

Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO

Paris

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Statement for Permanent Representative of India to UNESCO

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The Plenary session of the 205<sup>th</sup> Executive Board of UNESCO

Madam President of the General Conference;

Mr. Chairman of the Executive Board;

Madam Director General;

Distinguished Delegates,

Excellencies,

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Thank you for giving me the floor.

1. For the last session, and even during Preparatory group meetings, the issue of reforms of UNESCO has been among the top priorities of the Members States and the Director General. We congratulate the Director General and the Secretariat for providing fresh start and new direction in reforming the organization. In the process and our collective pursuit is aimed at fleshing out the specific elements of the proposed strategic transformation, its detailed substantive provisions, and its linkages with UNESCO's core mandate and central priorities, our delegation would remain an active participant in the process and pursuit of reforms of UNESCO. We strongly believe that this process must be Member State driven and transparent; and the associated resource allocation must remain sharply focused to UNESCO's central tasks.

2. In the 150<sup>th</sup> year of his birth, India is poised to celebrate the legacy

of Mahatma Gandhi, a man who lived and died in the cause of all humanity and left the world in so many ways a richer place. His teachings and contributions have touched and remain relevant to almost every major programme area of the Organization's activities – education, science, culture and communication. India has proposed a draft resolution on 'remembering the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi' at the current Executive Board. I call upon the Member States to wholeheartedly support the resolution and to participate in the activities celebrating Mahatma Gandhi's life and legacy that will be held over the course of the next year.

3. I would also like to use this opportunity to recall the creation of the Madanjeet Singh Prize for peace and non-violence in 1995, that marked the United Nations Year for Tolerance and the 125th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi under UNESCO's mandate for Social and Human Sciences. Established through the generous donation of the late UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, Indian artist, writer and diplomat Mr. Madanjeet Singh, the prize will be renewed at the current Board session for a further period of 6 years.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

4. In the field of education, Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, headquartered in New Delhi, fully funded by the extra-budgetary resources contributed by the Government of India, is taking on newer challenges that face UNESCO such as prevention of violent extremism and radicalization through education. I congratulate UNESCO in continuing to play a pro-active role in this ongoing discourse.

5. We hope to continue to work together with UNESCO to build a better world.

Thank you very much.