four Member States elected members of the Executive Board: Argentina, Brazil, Dominican Republic and Uruguay. Congratulations. Now we turn to Group IV which had six seats to be filled. Excellency, you have the floor.

1-32 السيد أنستاس (رئيس لجنة الترشيحات) :

شكراً سيدي الرئيس مرة أخرى، المجموعة الانتخابية الرابعة، كان هناك ستة مقاعد شاغرة، الامتناع اثنان، عدد الأصوات غير الصالحة ثلاثة، أسماء الدول الأعضاء المرشحة وعدد الأصوات التي حصلت عليها من الأعلى إلى الأدنى :

(The speaker continues in English)

32.2 Republic of Korea: 158; Kyrgyzstan: 157; Thailand: 156; Pakistan: 154; Afghanistan: 147 and Myanmar: 142. These were the results for Group IV, Mr President.

33. **The President:**

Thank you very much, your Excellency. I therefore declare the following six Member States elected members of the Executive Board: Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Republic of Korea and Thailand. Congratulations. Now, turning to Group V(a). You have the floor.

34.1 **M. Anastas** (Président du Comité des candidatures) :

Pour Groupe V(a), il y avait huit sièges à remplir. Abstention, un (1). Bulletins invalides, trois (3). Noms des États membres candidats et le score pour chacun dans un ordre décroissant :

(L'orateur poursuit en anglais)

34.2 Ghana: 162; Benin: 157; Kenya: 157; Senegal: 157; Namibia: 156; Guinea: 148; Togo: 148; Democratic Republic of the Congo: 145. Thank you, Mr President.

35. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. I therefore declare the following eight Member States elected members of the Executive Board: Benin, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Namibia, Senegal and Togo. Congratulations. Finally we turn to Group V(b). Excellency, you have the floor.

36.1 **M. Anastas** (Président du Comité des candidatures) :

Je sais que tout le monde attend ce groupe avec impatience. Je vois que tout le monde est attentif. On peut peut-être attendre un peu Monsieur le Président, pour laisser la tension monter.

(L'orateur poursuit en anglais)

36.2 For Group V(b) there are three seats to be filled. Abstentions: 1; Invalid ballots: 3. Names of the Member States candidates and the number of votes secured by each of them in descending order of the number of votes: Saudi Arabia: 113; United Arab Emirates: 107; Tunisia: 103; Algeria: 100; Qatar: 93. Mr President, these were the results for Group V(b).

37.1 **The President:**

I take it these acclamations are also for Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, whom I declare as the new elected members of the Executive Board. Thank you, your Excellency, for very clear, smooth work.

37.2 Excellencies, I would like within five minutes, if you can take your seats again, please to resume our debates. Very good. The commotion is lessening now. In two minutes, we will be able to resume. Thank you so much. I still wish to thank the Member States for the high level of participation in this electoral exercise, which shows the vitality of our democratic process. As you know, in UNESCO one country equals one vote and every vote is important. I am sure that the strong participation will be maintained in tomorrow's elections, which are as important as the one we have had today. Indeed, the different intergovernmental commissions, committees and other subsidiary organs of the General Conference whose memberships you will be renewing, also participate in no small measure in the implementation of the different programmes of our Organization. I also wish to thank the Member States who presented their candidatures to renew the membership of the Executive Board, thereby showing their strong interest in the work of our Organization and the universal values it promotes.

37.3 Let me also thank the electoral groups for their efforts in finding consensus, whenever possible, particularly with a clean slate of candidates. In closing, I warmly congratulate all newly elected Members of the Executive Board and on behalf of all Member States of UNESCO, I wish to thank His Excellency, the Chairperson of the Nominations Committee for the good work of the Committee and His Excellency, Mr Kazi Imtiaz Hussain, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Bangladesh to UNESCO, Vice-President of the General Conference, for having skilfully supervised the election process. I also wish to express my appreciation to the six tellers, Ms Teresa Salado of Portugal, Ms Nigar Gurbanova of Azerbaijan, Ms Julissa Hengstenberg of Guatemala, Ms Dilum Goonewardena of Sri Lanka, Mr Souleymane Konate of Mali, and Ms Zeina Saleh-Kayali of Lebanon. We appreciate the time and effort they have devoted to the electoral process. I will now give the floor to the Secretary to provide you with some information concerning the 208th session of the Executive Board which will meet on 29 November. Madam, you have the floor

38. **La Secrétaire :**

Merci Monsieur le Président. Juste une précision. La 208^e session donc du Conseil dans sa nouvelle composition se tiendra le vendredi 29 novembre. Un certain nombre d'informations vont vous être envoyées dans les prochains jours, assez rapidement. Merci beaucoup.

39. **The President:**

Merci madame. Palestine was not here so we added Palestine to the speakers' list after Norway. As I said, we were to continue with Germany. Your Excellency, you have the floor please.

40.1 **Germany:**

Thank you Mr President. First of all, let me thank all for this tremendous sign of confidence and I promise you Germany will be as effective and efficient as possible and contribute to the work of the Executive Board.

40.2 Germany is in favour of rotation. We are not in New York. This is UNESCO. This is Paris. We do not have and we do not need a Security Council in UNESCO. Germany has voluntarily practised rotation in the past and shown good example. But we do not want a change of the Constitution at this very moment. This would not be helpful for an organization that is luckily back on track. On the contrary, it could be a source of new disputes, deep division and fundamental unease, as we have seen, in the past. So, regardless of the one or the other content we support, we are of the opinion that the Constitution should not be touched at this point. However, each of us is asked to make an effort and to show a sign of good will and flexibility. UNESCO has a great project. We have so much to do and should focus on what really matters for the development of our Organization, facing the challenges of today's world. Whatever we could gain by a change of Constitution is not worth the damage a deeper division will cause. Thank you.

41. **The President:**

Thank you Your Excellency. Now I invite Finland followed by the Russian Federation.

42.1 **Finland:**

Thank you Mr President and congratulations to all elected members of the Executive Board. We think the draft amendment is an important initiative because it is about equity and fairness, about ensuring that all kinds of Member States will have a chance to participate in UNESCO's decision-making and will remain committed members of this community. The proposal has been well prepared with a clear mandate from the Working Group on Governance. I think we should all keep in mind that the changes that are being proposed by this amendment are really very modest. There is nothing revolutionary or dramatic in this.

42.2 As pointed out by New Zealand and others, there are many examples of term limits around the United Nations system, and as noted by several colleagues, the Constitution and Article V have already been amended many times at many sessions of the General Conference. We therefore find it surprising, that this modest, relatively technical amendment is sometimes framed as a radical change that would spoil the mood and eventually harm the whole Organization. Quite the

contrary – we believe this amendment would be good for UNESCO as a whole and an example of a decision that any responsible, well-functioning organization should be able to take. It has our full support. Thank you.

43. **The President:**

Thank you. I invite Russian Federation followed by Saint Lucia.

44.1 **Российская Федерация:**

Благодарю Вас, г-н Председатель. Наша позиция относительно рассматриваемой поправки хорошо известна, я не буду ее повторять, поскольку мы неоднократно на этот счет высказывались. Хотел бы заострить внимание на другом: большое беспокойство у нас вызывает тот факт, что эта поправка вызвала глубокий раскол между государствами-членами, именно в тот момент, когда наша Организация стоит перед серьезными вызовами.

44.2 Обсуждение вопроса о ротации в рамках рабочей группы, на неформальных встречах, в Специальном комитете Исполнительного совета и в юридическом комитете Генеральной конференции, на наш взгляд, убедительно подтверждает необходимость продолжения поиска общеприемлемого способа выполнения рекомендации 20. Призываем обратить внимание на заключение юридического комитета. Мы не можем игнорировать такой аспект проблемы, как возможное возникновение в результате внесения этой поправки новых обязательств для государств-членов согласно статье 13.1 Устава ЮНЕСКО. Юридический комитет фактически подтвердил наши опасения, поэтому мы убеждены, что не стоит спешить. Государствам-членам надо просчитать все последствия и определить оптимальную форму решения вопроса о ротации. Окончательное решение должно базироваться на прочном консенсусе, и для этого есть необходимые предпосылки.

44.3 Генеральная конференция на своей 39-й сессии, определяя сроки для полной реализации рекомендаций, не случайно отвела на это время вплоть до 41-й сессии. Призываем учесть это обстоятельство при принятии решения о внесении поправки в Устав. Со своей стороны, убеждены, что имеющиеся в нашем распоряжении два года дадут нам возможность прийти к взвешенным решениям и свести к минимуму риск негативных последствий для выполнения Организацией своего мандата. Надеемся, что сила диалога возьмет верх над силой голосования. Спасибо.

45. **The President:**

Saint Lucia is not yet ready, so India will take the floor next followed by Slovenia please.

46.1 **India :**

Thank you very much, Mr President, for giving our delegation the floor. I take this opportunity to also thank the Chairperson of the Legal Committee for his report. Mr President, everyone present in the room would agree about the crucial importance of this matter and the far-reaching impact and long-term implications that it would have on the work of UNESCO and also on the dynamics of its working methods.

46.2 The amendment, which is currently under discussion, not only impacts UNESCO's Constitution, but the very core of its structural construct and the heart of its governance. The Executive Board of UNESCO with 58 Members is the largest intergovernmental body in the entire United Nation system, where every Member State has to stand for election every four years. In our assessment, this allows equal opportunity for all Member States. We also believe that all Member States should have the democratic right to present their candidature. We are all for fairness, but fairness also means that no one should be forced the option of not being able to stand for the Executive Board elections. We also feel that the system thus far has served the Organization well and has provided strong dynamism and diversity, proper direction and much needed depth to the work of UNESCO and the pursuit of its core mandates. We also feel, as many other delegations have said before us, that this amendment indeed constitutes a new legal obligation – an obligation that bars and prohibits a Member State from standing for the elections of the Executive Board, thus denying them, as I said earlier, their democratic right.

46.3 Given the critical importance of this matter, we strongly believe that the progress on this issue and its resolution should be driven by strong and unifying consensus. The alternative to consensus would be more divisive narratives in UNESCO and our discussions thus far clearly reveal that there is as yet no measured emerging consensus on the way forward on this matter. Indeed, there are major differences and polarization of views on whether this amendment benefits UNESCO or actually undercuts the work and the very organization and framework of UNESCO. As such, we stand and support those large number of delegations present in the room who believe, and we join them in saying, that this matter needs to be discussed further to arrive at a decision which actually brings together the membership of UNESCO, rather than create more division and divergence and thereby harm the working of UNESCO.

46.4 Mr President, the overwhelming consideration for the decision that we will take today is undoubtedly the advancement, betterment and long-term sustainability of this Organization. We take this opportunity to reiterate our commitment to the Organization, its values and core mandate and would be happy to join the debate and deliberations both inside and outside the Plenary to arrive at a decision which is based on consensus and convergence rather than on divisiveness and divergences. Thank you.

47. **The President:**

Thank you Your Excellency. Slovenia please, followed by Colombia.

48. **Slovenia:**

Thank you, Mr President. At this General Conference, many important decisions have been approved, all of them with the aim to strengthen the role of UNESCO. Slovenia promotes rotation and inclusiveness as principles which also help strengthen UNESCO's visibility and stability within the United Nation system. Member States have led this discussion regarding the term limits already for many years. Further amendments were adopted while taking into account the comments of all Member States in a way that all Member States can prepare themselves. We want to state it clearly that this proposal does not promote leaving the Organization and that the same system is foreseen for some conventions. We believe that the

group of co-sponsors, a member of which is also, proposed good amendments which do not present a new obligation and which will help all Member States of this international community to actively present themselves in the Executive Board. Thank you.

49. **The President:**

Thank you. Now Colombia followed by Serbia, and I am also putting Bangladesh and Palestine. They were responsible for the Executive Board elections. They were not here. So after Serbia, Bangladesh and Palestine will speak, and we will continue with Uruguay. Colombia please, you have the floor.

