Twelfth plenary meeting of the 40th session of the General Conference

Thursday 21 November 2019 at 3.15 p.m.

President: Mr Altay Cengizer (Turkey)

1. The President:
   Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I declare open the 12th plenary meeting of the General Conference. Before we proceed, as you will recall there are 12 speakers remaining from yesterday and Myanmar also wanted to speak today. So altogether we will have 13 speakers. After these 13 speakers, I think it would be worthwhile for all of us if each group chooses between them two speakers to summarize their positions - two proponents and two opponents of the draft amendment. These will be for five minutes only. We will then see how things evolve. Let me first give the floor to Indonesia, please.

2.1 Indonesia:
   Thank you, Mr President. My delegation has observed and listened attentively to the rich discussion and debate since yesterday. It would be difficult at this stage to add to the various points and arguments that have been raised. From a discussion with the President, it is clear that position of Member States are still so far apart, both on the substance and the way forward on this issue. As a committed member of UNESCO, Indonesia has always and will always support the full implementation of all of UNESCO’s decisions taken by the various UNESCO organs, including the General Conference. This is important to show that multilateralism within the framework of UNESCO is serious, delivers and is accountable. For Indonesia, it is also essential that all key and important decisions taken by UNESCO, such as on this issue, receive full support and are reached through the consensus of Member States. This will ensure the unity of the Organization on this particular issue.

2.2 Indonesia believes there is still hope for a consensus-driven process. We need to redouble our efforts, work in an inclusive manner, and put our hearts and minds together to exhaust all possibilities. In this regard, Indonesia feels further efforts should be taken to reach the best outcome by the working group. Given the importance of this issue to all members, should there be a way out that is reached before the next General Conference, if needed, perhaps we even could think about calling an extraordinary session of the General Conference to adopt the consensus on this issue. Finally, Mr President, Indonesia is a strong proponent of a fair, open and democratic, inclusive multilateralism. The issue we are discussing is key to building such a multilateral system in UNESCO. The decision we take on this issue will not only reflect the credibility of UNESCO, but also the viability of today’s multilateral system. Indonesia is committed to the functioning and to the equality of this Organization. Thank you, Mr President.

3. The President:
   Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite Algeria to be followed by Zimbabwe.

4.1 Algérie :
   Merci beaucoup Monsieur le Président. L’Algérie reprend à son compte la déclaration faite par la Nouvelle-Zélande et à laquelle se sont associés de nombreux États membres hier. Elle considère que l’universalité de notre Organisation passe par une représentation de l’ensemble des États membres et est attachée au principe de la rotation. La diversité de la famille humaine commande une alternance en ce qui concerne la possibilité de siéger ou non dans un organe exécutif. La rotation ne peut qu’apporter une énergie nouvelle, de nouveaux regards, et une impulsion ainsi qu’un souffle nouveau à l’ensemble de l’Organisation.

4.2 Je me permets ici Monsieur le Président de faire une petite digression de ce que j’avais préparé parce que de nombreuses délégations ont fait hier mention de ce qui devait être dit et ont apporté beaucoup d’arguments. Toutefois je voulais juste répondre à trois points concernant les arguments qui nous ont été opposés. Concernant le manque de temps accordé à la discussion. Je suis là depuis plus de quatre ans, et cela fait plus de quatre ans que nous parlons sur ce sujet.

4.3 Concernant la stabilité de l’Organisation : nous avons entendu que la stabilité de l’Organisation serait ébranlée si, d’aventure, certains États étaient obligés de sortir du Conseil exécutif. Je suis désolé Monsieur le Président de le dire à tous mes collègues, et j’en suis aussi heureux, que l’UNESCO est plus solide et plus stable que l’ensemble ou la somme de ses États membres. Cette Organisation est beaucoup plus grande que nous, et nous y tenons, c’est pour ça que nous sommes aujourd’hui ici en train d’essayer de défendre un principe, non un intérêt. Nous essayons de défendre un principe de droit et non l’intérêt d’un État ou d’une région.

4.4 Et enfin, Monsieur le Président, je voulais juste signaler, et attirer l’attention de tous mes chers collègues ici présents, de vous-même Monsieur le Président, et de tout le Secrétariat. De nombreux États ont parlé d’une fracture éventuelle de l’Organisation si cet amendement que nous sommes en train de discuter aujourd’hui était adopté. Je suis désolé et profondément chagriné de le dire, mais la fracture est déjà là. C’est une fracture qui transcende les traditionnelles lignes d’opposition. Rendez-vous compte, nous sommes aujourd’hui en train de discuter une question qui transcende tous les membres de l’UNESCO. C’est pour ça que je dis, à partir d’aujourd’hui et quelle que soit l’issue du vote que nous allons avoir, qu’un groupe ou l’autre gagne, nous sommes tous perdants, parce que nous n’avons pas pu trouver une troisième voie, nous n’avons pas su trouver une solution de consensus.

4.5 Demain, ceux qui vont gagner vont se féliciter. Mais ceux qui vont perdre resterons amers. Resterons amers parce qu’il y a eu beaucoup de pression, il y a eu beaucoup de force appliquée à défendre un point ou un autre. Et la preuve en est qu’aujourd’hui il y a des absents. Et nous saluons les absents qui ne sont pas parmi nous parce qu’ils n’ont pas pu, ou n’ont pas été autorisés à être là parmi nous. Je vous remercie Monsieur le Président.
5. **The President:**

Merci, Excellence. I now invite Zimbabwe to be followed by Fiji.

6. **Zimbabwe:**

Thank you, Mr President. First of all, I would like to congratulate the Members that have just been appointed to the Executive Board. My delegation takes the floor to comment mainly about process. A lot has already been said by distinguished delegates who spoke before me. Zimbabwe supports the position whereby Member States are allowed time to deliberate and reach consensus, especially in this case where the Constitution could be amended. Mr President, we welcome this opportunity that has been given to us the Member States to air our views on this very important matter. We are concerned that should a decision on the draft resolution before us be finalized through voting, this will scar the cohesiveness of the Organization. We believe in the principle of inclusivity and equity. We therefore want to ask for more time to be allowed for further consultation and deliberation on the divided views at hand, with the objective of convergence at the end of the day. I thank you.

7. **The President:**

Thank you your Excellency. Now I invite Fiji to be followed by Palestine.

8. **Fiji:**

Mr President, I thank you and I join with many colleagues in wishing the newly-elected members of the Executive Board all the best. Yesterday, we discussed in the SHS Committee the idea of having a World Logic Day and I would like to try and keep to the spirit of that concept in this debate and focus on the issues. Firstly, Mr President, on the issue of the legal obligation, it seems that there is general consensus that there is none arising from this proposal.

8.2 In 1991, our predecessors removed the term limits and there was no legal obligation then. It follows that there is therefore no legal obligation to reinstate them. This is borne out by the fact the Constitution has been changed 11 times on term limits with no legal obligation. Thus, we appreciate the consistency in terms of precedent, which has been set out not only once, but 11 times.

8.3 Mr President, we have been discussing term limits with rotation as if they are one and the same thing. They are not. They are indeed linked, but they need to be considered separately. Even though Fiji is a sponsor to this amendment, we have listened to the constructive debate from yesterday and hopefully today. When I was a precocious student at the university, I told the deputy vice chancellor that there is a difference between hearing and listening. I am sure that all of us here today are indeed listening to the issues being raised with open minds. My colleagues have spoken with passion on the issue of term limits and they have raised the voice of the Pacific. We hope that the voice has not just been heard, but that we are all listening to it.

8.4 Mr President, Gandhi once said that honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress and we have indeed made progress. Iran said yesterday that we cannot make a change to the Constitution without considering its full impact. We agree. The impact of the decision to remove term limits in 1991 is really only being felt now. The issue has been on the agenda since 2015 and probably before again in 2017 and now in 2019. Perhaps we need to consider with all humility that decision taken by our predecessors is not serving us well in this Organization today in 2019. All speakers almost without exception, Mr President, have expressed their commitment to various principles – inclusivity, representation, solidarity and multilateralism, among others. We welcome this and want to associate ourselves with this. These are not principles just for those concerning the governance structures of the Organization. These are principles that we all should live every day of our lives. Many have also spoken about good governance. There are some principles there, too, which apply – participatory, responsive, equitable and inclusive. We have a system of one Member, one vote. We also have a system of equitable contributions to funding the Organization. If we are to be truly inclusive, we need to live it and open up spaces on the Executive Board while we still continue to contribute to the well-being of the Organization. After all, Mr President, we are here to serve.

8.5 The current Executive Board has 58 members, and if I am correct, only four come from the small island developing States (SIDS) grouping. Of those four, none come from the African SIDS nor from the Pacific SIDS. Therefore, the full diversity of this member-driven Organization is not available to the decision-making process of the Executive Board. This is based on another principle of good governance, which is for decisions to be made on the basis of full information. And without this, from some key SIDS organizations, which reflect our own diversity, the decision making is all the poorer. If there are term limits in place, as there previously were, this would allow a number of countries which have not been represented on the Executive Board or have been underrepresented the opportunity to share their indigenous and traditional knowledge, to bring new energy to the deliberations and ensure that the voices of the world are being raised in harmony and solidarity.

