

Fifth plenary meeting of the 41st session of the General Conference

Thursday 11 November 2021 at 10.10 a.m.

President: **Mr Irazabal Mourão** (Brazil)

General policy debate (*continued*)

1. **The President:**

Ladies and gentlemen, I would ask you to please take your seats so we can see if we have a quorum. Ladies and gentlemen, let us start with the general policy debate. We will continue with our national statements. I remind you once again of the time limit – you are going to help, all of us, to keep within the six-minute limit. We will start today and I will call His Excellency Mr Bárður av Steig Nielsen, Prime Minister of Faroes. We will see a pre-recorded video. You have the floor, sir.

2.1 **Mr Nielsen** (Faroes):

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General and distinguished delegates. Living in an island nation in the middle of the North Atlantic, the ocean has always been vast with vast distances, vast resources and vast opportunities. But over the last decades, that perception has changed. We have come to realize that our common Earth has its limits and if we do not change our way of life, it may not provide vast opportunities anymore. Climate change poses a global threat that affects all of us. We live in a time when it is more and more clear that we cannot face global challenges on our own and that we depend upon each other, a time where international cooperation and partnership is key to sustainable development and where the role of UNESCO is more important than ever. We must change our minds to change the way we live and we must do it together.

2.2 We highly appreciate UNESCO's clear focus on the Sustainable Development Goals and would like to thank UNESCO's Secretariat for the excellent work with the Medium-Term Strategy. We are now in the crucial decade leading up to 2030, and UNESCO is doing a great job. This decade is also the United Nations Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development. The work of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the collaboration of numerous stakeholders from all parts of society is crucial to ensure that policy makers all over the world have access to the best possible ocean sciences and services. We highly appreciate the action taken, and the Faroe Islands are ready to join the collaboration and to take on its share of responsibility.

2.3 As a large ocean nation, we are fully aware that the ocean holds the key to an equitable and sustainable planet. Furthermore, as recent scientific developments strongly indicate, the ocean may also hold the key to combating climate change. It is difficult to comprehend the speed of change that our societies have undergone in our lifetime. Little more than 100 years ago, the small, clinker-built rowing boat was the primary use for boat fishing and transport around the Faroe Islands. The boat is still in use, but is now mainly used for leisure and rowing competitions. We find that the Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage is a valuable tool not only for the safeguarding of traditions and knowledge, but also to engage people across generations and communities. Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is not about going back in time, but about acknowledging the transmission of traditions and knowledge as a fundamental part of sustainable development.

2.4 It is in the cross-sectional work that the full value of the UNESCO mandate unfolds at this General Conference. We celebrate UNESCO's 75th anniversary. We celebrate history and set our hopes for the future. The Youth Forum will address how the negative effects of the pandemic on youth can be fought. We appreciate the initiative from UNESCO and wish the participants a fruitful 12th Youth Forum. I will take this opportunity to welcome the Åland Islands as an Associate Member of UNESCO. Åland Islands is already a cherished partner in the Nordic operation, and we look very much forward to working alongside the Åland Islands as an Associate Member of UNESCO. Thank you for your attention.

3. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. I now call on His Excellency, Mr José Manuel Albares Bueno, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation of Spain. You have the floor, sir.

4.1 **Sr. Albares Bueno** (España):

Señor Presidente de la Conferencia General, señora Directora General, excelencias, señoras y señores: este año celebramos el 75º aniversario de la fundación de la UNESCO. Es la ocasión para recordar la historia y la vitalidad de nuestra Organización y renovar nuestro compromiso con sus valores fundacionales. Hoy, todavía más que en 1945, la educación, las ciencias, la cultura, la comunicación y la información son herramientas poderosas para avanzar hacia un mundo más pacífico y más próspero.

4.2 Nos hallamos en un contexto internacional nuevo, condicionado por la pandemia de la COVID-19 que ha puesto especialmente de manifiesto el papel de la ciencia. Gracias a la aplicación de las investigaciones más avanzadas han podido desarrollarse vacunas en un tiempo récord, lo que nos permite vislumbrar por fin la esperada salida. Para ello, es todavía necesario que la vacunación alcance a todo el mundo, de manera que podamos poner fin con éxito a esta pandemia. España está plenamente comprometida con este objetivo, ya hemos donado más de 25 millones de vacunas y vamos a donar otros 25 millones antes de la primavera de 2022.

4.3 Por el contrario, en materia de educación y de cultura hemos sufrido sin paliativos las adversas consecuencias de la COVID-19. Algunos países más desarrollados, aquellos con acceso generalizado a la energía eléctrica y a Internet, hemos podido atenuar los efectos de la pandemia en estos ámbitos. En España, gracias a las nuevas tecnologías y a la entrega y dedicación de los profesionales de la enseñanza, se ha podido dar continuidad a los programas educativos.

Somos muy conscientes de que ello no ha sido así en todas partes. Tenemos el firme compromiso de trabajar para superar esta situación y para alcanzar la igualdad de oportunidades en materia de educación en todos los países.

4.4 Por lo que se refiere al mundo de la cultura, tanto los creadores como los consumidores han sufrido una de sus peores crisis. Ello merece una reflexión sosegada que tenga en cuenta las vulnerabilidades de estos sectores, sus fortalezas y sus debilidades, las de la creación y las del acceso a la cultura como un derecho de todos.

4.5 Señor Presidente, señora Directora General, la Conferencia General de este año es especialmente importante. Contamos con adoptar la nueva estrategia de la UNESCO para los próximos ocho años. Su orden del día incluye iniciativas muy relevantes para el futuro, como la recomendación sobre la ética de la inteligencia artificial, que será un instrumento muy útil en el desarrollo de esta tecnología clave en los próximos años.

4.6 Quiero destacar en particular, nuestro apoyo a dos ejes básicos de la actuación en UNESCO la prioridad “África” y “la igualdad de género”. Respecto de África, consideramos urgente prestar una atención singularizado al continente que permita dar respuesta a sus especificidades en materia de patrimonio, de formación técnica, de educación y, por supuesto, de cooperación científica y de apoyo en el reto de vacunación contra la COVID-19. La igualdad de género es asimismo una de las prioridades de España, tanto en nuestras políticas internas como en nuestra acción exterior. Trabajaremos activamente dentro de la Organización para desarrollar programas que permitan alcanzar este objetivo en todos los países.

4.7 Esta Conferencia General coincide con el inicio de un nuevo mandato en la Dirección de esta Organización. Tras la pandemia nos enfrentamos al reto de recuperar el tiempo perdido, renovar estructuras, agilizar nuestro funcionamiento y ofrecer soluciones al diagnóstico que nos deja la realidad actual. Señora Directora General, puede contar con España en el desempeño de su relevante tarea al frente de la Organización para hacer frente a estos desafíos.

4.8 A nivel nacional, trabajamos con el fin de que los valores y principios de la UNESCO, sus actividades y sus mensajes permeen en la sociedad española. No lo hacemos solo desde el Gobierno, numerosas instituciones privadas y públicas son muy activas en este campo. Hace unos días, la Federación Española de Asociaciones, Centros y Clubs de la UNESCO organizó un acto de conmemoración de este 75º aniversario de la UNESCO que fue un gran éxito en España. La sociedad civil española se siente cada vez más identificada con los programas de la UNESCO. Por número de inscripciones, somos el cuarto país en la lista de Patrimonio Mundial, el quinto en la lista de Patrimonio Inmaterial, el segundo en el número de parques mundiales y el primero tanto en el número de reservas de la biosfera como en cátedras UNESCO. Los españoles somos, por tanto, embajadores globales del mensaje de la UNESCO y estamos muy orgullosos de ello.

4.9 Señor Presidente, señora Directora General, estamos convencidos que esta 41ª Conferencia General será un éxito. La UNESCO cuenta en España con una base muy sólida, el firme compromiso del Gobierno de España y el de una vasta red de actores implicados en los distintos ámbitos de trabajo. Muchas gracias.

5. **The President:**

I call now His Excellency Mr Sirojiddin Muhriddin, Minister of the Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan. You have the floor, Excellency.

6.1 **Mr Muhriddin (Tajikistan):**

Mr President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. At the outset, I should like to congratulate the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay and the President of the General Conference, Mr Santiago Mourão, on their election to high positions. I welcome this opportunity to express my gratitude for the excellent arrangement of today's Conference to its organizers.

6.2 Tajikistan, as an active Member of UNESCO, develops and promotes various projects in the fields of culture, science and education and makes a valuable contribution to the protection and promotion of the world heritage and culture. It is worth mentioning that one of the historical sites of Tajikistan, which is inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List is the ancient town of Sarazm. Particularly, I would like to highlight that the exhibition of historical items entitled “Tajikistan The Land of Golden Rivers”, also presents the findings of the ancient town of Sarazm. Last month, this exhibition was inaugurated at the Musée Guimet, the museum of Asian art in Paris with the participation of the Presidents of Tajikistan and France. About 300 artifacts from antiquity, the history of the Tajik people and valuable items on the history of our ancestors, from the British Museum known as the Amu Darya treasure are displayed at the exhibition. Along with this, with the participation of the President of Tajikistan, His Excellency Mr Emomali Rahmon and the UNESCO Director-General Ms Audrey Azoulay, we also once again held the Tajik Cultural Day of Unity at UNESCO Headquarters.

6.3 It is very symbolic that these events coincide with the celebration of the 30th anniversary of State independence of the Republic of Tajikistan. I would like also to mention that Tajikistan celebrated the 5,500th anniversary of the ancient town of Sarazm and the 700th anniversary of Kamoli Khujandi, which were inscribed on UNESCO's list of anniversaries for 2020-2021. The natural site Tajik National Park, the ancient town of Sarazm, the national music Shashmaqom, International Day of Nowruz, the national dish Oshi palav and Chakan, the art of embroidery in Tajikistan are outstanding examples of rich cultural and historical heritage of the Tajik people, which are recognized by UNESCO and inscribed into the World Heritage List.

6.4 In 2017, the Pamir mountains of Tajikistan were included for the third time on the list of 100 best tourist destinations in the world. The National Park of Tajikistan, which is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, is the business card of Tajikistan in terms of eco-tourism and mountaineering opportunities. The Government of Tajikistan has also prepared its unique landscapes as a universal natural heritage to be included in the brand-new UNESCO Global GeoParks nomination UNESCO. The Government of Tajikistan in order to preserve and pass on to future generations the art of Falak singing, which has long existed in the culture of mountainous Tajiks, has submitted a request to the UNESCO

Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage to inscribe it on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

6.5 Distinguished participants, as you are aware, Tajikistan is a country that proactively promotes global water and climate issues. One of the alarming global challenges is the fast melting of glaciers. This process can be observed in the example of melting glaciers of Tajikistan that over several past decades from among 13,000 glaciers of Tajikistan, more than 1,000 of them have completely melted down. Given the serious consequences of this ongoing process, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan proposed to declare 2025 the International Year of Glacier Protection and set a specific date for World Glacier Day, as well as to establish the International Fund for Glacier Preservation to take practical steps in protecting glaciers as the main source of clean water. In this context, we welcome the project reducing vulnerabilities of populations in the Central Asian region from glacier lake outburst floods in a changing climate, which began in April 2021. I am confident that such projects will play a significant role in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change.

6.6 Ladies and gentlemen, in the background of climate change, preservation of safe drinking water sources has become one of the major issues of the planet. In June 2022, in the framework of Dushanbe water process, we will host the High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development" in cooperation with the United Nations and other partners. The Dushanbe Conference will be pivotal in the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on the Mid-term Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Water Decade in 2023 in New York, co-chaired by Tajikistan and the Netherlands.

6.7 Mr President, an intricate and complicated situation in Afghanistan has become nowadays the source of our and the world community's grave concern. We cannot be indifferent toward the destiny of the neighbouring country and its people. Moreover, due to the existing situation Afghanistan is presently exposed to a serious humanitarian crisis: massive starvation. In this regard, Tajikistan appeals to the world community, including the concerned States, not to be indifferent with regard to the tragic and grave situation in Afghanistan and to take urgent, practical measures to render targeted humanitarian assistance to its people through the international and humanitarian organizations. We also call upon UNESCO to mobilize all resources and opportunities to promote the fields of science and education, culture and preservation of genuine values of all ethnic groups in this country. Mr President, in conclusion, I would like once again to appreciate the organizers of this Conference. I thank you for your attention. Thank you.

7. The President:

Thank you very much Your Excellency. Now I call His Excellency Riad al-Maliki, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Palestine. You have the floor, Excellency.

١-٨ السيد المالكي (فلسطين):

سعادة رئيس المؤتمر، سعادة السيدة المدير العامة، سعادة رئيس المجلس التنفيذي، أصحاب المعالي والسعادة، السيدات والسادة، أقف أمامكم اليوم بكل فخر وتواضع بمناسبة الذكرى العاشرة لعضوية دولة فلسطين في منظمة اليونسكو العريقة والنبيلة، حيث عملنا خلال تلك السنوات العشر على مواءمة انضمامنا إلى المنظمة واتفاقياتها المختلفة، واتخاذ العديد من الخطوات للاستجابة للتحديات المتعلقة بحقوق المرأة وتمكينها في المجتمع والمساواة بين الجنسين. وأود هنا أن أهنيء السيدة أزولاي على إعادة انتخابها مديرة عامة، ونعرب لها عن دعمنا لعملها من أجل رفعة وحسن تواجد منظمنا وتنفيذ ولايتها، متمنين لها النجاح. وأرغب في تقديم الشكر لأعضاء مكتب اليونسكو في فلسطين على جهودهم.

٢-٨ واسمحوا لي أن أجدد أمامكم تقديرنا العالي لليونسكو والتزامنا بأهدافها السامية التي نعتبرها جزءاً من أهدافنا الوطنية، والتي تتجسد فيها طموحات البشرية في الوصول إلى عالم يسوده السلام والتعاون بين جميع البشر، عالم تلتزم به الأمم بمبادئ الحرية والعدل وحقوق الإنسان، بالإضافة إلى الدور الذي تلعبه اليونسكو في الحفاظ على التراث والثقافة الفلسطينية. ففي فلسطين، عشرات بل مئات المواقع الأثرية التي تجعل من فلسطين كلها معلماً، بل موقعاً تراثياً فريداً لا نظير له يستوجب صونه وحمايته، خاصة في ظل ما نعاناه من الاحتلال الاستعماري الإسرائيلي الذي طال أمده، والذي ينتهك بشكل ممنهج وواسع النطاق القانون الدولي واتفاقيات اليونسكو وحقوق شعبنا بما فيها حقه في تقرير المصير، وغيرها من الحقوق الثقافية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية.

٣-٨ ولقد ازدادت وتيرة الانتهاكات والاعتداءات الإسرائيلية، حيث عمق الاحتلال الإسرائيلي غير الشرعي من انتهاكاته وجرائمه، بما فيها جرائم الحرب والجرائم ضد الإنسانية في كافة مجالات عمل اليونسكو، في التعليم، من خلال التحريض على مناهجنا التعليمية واستهداف المدارس والأطفال ومنظمة الأونروا والتراث والثقافة وحرية العبادة والانتهاكات بحق الصحفيين، واستهدافهم المتعمد لأكثر من ٥٤ صحفياً.

٤-٨ كما تجلّى ذلك في انتهاكاتها ضد المقدسات المسيحية والإسلامية، خاصة في مدينة القدس المحتلة، ومحاولات تغيير النظام القائم في الحرم الشريف في المسجد الأقصى، والحفريات إذ سمح لمجموعات استيطانية متطرفة وإرهابية، محمية من قوات الاحتلال، بتنفيذ اقتحامات لباحات المسجد الأقصى الذي جعلت منه ساحة للحرب والاشتباكات في شهر رمضان المبارك الأخير، ومنع المصلين المسيحيين من الوصول إلى الكنائس في الأعياد، وآخرها عيد الفصح المجيد، بالإضافة إلى ما تتعرض له الأملاك الوقفية الإسلامية والمسيحية بشكل عام من حملة استيطانية شرسة وعمليات تدنيس وتخريب، كما حدث مؤخراً ضد الكنيسة العثمانية في القدس، والاعتداء الغاشم على أرض مقبرة الشهداء التابعة للمقبرة اليوسفية في القدس الشرقية، وقرارات أدوات الاحتلال المختلفة بما فيها المحاكم التي وافقت على ما يسمى بالصلاة الصامتة للمستوطنين في الحرم الشريف في انتهاك للنظام القائم في ذلك المكان.

٥-٨ وفي الخليل، تم إغلاق الحرم الإبراهيمي الشريف أكثر من مرة بحجج واهية، وتم منع أي فلسطيني من دخوله، في حين سمح بدخوله فقط للمستوطنين الإسرائيليين وغيرهم من المتطرفين، بالتزامن مع البدء ببناء ما يسمى بالمصعد الكهربائي غير القانوني، ومصادرة مساحات واسعة من الأرض التابعة للموقع الأثري التراثي المسجل في قائمة التراث العالمي المعرض للخطر، وذلك لتشويهه وتزوير مكانته ذات القيمة الاستثنائية العالمية، وتغيير معلمه لتطابق روايتهم المزيفة عن فلسطين، وفرض روايتهم الاستعمارية المفروضة على المكان.

