

Deutsches Plenarstatement

beim 209. Exekutivrat der UNESCO

- President of the Executive Board
- Director-General of UNESCO
- Excellencies
- Dear Colleagues
- Ladies and gentlemen

Thank you.

1. This meeting of the Executive Board takes place in challenging times. Germany would like to commend UNESCO for its swift and decisive response to the challenges posed by CoVid 19. The Secretariat has initiated many appropriate initiatives including visible campaigns for a broader audience and programs like ResiliArt. UNESCO networks have been particularly active. These efforts are very well received in Germany.
2. Every aspect of UNESCO's vast mandate is directly touched by the pandemic, especially Education. 90 percent of learners worldwide have been affected by closures of educational institutions. These developments threaten to intensify already existing inequalities. Marginalized children and adolescents, girls as well as the poorest and the

displaced are at particular risk of not returning to school. Digital or distance learning still lacks infrastructure, training for teachers, lecturers and trainers as well as appropriate materials for digital teaching. Germany works together with partner countries in order to mitigate the impact of school closures on the most vulnerable children, inter alia in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. We will also support the COVID-19 Emergency Window of the Global Partnership for Education with 25 Mio. EUR out of 50 Mio. EUR pledged for 2020.

3. We need UNESCO's leadership in the Education 2030 agenda. Education is key for **sustainable development**; it provides the skills and values relevant to coping with shocks such as the pandemic. As a member of the Education 2030 Steering Committee Germany strongly encourages UNESCO to continue its successful work in this regard. Together with Germany UNESCO will host the World Conference on Education for sustainable development in May 2021 in Berlin, after a postponement due to the pandemic. We again extend invitations for this conference. We also urge Member States to engage with UNESCO and us leading up to the 2021 ESD World Conference.
4. UNESCO's networks are known for their quality. Even during the pandemic UNESCO has continued to work on better quality mechanisms and quality criteria. Germany is highly

committed to such processes and contributes actively, for example in ~~two~~ current processes of the Man and the Biosphere Programme. Man and the Biosphere has achieved remarkable results in recent years. We also welcome efforts for further improvement of quality in the IGGP. Healthy Oceans are a critical factor for the “next normal”. In 2021 in Berlin, in early June, Germany will host the launch conference for the Ocean Science for Sustainable Development Decade coordinated by the IOC.

5. Among UNESCO’s many efforts to maintain the World’s cultural heritage I would especially like to mention its excellent work in the recovery process of historical heritage in Mosul and other places in the Middle East.
6. UNESCO plays an important role in defending Human Rights, especially in defending journalists against human rights abuses. It remains a paramount task to defend the principles of universality and indivisibility of Human Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international instruments of the United Nations system.
7. Before I conclude let me stress again that UNESCO’s reform process needs to be continued and accelerated.

Thank you