8.6 But, Mr President, it is the opportunity to contribute that is important. Is it too much to ask? I turn now to the issue of rotation that has been mentioned by many, as integrally intertwined with term limits. Here again, we agree with Iran that this needs to be dealt with in the groups. However, it does have an impact on the overall inclusivity barometer of the Organization and does need some consideration on that basis. When I had the opportunity to participate on the Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award, we did a hike. It was drilled into us that we needed to go at the pace of the slowest – not just for safety reasons, but also for reasons of teamwork. In the world of persons with disabilities, there is a fundamental principle that they espouse of “nothing about us without us”. Within the United Nations system, this translates into “leaving no one behind”. So, the additional concept of rotating the representation in groups will support inclusivity and solidarity. It will support listening to the diversity of the Organization in all its glory. It will provide a platform for growth and multilateralism.

8.7 Mr President, the approach taken to consensus decision making is laudable and something that we support in principle. However, we seem to have an issue here to change the Constitution, we are enjoined to vote, as there is a requirement of a two-thirds majority. Those who have spoken eloquently before me have said that there is division in the General Conference and that we need to refer this matter of the proposed amendment to the groups to discuss and come to a consensus. With respect, this has been discussed since 1945 when the Organization was established. It has been
discussed in 1991 and again in 2015, 2017 and 2019. It is an ongoing discussion. And if indeed we are divided, sending this to the groups to discuss, will just move the division to the groups. We are asking for all of us to unite and to allow a change to the Constitution to take place so that we can all contribute. We need the courage to allow this change back to take place. As one speaker said, the only thing we can be sure of is that there will be change. In addition to this, there are two other truths: that we will pay taxes and that we will eventually die. On that happy note, Mr President, Fiji supports the amendment and does not believe that there is a legal obligation associated with this proposed change. We call on all of us to unite behind this proposal so that we can bring new positive energy to bear on the important mandate of UNESCO for the benefit of all of us and to meet our collective aspirations for the Organization. I thank you. Merci.

9. **The President:**
   Thank you Excellency. I invite Palestine to be followed by Switzerland.

   (The speaker continues in English)

10.2 Mr President, since yesterday, we have been listening to both parties and both parties advanced respectable and defendable arguments. I am not going to go back to these arguments, and I am not going to talk again about the principles that are defended by both parties whether it is inclusivity or rotation, diversity or representativity, but also consensus decision making. I tried several times and since the beginning since this amendment was submitted, we noticed that there was a group of Member States who were concerned by this amendment and they addressed a letter to your predecessor, the President of the General Conference, raising their concern and asking for the adjournment of this amendment.

10.3 Mr President, I think that both parties are right. That is why I tried at that time to conduct an initiative called the “third way”. Fifteen countries joined this third way. We conducted intensive consultations. Yesterday, I asked to be the last speaker in order to ask for a suspension and continue consultation with both parties. Now, I do not need to ask for this suspension, since yesterday night and this morning, I continued my consultations. My consultations were not about to consider any option because there are so many options to be discussed and considered, but it was about the formula of adjournment. Our purpose in the third way was only to avoid a divisive vote. Whatever vote will be conducted in this room regarding these amendments, unfortunately it will be divisive. Our purpose was to avoid this. How to avoid it? The idea was to seek an acceptable formula of adjournment that could be accepted by both parties. Both parties showed a good sum of flexibility and the majority of Member States on both sides were flexible. But unfortunately, there were a few Member States on both sides who were not so flexible that we can call hardliners. It is unfortunate, Mr President – my attempts and my initiative at this stage did not succeed. It is unfortunate. In that case, the debate can continue. But I call upon all colleagues from both sides, if they really seek a consensus to think about an acceptable formula of adjournment for everybody. This is the sense of my intervention. Thank you, Mr President.

11. **The President:**
   Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite Switzerland to be followed by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

11.1 **Suisse** :
   Monsieur le Président, chères et chers collègues. La Suisse a coparrainé l’amendement proposé. Il y a deux ans, la Conférence générale a tranché la question de principe, se prononçant après de longues discussions en faveur de l’idée de la limitation des mandats. Déjà en 2005, il y a donc 14 ans, la Conférence générale avait demandé aux groupes électoraux de régler la question de la rotation au sein de ces mêmes groupes électoraux. La décision de 2005 n’a pas eu de suivi effectif. Le malaise persiste ainsi depuis déjà des années. S’il en va de même avec la décision prise à une forte majorité il y a deux ans, lors de la 39e Conférence générale, le malaise qui enveloppe notre Organisation sur cette question ne fera que s’aggraver, risquant d’accentuer encore les divisions que nous avons malheureusement sous les yeux.

12.2 La Suisse, tout autant que les autres États, appuie le principe du consensus. Malheureusement, dans ce débat le mot consensus semble être devenu synonyme de statu quo, voire d’immobilisme. Nous le regrettons. Nous regrettons plus encore l’atmosphère générale ayant entouré les échanges autour de cette proposition où les invectives, les procès d’intention, voire les intimidations, ont trop souvent pris le pas sur le débat factuel et constructif.

12.3 Nous avons entendu à plusieurs reprises être exprimée la crainte selon laquelle l’adoption de la proposition examinée aura des conséquences graves et sur le long terme pour notre Organisation. Nous n’avons par contre pas entendu spécifier quelles conséquences pouvaient découler d’une présence plus large et plus diverse des États membres de l’UNESCO au Conseil exécutif. Pour notre part, nous pensons au contraire qu’une représentation plus équilibrée, plus inclusive et plus diverse renforcera notre Organisation.

12.4 Monsieur le Président, Mesdames et Messieurs, depuis 1945, nous avons su faire évoluer l’Acte constitutif de l’Organisation à de multiples reprises pour que l’UNESCO s’adapte aux conditions changeantes des temps. Il en va de même aujourd’hui. L’amendement proposé est équilibré, il accroît la représentativité, et élargit les bases sur lesquelles repose la gouvernance de notre Organisation. Pour le dire très simplement, il est bon pour l’UNESCO, il est bon pour ses États membres. Je vous remercie de votre attention.

13. **The President:**
   Thank you your Excellency. I now invite the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to be followed by Pakistan.
14.1 **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:**

Thank you, Mr President, and thank you to all those delegations around the room this afternoon and yesterday for their comments. When I was privileged to give our statement on Monday morning about multilateralism and I concluded about the importance of us not only demonstrating it or championing it but also demonstrating it, each and every one of us in this Organization. We have heard eloquently the arguments expressed by Member States both supporting and opposing the proposed amendment. We have also heard those who voiced concern about the idea of amending the Constitution or the pace at which we do so or the method we use. We are not unsympathetic to such concerns where sincerely held and presented. But, Mr President, we have also heard how there is undeniably a gap between the theory of equal access and the reality of elections to the Executive Board.

14.2 The United Kingdom is supportive of the principle of rotation so that all Member States who are willing should be able to play their part. We believe this is consistent with the essential character of UNESCO and reflects the diverse, pluralistic and universal character of the Organization. We also recognize that we, as a founding member and one of the largest contributors, both voluntarily and through assessed contributions, have a particular responsibility in this regard. That was instrumental in the decision of the United Kingdom voluntarily to step back from the most recent elections to the Executive Board. We did this to help achieve a set consensus in our group, but also in the hope that we might encourage others. We regret that it appears that we have not persuaded many.

14.3 So, where does this leave us, Mr President? We do not support a change to the Constitution as proposed, but we recognize that there is a legitimate and deeply-felt issue that we should not pretend does not exist. If the Member States gathered here today, decide through consensus either that we should put this to a vote or that we should use the period ahead for further deliberations, the United Kingdom will support that consensus. But to be clear, any such further deliberations would need to arrive at an agreed way forward and a concrete outcome. We cannot simply delay discussion again without an outcome in prospect. Furthermore, as a number of delegations have already argued, there have already been extensive discussions on this issue. So, we need to be honest with ourselves and with each other. Are we clear that extending discussions will help and are Member States genuinely willing to work openly and constructively and willing to make the likely compromises necessary in order to reach consensus? I leave that question for all of us to reflect on whilst restating our conviction that UNESCO’s strength lies in its plurality and its diversity. Those features must be faithfully reflected also in the composition of the Organization’s governing body. Thank you, Mr President.

15. **The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite Pakistan to be followed by Jordan.

16.1 **Pakistan:**

Thank you, Mr President. First of all, let me congratulate you on your election as the President of the General Conference. I would like to commend the way that you have so far conducted, the very important debate at the General Conference. Mr President, I would also take this opportunity to congratulate the new Members of the Executive Board. Since we are debating a very important issue, regarding the term limit of the Executive Board, I would like to convey on behalf of all the 58 Member States that the Executive Board is not about only those 58 Member States. It is about the entire membership of UNESCO. So, in that spirit, we would like to assure everyone that Pakistan and other Member States would work with them for their collective objectives and their collective aims at UNESCO.

16.2 Mr President, the Constitution of UNESCO was drafted many years ago, very carefully, taking into account the important principles of democracy, openness, equity, inclusiveness and constructive dialogue. We therefore see the process of amending the Constitution as a very serious, very important and responsible exercise. More importantly, it should be a process which should bring us together rather than divide us. For this reason, we strongly believe in the principle of consensus as a vital pillar of multilateralism. While, ideally, it might be difficult to have consensus all the time, yet the efforts to achieve a broader consensus as far as possible should continue to remain a desirable objective.