٦-٨ ويجب رفض الممارسات والمصطلحات التي تحرض على الأقصى، على الحرم القدسي الشريف، والتي تؤجج لصراع ديني لن تحمد عقباها، ويخدم أجندة الاستعمار الأبرتهايد، بالإضافة إلى محاولات تغيير الوضع والمسمى التاريخي والقانوني القائم لمدينة القدس وأسوارها وحرمة الشرف، والبناء القائم حالياً، وتزويره إلى ما يسمى بجبل الهيكل. وغزة التي ما زالت تعاني من حصار وإغلاق بشع مستمر منذ أكثر من ١٤ عاماً، وعدوان وحروب متكررة تقوض التعليم والثقافة والحق في الحياة.

٧-٨ إن القيمة الاستثنائية لمدينة فلسطين وخاصة القدس والحليل أنها قديمة قدم التاريخ، وأن الشعب الفلسطيني استمر لأكثر من ١٠٠ قرن بالعيش فيها دون انقطاع إلى يومنا هذا، وسيبقى بما تطور ثقافته وهويته الوطنية، وستبقى فلسطينية عربية التراث والثقافة والإراث، ولن يزورها ويشوه معالمها هذا الاحتلال الاستعماري الإسرائيلي العابر أو يفرض زيف روايته عليها.

٨-٨ السيدات والسادة، إن تجرؤ مجرمي الحرب الإسرائيليين على تدمير وتشويه وتزوير التاريخ والثقافة والمواقع التراثية، إنما يشجع الصمت الدولي والتخاذل في تحمل المسؤوليات القانونية والأخلاقية التي يفرضها القانون الدولي ومؤسساته كمجلس الأمن واليونسكو في توفير الحماية للشعب الفلسطيني ومقدساته. ولقد آن الأوان لوقف هذا الصمت والخروج عنه من قبل المسؤولين الدوليين، بما فيهم المدير العام لمنظمة اليونسكو، وأن الأوان لاتخاذ خطوات فعالة لحماية الشعب الفلسطيني وتراثه، ومحاسبة ومساءلة إسرائيل على جرائمها. ونطالب بإرسال بعثة اليونسكو للرد التفاعلي إلى مدينة القدس القديمة وأسوارها، ودعوة المدير العام لليونسكو لاتخاذ التدابير اللازمة لذلك. كما أوجه دعوة لأعضاء المجلس التنفيذي ولجنة التراث العالمي لزيارة فلسطين للاطلاع عن كثب على جرائم الاحتلال في مجال عملكم. وسيفجعكم ما سوف تشاهدونه عند زيارتكم فلسطين المحتلة.

٩-٨ السيد الرئيس، السيدات والسادة، يقول شاعرنا الكبير محمود درويش على هذه الأرض ما يستحق الحياة، وخوف الغزاة من الذكريات، فالغزاة والمستعمرين يخشون المستقبل والسلام ويخافون من التاريخ والتراث والذكريات، أما شعبنا فهو واثق من روايته، ويعتز بتاريخه وحقه في أرض فلسطين ومستقبله فيها، وسيحافظ عليها وعلى تراثه وذآكرته، وسيورثها لأبنائه وأحفاده، وسيحيي مستقبلهم، ويعزز مسيرتهم نحو الحرية والاستقلال والعودة، وشكراً لكم.

9. **The President:**

Thank you very much Your Excellency. Now I call Mr Edwin Tong Minister of Culture, Community and Youth of Singapore. You have the floor, Your Excellency.

10.1 **Mr Tong (Singapore):**

Mr President of the General Conference, Ambassador Santiago Mourão, Madam Director-General, Audrey Azoulay, ladies and gentlemen, I am very honoured to be addressing my fellow Member States at the 41st session of the UNESCO General Conference. First, let me congratulate Director-General Azoulay for her re-election to a second term. The resounding support is testament to Director-General Azoulay's steady leadership over the last four years, particularly in the face of the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

10.2 Singapore would also like to congratulate UNESCO on 75 years of building peace through education, culture, information, and science. Singapore appreciates UNESCO's efforts in these areas as fundamental means to stay united and tighten the bonds of our shared community. Two days ago, I met the French Culture Minister, Her Excellency Roselyne Bachelot, and we shared similar views on the challenges ahead. We discussed our common priority to preserve heritage through harnessing technology and innovation. We are meeting during a time of profound change and uncertainty. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted lives, communities and businesses globally.

10.3 UNESCO's work in promoting education, science, information, culture for sustainable development is even more relevant than ever. Singapore has participated substantively in UNESCO's plans and platforms to share the best practices in these areas, and we will continue to do so. Singapore fully recognizes the role of culture as an important driver of sustainable development and fulfilment of the Agenda 2030.

10.4 We are honoured that we inscribed our first element, Singapore's hawker culture, on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity last year. Our hawker culture is an important ICH that reflects our distinct history, our cultural identity, as well as our community's values of resilience, adaptability and solidarity, which have become even more salient in the fight against COVID-19. With the election of Singapore expert Mr Yeo Kirk Siang to UNESCO's ICH Evaluation Body, we are committed to contributing back to the international community.

10.5 Apart from ICH, we also firmly believe in the safeguarding of tangible cultural heritage. Singapore will continue to preserve the outstanding universal values of our first world heritage site, the Singapore Botanic Gardens. We will ensure that it will carry on to serve as an important site of national, historical and cultural importance, as well as education and research in Singapore and of the region.

10.6 On the scientific front, Singapore has been a keen contributor to UNESCO's bioethics programme. The responsible management of bioethical issues is critical for society and the growth of emerging scientific developments and technologies. Singapore expert professor Lee Hin Eng Hin is proud to serve as a member of the International Bioethics Committee. As a Member State of the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC) since 2014, we have also been actively involved in shaping the global discourse on emerging bioethical issues, as well as the development of international standards setting frameworks in this field. We are confident that we can continue to add value to UNESCO's very important work in this field and look forward to Member States' support of our candidature for re-election to the IGBC at this General Conference.

10.7 Let me also congratulate UNESCO on the successful conclusion of the intergovernmental discussions on the Draft Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence and the Draft Recommendation on Open Science. Singapore reaffirms our support of UNESCO's efforts to advance discourse and forge an international consensus. Singapore has adopted a balanced and pragmatic approach to facilitate innovation and industry development, while also ensuring user

protection. We look forward to deeper collaborations with UNESCO in our collective efforts to promote responsible artificial intelligence research and use.

10.8 On education, Singapore supports UNESCO's education programmes and activities. Singapore shares these concerns and strives to ensure the continuity of quality education for our students without neglecting their emotional needs and also wellbeing. As a UNESCO Creative City of Design, Singapore has also participated in the network's convening of the cities of design to share Singapore's efforts in responding to the pandemic, to support the creative industry and also design practitioners.

10.9 Dear colleagues and friends, this has been an extremely difficult time for many of us. The pandemic has exacerbated many of our existing inequalities, economic uncertainties and of course, the deep challenges posed by climate related and technological changes. In this context, UNESCO's work is even more critical than ever. As a committed and responsible Member of this Organization, Singapore hopes to work with all of you to strengthen UNESCO so that we can overcome these challenges and build a more sustainable, peaceful world. Thank you very much.

11. **The President:**

Thank you Your Excellency. I call now His Excellency Honourable Dr Yaw Osei Adutwum Minister of Education of Ghana. You have the floor, Excellency.

12.1 **Mr Adutwum (Ghana):**

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General of UNESCO, Excellencies, I am happy to be here this morning to address the 41st session of the General Conference of UNESCO. The Ghana Delegation joins previous speakers to congratulate you Mr President and the Director-General for your re-elections. Excellencies, as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of our dear Organization, Ghana applauds UNESCO for the dividends that have accrued to the peoples of the world through its foresight and watchdog functions.

12.2 UNESCO's international platform for promoting free and open debate in education, the sciences, culture, communication and information have contributed immensely in addressing many of the challenges that have confronted our world in the last 75 years.

12.3 Our collective commitment to protect nature has become more important than ever before. Biosphere reserves have proven to be charting clear pathways toward biodiversity and nature conservation, thanks to Member States who continue to designate biosphere reserves to demonstrate their commitments to conservation and sustainable development.

12.4 Our experience over the past 50 years on the Man and Biosphere Programme has demonstrated that biosphere reserves function as sustainable models for living in harmony with nature. UNESCO currently boasts 727 networks of biosphere reserves in 131 countries covering more than 5% of the earth's surface. With this achievement, there is no doubt that biosphere reserves will significantly contribute to reach the 30% target of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework by 2030. It is in this light that we call on the international community to formally recognize the contribution of biosphere reserves in the negotiations of the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework.

12.5 The Director-General's astute leadership role to address contemporary challenges through the Slave Route project: "Resistance, Liberty, Heritage" is commendable. As we all know, the transatlantic trade in enslaved people constitutes an important landmark in the history of the world. We believe the time has come for UNESCO to repackage this part of world history for our common good: to promote heritage tourism particularly for the millions of people of African descent, to renew their spiritual connections with their motherland and boost economic development in Africa.

12.6 Mr President, Ghana continues to chart a path of education transformation beginning from 2017 with the introduction of free senior high school education, which has enabled over 400,000 more students to go to secondary school. We continue to reform our education system in order to improve the quality and the relevance of higher education. Science, technology, engineering, mathematics education is being promoted in the country. We have also consolidated our efforts in TVET education, and we continue to ensure that we use education to create a virtuous circle of prosperity for all by not leaving anybody behind.

12.7 Mr President, we continue to ensure that the safety and freedom of journalists to perform their God-given profession is guaranteed. To guarantee access to information, Ghana passed the Right to Information Law in 2019. Within two years, we have established the Right to Information Commission with more than 1,000 employees across the country. Additionally, more than 400 duty-bearing institutions have been trained and introduced simplified procedures to respond to information requests from citizens. In the area of journalists' safety and in the fight against impunity, Ghana has established a multistakeholder coordinating mechanism for the safety of journalists under the independent national media commission.

12.8 Mr President, experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic have taught us the need for international collaboration to address disinformation, fake news and hate speech to secure the fidelity of our information ecosystem. In the light of the above, Ghana reiterates its support for the programmes outlined by UNESCO under Major Programme V of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2022-2025.

12.9 Finally, Mr. President, Ghana is proposing at this session a new category 2 centre in engineering innovations, manufacturing and technology transfer at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. This is contained in item 5.4 of the agenda. We call on Member States to support this initiative. Mr President, Ghana stands resolute in support of UNESCO and will continue to play a role critically to ensure that UNESCO is positively projected in Africa and in the rest of the world. Thank you for your attention.

13. **The President:**

Thank you very much Your Excellency. I call now His Excellency Mr Mahmut Özer Minister of National Education of Turkey. We will watch a pre-recorded video. You have the floor, Excellency.

14.1 **Mr Özer (Turkey):**

(address delivered in Turkish; English text provided by the delegation):

Dear colleagues, Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, distinguished guests, it is indeed a distinct honour and pleasure for me to address you today at the 41st session of the General Conference of UNESCO which coincides with the 75th anniversary of the founding of this outstanding institution of the United Nations system. I would like to thank Ambassador Altay Cengizer, the previous President of the General Conference, for his dedicated service to the work of UNESCO and to our common values. I convey my sincere congratulations to H.E. Mr Santiago Mourão, Ambassador of Brazil, on his new role as the new President of the General Conference, and I wish success to him. Let me also take this opportunity to heartily congratulate Madam Director-General on her re-election.

14.2 Not even two months passed after the last meeting of the General Conference, which was held two years ago, the whole world found itself in the epidemic crisis. Hereby, first of all I wish mercy to the millions of people who lost their lives because of the pandemic. I would like to express my gratitude to all healthcare workers who are fighting against the pandemic for their heroic struggle and dedication.

14.3 Unfortunately, education was one of the sectors that was greatly struck by the pandemic. In Turkey, to prevent hampering of the education processes of children and youth, we prioritized to employ the most modern methods. We were able to provide online education in all subjects and at all grades. As of this semester, we switched to full-time face-to-face education, and we are committed to keeping the schools open. Turkey continues its efforts to achieve SDG 4, since inclusive and quality education is the fundament of our society.

14.4 Dear colleagues; another challenge that has begun to make its presence felt more and more with the global epidemic is climate change. Climate change exposes the whole world to many threats, ranging from endangering food security to increasing the frequency of natural disasters, especially for fragile States such as developing countries and small island States. The lesson we learnt is clear: as the international community, we need to be much more prepared for any new challenge that may arise, we should act in a preventive manner against possible problems, and we should be in full cooperation and coordination in order to be able to respond effectively to possible global emergencies.

14.5 We need to seek efficiency, since it is the right way to go. In addition to that, we should bear in mind that a plainer Organization does not necessarily mean a more efficient Organization. In our agenda, there are many programmes including Priority Afric, and we have new areas like artificial intelligence, open science, and futures literacy. We must give the necessary importance and value to these programmes that will open new horizons for us.

14.6 The new initiative of the former President directly relates to the issue of capacity building. Being aware of the necessity of responding to the increasing number of problems related to the protection of cultural assets in a timely manner, as well as the necessity of raising and developing conservationists all over the world as a professional group, Turkey supports this initiative and the thought behind it.

14.7 During the last five years, the Turkish archaeological sites of Ani, Aphrodisias, and Göbeklitepe were inscribed as UNESCO world heritage sites, followed this year by the Arslantepe Mound. Göbeklitepe dates back 12,000 years, and as such, it is the oldest Turkish site on the List. Let me tell you that our excavations in the Göbeklitepe site are continuing, and we are meticulously completing the archaeological work to share our findings with the world.

14.8 UNESCO is becoming a more important institution day by day. As has been pointed out many times in the past, if UNESCO ceased to exist, the world would need to recreate it. So, we like to have this precious Organization that produces knowledge and acts upon it. Next week we will have the elections for the UNESCO Executive Board. I would like to express my gratitude to all the member countries of the Executive Board, which have completed their mandate, for their contributions that enriched our approach and thoughts. You have witnessed the devoted work and performance that Turkey has displayed during the period of 2017-2021 as a member of the Executive Board. Now, we kindly ask for your support for our second term candidacy for the 2021-2025 period. Turkey, as a country that is strongly devoted to the promotion and strengthening of world heritage, has also announced its candidature to the World Heritage Committee for the term 2023-2027. On behalf of my country, I would like to express that we will highly appreciate your kind support for this candidature as well. I thank you sincerely and wish a successful working period until the 42nd session of the General Conference. I should like to conclude my words by reaffirming Turkey's commitment to UNESCO's ideals and goals in the year of its 75th anniversary. Thank you.

15. **The President:**

Thank you very much Your Excellency. Now I call His Excellency Mr Sorin Mihai Cîmpeanu, Minister of Education of Romania. You have the floor, Sir.

16.1 **M. Cîmpeanu (Roumanie) :**

Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Madame la Directrice générale, Mesdames et Messieurs, chers amis, cette année a une signification particulière pour la Roumanie dans le contexte anniversaire plus large de 75 ans de la fondation de l'UNESCO. Nous fêtons en Roumanie à notre tour 65 ans d'adhésion à cette organisation. Nous voudrions saisir cette occasion pour vous remercier, Madame Audrey Azoulay, pour le message très chaleureux que vous avez transmis à la Roumanie pour cet anniversaire et nous vous félicitons pour votre nouveau mandat de Directrice générale de l'UNESCO que nous avons pleinement soutenu en Roumanie. La Roumanie continuera à vous soutenir dans la matérialisation de vos projets ambitieux et dans la promotion de toutes les causes nobles de l'Organisation. En parfait accord avec les principes des Nations Unies, la Roumanie soutient pleinement l'implémentation de l'Agenda 2030 et la réalisation des objectifs de développement durable. Nous saluons l'adoption de la

Déclaration de Paris et le renouvellement des engagements des dirigeants nationaux et internationaux à investir dans des domaines essentiels comme l'éducation, la recherche, l'environnement, les sciences naturelles, sociales et humaines, la culture et la communication, la paix, les libertés fondamentales et les droits des hommes.

16.2 Mesdames et Messieurs, l'importance d'une éducation de qualité en s'appuyant sur la connectivité et la technologie est une clé de notre futur, comme l'ont bien mis en évidence la Réunion mondiale sur l'éducation de 2021 et la Déclaration concernant l'avenir de l'éducation. Dans le contexte pandémique d'aujourd'hui, notre but majeur est d'assurer la continuité pédagogique grâce à l'enseignement à distance et en ligne et pas seulement parce que, par exemple, nous, en Roumanie, on fait des efforts pour pouvoir assurer la présence physique dans toutes les écoles, tout en prenant les mesures nécessaires pour protéger la santé des élèves et des enseignants dont la sécurité reste une priorité principale. Le domaine d'action prioritaire numéro 5, à savoir accélérer l'action locale de la feuille de route adoptée par la Conférence mondiale de l'UNESCO sur l'éducation au développement durable, tenue à Berlin en mai cette année, est d'une pertinence immédiate pour notre projet. Nous aimerions également mentionner l'importance que la Roumanie attache à travers une série de mesures spécifiques aux changements climatiques récemment discutés dans la Conférence des Nations Unies sur les changements climatiques et aux questions de l'océan et de l'océanographie.