50.1 **Colombia:**

Gracias, Presidente: quisiera Colombia iniciar recordando cuáles son los países miembros del Consejo Ejecutivo por América Latina y el Caribe. Voy a recordar la lista, ya que Filipinas y sus copatrocinadores han decidido invocar a los estados pequeños como justificación de esa enmienda. Voy a recordar lo que ocurre en el GRULAG en materia de representación de los Estados. Actualmente está Jamaica, Santa Lucía, San Vicente y las Granadinas, Granada, República Dominicana, Cuba, Uruguay, Argentina, Brasil y Venezuela. Yo creo que esa fotografía que acabo de decir es bastante dicente, bastante clara, de que en el Grupo 3, en el grupo hemos encontrado una solución que data de 1997, Presidente. Así que, como bien lo dijo mi colega de Argentina, sería bueno que los grupos hicieran mayores esfuerzos para encontrar soluciones internas.

50.2 Por el otro lado, Presidente, el argumento de que si se hizo allá se puede hacer acá, no me parece suficiente. Una cosa es Ginebra, otra cosa es Nueva York, otra cosa es la UNESCO y el hecho que se haya cambiado la Constitución once veces tampoco es un argumento de peso. Un país preguntaba que qué contraponemos los que no estamos de acuerdo con la enmienda, proponemos varias cosas. Primero, pues hablo a título de Colombia, pues que se retire la enmienda, claro que no va a pasar. Muy bien, discutámosla. Discutámosla con alternativas, primero dentro de los grupos regionales. Esa es la propuesta que nosotros propondríamos, y ¿por qué, Presidente? Porque no encontramos ningún argumento suficiente para pensar que esta enmienda de Filipinas vaya a ofrecer las condiciones que invoca. La Constitución ya ofrece esas cosas condiciones plenamente. La Constitución ofrece totalmente la rotación, ofrece totalmente la diversidad, la inclusión y la justicia. Y lo que ha pasado con esta enmienda es que pone fuera de la Constitución lo que la Constitución ya determina, ya contamos con esas condiciones, por lo tanto, pensamos que no hay que cambiar la Constitución, hay que cambiar las prácticas.

50.3 Por otro lado, Presidente, usted en su discurso de posesión habló de la convergencia y, en ese sentido, encontré una definición que compartimos en la APX, en el sentido de que convergencia significa "coincidir en la misma posición ante algo controvertido". Apelamos a todos sus buenos oficios, Presidente, para que logramos converger y, por último, Presidente: la gobernanza no se puede volver el fin de esta Organización. Hemos dedicado horas, y horas, y horas, y horas enteras a la gobernanza. La gobernanza no es el fin de la Organización, es un medio. Hagamos de esta conferencia, Presidente, la conferencia de las convergencias. Muchas gracias.

51. **The President:**

Thank you, thank you very much Excellency. Now Serbia, to be followed by Bangladesh.

52. **Serbia:**

Thank you, Mr President. Serbia is of opinion that the spirit of the open and continued dialogue between the Member States on all issues, particularly one of such a critical importance as constitutional changes and a consensus-based approach are something that we should preserve and is a key source of strength of this Organization. This is of paramount importance, especially keeping in mind the sensitive moment in which UNESCO now is. The overall interest of the Organization for stability in order to enable it to carry out its activities in the most effective way should always be our guiding principle. This should apply to all our endeavours with no exception. We should be building upon those initiatives that unite us rather than on those that divide us, while taking into account all the consequences of those initiatives for the future of the UNESCO. In this context, with regard to the proposed amendment to Article V, paragraph 4 of the UNESCO Constitution, we evidently need more time to overcome existing divided views. This is why Serbia strongly supports the postponement and continuation of constructive talks in order to examine all possible avenues and reach a solution acceptable to all. In the context of the 41st session of the General Conference, this is of utmost importance for UNESCO as a whole and the only way to avoid further division and polarization of our membership. Thank you.

53. **The President:**

Thank you very much. I now invite Palestine, followed by Uruguay.

54. **Palestine:**

Mr President, with your permission, I kindly ask you if it is possible to keep the intervention of Palestine to the end of the debate, because I would like following the debate in the room to raise a proposal that may be a middle ground and a consensus. So, with your permission would it be possible to give me the floor at the end of the debate, Mr President?

55. **The President:**

Yes, it would be. As you know, I just wanted to protect your rights while you were away, but you had something else in your mind. So you will be speaking last. Bangladesh, please.

56.1 **Bangladesh:**

Thank you, Mr President. I would start by repeating what my minister had said in her statement and during the general policy debate that the Organization is passing through difficult times, and also we as a nation, both globally and internally, in the Organization. She also mentioned that only through building consensus, promoting dialogue, mutual respect and understanding can we hope to work on these challenges effectively. Most importantly, she mentioned that we need to concentrate more on what unites us rather than divides us. We have noticed during the debate, during the General Conference and prior to it, a fair degree of divergence of views, especially on the proposals for amendment. It was much

more evident in the report of the Legal Committee as well, where we could not reach a consensus on whether there would be legal obligations created by these amendments or not.

56.2 We as a country believe that since the amendment proposes to restrict Member States from standing in an election, it does create a legal obligation. However, we are of the view that this issue needs further deliberation so that we can reach a consensus decision on such a fundamental issue as it proposes to be. In 2017, when we had approved the recommendation, it clearly stated that, first of all, that reform of the governance of UNESCO should be consensus driven, and secondly there was an indicative time frame within which we could try and reach that consensus, which alludes to the 41st session of the General Conference. We still have time to discuss it and to reach a consensus-driven decision, which would be for everyone to take ownership and move forward. I believe as a Member State that we all are committed to the mission and vision of the Organization and we want the best for it. Let us agree on a decision which will unite us in facing the challenges that we are confronted with. I would like to join many others in this august gathering who are calling for greater discussion and debate and looking through the implications of the changes that we propose to bring to the Constitution of the Organization. Thank you, Mr President.

57. **The President:**

Thank you Your Excellency. Now, Cook Islands to be followed by Egypt.

58.1 **Cook Islands:**

Thank you, Mr President. As already pointed out by all my esteemed colleagues, the amendment on term limits is the outcome of a long process which was open to all Member States and the governing bodies of UNESCO. The Cook Islands trust that the amendment strengthens the Executive Board because it creates an equitable system of geographic rotation. We have committed members that value their presence around the round table. This is a matter of equity. When our esteemed colleague from Japan mentioned that you welcome discussions within the General Conference, let us make sure that it happens now. The number of States wishing to talk show that there is an urgent need to tackle this issue. The division is already here. We need to address it and not turn a blind eye. We should not be afraid of dialogue despite pressure from larger Member States. Briefly, on the legal side, we believe that the amendment under item 7.3 does not create a new obligation. UNESCO before 1991, when term limits were fully operational, was not less of an Organization than the present UNESCO. Our previous colleagues did extremely precious work. The spirit of the term limits they initiated has been maintained within our House, just as in the World Heritage Committee. In addition, when in 1991 there was a drastic change of the Constitution in its core structure by electing Member States on the Board with no term limits attached, no one claimed that the amendment created a new obligation. Today the amendment presented, as New Zealand mentioned previously, is reasonable and fair and only wishes to adjust the modality of the election process to the principle of inclusivity in our modern world. It does not create a new obligation.

58.2 On a more personal note, we believe that UNESCO can play a valuable role in the Pacific to assist us in the response to the many challenges we are facing. However, we are not just a recipient of assistance. We are not just waiting for our esteemed colleagues on the Executive Board to raise all issues. We are committed to contributing to all pillars of the Organization through our cultural knowledge or educational value, and our traditional and sustainable way to manage our vast ocean that represent one quarter of the earth's surface.

58.3 As some of you may remember, in 2017 the Cook Islands campaigned for the Executive Board. We used quite a lot of resources to do so. We were in third position on the sixth list. Consensus dialogue did not do much good as the candidatures continued to arrive, pushing us outside the clean slate situation. Is this the type of dialogue, constructive talk and consensus within electoral groups that is promised if we postpone the amendment? We believe the amendment under item 7.3 will allow a better chance for the election of more diverse Member States, including small island States from all regions to the Executive Board. In doing so, it would give us the visibility that we all deserve. Thank you.

59. **The President :**

Thank you, your Excellency. I invite Uruguay, to be followed by Egypt.

60.1 **Uruguay:**

Muchas gracias, señor Presidente. Señor Presidente: Uruguay está profundamente convencido de que una Organización como la UNESCO se fortalece y se empodera cuando los mecanismos democráticos que la misma posee se profundizan y se afianzan, solo a través de marcos de gobernanza democrática haremos honor a la máxima de la agenda 2030 de no dejar a nadie atrás.

60.2 Siendo la práctica democrática un ejercicio constante, creemos que la misma aporta más equidad y asegura a toda la membresía igualdad de oportunidades. Al apoyar esta enmienda, Uruguay cree que aporta a la justicia y, sobre todo, de modo poderoso, a la inclusión. El principio de realidad, que a veces sostiene algunas decisiones, no debe ser usado como excusa para que subjetivamente no resulte posible asegurar la inclusión efectiva de todos los países integrantes de la comunidad internacional en el seno de los órganos decisorios. Uruguay tiene una larga tradición de defender que todos los miembros de la comunidad internacional participen en igualdad real de condiciones. La rotación efectiva de los Estados Miembros permite el desarrollo del multilateralismo en tiempos donde este es más necesario que nunca, cuando nuestro destino como humanidad está atado de forma indisoluble a nuestras capacidades para responder conjuntamente, señor Presidente, como comunidad internacional a los inmensos desafíos que nos afectan. Muchos países aún no han tenido la posibilidad de ser miembros del Consejo Ejecutivo y, por ende, el ejercer plenamente su voz y su opinión en temas que nos afectan a todos y todas. Muchas gracias.

61. **The President:**

Thank you, Excellency. Now Egypt, to be followed by France.

62.1 Egypt:

Mr President, two years ago, the General Conference adopted a set of recommendations on governance, with a time frame for their implementation. This time frame of the implementation extends until the 41st session of the General Conference. There are several modalities for implementing Recommendation 20 The draft amendments, which we are examining today, is only one interpretation of this recommendation, but certainly not the unique one. We previously raised our remarks concerning it. Let me just stress one new development regarding it – that we do not believe that it entails any new obligation.

62.2 Mr President, taking into account the division that we are witnessing, we are pleading for three things. The first is the postponement of this item until the upcoming session of the General Conference, which goes in line within the time frame that was already adopted by the same General Conference in the same set of resolutions. We should give time a chance. We are not speaking here about indefinite time, rather the same period which this same General Conference had agreed upon. Second, convening the Working Group on Governance several times in the upcoming biennium. Member States should have the opportunity to discuss thoroughly the implementation of this recommendation and to incorporate all the different point of views. Third, encouraging consultations on these matters based on more flexibility from all parties in order to have a true debate of ideas, a debate as referred to by Spain, in which divergent point of views are exchanged with flexibility, a debate that is undertaken with the aim of building together a common ground rather than imposing it from one side or the other. Finally, Mr President, let me reiterate that in order for the Executive Board to be truly representative of the entire membership of the Organization, the question of the distribution of seats on geographical groups needs also to be addressed. Thank you.

63. The President:

Thank you. France, to be followed by Kiribati.

64.1 France:

Merci Monsieur le Président. L'UNESCO, dans l'intérêt de tous ses États membres, et d'un multilatéralisme efficace, est en train de se recentrer sur ses missions, ses programmes, et la mise en œuvre concrète de son mandat dans tous les continents, pour faire face aux attentes immenses et si légitimes que notre Organisation suscite chez tant de populations. L'amendement proposé dans ces conditions pose de nombreuses questions et de nombreuses difficultés.

