

Check Against Delivery

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Statement by H.E. Ambassador Mr. Carsten Staur on behalf of Denmark's Minister of Children and Education

Mr. President, Ministers, Delegates

The Danish Government would like to congratulate the Director-General on her re-election.

We are committed and ready to engage with UNESCO and other member states in order to adapt the organization and the entire UN System to a new era, as called for by the UN Secretary-General in his most recent report Our Common Agenda.

At the heart of human rights is a full use of the UN human rights monitoring mechanism and stronger participation in civil society.

Some states have used the fight against COVID-19 to restrict freedom of expression for journalists, artists and scientific researchers – three groups covered by UNESCO's mandate.

As the UN specialized agency with a mandate to "promote the free flow of ideas by word and image", UNESCO should always defend freedom of expression.

We need to improve the organization's monitoring system, so it provides a more complete picture of the situation around the globe. We need to track progress, but also to identify problems and challenges, making full use of the existing frameworks within UNESCO.

Denmark acknowledges UNESCO's leading role in the coordination of the international collaboration – especially when it comes to the achievement of sustainable development goal four.

UNESCO has a leading global position in influencing education of children and youth and UNESCO standards often guide local efforts. A leading position that, perhaps now more than ever, can change the world.

Children and youth have taken to the streets, demanding that world leaders take responsibility for the climate, and many children and youth are engaged in making our education institutions climate role models. Climate change is arguably the greatest challenge of our time. No corner of the world is immune from the consequences of climate change.

An important step towards a green transition is that we have enough skilled workers to advance the practical use of clean and sustainable technologies. In Denmark, we strongly believe that vocational education will become a prominent gateway to green and sustainable technologies.

We cannot just think our way out of the climate crises. We need skilled workers who can build the climate friendly houses, offshore windmills and all the climate solutions, that the world will need and demand.

Therefore, the Danish Government aims at including sustainable development as a general part of our school system. For example by including sustainable development in the legislative objective for Vocational Education and Training.

We believe that providing children and youth with skills for the future in a time of climate-change is a crucial tool for each one of them and for a green world.

Denmark strongly supports target 4.7 about global citizenship. In Denmark, the law states that the Danish Folkeskole has to provide pupils with knowledge and skills, which prepare them for further education and make them want to learn more. Make them familiar with culture and history and give them an understanding of other countries and cultures.

School must help the pupils understand human interaction with nature and promote the individual student's development. The school has to prepare the students for participation, co-responsibility, rights and duties in a society with freedom and democracy. The work of the school must be characterized by intellectual freedom, equality and democracy.

UNESCO certified projects, such as World Heritage Sites and Biosphere Reserves, are critical in helping to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Global exchanges of experience and best practices within UNESCO can inspire us all and help accelerate actions towards 2030.

With this in mind, Denmark has decided to present its candidature for election, during this General Conference, to the International Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program for the term 2021-2025.

We hope to work with partners across the world to advance this agenda.

Denmark is committed to a strong and efficient UNESCO, within the United Nations system. We strongly believe in rules-based international cooperation, in working together to attain progress and fighting injustice.

In UNESCO, we need more Member States undertaking and sharing that responsibility.

That is why we favor more rotation in the Executive Board. We need to demonstrate that we are able to accommodate the longstanding call for more inclusivity and diversity.

We are happy and proud to extend our support, together with the other Nordic countries, for the candidature of Iceland to the Executive Board, following a stellar contribution of Finland over the last four years.

Thank you for your attention.