

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

Tuesday 23 November 2021 at 3.10 p.m.

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

Report of the Natural Sciences Commission (SC) (41 C/72)

1. The President:

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, I declare open the fifteenth plenary meeting of the General Conference. This afternoon we will continue with the examination of the reports of the commissions, starting with the report of the Natural Sciences Commission. I should therefore like to give the floor to His Excellency Mr António Nóvoa, Chairperson of the Natural Sciences Commission who will introduce the report contained in document 41 C/72 on behalf of the Commission. You have the floor, sir.

2.1. Mr Nóvoa (Portugal) (Chairperson of the Natural Sciences Commission):

Sou muito obrigado senhor presidente e caro amigo. Tinha pensado fazer este relatório em português o que era permitido pelos nossos regulamentos, mas vou fazê-lo em inglês e em francês.

(The speaker continues in English)

2.2 I will speak in English and French but not in Portuguese. Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, honourable ministers, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour and privilege for me to present to you the main conclusions of our deliberations on the seven agenda items related to Major Programme II – Natural Sciences and to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO entrusted to the Natural Sciences Commission, and to introduce the written report of the Commission, contained in document 41 C/72.

2.3 In our current context, with the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, among others, as well as a growing scientific denial, we must recognize the importance of science to UNESCO and, of course, its importance in all our countries. Science is one of the most important, if not the most important, common language of humanity. All the Member States gathered today, as well as our partners, collectively have a responsibility to advance and promote science and its application in the interests of peace, human rights, sustainable development, and the well-being of humanity.

2.4 I am pleased to report that we have made significant progress in this direction during our Commission. As you are aware, we have unanimously recommended a resolution on open science that I can say is truly historic. After two days and four meetings of stimulating, inspiring and insightful discussions, all of which were carried out with a cooperative and pragmatic approach, the Natural Sciences Commission of the 41st session of the General Conference completed its work on 16 November.

2.5 Let me turn to the first debate of our Commission in its first session. After the formalities of installing the Bureau and adopting our timetable, the Commission examined agenda item 8.1 with the Draft Recommendation on Open Science. The 40th session of the General Conference, through 40 C/Resolution 24, had tasked UNESCO to develop an international standard-setting instrument in the form of a UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science. After a two-year-long, highly inclusive, transparent, and consultative process, the resulting consensus text was presented in documents 41 C/22 and Corrigendum, with the corresponding proposed draft resolution in paragraph 9 of that document. The Assistant Director-General (ADG) for Natural Sciences, Ms Shamila Nair-Bedouelle, explained the process by which the open science recommendation was developed. UNESCO held a series of global and regional consultations where, in addition to Member States, the input of a wide range of stakeholders was incorporated, including young scientists, academies, scientific societies and associations, science unions and organizations, libraries and open access platforms, data organizations, and the United Nations system. Special attention was paid to the voice of the indigenous peoples. In May 2021, the revised draft was discussed, negotiated and adopted by consensus at the open science intergovernmental special committee meeting held online from 6 to 11 May 2021, which gathered technical and legal experts from over 100 Member States. The distinguished representatives of 49 Member States and three observers took the floor in the ensuing debate. Member States unanimously reiterated the importance of open science for both the advancement of science and benefits to society, and they highlighted the critical role of UNESCO in setting global internationally recognized standards for the just and equitable implementation of open science across the world. They noted the historical importance of this standard-setting instrument for ensuring that science is more inclusive, collaborative, transparent and accessible, and for strengthening international scientific collaboration in view of reducing the science, technology and innovation gaps existing within and between nations. Member States thanked the Director-General and the Secretariat for the consultative process leading to the draft text of the Recommendation. They expressed their desire to keep the process of implementation as inclusive as the process that led to the Recommendation. They also acknowledged the spirit of collaboration, consensus and multilateralism that marked the intergovernmental meeting of technical and legal experts under the able chairing of Ms Vera El Khoury Lacoecilhe, Deputy Permanent Delegate of Saint Lucia to UNESCO, to whom the Natural Sciences Commission would like to express its very special thanks.

2.6 Mr President, many Member States called for the prompt implementation of the Recommendation, and some reported on the strategies, initiatives, and actions they are already undertaking at the national level to align with the principles and provisions of the Recommendation. Member States also noted that the successful implementation of the Recommendation will require enhanced international collaboration and solidarity. They highlighted the importance of capacity building, the complementarity between intellectual property rights and open science, and investment in science research. Member States emphasized the need to address gender inequalities in scientific collaboration. They also stressed that access to data, information and technology should be equitable regardless of nationality, religion, or gender. One

Member State drew attention to the challenges for scientific research and obstacles to exchanging results of research imposed by trade embargoes, a view supported by some others. Three NGOs took the floor to support the Recommendation and to urge its quick implementation. The Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences thanked the Member States for their support and recalled the core values of open science, including quality and integrity, collective benefit, equity and fairness, diversity, and inclusiveness. She explained how issues raised by Member States on intellectual property rights, engagement of the private sector, confidence in science, and implementation of the Recommendation following its adoption had been considered during the two year-long consultative process and incorporated into the text of the Recommendation. She concluded by reaffirming that UNESCO was looking forward to working with Member States on implementation, referring to the specific relevant output in the 41 C/5: output 4.SC4 – “Member States capacities strengthened to improve STI policies, access to scientific and technological advancements and enhance knowledge sharing, including through Open Science.” The draft resolution that includes the Draft Recommendation on Open Science in paragraph 9 of document 41 C/22 was then recommended to the General Conference for adoption with an amendment inviting the Director-General “to support international collaboration on open science, including through strengthening collaboration with various existing open science platforms and encourage contributions through North-South, North-South-South and South-South collaborations.” Following adoption, one Member State suggested that to ensure early implementation of the Recommendation on Open Science, “Deep-time Digital Earth”, a pilot project with the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) be considered as an international collaborative project.

2.7 I would like to add a personal comment: this was a long debate but a very fruitful one. The Recommendation received overwhelming backing, with over 50 supporting interventions from the floor. This is the first time I have seen such strong support for a Recommendation. We all recognize the importance of science, and open science in particular, to fight the inequalities in the world. With the adoption of this Recommendation, UNESCO is writing one of the best pages in its history in the field of science.

2.8 Let us now turn to the second agenda item we considered in the Commission. The Commission then favourably addressed the first item under **5.4**, consideration of the Centre of Excellence on Biodiversity and Management of Natural Resources (COEB), in Rwanda, as contained in document 41 C/18.I. The draft resolution was recommended by the Commission to the General Conference for adoption without amendment. Rwanda emphasized the importance of the category 2 institute and thanked both the national and UNESCO teams involved. The Commission also favourably addressed the second item under item **5.4**, consideration of the Centre of Excellence in Engineering Innovations, Manufacturing and Technology Transfer in Kumasi, Ghana, as contained in document 41 C/18.II. The draft resolution was recommended by the Commission to the General Conference for adoption without amendment. Ghana expressed its gratitude for the overwhelming support it received for the establishment of the centre, explaining the benefits for the country and the region.

2.9 The next item under consideration was agenda item **5.13** International Day for Biosphere Reserves. This is contained in document 41 C/37. Thirty-eight Member States took the floor and great support was expressed for the initiative. Member States praised the work of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, highlighting the huge importance that biosphere reserves play in conservation and sustainable development. Many said that proclaiming 3 November of each year as the International Day for Biosphere Reserves would serve outreach and awareness-raising activities relating to biodiversity, nature, wildlife, and sustainable development, carrying a key message for young people. Many Member States reported on the strategies and actions they are undertaking at national and regional levels related to biosphere reserves and biodiversity issues more widely. The draft resolution was recommended to the General Conference for adoption without amendment. The original submitters of the draft resolution took the floor to thank all the delegates that provided such passionate support for the proposal.