16.3 La Roumanie est déjà présente sur la liste du patrimoine de l'UNESCO avec un inventaire important d'éléments culturels, sites naturels et biens immatériels d'une valeur extraordinaire, et nous continuerons nos efforts pour compléter cette liste avec de nouveaux éléments identitaires du patrimoine roumain à travers les dossiers individuels ou multinationaux. Compte tenu de l'expérience et des résultats obtenus à la suite de la mise en œuvre du projet Indicateurs UNESCO de la culture pour le développement, la Roumanie a intégré cette année la culture dans sa stratégie nationale pour le développement durable 2030 et pilote actuellement le projet Indicateurs Culture UNESCO 2030.

16.4 Mesdames et Messieurs, les sciences et les nouvelles technologies sont dans une dynamique sans précédent. La Roumanie salue chaleureusement les progrès remarquables de l'UNESCO avec les États membres dans l'élaboration de la recommandation sur l'éthique de l'intelligence artificielle. Nous saluons également les résultats similaires obtenus dans le domaine des sciences ouvertes et nous sommes prêts à appliquer ces deux concepts visionnaires. Le 75^e anniversaire de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture est une occasion de célébration, mais aussi de réflexion. Permettez-nous de féliciter encore une fois l'UNESCO pour les 75 années de dévouement continu à construire la paix. Nous soutenons pleinement ceux qui apprécient l'Acte constitutif de l'UNESCO comme étant un appel à la paix le plus fort et le plus inspirant jamais écrit. Cet anniversaire est encore une preuve que le multilatéralisme fait essentiellement partie de la solution aux problèmes auxquels nous sommes confrontés aujourd'hui dans le monde. Le renforcement du multilatéralisme doit devenir une priorité pour tous les États du monde, membres ou non, de l'UNESCO. La Roumanie est très dévouée à cette approche parce que nous avons le devoir de redynamiser nos efforts pour assurer au monde pacifique et inclusif sur une planète saine. Il est nécessaire de réaffirmer les valeurs qui sous-tendent l'action collective afin de mieux répondre ensemble aux défis actuels et futurs dans le cadre d'une vision repensée de la solidarité morale et intellectuelle de l'humanité. Et l'UNESCO est le parfait catalyseur pour ça. Merci pour votre attention et bon succès à tous.

17. The President:

Thank you Your Excellency. Now I call His Excellency Mr Khaled Atef Abdel Ghaffar, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Arab Republic of Egypt. You have the floor, Excellency.

١٨-١ السيد عبد الغفار (مصر):

السيد رئيس المؤتمر العام، السيد رئيس المجلس التنفيذي، السيدة المديرية العامة، السيدات والسادة الوزراء ورؤساء الوفود وممثلو الدول الأعضاء، اسمحو لي في مستهل كلمتي أن أتوجه بالتهنئة للسيد سانتياغو إراسبال مورو، المندوب الدائم لدولة البرازيل على انتخابه رئيساً للدورة الحادية والأربعين للمؤتمر العام، متمنياً له التوفيق في أداء مهامه الجديدة. ولا يفوتني في هذا المقام أن أهنئ أيضاً السيدة أودري أزولاي، المديرية العامة للمنظمة، على إعادة انتخابها لفترة ولاية ثانية، آملياً أن تستمر منظمنا العريقة خلال الفترة القادمة في الاضطلاع، على أكمل وجه ممكن، بالدور الهام المنوط بها في توثيق الروابط بين الأمم في مجالات التربية والعلوم والثقافة.

١٨-٢ السيد الرئيس، السيدات والسادة، تشرفت بلادي مع ١٩ دولة أخرى بتأسيس منظمنا العريقة منذ ٧٥ عاماً، اقتناعاً منها بأهمية بناء حصون السلام في عقول البشر، وبضرورة تأمين فرص التعليم تأميناً كاملاً ومتكافئاً لجميع الناس على حد سواء، وإيماناً منها بأن بلوغ السلم الدولي يمر عبر توطيد أطر التعاون بين الدول في ميادين التعليم والثقافة والعلوم. ولعل الذكرى الخامسة والسبعين لتأسيس منظمنا تمثل فرصة مواتية للتفكير في سبل تعزيز هذا الدور الفريد في المنظومة الأممية. وإن ما يموج به عالم اليوم من تحديات في مجالات التعليم والعلوم والثقافة، خاصة في ظل تبعات جائحة كورونا، يضاعف من حاجة العالم لنشر قيم السلام والتسامح، والمحافظة على التراث الثقافي والطبيعي، وضمان جودة التعليم للملايين البشر في شتى أنحاء العالم، وبالأخص أولئك الذين شهدت عملياتهم التعليمية ارتباكاً لا مثيل له في تاريخنا الحديث.

١٨-٣ السادة الحضور، إن التوقيت الذي نجتمع فيه اليوم فارق، فلعلنا بات بحاجة أكثر من أي وقت مضى إلى نشر ثقافة التضامن بين الشعوب ومعالجة التفاوت غير المسبوق في مستويات التعليم. ومن هذا المنطلق، نقدر أن الاستراتيجية المتوسطة الأجل المقبلة للمنظمة للفترة ٢٠٢٢-٢٠٢٩، على النحو الذي سبق مناقشته في الدورات السابقة للمجلس التنفيذي، سوف تمنح منظومتنا إطاراً هاماً يمكنها من مواجهة تلك التحديات الدولية المتنامية، ومساعدة الدول الأعضاء في بلوغ أهداف خطة التنمية المستدامة لعام ٢٠٣٠.

١٨-٤ واسمحو لي في هذا السياق، أن أتوقف أمام الأهمية التي توليها مصر لتفعيل الأولوية العامة المتمثلة في أفريقيا في اليونسكو. ولقد تشرفت مصر خلال الفترة الماضية برئاسة فريق العمل المعني بقطاع الثقافة في المجموعة الأفريقية، الذي صاغ خارطة طريق تعكس الاهتمامات الأفريقية في هذا القطاع الهام، تتمحور

حول تطوير قدراتها في مجال استعادة ممتلكاتها الثقافية، وتطبيق اتفاقية التراث العالمي لعام ١٩٧٢، مع الأخذ بعين الاعتبار احتياجاتها التنموية. ويهمني أن أتوجه بالشكر لكافة وفود الدول الأعضاء بالمجلس التنفيذي على إقرارها لهذه الأولويات الأفريقية، والأمانة على الجهد الذي بذلته في ترجمتها إلى خطط عمل تنفيذية. كما نتطلع إلى اعتمادها في الدورة الحالية للمؤتمر بحيث يتسنى تطبيقها اعتباراً من العام المقبل. ولا يفوتني، في هذا الصدد، أن أشير إلى الأهمية التي توليها الدول الأفريقية لقضية استرداد آثارها، لاسيما أن العالم سوف يحتفل بعد ثلاثة أيام باليوم الدولي لمكافحة الاتجار غير المشروع بالممتلكات الثقافية، وهو اليوم الذي أعلنه مؤتمرنا العام في دورته الماضية استناداً إلى مقترح مصري. ويهمني، من هذا المنبر، أن أتوجه لكم جميعاً بالشكر على دعمكم له وإقراره بالإجماع. وأود كذلك في هذا السياق أن أهنئ دولة بنين الشقيقة، وأحبي الرئيس الفرنسي ماكرون على إعادة الطوعية دون قيد أو شرط لستة وعشرين قطعة أثرية إلى موطنها الأصلي بنين. وتوجه مصر نداءً من هذا المنبر إلى جميع الدول التي تتبع هذا النهج، وتعيد القطع الأثرية التي غادرت أفريقيا إبان حقبة الاستعمار إلى موطنها الأصلي بوتيرة سريعة دون قيد أو شرط، لنعزز سوياً من أسس علاقات الأخوة والتفاهم، واحترام كل للآخر وحضارته وثقافته، وذلك بوتيرة سريعة لتتناسب مع أهمية وحجم المشكلة، حيث تستضيف أوروبا وحدها قرابة ٥٠٠ ألف قطعة أفريقية.

١٨-٥ السيدات والسادة، لقد طورت مصر على مدار العقود الماضية علاقات وروابط وثيقة باليونيسكو، لعل أبرزها حملة إنقاذ معابد النوبة التي تعد أكبر وأجبح حملة نفذتها المنظمة في تاريخها، وساهمت في تسليط الضوء على أهمية حماية التراث الثقافي والطبيعي، ومهدت الطريق لاعتماد اتفاقية عام ١٩٧٢ في هذا الشأن، وهي الاتفاقية التي نحتفل سوياً العام المقبل بمرور خمسين عاماً على اعتمادها. وتنسق مصر حالياً مع أمانة اليونيسكو لتنظيم الاحتفالية للعام القادم.

١٨-٦ ويهمني أن أؤكد لكم استمرار الالتزام المصري بالمنظمة ومقاصدها، وهو الالتزام الذي دفعنا إلى الترشح لعضوية المجلس التنفيذي للمنظمة للفترة ٢٠٢١-٢٠٢٥. وإذا نتطلع إلى الحصول على دعمكم لاكتساب هذه العضوية، فإننا نؤكد أننا سوف نوظفها لصالح تحقيق التوافق وطرح ودعم مبادرات يُفعل من دورها في شتى أرجاء العالم، ولاسيما الدول النامية. ويمكنني أن أذكر لكم، على سبيل المثال وليس الحصر، تعميم تجربة مصر الرائدة في مجال إصلاح منظومة التعليم من خلال المكاتب الميدانية المختلفة، والعمل على ضمان التطبيق الناجح للتوصيتين المطروحتين على جدول أعمال دورتنا الحالية، والمتعلقين بأخلاقيات الذكاء الاصطناعي والعلم المفتوح، والتي شاركت مصر في صياغتهما بفاعلية، وتعزيز حماية التراث الوثائقي في ضوء تمكّن فريق العمل المحدود العضوية المنشأ في إطار الاستعراض الشامل لبرنامج ذاكرة العالم، الذي تشرفت مصر بالمشاركة النشطة فيه، من التوصل إلى تسوية تُمكن من استئناف كافة أنشطة البرنامج، وذلك فضلاً عن استضافتنا لعدد كبير من الفعاليات الدولية.

١٨-٧ السيدات والسادة، ختاماً فإن مصر تتطلع إلى دورة موفقة وناجحة للمؤتمر العام، تضيف للنجاحات التي حققتها اليونيسكو خلال الخمسة والسبعين عاماً الماضية، وتمكنا من اتخاذ القرارات الصائبة التي تنعكس إيجابياً على شعوب العالم، مع تميمات بلادي للدورة الحالية بالنجاح والتوفيق. وأشكركم على حسن الاستماع.

19. The President:

Thank you for your words. Now I call His Excellency Mr Andrea Belluzzi Minister of Education and Culture, University and Scientific Research Youth Policies of the Republic of San Marino. You have the floor, Sir.

20.1 Mr Belluzzi (Saint-Martin) :

Monsieur le Président. Madame la directrice générale, Excellences, mesdames, messieurs, c'est un grand honneur pour moi de participer à la 41^e session de la Conférence générale de l'UNESCO qui se déroule à l'occasion de ce 75^e anniversaire de cette Organisation. Au nom du Gouvernement de la République de Saint-Martin. Je tiens à féliciter Son Excellence Santiago Irazabal Mourão pour sa nomination en tant que Président de la 41^e session de la Conférence générale et lui souhaiter un plein succès dans son travail. Je tiens également à remercier la Directrice générale, Son Excellence Audrey Azoulay pour le travail effectué au cours de son premier mandat et surtout dans les deux dernières années, dans les conditions difficiles liées à l'urgence sanitaire du COVID-19 et lui assurer le plein soutien de mon pays, pour son deuxième mandat à la tête de notre Organisation. Monsieur le Président, les périodes 2020-2021 a mis en péril nos pays, non seulement du point de vue sanitaire, social et économique, mais aussi parce qu'elle a entraîné les fermetures des écoles, des musées et de toutes les institutions dédiées à l'éducation et à la culture. Comme dans toute crise, il a fallu puiser dans nos ressources et notre créativité pour pouvoir rouvrir le plus rapidement possible afin de garantir la continuité de l'enseignement et l'accessibilité de la culture dans nos pays. L'UNESCO, sous la direction de sa Directrice générale, nous a aidés à cet égard. Elle a su comprendre les priorités et fournit à nos pays des lignes directrices qui sont devenues essentielles pour la poursuite des activités scolaires et éducatives. Pendant les deux dernières années, l'UNESCO a su se renouveler en créant de nouvelles modalités de participation aux fins d'encourager la diffusion de bonnes pratiques et le dialogue entre les États pour améliorer l'efficacité de nos systèmes d'éducation.

20.2 De nombreuses initiatives visant à réunir les Ministres de l'éducation, de la culture ont été organisées dans un contexte difficile et nous en sommes profondément reconnaissants à notre Organisation et à la Directrice générale. C'est notre responsabilité collective de mettre en œuvre des plans d'éducation qui prennent en compte les besoins de tous, en particulier des groupes les plus vulnérables de la société. La République de Saint-Martin soutient le rôle de l'UNESCO dans la promotion des objectifs de développement durable des Nations Unies et *education 2030 framework for action*, pour atteindre l'objectif numéro 4. Nous avons soutenu dès le départ de la création de la Coalition mondiale pour l'éducation et suivi les suggestions qui nous ont été faites par les États pour renforcer l'enseignement à la distance et la diffusion de l'éducation pour tous et en particulier pour les groupes vulnérables. Dès le début de l'urgence sanitaire, l'école de Saint-Martin s'est donnée pour objectif de faire revenir ses élèves dans les salles de classe le plus rapidement possible, car l'école est avant tout une question de relations et d'école. Et l'enseignement à distance exclut tout cela. Sans nier les difficultés rencontrées, Saint-Martin a réussi à maintenir l'école ouverte, surtout l'année dernière, grâce à l'étroite collaboration avec les autorités sanitaires qui a permis un suivi rapide et efficace de désinfection, réduisant ainsi l'isolement de chaque classe et des bâtiments, à un tiers du groupe scolaire. À Saint-Martin aussi, des mesures ont été prises pour limiter une potentielle propagation du virus, notamment l'éloignement social, l'assainissement et la ventilation des locaux

que nous maintenons encore aujourd'hui, dans l'espoir de pouvoir bientôt mettre fin à ces mesures pour revenir à la nature même de l'école, à savoir celle d'une communauté d'apprentissage ou un lieu où les gens peuvent interagir et construire ensemble l'apprentissage.

20.3 Monsieur le président, je réaffirme aujourd'hui le plein soutien de mon pays aux priorités définies par notre organisation et aux valeurs sur lesquelles elle est fondée. Le long chemin vers la paix, vers la paix et la compréhension mutuelle entre les peuples ne peuvent être séparés de la construction d'un système d'éducation efficace et de la diffusion de la culture. La République de Saint-Martin a toujours été très attentive au dialogue interculturel et estime que l'éducation joue un rôle fondamental dans la protection des droits de l'homme et la lutte contre l'extrémisme violent. Nous devons partir de la base dès les premiers stades du développement d'une personne et encourager l'application des programmes d'éducation qui aident les enfants à comprendre la diversité et à respecter les autres. C'est pourquoi nous avons inclus dans nos programmes scolaires des écoles maternelles l'enseignement de l'éducation à la citoyenneté et l'apprentissage dans un environnement numérique. La République de Saint-Martin soutient fermement le multilatéralisme. En tant que petit État, nous pensons que notre souveraineté est renforcée par notre participation à d'autres crises et aux activités des organisations internationales et que le défi mondial actuel exige un effort de tous, pour promouvoir le dialogue au sein des institutions internationales. Sans ce dialogue, nous sommes seuls et sans force.

20.4 Nous pensons que l'urgence sanitaire actuelle de COVID-19 est emblématique et a révélé au monde entier qu'il est impératif de rester unis dans la lutte contre les menaces mondiales, qu'elles soient liées à la santé comme dans ce cas ou autre. Le travail collectif doit également viser à protéger le patrimoine culturel mondial qui est souvent mis en danger par les attaques terroristes. La République de Saint-Martin accorde beaucoup d'attention à la protection du patrimoine culturel mondial. Nous sommes convaincus que notre Organisation doit renforcer son rôle de leader dans la protection du patrimoine culturel mondial et dans la lutte contre le trafic illicite d'œuvres d'art et nous soutenons toute initiative allant dans ce sens.