16.3 Yes, we have in the past had many occasions that the Constitution was amended, but I think that especially at this General Conference it is historic that we are having a set of three amendments to the Constitution. We do not have, at this stage, any specific comments on the pros and cons of each amendment. The arguments put forward by the proponents and those against those amendments, are very valid and the concerns are legitimate and worthy of consultation. Yet after listening to the debate since yesterday, it is very clear that the House is divided. This situation to us is absolutely against the ethos of this Organization, which is already going through very difficult times. As a worst-case scenario, we may not achieve consensus and we may have a vote, but it will be divisive, as mentioned by Ambassador Mounir Anastas. We would like to thank Ambassador Anastas as well for his really tireless efforts to reach a third way. But at this stage, we can understand that he feels a bit frustrated due to some very hard positions. We believe that these efforts to find and accept a consensus and an acceptable way forward should continue. Let us give dialogue a chance. Let us keep the spirit of UNESCO alive. Thank you.

17. **The President:**

Thank you, your Excellency. Now I invite Jordan, to be followed by Saint Lucia.

18.1 **Jordan:**

Thank you, Mr President. Let me start by thanking you sincerely, Mr President, for being very patient and for your wisdom in conducting this very important meeting. Much has been said in this room about this important matter for the past two days, and I wonder if our statement will add value to what has been said. Nevertheless, I will try to be constructive, as we usually try to be and very brief. Most of us, Mr President, agree that we are far from reaching consensus on this matter. We also agree that we do not need more divisiveness and division or further polarization in our Organization. Some colleagues mentioned the notion of not losing major partners in the Organization. Nevertheless, we believe that commitment to the Organization should not be bound to membership of the Executive Board. We also need to remember that our Organization was established with 40 members only. Today we are 193. Therefore, every Member State of UNESCO has
the right and should have the opportunity to be represented in the Executive Board, since experiences and capabilities of Member States are very diverse and different.

18.2 Jordan believes that term limits for membership on UNESCO’s Executive Board, as well as rotation and equitable geographic representation, is a matter of principle that reflects diversity and democratic governance, and should be agreed upon by Member States on a consensual basis. As the proponents of the amendment suggested in their explanatory note, the issue of term limits has raised significant and lengthy discussions and altered the rules within the amendment of the current Executive Board structure.

18.3 This controversial point invites my delegation to highlight that membership rules differ from one organization to the other, even within the aims and principles of each United Nations body. The Human Rights Council, for example, has adopted term limits for the purpose of promoting more commitments to human rights and has served as a significant tool for the promotion and enhancement of human rights in each Member State. As a matter of fact, it is essential to maintain the value of a successful working system as a key value whereby members of its Executive Boards shall meet certain technical and scientific requirements, as implemented in other organizations.

18.4 Against this backdrop, and in light of the discussions on the amendment, we believe that this important matter must warrant further consideration and if it could not be agreed upon consensus shall nevertheless remain on our agenda as an essential component. To be practical, we need to remain seriously focused on this matter and continue the constructive discussions in the working group on governance, or alternatively create a special working group to thoroughly analyse and agree on the changes of the Constitution on this point, for a better future for this Organization. Thank you, Mr President.

19. The President: Thank you. I will now invite Saint Lucia to be followed by Norway.

20.1 Saint Lucia: Please allow me to start by thanking you for your patience and for sharing and allowing such a rich and interesting debate. I would like to start by thanking the members of the Philippines delegation for all the time, efforts and energy they have put behind this constitutional amendment on term limits from the start, since the governance group. For us, their moral presence at this General Conference has even more weight than their physical presence.

20.2 Mr President, we voted in favour of term limits during the 39th session of the General Conference, and we have not since heard any convincing argument or seen any serious counter-proposal to make us change our mind. We are therefore co-signatories of 40 C/PLEN/DR.1 and are ready to take a decision at this General Conference.

20.3 Mr President, we have listened very carefully to the debate, like other colleagues. As I said in the Bureau last week, we are always respectful of the opinions of others, but we expect the same thing in return. Some of the speeches we heard yesterday were very patronizing. Basically, we were told that we were not acting in a responsible manner, that we are endangering the future of the Organization and of multilateralism, and that if a few big powers stay out of the Board for two years, which means only four meetings, the Executive Board will not be a real Board. In other words, we are told that although at UNESCO we are all equal, some are more equal than others, and some Member States are more qualified than others to serve on the Executive Board.

20.4 I am going to answer to all these arguments with one single sentence. The era where we could be told such things has ended a long time ago. Mr President, 15 years ago, during the General Conference in the same room, the same countries used the same arguments on the same issue of term limits to ask for a postponement in order to continue dialogue and reach a consensus. We, of course, agreed. The regional groups were requested by the General Conference to develop criteria and principles for a fairer representation on the Executive Board. So, we agreed to postpone. But the report that was made to the following General Conference on these negotiations showed that regional groups were unable to reach agreements on neither principles nor criteria. In fact, the goodwill did not cross the door of this room. My question to those who would like us to postpone again until the next General Conference is to ask “what would be different this time”? What is expected to happen in the next two years, apart from giving more time to pressure more countries among those who voted in favour of term limits at the last General Conference?

20.5 To conclude, Mr President, I would like to agree with those who said that the future of multilateralism is threatened but in our view it is not threatened by the constitutional amendment – it is threatened because a significant number of Member States were pressured and cannot express and defend their opinion freely and openly. Multilateralism is pressured because UNESCO, the Organization that advocates for freedom and democracy, cannot walk its talk. Thank you.

21. The President: Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite Norway to be followed by Myanmar.

22. Norway: Thank you, Mr President. The voting figures from the last General Conference have been referred to with more than 100 in favour of introducing term limits and only 12 against. This is a clear symptom that something is seriously wrong. It is a clear symptom that something has to be done. I think every country with a long-term wish to see UNESCO thrive will realize that this is a symptom that needs to be taken seriously. We have heard testimony here from countries feeling excluded, from countries being excluded. Norway does not stop at expressing its sympathy and understanding. Norway wants to side with these countries in practical terms by supporting the proposed amendment to the Constitution, which reintroduces term limits in the Executive Board. This has not been discussed only the past two years. This has been discussed off and on for many years. The time has now come to take a decision. What we need to fear is the consequence of not doing anything. In spite of being one of the 10 largest contributors to UNESCO, we settle for a Nordic rotation, which limits our membership of the Board to a maximum of four years during every 20-year period. This does not mean lingering 16 years in the desert. There is a life in UNESCO outside the Executive Board. You can work on global conventions in the
field of education with direct and real consequences for individuals. You can work on ocean issues in the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. You can become a candidate for the World Heritage Committee, where Norway is currently serving a four-year term, again in Nordic rotation. We urge colleagues to strengthen UNESCO and follow up on the decision taken with an overwhelming majority at the previous General Conference by adopting the proposed amendment that reintroduces term limits to the Executive Board. Thank you, Mr President.

23. **The President:** Thank you, Your Excellency. Myanmar will be followed by Sudan and Sudan will be the last speaker. Then, I asked for two more speakers. When the opponents and the proponents of the amendment have their speakers name, please inform the Secretariat. These speeches will be for 5 minutes each. Is there one more request? I invite Myanmar to be followed by Sudan, to be followed by Mauritania. And that will be the last speaker. Myanmar, then please.

24. **Myanmar:** Thank you, Mr President, I will be very brief. We share the view that the principles of inclusiveness, diversity and equitable geographic rotation and representation mentioned in one of the preamble paragraphs of the draft amendments to Article V of the Constitution are significant to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the governance of UNESCO. In the meantime, Myanmar strongly believes that dialogue of an inclusive nature and solidarity among Member States and consensus on these kinds of issues are equally important. Since this is my first intervention, I would like to take this opportunity to express my profound thanks to all Member States in supporting Myanmar to be elected as a Member of the Executive Board in yesterday's elections. Allow me also to offer my heartiest congratulations to all other newly-elected Members. I thank you.

25. **The President:** Thank you, your Excellency. We continue with Sudan, to be followed by Mauritania.

26. **Sudan:** Thank you, Mr President. The intention of my delegation in taking the floor at this stage is not to also pronounce itself on the cons or pros of the issue on the table. But I just want to remind us all that the volume of expressions and statements which have been voiced during the general policy debate of the General Conference about the importance of multilateralism. I think it is still ringing in our ears. A lot has been said that without enhancing and strengthening multilateralism, we would not be able to face the challenges of the globalizing world we are living in today. So, I think it would be wise of us all to give controversial undisputable issues, regardless of their justice and logic, enough time so that we can all agree on decisions which can be qualified as workable and implementable and which will strengthen UNESCO. I think it is the desire of every delegation here in this room to strengthen UNESCO rather than weaken UNESCO. My delegation cherishes highly the value of justice and the principle of equitable distribution of chances.

27. **The President:** But that does not mean that we should go and endeavour to adopt measures which will affect and cast some shadow on the corporate collective cooperation and collective efforts of all members to reform and enable UNESCO to go further with its reform and serve member countries by implementing its programmes within its mandate. Thank you, Mr President.

28. **The President:** Thank you, your Excellency. Lastly, before we move to the four representatives, Mauritania please.