2.10 The Commission proceeded to consider the second of the international days that was under consideration in agenda item **5.14** on the International Geodiversity Day, as contained in document 41 C/38. Member States congratulated the original sponsoring countries and voiced their thanks for the efforts to raise awareness on geodiversity. They felt that proclaiming 6 October each year as International Geodiversity Day would foster cooperation, raise awareness, and help with the understanding of the links between geodiversity and life, in the context of the challenges of sustainability, global climate change and natural disasters. It also underlined the link between geodiversity and the habitat of all living things, recognising UNESCO’s unique position as the only United Nations Organization with a mandate in Earth Sciences. The draft resolution was recommended to the General Conference for adoption without amendment.

2.11 The final item to be considered on our first working day was item **5.21** “Strengthening Mountain Glacier Monitoring and Research”. This is contained in document 41 C/54. Many Member States took the floor to enthusiastically support the initiative. They explained how research on mountain glaciers is even more relevant and urgent in the context of progressing climate change and the concomitant retreat of glaciers. This melting, apparent in our lifetimes, and the fact that the cryosphere is very sensitive to even minor changes in temperature, were recognized as serious challenges with wide-ranging implications, which necessitated an international cooperative approach, particularly in modelling and forecasting. The draft resolution was recommended to the General Conference for adoption without amendment. Kyrgyzstan, the submitter of the draft resolution, took the floor to express its gratitude to the Secretariat for its priceless assistance, and to the 20 co-sponsors of the resolution. Ladies and gentlemen, I will now switch to French.

(The speaker continues in French)

2.12 Mesdames et Messieurs les délégués à cette Conférence générale. À la première session du second jour de nos délibérations, nous avons commencé par le point 4.1, examen et adoption du Projet de programme et de budget pour 2022-2025 pour le grand programme II – Sciences exactes et naturelles, tel qu’il figurait dans les documents 41 C/5 et 41 C/6.

2.13 Ce point a été examiné conjointement avec le Point 5.22, Projets de stratégies opérationnelles pour la priorité Afrique (2022-2029) tel qu'il figurait dans le document 41 C/56.I Addendum. Les délégués ont été invités à aborder les deux points ensemble dans leurs délibérations.

2.14 La Sous-directrice générale pour les sciences exactes et naturelles a présenté le point, donnant un aperçu complet des programmes réseaux et initiatives scientifiques mis en œuvre par l'UNESCO dans le contexte mondial actuel, tel qu'exposé dans le Projet de programme. Elle a décrit ce contexte en termes de risques globaux tels que le changement climatique, la perte de biodiversité, la pandémie de COVID-19, les questions sociologiques et les défis liés à la science. Elle a mis en avant les questions qui se posaient dans les domaines de l'enseignement, des sciences, de la technologie, de l'ingénierie et des mathématiques (STIM), de la science ouverte, de la durabilité, des réserves de biosphère, de l'eau, de la dimension de genre, des PEID, des petits États insulaires en développement, des savoirs autochtones et de la jeunesse. Elle a livré quelques réflexions sur l'avenir de la science au service de l'humanité et sur la manière dont les 41 C/4 et C/5 avaient été élaborés pour aborder ces questions et contribuer aux ODD par le biais des programmes et des projets intersectoriels de l'UNESCO.

2.15 Vingt-neuf États membres ont pris la parole, remerciant la Sous-directrice générale pour sa présentation claire et détaillée et pour le travail accompli par le secteur des sciences exactes et naturelles. Ils ont unanimement exprimé leur soutien sans réserve aux programmes scientifiques de l'UNESCO et au Projet de programme et de budget dans le domaine des sciences. Ils ont fait part de leurs préoccupations quant aux conséquences néfastes du changement climatique et de la perte de biodiversité. Ils ont souligné combien les programmes scientifiques intergouvernementaux et internationaux de l'UNESCO jouaient un rôle essentiel à cet égard.

2.16 Ils attendaient fortement de l'Organisation qu'elle agisse en sa qualité de défenseur et de promoteur essentiel de la science interdisciplinaire et ouverte pour faciliter la mise en œuvre du Programme 2030 et de ses objectifs de développement durable. Nombreux d'entre eux ont reconnu le besoin croissant urgent de science dans le contexte de la pandémie de COVID-19 et la nécessité de faire progresser la science et l'ingénierie pour relever ces défis et d'autres défis mondiaux.

2.17 Les États membres ont dit apprécier et appuyer le programme phare 5 du Projet de stratégie opérationnelle pour la priorité Afrique (2022-2029) intitulé « Renforcement de la science ouverte, du développement des capacités en sciences fondamentales et appliquées ainsi que de la recherche scientifique à l'appui de l'innovation et du développement et du recours aux technologies dans les domaines des sciences océaniques, de la résilience face au changement climatique et de la gestion des ressources en eau en Afrique (SC-IOC) ». Ils ont souligné la nécessité de faire progresser la science, la technologie et l'innovation ainsi que l'ingénierie dans les pays africains. Ils ont demandé à l'UNESCO de développer davantage ses activités en Afrique, notamment dans les pays les moins avancés, en mettant l'accent sur le renforcement des capacités et de la coopération intersectorielle.

2.18 Ils ont estimé que l'éducation aux STIM, sciences, technologie, ingénierie et mathématiques, était une priorité absolue et qu'il fallait prendre en compte l'égalité des genres. Certains ont souligné la nécessité d'assurer aux bureaux hors siège une dotation suffisante en fonds et en ressources humaines. Plusieurs États africains ont exprimé le souhait de participer au programme phare et d'en tirer profit, anticipant des avantages à la fois nationaux, régionaux et panafricains.

2.19 Des États membres ont demandé à ce que l'UNESCO rende clairement compte des produits et des résultats liés à la Priorité Afrique pour un suivi et une évaluation efficaces, en donnant plus de détails sur les activités prévues. Certains ont demandé que l'on révise le tableau récapitulatif des programmes phares pour l'aligner sur la décision du Conseil exécutif (décision 212 EX/5.III.B) et qu'on le soumette à temps pour la Réunion conjointe des commissions qui se tiendra demain.

2.20 La Commission a recommandé à la Conférence générale d'adopter le Projet de résolution 02000 concernant le grand programmes II – Sciences exactes et naturelles, tels qu'amendé par le document 41 C/6. Elle a fait siennes les recommandations du Conseil exécutif relatives aux textes narratifs du Volume 2 telles qu'elles figurent aux paragraphes 73 à 76 du document 41 C/6.

2.21 La Commission a en outre recommandé à la Conférence générale d'adopter le Projet de résolution 02005 concernant le Centre international Abdus Salam de physique théorique, qui figure dans le document 41 C/5 Volume 1 sans modification.

2.22 Un État membre a souhaité introduire un amendement au texte du Projet de programme et budget pour 2022-2025 sous le grand programme II, plus précisément au paragraphe 02013 du Volume 2 du document 41 C/5. L'amendement proposé portait sur un objectif du Programme sur l'homme et la biosphère (MAB), explicitement, et je cite, « l'UNESCO renforcera encore son rôle dans l'élaboration de l'Agenda international pour la biodiversité en vue d'atteindre son principal objectif de porter à 30 % les zones protégées de la planète d'ici à 2030 ». Cet État membre a expliqué que l'objectif énoncé des 30 % n'a pas encore été établi par l'organe des Nations Unies compétent, à savoir la Convention sur la diversité biologique, et que le cadre global de la biodiversité au-delà de 2020 devait être établi au cours de la deuxième phase de la Conférence des Nations Unies sur la biodiversité COP-15, qui se tiendra à Kunming, en Chine, en mai 2022.