64.2 En premier lieu, cet amendement pose des questions de principe. Avant tout, la représentation géographique équitable est une priorité essentielle du multilatéralisme. C'est pourquoi les élections au Conseil exécutif ont lieu dans le cadre des groupes électoraux. Ce système électoral donne à chaque région la garantie d'être équitablement représentée par de fortes pondérations.

64.3 En deuxième lieu, tous les membres du Conseil exécutif sont élus tous les quatre ans par la Conférence générale, c'est à dire par l'ensemble des États membres, chaque État membre disposant du même nombre de voix, une seule. Chaque élection au Conseil exécutif est donc le résultat de l'expression souveraine de la volonté de tous les États et de la démocratie électorale. Enfin, le Conseil exécutif est déjà un organe particulièrement représentatif.

64.4 Premièrement, en vertu de l'Article V.A.1(a) de l'Acte constitutif, les membres du Conseil exécutif sont élus par l'Organisation dans son ensemble, et non pas par le groupe auquel ils appartiennent. Le Conseil exécutif représente donc bien l'Organisation dans son ensemble. Deuxièmement, dans le même esprit, rappelons que tout État qui siège au sein du Conseil exécutif a été élu par l'Assemblée plénière des États réunis à la Conférence générale. Troisièmement, en général, les organes restreints des organisations intergouvernementales sont composés d'un cinquième à un tiers du nombre total de membres. Avec 58 membres, ce qui correspond à la fourchette haute, le Conseil exécutif de l'UNESCO est un organe restreint particulièrement large. Enfin, l'Article V de l'Acte constitutif de l'UNESCO contient déjà des précisions qui visent à faire en sorte que le Conseil exécutif soit le plus représentatif possible.

64.5 Dernière question de principe. Il n'existe au sein du système des Nations unies aucune pratique de limitation ou d'interdiction de réélection au sein de l'organe exécutif dans les institutions spécialisées. Je m'explique. Sur les 15 institutions spécialisées du système des Nations unies, 14 ne pratiquent aucune limite à cet égard. Une seule organisation, l'Union postale universelle, stimule la rotation des sièges au sein de son organe exécutif.

64.6 Deuxièmement, l'amendement proposé crée non seulement des questions de principe, comme je viens de les évoquer, mais aussi des questions de méthode. La Résolution 39 C/87 de la dernière Conférence générale fait siennes les recommandations du Groupe de travail à composition non-limitée sur la gouvernance, telles qu'amendées par le document 39/C/70. Concernant les limites des mandats, la Recommandation numéro 20, qui a fait l'objet d'un vote, est une recommandation générale incitative et non-contraignante juridiquement.

64.7 Or, l'amendement proposé à l'Article V de l'Acte constitutif est clairement contraignant juridiquement et donc d'une autre nature. L'amendement proposé n'est pas celui endossé par la Conférence générale, c'est un nouvel amendement qui doit en conséquence faire l'objet d'un nouveau processus de négociation, conformément à la culture de consensus de l'UNESCO, et conformément au Paragraphe 134 des recommandations du Groupe de travail, qui demande expressément de conduire des discussions sur la mise en œuvre des recommandations avant la 40^e ou la 41^e Conférence générale. Nous avons besoin d'un débat vaste et approfondi qui n'a pas encore eu lieu sur la mise en œuvre des recommandations.

64.8 Troisièmement, après les questions de principe et les questions de méthode, l'amendement proposé pose d'importantes questions juridiques en créant pour les États de nouvelles obligations. L'important n'est pas le nombre d'amendements à l'Acte constitutif déjà adoptés par la Conférence générale, mais leur contenu. Tout amendement qui impose ou demande aux membres du Conseil exécutif de ne pas se représenter entraîne pour ces membres une obligation nouvelle qui ne pourrait entrer en vigueur en vertu de l'Article 13.1 de l'Acte constitutif qu'après ratification par les deux tiers des États membres de l'UNESCO, procédure dite renforcée ou lourde.

64.9 En cas d'amendement de l'Acte constitutif, la grande majorité des actes constitutifs des organisations du système des Nations unies exige d'ailleurs une confirmation de leurs engagements par les États par voie de ratification. Cette situation a été soulignée par le Comité juridique, qui a renvoyé deux versions différentes du projet de résolution à l'examen de notre Conférence générale.

64.10 Enfin, après les questions de principe, de méthode, et les questions juridiques, l'amendement proposé pose des questions d'opportunité. Ce débat a en effet d'importantes implications sur la gouvernance de l'UNESCO. L'Organisation est également confrontée à de nouveaux et nombreux défis, à des difficultés financières, politiques parfois, que nous connaissons tous. Aucune réforme ne doit entraver les diverses activités de l'UNESCO et toutes doivent renforcer la gouvernance de l'Organisation. Alors que ces défis nécessitent le plein engagement de tous, nous soulignons l'importance pour l'Organisation de ne pas favoriser des processus dont nous savons qu'ils font l'objet de profondes divergences de vue. Il est essentiel de ne favoriser aucun processus qui peut nous diviser au lieu de nous réunir.

64.11 Par ailleurs, en l'absence de toute réflexion et de tout débat sur les conséquences concrètes d'un tel amendement, nous appelons à la plus grande prudence et soulignons que ce projet, qui ne fait pas consensus, doit être examiné de manière beaucoup plus approfondie et doit faire l'objet d'échanges, de dialogues, comme c'est la tradition de notre Organisation.

64.12 En conclusion, pour toutes ces raisons et sur ce sujet d'importance fondamentale, nous souhaitons disposer de plus de temps pour mener des débats sereins, dans l'échange, et non dans la confrontation, et souhaitons donc que ce point soit examiné à la prochaine Conférence générale après un réel débat de fond. Je vous remercie Monsieur le Président.

65. **The President :**

Merci votre Excellence. Kiribati to be followed by Paraguay.

66.1 **Kiribati:**

Thank you, Mr President, for giving me the floor. My delegation would like to thank New Zealand for introducing this resolution concerning the proposed amendment to the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure on the limiting of terms of membership of the Executive Board in pursuance of a resolution adopted by the General Conference two years ago by an overwhelming majority.

66.2 Mr President, given the fundamental purpose for which this constitutional amendment has arisen some time ago, namely to enable UNESCO's Executive Board to be more inclusive and representative of all Member States, so as to ensure that no one is left behind in line with the 2030 Agenda, my delegation feels that it has been left behind, due mainly to the current status of Article A.4 (b) of the Constitution. It has therefore decided to support such a resolution and would like to join the sponsors and advocates of this resolution to request all members of this UNESCO family to see this resolution not as a threat to the solidarity and integrity of UNESCO, but as a new recipe for a more vigorous and dynamic and effective UNESCO for humanity in the future.

66.3 As regards the question of whether or not the time is ripe to implement what was agreed at the last session of the General Conference two years ago, we have a saying in Kiribati in the Pacific that says "Harvest the fruit when it is ripe. Otherwise it will end up rotting in the ground". Mr President, we believe and we respect, with respect to all members of this family, that the time is now ripe for this resolution. I thank you.

67. **The President:**

Thank you. Paraguay, please.

68.1 **Paraguay:**

Muchas gracias. Señor Presidente: mi delegación quiere apoyar el proyecto de modificación presentado en el documento DR 1. Creemos que la alternancia es buena para la Organización y por ello suscribimos los fundamentos presentados por la delegación de Nueva Zelanda. El principal problema que el sistema de reelección indefinida presenta es que algunos países ocupan lugares en el Consejo de manera casi permanente, mientras que otros lo hacen de un modo mucho más esporádico y, de alguna manera, estamos representando aquí lo que hace el Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas. Hay miembros permanentes, solamente que aquí no hay derecho a voto, y otros que son miembros no permanentes y algunos, como el Paraguay, que tienen muy pocas oportunidades de formar parte de los órganos de dirección de esta Organización.

68.2 El Paraguay, después de más de 60 años, tuvo una sola oportunidad que acaba de concluir, un mandato por cuatro años en el Consejo. Por ello, creemos que esta modificación va a profundizar la democracia en uno de los órganos más importantes de la UNESCO. Por otra parte, si se entiende que se necesita más debate, más reflexión o más negociación, estamos dispuestos a acompañar que se siga debatiendo este tema de aquí hasta la 41ª Conferencia. Muchas gracias.

69. **The President:**

Thank you. Now I invite Syrian Arab Republic, to be followed by Morocco.

70 الجمهورية العربية السورية:

إن الجمهورية العربية السورية التي تواجه حرباً ضروساً منذ ثماني سنوات، والتي تدرك اليوم أن اللحمة المجتمعية للمجتمع السوري الذي واجهه ويلات الإرهاب، هذا المجتمع السوري الممثل بمجلسه النيابي، نواب الشعب ونقاباته واتحاداته العمالية ومجتمعه المدني المنخرط في مواجهة ويلات الحرب، يجد نفسه في حلة جديدة عندما يبدأ الحوار بين مختلف فئاته. وهذا الحوار الوطني والسياسي هو الفرصة السانحة أمام مجتمعنا لمواجهة كل التحديات، وهو الذي يسمح لنا أن نتحدى حتى الإرهاب. ولذلك، ومن موقعي كدولة عضو مؤسس لليونسكو منذ عام 1946، أرى أن الحوار هو الوسيلة الوحيدة لمواجهة كل التحديات، حتى تلك التي قد تماثل الإرهاب. ولذلك، فإنني أؤيد المقترح المقدم والذي عملنا عليه طويلاً مع اليابان لأننا نرى أن منظمنا العتيبة تواجه تحديات حمة قد تصل إلى مواجهة الإرهاب

وتداعياته، والتفرقة والفئوية والإسلاموفوبيا، وكذلك هيمنة الدول العظمى على الصغرى، وأيضاً التفتت والتشتت. وفي هذا السياق، يبدأ الحوار كنقطة انطلاق وليس هدفاً نهائياً. ولا نسعى إلى الحوار لأننا نسعى إلى الإطالة ولا إلى التأجيل، نسعى إلى الحوار لأنه المنصة التي تتيح لنا جميعاً أن نلتقي على التوافق الذي يجمع فيما بيننا. ولذا، أطلب جميع الدول الأعضاء أن تفسح أمام منظماتنا العتيدة الفرصة الحقيقية الواعدة دون أي تحدٍ داخلي أو خارجي ودون أي هيمنة فكرية لمجموعة على أخرى لكي نتاح لنا فرصة أن نواجه أعظم التحديات، وشكراً السيد الرئيس.

71. The President:

Thank you, Excellency. Morocco to be followed by Iceland.

72.1 Maroc :

Merci Monsieur le Président de nous donner la parole. Je voudrais tout simplement affirmer le soutien bien sûr du Maroc à la proposition du Japon, et souscrire évidemment à l'argumentaire développé par l'ensemble des États membres qui soutiennent la proposition faite par le Japon. Dois-je rappeler le principe cardinal de cette magnifique Organisation qui est le consensus. Ce à quoi nous assistons aujourd'hui à travers cet exercice nous démontre malheureusement l'importance des divergences qui demeurent entre les uns et les autres et qui nous éloignent de ce principe cardinal.

72.2 Nous sommes tous d'accord qu'évidemment on regarde des textes fondamentaux. Chaque État membre peut proposer un amendement à un acte constitutif ou même aller au vote pour faire passer un éventuel amendement. Sauf qu'une telle démarche s'inscrit à contresens du principe consensuel qui doit prévaloir au sein de notre Organisation. Nous avons cet après-midi entendu beaucoup parler évidemment de principes démocratiques, nous y souscrivons fortement, mais faut-il également rappeler que le pendant fondamental de la pratique démocratique est le respect des décisions souveraines des États membres de pouvoir s'y porter candidats aux différents organes s'ils le souhaitent.