20.5 Nous engagerons dans les mois à venir à accélérer la ratification d'importantes conventions de l'UNESCO qui portent sur ce thème. La Convention pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine culturel immatériel, la Convention sur la protection et la promotion de la diversité des expressions culturelles, la Convention cadre du Conseil de l'Europe sur les valeurs du patrimoine culturel pour la société, qui sont actuellement à l'étude des experts aux fins de les ratifier prochainement par voie parlementaire. Après l'inauguration de deux importants musées dédiés à l'art moderne et contemporain, et la culture de la philatélie numismatique en 2018 et 2021, Saint-Martin et s'est engagée dans la réalisation d'un projet important pour la création d'un complexe muséologique et d'un auditorium afin que l'offre culturelle devienne l'un des éléments d'identification de Saint-Martin dans les prochaines décennies. C'est pourquoi nous faisons appel à tous les pays et déclarons notre volonté de développer de nouvelles collaborations. Merci de votre attention.

21. **The President:**

Merci, son Excellence. I call Her Excellency Dr Luísa Maria Alves Grilo, Minister of Education of Angola.

22.1 **Ms Grilo (Angola):**

(address delivered in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation):

Mr President of the UNESCO General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Angola and its people, whom I have the honour of representing in this majestic assembly, I greet you and express congratulations to the President of the UNESCO General Conference for his election, just as I express my felicitations to the General Director of UNESCO for her re-election.

22.2 Excellencies, today, more than ever, the world faces challenges that may harm the survival of humankind and institutions, requiring all nations to commit and perform responsible actions in defense of the human being and sustainable development of peoples. Education and teaching, science, technology and innovation are appropriate resources through which a better world can be built in respect of life and nature. Despite the constraints of a conjuncture nature, Angola has been implementing in the most diverse areas of its social and economic life, a set of programmes to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 17. It does so by focusing on reducing regional asymmetries, gender inequalities and ensuring universal and quality education for all children, promoting social inclusion, and vigorously combating any kind of discrimination. This includes the integrated intervention programme in the municipalities that is prompting the significant increase in the number of classrooms and the consequent reduction of students outside the education system.

22.3 Thus, in the field of education, students returned to school after the didactic, pedagogical, biosafety and skills-enhancing conditions of teachers were successfully guaranteed. All consistent with the formative needs and the role of schools in the "new normal" imposed by COVID-19. In the field of higher education, science, technology, and innovation we have been working on a training programme for Angolan staff with high performance and academic merit. Aided by the support of some of the best universities around the world, we have managed to enrol 433 students abroad, in addition to the granting of 190 doctoral and postdoctoral scholarships to higher education teachers. It is necessary to mention the science and technology development programme, co-financed by the African Development Bank, which has financed 25 projects out of the 45 planned. In the same scope is the creation of the National Agency for the Financing of Science, Technology and Innovation, whose purpose is the integration of research institutions and technological development institutions and higher education institutions in international scientific research networks.

22.4 Special attention is being given to secondary school girls, by encouraging them through 250 annual scholarships in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The objective is to reduce the existing gender deficit, in addition to strengthening self-development skills through women's empowerment programs, combating poverty, protecting, and promoting children's rights and valuing the family. In this perspective, digital literacy is included with the 7 million Internet users and the manipulation of varied information and communication systems. Such systems are mostly used by the younger generations in the country which compose two-thirds of the country's population.

22.5 The Republic of Angola, therefore, supports initiatives, programmes and projects that benefit African countries, and here we would like to highlight UNESCO's operational strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029, as it reflects the aspirations of the African Union's 2063 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the United Nations 2030 Agenda. We also consider the need to add efforts to register new African sites on the World Heritage List, as well as the preservation of the sites already registered through scientific, technological cooperation and the mobilization of funds for the further development of actions carried out by the Africa World Heritage Fund.

22.6 Excellencies, the Republic of Angola has submitted its application to the Executive Board, so we request the Member States and in particular the African Group, to support our intention. This year Angola and UNESCO hold the second edition of the Luanda Biennial Pan-African Forum for Peace Culture, in a hybrid format, with thematic forums of interest, so the participation of all is welcome. On this occasion of UNESCO celebration of its 75th anniversary of its existence, we join our voice to the other members congratulating the Organization on its work in favour of education, science and culture expressing on behalf of my country the interest of strengthening our partnership for the common good and sustainable development, local and regional. Thank you so much for your attention.

23. **The President:**

Now I call Her Excellency Dr Dipu Moni Minister of Education of Bangladesh. You have the floor, Excellency.

24.1 **Ms Moni (Bangladesh):**

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, honourable ministers, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. I congratulate all Member States of UNESCO and UNESCO officials on the eve of the 75th anniversary of UNESCO. I extend my heartiest felicitations to Ambassador Mourão on his election as President of the 41st session of the General Conference. I am confident that under his leadership and guidance, we will have a successful session. I wish to register our deep appreciation to the President of the 40th session, Ambassador Cengizer for his tireless work during the last biennium. Madam Audrey Azoulay, our Director-General deserves our special commendation for the continuation of responding to the challenges of the pandemic with agility and creativity in an effective, efficient and professional manner. I congratulate her for her re-election to serve as the Director-General of our Organization for a second term. Please be assured, Madam Director-General, of our full support for your endeavours.

24.2 Excellencies, dear friends, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the gaps in our society, which is aggravating inequality and exclusion. We must act together under the UNESCO mandate, which is essential for the inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, UNESCO's next Medium-Term Strategy is very important for us as it will serve as the foundation and framework for the Organization's global impact in its fields of competence.

24.3 We support the global priorities, Africa and gender equality, as well as the priority accorded to small island developing States and youth. We commend this strategic approach on biodiversity and the greater emphasis on UNESCO's action on environmental sustainability and mitigation of climate change. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, during these unprecedented times, Bangladesh has adopted a whole of society approach in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals and ensuring a COVID-19 recovery that will leave no one behind. So far, we have allocated US \$15.4 billion stimulus packages. The United Nations sponsored Sustainable Development Solutions Network has conferred Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with a Sustainable Development Goals Progress Award during the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly. This is a testimony of Bangladesh's success in its continued efforts to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure peace and prosperity for all based on the Sustainable Development Goals.

25.4 Mr President, distinguished delegates, 2021 is a very special year for us as this year we are celebrating the olden jubilee of our independence. This celebration coincides with Mujibur, the birth centenary of our father of the nation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, which UNESCO is officially associated with. I pay my profound respect and homage to the father of our nation, Mongolians, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a champion of peace, human rights and fundamental freedom. I sincerely thank all UNESCO Member States for getting associated with the 100th birth anniversary of the Sheikh Mujibur Rahman through the inscription of the anniversary programme in 2019 and establishing the UNESCO Bangladesh monument to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the international prize for the creative economy in 2020, and before that by inscribing the historic 7 March speech in the Memory of the World International Register as documentary heritage. These are befitting tributes to such an advocate of Peace of India on his birth centenary.

24.5 I am pleased to share that the first award ceremony of the UNESCO-Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman International Prize for the Creative Economy will take place today at 6:30 p.m. in this room where we are expecting the gracious presence of our Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh. I invite you all to this event. She will also address you at the beginning of the afternoon session today.

24.6 Excellencies, considering the importance of the creative economy, we must work together to support entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation. As part of our efforts, Bangladesh joined United Arab Emirates and Colombia as a co-author of a decision on the creative economy during the 212th session of the Executive Board. Our actions will help to empower people, promote social inclusion and reduce poverty.

24.7 Mr President, UNESCO's work in education, science, culture, social science, information and communication is vitally important for building peace, harmony, mutual respect and understanding. Bangladesh's commitment to UNESCO's mandate and mission remains as strong and unwavering as ever. We express our full satisfaction on the Futures of Education report. This will be a guiding document to act together to formulate a future-oriented education policy to make the futures we want.

24.8 Mr President, Bangladesh is very pleased that UNESCO will adopt two standard setting instruments on open science and artificial intelligence during this General Conference, which will be essential tools to strengthen international cooperation and will ensure that we all benefit from science and technological advancement.

24.9 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Bangladesh's tenure in the Executive Board has come to an end. We sincerely thank the Member States for the trust we received and for giving us the opportunity to serve UNESCO. Believing in the principle of rotation, taking a gap of two years Bangladesh has presented its candidature to serve on the Executive Board for the period of 2023-2027. We hope to receive your all-out support to serve the Executive Board again at the 42nd session of the General Conference.

24.10 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, as UNESCO deals with common goods of humanity rising above narrow political interests, we must act right here at UNESCO. At this critical juncture, I hope UNESCO will make a positive impact on the lives of people around the world. I assure you that Bangladesh will continue to fulfil its obligations and do even more to strengthen the Organization effectively, efficiently and meaningfully. I thank you. *Joy Bangla, Joy Ubuntu.*

25. **The President:**

Thank you, Your Excellency for your speech. Now, I call His Excellency Honourable Shri Dharmendra Pradhan Minister of Education of India. We will watch a pre-recorded video. You have the floor, Sir.

26.1 **Mr Pradhan (India):**

Madam Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, distinguished representatives, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. It is a great honour for me to address the 41st session of UNESCO's General Conference. On behalf of the people of India I take this opportunity to congratulate the UNESCO family on completing 75 remarkable years of partnering development across the world. As a founding Member of UNESCO, India has had a deep and productive engagement with this multilateral platform that is defined by a common commitment for peace, solidarity and attainment of Sustainable Development Goals. The year is also significant for India as we celebrate *Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav* to commemorate 75 years of our country's independence. The event is an embodiment of the progressive spirit of India, a celebration of our glorious history and an articulation of our ideas and *Atmanirbhar Bharat* or self-reliant India.

26.2 Excellencies, while the COVID-19 pandemic has brought untold misery to the world, we must respectfully acknowledge the indomitable spirit of people and governments across the globe to stand still and fight unitedly against the onslaught. The world has rapidly devised and adjusted to the new, technologically and digitally driven norms. India carried out the world's largest and fastest vaccination drive under the able guidance of our Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Two million made-in-India vaccines were rolled out in just 11 months of the first infection. One billion vaccines have since been administered in just nine months. More than 60 million vaccines have been provided to 95 countries under our Vaccine Maitri or Vaccine Friendship Initiative.

26.3 Excellencies, India has actively promoted the use of technological and digital solutions in areas concerned with achievement of its digital goals, especially for delivery of education. E-learning is being facilitated through platforms like Diksha or digital infrastructure for school education, which are to house of 3,500 plus energized textbooks and over 16-million-page hits daily from massive online open course portal with enrolment of over 22 million, the National Digital Library, which has more than 38 million digital resources and more than 5.2 million students registered, virtual labs and several others. The PME media programme provides multi-modal delivery of education through online TV, radio and mobile modes. For areas with limited access to online modes, TV channels through Imperva and radio, including community radio. The PME media programme benefits nearly 250,000 schoolchildren. Specialized sturdy material is being provided for the differently-abled students through digitally accessible information system and in sign language. Moreover, the open initiative provides psychological support to students, teachers and families. India is also working to eliminate the digital divide by strengthening digital infrastructure and enhancing access to digital devices.

26.4 Excellencies, I am happy to share that several initiatives have already been implemented under our national education policy announced in 2020 that will accelerate the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals by enhancing access to education and improving quality of teacher learning. Some of these initiatives include the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with understanding and numeracy and sign language as regular subjects, teaching engineering in an Indian language, formation of an academic bank of credit, stress on vocational education and skilling, multiple entry exit options, forming a national education technology forum and emphasis on the internationalization of education.

26.5 Gender equity and empowerment have always been a major priority for India. The government provides support for this through various schemes. I am happy to share that the gender parity index for women in higher education is more than one now and the gross enrolment ratio is also rising consistently.

26.6 Excellencies, I take this opportunity to thank UNESCO Member States for their support for the inscription of the Kakatiya Rudreshwara Temple in Telangana and Harappan City Dholavira in Gujarat on the UNESCO World Heritage List. India reaffirms its commitment for preserving cultural heritage across the world.

26.7 Excellencies, India has a vibrant science and technology research ecosystem. Today, we need a policy and regulatory framework for the emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, which have the potential to positively impact lives across the world. We are also committed to continue our engagement with UNESCO in areas like oceanography.

26.8 Excellencies, India has a vibrant science and technology research ecosystem. Today, we need a policy and regulatory framework for the emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, which have the potential to positively impact lives across the world. We are also committed to continue our engagement with UNESCO in areas like oceanography. Excellencies, I take this opportunity to reiterate that India values the association with UNESCO in all its core working areas: education, culture, natural change, social change and communication. I reaffirm my country's commitment to continued association with UNESCO and look forward to working together in a mutually enriching and synergistic partnership to further our shared objective for peace, equity and unity. Thank you, friends.

27. The President:

Thank you very much Your Excellency. Now I call Her Excellency the honourable Ms Agnes Nyalonje Minister of Education of Malawi. Excellency, you have the floor.

28.1 Ms Nyalonje (Malawi):

Mr President of the General Conference, Director-General of UNESCO, Madam Audrey Azoulay, fellow distinguished delegates. Mr President, allow me to add my delegation's sincere congratulations on your accession to the presidency of this 41st session of the General Conference. I have trust in your wisdom and able leadership. Allow me also to join the rest of the delegations in congratulating Madam Azoulay for being resoundingly re-elected and appointed Director-General of UNESCO. Congratulations, Madam. I bring fraternal congratulations and greetings from His Excellency Dr Lazarus Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi. He wishes all the delegates to this Conference fruitful deliberations.

28.2 Mr President, this 41st session of the General Conference is taking place at a time the world is slowly returning to normalcy in this COVID-19 era. As UNESCO is closing the Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021 and entering the new Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029, this session offers us an opportunity to reflect on the achievements that have been made and the challenges that have been encountered. Malawi appreciates the work done by UNESCO amidst the challenges brought about by COVID-19. Notably, UNESCO has ably fulfilled its functions as a laboratory of ideas, a clearinghouse, a standard setter, a catalyst and monitor for international cooperation and a capacity builder, as well as peacebuilder.

28.3 Malawi supports the Organization's maintenance and integration of two key global priorities in the Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 and programmes, that is, priority Africa and priority gender equality. This is very much appreciated in Malawi and elsewhere among Member States. And we urge that we all do our best to ensure progress. Continuous maintenance of these two priority areas over the years may be an indication that there are serious challenges that hamper progress which need to be addressed in a business unusual approach.

28.4 Mr President, Malawi is committed to adopting national priorities against regional and global benchmarks such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the African Union, Agenda 2063 and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) development agenda. Malawi's own development blueprint, the Malawi 2063 Vision, responds to that commitment. In education, Mr President, Malawi appreciates initiatives by UNESCO in the establishment of the Global Partnership on Education and the UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank consortium programme set up to help countries to adopt evidence-based strategies and measures in response to COVID-19.

28.5 We are also appreciative of the UNESCO Norwegian Teacher Initiative, which is supporting the development of our policy on teachers and teacher promotion and also the professional development of teachers. We also appreciate the support provided by UNESCO and partners such as the European Union towards Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), which has supported the articulation of a TVET policy and improved funding towards this very important area of my government's work.

28.6 Mr President, I would like to acknowledge and thank in a very special way the role played by the National Commissions for UNESCO and their respective governments in Germany and South Korea. These UNESCO Commissions have collaborated with our National Commission in promoting UNESCO's mandate and its added value. Such collaboration has demonstrated that within the architecture of UNESCO, National Commissions continue to constitute capable actors that appropriately position UNESCO to respond to the challenges of today's world, including the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The work of these National Commissions has responded very well to UNESCO's mandate. Malawi looks forward to the continuation and creation of more such partnerships in the spirit of multilateralism, and calls upon the National Commissions and their respective governments to continue with this mode of collaboration or cooperation.

28.7 Mr President in science, I wish to thank UNESCO for the work done on the Man and Biosphere programme and for the support being provided towards the strengthening of science, technology and innovation. In the social and human sciences programme, Malawi appreciates the efforts being made in strengthening the programme through initiatives such as the establishment of the Malawi Anti-Doping Organization and the National Committee on Bioethics.

28.8 Mr President, culture defines people. Culture has lasting effects on how people approach and address life's challenges. We applaud UNESCO for adopting a road map for the implementation of the 2005 Convention in the Digital Environment, which is a major breakthrough to support Member States addressing issues such as the digital divide in the flow of cultural goods and services, digital literacy and remuneration of culture professionals online. Malawi is very appreciative of the role played by UNESCO and the Norwegian Embassy in supporting the implementation of the culture policy in my country.

28.9 Malawi has UNESCO world heritage sites such as the Lake Malawi National Park and the Chongoni Rock Art paintings in Dedza. Both of these are natural and cultural heritage sites. Malawi fully subscribes to the tenets of freedom of expression and free access to information. Every year Malawi joins the international community in commemorating World Press Freedom Day and World Radio Day. As a sign of commitment, the Malawi Government has gazetted the Access to Information Act on 30 September 2020.

28.10 Mr President, distinguished delegates. In conclusion, I wish to express Malawi's commitment to support our partner Member States that have expressed interest to vie for various seats in the Executive Board and other committees. And with these remarks, I thank you all for your attention.

29. The President:

Thank you Your Excellency and for your kind words to this presidency. I now call His Excellency Mr Abdelhakim Belaabed Minister of National Education of Algeria. You have the floor, Excellency.