2.23 L'amendement proposait que l'objectif soit retiré du texte ou que la rédaction du paragraphe 02013 soit alignée avec le cadre global de la biodiversité au-delà de 2020. Aucun consensus n'a pu être trouvé pour ce qui était de recommander un tel amendement à la Conférence générale. La majorité des États membres qui sont intervenus ont souligné qu'ils ne souhaitaient pas ouvrir le Volume 2 du 41 C/5 à des modifications vu qu'il avait été approuvé par consensus par le Conseil exécutif après de longues et difficiles négociations et qu'il servait de note explicative au Volume 1 du 41 C/5 et aux résolutions dont l'adoption venait d'être recommandée.

2.24 Deux autres États membres se sont dits favorables à ce que l'amendement proposé soit examiné, mais une majorité d'États membres, y compris non-membres du Conseil exécutif, ont estimé que les membres du Conseil exécutif avaient eu

de multiples occasions de proposer des amendements et d'en discuter, et qu'il n'était pas souhaitable d'ouvrir à nouveau la discussion sur ce texte.

2.25 Finalement, il a été décidé qu'aucun amendement ne serait recommandé, mais que ce débat serait clairement consigné dans mon rapport à la plénière. Ce que je viens de faire.

2.26 Mesdames et Messieurs, chers collègues, notre quatrième séance et dernière, a été consacrée à l'océan, avec l'examen, à nouveau conjoint, des points 4.1, « Examen et adoption du Projet de programme et de budget pour 2022-2025 (41 C/5) » (cette fois, en ce qui concerne la Commission océanographique intergouvernementale) et 5.22, « Projets de stratégie opérationnelle pour la priorité Afrique (2022-2029) », tel qu'ils figurent dans le document 41 C/56 et addendum.

2.27 Avant de commencer, j'ai pris la liberté de rendre hommage à notre ami et collègue, feu le Professeur Mário Ruivo, qui a consacré sa longue carrière aux questions relatives aux océans. Le Sous-Directeur général et Secrétaire exécutif de la Commission océanographique intergouvernementale, Monsieur Vladimir Ryabinin, a présenté ces points. Il a résumé les multiples fonctions et partenariats de la COI, et décrit comment ils s'inscrivaient dans le prolongement des résultats définis dans les documents 41 C/4 et C/5, tels qu'entérinés par l'Assemblée de la COI à sa 31^e session tenue du 14 au 25 juin 2021, dans sa résolution A-31/2 sur les questions de gouvernance, programmation et budgétisation intéressant la Commission. La Décennie des Nations Unies pour les sciences océaniques au service du développement durable 2021-2030 a pour mission d'imaginer des solutions transformatrices issues des sciences océaniques au service de développement durable, tissant ainsi un lien entre les populations et nos océans. C'est la COI qui en est la chef de file au sein du système des Nations Unies. Et elle a déjà commencé à s'emparer de certaines problématiques au moyen de tout un éventail de programmes approuvés.

2.28 L'ADG a ensuite décrit le cinquième programme phare de la Stratégie opérationnelle pour la priorité Afrique en donnant un aperçu de l'action menée par la COI sur le continent par l'intermédiaire de ses différents programmes. Les petits États insulaires en développement, a-t-il rappelé, sont aussi une priorité pour la COI.

2.29 Pour conclure, l'ADG s'est dit confiant dans le fait que le travail de la Commission pourrait permettre une contribution majeure de la famille de l'océan à la durabilité grâce à une planification durable de l'espace marin fondée sur la science.

2.30 Vingt-quatre États membres ont pris la parole pour remercier le Sous-directeur général et le Secrétaire exécutif de la COI de sa présentation du projet de 41 C/5 relative à la COI et ont recommandé l'adoption de celui-ci par la Conférence générale. Les États membres ont souligné l'importance fondamentale de la Décennie des océans, qui constitue une occasion unique de mettre l'océanographie au service des besoins de la société, l'océan étant appelé à jouer un rôle essentiel pour atténuer les effets du changement climatique et permettre l'adaptation à celui-ci.

2.31 Ils se sont par ailleurs félicités du rapport du Service d'évaluation et d'audit sur le positionnement stratégique de la COI ainsi que de la décision connexe du Conseil exécutif qui, à sa 212^e session, a invité la Directrice générale à créer une unité de coordination de la Décennie dotée des effectifs et des moyens nécessaires.

2.32 Un certain nombre d'États membres se sont exprimés en faveur d'une meilleure intégration de la COI dans les efforts globaux de mobilisation des ressources et de sensibilisation déployés par l'UNESCO, le thème de l'océan devant être pris en compte de manière transversale dans tous les domaines d'action de l'Organisation. Plusieurs États membres ont demandé une augmentation du budget du programme ordinaire de la COI pour le prochain cycle. Les États membres ont souligné que la COI était la seule à être dotée d'une telle compétence en matière de renforcement des capacités institutionnelles des États membres, en particulier pour l'Afrique et pour les pays PEID, et qu'il importait d'appuyer l'Afrique dans la réalisation de l'objectif de développement durable 14 visant à conserver et exploiter de manière durable les océans, les mers et les ressources marines aux fins du développement durable.

2.33 Plusieurs États membres ont mis en avant les possibilités offertes par l'économie océanique durable à l'Afrique. Ils ont souligné l'importance cruciale de la Décennie des Nations Unies pour les sciences océaniques au service du développement durable et ont demandé qu'elles soient prises en compte dans la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie opérationnelle pour la priorité Afrique.

2.34 La nécessité de créer et de rassembler une masse critique, dossier analogue sur le continent, a été clairement exprimée. Les États membres ont relevé la nécessité d'accroître le renforcement des capacités, en particulier professionnelles et techniques, en Afrique. Plusieurs États membres ont donné des exemples d'activités entreprises aux niveaux national et régional et ont demandé au Secrétariat de la COI de continuer à développer les partenariats stratégiques.

2.35 Dans le prolongement du débat, la Commission recommande que la Conférence générale adopte le Projet de résolution 03000 concernant la Commission océanographique intergouvernementale, telle qu'amendée dans le document 41 C/6.

2.36 Monsieur le Président, Madame la Directrice générale, mes amis, chers collègues, j'en arrive à présent au terme de mon rapport. Permettez-moi de remercier les membres du Bureau de la Commission pour leur précieux soutien, ainsi que ses vice-présidents, Madame Gabriela Jiménez-Ramírez, Ministre de la science et de la technologie du Venezuela, et Monsieur Dominic Dormenla Nanda Kweme du Libéria.

2.37 J'aimerais aussi remercier le Secrétaire, Monsieur Albert Fischer, pour son travail exceptionnel et son soutien constant, ainsi que Monsieur Ezra Clark et toute l'équipe du Secrétariat de la Commission pour leur aide et leur dur labeur en coulisses. Les autres membres de l'équipe sont Mesdames Yun Sun, Jacinta Atieno Onyango et Justine Auclair, et Messieurs Patrice Boned et Samuel Parthey.

2.38 J'associe à ces remerciements les traducteurs et les techniciens qui nous ont permis de travailler dans de bonnes conditions, ainsi que tout le personnel de l'UNESCO, le personnel de la sécurité et les équipes d'entretien, tout en particulier,

qui ont veillé à notre sécurité et à notre santé. La Conférence générale n'aurait pas pu se tenir sans eux et sans leur soutien, sans leur travail.