72.3 Donnons-nous, et c'est la position du Maroc, du temps pour mieux nourrir notre réflexion sur cet amendement qui est fondamental, qui est important. Nous estimons que notre Organisation a besoin en ce moment précis de sérénité, d'apaisement, et d'unité, et c'est pour cela que nous souscrivons encore une fois à la proposition faite par l'Ambassadeur du Japon de reporter l'examen de ce point à sa 41^e session et d'inviter évidemment le Groupe de travail à poursuivre l'examen de ce point en vue d'en débattre à la 41^e session de la Conférence générale. Merci Monsieur le Président.

73. The President:

Merci votre Excellence. Now I invite Iceland, to be followed by the Republic of Korea.

74.1 Iceland:

Thank you, Mr President. Iceland supports the draft amendment to Article V and I wish to take this opportunity to explain why. We support the amendment because we firmly believe that this amendment is an important step towards more inclusivity, more diversity, more engagement and above all, sound multilateralism. The principle of shared responsibility is also very much at play here. As we have heard, the issue of term limits is not a new issue. It has been discussed over a number of years already and in principle put to a vote at the last session of the General Conference. It is a persistent democratic call for the promotion of wider participation, openness, solidarity and wider cooperation. We do not believe this amendment entails new legal obligations. We do, however, believe this amendment entails more opportunities for all Member States.

74.2 Iceland is a candidate for the Executive Board in 2021 – the Nordic candidate, to be clear. By the way, let me take this opportunity to congratulate the newly-elected Members to the Executive Board. As my distinguished Danish colleague explained in his intervention earlier, the five Nordic countries have for years practised quite a tough rotation, meaning that over a 20-year period its country will only have the opportunity to sit on the Board for four years. This tough rotation has not led to countries in our group being less involved. If anything, they have become more involved in UNESCO's work and activities. I wanted to emphasize this point because I do understand the concerns in this regard, although I do believe that the Nordic experience demonstrates that these concerns are entirely unfounded. Thank you, Mr President.

75. The President:

Thank you, Excellency. Now, the Republic of Korea to be followed by Hungary.

76.1 Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr President. My delegation wishes to express its support for continued effort to achieve consensus on this issue, given there still persist completely opposing, seemingly irreconcilable views at the moment among a great number of Member States on the term limits amendment. We believe the last thing UNESCO can afford is a divisive vote.

76.2 Member States need to continue to discuss this issue, including in the Working Group of Governance. I also would like to recall that there are already quite effective practices and arrangements within several regional groups that are said to be quite successful in ensuring both continuity and rotation. It would be best to allow each regional group to take this unique competition and characteristics into account and come up with its own balanced approach to rotation. My delegation supports postponing this item to give ourselves more time to narrow the gap through mutual understanding and dialogue and reach consensus. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

77. The President:

Thank you, Excellency. Hungary, to be followed by the Dominican Republic.

78.1 Hungary:

Thank you, Mr President. I would also like to start by congratulating the newly-elected Members of the Executive Board and also express thanks for the support of all for Hungary. As one of the co-sponsors, Hungary supports the adoption of this draft resolution and we fully support the adoption of this resolution at this session of the General Conference. This amendment, we believe, is about fairness, equity, inclusiveness, equality and ensuring opportunities so that all countries

can play a part in UNESCO's governance, not only in theory, but also in practice. This would contribute to strengthening the Organization and not the weakening of it and giving it a wider relevance and impact and thus a brighter future.

78.2 We are convinced that the amendment would reinforce democracy and multilateralism as rotation would allow more Member States to contribute to decision-making of the Organization. We should maybe recall that many countries have not yet served on the Board at all. We are also convinced that this amendment is for the health, balance and renewal of the Organization and reflects genuine multilateralism, solidarity and cooperation, which Secretary-General Guterres highlighted in his address recently. Needless to say, Mr President, Hungary favours and prefers consensus. On some of the most crucial topics, however, we all know that consensus cannot be arrived at. We should not misuse the concept of consensus, especially not to misuse it to block a reform that has been already voted upon and endorsed by the General Conference, which has already pronounced itself on the principle of rotation and term limits.

78.3 We have had many votes on membership and leadership of this Organization and its governing bodies. Sometimes we agreed, sometimes we disagreed. Sometimes we only agreed that we disagreed. But this House has always withstood those votes and the debates where we need to make decisions to move forward, and respect the decisions voted upon. We expect the same now on term limits and this amendment. We adopted by a vote of 103 for and only 12 against the recommendation of the Working Group on Governance at the last session of the General Conference. We need to uphold that decision, which was further reinforced by the adoption of 39 C/Resolution 87, which called for the implementation of all the adopted recommendations of the Working Group including the one on term limits for the membership of the Executive Board. Our task now is to implement this resolution, after careful and lengthy consideration and thorough discussion of the past years. The framework of the recommendation was very clear – two or three terms with a gap of two or four years.

78.4 The co-sponsors fully respected this framework and built our proposal upon it. The formula of two terms of four years mirrors term limits in many domestic systems. The mandate of the Director General and the programme and budget cycle. The proposed amendment is reasonable and moderate. Implementation is pushed back to eight years from now so that all can prepare for it. Two years is a very short time, but helps create the small amount of space needed to promote opportunities for other Member States to get a fair chance to serve on the Executive Board.

78.5 From the legal point of view, we firmly believe that this proposal does not constitute any legal obligations for the Member States. In conclusion, Mr President, we urge Member States to vote with their conscience, objectivity and reason. Term limits are not supposed to be a divisive issue, but a unifying one, so that all Member States can have a fair chance of playing their part in the governance of this important organization. It is about ensuring shared ownership and responsibility, an understanding that we all can have seats at the table. I agree with the assessment of the distinguished representative of Kiribati. The time is ripe for decision now. Let us take extra action on the amendment at this session. Thank you very much, Mr President.

79. **The President:**

Thank you. I now invite Dominican Republic to be followed by Cuba.

80.1 **República Dominicana:**

Gracias señor Presidente. Seré breve. Soy muy amigo de las pocas palabras. Somos de opinión que el mejor escenario para lograr un espacio en el Consejo Ejecutivo son los grupos regionales y que sea en esa realidad donde se motive y justifique su participación en el Consejo Ejecutivo, porque debemos tener presente que países que, formando parte de la Institución, no tienen representación física, con lo que esta enmienda estaría obligando a esos Estados Miembros a buscar la forma de hacerse presente con oficinas o, en su defecto, pasar este derecho a otro país.

80.2 Es en el escenario de los grupos regionales donde se conocen y se reconocen los países miembros que tienen participación activa y no una participación cada dos años en la Conferencia General. En el día de hoy, y luego de tener los resultados, más se fortalecen mis palabras. Formamos parte del Consejo gracias a nuestro grupo electoral, el GRULAG, ellos decidieron que en lista limpia Uruguay, Argentina y Brasil, junto a República Dominicana, tuvieron el honor de representarlos. Tengan en cuenta que solo la acción de buscar apoyo para tener el honor de pertenecer al Consejo Ejecutivo, solo esa acción de acercamiento bien vale la pena para un debate más profundo y transparente, en lugar de la aprobación de esta enmienda a nuestra Constitución. Muchas gracias, señor Presidente.

813. **The President:**

Thank you. I now invite Cuba to be followed by Mexico.

82.1 **Cuba:**

Gracias, señor Presidente. Mi delegación desea sumarse también a los colegas que han felicitado a los nuevos miembros del Consejo Ejecutivo y expresa una vez más su disposición a continuar trabajando al interior del Consejo en la implementación del importante mandato que tiene esta Organización.

82.2 El tema que nos ocupa, señor Presidente, es de la mayor importancia para nuestra delegación, en tanto aborda la cuestión relativa a la participación de todos en la labor de esta Organización que, como decíamos, tiene un mandato extremadamente importante y que todos en los últimos días hemos reafirmado. Pensamos que cualquier ejercicio que realicemos deberá fortalecer y conducirnos a una mayor presencia del multilateralismo en esta casa y una mayor unidad entre todos para poder lograr nuestros objetivos comunes.

82.3 El Consejo Ejecutivo es uno de los tres órganos principales de la UNESCO que, por su contenido, por el contenido de sus debates y la periodicidad de sus reuniones, tiene una influencia determinante en los asuntos programáticos y presupuestarios de esta Organización. No sorprende, entonces, que la participación de los Estados Miembros en sus labores sea del mayor interés para todos. El grupo de trabajo de gobernanza, procedimientos y métodos de trabajo de los órganos rectores de la UNESCO hizo una recomendación al respecto que no logró, lamentablemente, consenso y

aprovechamos la ocasión para reconocer la excelente labor de este grupo y la importancia de la evaluación y las decisiones que el mismo tomó.

82.4 Cuba siempre abogó por el consenso e hizo su mayor esfuerzo para evitar una votación sobre tan sensible tema en la 39ª reunión de la Conferencia General. No concebíamos una enmienda a la Constitución sin la unidad de todos sus Estados Miembros. Cuba respaldó, entonces, la recomendación del grupo de trabajo por dos razones fundamentales: la importancia que concede a la rotación y la participación de todos, arreglo que en nuestro grupo regional existe, que no es perfecto, que no siempre se cumpla al pie de la letra, pero en general acomoda el principio de la participación en el Consejo de todos nuestros países. Asimismo, por nuestro respaldo a la labor positiva del grupo de trabajo de gobernanza, así como el positivo precedente que su discusión universal nos legó. No obstante, durante los dos años que han seguido a esta decisión hemos visto con pesar las diferencias que se han ido profundizando entre todos y hoy vemos la división que en torno a este asunto tenemos. Pensamos que enmendar la Constitución sin consenso no parecería una buena decisión. Con relación a lo señalado sobre el impacto jurídico que el tema tiene, no compartimos que eso sea exactamente así. No obstante, señor Presidente, ante el escenario descrito, mi delegación favorecería que nos demos una nueva oportunidad para el diálogo y a los esfuerzos por un entendimiento común. Cuento con nuestra delegación para ello. Gracias.

83. **The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. Now Mexico to be followed by Portugal.

84.1 **México:**

Muchas gracias al Presidente, gracias a las distinguidas delegaciones por su tiempo. Señor Presidente: este es un debate largo, complejo, lleno de muchos elementos. Yo solo quisiera abordar algunos de ellos. Se ha señalado aquí que existen precedentes para la modificación actual, que existen precedentes, por ejemplo, o ideas que podemos encontrar en el Comité del Patrimonio Mundial y en el Comité del Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial. Nosotros no lo vemos así. Estos son órganos de tratados de naturaleza distinta y de obligaciones y responsabilidades para nuestros Estados, que tienen alcances muy diferentes a nuestro deseo de permanecer y de pertenecer y de ser elegidos por la membresía en el Consejo Ejecutivo.

84.2 Señor Presidente: se ha dicho que el Consejo de Derechos Humanos pudiera ser algún referente. Tampoco lo vemos así, señor Presidente. La decisión de establecer el Consejo de Derechos Humanos en sustitución de la Comisión de Derechos Humanos como órgano subsidiario de la Asamblea General fue tomado por un órgano tan particular y tan universal y tan importante como es la Asamblea General. Es un órgano subsidiario y recordarán aquellos que estuvieron en Ginebra que el acuerdo que fue plasmado en la resolución 60/2.51, fue un paquete. En esto, se consideraron diversos elementos de representación, pero también de fondo. Era un paquete.

84.3 Por lo que se refiere, señor Presidente, al debate que tenemos aquí en este plenario de esta Conferencia General. La realidad fundamental es que, para enmendar la Constitución de esta Organización, de una organización que es ésta, se requiere, señor Presidente, que no debilitemos a la Organización, se requiere la convergencia de voluntades y en este debate, tanto como en las discusiones anteriores, lo que estamos viendo es que aún no tenemos esta convergencia y que llegar a forzar una decisión por encima de multitud de voluntades no puede más que ir en detrimento de la fortaleza de la Organización.