٣٠-١ السيد بلعابد (الجزائر):

السيد رئيس المؤتمر العام، السيدة المدير العام لليونسكو، السيد رئيس المجلس التنفيذي، أصحاب المعالي والسعادة، السيدات والسادة الحضور، اسمحوا لي في البداية أن أتقدم بالتهنئة إلى السيد سانتياغو إراسبال مورو، السفير المندوب الدائم لدولة البرازيل لدى منظمة اليونسكو، على انتخابه رئيساً للدورة الحادية والأربعين للمؤتمر العام لمنظمة اليونسكو. كما أهنئ السيدة المدير العام على إعادة انتخابها لنفس المهمة لمدة جديدة.

٣٠-٢ سيدي الرئيس، يسعدني باسمي الخاص، وباسم الوفد الجزائري الذي أترأسه، أن أحمل إليكم سلاماً حاراً من الأمة الجزائرية العريقة، وأنقل لكم تحيات وتقدير حكومتنا وشعبنا، وأعبر لكم عن خالص شكرنا وامتناننا للعمل الدؤوب الذي تقوم به منظمة اليونسكو في سبيل نشر العلم وترقية الثقافة الإنسانية وضمان تربية ذات نوعية وجامعة لجميع أطفال العالم. وينعقد مؤتمرنا العام في سياق عالمي يتسم بانتشار جائحة كورونا التي شلت العالم قاطبة، وبالنسبة إلى بلدي الجزائر، فإن تأثير الجائحة دفعتنا إلى إعادة تنظيم التمدريس لضمان الحق في التعليم لكل المتعلمين، مع التقيد بالقواعد الوقائية الصحية للمحافظة على سلامة الجميع. وهذا الأمر جعلنا نقتحم عالم التعليم الرقمي وتطوير التعليم عن بعد، حيث تم تطوير عدة أروضات لتقديم دروس لجميع المستويات التعليمية مع استحداث قناة تلفزيونية متخصصة لذات الغرض، فضلاً عن اعتماد التعليم الهجين في مؤسسات التربية والتعليم العالي. وفي هذا المقام، اسمحوا لي أن أتوجه بالشكر والعرفان للمعلمين في بلادتي، ولكل الذين قدموا نموذجاً يقتدى به من حيث الانضباط في تطبيق البروتوكول الصحي، وفي تضحياتهم من أجل ضمان تمدريس أبنائنا رغم الضغوط والتعقيدات التي فرضتها الجائحة على تنظيم التدريس منذ ظهورها. وانطلاقاً من مبادئ إلزامية مواصلة الدراسة، وتفضيل العمل الحضوري قدر الإمكان، وتحسباً للدخول المدرسي للسنة الدراسية ٢٠٢١-٢٠٢٢، ووفقاً لتعليمات السيد رئيس الجمهورية، تم إعداد استراتيجية وطنية لعملية التلقح ضد فيروس كورونا، مع ضمان إعطاء الأولوية للتلقح كل مستخدم قطاع التربية قبل الدخول المدرسي الذي صادف انطلاق مجمع "صيدال" الجزائري في إنتاج أولى الدفعات من لقاح المصنع محلياً ضد هذا الفيروس تحت مسمى "كورونا فاك".

٣٠-٣ السيدات والسادة، عرفت الجزائر خلال العامين الماضيين استحقاقات وطنية في مجال البناء الديمقراطي، بدأت بانتخاب السيد عبد المجيد تبون رئيساً للجمهورية في ١٢ كانون الأول/ديسمبر ٢٠١٩، وهو الذي فاز بجدارة واستحقاق بثقة الشعب الجزائري العظيم الذي عقد العزم على الهبة والانتصار، فكان رد الرئيس ملؤه خدمة الوطن بتضحية واقتدار. فمن حقنا اليوم، بل حري بنا نحن الجزائريون والجزائريات بتاريخنا وشعبنا وعراقة أمتنا، الاعتزاز والافتخار، ونحن ماضون في تأسيس دعائم ومقومات الجزائر الجديدة التي حررها الشهداء الأبطال ويرعاها أبنؤها الأحرار. ولأجل ذلك، باشر السيد الرئيس جملة من الإصلاحات الجوهرية والشجاعة التي من شأنها التأسيس لدعائم "الجزائر الجديدة" المكرسة لدولة الحق والقانون والعدالة الاجتماعية والشفافية وحرية التعبير واحترام الآخر والعيش معاً وإشاعة ثقافة السلم وثبات الموقف ونصرة القضايا العادلة في العالم والدود عن حرمة وحمى الوطن. ومن بين هذه الإصلاحات، تم إعداد دستور جديد للبلاد زكاه الشعب الجزائري خلال الاستفتاء الذي نظم في الفاتح من تشرين الثاني/نوفمبر ٢٠٢٠، والذي فتح المجال لمسار البناء المؤسساتي الذي بدأ من خلال تنظيم الانتخابات التشريعية في شهر حزيران/يونيو ٢٠٢١، وستليها الانتخابات المحلية في أواخر هذا الشهر.

٣٠-٤ أما في قطاع التربية والتعليم، يجب التذكير بأنه منذ الاستقلال قامت الجزائر بمجهود كبيرة أبرزها القرار السيادي والدستوري الذي نص على إلزامية ومجانبة التعليم. وهذا القرار الذي أعيد تأكيده في المادة ٦٥ من دستور ٢٠٢٠، والذي يضمن الحق لكل أبناء وبنات الوطن في التربية والتعليم. وتبقى الجهود متواصلة، حيث أن مخطط عمل الحكومة الذي تم اعتماده منذ أيام قليلة يرفع رهان تحسين نوعية التعليم من خلال إدراج إصلاحات بيداغوجية عميقة، وإعادة الاعتبار للتخصصات، ولا سيما العلمية والتقنية والتكنولوجية، وتعليم الرياضيات والمعلوماتية مع رفع نسبة الباحثين، حيث تعزز الحكومة تعزيز رأس المال البشري من خلال ترقية مختلطة مكوناته. وبهذا الصدد، تم إنشاء وفتح مدرسة وطنية عليا للرياضيات ومدرسة وطنية عليا للدكاء الاصطناعي مطلع السنة الجامعية الجارية. كما أعطت الدولة اهتماماً خاصاً لترقية التربية الجامعة، من خلال تحسين آلية التكفل بالأطفال ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة، حيث تم وضع مخطط للتكفل بالأطفال المصابين باضطراب التوحد. وبهذا الصدد، تم إقرار إنشاء مدرسة وطنية عليا لتكوين أساتذة متخصصين في التوحد ومدرسة وطنية عليا لتكوين أساتذة متخصصين في تعليم الصم والبكم.

٣٠-٥ وبخصوص تكوين الموارد البشرية المؤهلة ذات النوعية، تبنت بلادتي استراتيجية ترمي إلى ترقية التخصصات ذات الأولوية التي تتماشى مع استراتيجية الحكومة الرامية لدعم الاستثمار، على غرار تكنولوجيات الإعلام والاتصال، والصناعة الغذائية، والفلاحة، والطاقات المتجددة وغيرها من المجالات، فضلاً عن ترقية التعليم المهني بإدخال مفاهيم جديدة عليه وإعادة تنظيمه.

٣٠-٦ وبخصوص الثقافة، فإن بلادتي تبقى ملتزمة بمتابعة التدابير والتوصيات المتخذة من طرف الهيئات المختصة في مجال حماية التراث العالمي واسترجاع الآثار المهربة والمسروقة. وفي هذا الصدد، يطيب لي أن أعلمكم أن المركز الإقليمي (من الفئة ٢) لصون التراث الثقافي غير المادي في أفريقيا، الكائن مقره بالجزائر قد دخل حيز الخدمة.

٣٠-٧ السيدات والسادة، إن بلادتي ملتزمة بتحقيق غايات الهدف ٤ من أهداف التنمية المستدامة، حيث أن خارطة الطريق المسطرة لمنظومة التربية والتكوين الوطنية تأخذ بعين الاعتبار هذه المقاصد. وقد أبرز التقرير الوطني الطوعي للجزائر، الذي تم عرضه في أشغال المنتدى الرفيع المستوى للمجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي بنيويورك في ١٦ تموز/يوليو ٢٠١٩، التقدم المحرز بشأن تحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة. وفي هذا المجال، احتلت الجزائر المرتبة الأولى على المستويين الأفريقي والعربي في عام ٢٠١٩ ضمن تصنيف مؤشر التنمية المستدامة، كما تم تكريس حق المواطن في بيئة سليمة في إطار التنمية المستدامة من خلال المادة ٦٤ من دستور ٢٠٢٠. ونؤكد التزام الجزائر بمواصلة جهودها لاستكمال تنفيذ خطة التنمية المستدامة لعام ٢٠٣٠ وتحقيق خطة الاتحاد الأفريقي لعام ٢٠٦٣ في مجال التربية من خلال دمج أهداف التنمية المستدامة في البرامج الدراسية. كما شرعت الجزائر خلال الفترة الماضية في إدماج اللاجئيين وطالبي اللجوء على أراضيها في المجتمع عن طريق ضمان التمدريس والتكوين لأطفالهم.

٨-٣٠ السيدات والسادة، ختاماً ونحن نحتفل بالذكرى الخامسة والسبعين لتأسيس اليونسكو، تدعو الجزائر منظمتنا الموقرة إلى دعم الجهود الوطنية لبناء قدراتها على الصمود، والحد من أوجه عدم المساواة وتحقيق التنمية المستدامة، وترقية التعاون العلمي المشترك إقليمياً ودولياً بغية تقليص الفجوة المعرفية والرقمية ما بين الشمال والجنوب. كما تؤكد عزم الجزائر على مواصلة العمل للارتقاء بالأهداف السامية للمنظمة في بناء مجتمع العلم والثقافة والمعرفة والسلام، متمنياً النجاح لمؤتمرا، والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله تعالى وبركاته.

31. The President:

Thank you Your Excellency. Now I call Her Excellency, Ms Delphine Edith Emmanuel Adouki, Minister of Higher Education of the Republic of Congo.

32.1 Mme Adouki (Congo) :

Monsieur le président de la 41^e session de la Conférence générale. Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Madame la Directrice générale de l'UNESCO. Distingués membres des Délégations des États membres en vos rangs, grades et toute préséance confondus, Mesdames et Messieurs, permettez-moi, au nom de la République du Congo, d'adresser nos vives félicitations à Son Excellence Monsieur Ahmet Altay Cengizer, président de la 40^e Conférence générale, à Son Excellence Monsieur Agapito Mba Mokuy et à Madame Audrey Azoulay, Directrice générale pour la détermination et le talent dont ils ont fait preuve pour la préparation et la tenue en présentiel de la présente session. Je ne manquerai pas aussi de féliciter et d'assurer de notre soutien, Madame Audrey Azoulay pour sa brillante réélection au poste de Directrice générale de notre Organisation. Mes félicitations s'adressent aussi à son Excellence Monsieur Santiago Irazabal Mourão, Président de la 41^e Conférence générale, ainsi qu'à tous les Vice-présidents pour le soutien que nous leur accordons dans la réalisation de leur noble mission au service de notre Organisation.

32.2 Mesdames et Messieurs, la pandémie à COVID-19 a conduit la République du Congo à l'adoption à diverses restrictions sous la clairvoyante direction de Son Excellence, Monsieur le Président Denis Sassou-Nguesso, et le peuple congolais a fait preuve d'une résilience indéniable, expérimentant grâce à l'UNESCO la continuité pédagogique. La République du Congo a fait du développement durable sa priorité et s'est fixé comme objectif, notamment la protection de l'environnement, l'exploitation rationnelle de ses ressources naturelles, une offre d'éducation de qualité pour tous, la promotion du genre, la sauvegarde de son patrimoine culturel, la promotion de la paix et du « vivre ensemble ». C'est dans cette vision que se construit la construction d'un système éducatif dont l'UNESCO constitue l'un des partenaires majeurs, assurant ainsi une formation diversifiée de qualité tournée vers l'employabilité des jeunes. C'est cette vision qui nous a permis, avec le concours de l'UNESCO, de conduire notre politique scientifique avec notamment pour résultat la création de plusieurs centres et instituts de recherche et surtout, l'affectation de 25 % du budget national à l'éducation et à la recherche scientifique. C'est enfin cette vision qui est à l'origine du fond bleu du bassin du Congo, de la protection des tourbières, de l'inauguration du Centre d'excellence d'Oyo en énergies renouvelables, du Centre national de formation des enseignants de Mouyondzi et de l'Organisation des États généraux de l'éducation.

32.3 Au plan culturel, la République du Congo soutient l'inscription au patrimoine immatériel de la Rumba. Excellence, Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Mesdames et Messieurs les membres de Délégations, la République du Congo soutient la Résolution de l'UNESCO relative notamment à, Résolution de l'UNESCO notamment relative. Je vous prie de m'excuser. Analysant les projets du budget 2022 et 2023 et le projet de la stratégie du moyen terme 2022-2029, la République du Congo soutient leur alignement aux objectifs du Programme de développement durable 2030, en espérant un effet accélérateur de l'action de l'UNESCO dans l'atteinte de ses objectifs. Concernant le projet de programme et budget, le Congo souhaite que le taux de croissance global de 9,8 % de ce budget soit reflété au niveau du programme de participation et de l'action en faveur des femmes.

32.4 Dans le grand programme en éducation, nous saluons les efforts de l'UNESCO, de l'Institut des statistiques de l'UNESCO dans la mise en œuvre de l'ODD 4, notamment dans la formulation des indicateurs les plus adaptés à chaque situation nationale. Nous souhaitons aussi la réforme du mandat du Bureau international pour l'éducation. En sciences, nous encourageons l'UNESCO à renforcer les capacités des États membres, à améliorer les politiques de la science, la technologie et l'innovation, l'accès aux progrès scientifiques et technologiques et le partage de connaissances, notamment par la science ouverte. À ce sujet, la République du Congo a mis en place un Comité national sur la science ouverte et soutient la Recommandation y afférente. Elle organisera du 16 au 22 avril 2022, dans le cadre de la CEEAC, la Semaine de la Science et des Technologies. Dans la même veine, nous soutenons l'avant-projet de Recommandation sur l'éthique de l'intelligence artificielle et sollicitant l'appui de l'UNESCO à notre deuxième Université publique qui abritera le Centre africain de recherche en intelligence artificielle, centre de catégorie 2, de portée continentale. Enfin, pour conclure, d'une part, je ne manquerai pas de solliciter votre soutien à la candidature de la République du Congo en qualité de membre du Conseil exécutif. D'autre part, je souhaiterais réaffirmer notre foi en l'avenir de l'UNESCO et nous féliciter de l'exécution des engagements pris dans le cadre du mémorandum signé entre l'UNESCO et le Congo lors de la mémorable visite de la Directrice générale à Brazzaville, en octobre 2020. Je souhaite plein succès à nos travaux et vous remercie.

33. The President:

Thank you Your Excellency. Now I call Her Excellency Dr Madiha bint Ahmed Al Shaibaniya, Minister of Education of Oman. You have the floor, Excellency.

١-٣٤ السيدة الشيبانية (عمان):

سعادة رئيس المؤتمر العام، سعادة رئيس المجلس التنفيذي، معالي المديرية العامة لليونسكو، أصحاب المعالي والسعادة، الحضور الكريم، السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته، إنه لمن دواعي السرور أن أشارك في الدورة الحادية والأربعين للمؤتمر العام لليونسكو، وأشرف بداية أن أنقل لكم تحيات حضرة صاحب الجلالة، السلطان هيثم بن طارق، سلطان عمان وتقنياته لأعمال هذا المؤتمر بالنجاح والتوفيق، وتطلعات جلالته لعالم تسوده مبادئ التفاهم والحوار من أجل تحقيق الأمن

والسلام في العالم أجمع، ولهذا المنظمة المزيد من الازدهار. كما يسرني تحنئة معالي أودري أزولاي، المدير العام لمنظمة اليونسكو، على إعادة تعيينها للفترة القادمة راجية لها التوفيق لتحقيق أهداف المنظمة.

٣-٢٤ الحضور الكريم، يأتي انعقاد هذا المؤتمر واليونسكو تحتفي بالذكرى الخامسة والسبعين على تأسيسها في فترة استثنائية تمر بها دول العالم جراء انتشار كورونا (كوفيد ١٩) وتداعياتها على المؤسسات التعليمية والصحية والاقتصادية، مما يؤكد الدور الريادي الذي تقوم به المنظمة عبر مسيرتها الطويلة لتحقيق التطلعات الإنسانية وغاياتها في القضايا المختلفة، ودورها الفاعل في الحفاظ على مكائنها وفي مد يد العون للمجتمع الدولي للتغلب على كافة التحديات، لا سيما القضايا المتعلقة بالتعليم ورفاه الإنسان.

