

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. DARKO TANASKOVIĆ,
PERMANENT DELEGATE OF SERBIA TO UNESCO

202nd Session of the Executive Board

Paris, 09 October 2017

President of the General Conference,

Chairman of the Executive Board,

Director General,

Distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the very moment when the membership of our Organization is about to elect the new Director General, these words have to be reiterated: in today's world at the crossroads, UNESCO's challenges are numerous and critical – its' founding ideals and principles are being distorted, and the rise of politicization, structural, programmatic and financial crisis is weakening its world-wide credibility. Still, this Organization is one of the few remaining collective hopes for securing a responsible care for the values that guarantee the survival of humanity. Serbia welcomes and is encouraged by the growing recognition among Member States of this collective responsibility. The resistance to politically instrumentalize UNESCO has indeed led to some concrete actions, while the implementation of the more effective programmatic prioritization and objective analysis of Organization's capabilities are under way. Serbia is ready, as always and according to its capacities, to join, support and contribute to these positive processes.

We stand by UNESCO's continuous efforts to bring about visible and sustainable results in achieving the 2030 Agenda, including ensuring quality education for all, good health and wellbeing and gender equality.

Serbia highly values UNESCO's active engagement in global coordination mechanisms aimed at responding to the education needs of people affected by crises in different parts of the world, and supports the Organization's intention to further enhance learning opportunities for refugees and IDP's. In this regard, we warmly welcome the fact that the draft Programme and Budget for the next biennium reflects the commitment UNESCO had made to the people in crises and vulnerable situations.

Combatting violence, whether it is caused by extremist beliefs or by retrograde logic vis-à-vis gender roles, remains, in our view, one of the most important tasks of UNESCO. In that context, Serbia wholeheartedly supports all actions aimed at preserving endangered cultural heritage of humanity. We also support capacity building efforts on school-related gender-based violence, led by UNESCO, in many Member states. We welcome activities aimed at reducing the gender gap in STEM, including the promotion of gender equality in STEM education.

Mr. Chairman,

In keeping with our support for the ongoing efforts to improve the governance of UNESCO, I will finish here, but not before expressing Serbia's gratitude to the outgoing President of the 38th General Conference, Mr. Stanley Mutumba Simaata, and you Mr. Chairman of the Executive Board, for sincere efforts aimed at improving the governance of UNESCO's governing bodies and strengthening the spirit of consensus and teamwork.

We would also like to express our appreciation to the Director General, Mrs. Irina Bokova, for her responsible and competent leadership of this Organization in the past eight difficult years and wish her all the best in her life and future endeavors.

Thank you.