

After receiving official notification by the United States Secretary of State, as UNESCO Director-General, I wish to express profound regret at the decision of the United States of America to withdraw from UNESCO.

In 2011, when payment of US membership dues were suspended I said I was convinced UNESCO had never mattered so much for the United States, or the United States for UNESCO.

This is all the more true today, when the rise of violent extremism and terrorism calls for new long-term responses for peace and security, to counter racism and antisemitism, to fight ignorance and discrimination.

At the time when the fight against violent extremism calls for renewed investment in education, in dialogue among cultures to prevent hatred, it is deeply regrettable that the United States should withdraw from the United Nations agency leading these issues.

At the time when conflicts continue to tear apart societies across the world, it is deeply regrettable for the United States to withdraw from the United Nations agency promoting education for peace and protecting culture under attack.

This is why I regret the withdrawal of the United States.

This is a loss to UNESCO.

This is a loss to the United Nations family.

This is a loss for multilateralism.

UNESCO's task is not over, and we will continue taking it forward, to build a 21st century that is more just, peaceful, equitable, and, for this, UNESCO needs the leadership of all States.

UNESCO will continue to work for the universality of this Organization, for the values we share, for the objectives we hold in common, to strengthen a more effective multilateral order and a more peaceful, more just world.