2.39 Je remercie également Madame Shamila Nair-Bedouelle, Sous-Directrice générale pour les sciences exactes et naturelles, et Monsieur Vladimir Ryabinin, Sous-Directeur général et Secrétaire exécutif de la COI. Ce sont, chers amis et collègues, ce sont deux personnalités extraordinaires, pleines de rigueur, mais aussi de passion, et animées d'une réelle vision, qui honorent les sciences et l'océan, qui honorent l'UNESCO et la projettent à l'échelle mondiale.

2.40 Enfin, je remercie la Directrice générale, Madame Audrey Azoulay, pour son appui en faveur de notre action historique en matière de science ouverte, ou, si vous préférez, de sciences ouvertes, au pluriel. L'une des pièces les plus extraordinaires de la collection d'art de l'UNESCO, devant laquelle nous avons la joie de passer chaque jour, est « L'Homme qui marche » d'Albert Giacometti. Il ne marche pas, cet homme, en regardant ses pieds, mais droit devant lui, regardant ce qui est devant lui, dans l'avenir. La vision de Madame Azoulay nous a permis de construire cette voie vers la science ouverte, en amplifiant et en renforçant les expériences les plus réussies qui sont déjà en train de prendre corps dans le monde et qui laissent entrevoir le futur de la science, le futur d'une science appelée à jouer un rôle central dans l'avenir de l'UNESCO, dans l'avenir de l'humanité.

(L'orateur poursuit en portugais)

2.41 Senhor Presidente agradeço lhe muito seu trabalho a sua colaboração a sua solidariedade para os nossos trabalhos.

(The speaker continues in French)

2.42 Je suis en train de remercier le Président de la Conférence générale, comme vous avez peut-être compris. C'est un honneur de pouvoir agir sous votre Présidence. Ce fut aussi un grand honneur pour moi d'assumer les fonctions de Président de cette Commission. Nous savons tous qui sommes ici dans cette salle, qu'à ses débuts, tout au début, l'UNESCO a failli n'être que l'UNECO, que son nom aurait pu être exempt du « S » de « science », ce qui aurait été tragique pour notre Organisation et pour le monde parce que la science est ce qui projette l'histoire vers l'avenir, vers le futur.

2.43 Ne croyez pas, je vous demande, ne croyez pas l'ancien proverbe latin, « Si vis pacem, para bellum ». Non. « Si nous voulons la paix, préparons la guerre ». Non. Si nous voulons la paix, nous devons préparer la paix. Nous le répétons encore et encore, et fort heureusement, c'est dans l'esprit des êtres humains que doivent être élevées les défenses de la paix. Oui, nous sommes en train de parler de l'éducation. Mais la paix nécessite aussi la mise en place de conditions où elle puisse s'épanouir. Et pour cela, la science est indispensable. Voilà ce qui nous a guidé dans la conduite de nos travaux, dans la conduite de nos décisions. La science a une responsabilité immense pour assurer les conditions de la paix pour notre humanité commune. Je vous remercie de votre attention.

3. The President:

Thank you, Your Excellency for your presentation. Are there any comments or suggestions on this report? United Kingdom requests the floor before we take any decision. You have the floor, United Kingdom.

4. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

Thank you, Mr President. The United Kingdom would like to make an intervention about the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC), but I am in your hands as to what the best moment would be for that. Thank you very much.

5. The President:

If it is alright with you, Excellency, we will take it up after. Dear colleagues, as you know, the report of the Natural Sciences Commission contains item 8.1 "Draft Recommendation on Open Science". We had the opportunity this morning to see and witness a historic moment. Now, we have the opportunity to witness a second historic moment. And this is as important as the previous one. And I want to thank you, before we move on, Madam Director-General, my friend Mr António Nóvoa and, of course, Ms Shamila Nair-Bedouelle, for their efforts to bring this idea from some time ago and which is now a reality that is before us. Certainly, we have witnessed the importance of science for us every day. But we have also witnessed the importance of open science in the handling of this pandemic that we have suffered. Vaccines are there, available to all of us in great part because of the open science process and the exchange of scientific information. Therefore, we will be certain that these recommendations on open science and on artificial intelligence will be two of the important axes of action in UNESCO in the future. Therefore, my friends, I request that we move ahead, and if there are no objections, I request that we adopt this resolution by acclamation right now. I thank you very much. *It is so decided.* May I consider, dear colleagues, that the General Conference takes note of the report of the Science Commission and hereby adopts the draft resolutions proposed in document 41 C/72, subject to the decisions that the Conference may take when adopting the Appropriation Resolution for 2022-2023? I see no objections. *It is so decided.* And now, dear colleague from the United Kingdom, you have the floor sir.

6. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

Thank you, Mr President. Mr President, Madam Director-General and the Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, the optimal funding of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO to deliver on the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development is of paramount importance to the United Kingdom. The IOS evaluation, adopted at the 212th session of the Executive Board, highlights the inadequate financial resourcing of the IOC in UNESCO, especially at a time when there is concrete evidence of the critical role the ocean plays in climate change mitigation and its importance in supporting the sustainable development agenda. The United Kingdom would like to see an increase in the share of UNESCO's regular budget to the IOC in order to address the following specific needs: the successful coordination and delivery of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), delivery of endorsed IOC United Nations Ocean Decade projects and programmes, and to improve the visibility of

the IOC and brand recognition to a broader audience. The United Kingdom would be pleased to see more discussions between Member States and the Secretariat to establish the feasibility of such an uplift for the future budgeting exercises. Thank you, Mr President.

7. **The President:**

Thank you very much. I see Grenada requests the floor. Madam, you have the floor.

8. **Grenada:**

Thank you, Mr President. Grenada would like to associate itself with the statement made by the United Kingdom. We recognize the vital importance of IOC and would like to see it strengthened. Thank you very much.

Report of the Communication and Information Commission (CI) (41 C/75)

9. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Grenada. We have taken note of these comments. Is there any other delegation that requests the floor? I see none. Your Excellencies, we now move to the report of the Communication and Information Commission. I would therefore like to give the floor to His Excellency Mr Mounir Anastas, Chairperson of the Communication and Information Commission, who will introduce the report contained in document 41 C/75 on behalf of the Commission. You have the floor, Sir.

10.1 **Mr Anastas (Palestine) (Chairperson of the Communication and Information Commission):**

Thank you, Mr President. I wanted to be brief, to give a brief oral report, but it is impossible. I will try to read it as quickly and clearly as possible.

(The speaker continues in Arabic)

٢-١٠ السيد رئيس المؤتمر العام، السيد رئيس المجلس التنفيذي، السيدة المديرة العامة، أصحاب السعادة، السيدات والسادة، تحياتي لكم جميعاً، أود بداية أن أشكر كل الأعضاء الذين حضروا معنا جلسات لجنة الاتصال والمعلومات.

(The speaker continues in English)

10.3 On behalf of the Communication and Information (CI) Commission, I am honoured to present the report of the Commission, contained in document 41 C/75. The CI Commission held three meetings over two days to examine the five agenda items, entrusted to it by the plenary. At the outset, I would like to thank the members of the Commission for conducting their work in the spirit of consensus and mutual understanding. I am pleased to report that all the resolutions were recommended for adoption without amendments.