84.4 Señor Presidente de la Conferencia General: ¿será cuestión que tengamos que fortalecer el procedimiento para lograr aunar voluntades? ¿Será que debimos haber trabajado más en 2017, en 2018, e incluso este año? ¿Será que tendremos que profundizar nuestros esfuerzos en el comité especial, en el grupo de trabajo de gobernanza? ¿Será que tengamos ahora, en 2020, la oportunidad con usted como Presidente de esta Conferencia General, de tener un diálogo entre los diferentes puntos de vista con mecanismos amplios que le demos tiempo a las reuniones, calidad de nuestras discusiones, que usted nos pueda ofrecer una oportunidad de buscar aunar voluntades? Esperamos que sí, señor Presidente. Esto lo vemos indispensable para la UNESCO, para su futuro. Muchas gracias.

85. **The President:**

Thank you. I took very careful note of what you have said regarding the future. Now, Portugal to be followed by Tonga.

86.1 **Portugal:**

Thank you, Mr President. The goals of this amendment are to uplift the belief of all Member States that they can play an adequate part in the Organization's life to uphold the principle of rotation, to increase participatory rights and to reinforce pluralism and representation on the Executive Board. The expectations of the wider membership on all those accounts are not fully met under the current system. Elections to the Board are free and competitive, but do not offer a level playing field to all parties. Incumbency and large political diplomatic machines are perceived as creating unfair advantages. Pluralism, although helped by an electoral group system and the size of the Board, is not sufficiently ensured. Rotation, an important mechanism for representing different Member States' interests is not practised uniformly on a voluntary basis. What is missing, as the Working Group on Governance rightly concluded two years ago, is term limits, reintroducing the limitation of the right to re-election that was abolished in 1991. The proposed term limits are reasonable and quite restrained. Actually, immediate re-election is not the rule in international practice. For example, the elected members of the United Nation Security Council are not eligible for immediate re-election. Under this proposal, newly elected members of the Board are eligible for immediate re-election and the proposed gap is two years instead of a possible four.

86.2 Furthermore, a long transitional period of eight years is established so that any Member State, including current Executive Board members which have served over five consecutive mandates will only be listed as not eligible for immediate re-election from the 44th session of the General Conference in 2027 onwards. On the legal question, eligibility to the Board carries no obligation. That has been the rightful understanding of the General Conference when amending Article V of the Constitution in the past. It is our firm opinion that such a claim is clearly off the mark from a legal point of view and it should have been dealt with by the Legal Committee. This assembly should be able to decide on this question swiftly.

86.3 To conclude, we do not believe that this matter was not discussed thoroughly. In fact, it was discussed and it was that discussion that gave rise to the recommendation to establish term limits for membership of the Executive Board – a recommendation that the General Conference decided to endorse at its last session. This assembly should not backtrack on its own decision. The existence of a divergence of views is the rule when it comes to amendments to UNESCO's Constitution. That is why, by and large, most past amendments were decided by vote, seldom by consensus. Thank you, Mr President.

87. **The President:**

Thank you. Now Tonga to be followed by Benin.

88.1 **Tonga:**

Mr President, in times of tension like this, I wish that I could go and watch a Turkish movie, which has become one of my favourite and relaxing pastimes to bring peace and strategic vision to my mind. In summary, Mr President, the tiny kingdom of Tonga in the Pacific supports the adoption of the draft amendment in 40 C/PLEN/DR.1 for the inclusive and transparent reasons that His Excellency from New Zealand presented eloquently and explicitly in his opening address.

88.2 Tonga also believes that the proposed amendment is not a new obligation. UNESCO should also recall the recommendations of the External Auditor in 2015 on the governance of UNESCO in document 197 EX/28 to limit the total length of some constitutive terms of office. Normally when you hire an auditor, it is expected that the auditor will recommend the highest ethical principles and practices in an organization. UNESCO's should therefore seriously implement the recommendations of the External Auditor. Tonga sat on the Executive Board from 1993 to 1997. We would love to return to the Board, but we do not have the financial resources for electoral campaigns. We have had dialogue with our Asian brothers and sisters to give the Pacific at least one reserved seat out of the 12 seats with the Asia and the Pacific group, but it has not been successful.

88.3 So for how much longer are we going to dialogue? When Tonga sat on the Board, we were instrumental in developing a flagship project for the Pacific. It was called "Focus on the Pacific", which received reasonable support and assistance from UNESCO. With the absence of the Pacific on the Executive Board, we do not have a voice, and as such, the Pacific appears to be dead to UNESCO. I appeal to all Member States to adopt a proposed amendment to allow all Member States to have the opportunity to sit on the Board and to share responsibility to restore UNESCO to its unique status when it was founded in 1945. Please do not underestimate small islands like Tonga. Last month, our small island nation had a historic win over the Great Britain Lions and the Australian Kangaroos – so historic that a public holiday was declared. I am talking about rugby here. Some years ago, we beat France. How did we do it? It was through passion, sincere passion to achieve a goal. In the same spirit, we can contribute to the work of UNESCO and the Executive Board with passion and be champions once again for UNESCO's principles of peace, inclusivity, diversity, equitability, multilateralism and international solidarity. Thank you very much.

89. **The President:**

Thank you Excellency. In Turkey, we understand nothing of rugby as you will suspect. Now Benin to be followed by Ethiopia please.

90.1 **Benin:**

Merci Monsieur le Président. Permettez-moi tout d'abord de souligner la gravité de la question que nous sommes en train de discuter. Juste pour vous signaler que la montée et la persistance des pressions sur cette prime capitale ne permettent pas un débat serein ni constructif en toute responsabilité. Je voudrais attirer votre attention sur le fait que des télécommandes continuent de fonctionner.

90.2 À la suite de la Nouvelle Zélande, et des co-auteurs, le Bénin soutient la limitation du nombre de mandats au Conseil exécutif. Elle n'est pas une nouvelle obligation juridique, et la Conférence générale doit prendre une décision à cette session car l'amendement sur la limitation est le résultat d'un long processus inclusif et d'une décision antérieure de la Conférence générale.

90.3 Le Bénin, qu'il vous souvienne, fait partie des 103 États membres qui en 2017, lors de la 39^e, ont voté en faveur de cette limitation, s'il faut le rappeler, contre 12 États membres qui étaient défavorables à cette mesure. C'est pour nous une affaire de constance. Parce que c'est surtout d'une question de principe qu'il s'agit. Dans la pratique, il ressort, dans la pratique de l'UNESCO j'entends, il ressort que la Conférence générale a déjà procédé, et ça a été dit avant moi, à plusieurs reprises, à l'amendement de l'Acte constitutif, et aucun de ces amendements antérieurs n'a été considéré comme impliquant de nouvelles obligations, à l'exception d'une, et ça a été dit également.

90.4 La limitation des mandats, loin d'affaiblir l'UNESCO comme on entend le dire par-ci et par-là, va renforcer la gouvernance, promouvoir la diversité et rétablir un système équitable, inclusif, plus participatif, reflet du multilatéralisme que nous chérissons tant, et d'une vraie solidarité et coopération. À cet égard il est important de souligner que chaque organisation se dote des règles et des organes qui lui permettent de réaliser ses missions. La comparaison donc, avec d'autres agences du système des Nations unies est sans pertinence dans le cas d'espèce.

90.5 En effet, le but de l'UNESCO est de contribuer au maintien de la paix et de la sécurité internationales en resserrant la coopération entre nations. Mais comment y parvenir si nous y pratiquons l'exclusion ? La limitation des mandats est pour nous un principe fondamental qui permet à tous les États membres quels que soient la taille ou le niveau de prospérité de participer à la gouvernance de l'UNESCO en exerçant leur droit de contrôle et de responsabilité. À ce propos, Monsieur le Président, je voudrais rappeler qu'il n'y a pas un droit absolu pour aucun État membre d'être au Conseil exécutif. Par exemple, dans toute démocratie, certains droits sont limités.

90.6 Monsieur le Président, la 40^e session est convoquée devant l'Histoire. Elle doit prendre ses responsabilités en ne permettant pas que la question sur la limitation des mandats soit reportée plus tard. Le report ne saurait être le consensus. Le consensus et la souplesse en son nom, c'est maintenant. Je vous remercie.

91. **The President:**

Merci votre Excellence. I now invite Ethiopia to be followed by Cameroon.

92.1 **Ethiopia:**

Thank you, Mr President, for giving me the floor. Let me also join other delegations in congratulating those who were elected as new Members of our Executive Board. Mr Chairman, my delegation supports the postponement of this proposal. It does so because we feel that this is a divisive issue that will further weaken our Organization. I have listened very carefully to the arguments raised for this amendment and they are very good arguments. When we talk about inclusivity, when we talk about rotation and diversity, these are all arguments that appeal to us in particular, because we have never been, are not and do not aspire to be a permanent member of any organ. So we come from that point of view, not of self-interest but from a point of view of the interests of the Organization at heart. All reforms, especially major ones, have to be put in a context. The context we are in today is a UNESCO that was battered over the last years. It is now barely recovering. While we are in this phase of recovery, we do not think it is wise to proceed with an amendment that will further create rifts and divisions and ultimately weaken the Organization that we all hold dear. That should be our first and foremost priority at this stage.

92.2 We feel that the recommendation at the last General Conference gives us room and time for further deliberations. As seen during the current debate, many delegations have expressed their reservations, to say the least, over the process and on some of the consequences of this amendment. Therefore, it would be wise for us to postpone it and hold further consultations until we reach a wider based consensus. Mr President, in my country, which is one of long distance runners, we have a saying "If you want to go quickly, you go alone. But if you want to go far, you go together." So I plead that we go together. Thank you.

93. **The President:**

Thank you very much Your Excellency. I invite Cameroon to be followed by South Africa.

94.1 **Cameroun :**

Merci Monsieur le Président de me donner la parole. Le Cameroun, quant à lui, va dans le sens de ce qu'il considère déjà comme une expression plus importante dans l'orientation, dans les deux orientations qui se dessinent au cours de ces débats, à savoir nous donner le temps. Nous donner le temps. On n'a pas le couteau à la gorge pour trancher cette question à cette session. Approfondir la réflexion. Pourquoi ? Parce que le problème que l'amendement des Philippines veut résoudre, peut se résoudre autrement.

94.2 Le problème d'équité et d'inclusion. D'accord. Mais le Cameroun appartient à un groupe qui comporte un sous-groupe, l'Afrique centrale, qui pratique déjà le principe de rotation, depuis quelques années. Un principe de rotation qui permet, comme cette fois-ci, et certains se demandent pourquoi le Cameroun ne se représente pas pour siéger de nouveau au Conseil à partir du 29 prochain, le 29 novembre. Mais parce que le Cameroun respecte, en toute bonne compréhension, le principe de la rotation, pour permettre à ceux de l'Afrique centrale, à l'intérieur du grand Groupe V(a), de participer. De quoi s'agit-il ? Qu'est-ce que nous avons entendu depuis ? C'est à dire, les divers États membres, qui sont favorables à la solution immédiate aujourd'hui, souhaitent participer, souhaitent qu'il soit donné une chance à tout le monde de participer.

94.3 La rotation est plus facile à l'intérieur des sous-groupes. Pourquoi l'UNESCO a conçu les groupes, le principe d'un groupe ? Pourquoi à l'UNESCO nous devons penser que le consensus, alors que nous voyons tous les jours que le consensus est devenu comme une sorte de slogan, je reprends ici l'expression d'un de mes voisins au Conseil exécutif, c'était le représentant de la Chine. Nous sommes d'accord, on se disait, mais oui, on utilise le consensus, comme, effectivement, une formule magique. Or, pour arriver au consensus, qu'est-ce qu'on fait ? On débat, comme nous sommes en train de débattre. L'autre jour on a débattu sur les questions budgétaires longuement. Les points de vue étaient très différents mais il y avait une majorité qui se dégageait. Pendant que d'autres disaient attention, on n'est pas là pour une démocratie, il faut tenir compte de ce que chaque État a comme spécificité... mais alors, comment arriver à un consensus ?

