

**National Statement of Lithuania
at the 207th Executive Board session, UNESCO**

Madame Director General,
Madame President of the General Conference,
Mister President of the Executive Board,
Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to start by declaring that Lithuania fully aligns itself with the European Union's statement.

We consider this Executive Board session of utmost importance to the work of UNESCO during the forthcoming biennium.

Nous remercions la Directrice générale et le Secrétariat pour leurs efforts dans la gestion de l'Organisation. Nous sommes témoins de l'amélioration de la qualité des rapports essentiels ainsi que d'autres documents. Nous saluons également les efforts du Secrétariat de tenir informés les États membres et de poursuivre le dialogue. La Lituanie est un des pays qui répond toujours aux questionnaires et aux sondages divers – nous sommes d'opinion qu'il est important de fournir des données nationales, par conséquent nous encourageons tous les États membres à suivre ce modèle. Tous les détails comptent, c'est pourquoi nous percevons ces aspects en tant que partie de la Transformation stratégique de l'Organisation. Nous soutenons entièrement cette Transformation visant à renforcer l'UNESCO et à l'adapter aux nouveaux défis. Ce processus essentiel permet également à l'Organisation de soutenir davantage les États membres dans la mise en œuvre de l'Agenda 2030.

In the capacity of a member state, Lithuania focuses its energy and financial resources on the Communication and Information Sector, by providing our knowledge and expertise, offering our non-earmarked voluntary contributions for the sector. We also financially support a specific project, UNESCO's "Open Talks", and we are proud to be part of this annual forum since its launch in 2016. We believe that the role of communication and information is increasing globally and UNESCO is an exceptional UN agency with a clear mandate in this field. Therefore, UNESCO's community should fully exploit its mandate, by recognising the obvious reality and not avoiding to use the terms of disinformation and misinformation in its work.

Lithuania commends UNESCO's efforts to make the Organization more visible in the UN system. We contributed to this visibility by co-organizing the journalist safety event on the occasion of the High Level Political Forum in New York this July together with the Secretariat and other fellow countries. The launch of UNESCO's Futures of Education initiative during the UN General Assembly this September is also an achievement in presenting and promoting UNESCO's ideas outside Paris. We appreciate that the Secretariat shares with us the information about its initiatives in New

York, however, the member states need to know about such plans as early as possible in order to provide our better contributions to such events by attracting the attention of the heads of state or government whose agendas are very busy and need forward planning.

We commend the steps that UNESCO is undertaking in view to the possible elaboration of a recommendation on Open Science by preparing a consolidated roadmap. We share the opinion that the exchange of information on the subject provides an excellent opportunity to have proper discussions.

Dear colleagues,

I have to express my disappointment about the failure to reach an agreement in the Open-Ended Working Group dedicated to the review of the “Memory of the World” Programme. It is a noble and technical programme by its nature. Unfortunately, we converted it into a battle about the International Register. Yes, the Register is a powerful tool to communicate the “Memory of the World” Programme and to display important archives. We ourselves are proudly celebrating this year the 10th anniversary of the inscription of the collection of documents regarding the human chain “The Baltic Way” that took place 30 years ago and changed the history of our countries irreversibly. However, we see that excessive attention to the International Register is stalling the programme and exhausting it financially, while distracting our attention from the principle objective of the programme, which is the protection and safeguarding of archives. Lithuania firmly believes that the “Memory of the World” Programme cannot be misused to interpret the history and even less so, to quarrel about the history. The diverging views stem from the attitude of states towards the possibility to veto or censor one another’s nomination. If such a right became a reality, the International Register would serve as a permanent battlefield. Given the complexity of the world history, it is normal that we have diverging views to certain historic phenomena, and there are ways to solve this kind of issues through dialogue.

This is Lithuania’s last statement during our current term on the Executive Board. Not so modestly, I will allow myself to say that we have been a member, who contributes to the wellbeing and progress of UNESCO with expertise, that cares about justice and human rights, and that is flexible when it comes to negotiating ways towards our goals. We thank the Secretariat and the member states for your cooperation so far. As the 207th session ends, we will be stepping down from the Executive Board, so that we could continue working effectively and creatively but in a different status. In the meantime, we will also be preparing ourselves for our next term on the Executive Board, where we intend to return in 2021. These two kind of gap years will be our contribution to the efforts of promoting equal opportunities, diversity and dynamism of UNESCO.