10.4 The Commission began its work by electing its Vice-Chairpersons: Ms Silvia Elena Alfaro Espinosa (Peru), Ms Anna Plassat Muriňová (Slovakia), Ms Claudia Reinprecht (Austria) and Mr Kyaw Zeya (Myanmar). I thank them all for their efforts. The representative of the Director-General, the Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information (ADG/CI), Mr Tawfik Jelassi, set the stage for the Commission by recalling the key role of the media and information and communication technologies in addressing the increasingly complex challenges of the twenty-first century, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

10.5 The Commission then invited the CI Sector's two intergovernmental councils to report on their activities. The Vice-President of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), Mr Kavi Chongkittavorn, highlighted the programme's support to grassroots media actors and journalism education. He also informed the Commission about IPDC's first Global Report on the Implementation of Access to information Laws. Next, the Chairperson of the Information for All Programme (IFAP), Ms Dorothy Gordon, informed the Commission about recent projects tackling the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on information ecosystems in different parts of the world. She also announced IFAP's plans to deepen understanding on concepts such as "metaverse" and "digital public goods".

10.6 Mr President, allow me now to summarize the key takeaways from the debates. At its first and second meetings, the Commission considered two items: item 4.1 on the "Consideration and Adoption of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 (41 C/5)" and item 5.22 on the "Draft operational Strategy for Priority Africa (2022-2029)". In his introductory remarks, the representative of the Director-General presented the two items, emphasising that the new programmatic framework reflected UNESCO's lead role in the fields of freedom of expression and safety of journalists; universal access to information; media development and media and information literacy; innovation and digital technologies; and documentary heritage. He referred to the increased focus on transversality, reflected in the CI Sector's contributions to three of the five intersectoral programmes. He further affirmed the Sector's commitment to UNESCO's two global priorities, Gender Equality and Africa, as well as to its priority groups, particularly through the Flagship Programmes for Priority Africa. In the debate that ensued, delegates of 41 Member States and three observers took the floor. Speakers welcomed the Draft Programme and Budget, noting the importance of the CI Sector in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and tackling the COVID-19 crisis.

(The speaker continues in French)

10.7 Mesdames et messieurs, de nombreux intervenants ont plaidé pour un accroissement de la transversalité et une approche basée sur les droits de l'homme intégrés à toutes les activités du Secteur CI. Je suis désolé, en français, on continue à dire « CI » mais c'est « CI ». Les États membres ont également reconnu l'importance des deux programmes intergouvernementaux, le PIDC et le PIPT, dans le renforcement des écosystèmes médiatiques. Au cours de leurs délibérations, les États membres ont partagé leurs préoccupations quant à l'état de la liberté d'expression et de la sécurité des journalistes. En écho aux conclusions du Rapport de l'UNESCO sur les tendances mondiales en matière de liberté d'expression et de développement des médias, certains ont condamné le nombre croissant d'attaques à l'encontre des

journalistes, particulièrement à l'encontre des femmes journalistes. Un Délégué a mis l'accent sur la sécurité des journalistes couvrant les conflits armés. Plusieurs intervenants ont attiré l'attention sur le travail du Secteur CI en matière de sécurité des journalistes, suggérant qu'ils devraient être élargis pour couvrir également les libertés artistiques, scientifiques et académiques.

10.8 Le deuxième anniversaire à venir du Plan d'action des Nations Unies sur la sécurité des journalistes et la question de l'impunité a été mentionné comme l'opportunité de renforcer le rôle de leadership de l'UNESCO dans la coordination de ce mécanisme inter-agences. L'Autriche a annoncé son intention d'accueillir une conférence ministérielle de haut niveau afin de marquer cet anniversaire l'année prochaine, 2022.

10.9 Certains délégués ont commenté le fait que l'élan généré par la récente remise du prix Nobel de la paix à deux journalistes peut renforcer le plaidoyer de l'UNESCO en faveur de la sécurité des journalistes. L'impact de la désinformation et le discours de haine sur le bien-être et la cohésion sociale ont fait partie des grandes préoccupations exprimées par les États membres. Dans ce contexte, ils ont affirmé l'importance d'autonomiser les citoyens par l'éducation aux médias et à l'information, ainsi que combler le fossé numérique, notamment en appliquant le concept d'universalité de l'Internet et les principes DOAM, les droits de l'homme, l'ouverture, l'accessibilité et la gouvernance multipartite.

10.10 Plusieurs États membres ont aussi appelé à un accès à l'information accrue pour les groupes marginalisés par la promotion du multilinguisme et la préservation des langues autochtones. Le rôle des médias communautaires dans l'amélioration de l'accès à l'information et la promotion du pluralisme et de la diversité des médias a été également soulignée.

(L'orateur poursuit en anglais)

10.11 Distinguished delegates, I should admit that I was particularly pleased to hear many Member States refer positively to the relaunch of the Memory of the World international register. As many of you know, I served as the Co-Chairperson of the Limited Participant Working Group, in charge of the Comprehensive Review of the Memory of the World Programme, together with my colleague and friend, His Excellency, the Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Albania to UNESCO, Mr Ferit Hoxha. In the CI Commission, many speakers expressed their satisfaction with the renewed opportunity to shed global light on their documentary heritage by nominating items for inscription on the International Register. One delegate suggested considering in future the adoption of an international instrument so as to give this programme the attention it deserves.

10.12 Referring specifically to the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa, several speakers expressed their general support. They spoke about the needs to bridge the digital divide across the continent and to harness the benefits of emerging technologies for education and the provision of government services. One Member State emphasized the need to craft specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound (SMART) outcomes and performance indicators, and to better align the summary of the Flagship Programmes with the Draft Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 (41 C/5). In his reply, the representative of the Director-General thanked the Member States for their support to the Draft Programme and Budget, and for their recognition of CI's relevance to the world of today, marked by globalization and the digital transformation. He emphasized the transversal nature of the CI sector's work and gave examples of the sector's intersectoral cooperation in the fields of media and information literacy, open education resources, open science, artificial intelligence, and indigenous languages. In this regard, he also highlighted the CI Sector's contribution to the Priority Africa Flagship Programme 4 on "harnessing new and emerging technologies for sustainable development in Africa, including through the implementation of the recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence". The CI Commission recommended that the General Conference adopt the document 41 C/5, as it relates to Major Programme V, and as amended by the document C/6. The Commission also recommended the adoption of the provisional budget ceiling for Major Programme V. The CI Commission also approved the recommendations of the Executive Board on the narrative of volume 2 for Major Programme V as contained in document 41 C/6. The Commission transmitted a summary of its debate on item 5.22 to be reflected in document 41 C/INF.16.

10.13 Ladies and gentlemen, I would now like to turn your attention to another item discussed during the second meeting, namely item 5.11, on the Revision of the Statutes of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). The representative of the Director-General presented the item, explaining the implications of the proposed revisions for the IPDC governance. According to the revised statutes, the composition of the Bureau would be: one Chairperson, one rapporteur and six Vice-Chairpersons. In addition, the amendments would impose a statutory limit of two terms in succession to enable a more dynamic rotation of members in the IPDC governing bodies. The CI Commission considered the relevant draft resolution without debate and recommended its adoption without amendments, as contained in paragraph 15 of document 41 C/75.

10.14 The Commission continued its work by examining item 5.16 on the Windhoek+30 Declaration made on World Press Freedom Day 2021. This item was presented by Namibia, which hosted the World Press Freedom Day from 1 to 3 May 2021. The delegate from Namibia thanked all 47 co-sponsors of the draft resolution and underscored that the Declaration was the outcome of worldwide multistakeholder consultations. Following the introduction by Namibia, 32 Member States took the floor. The majority of speakers expressed their support to the Windhoek+30 Declaration and stressed its symbolic value for press freedom. Many also underlined the relevance of the call, *inter alia*, to promote media freedom and viability, expand media and information literacy, and promote transparency of digital platforms. One Member State underlined the importance of improving working conditions for journalists. In his reply, the representative of the Director-General stated that the Windhoek+30 Declaration takes forward the spirit of the original 1991 Windhoek Declaration and recognizes the new media actors and challenges to freedom of expression. He explained that the endorsement of this declaration would help mobilize the widest possible range of stakeholders to implement its principles and to prepare for the 2022 World Press Freedom Day, which will be hosted by Uruguay. The CI Commission recommended that the General Conference adopt the resolution as contained in document 41 C/75 paragraph 19.