94.4 Moi, le Cameroun, pense qu'effectivement il est plus facile dans des groupes, parce que l'UNESCO a conçu les groupes, il faut leur donner un sens, de permettre effectivement des échanges et des consensus plus faciles. Donc, pour le Cameroun, je vais commencer par l'expression de la position du Cameroun. Le Cameroun souhaite effectivement que la question, la discussion, l'approfondissement de cette question soient poursuivis. On ne dit pas que la mesure qui est proposée dans l'amendement est rejetée en bloc, mais on dit que même si dans la précédente Conférence générale avait déjà préparé l'évolution dans cette direction, il apparaît aujourd'hui qu'il y a une autre façon de procéder et nous pouvons y faire davantage attention. Pourquoi pas ? Le Cameroun est donc pour la continuation, pour ne pas parler de report, la continuation de la réflexion sur la question.

94.5 La question qui se pose c'est laquelle ? L'inclusion, l'équité. Oui, comment je vais jouir de cela ? Est-ce que, c'est en interdisant de manière automatique et de manière brutale à certains de se présenter ? Ce n'est pas valable seulement pour les grands groupes, où se trouvent les grands donateurs, les grands financiers, ça peut se poser dans des groupes comme le Groupe V(a) où tout le monde n'a pas effectivement les mêmes possibilités, mais en fait chacun est prêt à comprendre qu'il faut céder la place, il faut céder deux ans, il faut céder quatre ans, à d'autres États membres pour qu'ils soient représentés au Conseil exécutif. Voilà, Monsieur le Président, ce que le Cameroun tenait à dire sur cette question. Merci.

95. **The President:**

Merci votre Excellence. I now invite South Africa to be followed by Cambodia.

96. **South Africa:**

Thank you, Mr President. South Africa fully endorses these statements so eloquently delivered by New Zealand in support of the proposed resolution to amend Article V of the Constitution of UNESCO in order to introduce term limits pursuant to the resolution of the 39th session of the General Conference. This draft amendment is an expression of Member States' quest to create conditions that would make it possible for all States to actively participate on an equal footing in all the decision-making structures and processes of the Organization. This is not just a principle of democracy. This amendment will strengthen the governance of the Organization. It will promote diversity and re-establish an inclusive system of rotation in the Executive Board established during the founding of UNESCO in 1945. Regarding the issue of postponement, in view of the fact that this issue has been exhaustively discussed over the last years, we are doubtful that its deferral to the 41st session of the General Conference will yield any different outcome. South Africa, therefore, calls on this session of the General Conference to finalize this discussion by adopting the proposed amendment. I thank you.

97. **The President:**

Thank you very much Your Excellency. I invite Cambodia to be followed by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

98.1 **Cambodge :**

Merci Monsieur le Président de me donner la parole et de permettre au Cambodge de s'exprimer dans cet intéressant débat. Permettez-moi de profiter de cette occasion pour féliciter tous les nouveaux membres du Conseil exécutif qui ont été élus haut la main.

98.2 Monsieur le Président, le Cambodge est très inquiet par la division que suscite l'amendement proposé au sein de notre Organisation. Malgré les efforts du Président du Comité juridique, que nous saluons et remercions, il est indéniable qu'il n'y a pas de consensus. Par conséquent, nous considérons que cette question a besoin de mûrir davantage. Elle a besoin que les États membres dialoguent entre eux pour parvenir à un consensus. Nous considérons que le principe du consensus est une nécessité dans une société internationale et doit être appliqué dans la mesure du possible pour permettre des relations apaisées et harmonieuses entre les nations, particulièrement pour notre Organisation et la période mouvementée qu'elle traverse.

98.3 Monsieur le Président, parce qu'il prive, parce que cet amendement prive clairement le droit d'un État souverain de se porter candidat, nous pensons que cette proposition d'amendement crée du point de vue juridique une nouvelle obligation pour les États membres qui risque de créer un précédent en droit international et fragiliser les règles patiemment mûries par les pères fondateurs de notre Organisation.

98.4 C'est pour ces raisons, Monsieur le Président, que le Cambodge soutient le principe d'un ajournement de ce point à la prochaine Conférence générale. Pour paraphraser un grand homme d'État, Monsieur le Président, s'il vous plaît, il faut donner du temps au temps. On dit que la nuit porte conseil, le temps porte également conseil. C'est l'avenir de notre Organisation qui est en jeu. Je vous remercie Monsieur le Président.

99. **The President:**

Merci votre Excellence. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to be followed by Lithuania.

100.1 **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:**

Thank you, Mr President. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines co-sponsored this amendment because we are firmly convinced that all Member States must have the opportunity to serve in the Executive Board and to actively participate in this decision-making body. It is not the first time we discussed the issue of the rotation in the Executive Board. We have discussed it many times in the last 15 years. It already started also at the 33rd session of the General conference in 2005. We see now that it is time to take a responsible and fair decision. When we adopted 39 /Resolution 87 at the 39th session of the General Conference, it was adopted after two years of consultation, negotiations and discussions in the Open Ended Working Group on Governance. If we adopt the amendment, it will allow more inclusiveness, diversity and will give to all Member States equitable and democratic access to the Executive Board. Rotation is a fundamental principle in all functioning governing systems to renew themselves.

100.2 Mr President, everyone can leave the Board for two years. It is not a long time. We are not here in the Security Council and we do not deal with security issues. Here we are dealing with peace. All Member States should be involved in the Executive Board to be able to raise their voice in this Organization. My dear colleague from Colombia reminded us of the agreement in Group III. But I just want to tell him, because I am here a long time, that many groups came to consult us about this agreement, and to try to reach such agreement in their own group and they did not succeed. So I think that the amendment will allow for us to reach this purpose. We heard also that this amendment will destabilize the Organization and will have major consequences. I did not hear one major consequence. What are these major consequences? My delegation considers, Mr President, that stability in this Organization depends on sound governance, decision-making, cooperation and coordination, not on the size of the countries or the size of their contributions, or if they are rich or poor. Thank you.

101. **The President:**

Thank you very much Your Excellency. I would like to announce my intention to go towards 7.30 p.m. because I see this as a wonderful opportunity. You are all being very eloquent and not just saying things that are being repeated here. There are very important subtle differences. This is very important input to the work of UNESCO. I still have speakers so we will go past 7.30 p.m. Thank you. So I give the floor to Lithuania to be followed by Kazakhstan.

102.1 **Lithuania:**

Thank you very much, Mr President. Thank you for creating this quiet, respectful atmosphere by your patience and by your even-handed attitude, because I believe for the first time we have a situation when States are really listening to one other. I hope so. Lithuania supports the amendment introduced by the Philippines together with many countries and I will explain why.

102.2 We joined UNESCO in 1991, exactly the year in which the General Conference abolished the term limits that had been practised in UNESCO for 46 years. We were among a large number of small States that joined UNESCO in that year, and after almost 30 years during our third term on the Executive Board, we joined a number of States that supported a recommendation by the Working Group on Governance and supported it also by a vote at the 39th session of the General Conference.

102.3 Why did we do it? First of all, because of our experience as a State and our ideals and what we believe. We believe in equality, democracy and fairness, as a reason for democracy and equality. As a young and small State at UNESCO, when we came to the 39th session of the General Conference we already had a very good understanding that quite deep divisions exist in UNESCO regarding no term limits for the Executive Board. Because by that time – and now it is even more obvious that more and more States, that was the development after 1991, are willing to have no term, in actually keeping seats there. Also a larger number of States are willing to be on the Executive Board at least once, and have never been there. So, fairness for us was one of the reasons. We listened very attentively to the work of the Working Group on Governance, but especially we paid attention to the External Auditor's recommendation, which we considered very crucial, and it was mentioned here already, to reintroduce term limits because I believe auditors really listened to the States. Exactly two years ago, the recommendation was adopted by an absolute majority of the States. I can say that that was my first General Conference as representative of Lithuania. I came bright eyed and very excited, and as a strong believer in multilateralism.

102.4 But in the last semester, I started feeling naive, probably because, as Spain and some other States mentioned, when the process started becoming reality after the decision that had been made at the 39th session with a clear majority, it was actually anything but a multilateral approach. Because multilateralism actually means understanding and respecting an order. In discussions, as mentioned here many times, we never heard serious arguments as to why this proposal is destroying UNESCO. What we hear was very clear, that there was no consensus. Consensus was absent before 2017. Definitely. And so it stays there. So they are calling for consensus which I believe would invoke serious dialogue, but there is no serious dialogue – just a call for postponement. So I am leaving UNESCO because this is my second and last General Conference, but I am leaving UNESCO not thinking that the introduction of term limits will ruin UNESCO, but about the ways how preventing the introduction of term limits is ruining UNESCO. Thank you very much.

103. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. I invite Kazakhstan to be followed by Samoa.

104.1 **Kazakhstan:**

Thank you. Mr President, your Excellencies, dear colleagues, distinguished delegates, first of all, let me join in congratulating the newly-elected members of the Executive Board. Concerning today's discussion, we pay due respect to many valid arguments proposed by supporters of both views on this important issue of great importance for our Organization. Kazakhstan has previously served twice in the Board, and we believe that if you seek your chances that any Member State may achieve its goal of becoming part of the governing bodies and contributing substantially to the governance of our Organization.

104.2 Even today at this election, we have witnessed countries being elected to the Executive Board for the first time. So Kazakhstan is part of a group of Member States who urge a continued search for consensus on the amendment proposed by the distinguished colleagues to Article V. The governing bodies of UNESCO have previously ruled that all future reforms of UNESCO must be consensus driven and we agree on that. The specific decisions of the 39th session of the General Conference based on the results produced by the Working Group on Governance indeed recommend the introduction of term limits in the governing bodies of UNESCO. However, at the same time, they also request our Organization to discuss the implementation before the 40th and 41st sessions of the General Conference. The discussions we have witnessed so far seem to indicate that we have not yet developed a wide consensus on such a major reform of critical importance to our Organization. Therefore, we believe we have at least two more years for consolidated, constructive efforts together in order to find common ground that would be beneficial for strengthening our Organization, not weakening it. Thank you for your attention.

105. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. I now invite Samoa to be followed by Italy.

106.1 **Samoa:**

Thank you, Mr President. Madam Director-General, the Pacific in UNESCO is represented by 17 countries, the majority of which are small island States at different levels of development, surrounded by wide sea and facing vast distances as a result. As you are aware, the Pacific is a member of electoral group IV for the Asia Pacific region, comprising over one third of the 44 ASPAC membership and with 12 seats on the Executive Board.

106.2 We are looking for a forum in which our voices can be heard. We have had the honour in the past to have Pacific representation on the Executive Board, but things have changed considerably since we last had representation on the Board. As such, Pacific States also have unique challenges and opportunities that need to be reflected and addressed in the work programme of UNESCO through the Executive Board. Not having a voice on the body responsible for making decisions between meetings of the General Conference is therefore an obstacle in the achievement of fair and equitable representation on the governing organs of UNESCO. It also derives UNESCO of the unique cultural flavour, social dimensions and vitality and experience that the Pacific region brings to the Organization. The Pacific, on numerous occasions in the past, has sought to engage the Asian countries to discuss a possible arrangement similar to the practice in the Caribbean and Latin America group, where two out of 10 seats are reserved for the Caribbean. But these efforts were not successful. The reality is that our prospects of successful election are severely limited by the advantage held by those already on the Board. It is very difficult for small island States, very far away from Paris, to compete fairly. We talk about consensus. If you Google "consensus" and its meaning, it says the majority. How do we get to a majority? I think voting is a fair process. When one is sitting at a higher and more comfortable position looking down, we have an aerial plain view of what is happening at the

bottom. It is very easy to adopt consensus or perhaps complacency. But when you are down at the ground level and grass roots, you feel the impact of being silent, of being excluded.

