

Speech 202 Executive Board

Mr. Chairman of the Executive Board

Mme. Director General

Excellencies,

On behalf of the Sultanate of Oman, I would like to emphasize three vitally important messages – the importance of leadership, the need for accountability and finally to reaffirm our shared commitment to sustainable development.

We as responsible and accountable member states are at an important crossroads and the decisions we make at this Session will pave the way for robust and evidence-based resolutions to be made during the upcoming General Conference.

Thus we have a number of critical choices to make that ultimately will influence the future of our Organisation.

At the same time, we are approaching a vital juncture of electing a new Director General. Can I take this opportunity of thanking the outgoing Director General for her leadership.

While her convictions were full of drive with clear ideas nevertheless, reform within the organization continues to move at a gradual pace due to drastic budget cuts and laissez-faire decision making processes.

Therefore, the incoming Director General must show determination to strengthen communication as well as to address the financial impediments facing UNESCO.

Accordingly, we need to reiterate the need for sharper resolutions and meticulous-decision making for the organization.

Hence, it is vital that we elect a leader who can demonstrate impeccable leadership, **qualities** of dialogue, strength and audacity with resilience and resourcefulness, capable of making proactive changes to ensure the continuing relevance of the organization.

Equally, proficiency in meeting the challenges of austerity and proving value for money must be confirmed. As well as sound leadership skills, we must recognize the need for transparency to ensure **accountability** in each decision-making process.

All over the globe we are witnessing examples of escalated violence, horrific hatred and sometimes blind intolerance. But none of this is innate. Intolerance and disharmony are based on ignorance, on prejudices that are taught, in minds that were not trained to think critically.

This is why quality education is so crucial, and why the core mandate of UNESCO is so urgently needed.

Values of dialogue, understanding, diversity, and inclusion are essential to build peaceful, sustainable and harmonious societies; and it is the responsibility of UNESCO to ensure that these values are promoted, implemented and preserved.

They must include transparency, accountability, good governance, an evaluation culture and, above all else, strong ethical standards. These principles ought to be a common yardstick, embodied by the whole Organisation, up to the highest levels, because nobody is above them.

Finally, one of the major aspects of UNESCO's delivery is **sustainable development**. Therefore, during this session, we are presenting an item on sustainable tourism.

We hope it will contribute, in its own way, to reinforcing some of the existing values of UNESCO: sustainability, respect for the environment and heritage, as well as cultural dialogue.

Indeed, UNESCO is committed to sustainability in all its aspects, especially in heritage preservation which is beneficial to both tourism and cultural awareness.

Preservation and development of local communities, as well as protection of natural and cultural heritage are crucial concepts. In line with these values, the Sultanate of Oman has adopted a long term strategy for sustainable tourism.

This reaffirmation and commitment is fully aligned with UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Excellencies,

In light of the continued difficulties which we are facing, both internally as well as globally- UNESCO's message of commitment towards peace and stability has never been so imperative in a world shaken by turbulence and unpredictability.

Hence, we must all remain fully focused and committed to the future of our Organization.

Thus, it is our duty to work constructively, to think strategically, and most importantly, to embody the fundamental values of UNESCO at all times.

Allow me to end by quoting the celebrated poet **Jalal ad-din Rumi**: *“Listen with ears of tolerance, See with eyes of Compassion, Speak with the language of Love. and in our case may I add - Speak with the language of Unity and Peace.”*

Thank you

