

**President of the General Conference,
Director General,
Excellencies,**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you
on behalf of the Norway.

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As one of the founding members of UNESCO, this organisation
is important to Norway. It embodies many of our core values.

The first line in the UNESCO Constitution reads;
“Since wars begin in the minds of men,
it is in the minds of men
that the defences of peace
must be constructed”.

This is not a hollow phrase. UNESCO means values, core
values for all of us.

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UNESCO values is,
The opportunity for all to learn,
to educate for inclusion,
to enforce critical thinking,
and to fight xenophobia, racism, suppression,
and discrimination of all sorts.

UNESCO values also mean;
That we must carefully safeguard
freedom of expression and free media.
That we must fight echo-chambers where hate thrives
and social stigma flourishes.
That we must stimulate independent and open research
that lets us make decisions
based on knowledge –
not on alternative facts.

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UNESCO values states that it is worthwhile to safeguard our common culture and that it is vital we protect our planet from being destroyed.

This is what UNESCO means to me – and to Norway.

And this is what we should never forget in our discussions. We must rise above the nitty gritty in endless negotiations.

We must keep our eyes on our common vision for a better future.

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Mr. President,

The *Sustainable Development Goals* work as our stars for navigation.

Norway has partnered with UNESCO to strengthen global education cooperation in order to more effectively reach the SDG 4. We fully support the new Global Education Cooperation Mechanism.

Education is a powerful weapon to fight social and economic inequalities - Leaving no one behind.

Norway is proud to co-host the second *Global Disability Summit* in February 2022, together with Ghana and the International Disability Alliance.

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Two years ago, the General Conference adopted “*The Global Convention for*

*Recognition of
Higher Education Qualifications”.*

This Convention is important
and I urge all countries to ratify the Convention,
so it can enter into force.

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Norway has been member of
the World Heritage Committee
for the last four years.

The World Heritage sites
are unique masterpieces.
Created by nature or mankind,
we want to protect them.

Please accept a friendly reminder
from an outgoing member
that we all have a responsibility
to do what we can
to uphold the integrity and credibility of the list.

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Director General,

The two new *Recommendations in Science*
are important, timely and relevant.

The ethics of artificial intelligence is important.
We are all aware of how vulnerable we are
in a world more and more controlled by
a few high tech companies.

We need open science
to make knowledge available to all.
Research paid for by the public,
must be fully available to the public –
globally.

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The international *decade of indigenous languages* is ahead of us.

It is a strong commitment to save and to strengthen indigenous peoples' languages.

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Freedom of expression should be secured through free media.
Editors and journalists need special protection.

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Friends of UNESCO,

Norway is a strong supporter of multilateralism and of the UN-system.

We hold the values of UNESCO high.

We support UNESCO's strategic transformation and endorse the *transversal approach of the Medium-Term Strategy*, based on a human rights approach and with a focus on gender equality and Priority Africa.

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As part of a voluntary Nordic practice of rotation, Norway fully supports Iceland's candidature for *the Executive Board*.

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Let me end where I started, citing *the UNESCO Constitution* stating:

"...that peace must therefore be founded,

*if it is not to fail,
upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind".*

This is still a beautiful message.

Thank you!