106.3 The amendment we are talking about here and now, provides for a fair and reasonable two year stand-down period. That will promote rotation and equitable geographic representation. It reflects the core values of multilateral diplomacy, democratic governance, inclusiveness and diversity. It is also consistent with the spirit of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda of leaving no one behind. You are leaving the Pacific behind. If we also use the other very commonly used word of “consistency”, there may be proportionally allocated seats on the Board based on the number of countries in the grouping, but within each grouping it certainly is not consensual and nor is it consistent. If we were to apply the formula for the Caribbean and Latin America group through the Asia and the Pacific group, 17 out of 44 is more than one third. So therefore, the Pacific region proportionally should at least look at three seats out of twelve. Is that consistent and fair and equitable? I think so. Most importantly, this amendment would facilitate the election of Pacific Island countries to the Executive Board and in doing so will amplify the Pacific voice in UNESCO It is for this reason that Samoa strongly supports and would vote in favour of the amendment to Article V. Thank you.

107. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. Now Italy, to be followed by Palau.

108.1 **Italie :**

Merci Monsieur le Président. Les débats d'aujourd'hui, comme les discussions que nous avons eues lors du dernier Conseil exécutif et dans les réunions des groupes de gouvernance, montrent que le thème de l'introduction d'une limitation du nombre de mandats au Conseil exécutif est une cause de fortes divergences entre nous. Le rapport du Comité légal fait état d'une incertitude importante aussi sur le plan juridique. Nous croyons que l'amendement pose des nouvelles obligations juridiques pour les États membres.

108.2 Le premier constat que j'aimerais faire est que ce climat de divergence et de tension ne sied pas à l'Organisation, surtout dans un moment où le processus de transformation stratégique appellerait plutôt à l'unité. Alors que nous constatons la force d'attraction de l'UNESCO sur les grands thèmes de notre action suite au succès des forums de l'éducation et de la culture, j'aimerais souligner l'importance de l'unité, de se rassembler autour des priorités de notre mandat, afin de donner une réponse à la demande UNESCO que nous entendons. Comme beaucoup d'entre nous l'ont dit, il nous faut plus d'UNESCO, il nous faut une Organisation unie et non divisée.

108.3 La proposition qui nous est présentée essaye de répondre à une demande de représentativité et d'inclusion qui vient d'une partie importante des membres. Une demande que nous trouvons non seulement légitime, mais qui surtout témoigne de la volonté de tous de s'engager dans la vie de cette Organisation. Toutefois notre position à ce sujet est claire. Il faut travailler ensemble afin de trouver une convergence, une voie positive qui puisse apporter un vrai bénéfice à l'Organisation, une voie qui ne vise pas à limiter les attentes de certains d'entre nous d'y contribuer, mais qui permette au contraire de renforcer la capacité de représentation des pays membres. Notre Acte constitutif garantit aujourd'hui à tous les pays membres les droits et surtout la responsabilité de se présenter et d'être élu ou pas. Et remplacer des élections par des automatismes ce n'est pas la réponse la plus appropriée.

108.4 Monsieur le Président, nous sommes engagés dans une transformation stratégique qui nous guidera vers des nouvelles visions du rôle de cette Organisation, une vision qui nous permettra d'adopter une nouvelle stratégie en 2021. Le travail que nous avons devant nous dans les prochaines deux années est très important et pourra définir le futur de l'UNESCO dans le système multilatéral. Si nous souhaitons parvenir à renforcer le rôle de l'UNESCO, nous devrions mener ce travail avec un esprit d'unité et d'inclusivité.

108.5 Pour ces raisons, nous croyons qu'il faut poursuivre la discussion entre nous sur des nouvelles bases de confiance réciproque. Non pas par la confrontation mais par le travail commun afin de construire ensemble une position de convergence. C'est pourquoi nous demandons de reporter les délibérations sous ce thème à la prochaine Conférence générale, en donnant la possibilité au Groupe de gouvernance de trouver une solution partagée. Merci Monsieur le Président.

109. **The President:**

Thank you very much Excellency. Now Palau to be followed by Sweden.

110.1 **Palau:**

Mr President, Excellencies, thank you for the opportunity providing me to speak today. Palau aspires and supports this amendment 40 C/PLEN/DR.1 and urgently seek the support in Member States and UNESCO to live up to our mandates and support the amendment that we have endorsed in the last General Conference. This amendment truly resonates our pulse and spirit as people of culture, where it is consistent with the spirit of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda of leaving no one behind. As echoed by New Zealand, Samoa, Kiribati and co-sponsors, this amendment is fair and provides for a reasonable two year interval period, which promotes the prospect for a fair rotation, equitable geographic representation. It reflects the core values of multilateral diplomacy, democratic governance, inclusiveness and diversity. This amendment is the key element that brings empowerment to the full membership of UNESCO. Let us leave no country behind, small or big. We are all here as equal Member States with common goals that connect us as one. The rotation term limit period does not prevent any Member State having a place in the Executive Board, but rather allows this prospect for every Member State to have an equal, fair opportunity to be a member.

110.2 This amendment leverages our mandate of governance to be inclusive and to engage more closely with robust diverse assets in our leadership going forward that is much more crucial with times of constant change and many challenges upon us. The time is now, Mr President, and we must not prevent anyone a place in the governing institution of UNESCO, which is the underlying principle of this Organization. We must embrace the strength of our diversity, innovative and balanced leadership to fair and reasonable representation on the Executive Board.

110.3 Today, Mr President and Members, this debate process is democracy in its right place and in consensus, where fair representation of Member States in the underlying consideration and constitutional mandates of this Organization has been activated and realized in this process of transparent governance. Palau applauds this auspicious Organization and expresses appreciation for this opportunity to take action together, and appeal to you to support this amendment that is important for this Organization and for all of us, not in divergence, but in diversity of solidarity. Thank you, Mr President.

111. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. Sweden next to be followed by Azerbaijan.

112.1 **Sweden:**

Thank you very much, Mr President, and let me at the onset thank you for this atmosphere to have a clarifying debate on this issue. Sweden wholeheartedly support 40 C/PLEN/DR.1 and we wish to see it adopted. Sweden has always been committed to the United Nations and to multilateralism, and we recognize that we need strong global and multilateral solutions to the global challenges that we all face together.

112.2 Based on this conviction of seeking joint global solutions through strong multilateralism, it is natural for us that Member States of UNESCO rotate to serve in the Executive Board. In the Board we serve on behalf of the full membership of UNESCO and it is therefore right to let as many Member States take joint responsibility and share the task of serving.

112.3 Furthermore, as regards the potential consequences of this decision for the governance structure of UNESCO that was mentioned by a few Member States, we have not at any point during this long process of two years been presented with concrete examples of what these risks may entail. On the contrary, we believe that the term limits will contribute to a healthier governance system. Rotation allows for any governance system to continuously have the possibility to renew itself. Rotation contributes to strengthen our shared ownership of UNESCO, and this is exactly what we need against the increased challenges to multilateralism that we are facing today.

112.4 This is not a proposal for the sake of proposing, but rather to strengthen our joint ownership of UNESCO in the interest of all Member States. Sweden is the largest contributor of voluntary contributions to UNESCO. We contribute with \$135 million over four years. Sweden invests this money, not because we have a seat at the Executive Board, but because we consider the results framework of UNESCO to be valid for promoting our efforts to implement Agenda 2030.

112.5 Mr President, you said in your initial remarks that to consider an amendment to the Constitution is not an ordinary task and I could not agree more. Given the importance and seriousness of the issue, it is even more crucial to ensure that Member States can consider and decide for themselves as sovereign States. We note with regret the pressure exercised by a few countries over the last months and weeks against the many countries in UNESCO. We see the current proposal of a two year pause as a modest one. Another option would have been to ask for a four year pause. A two years pause after serving eight years in the Board is really not very much to ask. In addition, the fact that it would only take effect in eight years' time is to give everyone ample time to prepare themselves. Previous attempts to find a voluntary system for rotation have not produced a real rotation in practice or inclusion. Here I would like to refer to the process of the decision of the General Conference in 2005. In conclusion, we see the proposal as codifying the expressed wish of the General Conference. This General Conference should not backtrack on its own decision that it took as recently as 2017. We wish to see this decision from 2017 come into a decision at this General Conference, and we do not wish to postpone this any further. Thank you very much, Mr President.

113. **The President:**

Thank you Excellency. I now invite Azerbaijan to be followed by Belarus.

114.1 **Azerbaijan:**

Thank you, Mr President. Azerbaijan co-sponsored this amendment with a clear conviction that this constitutes the very core and principle of multilateralism and its principles like inclusivity, equality, diversity, equal geographical rotation and many others. These nice words that we keep repeating in every meeting of UNESCO. But I believe it is high time not to repeat this magic mantra by words, but to show in action that we really value and cherish the principles that are so important for multilateralism. Nevertheless, we do respect the concerns raised by some countries against this amendment. But we cannot agree with the view that links this amendment and membership to the Executive Board with the future of UNESCO.

114.2 The future of UNESCO should not be dependent on membership to the Executive Board. We all have shared responsibilities and commitment to this Organization, and this has nothing to do with our membership in certain bodies of the Organization. Either we are fully committed to the mission and objectives of UNESCO or we are not. I believe there is no term like conditional commitment. Azerbaijan supports this amendment as a matter of principle that fits to our vision within the overall United Nation's system, to provide equal opportunities to all countries regardless of their size or financial contribution. It is a matter of fairness and justice above all. It is an attempt not to disengage some, but rather to engage all. We do support consensus and dialogue, but we believe that these two important notions should be genuine, honest and not selective. We cannot resort to these important notions whenever we want or whenever we like. With this in mind, my delegation does not support the postponement. Thank you.

115. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. Belarus to be followed by Estonia.

116.1 **Беларусь:**

Спасибо г-н Председатель. Постараюсь быть максимально кратким. Республика Беларусь не является так называемой крупной державой, но это не мешает нам достаточно регулярно избираться в Исполнительный совет. Повторю не единожды озвученную нашей делегацией позицию: изменения в Уставе ЮНЕСКО возможны и нужны, но только те изменения, необходимость которых всем очевидна и которые будут приняты консенсусом. Изменения, которые вносят раскол в семью ЮНЕСКО, не должны насильно продавливаться. В случае с данной поправкой мы

не можем достичь консенсуса даже по вопросу, влечет ли она дополнительные обязательства. Полагаем, что право избираться, как говорили многие государства, не является обязательством, но также очевидно, что обязанность не выставлять кандидатуру – это не что иное, как обязательство. Предложенная поправка непосредственным образом ущемляет суверенные права государств-членов, ограничивая их неотъемлемое право избираться и быть избранными, и с этим многие не согласны, поскольку право избираться одних не должно означать запрет на выставление своей кандидатуры для других.

116.2 Хочу задать один риторический вопрос: я сегодня посчитал, что в случае принятия данной поправки в теперешнем виде в 2028 г., когда она вступит в силу, сложится ситуация, при которой две трети населения нашей планеты будут искусственным, подчеркиваю, искусственным образом исключены из процесса принятия решений в областях науки, образования и культуры. Можно ли это считать реализацией принципов справедливого географического распределения, разнообразия, демократии? Спасибо.

117. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. I now invite the Netherlands to be followed by Tonga.

118. **Netherlands:**

Thank you very much, Mr President. We support 40 C/PLEN/DR.1 to make UNESCO more inclusive and diverse, essential characteristics of this precious and essential consensus-driven Organization. It reinforces democracy and multilateralism, as rotation allows more Member States to contribute to decision making. The Netherlands does that, together with Luxembourg and Belgium, in Benelux format. Culture is the common language. It speaks directly to people's hearts. We want a UNESCO that talks to people on the ground where it is needed. 40 C/PLEN/DR.1 updates the image of UNESCO and the Executive Board. It makes UNESCO better prepared to rise up to the challenges of the century. Thank you very much, Mr President.