٣-٣٤ الحضور الكريم، إن النهج المتأصل لمنظمة اليونسكو في تبني قضايا الشباب وتقديم الدعم اللازم لهم يعد أمراً في غاية الأهمية، وهو ما يتناغم مع أبعاد التنمية المستدامة في إيجاد حوارات ونقاشات مستمرة معهم عبر المنابر والمنتديات الشبابية المختلفة من أجل تمكينهم وتحقيق طموحاتهم. وفي هذا المجال، أولت بلادي سلطة عمان الشباب جل اهتمامها، إذ شاركوها في صياغة رؤية عمان ٢٠٤٠ التي ركزت على رعاية الشباب وتطوير مهاراتهم ودعم مبادراتهم الوطنية. واليوم يحق لنا أن نفخر بما حققه الشباب العماني من منجزات على المستويين الدولي والوطني، إذ سطروا أروع الأمثلة في التعاون والتلاحم في الكثير من القضايا الوطنية بما يسهم في دفع عجلة التنمية الشاملة في البلاد.

٤-٣٤ الحضور الكريم، لقد كشف التحدي الذي لا يزال يواجه التعليم في جميع دول العالم نتيجة تداعيات فيروس كوفيد ١٩، عن حاجة نظم التعليم إلى إعادة التفكير في غاياته ومناهجه وطرقه لتمكين المتعلمين من استمرار التعلم في ظروف متغيرة وسباقات غير مألوفة، من أجل تعزيز التقدم المحرز في تحقيق الهدف ٤ من أهداف التنمية المستدامة الخاص بالتعليم حتى عام ٢٠٣٠، وتأمين مستقبل أفضل للتعليم وفق الحوارات التي بدأتها المنظمة بشراكة مع أصحاب القرار وصناع السياسات. ولضمان استمرارية التعليم في بلادي، وللمحافظة على سلامة الطلبة والطالبات والهيئات التدريسية والإدارية، فقد تبنت سلطة عمان تدابير احترازية معتمدة على التعليم المدمج، وأولت أهمية قصوى لتشخيص الفاقد التعليمي ومعالجته خلال فترة التعافي من الجائحة. كما عملت حكومة بلادي على إيلاء المعلمين أولوية في تلقي لقاح كوفيد ١٩، الأمر الذي أتاح لنا الانتقال التدريجي من التعليم المدمج إلى التعليم الحضوري خلال هذا العام الدراسي، مع المحافظة على مكتسبات التعليم الإلكتروني والتحول الرقمي في التعليم. وفي هذا الصدد، أود الإشادة بالدور الاستثنائي الذي قام به المعلمون لضمان سير العملية التعليمية، داعين المنظمة لقيادة مبادرة عالمية تُعنى بتمكين المعلمين ورفع كفاءتهم وإتاحة الفرصة لهم لتبادل الخبرات فيما بينهم في مجتمعات التعلم المهنية، وإكسابهم المهارات المطلوبة لمواكبة التحول الرقمي في التعليم.

٥-٣٤ الحضور الكرام، تعلمون جميعاً أن قطاعات الثقافة والتراث والفن والسياحة قد تأثرت أيضاً جراء جائحة كوفيد ١٩، وذلك على نحو متفاوت، إذ شهدت الكثير من المتاحف والمسارح والمعارض الثقافية ومواقع التراث العالمي إغلاقاً وتعطيلاً لأنشطتها وبرامجها الثقافية المختلفة، لذا فقد باتت من الأهمية أن تتضافر الجهود بين جميع الجهات والمؤسسات الثقافية في العالم لوضع رؤية واضحة وتطوير آلية مشتركة لتنظيم الفعاليات والبرامج الثقافية لضمان استمرارها في مثل هذه الظروف مستقبلاً. كما قامت بلادي مؤخراً بإصدار الاستراتيجية الثقافية التي ستسهم في تحويل المشهد الثقافي العماني إلى واجهة للإبداع والتنوع الثقافي من خلال منظومة ثقافية متكاملة ومنفتحة على الثقافات الإنسانية الأخرى.

٦-٣٤ الحضور الكريم، انسجاماً مع توجهات اليونسكو للاستثمار في الاقتصاد الإبداعي، فإننا في سلطة عمان ننظر إلى الذكاء الاصطناعي والتقنيات المتقدمة على أنها إمكانات لتعزيز إنتاجية القطاعات الاقتصادية والتعليمية والصحية. وإذ نشيد بالاهتمام البالغ للمنظمة في السنوات الأخيرة بإصدار وثائق تعنى بأخلاقيات العلوم والذكاء الاصطناعي، فإن بلادي تؤكد أهمية اعتماد مشروع التوصية الخاصة بأخلاقيات الذكاء الاصطناعي، ومشروع التوصية بشأن العلم المفتوح في هذه الدورة.

٧-٣٤ أصحاب المعالي والسعادة، الحضور الكريم، إن المرحلة المقبلة تتطلب منا العمل بشكل جماعي للوصول إلى أهدافنا المنشودة من أجل الأجيال القادمة، وتهيئة العالم لمستقبل أفضل من خلال إيجاد حلول مستدامة وطرق حكيمة لتكوين مجتمعات منتجة وواعية وقادرة على الابتكار من أجل المحافظة على موارد الكوكب الذي نعيش فيه. وفقنا الله جميعاً لما فيه خير الإنسانية، والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته.

35. The President:

I thank you very much for your words. Now I call His Excellency Professor Nikolai Denkov Minister of Education and Science of Bulgaria. We are going to watch a pre-recorded video. You have the floor, Your Excellency.

36.1 Mr Denkov (Bulgaria):

Dear Mr President of the General Conference of UNESCO, dear Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board of UNESCO, dear Director-General of UNESCO, your Excellencies, dear delegates, I would like to start by congratulating Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay on her appointment for the second consecutive term as the head of the Organization. We highly appreciate the work of Ms Azoulay and of the UNESCO Secretariat, which successfully leads the Organization in the way of reforms under difficult conditions. I also extend congratulations to the newly elected President of the General Conference. I am confident that his rich professional experience would contribute to fruitful discussions in the spirit of the ideals and principles of our Organization.

36.2 The global health crisis proved once again the exceptional power of international cooperation, the importance of solidarity, and the role of consistency and efficiency in our efforts to achieve peace and stability. This goal, set by our ancestors 75 years ago, resonates even stronger today. It is our common duty to achieve it.

36.3 UNESCO has a leading role in the realization of the ambitious United Nations Agenda 2030. Bulgaria is an active and consistent partner in this global effort. One of the important steps to make progress in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 is to strengthen the global education architecture. We welcome the leading role of

UNESCO in the consultation process, the global coordination and the related cooperation mechanism. Our priorities in this process are the professional qualifications and life-long learning which are essential components of the Global Education Programme.

36.4 An important task for us is the implementation of a clear and long-term policy, aimed at the protection of the tangible and nontangible cultural heritage. We are aware that new threats endanger world heritage in all its diversity, which requires the entire international community to participate in its protection, management and popularization. Along with the cultural diversity that promotes the free exchange of ideas between cultures, we consider cultural heritage as a powerful tool for economic growth and for development of creative economy, digital environment and jobs of tomorrow.

36.5 The Republic of Bulgaria considers as a high priority the preservation of traditions and customs as a vector of sustainability. Proof of this consistent commitment is the active work of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe, situated in Sofia. This Centre continued its activity during the harsh pandemic conditions. Bulgaria will initiate a renewal of the agreement with UNESCO for this Centre, which proved to be a key actor in safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage in the region.

36.6 Bulgaria is proud that, via the UNESCO-Bulgaria Trust, it finances a series of projects in the priority areas such as the fight against antisemitism through education, enhancing sustainability to climate changes in the context of the protection the cultural and natural heritage. The inequalities between different countries and regions deepened during the COVID-19 period, which brought up the crucial role of science, technologies and innovations in developing more stable and resilient societies. The essential need of open and inclusive science has been proven, involving enhanced cooperation and solidarity. Bulgaria adopted the UNESCO recommendation for open science and included it as an integral part of all new scientific initiatives.

36.7 Recognizing the importance of artificial intelligence for the deep transformation of our times, we have to make sure that it serves humanity while respecting human rights and dignity. Bulgaria took part in the broad consultation process of drafting the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence.

36.8 In conclusion, I express once again Bulgaria's confidence that all together we shall continue to make solidarity efforts for expanding the UNESCO influence for development of the processes, leading to the wellbeing and prosperity of the mankind. I wish success to the General Conference of UNESCO. Thank you for your attention.

37. **The President:**

Thank you very much Excellency, Now I call Her Excellency Ms Claudiana Cole, Minister of Basic and Secondary Education of Gambia.

38.1 **Ms Cole (Gambia):**

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board; Madam Director-General of UNESCO, your Excellencies, ambassadors and permanent delegates, distinguished representatives of international organizations, ladies and gentlemen, please allow me to congratulate the President of the General Conference on his election and also to congratulate the Director-General of UNESCO, Madam Azoulay, on her re-election for a second term and to thank her for all the support that she has been giving to my country, Gambia. I now have the honour to deliver the statement at the 41st session of the General Conference on behalf of the people and the government of Gambia. The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the essential futures of all our institutions, and it has challenged governments around the world to rethink and reinvent new strategies in order to rebuild more solidly and resiliently.

38.2 Indeed, the shock generated by this unprecedented health crisis has vitiated the institutional structures of entire educational systems. In Gambia, the nationwide school closure had directly affected about 700,000 children. But as we begin to recover, appropriate measures were put in place to ensure the continuity of learning. Gambia, with the support of partners such as UNESCO, was able to provide access to learning through the use of radio and television. Upon the reopening of schools, pupils and teachers were supported to interact in a safe learning atmosphere.

38.3 Our Government revisited the national education policy to re-emphasize the critical necessity to use information technology in distant education as a key driver in promoting the slogan "Learning never stops." We are also reviewing the national school curriculum to integrate risk management and resilience, and thanks to UNESCO, 1,000 Gambian teachers were trained to use digital means in education.

38.4 Ladies and gentlemen, we thank UNESCO for supporting the many initiatives to promote and develop the intangible and tangible cultural assets in our country. Our country is committed to ratifying the 2001 Convention on Underwater Cultural Heritage very soon. However, one needs to recognize that the pandemic has not spared the culture and tourism sector. Family meetings and religious gatherings, which constitute the essential fabric of the Gambian society, were seriously affected. And while certain elements of legal enforcement have been relaxed, the society is yet to return to normal. Artistic performances, museum attendance and cultural ceremonies have been reduced to the barest minimum.

38.5 The cultural industries were startled and many Gambians were rendered jobless. As we recognize the fact that transformation of a resilient cultural landscape resides on a responsive cultural policy that seizes the dynamism of the youth, we envisage to capitalize on the vast opportunities that the digital world is offering. New talents emerging and creativity is being harnessed, allowing the rekindling of many aspects of our culture.

38.6 Ladies and gentlemen, Gambia continues to be engaged in the irreversible process of peace. As we reiterate our commitment to building a nation where the press is free, our country has undergone major reforms in the media and information domain. With these initiatives over the past four years and the increase in the number of media houses, The Gambia is in the right direction towards advancing a culture of media freedoms. Our Government has formulated a policy on cybersecurity and for the promotion of universal and affordable access services. A media and information bill has been enacted into law, thus paving the way for governance, transparency and a free and well-informed citizenry. We commend

UNESCO for offering young media professionals training on fact checking to combat misinformation and disinformation. We have no doubt that this will reinforce our democracy and the prevention of violence and hate speech during the upcoming presidential election in Gambia.

38.7 Ladies and gentlemen, our Government recognizes gender and women's empowerment as a critical enabler in the attainment of sustained and progressive development. I am pleased to inform you that we have upgraded the Women's Bureau to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, which has prioritized a series of inclusive legislative and policy reviews. Gambia is devoted to addressing equality, social justice and the further mainstreaming of women and children in its overall development process.

38.8 Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we acknowledge the fact that youths are the driving force for our socioeconomic development. They are contributions towards socioeconomic and political reforms in the context of rapid global changes cannot be overemphasized. Thus, we have initiated a shift in the youth development paradigm to emphasizing the recognition of them as the single most important and valuable natural resource that Gambia has. We are committed to putting in place the necessary government machinery and other available national support to ensure that systematic frameworks in institutionalized settings are established and used to empower the youth. We thank UNESCO for supporting the development of the first sector wide policy on TVET in Gambia.

38.9 Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, Gambia commends UNESCO for its leading role during the COVID-19 crisis, particularly all the efforts made in combating and alleviating the negative impact of the pandemic. We are confident that we will continue to work with UNESCO to devise and implement policies and programmes that will collectively make our world a safer, more resilient and a better place for all mankind. Finally, my Government wishes to express its profound appreciation to the work of the Africa Group at UNESCO in ensuring that Priority Africa activities are aligned with Agenda 2063 of the African Union. I thank you all for your kind attention. Thank you.

39. The President:

I thank you Your Excellency. Now I call Mr Mohammad Mortada, Minister of Culture of Lebanon. You have the floor Your Excellency.

٤٠-١ السيد مرتضى (لبنان):

السيد رئيس المؤتمر العام، السيد رئيس المجلس التنفيذي، السيدة المديرية العامة، أيها السيدات والسادة، جئتكم من لبنان، من بلد حميد فرنجية، رئيس المؤتمر العام الذي استضافته بيروت، وبلد عارف الرئيس وإشارات قدموس التي ترتفع على أحد جدران منظمنا ضمن مجموعة اليونسكو للأعمال الفنية؛ وبلد أنطوان غطاس كرم صاحب كتاب عبد الله من سلسلة الروائع الأدبية للمنظمة، وبلد الإمام موسى الصدر، وكمال جنبلاط، والشيخ صبحي الصالح، والمطران جورج خضر، والأب يواكيم مبارك، والمطران غريغور حداد، وكثيرين غيرهم ممن بادروا إلى إجراء حوار مسيحي إسلامي في قاعات هذه المنظمة عام ١٩٧٧، لتكون مبادراتهم فاتحة لما عرف لاحقاً بحوار الأديان؛ وبلد العديد ممن ساهموا في قضايا هذه المنظمة منذ اشتراكه في تأسيسها وصولاً إلى نجاة صليبا وعبلا السباعي اللتين نالتا جائزة اليونسكو/لوريال للنساء في العلوم.

٤٠-٢ وجئتكم من لبنان ناقلاً تهنئة الدولة اللبنانية، وتهنئة الشخصية، للسيد سانتياغو إراسبال مورو على انتخابه رئيساً للمؤتمر العام، متمنياً له وللمؤتمر النجاح فيما ينتظره من أعمال وموضوعات مهمة، وللمديرية العامة، والسيدة أزولاي انتخابها لولاية ثانية، متمنياً لها دوام التوفيق والنجاح في مساعيها لإبراز دور اليونسكو في عالم يتلظى في أتون العنصرية والعنف والجهل، والاحتباس الحراري، وتوسع الهوة المعرفية والرقمية بين شعوبه الذين يستصرخون ضمير الإنسانية الذي تجسده منظمنا من أجل إنقاذهم مما هم فيه عالقون.

٤٠-٣ وأغتنم هذه المناسبة لنهنئ أنفسنا وجميع الدول الأعضاء بالعيد الخامس والسبعين لليونسكو، آملاً أن نحتفل بالمتوية وقد تحقق الكثير من الأهداف النبيلة التي تطمح إليها منظمنا كتحديث التربية وحماية الحريات، والمحافظة على التراث المادي وغير المادي للحضارة البشرية، وتمكين المرأة والشباب، وحماية الصحفيين، وإنهاء ظاهرة الإفلات من العقاب، وصولاً إلى عالم أفضل تستعيد فيه الإنسانية جوهره كينونتها.

٤٠-٤ وينبغي لي أن أذكر بأن بيروت، التي استضافت المؤتمر العام الثالث سنة ١٩٤٨، شيدت لتلك المناسبة قصرًا لا يزال اسمه حتى اليوم "قصر اليونسكو"، ومنه اتخذ الحي الذي أُقيم فيه في بيروت اسمه، فصار حي اليونسكو. وبيروت منذ عام ١٩٦١ تستضيف مكتباً إقليمياً فاعلاً، وهي العاصمة التي صنفتها مدينة مبدعة للأدب عام ٢٠١٩، بعدما كانت عاصمة عالمية للكتاب في عام ٢٠٠٩. وغير بعيد منها تقع مدينة جبيل، أم الأبجدية وناقلتها إلى العالم، التي تستضيف المركز الدولي لعلوم الإنسان. وبيروت كانت ولا تزال الشاهدة على جوهر رسالة هذه المنظمة من خلال المبادرة التي أطلقتها المديرية العامة مشكورة في ذكرى انفجار ٤ آب/أغسطس ٢٠٢٠ وسمتها "بيروت"، وهي مبادرة سبقت كرسى اليونسكو من خلالها وضع التعليم والثقافة في صلب جهود الإغاثة في حالات الطوارئ منذ لحظةها الأولى. وتستمر هذه المبادرة بنجاح عبر جهود المنظمة ودعم الدول الأعضاء في إظهار الروح الحقيقية لليونسكو.

