

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

Monday 22 November 2021 at 10.10 a.m.

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

Fourth report of the Bureau

1.1 The President:

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I declare open the twelfth plenary meeting of the General Conference. Dear colleagues, Excellencies, before we turn to the examination of item **7.2**, I would like to inform you that the Bureau of the General Conference held its fourth meeting last Friday, 19 November. The Bureau heard progress report on the works of the commissions and committees, and I am pleased to inform you that the work has been fully on schedule and their respective reports are underway for eventual presentation to the plenary, in the last phase of the General Conference. A member of the Bureau underlined some procedural concerns regarding specific items on the agenda of two commissions, respectively. In commending the electoral process conducted during this General Conference, several comments and suggestions were made by the members of the Bureau to capture lessons learned and best practices for the future. The Bureau endorses the proposed planning for the last phase of the General Conference. Having said so, let me know now if we can continue, and if we can, if there is an acceptance from the room for this report. I see none. *It is so decided.*

Item 7.2: Draft amendment to Article V of the Constitution

2.1 Dear colleagues, let me now turn to the item on the agenda for this morning meeting related to the proposed draft amendment to the UNESCO Constitution. Excellencies, dear colleagues, we are tasked today to examine a question of the utmost importance. You will undoubtedly recall that at its 40th session the General Conference examined item **7.3** "Draft amendment to Article V of the Constitution" related to the term limits for the eligibility of Members of the Executive Board. This item was presented by a number of Member States in connection to the debates held during the open-ended working group on governance, procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO. After deliberations, the 40th session of the General Conference decided to adjourn the examination of this item to its 41st session. I recall it was 40 C/Resolution 82. Subsequently, Member States advocated that His Excellency, Mr Ahmet Altay Cengizer, President of the 40th session of the General Conference, continue consultations so as to clarify positions and seek consensus around the issue. Allow me at this stage to commend His Excellency Mr Ahmet Altay Cengizer who spared no efforts since the last General Conference to lead extensive consultations on this matter with the delegations. His hard work to move forward with the debate in the last two years is highly appreciated.

2.2 Dear colleagues, we are now thus at the 41st session of the General Conference to come to terms with this matter. In this regard and with respect to the delegations who have worked hard over the weekend with me in a meeting and conducted large consultations, I would like to present to you the fruit of these consultations in the form of a consensus text, which I have shown, which I will ask to be shown on the screen in English and French for your consideration and approval. The Secretariat will show the text on the screen. I will give you a couple of minutes to read the text which is now on the screen.

2.3 Dear colleagues, I hope you have had enough time to read the text. Considering that this text has been closely reviewed and weighed by many. I am asking for the whole text to be adopted by acclamation. I see no objections. Thank you very much. So, the text has been **adopted**. Thank you very much. I am asking if any delegation wants to take the floor. I see Denmark. Denmark, you have the floor.

3. Denmark:

Thank you, Mr President. I will be very brief. I just want at the outset to thank you for all your personal efforts to find a way forward on this issue. You have played over the weekend a very important role in developing the solution now on the screen and now adopted by all of us by consensus. In this solution, of course, you will also have an instrumental role in the future consulting Member States over the coming months and providing information on the progress of these consultations prior to the next session of the General Conference. I would like to stress my delegation's strong commitment to the process, which we have ahead of us and the objective of enhancing the inclusiveness of the Executive Board. I hope for some tangible outcomes of this process in the months to come prior to the next session. But first of all, I would like to thank you very much for your personal engagement on this issue, and I hope that personal engagement continues over the next many months. Thank you.

4. The President:

Thank you very much. I see Egypt, you have the floor, sir.

5.1 Egypt:

Thank you, Mr President. On behalf of our like-minded group, I would like to deliver the following statement. We would like to commend your presidency of this 41st session of the General Conference, the adoption by consensus of a resolution under this item is a testimony of your able leadership and your ability to reach consensus in one of the most, if not the most, divisive issues on the agenda of this Organization. We are fully confident that your impartiality and skills would guide the consultations you intend to undertake with Member States with a view to enhancing the inclusiveness of the Executive Board.

5.2 Mr President, the idea of this amendment was put forward some years ago and has been the subject of a considerable amount of work by UNESCO Member States, which took up many of its resources from the 38th session of the General Conference, which established the working group on governance. To this day, we are thus glad that by adopting today's resolution, this divisive debate will cease and we will be able to focus the scarce resources of our Organization to its

domains of competencies. Last but not least, we would like to thank all the delegations involved in the discussions that were held in the last months and days and for the constructive spirit they showed. We are all united for UNESCO and we will remain united for it. Thank you very much.

6. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Egypt. I see Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan, you have the floor.

7. **Кыргызстан:**

Уважаемый г-н Председатель Генеральной конференции, я хотел бы поздравить Вас с тем, что Вы очень правильно начали свою работу и многое делаете для сохранения дружбы и взаимопонимания. Вместе с тем я очень рад и благодарен Вам за то, что мы отложили рассмотрение этой резолюции. Однако хочу заметить, что это является сигналом, о котором мы должны задуматься. Кыргызстан сейчас тоже сталкивается с этим. Дело в том, что помимо Исполнительного совета идет еще борьба за комитеты, где мы должны подходить к делу очень серьезно и стремиться к взаимопониманию. Поздравляю всех с тем, что мы закончили рассмотрение этой резолюции в дружеском ключе. Я очень надеюсь, что этот вопрос больше не будет подниматься, и лично благодарю Вас, г-н Председатель Генеральной конференции.

8. **The President:**

Thank you, Kyrgyzstan. I see Iraq. You have the floor.

العراق: ٩

السادة الحضور الكرام، إن وفد بلادي، وانطلاقاً من مواقفه المؤيدة للروح المؤسساتية لعمل المنظمة وتدعيم دورها وحضورها على الساحة الدولية، وهذا ما يتحقق من خلال تعزيز النهج الديمقراطي الذي تقوم عليه، وبناءً على ذلك، فإن وفد بلادي يؤيد بقوة تعديل المادة الخامسة من الميثاق التأسيسي بتعديل مدة العضوية في المجلس التنفيذي، بما يفسح لكافة الدول الأعضاء في المنظمة المجال لشغل عضوية المجلس المذكور، وتفعيل مضامين الميثاق التأسيسي للمنظمة، وبالأخص الفقرة ٣ من المادة الخامسة-ألف التي أكدت ضرورة مراعاة التعددية الثقافية للدول الأعضاء وتوزيعهم الجغرافي. وعليه، فإننا نأمل من المشاورات القادمة أن تحقق تقدماً في هذا المجال، وشكراً سيادة الرئيس.

10. **The President:**

Thank you Iraq. I do not see other requests for the floor. I just want to assure you, dear colleagues, that I will try to continue consultations in the next two years in the way I have always worked, which is to try to find a consensus – and if not consensus, then convergences. Therefore, I will continue consultations with your delegations and regional groups so that we can move to try to find a way forward. I thank you very much for your commitment to this issue and to coming together to this solution which seems to be a very good solution, a monument to diplomacy. Thank you very much. Well, we are coming to the end of our meeting. The plenary will reconvene this afternoon for the installation of the Director-General and taking into account the discussion that we had at the Bureau of the Conference. We will listen to the statements by the regional groups, and then the Director-General will share with us an event that we are looking forward to later. Thank you very much. *The meeting is adjourned.*

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.