

## **ADDRESS / STATEMENT**

**207th Session of the Executive Board of UNESCO  
Paris, France, 9 – 23 October 2019**

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**REPRESENTATIVE**

**OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA**

**TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNESCO**

**Statement at the 207<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Board of UNESCO  
Paris, France, 9 – 23 October 2019**

**Madame Director General,  
Mr President of the Executive Board,  
Mrs President of the General Conference,  
Excellencies, distinguished Colleagues,**

**It gives me great pleasure to address the 207<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Board.**

**All remarks expressed in my national capacity are aligned with the statement made // which will be made on behalf of the European Union.**

**Given the development and improvement through the Strategic Transformation Process, Slovenia strongly believes in the excellence and success of UNESCO's work. With a fully transparent and inclusive transformation, UNESCO will be experiencing its rebirth.**

**The full implementation of the ongoing Strategic Transformation must remain the top priority of the Organization in the upcoming years, and with regards to this process, please rest assured that Slovenia will remain a strong supporter. I would like to point out that we are very satisfied of UNESCO's open and flexible approach with an emphasized mutual and transparent way of communication with its Member States in this framework. We look forward to continuously and closely working together with the Director General, the Secretariat and with you, distinguished colleagues and delegations, to whom I express my sincere gratitude for all of your active cooperation and commitment.**

**Slovenia's activities during the past 4 years of its mandate in the Executive Board were focused on Education by fully supporting the Education 2030 Agenda to which Slovenia contributes with its experience and expertise in the development of Open Educational Resources (OER). We have fully supported the process for the adoption of UNESCO's Recommendation on OER, which should be adopted at the next session of UNESCO's General Conference.**

**Further, Slovenia fully recognizes UNESCO's new efforts in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and especially in its ethical dimensions. The development and application of AI technologies will profoundly shape humanity's access to information, knowledge transaction processes and education. AI has also great potential to foster open and inclusive knowledge societies, especially for marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, rural populations, and indigenous peoples, to promote**

**open access to education, digital persistence, cultural diversity, and scientific progress.**

**In this light, the Slovenian Government proposed the establishment of an International Research Centre on AI under the Auspices of UNESCO which received the support of all Member States of the Executive Board at its last session in April. I would like to kindly ask you again for your support also during the General Conference when the final decision will be adopted.**

**Slovenia is committed to promote strong and effective multilateralism with the UN. Bearing in mind the constitutional nature and role of UNESCO within the UN System, we all have to resist any attempts that intend to weaken the Human Rights and we should keep this in mind as well when following decisions under Pillar 3 of the Strategic Transformation.**

**During the last year it has been reaffirmed once again that steps taken in order to prepare UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (40 C/4) are of extreme importance. Therefore, Slovenia is active with its constant request to prioritize UNESCO's activities in line with its financial resources according to expected results and impact on the people closely following the realization of the SDGs.**

**At this session of the Executive Board, we look forward to the debate on 40 C/5, including UNESCO's budget for the second biennium (2020-2021). Many projects and many ideas have to be realized and Slovenia will support their realization. Further, it is my great honor to confirm at this stage that the Government of Slovenia decided to support the Director General's proposed scenario of "Zero Real Growth" of UNESCO's budget.**

**I would like to take some words on the role of our National Commission. In the last period, we have organized two major events: The 2nd Annual Informal Meeting of UNESCO National Commissions from the South-Eastern European Region took place in Ljubljana on 14 and 15 May 2018, with the representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine. Participants discussed how to improve exchange of know-how and best practices, among others in the fields of the activities of UNESCO designations, Regional UNESCO Youth Spaces, cooperation among universities and the ASPnet.**

**Then, the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> Informal Meeting of the European Network of National Commissions for UNESCO at Bled from 24 - 26 February 2019, with the aim to address contemporary challenges of the Network, and,**

**among others also the role of National Commissions in the Strategic Transformation of UNESCO. We are glad that the Director General and the Secretariat recognize the important role of National Commissions and attended this meeting with ADG Matoko and Charaf Ahmimed.**

**Please allow me to conclude, and since all good things come to an end somewhen – for me, it is time to say good bye. Slovenia was a member of the Executive Board during the last four years. We cannot – or better to say: we should not evaluate how much Slovenia has contributed to the successful work of UNESCO during these years. You know this best, and it will be your judgement which is final. We have decided not to run for another term at this General Conference. We believe that a large number of other Member States should have the chance to contribute their ideas to UNESCO and actively work for the benefit and success of the Organization. However, I can promise: we will soon come back!**

**Madame Director General, Mr President of the Executive Board, Mrs President of the General Conference, Excellencies, distinguished Colleagues, dear Friends. It has been an extremely demanding but, of course, also a very interesting and exciting time for me as President of the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO and as university professor to participate as Representative of the Slovenian Government in the work of the Executive Board.**

**I have learned a lot and would like to sincerely thank all colleagues for an honest and very fruitful and constructive dialogue on most of the agenda throughout the last four years. Due to limited time, I can share with you only my major concern for the future development of the world. The most important question that explains this concern is: "Do we understand how technology is transforming our democracies, our lives and our way of thinking? Are today's societies equipped enough to make evidence-based decisions on how to govern and manage the decisions in the digital age"?**

**In order to understand what is actually happening, we are in need of an independent and holistic approach including all scientific disciplines. And as an engineer, I strongly believe that much more funds and efforts have to be made available to be invested in human and social sciences, enabling the societies to take proper and fair decisions and not to approach contemporary global challenges with covered eyes. But what we need most importantly, is Wise, Honest, Transparent and Open Decision Makers.**

**Thank you for your attention.**