٤٠-٥ والحقيقة أنه على الرغم من الأزمات الصحية والاقتصادية والاجتماعية الحادة التي تعصف بلبنان ومؤسساته التربوية والثقافية، والتي كان من نتائجها القاسية هجرة الأدمغة وتعريض مستقبل الشباب للضياع والخوول دون تمكن السلطات المختصة من تحقيق كامل أهداف الألفية للاحية شمولية التعليم، فإن لبنان لم يتوقف عن السعي إلى المحافظة على دوره الريادي في التربية والثقافة والحفاظ على مواقع الأثرية ومحاربة الاتجار غير المشروع بالقطع الأثرية، عبر التعاون مع المنظمة والهيئات الدولية المعنية، ولم يتوقف كذلك عن إيلاء التنوع الثقافي الذي هو هواء لبنان أولوية قصوى. ولكن أزمات لبنان التي تزداد وطأها بالاعتداءات الإسرائيلية المتتالية، وبوجود مئات الآلاف من اللاجئين الفلسطينيين والنازحين السوريين المنتشرين على كامل الجغرافيا اللبنانية، ممن ينوء بهم الاقتصاد، توجب على منظمنا دعوة قادة العالم إلى إيجاد حلول جذرية للمسألتين الفلسطينية والسورية برفع الاحتلال ووقف الاعتداء واجتثاث الإرهاب، وفقاً لقرارات الأمم المتحدة ومبادئ حقوق الإنسان ومقتضيات ثقافة السلام.

٤٠-٦ وفي عامها الخامس والسبعين، تتألق اليونيسكو على رأس القضايا الكبرى التي يواجهها العالم، بدءاً من قضية مستقبل التربية والتعليم في زمن الإنترنت والذكاء الاصطناعي، ومروراً بالحاجة إلى وضع الثقافة في قمة أولويات الدول لارتباطها الوثيق بالتنمية، ووصولاً إلى مسألة حماية البيئة والمحيط الحيوي. وإن لبنان حريص على البقاء في طليعة الدول المتمسكة برسالة الحرية والتعددية والتنوع، فهو يتكوينه مساحة عيش واحد ولقاء وحوار. أما ما عجزت عنه الحروب العسكرية المتكررة التي جرى خوضها ضده وفيه من أجل إخضاعه وهدم دوره، وآخرها الهجمة التكفيرية التي تهدد سورية وامتدت إلى لبنان، تحاض اليوم بشكل آخر، منها تأليب اللبنانيين بعضهم على بعض، ورفع الحواجز النفسية وتأجيج الغرائزية والطائفية، وهذا ما يتهدد التنوع اللبناني بنوعيته المتميزة، ويتهدد بالتالي فرادة لبنان، بل السبب الموجب لبقائه ككيان.

٤٠-٧ ووزارة الثقافة مصرّة على أن تلعب دوراً على مستوى بناء جسور التلاقي التي وحدها تجعلنا نخرج من كهوفنا النفسية ونستعيد ثقتنا بذواتنا ليبقى لبنان وفيّاً لدوره، قائماً به على أكمل وجه، تحقيقاً لرسالته الإنسانية ومعنى وجوده. ودمتم بخير، وعاشت اليونيسكو منارة تشع على الإنسانية تعاوناً وتعاضداً وعلماً وثقافة وسلاماً، وعاش وطني حبيبي لبنان، والسلام عليكم.

41. The President:

I thank you Your Excellency. Now I call Her Excellency Ms Glenys Hanna-Martin, Minister of Education, Technical and Vocational Training of Bahamas. You have the floor Your Excellency.

42.1 Ms Hanna-Martin (Bahamas):

Mr President, Madam Director-General, colleague Ministers, representatives of the various delegations, distinguished ladies and gentlemen. It is an honour and esteemed privilege to have this opportunity to address this 41st session of the General Conference of UNESCO as the Minister of Education and Technical and Vocational Training for the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. I bring greetings on behalf of our Governor General His Excellency the Most Honourable Sir Cornelius A. Smith and the Honourable Philip Davis, Prime Minister, and indeed the people of Bahamas.

42.2 We congratulate Madam Director-General on her re-election. We also congratulate UNESCO on the celebration of its 75th anniversary. We are proud that the Bahamas has been a full Member of this august body for 40 of those 75 years. We are gratified that over these decades we have participated fully and engaged in wide-ranging collaboration and cooperation.

42.3 The world has changed very much over these years and today we face emerging challenges which threaten our planet and all of its inhabitants collectively. One such issue is climate change and global warming. We in the Bahamas understand this most painfully and all too well. Just last week our Prime Minister Philip Davis addressed the United Nations COP26 Leaders' Summit in Glasgow, Scotland, on this pressing matter of climate change. He advised that the Bahamas, my home, is among the 10 most vulnerable island nation States in the world. We understood this vulnerability in a most practical way in 2019 when our nation was hit by a category five hurricane called Dorian.

42.4 Dorian devastated significant portions of two economic centres in our country, the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahamas. It killed untold numbers, the exactitude of which are still unknown, and left in its wake many traumatized by the horrific events which were witnessed first-hand by the many who watched loved ones die and had to fight to save their own lives, in the 23-foot-high wall of water and 185-mile force winds and tornado activity. The cost to us of that hurricane is estimated in the region of \$3.4 billion and impacts on the economy that will last for years, and we are still in the midst of picking up the pieces in many ways, including in the delivery of education on those affected islands. Dorian was the culminant of a series of devastating hurricanes which preceded it.

42.5 Our Prime Minister pointed out at the COP26 Conference that we are a low-lying ocean State planted within 100,000 square miles of water which provides a carbon sink which benefits the entire world, yet we are victimized by climate change substantially brought on by activities in third-party States.

42.6 There are no silos in the global environment and we must operate and cooperate symbiotically, engage in give and take for the harmonious systems for the planet's survival. It is certainly true, as elucidated by John Donne, 16th century English poet, "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main."

42.7 Not long after Hurricane Dorian we experienced the COVID-19 pandemic which has impacted the entire world. We in the Bahamas have certainly not escaped the tremendous fallout wrought by this deadly and disrupting virus. The process of educating our children has been acutely affected by this pandemic and we have experienced challenges on all fronts varying from access to wi-fi, in some instances access to electricity, challenges in providing child supervision in homes, managing student attention in a virtual instructional mode and access to virtual learning devices.

42.8 In the Bahamas we will not rest. Our people are courageous and resilient and filled with the resolve that we will work to ensure our country is one of the finest little countries on the face of the earth, and that our people are given the best opportunities possible. We also understand the critical link between the delivery of education to the individual development of each child and the collective success of a nation. We are most appreciative for the work of UNESCO in its provision of critical data, timely research and considered recommendations to help redress the challenges we face and help us to build upon our strengths. The work and support of UNESCO during this difficult period in human history cannot be overstated.

42.9 We are also grateful for the collaboration with UNESCO in the development and implementation of the framework which resulted in the Bahamas becoming a State Party to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Pursuant to this, we have submitted nomination papers for the inscription of our indigenous national cultural festival of the Bahamas, Junkanoo, an amazing mix of rhythms retained and evolved since the crossing of the Middle Passage – in essence, a celebration of freedom demonstrated in dance. Junkanoo is an art form significant to the

national identity of our people, commemorative of our historical journey and in urgent need of safeguarding for generations yet unborn and for enrichment of world cultures.

42.10 Despite our acute vulnerabilities and ongoing challenges, we have dug deep and determined that we will create a new day for our people, that we will bring about the necessary adaptation and implement pragmatic change to secure the future progress of our people. In this regard we are re-envisioning virtual learning for our archipelagic State, developing policies that are data-driven, actively reviewing the curriculum, facilitating life-long learning and professional development for our educators and establishing universal pre-primary education. In recognition of the substantive and qualitative relationship with my nation, the Bahamas reaffirms its pledge and commitment to fully honour the goals, as articulated by UNESCO, and to declare our full partnership in the development of this work, to the benefit of all people. Finally, we are offering ourselves for membership on the Executive Board. We are hopeful that members will see the value of our experiences, our unique insight and our dogged commitment to the ideals as articulated by UNESCO as valuable inputs to the higher participation of decision-making. I thank you.

43. **The President:**

I thank you Your Excellency. Now I call His Excellency Mr Professor Ansu Sonii, Minister of Education of Liberia. You have the floor Your Excellency.

44.1 **Mr Sonii (Liberia):**

Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, colleagues, delegates, ladies and gentlemen. I join other Member States in expressing our profound congratulations to UNESCO on the 75th anniversary of its founding, of which convention Liberia is a signatory. It cannot be emphasized even more that because of UNESCO and its mission and programmes that the world has become a better place over the past 75 years and that we can begin to breathe peace throughout the world and all nations.

44.2 Liberia also wishes to congratulate you, Mr President, for the election to chair this 41st session of the General Conference. And accordingly, we pledge our support. Similarly, we express our appreciation again for the work of the Director-General over the past four years and congratulate her for being re-elected to the post of Director-General of UNESCO. Again, you have our support.

44.3 Seventy-five years ago, history tells that UNESCO became an entity in the architecture of United Nations systems. Liberia stands proud to have been present 75 years ago as a founding member nation whose signatory endorsed the philosophy of this enterprising embodiment of the concept of a United Nations, particularly after the aftermath of a destructive calamity presented upon mankind such as wars. In celebration of these 75 years, Liberia's President, His Excellency George Weah, among other Excellencies of his standing, has accepted an invitation to grace the occasion and lends his representation in confirming support for the UNESCO agenda for the years to come.

44.4 Our long-standing membership with UNESCO and other international organizations is testament to Liberia's firm commitment to the principle of multilateralism and the protection of women, the promotion of girls' education across our landscape. Nothing else does it better. Ladies and gentlemen, education draws on the transformation of the lives of men and women, culture in all of its glory – science with all of its inventions, when taken together, have a single purpose to ensure peace and stability the world over. For these reasons, all nations developed and developing, big and small have taken education as the principal recipe, prerequisite upon which development agendas are set. Everything else depends on the success of this agenda item, Education for All, without exception.

44.5 Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, delegates, Liberia, like many other countries, has heard the call to action in accelerating the education processes for its citizens and residents, in particular girls. Sometime in 2021 and earlier the Government of Liberia introduced special incentives to improve girls' enrolment, retention and completion. In that regard the gaps at all levels between boys and girls have substantially narrowed, and we are pleased to report significant progress at all levels of teaching and learning in spite of disruptions. Our concerns grow, however, for out-of-school youth without skills to fend for themselves responsibly, and I record that the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Youth and Sports is intervening in several ways to remedy that deficit.

44.6 I reported substantial performance on regional and public examination, suggesting that we are on course. While the results of education are usually delayed in recognition, we believe that the Sustainable Development Goal 4 targets shall be realized substantially above average by 2030, to which the Liberian Government again is fully committed. The two years 2020 and 2021 simply referred to as COVID years in our country, and many other countries, interfered with some of the gains our education system had made earlier on. In those regards, significant time and resources have been spent and lost in the process of converting that process. In remedy, quick interventions and substitutes are placed into action to minimize the impact of the absence of in-person teaching and learning. One of those substitutes was teaching by radio programme for basic and secondary school students and online learning for university students. That talent, however, has given reason for the Ministry of Education to begin a full-scale development of a platform for continuous teaching and learning through the use of radio and television and other digital platforms to be fully commissioned by mid-2022. The lectures to be enrolled on that teaching platform are being developed for all grades. As we journey into the future, it is our hope that a new bridge will be built, connecting early childhood more similarly to primary school, similar to secondary school, and even more similarly to tertiary and higher education. This will ensure continuous capacity building across the educational system and sustainable development.

44.7 Cultural heritage, Mr President, despite Africa's rich cultural heritage and endowment, it is clear that the continent remains underrepresented on the world heritage stage. In that regard, we are pleased to inform this General Conference and invite Madam Director-General, who may receive an invitation officially from the organizing committee to Liberia's bicentennial in 2022. The year 1822 marks the first-time entry to an unknown place by free men of colour, former slaves from America, searching for a home in Africa, a continent of their ancestry. Providence Island, as it is now called, for more than 100 years was called Dozoa Island by the tribal people because it was found in the middle of the water. The original

name was also long before the city was named. What more history can be defined as this? This is the history that Liberia has requested before, a request again today to be considered as a World Heritage Site. Indeed, it does qualify in all of this context. Unfortunately, as of now, the consideration is still on hold. Providence Island Dozoa is the epicentre of the Liberian story founded with bravery in the midst of colonialism and land grabs all across Africa during the century, the nation which championed most of the ambitions that led to the wave of independence and self-determination across the African continent in the 1900s. Just as Liberia is a small country with nearly five million people but with an influential history, so also is Providence Island, a small piece of land engulfed by water becoming the embryo of a Liberia, the only independent black African State surrounded by powerful colonial powers for more than a century.

44.8 Mr President, esteemed colleagues, what better justification can we give to further credential Liberia's long-standing request as indicated, especially being a founding member of this great institution, UNESCO? On behalf of my President, Dr George Weah and Liberians all across the world, we stand in anticipation that a 200-year history will become recognized. Providence Island, formerly Dozoa, will receive acknowledgement on the World Heritage List, a recognition that we the friends of Liberia shall never forget. By extension, we also request UNESCO to support us in the development of Liberia's biosphere reserves.

44.9 Finally, Mr President, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, distinguished delegates, we strongly believe that with our collective effort in addressing the underperformance of education systems in the developing world that we will be in a better position to overcome the evils of unemployment, poverty, inequality, ignorance and undesirable migration. Additionally, Liberia supports the initiative of soccer in all of our schools because we know that it brings unity and reconciliation. We are convinced that open science and artificial intelligence is a way forward for accelerating education in a profound way, and we shall commit our country to it. In conclusion, Your Excellency, Liberia joins other nations in presenting condolences to citizens of the world who lost loved ones to the hands of COVID-19 and other forms of natural disasters in the past years. Thank you. It has been a pleasure.

45. **The President:**

Thank you very much Excellency. Now I call His Excellency Mr Aleš Chmelař, Vice-Minister for European Affairs Management of Czechia. You have the floor, Excellency.

46.1 **Mr Chmelař (Czechia):**

Thank you. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour for me to address the General Conference of UNESCO today on behalf of the Czech Republic. We live in turbulent and challenging times of tectonic changes impacting every field of UNESCO competence. The ongoing pandemic has clearly shown the importance of equal access to education, the hunger for culture, knowledge, science and access to free media and a hate-free online environment. We have learned that cohesion of our societies must be fostered, with special attention to intergenerational solidarity, as set out in Agenda 2030.

(The speaker continues in French)

46.2 Permettez moi aussi de prendre cette occasion et féliciter la directrice générale Audrey Azoulay pour sa réélection récente qui témoigne de bon travail de la direction entière et de l'UNESCO, de continuité et de l'unité de cette organisation.

(L'orateur poursuit en anglais)

46.3 We also commend the efforts of the Director-General in transforming our Organization. We fully adhere to UNESCO's two Global Priorities, Africa and Gender Equality and the four strategic objectives of the new Medium-Term Strategy. While climate change, the overarching global challenge of today's world, is being discussed at COP26 in Glasgow, let me focus on four main pillars underpinning the temple of UNESCO. A robust educational system, accessible to all, is vital for creation of sustainable societies, resilient enough to face the twenty-first century challenges, with inclusive growth, and peaceful coexistence as cornerstones.

46.4 The Czech Republic has spearheaded the Sustainable Development Goal 4 implementation. Last year, our Government adopted a new strategy for education policy up to 2030 and beyond, which promotes competences in sustainable development, access to high-quality education for all and digital literacy. Inclusive education is also one of the key solutions to poverty eradication. We have recently adopted a programme focused on enhancing capacities of public universities in our partner developing countries. Educating in innovative approaches, gaining diverse skills and learning from experience are also crucial for maintaining respect for cultural and natural heritage and promoting cultural diversity.

46.5 Focus on education in crisis, including on the needs of refugees and internally displaced persons, is of paramount importance. We help in Afghanistan, Iraq, Sahel, Syria and Ukraine. In Afghanistan in particular, we have currently mobilized or redirected funds worth 80 million Czech crowns in support of vulnerable populations and refugees.

(The speaker continues in French)

46.6 Mesdames et messieurs, inutile de répéter, tout le secteur culturel mérite une attention accrue suite à la pandémie mondiale. Nous ne devrions pas sous-estimer le rôle des musées et autres institutions culturelles. Leur avenir durable doit être assuré. Sans doute cette problématique sera entre autres amplement discutée durant la 26^e Conférence générale du Conseil international des musées à Prague, en août l'année prochaine. D'ailleurs, il est à saluer comme comment la culture a su s'adapter et s'est mise ces derniers mois « en ligne » afin d'atteindre un nouveau public et de nouveaux horizons. Or, chacun le sait, le monde virtuel n'est pas sans défis, loin de là.

(L'orateur poursuit en anglais)

46.7 For this reason, we welcome the process resulting in the Draft Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. We appreciate that its starting point is the premise that ethics should lie in the very foundations of artificial intelligence systems. Speaking of the online environment, the Czech Republic supports creation of national strategies to

combat antisemitism online. It is important to shorten the time between when the hate speech appears online and its removal. To this end we must work globally.