10.15 Distinguished delegates, at its third meeting, the Commission concluded its work by examining item 5.8 on the Report by the Director General on implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes. In his

introductory remarks, the representative of the Director-General noted that, as co-organizer of the WSIS Forum and lead-facilitator of five of the eleven WSIS Action Lines, UNESCO is centrally positioned in the global discussions on technology and innovation. He explained that the document presented to the CI Commission contained a proposed roadmap for the WSIS+20 review process, which is to culminate in 2025. He noted that the review timeline allows for a multi-stakeholder reflection on the challenges to harnessing ICTs for development and to bridging the digital and knowledge divides, areas in which UNESCO has a central role to play. Representatives of 15 Member States took the floor on this item. Speakers expressed general support for UNESCO's involvement and leadership role in the WSIS process and the upcoming review in 2025. Many highlighted the transversality of UNESCO's work within WSIS and reiterated the importance of multistakeholder partnerships going forward. One speaker recommended the involvement of the two intergovernmental councils, IPDC and IFAP, in taking stock of WSIS outcomes' implementation. In his reply, the representative of the Director-General, noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the extent to which digital technology is multifaceted and linked to freedom of expression, multilingualism, media and information literacy and access to information. He reiterated the Secretariat's commitment to promoting the Internet universality principles and building capacities in the field of the digital transformation and artificial intelligence; and referred to upcoming events, including the next Internet Governance Forum and WSIS Forum, as important platforms to take this work forward. He further reiterated UNESCO's intention to continue working closely with the Member States towards the WSIS+20 review process in 2025. The CI Commission recommended that the General Conference adopt the resolution as contained in document 41 C/75 paragraph 22.

10.16 Ladies and gentlemen, the world is still living with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, which, unfortunately, is not the last crisis that we will have to face collectively. It is my conviction that we cannot effectively handle rising global challenges, be it environmental, economic, or political, without strong international and regional partnerships that result in joint advocacy and actions. In an era increasingly marked by the digital transformation, UNESCO has a key role to play in supporting its Member States to harness the opportunities brought by emerging technologies for building truly inclusive knowledge societies, while safeguarding against potential pitfalls. UNESCO's convening power and its unique mandate to promote access to information, media and information literacy, freedom of expression and the safety of journalists, are equally key to these efforts.

10.17 Distinguished delegates, dear colleagues, in closing, I would like to thank the members of the CI Commission for their thoughtful interventions, which made the conversations rich and diverse. It was a pleasure and an honour to chair this Commission, which conducted its work in a smooth and effective manner. I should mention that we had three meetings, but, originally, there were four meetings scheduled. But following the rich debate and effectiveness, we managed to exhaust all the items on the agenda in three meetings. Thus, we economized some money for the Organization. Maybe Madam Director-General will be happy. I also express my thanks to the Bureau of the Commission and the Vice-Chairpersons. My gratitude goes to Mr Tawfik Jelassi, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, for his support and insightful contributions. I would also like to thank the CI Commission Secretariat led by Mr Davide Storti, which also included Ms Ma'aly Hazzaz, Mr Joe Hironaka, Ms Ana Lomtadze, Mr Bhanu Neupane and Ms Flavie Romer.

(The speaker continues in French)

10.18 Qu'ils en soient tous remerciés, on ne les voit jamais. Ils sont toujours à l'arrière, mais c'est eux qui font le grand du travail.

(L'orateur poursuit en anglais)

10.19 I would like also to thank the interpreters, room clerks, technicians, and the security staff, all of whom have enabled us to carry out our work smoothly and without interruptions in these challenging times.

(The speaker continues in French)

10.20 Monsieur le Président, pour finir, je souhaite réitérer nos félicitations à Madame la Directrice générale, pas seulement pour sa réélection, mais pour ses efforts continuels pour porter notre Organisation au plus haut niveau, malgré toutes les difficultés qu'on a connues les deux dernières années. Donc, qu'elle en soit ici remerciée. Je souhaite, Monsieur le Président, j'aurais voulu vous remercier comme mon collègue, son Excellence l'Ambassadeur de Portugal, António Nóvoa, mais malheureusement, je ne pourrai pas parler en portugais. Tout ce que je peux vous dire en portugais, c'est « *obrigado* », mais j'aurais voulu quand même vous féliciter avec quelques mots pour dire à quel point votre présidence n'était pas seulement géniale, mais était très efficace. Donc, merci beaucoup. Merci Monsieur le Président, et encore merci à tous les États membres.

11. **The President:**

Thank you for the kind words towards this presidency. And thank you for your report. Are there any comments or suggestions on this report? I see none. May I consider that the General Conference takes note of the report of the CI Commission and hereby adopts the draft resolutions proposed in document 41 C/75, subject to the decisions that the Conference may take when adopting the Appropriation Resolution 2022-2023? I see none. May I then consider that the General Conference takes note of the report of the CI Commission and hereby adopts the draft resolutions proposed in document 41 C/75, subject to the decisions that the Conference may take when adopting the Appropriation Resolution for 2022-2023? Thank you. *It is so **decided***. Thank you very much. I wish to congratulate you, Ambassador Mounir.

Report of the Culture Commission (CLT) (41 C/74)

12. Your Excellencies, we now turn to the report of the CLT Commission. I would therefore like to give the floor to His Excellency, Mr Ismunandar, Vice-Chairperson of the Culture Commission, who will introduce the report contained in document 41 C/74 on behalf of the Commission. You have the floor, sir.

13.1 Mr Ismunandar (Indonesia) (CLT Commission Vice-Chairperson):

I am honoured to present this oral report on behalf of the Culture Commission, which examined six agenda items and four reports in a series of four meetings. Mr Vasif Eyvazzade (Azerbaijan) chaired the Commission. The Vice-Chairpersons of the Bureau included Ms Elia Del Carmen Guerra Jurado (Panama), Ms Senate Barbara Masupha (Lesotho) and myself, Mr Ismunandar (Indonesia). At the outset, allow me to convey the gratitude and appreciation of Mr Vasif Eyvazzade to the distinguished members of the Commission, who actively participated in the debates with commitment and efficiency throughout, which enabled us to productively conduct our work in the spirit of consensus.

13.2 The Culture Commission began its work by adopting the revised provisional timetable of work divided into four meetings on Wednesday 17, Thursday 18 and Friday 19 November 2021. In the course of the Commission's work, 78 Member States and three observers took the floor. Without further introduction, let me turn to the first meeting of our commission. Items **5.2** on Jerusalem and the implementation of 40 C/Resolution 43 and item **5.3** on the implementation of 40 C/Resolution 67 concerning educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories were introduced by the Director of the Cabinet of the Director-General. Following in-depth consultations carried-out with the parties concerned, the Commission recommended, by consensus and without debate, that the General Conference adopt the draft resolutions relating to items **5.2** and **5.3**. The latter item was also considered in the Education Commission, which recommended by consensus that the General Conference adopt this resolution. I would like to reiterate my congratulations to the Secretariat for assuming an active mediating role and all parties involved for maintaining the spirit of dialogue and consensus. The draft resolutions relating to items **5.2** and **5.3** are contained in paragraphs 7 and 8 respectively of the written report.