29. **The President:** Merci Excellence. I already have the names of at least three speakers. I will be needing one more. But since New Zealand introduced, then I think it is the right time for Japan to introduce their thinking. Then we will continue with New Zealand. Japan, you have the floor.
30.1 **Japan:**

Thank you very much Mr President. This is my second intervention. As I mentioned in my first intervention, I listened to all the interventions carefully and closely and I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the participants and all the speakers at this Conference. Your views are very noble and valuable and the orientation is also sincere and your preparedness to contribute to the Organization is genuinely and highly appreciated. But at the same time, I need to say that despite all the discussions for the past two days, we do not see the signs of a convergence of views. We still see divergent views. They are all valid, but no convergence, let alone consensus. Of course, there are reasons behind that. Yes, we have to sincerely address the genuine desire for the countries who wish to contribute more to UNESCO through the membership of the Executive Board. That desire is genuine and should be properly addressed. But at the same time, the concern raised by some countries over the possible consequences of the amendment to the governance of UNESCO is also genuine, particularly in face of the global challenges we are facing. UNESCO needs to have very strong and effective governance.

30.2 Mr President, as I mentioned, we adopted the recommendation two years ago, but it is still in the mid-term of the indication of a four-year period. After your capable, able, thoughtful leadership, I would rather ask you to lead us for the next two years. That is the ending in two years indicated in the recommendation, to bring about tangible, instrumental, useful outcomes of our discussion. I need to say that I am cautious in trying to go into voting at this juncture, because although our joint endeavour is very noble and everybody is trying to contribute to this process with a view to contributing to UNESCO, sometimes when things are not right and when the work would entail other negative outcomes I would particularly like to stress the importance of the unity of UNESCO, and never having the voting that might divide us unfortunately.

30.3 With a view to renewing our commitment and our spirit and with a view to a good start with more productive and more useful, beneficial and more imaginative and vibrant discussion for the next two years, Mr President, I humbly propose a motion of adjournment of the debate on this item until the next 41st session of the General Conference, wishing that we can reach and can deliver tangible, effective, useful outcomes that would be supported by everybody here with a convergence of our views or hopefully consensus. I would like to make it very clear that Japan will be strongly committed to outcomes of our discussion. I need to say that I am cautious in trying to go into voting at this juncture, because although our joint endeavour is very noble and everybody is trying to contribute to this process with a view to contributing to UNESCO, sometimes when things are not right and when the work would entail other negative outcomes I would particularly like to stress the importance of the unity of UNESCO, and never having the voting that might divide us unfortunately.

31. **The President:**

Thank you. I invite New Zealand to be followed by Serbia.

32.1 **New Zealand:**

*Kia ora,* Mr President, Kia ora delegates. Thank you very much for giving me the floor again, for giving the co-sponsors this opportunity to offer some additional comments. Let me take this opportunity from New Zealand to congratulate all of those newly-elected Members of the Executive Board and all those Members that have been elected for the first time. Congratulations.

32.2 I want to begin, Mr President, by thanking you for the spirit in which you have led us through this very important debate. You have set a very fair and constructive tone and you have created the space for members to speak. And you have led us through discussions in a calm and highly professional manner. We really appreciate your leadership. We have heard from numerous speakers on both sides of this debate that we need an Executive Board with representation from all regions of the world. We heard that UNESCO and its three organs should reflect the membership of the global community that it serves. And we heard that if UNESCO is to remain relevant and agile and is able to provide solutions to today’s global challenges, and to seize new opportunities, we need to bring fresh ideas to the table, and more diverse perspectives.

32.3 This amendment, which is clearly not a legal obligation based on precedents within this Organization, including with respect to term limits, will facilitate the participation of all States in the governance of this important Organization. This amendment is not unprecedented. Term limits have been imposed on the Executive Board at UNESCO’s founding in 1945, then in 1952, 1962, 1967 and 1972, and by Mr President, with a dose of common sense, courage and effective decision-making, we would hope as early as this evening. It is also consistent with the practice of term limits within and across the United Nations system and within UNESCO, for example, in the World Heritage Committee and on the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

32.4 The abolition of term limits in 1991, leading to de facto permanent membership for some and more regular representation of certain States, has been detrimental to UNESCO’s legitimacy and effectiveness. The reality is, as you have heard yesterday from a number of delegations, that the prospects of successful election for new States, for small States and for those States that have not served in a very long time are severely limited by the advantage held by those already on the Board. Distance from Paris is another barrier to mounting effective campaigns.

32.5 Mr President, we have listened very carefully to those that do not appear ready to support the proposed amendment. We heard that there was a divergence rather than a convergence of views. We heard a call for more time, more dialogue in order to build and in the view of some States, a unanimous consensus, a unanimous consensus that we do not believe in. We heard that this amendment would entail serious consequences to the governance of UNESCO, its long-term sustainability and even financial challenges. I am not going to address each of these points because they have been debated at length. But it is worth repeating the point about financial contributions. There is no and nor should there ever be, if we are to preserve a fundamental tenet of multilateralism, differentiation according to the quantum of our contributions. Nor should there ever be conditionality attached, including with respect to representation on the Executive Board. We do not accept this. By virtue of our assessed contributions, we are equal participants. The common thread to these arguments of those not supporting these amendments is to preserve the status quo.

32.6 It is not to carry forward what was decided two years ago. It also seeks to catastrophize what is, in form and substance, a fair and reasonable proposal – a two-year stand down period, Mr President, two years. We, on the other hand, have suggested that time has not served us well in this debate. This issue has been debated at length for more than 15 years.
More recently, the Working Group on Governance was convened to consider the matter. In 2015, after two years of deliberations, it recommended the imposition of term limits. These recommendations were endorsed by the General Conference. It therefore feels somewhat absurd today that we would continue to discuss something that has already been decided.

32.7 How can we be confident that more time will magically unlock unanimous consensus? We are not so confident, and we fear that a failure to act today, a failure to take meaningful and concrete action will indeed entail serious consequences to the governance of UNESCO and its long-term sustainability. Many States who spoke yesterday conveyed a sense of frustration, including many from large ocean states in the Pacific. How much time do we need in this Organization to take decisions? How much time do we need to take meaningful action? As the distinguished delegate from Kiribati noted, “When the fruit is ripe, we must harvest it. Otherwise it will rot in the ground.” Let us harvest the fruit now and adopt this draft amendment. Thank you, Mr President.

33. The President: Thank you, Excellency. I invite Serbia to be followed by Benin.

34. Serbia: Thank you, Mr President. We want just not to lose time to underline without repeating our position from yesterday. Just to point out three things. Having in mind the importance of the issue, having in mind the evident division that exists among the Member States, having in mind the legitimate concerns that exist on both sides — and I repeat on both sides — we support the Japanese proposal to adjourn until the 41st session of the General Conference in order to enable all of us to embark on meaningful and sincere discussion in order to find a solution that would be acceptable for all. Thank you.

35. The President: Thank you, your Excellency. Benin please.

36.1 Bénin: Merci Monsieur le Président. Je voudrais vous remercier pour la manière exemplaire avec laquelle vous avez conduit nos débats sur une question aussi délicate. Ma délégation estime que les amendements à l’Acte constitutif sont une question de haute importance qui intéressent au plus haut point tous les États membres de l’UNESCO et qu’il est très important que cette dernière se prononce en toute liberté et en toute indépendance. N’ayons donc pas peur. Agissons pour transformer la gouvernance de notre Organisation. Les injustices et les frustrations de certains États membres ont un écho tel que l’action n’est plus admise.

36.2 La Conférence générale a déjà pris une décision claire en 2017 et toute manœuvre visant à empêcher la mise en œuvre efficace et efficiente de cette décision va à l’encontre de cette Organisation et l’affaiblir davantage. De l’avis de notre délégation, ce projet d’amendement est fondé en opportunité mais surtout en droit. En effet, déterminer si un projet d’amendement implique ou non de nouvelles obligations à l’Acte constitutif est une question d’interprétation juridique qui doit être faite selon les règles du droit international. Et, selon ces règles, un traité doit être interprété de bonne foi, suivant le contexte et surtout en tenant compte de toute pratique ultérieure suivie dans l’application du traité sans exclure le recours aux travaux préparatoires et aux circonstances dans lesquelles le traité a été conclu.

36.3 Au regard donc de ces règles, le Bénin soutient, premièrement, que le contexte à considérer ici est celui de l’UNESCO et plus particulièrement les dispositions de son Acte constitutif. Toute allusion à la Constitution d’autres organisations internationales, comme il est fait mention à tort et peut-être à dessein par certaines délégations, est sans pertinence en l’espèce, car chaque organisation se dote des organes et des règles qui lui permettent d’atteindre ses objectifs.

36.4 Deuxièmement, en dehors du contexte, et quand on vient à la pratique de l’UNESCO, il ressort d’une manière générale que la Conférence générale a déjà procédé à plusieurs reprises à l’amendement de l’Acte constitutif et aucun de ces amendements antérieurs, à une seule exception, n’a été considéré comme impliquant de nouvelles obligations. La seule exception, survenue en 1995, concerne un projet d’amendement à l’Article 9 de l’Acte constitutif visant à introduire des dispositions relatives aux obligations financières. En aucun cas le présent amendement, qui concerne la limitation des mandats et non des obligations financières, n’est ni de cette nature, ni dans un tel but, et ne peut, en conséquence, pas être considéré comme impliquant de nouvelles obligations.

36.5 Troisièmement, il ressort de la pratique de l’UNESCO, d’une manière spécifique, que la Conférence générale a déjà approuvé un amendement à l’Article VI, alinéa 2 de l’Acte constitutif qui limite la durée et le nombre de mandats du Directeur général, qui était de six ans, renouvelable indéfiniment, à deux mandats de quatre ans sans possibilité de réélection. C’est un précédent très important dans l’espèce. La Conférence générale n’a pas considéré que cet amendement implique de nouvelles obligations de sorte qu’il est entré en vigueur dès son adoption et n’a pas été soumis à une procédure de ratification.

