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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

202nd session of the Executive Board of UNESCO

Address by

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Plenary Debate

Mr Chairman of the Executive Board of UNESCO

Madam Director-General,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues,

I am very pleased to be here with you today, having heard your interventions at the beginning of such a special session of the Executive Board. Why “special” some may ask? This session is special given the following context: We will be dealing with the delicate recommendation of a candidate for the key position of Director-General of UNESCO; we will be considering a new Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5) for adoption by the General Conference this coming month; and several Member States present in this room are coming to the end of their respective mandates.

First, I would like to warmly thank the Chairman of the Executive Board, Ambassador Worbs, for the leadership provided to the Board. Mr Chair, I have no doubt that all delegations present in this room agree with me in acknowledging your constant resolve and commitment to ensure fruitful outcomes during the deliberations of the Board. Your participation and support during our three-organ consultations, together with the Director-General, have allowed us to share views and map the way forward, in order to align the operational steps of our respective missions.

In the same vein, I would like to sincerely thank all members of the Executive Board for your valuable contributions, your commitment to reflect on, monitor and assess the work of the Organization and ensure effective preparation for the work of the forthcoming session of the General Conference. In particular, I wish to acknowledge and thank all your positive comments, made in this room since yesterday, on the work led by the Working Group on the Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of the Organization.

I would also like pay tribute to the Director-General. Madam Director-General, you have not only led the Secretariat of this Organization during a period that will go down in the annals of our Organization as one of the most difficult ones, but together with your management team and members of the Secretariat, have persevered to keep our Organization afloat and relevant. I would like to thank you, members of your management team and the entire Secretariat for your dedication to our Organization.

I myself will be coming to the end of my mandate as President of the 38th session of the General Conference. Throughout my term, I have attempted to adhere to the **principles of equality and inclusivity** to guide my actions.

Naturally, we are very diverse and unequal in character, yet equality must apply as far as **opportunities** are concerned. Throughout the deliberations of the Working Group on the Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of UNESCO, this principle of equality of opportunities, leading Member States on the path for a continuous search for inclusion at all governance levels, was a key founding common denominator in all our deliberations and subsequent recommendations. This session of the Board will thus have the opportunity to appreciate this call in view of finalising its comments on the Report of the Working Group which is submitted to the General Conference as Document 39 C/20 for its review and adoption as appropriate.

Excellencies,

You will recall that at the last session of the Executive Board, I respectfully pleaded with all those with outstanding balances to settle such balances, while thanking all those Member States who had timely honoured the payment of their assessed contributions and, as such, complied with their constitutional obligations to our Organization.

I am aware that the situation has evolved to date not for the best – for as the Director-General pointed out “Our Organisation has reached breaking point”. I am therefore reiterating my plea to all those who have appeared to remain both silent and unresponsive to comply as the current scenario depicted in Document 202 EX/31 Part I is a severe impairment of our Organization’s programme execution efforts.

Excellencies,

Today, with all recommendations expected from this Board to feed the deliberations of the General Conference, I am calling upon all Member States to exercise their **good conscience**.

We, for sure, cannot ignore the financial constraints faced by each of our respective nations. Yet, one could be surprised by the lively and lengthy debates on a choice between a budget envelope of either US\$ 667 million or US\$ 653 million for two years, considering that the difference between the two options amounts to only **US\$ 7 million a year**. Wouldn’t it be a better use of Member States’ time to spend ample debates on the separate issue of enhancing the efficiency of the results delivery of the Organization?

In any of the scenarios, our commitment to the values and mission of the Organization must be our guiding principle in mobilizing adequate resources needed for the implementation of our Programme.

In addition, the good conscience of Member States should also be an essential feature of the decision-making process at the time of the finalization of the forthcoming election processes, both for the position of Director-General, and the membership renewal of the Executive Board.

Regarding the DG's election process, we should keep in mind that, as one Member State noted, the new DG should not be regarded as a messiah. It is incumbent upon us as Member States to create a conducive environment to allow for smooth programme implementation by the Secretariat.

Regarding the renewal of the membership of the Executive Board, one may be inspired by the progressive ideas advanced in the course of the debates of the **Working Group on the Governance, Working Methods and Procedures of the Organization**. While some Member States had expressed the need to provide some formal regulation to the rotation of Member States representation on the Executive Board, others advocated for a flexible approach founded on self-abstention. This open approach does not only build on an orderly functioning and mutual trust between Member States, but also consolidates the principles of fairness and inclusion.

Oscar Wilde once said that "A pessimist is somebody who complains about the noise when opportunity knocks." Let's be optimistic for the future of this Organization. Let's fully benefit from the opportunities at our disposal, let's take decisions in good conscience, always promoting the high values of UNESCO.

Contributing to peace, promoting fairness, inclusion and mutual understanding is never simple, **nor out of reach!** However, I strongly believe that this should gain traction in the fora of our Governing Bodies.

Excellencies,

I wish you all a very fruitful session.

Spasibo!