13.3 The Commission subsequently considered item **4.1** regarding the Draft Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 (41 C/5). The Assistant Director-General for Culture introduced the item, providing an overview of the Culture Programme's structure, key areas for intersectoral cooperation and the main cross-cutting issues and priorities for its future implementation. During the discussion, 51 Member States and three observers took the floor. The Draft Programme and Budget was widely supported and appreciation for its coherent structure and its transversal approach was expressed. Several Member States welcomed the emphasis laid on actions addressing the two global priorities, Africa and Gender Equality, as well as targeting priority groups, including small island developing States (SIDS) and youth. Similarly, many countries expressed their appreciation for the strengthening of intersectoral cooperation, in particular with the Education, Natural Sciences, and Communication and Information sectors, as well as the recognition of the essential role of culture for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals within the Draft Programme and Budget. The role of culture as a driver and enabler of inclusive, resilient and pluralistic societies was widely underlined in this framework.

13.4 Member States commended the importance of UNESCO's work to promote the implementation of the six culture conventions and highlighted the need to scale up capacity building efforts at regional, national and local levels. They also highlighted several key areas for which, in line with the Draft 41 C/5, the action of the Culture Sector could be amplified in the coming years, such as strengthening the creative economy, fostering human rights-based approaches and cultural rights – including to promote artistic freedom and support Indigenous Peoples – leveraging culture for gender equality and climate action, or supporting the adaptation of the cultural sector to the digital transformation. The development and roll-out of monitoring mechanisms – including the periodic reporting systems of the Culture Conventions and the UNESCO Culture|2030 Thematic Indicators – was also emphasized. Many Member States stressed the importance of enhancing the protection of natural and cultural heritage, in particular in contexts of conflict and disaster, as well as fighting against illicit trafficking of cultural property and the promotion of its return and restitution. Underlying the major impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cultural sectors worldwide, a number of countries commended the relevance of UNESCO's efforts to support Member States' policy response, including the ResiliArt movement, the organization of the UNESCO Forum of Ministers of Culture and the dissemination of targeted publications. A number of Member States acknowledged the renewed momentum on global cultural policy dialogue and the amplified advocacy on the leading role of culture in addressing the multidimensional challenges of sustainable development. The UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies, Mondiacult 2022, foreseen to be convened by the UNESCO Director-General and hosted by the Government of Mexico in 2022, was strongly welcomed by Member States.

13.5 The Commission then moved to the second meeting, which began with the adoption of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2022-2025. Under item **4.1**, the Commission examined draft resolution 41 C/DR.1, submitted by the United Arab Emirates and co-sponsored by Kuwait and Bahrain, aimed at supporting a global reflection towards a revised framework for culture and arts education, including through the holding of an intergovernmental World Conference on Culture and Arts Education in 2023 as a Category 2 Meeting. The Culture Commission then adopted by consensus the draft resolution contained in paragraph 05000 of document 41 C/5, Volume 1, amended in light of document 41 C/6, as well as the Integrated Budget Framework for Major Programme IV – Culture. The Culture Commission also adopted by consensus the draft resolution 41 C/DR.1, taking into account the comments of the Director-General included in document 41 C/8, and endorsed the recommendations of the Executive Board concerning Volume 2 of 41 C/5, as contained in document 41 C/6. The draft resolution relating to item **4.1** is contained in paragraph 6 of the written report.

13.6 The Culture Commission then examined item **5.22** on the Draft Operational Strategy for Priority Africa (2022-2029). The Assistant Director-General for Culture introduced the item by providing an overview of the Sector's approach to its implementation and presenting the Flagship Programme 3 led by the Culture Sector, while also referring to Flagship Programme 2 to which the Culture Sector will also contribute. In the course of the Commission's work on item **5.22**, 22 Member States took the floor. During the discussions, Member States welcomed and supported the Draft Operational Strategy for Priority Africa, commending the consultative process leading to its elaboration, as well as underlining its transversal and comprehensive scope. The main objectives of Flagship Programme 3 "Fostering Cultural Heritage and Capacity Development" were commended by a majority of Delegates. Member States recalled the critical contribution of cultural and natural heritage to the social and economic development of local communities and underlined the importance of prioritising capacity building to support local expertise and knowledge sharing in the implementation of Flagship Programme 3, as well as the need to mobilize funding for these efforts.

13.7 Looking at the implementation of the Strategy, Member States stressed particularly (i) the necessity to consider security issues related to specific contexts of violent extremism, conflict and disasters that may seriously affect African cultural property and sites, and the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property; (ii) the need to develop clear and measurable indicators to monitor results achieved; and (iii) the importance to expand interregional cooperation, including through South-South dialogue and cooperation. A series of adjustments to be introduced in the summary table of Flagship Programme 3 were presented on behalf of the Africa Working Group on Culture, with a view to better reflect previous decisions adopted by the Executive Board and were agreed upon by the Commission. I wish to remind you that no draft resolution was submitted for consideration by the Commission on this item. The Commission's debates on this item were summarized in the document 41 C/INF.16 transmitted to the Joint Meeting of Commissions to be held on 24 November.

13.8 The Commission then took note of the reports concerning the main activities of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage for 2020-2021 (document 41 C/REP/19), the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for 2018-2019 (document 41 C/REP/21), the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation (ICPRCP) for 2020-2021 (document 41 C/REP/20), as well as concerning the activities of the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture (IFPC) for 2020-2021 (document 41 C/REP/22). In relation to these items, on 19 November, before the closure of the works of the Commission, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland formulated the following comment in relation to paragraph 10 of Document 41 C/REP/20 and requested that it be mentioned in the oral report as follows: "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland deplores the manner in which the ICPRCP 22. COM 6 Decision was tabled, presented and adopted, as the concerned Member State was not given prior notice to this decision. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland expects the highest standards of transparency and decency in the procedures for adopting decisions, especially those that involve a particular Member State, and recalls that draft resolutions and decisions should be shared in advance before consideration by any governing body of UNESCO". With regard to the same item, Egypt also requested that the following statement be mentioned in the oral report: "the Secretariat of the ICPRCP mentioned the 22. COM 6 Decision in the APX Commission and the decision of the ICPRCP was taken according to the rules of procedure". The Commission concluded its second meeting by recommending, by consensus and without debate, that the General Conference adopt the draft resolution for the proclamation of a World Novel Week, submitted under item **5.10**. This resolution is contained in paragraph 9 of the written report.

13.9 Ladies and gentlemen, we shall now turn our attention to the third and fourth meetings, during which the Commission examined item **6.2** concerning the follow-up to 39 C/Resolution 87 and prospects for UNESCO's conventions in the field of culture. Item **6.2**, which had previously been examined by the Legal Committee following the recommendation of the Bureau at its first meeting, was introduced by the Assistant Director-General for Culture. In the context of the discussions on item **6.2**, 55 Member States took the floor. Member States commended the Secretariat for the robustness of the draft model rules of procedure for the assemblies of the Culture Conventions annexed to document 41 C/55. Several Member States expressed the wish that the harmonization process, intended to improve the efficiency of the assemblies and to rationalize the work of both the Secretariat and the Member States, would be pursued and deepened in the future, notably stressing the importance of making progress on the harmonisation of rules of procedure as recommended by the General Conference at its 39th session in 2017. Some Member States also underlined the importance to pursue broader discussions on the synergies and harmonization between the Conventions in the future. Several Member States called for a more timely distribution of document 41 C/55 and stressed the need to involve Member States, as well as the Conventions' governing bodies, in the upstream preparation of the draft model rules. Furthermore, it was highlighted that more time was needed to examine the content of the model rules in its substance. Member States further stressed the need to fully respect the specificities of each Convention and the independence and sovereignty of the respective assemblies. During the debate, some Member States expressed doubts as to whether the General Conference was mandated to recommend the model rules of procedure to the assemblies. Further questions were raised regarding the work schedule for the follow-up to 39 C/Resolution 87 – as some Member States shared their wish to delay the discussion to the next session of the General Conference – the methodology used for the elaboration of the model rules, and their possible legal implications for signatory States.

