

HUNGARY'S STATEMENT (DRAFT)

to be delivered by H.E. Mr. László TURÓCZY, ambassador and permanent representative

at the 210th session of the Executive Board

on 2/12/2020

Mr Chairperson, Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, Dear Colleagues,

I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to every single person, as well as to you personally Mr Chairperson, who have made possible despite the challenging circumstances, the organization of the 210th Session of the Executive Board to be held in presentia. The COVID-19 pandemic, unfortunately, is still far from being over, and combatting it demands tireless efforts from each country and each International Organization.

During the spring months, when it came to confront the first and immediate effects of COVID-19, it was a major concern for Hungary to experience the quasi-paralysis of major International Organizations, even in the United Nations System. Against this backdrop, the proactive manner with which UNESCO responded and has been responding to help member States mitigate the impact of the pandemic in the organization's domains of competence stood out and we thank the Director-General and the Secretariat for that.

This pandemic underlined the role of UNESCO as a United Nations specialized agency, whose unique expertise and specific competence can be immediately utilized, which is a crucial comparative advantage. In this regard, it is important to reaffirm UNESCO's fields of competence in the UN system for the next decade.

There is no corner of the globe where the virus is not present, hence it seriously jeopardizes the ongoing process towards the fulfillment of Sustainable Development Goal number 4. The rising funding gap and slowing progress in the most important areas such as universal access to quality education, women's and girls' empowerment, global citizenship etc. require urgent action. UNESCO, as the lead agency in education and for SDG4, must ensure that the effects of the current crisis are kept to the minimum and the international community can get back on track to achieve the SDGs. UNESCO has to continue to show the way, especially within the

UN system, in a more transparent manner, to provide expertise, to be the platform for sharing ideas and exchanging good practices, and to enhance dialogue with Member States.

Hungary is looking forward to the results of the work of the International Commission on the Futures of Education. In these unprecedented times even if we do not know what tomorrow brings, there is an absolute necessity to have a vision that looks much beyond than the current situation. We believe that education is a global common good and as such it needs particular attention when we think about the life of future generations. We are also convinced that particular emphasis is needed on the implementation of SDG 4.7 focusing on education for sustainable development and global citizenship.

Young people are key to the future, therefore the ability of UNESCO to conduct intergenerational dialogues is a valuable asset that could and should be utilized.

The UN decision on the International Decade of Indigenous Languages could not have come at a better time. Hungary is deeply committed to the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous people, we fully support UNESCO's work in this field. It is of utmost importance that indigenous people, like national minority communities all over the world can have the real possibility to shape their community and the future of their place of living. They should not be considered sources of conflict but rather a special resource that contributes to the well-being and prosperity of the state they are living in.

We also learnt a very important lesson in the past few months. Instead of competing, we have to cooperate, share and unite our knowledge in the interest of all mankind. UNESCO's initiative on Open Science has to be the basis for all research throughout the world.

Investing in science is more important than ever. We have to understand that nature will take revenge if exploited. As the well-known saying states: We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children. Hungary welcomes the fact that in the times of crises UNESCO keeps its scientific approach and functions as a lab of ideas. We emphasize the importance of Global and Regional expert consultations, and webinars as key elements for sharing knowledge, good practices, research findings.

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The Covid-19 pandemic continues to heavily impact the cultural sector as well. The devastating and long-term effects of the health crisis is yet to be seen. We endorse UNESCO's efforts in order to identify the most appropriate kinds of support for culture and access to a diversity of content, as well as the possibility to equitable participation in cultural life, including in the digital environment. In this regard, we support the two important campaigns launched, namely „ShareOurHeritage” and „ResiliArt Movement”.

Avant de conclure, permettez-moi, d'exprimer au nom de la Hongrie, mes sincères condoléances au pays hôte, suite à l'assassinat de Samuel Paty.

This horrific act will not let us forget that we all, including UNESCO have still much to do in the field of fighting radicalization and extremism.

Thank you, Chairperson.