36.6 Quatrièmement, depuis l’adoption des recommandations du Groupe de travail sur la gouvernance, les États membres ont accepté de réviser les statuts de certains organes de l’UNESCO pour introduire presque partout où il n’existe pas, une limitation du nombre de mandats consécutifs, généralisant encore plus le principe. Tous ces éléments de fait témoignent d’une pratique constante et concordante au sein de l’UNESCO qui permet de soutenir de bonne foi et sans aucun doute possible que la limitation du nombre de mandats au Conseil exécutif n’implique pas une obligation, puisque le principe n’est pas nouveau au sein de l’Organisation.

36.7 Cinquièmement, ma délégation souhaite évoquer les travaux préparatoires, notamment les circonstances de la création de l’UNESCO. En effet, dès l’origine, les pères fondateurs de l’UNESCO ont une vive conscience des conséquences dramatiques du reniement de l’idéal démocratique et du dogme de l’inégalité. De ce fait, ils ont estimé dans leur sagesse qu’il faut limiter les possibilités de réélection multiple pour les membres du Conseil exécutif, un organe restreint,
36.8 Je terminerai, Monsieur le Président, en évoquant la question du consensus. Effectivement, le consensus suppose non seulement le dialogue mais aussi la flexibilité pour parvenir à une décision mutuellement acceptée, mais il ne donne aucun droit de veto. S’il est souhaitable, donc, que nous parvenions à des décisions par consensus, il faudrait que nous puissions nous efforcer dans ce sens, et, à défaut de parvenir au consensus il faut que nous puissions faire application du Règlement intérieur, c’est à dire aller au vote. Merci Monsieur le Président.

37. The President: Merci Benin. Now we have entered three different ways of our deliberations. The representatives of Japan and Serbia have asked to adjourn the debate on the item until the 41st session of the General Conference. According to Rule 75 of our Rules of Procedure, during the discussion of any question, a Member State or Associate Member present may move adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. Any such motion shall have precedence in addition to the proposer of the motion, while speakers may speak in favour of and against the motion. The President may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this Rule. I will therefore give the floor first to another Member who supports this motion of adjournment and then to a Member who is against the motion, and I will restrain the time to three minutes. Thank you. So, you need a speaker who supports the motion and is in favour of adjournment. Morocco will speak in favour of the motion and Saint Lucia will be speaking against the motion. Morocco, please.


39. The President: Thank you. Saint Lucia please.

40. Saint Lucia: Thank you, Mr President. I will be a little longer than my dear colleague from Morocco. Yes, my delegation wishes on behalf of the co-sponsors to speak against the motion of the postponement. At this level and after this much work put into this constitutional amendment, we believe that postponing it is a denial of our democratic right to take decisions in this Organization. We believe that it is not possible to eternally hide behind consensus in order to preserve a status quo that is unsatisfactory for so many of us. Yes, we are divided. But you know, Mr President, the citizens of any democratic country on the eve of an election are also divided. They all go to vote, express their opinions, and then life goes on. Can you tell them they cannot vote? To come back when they agree? This is really a denial of democracy. If consensus was at all possible on this issue, I think it would have happened in the past 15 years. Thank you.

41. The President: Thank you, your Excellency. Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates, as I understand and see, the room is divided on this sensitive subject. I therefore propose that we proceed immediately to vote on this proposed motion for the adjournment of the debate. Let me also remind you that according to Rule 83, the decision which will be voted on requires a simple majority of the members present and voting. May I also remind you that in accordance with Rule 85, the expression “members present and voting” means members casting an affirmative or negative vote. Members who abstain from voting are considered “non voters”. Yes, Bangladesh.

42. Bangladesh: Thank you Mr President. I did not want to interrupt by raising the flag, just to request that following your ruling that we go for a roll call vote on this adjournment motion. Thank you.

43. The President: Thank you. I invite Japan please.

44. Japan: Japan seconds Bangladesh. Thank you.

45. The President: Then we will have a roll-call vote. It shall be taken, there are two Members who requested it. China, please.

46. 中国：谢谢主席。根据《大会议事规则》第 89 条，中国希望在投票前就我投票立场进行解释性发言。中方支持日本提出的延期辩论动议，将该议题推迟到下届大会进行讨论。正如我们之前发言所述，目前会员国对议题（议程项目）7.3 所列修正案的意见有严重分歧，因此已经在会员国间造成了一定程度的分裂。我们不能任由这种情况发展下去，影响本组织重大计划项目的实施，损害广大会员国，特别是发展中国家的根本利益，给本组织造成长远的破坏影响。中方认为，不应该急于就此修正案作出决定，而应进行进一步对话协商，为寻求共识方案争取时间和空间，为凝聚集体智慧的集体行动奠定坚实基础。这次投票是为了团结争取机会，不是为了分出输赢。因此中方对日本提出的延期辩论动议投赞成票。谢谢。

47. The President: Thank you Your Excellency. I invite Cote d’Ivoire to be followed by Denmark.

48. Côte d’Ivoire : Merci Monsieur le Président. Vous avez annoncé tout à l’heure que nous allions procéder au vote, et, Monsieur le Président, avec votre permission, nous souhaiterions que vous fassiez une explication très claire, parce que nous devons rendre compte de ce qui se passe ici à nos capitales et votant oui ou non à l’ajournement, nous aimerions savoir quelles seraient les conséquences par rapport au projet de résolution présenté. Je vous remercie Monsieur le Président.
49. **The President:**
   *Bien entendu Excellence. Denmark please.*

50.1 **Denmark:**
   Thank you, Mr President. I just want to make sure before I start that what we are doing now is actually what we are, as Member States, giving our explanations of vote before the vote, as China started to do and we are doing the same. It does not mean that all the countries that have taken part in the plenary debate necessarily need to come back and repeat their statements. But it does mean that it would be fair to for those countries to have a need to explain their vote to do so before you actually start conducting the vote.

50.2 My explanation of the vote is basically that I want to explain why Denmark – and I am sure also other co-sponsors of this resolution – will vote no to the proposed adjournment of debate. It is basically a simple choice here. I think that the discussion over yesterday and today has been incredibly clear and useful, and I thank all who have participated in this discussion, no matter what their positions were. I think that I would particularly refer to the statement made by Saint Lucia in terms of repeating the history of this. It is 15 years ago that we started this process. Whenever this process has come up, the answer has been postponement. It is still postponement. That basically is what I think has made a number of countries insist that we move forward in this and we go beyond postponement. That is the reason that we would vote no to the Japanese proposal. I think that what has impressed me most in the debate has been the very strong statements from a number of small island States from the Pacific region and elsewhere, who have really come forward explaining their frustration of being in practice prevented from taking a seat at the Executive Board. The rotation that they want and seek, the term limits that they want, is not implemented in regional groupings. We started that 15 years ago and it is not implemented in the Executive Board. Pressure has been put on countries to withdraw and not consider running for the Board. That is the real problem. I think the debate has shown that and that is the reason that we will vote no on the motion of adjournment. Thank you.

51. **The President:**
   Thank you, Brazil you have the floor please.

52.1 **Brazil:**
   Thank you, Mr President. Brazil would like to support the proposal made by the distinguished ambassador of Japan. Given the very deep divisions and polarizations we observed in the debates during today's and yesterday’s session, I do believe that we should all think about the future of this Organization rather than the interests of individual countries. I do understand and share the need for a wider representation at the Board, and I am very sorry that our colleague from Saint Lucia when she so vehemently defends this project does not mention that it is thanks to understandings that we could reach inside our regional group that we have four places in GRULAC for the Caribbean islands.

52.2 This is an understanding that should serve as a solution or an example of solutions that can be reached inside regional groups. So, I think we have a lot of room ahead of us to still study possibilities of incorporating people. I think we all should be grateful to some delegations that helped small Pacific islands to be present here today to vote on their behalf. I think this is really the true spirit of this Organization. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

53. **The President:**
   Thank you, your Excellency. Lithuania, please.

54. **Lithuania:**
   Thank you very much, Mr President. Lithuania will vote against adjournment. Explaining our vote, I mentioned yesterday in my speech that we actually perceive this proposal as an answer to divisions that exist, and divisions as we heard from interventions that have already been disputed for 15 years. It looks like the longer the discussion, with postponements, that the division deepens. Adjournment just means to postpone this discussion to the next session of the General Conference. I think two years at my second General Conference, we had the best in-depth, well-argued and calm discussions on many topics. There was no tension in the room except sometimes for statements that if we not decide now, some States will have consequences, especially small States. That I do not believe is really a spirit of discussion and those arguments actually are not really acceptable. So, without going further on the arguments that some States will pay for their decision, maybe we cannot postpone but need to go forward now. Thank you very much.

55. **Le Président:**
   J’apporterai des explications plus claires, Madame Houphouët-Boigny, dans un moment. Maintenant, Argentine, suivi par l’Australie.