13.10 In response to the questions raised by Member States, the representative of the Secretariat recalled that the model rules were elaborated within the framework of the harmonization referred upon by the General Conference by Resolution 39C/ 87 on the governance, procedures and working methods of the UNESCO governing bodies through a consultation process involving the Secretariats of the concerned Conventions, the Office of the Assistant Director-General for Culture and the Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs. He further recalled that this initiative was intended as a long-term prospect, addressing the needs identified by the governing bodies of the Conventions themselves. The Legal Advisor of the Organization confirmed that the draft model rules of procedure were not intended to impose any obligation on the Conventions' respective governing bodies, which would remain sovereign to decide upon the revision of their respective rules of procedure, as deemed appropriate. He further specified that the draft model rules would have no impact on the substance of the Conventions, nor on the regulatory frameworks of the signatory States. He confirmed the legitimacy of the General Conference in adopting a resolution aimed at proposing to the attention of the Conventions' assemblies a working tool intended to further explore the harmonization of rules of procedure, with the understanding that the said assemblies would remain fully sovereign in their respective decisions. An extended debate took place on the amendments to the draft resolution proposed by several Member States, during which efforts were made to bring views together and build a consensus. The Commission concluded the debate by recommending, by consensus, that the General Conference adopt the draft resolution relating to item **6.2** on "Follow-up to 39 C/Resolution 87 and prospects for UNESCO's conventions in the field of culture", as amended. This resolution is contained in paragraph **11** of the written report. One Member State, while rallying to the consensus, regretted that the broad spectrum and main objectives of the UNESCO Culture Conventions towards the realization of UNESCO's mandate were not explicitly reflected in the draft resolution.

13.11 Mr President of the General Conference, distinguished delegates, this brings me to the end of my report. Let me once again express, on behalf of the Chairperson of the Commission as well, my gratitude to all the members of the Culture Commission for the spirit of mutual respect and constructive dialogue that prevailed in our discussions, and which enabled us to make such fruitful progress. I also wish to thank the Assistant Director-General for Culture, Mr Ernesto Ottone, for his pertinent inputs and clarifications. Finally, let me thank the Secretary of our Commission, Ms Emmanuelle Robert, and the whole team – Mr Mauro Rosi, Ms Youmna Tabet, Ms Melika Medici, Mr Rasul Samadov, Ms Tharmila Vigneswaranathan and Mr Anton Tsygankov, for their invaluable assistance. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the interpreters, technicians and room clerks.

13.12 Ladies and gentlemen, as the Director-General, Ms Audrey Azoulay, rightly said in her general policy speech on 9 November, “it is to advance knowledge, respect for others and dialogue that we act for cultural diversity as well as for diversity of the arts and tangible and intangible heritage”. I am pleased to testify that the work carried out over these past few days within the Culture Commission has been driven by these principles with the aim of ensuring that culture, as a source of fruitful exchange, a vehicle for peace and inclusion, a dynamic dimension for resilience and recovery, and a driver of sustainable development, can provide effective responses to our current concerns, and rise to the challenges of the future. Let us tap into the power of culture to build back better and put the world on track to achieve the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

13.13 In closing, I would like to ask all of you to embrace the spirit of Indonesia’s motto – *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* – which means unity in diversity. It is not only the foundation of Indonesia, it is also enshrined in Indonesia’s coat of arms. It signifies the unity of the Indonesian people in the past, present, and future, despite our very diverse culture and ethnicity. Let *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* also sum up the meaning of the world’s common humanity. Let us honour and praise the diverse cultures of all of us for the common goal of shaping the brighter shared future of mankind. Let us work together, with unity in diversity. I thank you all.

14. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for the presentation. Are there any comments or suggestions on this report? Grenada, you have the floor.

15. **Grenada:**

Mr President, I can present my comments after the adoption.

16. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Grenada. Are there any other comments? No? May I then consider that the General Conference takes note of the report of the CLT Commission and hereby adopts the draft resolutions proposed in document 41 C/74, subject to the decisions that the Conference may take when adopting the Appropriation Resolution for 2022-2023? I see no comments. *It is so decided.* Grenada, you have the floor, followed by Chile.

17.1 **Grenada:**

Mr President, thank you for giving me the floor. Grenada would like to thank the Vice-Chairperson of the Culture Commission for his report and convey to the Chairperson of the Culture Commission our congratulations for his wise chairpersonship of the Commission and the positive conclusions of the Commission’s works.

17.2 Mr President, as it the last report of the commissions, allow me also to extend to all the chairpersons of the commissions our thanks for the reports and congratulations for the successful work. Concerning the Culture Commission, Grenada notes that the Commission took note without any presentation of the report of the intergovernmental committees on their activities and the funds, the World Heritage Committee, Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation and the International Fund for the Promotion of the Culture. We are aware that this was also the case for previous sessions. Nevertheless, as for other commissions which had presentations of reports and, in particular, the Communication and Information Commission, which had the opportunity to listen to brief presentations of three minutes each about the work of the two intergovernmental programmes, IPDC and IFAB, my delegation considers that the brief presentation of such reports remains a significant moment which makes visible the work of these intergovernmental committees and funds to the General Conference, which can therefore take note with full knowledge of their reports or comment on them. Thus, we would suggest, as much as possible, to include for future sessions a short presentation of the report of intergovernmental committees and funds during the Culture Commission of the General Conference. I thank you for your attention.

18. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Grenada. We have noted your suggestions. Chile, you have the floor.

19. **Chile:**

Muchas gracias, señor Presidente. Nosotros nos sumamos al consenso en relación con los trabajos de la Comisión de Cultura y agradecemos tanto al Presidente como a la Secretaría su cooperación para el éxito de esta labor. Siguiendo instrucciones de mi Gobierno, deseo recalcar la importancia del trabajo que va a emprender la Secretaría en relación con el seguimiento de la resolución 39 C/87 y su aplicación a las convenciones de la UNESCO relativas a la cultura. Para nosotros es muy importante que se promuevan la eficiencia y la eficacia tanto en el trabajo interno que se lleve a cabo desde la propia Secretaría como en el impacto que este vaya a tener en las administraciones nacionales. Tenemos observado, en nuestros Ministerios de Cultura, que hay tendencia a reproducir unidades destinadas a cada una de las convenciones, cuando sería mucho más fácil trabajar con el sistema de ventanilla única. Por eso estaremos especialmente atentos a esta línea de trabajo que se emprende ahora. Muchas gracias.

20.1 **El Presidente:**

Gracias Chile por sus comentarios. Tomamos nota de sus gestiones y su disposición a trabajar en esta línea.

(The President continues in English)

20.2 I do not see any other requests for the floor. So, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, I wish to congratulate all members of the Culture Commission for their fantastic work, and we have thus come to the end of our meeting for today. The plenary will reconvene tomorrow at 10 a.m. to adopt the remaining reports of the Committees, as well as the remaining items on the agenda of this General Conference. Thank you very much. I wish you a nice evening. The meeting is **adjourned**.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.