

Exboard speech 207

**M. Chair of the Executive Board,
Madam President of the General Conference Madam
Director-General Excellencies, Ladies and
Gentlemen**

The membership of the Sultanate of Oman in the Executive Board is coming to an end. With this, allow me to share my thoughts on this enriching, humbling, and, at times, challenging experience.

In my opinion, a challenge has often been the sometimes difficult but necessary decision to put the organization's best interests ahead of our respective national ones. No matter what we all say in our speeches and discourses about this, it is, in reality, a very difficult task, one that requires us to broaden our perspectives and to be daring, courageous, persuasive, and flexible.

In the end, we do this because we all believe in our organization's shared values, in qualities like equality for all, cooperation, inclusion. These values need to be further reflected in our decision-making to enhance ethics and transparency, and furthermore reduce any double standards.

Another challenge concerns our ability as member states to formally voice and share our opinions on certain issues in meetings, rather than choosing to save our views for UNESCO's corridors.

By choosing to fuel change, rather than rumors, we will be able to foster an environment of trust, where different views are not to be regarded as antagonistic, but constructive.

Dear colleagues,

Despite these challenges, the experience of Oman in this board has mostly proven to be extremely enriching.

Enriching because despite our diverse perspectives on issues, all of us as Board Members have witnessed a sense of cooperation, dialogue and compromise, which has helped us to reach consensus many times. And in this respect, informal dialogue and discussions with other member states and the secretariat have been of great benefit to this process. I am therefore looking forward to the discussions of this session of the Board and hope to reach consensus, even on issues that may seem divisive such as the Budget of the 40C/5. On this specific aspect, the Sultanate stands ready to cooperate, and will go with the consensus.

Enriching, also, because our membership required us to be well acquainted with the work of UNESCO in a different, and more in-depth manner, and humbling because it has lead us to realize the substantive work achieved by the secretariat to enable us together to fulfill the mandate of UNESCO. The Programme execution report (contained in document EX 4. Inf), the different activity reports, as well as the overall constructive evaluations of some programs, prepared by IOS, and contained in document ex 5.II are a testimony to that hard work. I am looking forward to examining them during this board, while keeping in mind that overloading the secretariat with the task of reporting may be challenging not only for them, but also for the members of the Board who must be prepared to respond appropriately to complete the decision making process.

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

As Oman was running its campaign for the membership of the Board, we thought that getting the votes was the difficult part in this whole process, and I wish to take here the opportunity to thank all those members who extended their vote and their confidence in us. But votes imply a responsibility and a commitment to the work of the board.

This membership meant to us working genuinely, and to the best of our ability, in order to fulfill the demanding duties of the board, and to serve the best interest of this Organization. I hope we have managed to do so, and I wish the best of luck to the new composition of the Board.

I truly believe that all of us, member states and secretariat alike, care for this Organization and strive for its benefit, and the differences that arise sometimes relate to the ways and methods of improvement, not to its ultimate mission.

They should therefore not be feared, because our common goal, as the collective conscience of UNESCO is to improve this Organization, an Organization with a unique mandate in the UN system, where all countries, big and small, have a voice.

Thank you