56. **Argentina:**
   Gracias Señor presidente: la delegación va a apoyar la propuesta de Japón. Como dijimos, queremos más diálogo y menos votaciones. Creemos que cualquier tipo de votación nos lleva a romper el espíritu de esta casa. Entendemos que hay muchas delegaciones que plantearon que quieren mayor participación, no necesariamente mayor participación quiere decir dejar afuera a otros. Se puede estudiar otros mecanismos, esto no fue planteado durante los debates en forma muy profunda. Queremos tener tiempo para que todas, sin ninguna exclusión de las propuestas que se hicieron, sean admitidas en esta mesa; y nos preocupa muchísimo que estemos en este estado, donde estamos solamente tratando de arreglar nuestras diferencias con más diferencias. Vamos a votar a favor de la propuesta de Japón para poder seguir dialogando y encontrar soluciones que satisfagan absolutamente a todos los Estados sin ninguna exclusión. Muchas gracias.

57. **The President:**
   Thank you. Australia to be followed by Ethiopia.
58. **Australia:**
Thank you Mr President for giving me the floor. Australia will be voting against the adjournment of the debate to the next session of the General Conference. As many speakers have said before yesterday and today, this is an issue which has been before us for many years now and in which there has been extensive debate and discussion, and regrettably there has been no coming together of views. Ultimately, there are some who believe in the principle of term limits, and there are some countries which do not. At some point, this Organization must take a decision. That moment is now, at this General Conference. We have before us a draft resolution which will achieve that. For us as a country that is not considered as a big country and that is at a level of development which needs UNESCO, we feel that this amendment will lead to a lose-lose situation because we need UNESCO and if indeed this amendment goes through, it will wreck the organization and its capacity to help us small countries.

59. **The President:**
Thank you, your Excellency. I invite Ethiopia to be followed by the Russian Federation.

60. **Ethiopia:**
Thank you, Mr President. Our delegation supports the proposal by Japan and seconded by others to postpone consideration of this issue until the next General Conference. Mr President, our position is informed by the interests of the Organization. As we stated earlier, we see three interests here at play. All of them are equally important, but we have to think of the consequences that this amendment entails. Whether it is actually voted or rejected, the wise move would be to postpone it until the next General Conference. For us as a country that is not considered as a big country and that is at a level of development which needs UNESCO, we feel that this amendment will lead to a lose-lose situation because we need UNESCO and if indeed this amendment goes through, it will wreck the organization and its capacity to help us small countries. So, for the interests of the same principles that were advocated by those who want this amendment to go through, mainly equitable geographic representation, we urge that two years is not too much time to wait in order to ensure the interests of the Organization are ensured. Thank you.

61. **The President:**
Thank you, your Excellency. Russian Federation to be followed by Fiji.

62. **Российская Федерация:**
Благодарю Вас, г-н Председатель. Наша делегация поддерживает предложение Японии об отсрочке рассмотрения данного вопроса. В условиях поляризации мнений, которая фактически расколола ЮНЕСКО надвое, очень трудно принять какое-либо ответственное, продуманное решение, поэтому мы выступаем за отсрочку.

63. **The President:**
Thank you, Excellency. Now Fiji to be followed by Pakistan.

64. **Fiji:**
Mr President, thank you very much. I think it is a difficult statement to make that some Member States are acting in the best interests of the Organization and implying that others are not. There are many doomsday scenarios that are being presented, and I think that this Organization is mature enough and has survived for the past 74 years and is likely to survive beyond today. The proposal from Japan is just saying that we postpone. There is nothing tangible in terms of outcomes contained in the proposal and therefore it just gives us the impression that this is – to use an expression – kicking the can down the street. On that basis, while we enjoy debate and while we enjoy discussion, we are not in a position to support this motion.

65. **The President:**
Thank you, your Excellency. I invite Pakistan to be followed by Togo.

66.1 **Pakistan:**
Thank you, Mr President. The founders of UNESCO had recognized consensus as a vital pillar of multilateralism. If consensus was not to be achieved, they still set a limit of a two-thirds majority for amendments. This speaks volumes about the importance of constitutional changes. A significant number of Member States are of the opinion that further dialogue is needed on Executive Board term limits before the Constitution should be amended. Many of us believe that Member States’ right to contest elections to the Board should not be restricted. Election is a process and not an end result in itself. It is up to UNESCO’s membership to decide whether or not to vote for particular Member States. We can and we should have discussed alternate modes of rotation, democracy and equitable representation on the Board. Not all regional groups have a policy of rotation within themselves and this can be looked into. We also know that certain regional groups in UNESCO are underrepresented on the Executive Board and we should explore ways to rectify this geographical imbalance.

66.2 **Mr President,** with so much divergence within UNESCO on this issue, it would not be prudent to rush through with these amendments. Like many others, Pakistan also prefers further deliberations on the issue and joins all other delegations who spoke in favour of adjournment. We support Japan’s proposal for adjournment of debate. I thank you all.

67. **The President:**
Thank you, Madam. Now I invite Togo to be followed by Uzbekistan please.

68. **Togo:**
Merci Monsieur le Président. Monsieur le Président, pendant ce débat très riche et très instructif qui nous a retenu depuis hier, nous avons entendu des points de vue antagonistes pour ou contre la question de la rotation dans le cadre de l’élection des membres au Conseil exécutif. Nous voulons demander à cette assemblée de ne pas perdre de vue les
propositions intermédiaires qui ont été exprimées, notamment celle du Cameroun qui nous disait que la solution d’une plus grande participation d’États membres au Conseil exécutif pourrait se situer dans un approfondissement des discussions au niveau des groupes régionaux et sous régionaux. Pour cela, Monsieur le Président, nous avons encore besoin de temps et la délégation du Togo serait favorable à l’ajournement des discussions sur ce point. Je vous remercie.

69. **The President:**

_Merci votre Excellence._ Now I invite Uzbekistan to be followed by France.

70. **Uzbekistan:**

Thank you, Mr President. Actually, I did not ask for the floor, but since you gave me the floor we support Japan’s proposal to postpone this issue until the 41st session of the General Conference. Thank you, Mr President.

71. **The President:**

Thank you. Are there any other delegations that have not asked for the floor, so I can give them the floor? France please, followed by India.

72.1 **France :**

Merci Monsieur le Président. Je souhaiterais vous informer et informer tous mes collègues ici que la France soutiendra la proposition d’ajournement faite par la délégation du Japon et soutenue par maintenant plusieurs délégations. Grâce à vous Monsieur le Président, nous avons pu nous écouter les uns les autres, discuter, élaborer nos positions de manière très calme, très précise, et nous avons pu entendre que nous n’avons pas de consensus aujourd’hui, et qu’une grande partie de l’assemblée ne souhaite pas polariser, diviser, se confronter. Une grande partie de l’assemblée souhaite prendre le temps de la réflexion.

72.2 Il ne s’agit pas pour nous aujourd’hui en demandant l’ajournement, de nier la réalité des positions en présence, et nous voudrions que ceci soit très clair. Il s’agit en réalité de les écouter et de les écouter plus, de prendre le temps de les écouter, de nous comprendre, et d’identifier ensemble les voies pour l’UNESCO de continuer sur la voie tracée récemment. L’UNESCO s’est remise sur la voie du consensus, c’est ce qu’ont montré les discussions depuis le début de cette Conférence générale. Nous nous en félicitons et nous espérons que nous pourrons rester dans cette épure. Merci beaucoup.

73. **The President:**

_Merci votre Excellence._ Now I invite India, to be followed by Armenia.

74. **India:**

Thank you, Mr President. Just very briefly to say that our delegation would support the Japanese proposal for the adjournment motion that this item be taken up again at the next General Conference for all the multiple reasons which many of the speakers before me have said in support of the Japanese proposal, which is that we have heard since yesterday and today a multiplicity of views in the room. I think more than anything else, what it points to is the fact that we do not have consensus. There is division. There is a divergence of views. We respect each of the positions. We firstly ourselves feel that the draft resolution as it currently stands principally undercuts the democratic right of the member countries to stand for election to the Executive Board. But we feel that on such an important matter, the decision should be rooted in convergences and consensus and not on division and divergences. We would therefore support the Japanese proposal for the adjournment motion of this agenda item to the next General Conference. Thank you.

75. **The President:**

Thank you, Excellency. Armenia to be followed by Mauritania.

76. **Arménie :**

Merci Monsieur le Président. L’Arménie se prononce en faveur de l’ajournement du débat proposé par le Japon. Nous réaffirmons que la création de divisions au sein de la communauté de nos États est contraire aux intérêts de notre Organisation. L’Arménie réitère son attachement au dialogue et à des prises de décision consensuelles. Elle se déclare favorable à la poursuite des discussions afin qu’une solution partagée par tous soit trouvée dans la perspective de la 41e session de la Conférence générale. Merci.

77. **The President:**

_Merci votre Excellence._ Now I invite Mauritania to be followed by New Zealand.

78.1 **Mauritanie :**

Merci Monsieur le Président. La Mauritanie est pour la proposition du Japon. Nous disons « oui » à l’ajournement. Mais avant de terminer je voudrais un peu expliquer pourquoi ce « oui ». Et je vais parler, si vous le permettez Monsieur le Président, un peu le langage des gens du désert. Vous savez, les gens qui sont habitués aux espaces, les peuples du désert, nous sommes des peuples qui n’ont jamais rien. Mais nous ne manquons de rien. Vous savez pourquoi nous ne manquons de rien ? Parce que nous nous attachons à la fierté et à la démocratie.

