

## **National Statement by Turkey**

### **205th session of the Executive Board**

Madame President of the General Conference,

Mr. Chairperson of the Executive Board,

Madame Director-General,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Whatever the seeming evolution of international affairs might be, the 2030 Agenda continues to provide a unique opportunity for stronger and result-seeking multilateralism. UNESCO is apt to foster its leading role within the UN system as it is placed to shape the outcome of SDG 4, along with its other missions which are increasingly relevant in today's world.

This is precisely why, we are determined to see this Organization more effective and efficient, and look forward to the success of the ongoing reform process. This Board will continue to follow closely the progress report and the recommendations of the reflection process heeding to the spirit of responsible intergovernmentalism, as expected of us.

We also believe that our proven commitment to multilateralism and dialogue will be seeking to improve the conditions of stability where they are most needed. In this vein, the flagship initiative of the Director General, “Reviving the Spirit of Mosul” is also a call to mobilize the capabilities of UNESCO. I would like to take this opportunity to announce hereby that Turkey, as a neighbour and a partner sharing UNESCO’s humanistic vision towards Iraq, has decided to make a modest contribution to this important initiative.

Evidently, this session of the Executive Board has several key issues on the table:

We will be starting the preliminary discussion for the next C/5. We need a budget that would implement the Program we have adopted last year at the General Conference and cannot really aim, at least at this stage, towards financing newer priorities for UNESCO.

I should extend my congratulations to the Secretariat for the successful organization of the very first Structured Financing Dialogue (SFD). This has been innovative in many ways and already constituted a major shift in our way of doing business. As the recent JIU Report emphasizes, the use of partnerships with the private sector is indeed critical for the implementation of Agenda 2030. We therefore would like to see the financial impact of SFD on the Organization and look forward to the next steps in this process.

Having said that, another issue that deserves our attention is our collective responsibility to pay our assessed contributions to the Organization on a timely and regular basis. After all, this is the first and foremost obligation of Member States. It is also the way to show our commitment to the ideals of UNESCO. This is why, we believe that our deliberations at this Board should be able to define a way forward, a mechanism that will be fair to all.

We are already seeing the positive outcomes of the Governance process that we have launched together within the Organization. Although we have met only three times, Turkey believes that the Preparatory Group has already proved its success in abiding by its guiding principles, namely, “inclusivity”, “efficient preparation of regular sessions of the Board” and “cost-effectiveness”. We have full support for the continuation of this mechanism beyond 2019. In its success, our Chair and Co-chair deserve a special appreciation.

Turkey has been closely following the SDG4 agenda, now also as a member of the Steering Committee. Regional consultation meetings as well as the upcoming Global Education Meeting (GEM) will be critical on the way to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) next year where SDG4 will be reviewed. We welcome that one of the focus areas of GEM would deal with the big question of migration and displacement of persons, and to this, we are planning to contribute.

While acknowledging UNESCO’s mandate in coordinating, monitoring and reviewing SDG4, our success will also depend on the ability of UNESCO to support its implementation at the country level. Therefore, it would be equally important that UNESCO actively engages in shaping the way forward and positions itself appropriately within the new UN Development System. We are looking forward to hearing more from the Secretariat about this process.

Water is one of the other areas where UNESCO has a mandate and comparative advantage through the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) which can boast more than 40 years of experience and accumulated knowledge. Through its large number of Chairs and Category-II Centers as well as its network in the field, IHP is well placed to support the implementation of SDG6 on water and sanitation. We believe that, as members of this Organization, we have a duty to promote IHP’s standing within the UN family.

Last, but not least, I would like to reiterate our call to address the issue of underrepresentation. Geographical representation is a key principle and it should be equally applied at all levels of the Organization. While welcoming the Young Professionals Program, we encourage Secretariat to implement additional measures to reverse the trend. Likewise, we encourage the Secretariat to be more transparent and accountable during the recruitment process. We will be closely following UNESCO’s efforts to this end.

Thank you.