46.8 Furthermore, we will continue our support for independent media and media literacy in target countries. This is an indispensable part of our foreign policy. We have decided to seek election to the Intergovernmental Council of UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) for the term 2021-2025. Independent journalism as a direct and reliable source of information everywhere is of crucial importance.

(The speaker continues in French)

46.9 Dans le domaine de la préservation de l'information, nous saluons l'approbation des Principes directeurs révisés du Programme *Mémoire du Monde* et le lancement du nouveau cycle de propositions d'inscription au Registre international.

46.10 Excellences, permettez-moi de conclure en mentionnant le bicentenaire de Johann Gregor-Mendel que la République tchèque a proposé de célébrer l'année prochaine, en y associant l'UNESCO. Que l'anniversaire de la naissance de père fondateur de la génétique puisse nous servir pour illustrer la place centrale qu'occupe la science dans nos vies. Je souscris volontiers à la devise du prix L'Oréal UNESCO, auquel la Tchéquie participe depuis des années. Le monde a besoin de la science, la science a besoin des femmes. J'en y ajoute que nous avons tous besoin d'un monde qui accorde, et à la science et aux femmes, la place qu'elles méritent. L'éducation, la culture, la communication et la science, les défis actuels dans tous ces secteurs sont de grande ampleur, tout comme le rôle que peut et doit assumer l'UNESCO en les affrontant. Vous pouvez compter sur le soutien de la République tchèque. Vous pouvez compter sur notre soutien et je vous remercie de votre attention.

47. **The President:**

Thank you very much for your words. Now I call His Excellency Mr Dong Gi Kim, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Korea to UNESCO. You have the floor, Sir.

48.1 **Mr Kim** (Republic of Korea):

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, distinguished delegates, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to congratulate Ambassador Santiago Irazabal Mourão on his selection as the President of the 41st session of the General Conference of UNESCO. I have every confidence that this General Conference will prove a resounding success under his able and wise leadership. As Madam Director-General embarks on the second term, we wish to express our deep appreciation for the achievement in delivering on UNESCO's mandate during the first term. We trust that Madam Director-General will imbue even further impetus into the valuable work of UNESCO.

48.2 For the past 75 years, UNESCO has been traveling a journey of building the defences of peace in the minds of men and women. All our endeavors have been rooted in universal respect for justice, for the rule of law, for the human rights and fundamental freedoms by working together towards the realization of these principles. We have truly achieved many meaningful accomplishments for humankind.

48.3 However, the unprecedented global challenges such as the pandemic, climate change, a growing inequality and divide mean that there is indeed no scope for complacency. Mr President, I would like to draw your attention to two key elements which are imperative if we are to be able to rise to these tasks of the times. First, UNESCO should play a leading role in fostering even more solid ties of multilateral cooperation. This requires an accurate analysis of current environment in the education, science and cultural fields, as well as the mobilization of resources for translating UNESCO's ideas into reality. I hope we can present together more UNESCO projects through which the benefit is actually felt on the ground.

48.4 UNESCO's functions, such as serving as a laboratory of ideas or standards, etc., now have a new significance in terms of successfully navigating the path towards a brighter future. In this regard, we welcome the timely adoption of recommendations on artificial intelligence ethics and open science. We will make every effort to enable the new norms embraced by UNESCO to take root in the international community. Second, in this context, UNESCO needs ever strengthened partnerships with other international actors. To interlink and broaden UNESCO's work requires a tighter network of cooperation, both at the domestic and international levels, bringing together various stakeholders. The unique network of UNESCO's National Commissions can act as an effective facilitator of UNESCO's programmes at every level of our societies.

48.5 Mr President, the Republic of Korea, in the face of real difficulties following the Korean War, deeply appreciated the helping hand offered by UNESCO in the form of printing machines for textbooks provided during the 1950s. The realization the international community remembered us and readily shared educational resources was a source of tremendous encouragement to the Korean people. Now, the Republic of Korea is joining in the noble endeavours of UNESCO to deliver a message of hope to the international community, a message that we can further contribute to peace and security by fostering solidarity among nations through education, science and culture.

48.6 Education is a fundamental human right and at the same time, an enabler of other human rights. Education helps us maximize on the potential of individuals and societies. In this belief the Republic of Korea is committed to developing quality education and Education for All. We will continue to contribute to UNESCO's technical and vocational training, as well as girls education and women's education in different regions.

48.7 We welcome the Futures of Education report, which will serve as a compass, guiding us to the way forward for education. We believe the report will ultimately help facilitate a consensus within society on the need to invest more in education and deepen a sense of cooperation at the international level. Racism and discrimination are the seeds of social conflict and create cracks in the spirit of a community of people living together in harmony. The group of Friends for

Solidarity Inclusion with Global Citizenship Education will continue to speak out against any act denying the equality of all human beings.

48.8 We believe international cooperation in science is the key to narrowing the gap among nations and promoting joint response to transboundary problems. We will continue our efforts in making further achievements in such fields as hydrology, ocean science and biodiversity.

48.9 We believe international cooperation in science is the key to narrowing the gap among nations and promoting joint response to transboundary problems. We will continue our efforts in making further achievements in such fields as hydrology, ocean science and biodiversity. The joint inscription of traditional wrestling "ssirum/ssireum" as intangible cultural heritage in 2018 presents a valuable step towards establishing lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. We hope that the demilitarized zone, a very symbol of the division of the two Koreas, can be a world heritage site in the future marking another significant initiative for peace on the Korean Peninsula. We will continue to contribute to protection of world heritage through various capacity building projects.

48.10 Mr President, dear colleagues, in closing, in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, solidarity and inclusion across borders are more precious than ever. It is imperative to continue our efforts to build invincible defences of peace. The Republic of Korea is committed to the abiding collaboration with UNESCO to realize noble ideals it aspires to. Thank you for your kind attention.

49. **The President:**

Thank you very much, ambassador. Thank you for your kind words. Now I call His Excellency Mr Makram Queisi, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Jordan to UNESCO.

50.1 **M. Queisi (Jordanie) :**

Monsieur le Président, Madame la Directrice générale de l'UNESCO, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, mesdames et messieurs, je voudrais d'abord adresser mes félicitations à Son Excellence Monsieur Santiago Irazabal Mourão pour son élection à la Présidence de cette session de notre Conférence générale et lui souhaiter beaucoup de succès et ainsi lui témoigner notre confiance dans sa capacité et sa sagesse à conduire les travaux de notre Conférence de façon efficace et compétente. Je tiens également à adresser mes sincères félicitations à son Excellence Madame Audrey Azoulay, à l'occasion de sa réélection au poste de Directrice générale à l'UNESCO, et l'assurer de notre soutien ainsi que de notre confiance absolue.

(L'orateur poursuit en arabe)

٢-٥٠ السيدات والسادة، إن دور اليونسكو يتمثل في قراءة المستقبل لتعزيز الشراكة العالمية والتنسيق والتعاون الدولي لتحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة والتعليم والثقافة والحفاظ على التراث، إضافة إلى مواجهة التحديات العالمية للتصدي لآثار التغير المناخي ووباء كوفيد ١٩، مما يدل على أن المنظمة تسير في خطى ثابتة لتحقيق الأهداف النبيلة التي أنشئت من أجلها. ولما لجائحة كورونا من آثار كبيرة على مختلف القطاعات، فقد عانى قطاع التعليم في المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية والعالم جراء الانقطاعات المتكررة ووقف عملية التدريس وجاهياً، فإننا في الأردن عملنا على تعزيز مبدأ الشراكة بين القطاعين العام والخاص لتوجيه الدعم من أجل استمرار عملية التعلم عن بعد، وكذلك تعزيز قدرات المعلمين وتدريبهم على المهارات التكنولوجية المستحدثة التي رافقت هذا النوع الجديدة من التعلم.

٣-٥٠ أما مسيرة التنمية في الأردن، فقد واجهت تحديات صعبة، على رأسها حالات الصراع الطويل الأجل في منطقتنا، والتي خلفت موجات من اللجوء المتواصل إلى الأردن، مما جعل منه ثاني أكبر مضيف للاجئين نسبة إلى عدد السكان، فواحد من كل ثلاثة في الأردن لاجئ. وبالرغم من هذا الوضع الاستثنائي، فقد سادت في مجتمعنا قيم الضيافة والتعاطف، لا بل أن أول لاجئ في العالم تلقى جرعة لقاح ضد كورونا كان في الأردن، مما يدل على أهمية اعتبار اللقاح مادة متاحة للجميع، وبما يضمن التوزيع العادل للقاحات وخصوصاً في القارة الأفريقية لضمان تغلبنا على هذا الوباء.

٤-٥٠ أما السلام في منطقتنا، فإنه يقف أمام خيارين، فإما سلام عادل ينهي الاحتلال ويفضي إلى قيام الدولة الفلسطينية المستقلة ذات السيادة على خطوط الرابع من حزيران/يونيو ١٩٦٧، وعاصمتها القدس الشرقية وفق حل الدولتين، أو استمرار الاحتلال الذي تعمقه الانتهاكات المتواصلة لحقوق الشعب الفلسطيني والإجراءات غير الشرعية التي تقوض فرصه. وبما أن مفتاح السلام هو مدينة السلام، القدس التي جاء إدراجها في قائمة التراث العالمي بطلب من الأردن عام ١٩٨١، وفي قائمة التراث العالمي المعرض للخطر عام ١٩٨٢، وإدراكاً من المجتمع الدولي للمخاطر التي تهدد هذه المدينة إرثاً إنسانياً ذا قيمة استثنائية، فإنه لا يجوز بأي حال من الأحوال أن يستمر انتهاكها بالممارسات المهتدة لإرثها الثقافي والإنساني من قبل إسرائيل كقوة قائمة بالاحتلال. ومن منطلق الحرص على دعم مذهب التوافق وتعزيزه، وإيماناً منا بضرورة منح المنظمة المساحة اللازمة لتنفيذ الولاية المناطة بها في حفظ التراث الإنساني في مدينة القدس القديمة وأسوارها، فقد دعمنا بالشراكة مع وفد فلسطين ووفود المجموعتين العربية والإسلامية، القرارات التوافقية التي عملت المديرية العامة مشكورة على التوصل إليها. وبهذه المناسبة فإننا ندعم جهود المديرية العامة في إطار سعيها المخلص لتنفيذ الولاية المنوطة بها، وتنفيذ القرارات الصادرة عن المنظمة بخصوص القدس، وعلى وجه التحديد إنفاذ بعثة الرصد التفاعلي وتعيين ممثل للمديرية العامة في المدينة، مؤكداً هنا أن الأردن ومن منطلق الوصاية الهاشمية التاريخية على الأماكن المقدسة الإسلامية والمسيحية في القدس، سيواصل دوره وجهوده لحماية ورعاية المقدسات والحفاظ على الوضع التاريخي والقانوني القائم فيها.

٥-٥٠ ولقد كانت اليونسكو نصيراً مخلصاً لأفريقيا من خلال جعلها أولوية على جدول أعمالها. وعليه، فإننا ندعم بالكامل المبادرات والبرامج التي تأخذ في الاعتبار التحديات التي تواجه القارة الأفريقية في مجالات اختصاص اليونسكو بالتنسيق الكامل مع البلدان الأفريقية، مؤكداً في هذا السياق أن دعمنا لأفريقيا سيكون دون تردد، وشراكتنا لا جدال فيها، وتطلعاتنا واحدة ومتطابقة. وأما ما يتعلق بالدكاء الاصطناعي، فنرى بأن اليونسكو تعد المنتدى الأنسب لإجراء حوار بناء حول أخلاقياته، والنظر كذلك في آلية تسخيرها لتحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة، متمنياً للجميع مؤتمراً ناجحاً لتعزيز عملنا المتعدد الأطراف لمواجهة التحديات وتذليل الصعوبات وتحقيق ما فيه خير للإنسانية ورفعته، وشكراً سيدي الرئيس.

51. **The President:**

Thank you very much for your kind words. Now I will call Her Excellency Ms Junever Mahilum-West, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the Philippines to UNESCO, to introduce the video message by His Excellency Teodoro Locsin Jr, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines.

52.1 **Ms Mahilum-West** (Philippines)

Thank you, Mr President. Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. The Philippines congratulates His Excellency, President Santiago Irazabal Mourão for your election and Her Excellency Madam Director-General Audrey Azoulay for your re-election on your second term. You have our country's full support. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. I am honoured to introduce the Philippines statement as delivered on video by His Excellency, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro Locsin Jr.

53.1 **Mr Locsin Jr** (Philippines):

Excellencies, colleagues, on its 75th anniversary the Philippines strongly reaffirms our commitment to UNESCO's principles and its objective of laying the foundations of peace in the minds of men and women through education, the sciences and culture. Since 1946, the Philippines has strived to strengthen UNESCO's engagement with its members and ensure impartiality, independence and balance in UNESCO's work. As a member of the Executive Board, we fully support UNESCO's global priorities on Africa and gender equality, its programmes for small island developing States, youth and indigenous peoples, and on addressing capacity-building needs of the most vulnerable.

53.2 UNESCO has achieved many gains, but the pandemic upended our efforts to promote human development in education, science, culture and communication and information. Social inequalities and divides further deepened. The Philippines has felt these setbacks deeply. Our solutions are predicated on the end of the pandemic, which is nowhere in sight.

53.3 As one of the group of friends on global citizenship education, we advance the transformative role of education for moral and material progress. We have no need to combat discrimination and hate speech. As a subject people, we all suffered discrimination. Our war of independence at the turn of the twentieth century was roundly defeated by the rising world hegemony – mercifully, because the Americans preached, even if they did not always practice equality and free speech to prepare us for democratic independence. We all started poor. World War II left us the most devastated capital, second only to Warsaw. We have no occasion to use hate speech since we are all without exception, rich and poor of a mixed and coloured race. That is why, as United Nations peacekeepers, Filipinos are loved by all the populations in which they are deployed.

53.4 There are attempts at misinformation, but they fail. Filipinos are an unfailingly kind but always sceptical people. Even at its best, government hardly gets its side heard, let alone believed. This is a healthy thing. The grave dangers lie with "netizens" as they call themselves. They always get the benefit of their doubtful, if not malicious, information. If it is just politics, it is the play of the vastly enhanced marketplace of misinformation or mistakes. But when it concerns public health and the economy, it can ruin countries.

53.5 We support the Berlin Declaration on Education and Sustainable Development, which aims at but rarely hits the target of environmental and climate action as core curriculum. We have begun to revert to limited in-person classes. The isolation has hurt our children stuck at home, when they have a home. We are implementing blended education packages using digital and new technologies, along with traditional and lifelong learning to provide educational materials to learners and teachers. We cannot have learning continuity and address learning loss without technology and innovation in education.

53.6 The Philippine Innovation Act of 2018 anticipated the pandemic as a vital component of economic growth. For culture and natural science, our experts work with UNESCO to manage and conserve our cultural and natural heritage. UNESCO's project on thematic indicators for culture in Agenda 2030 optimizes the contributions of our diverse cultures in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals with less resistance. We familiarize progress.

53.7 As an archipelago in the path of typhoons of increasing ferocity as climate inexorably changes, and as a country exposed to relentless man-made environmental degradation for profit, we support UNESCO initiatives in these areas. The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development is critical to our future. We support UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme to strengthen the interface between research and policy, knowledge and action.

53.8 We are living in a time of overwhelming changes. Without evidence-based policymaking we will be boxing in the dark. UNESCO was born in the throes of a war to prevent the outbreak of another war. If it is to continue to achieve this lofty goal, we must move away from empty talk and equivocation and quite simply, act. Thank you.

54. **The President:**

I thank His Excellency for the kind words. Ladies and gentlemen, this was our last speaker on the list. I wish to inform you that the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has asked for the right of reply to a statement made earlier. In accordance with Rule 70 of our Rules of Procedure I will accord the right of reply for two minutes. Your Excellency the Representative from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, you have the floor.

55. **Democratic People's Republic of Korea:**

Mr President, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea asked for the floor to clarify its position on the issue of inscription of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) as a world heritage site, which was raised by the South Korean delegation. The DMZ is the world's most hotspot area where North and South Korea acutely confront each other for many decades. The South Korean authorities are talking about the inscription of the DMZ as a world heritage site, but at the same time, behind the scene, they are accelerating the modernization of their offensive military equipment and the aggressive military exercises with foreign forces against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Such hypocritical

behaviour of the South Korean authorities is none other than a mockery to the international community. If the United States of America and South Korea authorities truly want peace and reunification, reconciliation and cooperation, they should first renounce their prejudiced viewpoints, unjust double-dealing attitudes and hostile stand and policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Thank you.

56. **The President:**

Thank you for your statement. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for your statements and inspiring words. The plenary will reconvene at 3 p.m. sharp. I would kindly request you to be very punctual and be in your seats, please by at least 2.55 p.m. as we will have the privilege of receiving the official visit of Her Excellency Madam Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh at 3 p.m. I count on your presence and of course, a full room to welcome the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. *Bon appetit* at this time and the meeting is **adjourned**.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.