78.2 Je vais vous poser une seule question. Comment pouvons-nous demander à quelqu’un de laisser sa place, ce qui n’est pas démocratique, sans un consensus là-dessus ? Comment est-ce possible ? Effectivement, pour un État comme la Mauritanie, où il y a 22 ans que nous n’avons pas siégé au Conseil exécutif, il est de notre intérêt de passer, de voter « oui » pour l’amendement, c’est à dire avec la rotation.

78.3 Mais il n’est pas de notre intérêt de voir notre Organisation divisée sur une question qui à la base n’est pas démocratique. Et quand la question n’est pas démocratique, il faut bien encourager le consensus là-dessus, et que les États acceptent d’eux-mêmes de laisser leur place, bien que notre point de vue sur cette question, et c’est là où ça justifie que nous avons besoin de discuter encore sur cette question et nous demandons le report, c’est que cette démocratie, cette alternance, nous pouvons bien la trouver au sein des groupes. C’est au sein des groupes qu’il faudrait la discuter. Je ne veux pas être assez longue. Je vous remercie infiniment.
79. **The President:** Thank you, Mr President. Apologies for taking the floor again. New Zealand is clearly opposed to an adjournment of this debate. We think that it is a denial of the very constructive spirit that we have had over the last two days. The spirit of this debate has been very positive. It is 4.50 p.m. now – we have time. We have heard about the need to talk, we have heard about the need for dialogue. Let us keep talking and let us move to this draft resolution – let us examine this draft resolution. We do not think that kicking the can down the road is the right way to go. New Zealand will be voting no to an adjournment about the need for dialogue. Let us keep talking and let us move to this draft resolution – let us examine this draft resolution. Thank you Mr President.

80. **New Zealand:** Thank you. I now invite Thailand to be followed by Benin.

81. **The President:** Thank you. I now invite Thailand to be followed by Benin.

82. **Thailand:** Thank you, Mr President. During the last session of the General Conference, Thailand voted in favour of the recommendation of the Working Group on Governance as we believe that a term limit to serve on the Executive Board can contribute to enhanced inclusiveness and rotation which are beneficial for the Organization. However, after listening to the extensive debate yesterday and today, different opinions have been raised including whether the amendment is a new legal obligation or not. We are then of the view that it is wise to allow more time for discussion at the moment. Thank you.

83. **The President:** Thank you, Mr President. Apologies for taking the floor again. New Zealand is clearly opposed to an adjournment of this debate. We think that it is a denial of the very constructive spirit that we have had over the last two days. The spirit of this debate has been very positive. It is 4.50 p.m. now – we have time. We have heard about the need to talk, we have heard about the need for dialogue. Let us keep talking and let us move to this draft resolution – let us examine this draft resolution. We do not think that kicking the can down the road is the right way to go. New Zealand will be voting no to an adjournment of this debate. Thank you Mr President.

84. **The President:** Thank you. I now invite Thailand to be followed by Benin.


86. **The President:** Thank you, your Excellency. Now Benin to be followed by the Syrian Arab Republic.

87. **Syrian Arab Republic:** Welcome, my friend. We support the position of Japan. It is not a new frustration. It exists already for 15 years and the division will continue. So, we need to come to a decision on this motion. We will vote no to adjourn, we will vote against. Thank you very much.

88. **The President:** Thank you very much, Mr President. Sweden will vote no to Japan’s motion to adjourn this. It is a simple choice.

89. **Sweden:** Thank you very much, Mr President. Sweden will vote no to Japan’s motion to adjourn this. It is a simple choice. The rotation that we have been seeking for many years has not been implemented, and that is actually a fact. We have heard through this debate many Member States explain their frustration of never being able to serve in the Board. I would like to thank all the participants in the debate. It has been very helpful and many have pointed to the history of this proposal. We have tried for 15 years to get to this point. We would not like to repeat the debate that we just had. But I note that some Member States are saying that they act in the best interests of others and we do not agree to this. Division exists already on this issue. It is not a new frustration. It exists already for 15 years and the division will continue. So, we need to come to a decision on this motion. We will vote no to adjourn, we will vote against. Thank you very much.

90. **The President:** Thank you Excellency. Now Belarus to be followed by Egypt.

90.1 **Belarus:** Большое спасибо, г-н Председатель. Сегодняшние выборы во вспомогательные органы ЮНЕСКО показали, что зачастую мы даже не набираем достаточного количества кандидатов, чтобы закрыть все вакантные должности. Это еще раз показывает, что такой уж катастрофической проблемы с избранием в Исполнительный совет и во вспомогательные органы ЮНЕСКО, наверное, все-таки нет. Беларусь последовательно и настойчиво призывает государства-члены ЮНЕСКО избегать поляризации. По нашему мнению, слово «раскол» является синонимом слова «катастрофа» для ЮНЕСКО. Консенсус – это краеугольный камень всей работы ЮНЕСКО, а не фитовый листок, как было заявлено сегодня одной из делегаций.
90.2 All countries mark the positive result of yesterday and today’s dialog. Why then should some countries be reluctant to prolong this dialog and continue with full and open discussion? Democracy is this right of choice. On the condition of full and open discussion, we continue the discussion without any constraint. It is a democratic process. Thank you.

91. The President: Thank you. Now Egypt to be followed by Palestine.

92. Egypt: Thank you, Mr President, I will be very brief. Egypt will vote yes for the Japanese proposal for the reasons previously mentioned by several delegations. Thank you so much.

93. The President: Thank you. I invite Palestine to be followed by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

94. Mr President, I am sorry again to interrupt the interventions regarding the question of adjournment and the explanations of vote, but I am speaking here as Chairperson of the Nomination Committee. Many delegations were asking us when and where the results of the elections in the Nomination Committee will be announced, knowing that we have the plenary here today. We are not going to hold a meeting in Room IV this afternoon. It would not be possible to announce the results, but the Secretariat kindly agreed to announce for the moment the results on the screens. So, in one hour hopefully, if we finish the counting you will find the results on the screens. If possible, tomorrow morning – and we will check this with the Secretariat – we may hold a very short meeting to announce the results with the scores, because on the screens tonight you would not be able to see the scores. This was the sense of my intervention and to explain regarding the vote and our position. Everybody understood that we always cherish understanding and consensus and avoiding a vote if possible. But at this stage, it is not possible any more. Nevertheless, Palestine stays neutral in this regard. Thank you, Mr Chair.

95. The President: Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to be followed by Chile.

96. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: Thank you, Mr President. My delegation will vote against the adjournment. I think it is time to take a fair and responsible decision. After many years of discussion on this issue and the fact, Mr President, that there is additional agreement in an electoral group does not mean that we should ignore others – the group who tried within their regional groups many times to discuss this issue without any success, and even the regional groups which have a clean slate. It is always without them. We have started this debate in a spirit of cooperation and to defend the values of a democratic, democratic multilateralism. If we are talking now about 39 C/Resolution 87, I remind you that this resolution was adopted by consensus. If there is any vote, it is without any constraint, Mr President. It is a democratic process. Thank you.

97. The President: Thank you. I now read those delegations who wished to make a statement on the explanation of their vote: Chile, Tunisia, Micronesia, Algeria, Burundi, Luxembourg, Cabo Verde, Switzerland, Cook Islands, Bangladesh, Iran, Slovenia, Kiribati, Republic of Korea and Uruguay. I would appreciate if you can bring the main points in your speeches, so that at any rate we have to go to a vote. Please keep it in mind. I also have South Africa, and Peru. Yes, I will wait for 30 seconds and if I do not see any flags, I will consider this list of explanation of votes closed. Comoros, Hungary, Mongolia. Okay. Nigeria. I consider the list closed and I give the floor to Chile to be followed by Tunisia.

98. Chile: Gracias, señor Presidente. Quisiéramos manifestar nuestro apoyo a la propuesta del Japón de posponer el debate, pues entendemos que no se ha trabajado suficientemente el consenso y queremos que haya tiempo para llegar a una decisión que haya sido examinada y aceptada por todos los Estados Miembros de la Organización. Muchas gracias.

99. The President: Thank you Chile. Tunisia, please.

100.1 Tunisia: Merci Monsieur le Président. L’amendement de l’Acte constitutif est loin d’être un acte anodin. Il ne devrait pas être imposé à quelques États membres de l’Organisation. Nous sommes, je pense, tous dans cette salle, favorables à toute démarche ou action de nature à améliorer la gouvernance et l’efficacité de notre Organisation, qui a certainement besoin des contributions de tous ses États membres dans leur diversité.

100.2 Toutes les déclarations que nous suivons depuis hier témoignent de l’intérêt que tous les États membres portent à ce projet d’amendement qui divise largement, et qui, rien que de ce fait, mérite plus d’attention et d’examen pour un meilleur avenir de notre Organisation, que nous voulons pérenne. La Tunisie souhaite qu’un consensus soit obtenu sur la question. S’accorder plus de temps pour trouver un terrain d’entente plus large nous semble être une sage décision. La Tunisie, qui aurait évité le passage au vote, soutiendra la proposition du Japon. Je vous remercie.

101. The President: Merci madame. Micronesia to be followed by Algeria.
102. **Micronesia:**
   Thank you very much, Mr President. What an honour it is to be here today. The small island of Micronesia will vote no. Mr President, any discourse or dialogue that takes 15 years is not a dialogue or discourse — it is indecisiveness. If this was in relation to climate change, by the time we made a decision my islands would have sunk already. I can understand the fear of the consequences — the division is right there. I put it to you now, moving the time to two more years will that not further divide the divisions that are already present? Thank you.