119. **The President:**

Thank you very much. I see that Tonga had already spoken. I now invite Luxembourg to be followed by Iran.

120.1 **Luxembourg :**

Merci Monsieur le Président. Le Luxembourg voudrait ici dire son soutien à l'amendement constitutionnel à l'Article V tel que présenté en début de séance par la Nouvelle Zélande et si éloquemment complétée notamment par le Bénin.

120.2 Notre compréhension du multilatéralisme actif et vivant se base sur une représentation inclusive, équitable et diversifiée de tous les États membres au Conseil exécutif. Nous cherchons une solution équitable qui soit horizontale, bien au-delà de la logique des groupes régionaux. Et, comme le collègue néerlandais vient de dire, nous avons au sein du Benelux un arrangement régional entre nous trois, mais malgré tout nous souhaitons une solution horizontale valable pour tous. Tous doivent avoir la possibilité d'apporter leur pierre spécifique à l'édification de l'UNESCO, et justement en ce moment important de l'Organisation. C'est aussi une garantie pour le bon fonctionnement de notre Organisation, et pour renforcer l'engagement de tous dans l'intérêt de l'Organisation.

120.3 Nous ne pensons pas que cela représente une nouvelle obligation. Depuis 2017, deux ans se sont écoulés pour dialoguer et chercher un rapprochement. Nous estimons dès lors qu'il est désormais temps de procéder à un vote, comme cela s'est fait lors de Conférences générales précédentes, et nous appelons tous à rejoindre le Projet DR1. Je vous en remercie. Au revoir.

121. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. Now Iran to be followed by Indonesia.

122.1 **Islamic Republic of Iran:**

Thank you very much, Mr President, as it is my first time to speak while you are presiding, I would like to congratulate you on having this prestigious position, and I would like to thank you for your patience in this discussion. And thank you that you did not put the time limit on interventions, because this is a matter, a real matter of discussion. We should be patient. We should patiently go ahead with that. We have witnessed that in the Executive Board, sometimes over a couple of million dollars budget, we have discussed for two days. Now in such an important matter here, we have to give ourselves proper time to discuss this. Thank you very much for your patience.

122.2 Mr President, first of all, I would like to echo what the wonderful points made by my dear colleague, Ambassador Abdel-Ellah Sediqi of Afghanistan, when he mentioned the importance of form, parallel to content. He mentioned Victor Hugo's wonderful quotation that "form is the substance which comes to the surface". The real mission of UNESCO is building the defences of peace, a lasting peace. This is an art. And in an art form runs at the same level of content. We cannot separate form from the content. And the brilliance and beauty of UNESCO is its form – to tackle, to face an issue.

122.3 We have over 190 Members; each country has different policies, different politics, different cultures, but there is a mechanism here that all of us, for example, in 2001, decided to come to a document for intangible cultural heritage. It took us two years, but all of these countries, with different opinions, different system of politics, they come to something that all of them agrees on. This is the art of UNESCO. The mechanism that we are following to reach to a common point is an art. This is the point I wanted to make, and I would like to mention that if you take out the point of performing this art from UNESCO, nothing would be left. Let us not forget the wonderful phrase in the Constitution when it said that the lasting peace, all of you know that. I want to make use of that in this discussion. The peace, if it is not to fail, should be constructed upon intellectual and moral solidarity. We are claiming that through intellectual and more solidarity, we are going to make peace in the world.

122.4 Now, look at this split here. It is not beautiful that we witness such a big split in this room. Then what about the elements of intellectual and moral solidarity? How we can provide it, provide us with that? That our Constitution said that

without that we cannot think of ever-lasting peace and intellectual and moral solidarity is an art, and in an art form, is important. How are we going to decide? The form that we follow in UNESCO to come to a common conclusion, a convention, something called a document that all of us agree, that process is brilliant. Look at the history. History projects of UNESCO of writing history books. We have history of Africa, history of Central Asia, history of humanity. All of this. One of these history books took us 40 years. Why? Because UNESCO was not only going to write the book, a history book. UNESCO wanted to write a history for Africa, for central Asia, for somewhere else, that is all that is covered around that area, accepted and it was for this reason that one project took us 30 years, 40 years. It is educative. The process has some meaning. And this is the important point of form when we discuss in UNESCO.

122.5 Let us come to the point under discussion. Rotation is wonderful. Inclusion is wonderful. I am not talking about that. Nobody doubts it. Everybody in this room wants a more powerful UNESCO, but we see this split in method. All of us want inclusion, rotation, but the problem is, how? And through which mechanism? Let me give you an example. Today, out of six geographical groups in this house, five of them had a clean slate in the election for the Executive Board. I belong to the Asia and the Pacific group. It is a very diversified group. It is the first time that we came to a clean slate. How? It was through dialogue. In 1998, I was Chairperson of the ASPAC Group. At that time, I tried to find a mechanism that gradually from committees and commissions come to a method that you can find a clean slate. And now, we succeeded. We were successful. This means that there are other ways that we can try for.

122.6 My question is that in the issue of having a better Executive Board, did we exhaust all our efforts for discussion or for dialogue? I have been in this house for a long time. I witnessed that, yes, it was frequently the discussion of the relations between the three organs in governance, but over this issue under discussion, there has been some negotiation and dialogue, but I did not witness any structure. What we need is a structured dialogue, not negotiation in the corners here and there for such an important issue.

122.7 When I talk about dialogue, I do not mean exactly negotiation. I mentioned this frequently. Dialogue is different. Dialogue is the performance of the art of listening to the other side. Do we exhaust ourselves? For that, do we exhaust the capacity, the underutilized capacity of geographical groups? To find the way, did we discuss any possibility of any voluntary gesture in our geographical groups, or not? It is debate and dialogue that bring a refreshing breath, to intoxicate us so that we perform our task with ease. Indeed, they are a wave that propels us in our ambition to fulfil all the facets of UNESCO's sacred mission. The Executive Board can surely be most effective when our intellectual endeavours become more collective. And this is from UNESCO's side of my experience.

122.8 Let us go to the other side. The philosopher William Ockham used this principle in philosophy of science and I think it would apply here. Please pay attention to that. I am coming to my conclusion. He had the principle called Ockham's Razor. Suppose that there exists two explanations for an occurrence. In this case, the one that requires the smallest number of hypotheses is usually the correct one. The more assumptions you have to make, the more unlikely an explanation. Let us try that through dialogue, we would decrease the level of assumption, because sometimes if we hurry up and if we move for the amendment in a hurry, we may not see some side effects that none of us would like. Because, yes, we are talking about a better Board, but at the same time, we want a real Board. And to find the mechanism how we can have both? Why don't we exhaust ourselves? For dialogue? For thinking of morality? And intellectual and moral solidarity of humankind.

122.9 I think if they come across an unhealthy body in some corners, surgery is the last way. Let us not jump in a hurry for surgery. Probably we may be able to find other ways. Therefore, I would like to invite for more time, more dialogue and more possibility of listening to each other and finding other ways towards a structured convincing process, not giving so much value to numbers.

122.10 Therefore, I would like to summarize, the paradigm that I am inviting to for a better release, time for discussion in the future with Mr President. Jalāl ad-Dīn Rumi, from my country and your country, and he is well known in many other places, said that out beyond the idea, yes, there are two ideas: This side or that side. But I am suggesting beyond that idea of right- or wrong-doing, there lies a field. When the soul lies down on that beautiful grass, the world is too full to talk about. We shall meet there. We shall meet there, where ideas, languages and even the phrases of each other do not make any sense. We shall meet there. Thank you.

123. **The President:**

Thank you very much Ambassador Jalali. It is my duty to say that we have just listened to the crystallization of 2,000 years of thoughts, because you and I are both somewhat classicists. I am sure you do not use Twitter, if you are not forced to! I thank you, regardless of the political undertones, I think this was a wise speech and it really juxtaposed very well to the atmosphere. We are seeing the benefit of the wider talks and we should not secede at all from this. I have important speakers on my list who were not able to take the floor. I believe, yes, I will give Estonia the floor. I believe we should continue this. There will be no point tomorrow afternoon asking for this or that. We have left a very small number of countries. It would be more than a pity if they are not able to speak. They should also speak. I will announce their names. Estonia will speak, then tomorrow Indonesia, Algeria, Zimbabwe, Fiji, Switzerland, Pakistan, Jordan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Saint Lucia, Norway and Palestine. I am prepared to listen to two more crystallizing speeches from both sides, after all this. And then we will be enabled to move to whatever, voting this or voting that. Each group will have the higher moral ground because of all these speeches and it will give all of us higher, stronger morality. So there will be no reason not to listen to Zimbabwe, Switzerland, Pakistan and others. I propose that we can try to exhaust this list tonight but there is not much point in it. We will convene tomorrow afternoon at 3 p.m., continue the discussion and let the debate evolve into other areas, which we all expect. Now, Estonia will speak and then we will begin tomorrow with Indonesia, and we will continue with nine or 10 more countries and we will have a natural atmosphere again. So Estonia, please.

124.1 **Estonia:**

Thank you very much, Mr President, and I would like to thank you also for your very able leadership that has indeed created this constructive atmosphere in this room where States are really listening to each other. Estonia firmly supports

this amendment to the Constitution and we wish to see it adopted. Estonia joined UNESCO in 1991 and has served as a Member of the Executive Board only once from 2013 to 2017. We benefited greatly from this responsibility to contribute fully to the work of UNESCO. Estonia is truly convinced that term limits would result in greater rotation of Member States in the Board, and consequently the Executive Board and the entire Organization would only benefit from greater diversity and inclusiveness, in the spirit of multilateralism and equal representation of all regions and views.

124.2 We believe the amendment will lead to strengthened governance and ownership and consequently to a stronger UNESCO. Based on precedents, we are convinced that this amendment does not create a new legal obligation, as it was correctly noted by the delegation of New Zealand and others earlier. There has not been question of a new legal obligation in the previous amendments of the Constitution, including for amendments concerning the Executive Board. Estonia values highly the consensus principle in UNESCO. However, the issue of rotation has been discussed in electoral groups and other fora for more than 10 years without any tangible results. Therefore, Estonia does not support any prolongation or postponement of this discussion. We believe the time has come to take action. Thank you very much.

125. **The President:**

Thank you. In the morning, as you know, there will be the elections for commissions and committees and then we meet again in this spirit. Yes, Denmark.

126. **Denmark:**

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Not fully agreeing with you, not wanting to prolong anything, but just one question. We will meet tomorrow at 3 o'clock and of course, we have other amendments. What is your plan or scenario for tomorrow? Do you foresee an evening session beyond 7:30 p.m. for tomorrow? Where we have to go from DR.1 to DR.2 presumably also to subsequent DRs. It is just for delegations to make plans and arrangements for the consideration of this. That would be one thing. The second thing is that I would also ask the co-sponsors of DR.1 if they could stay behind just a few more minutes and meet in Room IX, right after the adjournment of this session. Thank you very much and I am sorry for interrupting you. Thank you.

127. **The President:**

No, not at all. Yes, it should be consecutive. We will move from DR.1 to DR.2 and others. I think we should devote enough time. What is going on is really wonderful. Everyone has been eloquent. Everyone has been convincing. So, if the case is that, then we will help our minds to arrive to a better decision. This is the way to go in this very complicated subject. So I intend after 3 p.m. tomorrow, that we can continue but the number of speakers who have to take the floor tomorrow does not exceed 12 or 13. So we will have enough time to go forward. Thank you. Thank you so much. *The meeting is adjourned.*

The meeting rose at 7.35 p.m.