

**GRULAC DRAFT STATEMENT FOR THE  
202th SESSION OF THE UNESCO EXECUTIVE BOARD**

*October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017*

- **Mr. President of the General Conference;**
- **Mr. Chairperson of the Executive Board;**
- **Ms. Director General,**
- **Dear colleagues,**

For Latin America and the Caribbean, the election of the new Director-General of UNESCO is the most significant decision which shall be adopted in this 202th Session of the Executive Board. Our future depends largely on this.

Despite the complexity and the magnitude of the challenges the new Administration will face, we believe that we are at the same time facing a tremendous opportunity to strengthen the Organization. To this end, the new Executive authority should contribute more transparently, together with the Member States, to solve the grave financial situation of the Organization, associated with the huge delay in the payment of contributions. The new authority must also push for changes required by UNESCO to reinforce its intergovernmental character and its international leadership in the mandates of its fields of competence, as well as in the achievement of the goals of the 2030 agenda.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We wish to recall in this assembly that the financial situation is one of the challenges facing the Organization to the achievement of its objectives and the implementation of its Programs.

In this context marked by budgetary and financial constraints we must try to improve our internal administrative methods and ensure that Member States comply with their obligations. We must be creative and effective. We have made much progress, but we must do even more.

In this Executive Board, we will have the opportunity to work on Documents 39 C/5 and 39 C/6, and together, they will give us budgetary and programmatic orientations for the next financial period. In addition, for the first time, we will benefit from the new format of these two documents, based on budgetary integration. In this framework, we reiterate that the regular budget must ensure adequate financial resources to all UNESCO sectors, in accordance with the priorities defined by the Member States.

As a result, we must ensure that this integration between regular budget and extra-budgetary funds really leads us to greater transparency and maximum efficiency of this Organization in the allocation and use of funds. This will be essential for creating work conditions conducive to the Structured Financing Dialogue, with a view to obtain a greater amount of resources.

**Dear delegates,**

Recent natural phenomena that have recently severely hit several Latin-American countries and Caribbean SIDS underline the need of working in an international framework to build global adaptation and mitigation responses.

In this context, GRULAC considers it also imperative to strengthen the UNESCO Emergency Plan for disaster situations, by allowing to it sufficient regular budget funding.

Likewise, GRULAC reiterates the need to ensure, in the framework of the 39 C/5 and the voluntary contributions, an adequate financing for the UNESCO Strategy for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict and for its Action Plan, which has integrated the subject of natural disasters. In this context, we encourage UNESCO to establish a mechanism allowing integrating all the Cultural Conventions with the objectives contained in this Strategy, in an effective and consistent manner.

On the other hand, the GRULAC expresses its disagreement with the recommendation of the External Auditor about the closure of the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture (IFPC), which is not supported by its Administrative Council. For this reason, we ask the Director-General to initiate a process of consultation with Member States, allowing to transparently assessing the future of this Fund.

We also reaffirm our commitment to the UNESCO Policy on Engaging with Indigenous Peoples (Item 9 of this Exécutif Board Session), convinced that it will contribute to the promotion and defense of peace, cultural diversity, indigenous languages, sustainable development and respect to the human rights of indigenous peoples.

**Mr. Chairman,**

GRULAC ratifies the commitment to Education and the central work of teachers in the attainment of objective 4 of the 2030 Agenda, in order to ensure quality, inclusive and equitable learning in all levels of education. In this regard, GRULAC reiterates its concern toward the alarming number of at least 750 million youth and adults who still cannot read and write, as one of the main challenges that UNESCO must deal with to promote literacy worldwide. Therefore, our Region supports the Draft decision on item 44 of the agenda.

The role of UNESCO is key to achieving the goals of the educational agenda by 2030, for this reason GRULAC reiterates its support to the actions of the ODS Education 2030 Steering Committee.

In the context of higher education, we thank the Secretariat maintaining in the 39 C/5 the financing of the IESALC activities at an adequate level, in order to promote academic mobility, technical and vocational training and the best practices.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Today, in times of a wide reflection on multilateralism and possible reforms to the United Nations system and its agencies, with a view to its adaptation to support countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, we express our will to achieve greater visibility of the programs led by UNESCO in the field of natural sciences for the benefit of its Member States.

The leadership of the UNESCO in the sciences should be strengthened across the United Nations system, in order that the activities and results in science, technology and innovation programs, as the International Hydrological Programme or Man and Biosphere, continue to contribute in favor of the preservation of the environment, sustainability of biodiversity and in the fight against climate change.

**Dear Colleagues,**

Return to the Humanities is a priority for concretizing the mandate of UNESCO in the construction of peace. Hence the importance of the Sector of Social Sciences with programs such as MOST, which should be strengthened to increasingly contribute to social transformation policies aimed at fighting against inequality and the eradication of poverty, with a clear linking with regional contexts.

On the other hand, UNESCO must deepen its engagement with young people and promoting their participation. In this context, we find in the Kazan Action Plan and the International Convention against Doping in Sport, two big means to empower new and future generations.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Information and communication technologies can be a powerful tool to reduce inequalities and promote sustainable well-being. In this context, the Information and Communication Sector meets two main objectives of UNESCO: the promotion of freedom of expression and access to information together with the development of communications. These two parameters must also be priorities, and include the IPDC and the IFAP activities.

The recent Expert Meeting on the Dark Net has allowed the IFAP to fully accomplish its role, promoting a new reflection around societal themes of great importance.

**Mr. Chairman, Dear colleagues,**

Finally, GRULAC expresses its appreciation to the Working Group on governance and aims that its recommendations will effectively and consistently promote the political and administrative reforms required by UNESCO, including the reaffirmation of the General Conference's leadership as the most universal of their governing bodies. Therefore, we

confirm our unyielding commitment to insure that the governance process will mark the beginning of a new era of this Organization, ratifying its foundational objectives, its intergovernmental character and its ethical and intellectual contribution in favor of peace and sustainable development.

**Thank you.**