103. **The President:**
   Thank you. Let me go to the list. Algeria to be followed by Burundi.

104. **Algérie :**

105. **The President:**
   Merci votre Excellence. I now invite Burundi to be followed by Luxembourg.

106. **Burundi:**
   Merci Monsieur le Président. Considérant l’attachement de notre Organisation au principe de consensus, et vu les échanges autour du sujet, il serait plus judicieux de prendre un temps suffisant pour rapprocher les positions des uns et des autres afin d’éviter une approche qui tend vers l’éloignement de points de vue. Raison pour laquelle ma délégation soutient le report de cet amendement à la prochaine session afin de rechercher un consensus en commençant par des consultations au sein de ce groupe, au sein des sous-groupes. Donc, nous soutenons l’ajournement proposé par le Japon. Je vous remercie.

107. **The President:**
   Merci votre Excellence. I now invite Luxembourg to be followed by Cabo Verde.

108. **Luxembourg :**
   Merci Monsieur le Président. Nous avons entendu certaines délégations se déclarer contre le principe de limitation des mandats pour toutes sortes de raisons, démocratiques et autres, et qui à présent s’expriment en faveur de la proposition du Japon d’ajourner le débat, pour permettre une discussion soi-disant sereine. C’est pour le moins paradoxal. Et ça explique pourquoi nous ne croyons pas qu’un ajournement fera réellement avancer le débat. Le Luxembourg votera donc « non » à la proposition du Japon, pour que nous puissions enfin tous nous prononcer sur notre projet d’amendement. Merci.

109. **The President:**
   Merci. Now Cabo Verde to be followed by Switzerland.

110. **Cabo Verde:**
   Merci Monsieur le Président. Cabo Verde votera « oui » pour l’ajournement proposé par le Japon, parce que l’histoire nous jugera coupables pour ne pas trouver une solution, si nous ne trouvons pas un consensus, une solution de dialogue pour sortir de la difficulté dont nous nous trouvons. Aujourd’hui le système multilatéral est au bord d’un abîme ici à l’UNESCO, où le Secrétaire général des Nations unies, Antonio Guterres, que je connais bien, il est sincère, nous a rapporté l’importance de notre Organisation. Nous sommes, aujourd’hui, en train de faire un pas de plus dans la direction de ce même abîme. Cela parce que nous n’arrivons pas à nous entendre sur une question d’une importance majeure pour le vivre-ensemble.

110.2 Nous avons déjà écouté tous les arguments qui paraissent justes d’un côté et de l’autre. Chaque partie est convaincue d’avoir la pleine raison. Parce que comme on fait aujourd’hui dans les réseaux sociaux, on n’écoute que nos propres amis qui ont les mêmes positions et opinions que nous. Ce qu’il nous faut c’est écouter l’autre. Quelqu’un a parlé de la différence entre entendre et écouter. C’est ça le vrai esprit multilatéral : écouter l’autre. Aller à une élection signifierait aller ouvrir un précédent dont nous ne pouvons pas mesurer les cicatrices futures. Nous pensons que nous avons encore un peu de temps pour trouver une solution dans le temps, le peu de temps qu’il nous reste encore. Merci.

111. **The President:**
   Merci votre Excellence. I now invite Switzerland to be followed by Cook Islands.

112. **Suisse :**
   Merci Monsieur le Président. La Suisse votera « non » à la proposition d’ajournement. La Suisse est favorable au dialogue, la Suisse est favorable au débat. Celui-ci dure depuis plus de 15 ans sans résultat. Continuer ad infinitum sans jamais arriver à une décision semble être devenu un but en soi. Ce n’est pas sain, et ne fera que maintenir les divisions. La Suisse votera donc contre l’ajournement. Je vous remercie.

113. **The President:**
   Merci votre Excellence. I now invite Cook Islands to be followed by Bangladesh.

114. **Îles Cook :**
   Merci Président. Je vais parler en français. La motion d’ajournement n’est pas un vote en faveur ou en défaveur de l’amendement. Ne nous trompons pas de débat. Ici, on nous demande de tourner le dos au principe même de la démocratie, de notre droit mais aussi de notre devoir de débattre. J’entends depuis le début de ce débat parler de la notion de consensus et également de divergence. Bref, une volonté de certains de donner du temps au temps, mais justement, encore faut-il savoir sur quoi on peut converger, sur quoi on doit chercher un consensus. Nous savons que ces conversations ont débuté...

115. The President: Merci votre Excellence. I now invite Bangladesh to be followed by Slovenia.

116. Bangladesh: Thank you Mr President. It would be most desirable to have a consensus on an issue which is so fundamental and of critical importance as an amendment to the Constitution. We find great divergence of views and positions. The adjournment will allow us more time to find an acceptable solution which will be beneficial for the Organization. We will therefore vote in favour of the motion proposed by Japan.

117. The President: Thank you your Excellency. I now invite Slovenia to be followed by Iran.


119. The President: Merci madame. Now I invite Iran to be followed by Hungary.

120. Luxembourgeois : Merci beaucoup Monsieur le Président. Je serai très bref. En fait pour les raisons déjà expliquées par notre délégation, nous resterons toujours sur le chemin du dialogue donc nous allons voter pour la continuation du dialogue afin de trouver un moyen de satisfaire tout le monde. Merci.

121. The President: Thank you your Excellency. Now Iran to be followed by Indonesia.

122. Iran (République islamique d’) : Merci beaucoup Monsieur le Président. Je serai très bref. En fait pour les raisons déjà expliquées par notre délégation, nous resterons toujours sur le chemin du dialogue donc nous allons voter pour la continuation du dialogue afin de trouver un moyen de satisfaire tout le monde. Merci.

123. The President: Thank you. Now Hungary to be followed by Kiribati.

124. Hungary: Thank you, Mr President. I will be very short. Hungary will vote against the adjournment of the debate, and we will do so not only because we have co-sponsored this amendment but also because Hungary, like many other countries, has a principled line shared across all United Nations organizations and forums of not supporting no action motions. We always prefer to exhaust the discussions at hand instead of postponing debates. In closing, we are voting no to the adjournment of the debate. Thank you.

125. The President: Thank you. Now I invite Kiribati to be followed by the Republic of Korea.

126. Kiribati: Gracias, señor Presidente. El Perú desea apoyar la propuesta del Japón de posponer el debate, puesto que es evidente que no se ha logrado el consenso que todos deseamos y que es la esencia de la UNESCO. Gracias.
The President: 

Merci. Now I invite South Africa to be followed by Comoros.

South Africa: 

Thank you, Mr President. As indicated in our previous intervention, we believe in consensus but we do not believe in filibustering. We believe in genuine dialogue. In this case, it is our considered view that this issue has been exhausted and that the time is opportune to be guided by the Rules of Procedure which provide for voting as a normal mechanism to facilitate a decision by the General Conference. We do not believe therefore that deferring this item to the next session of the General Conference would make either party change its views on the matter. For that reason, South Africa will vote no. I thank you.

The President: 

Thank you. I now invite Comoros to be followed by Mongolia.

Comores: 


The President: 

Thank you. I now invite Mongolia to be followed by Nigeria.

Mongolia: 

Thank you, Mr President. Mongolia will vote for the adjournment as we believe that there is a way for consensus. Thank you.

The President: 

Thank you. Nigeria please.

Nigeria: 

Thank you, Mr President for giving me the floor as the last speaker. Nigeria’s position is very clear: we believe in the third way and as such we support the proposal of Japan to postpone debate. Thank you.

The President: 

Thank you. You are now called Uruguay please.

Uruguay: 

Muchas gracias, señor Presidente, por el privilegio de permitirme ser el último en tomar la palabra. Como usted sabe, nuestros países hacen un esfuerzo enorme para poder enviar delegados a esta sala, tras haber pasado dos años estudiando lo que vamos a decir, pensar y acordar en la próxima reunión de la Conferencia General. Justamente por eso, cuando llegamos acá y tenemos a la vista resoluciones sobre temas que se vienen discutiendo desde hace 15 años, no nos parece adecuado acá en pleno debate, después de seis horas considerando las distintas posturas de los países, aprobemos una resolución que deja el asunto para dentro de dos años. ¿Con qué cara vuelvo yo a mi país para decirle al correspondiente ministro que lo que hemos decidido es postergar el examen del tema para dentro de dos años, sin tener una idea clara de cuán lejos estamos del consenso que queremos construir, cuán divergentes son las posiciones, en qué proporciones y con qué intensidad? Por todo ello el Uruguay va a votar en contra de esta propuesta. Muchas gracias, señor Presidente.

The President: 

Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates, we will now start the vote. The Secretary will now call on each Member State in the French alphabetical order, beginning with Serbia, whose name has been drawn by lot at the 206th session of the Executive Board as the first Member State in that order for this General Conference. In addition, following the decisions we took earlier, the names of the 10 Member States which were declared as having no right to vote in this General Conference will not be called during this vote. The voting members, whom the Secretary will call, shall vote on whether they are in favour of the proposal to adjourn the debate on this item. Those in favour shall say “yes”; those against should say “no”. Member States that wish to abstain must state their intent. Finally, I wish to remind you that in accordance with Rule 88, after the President has announced the beginning of voting no one shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. The vote begins now. Secretary, please call on each voting Member State.

Un vote par appel nominal est pris. Les résultats sont les suivants :


les Grenadines, Sainte-Lucie, Samoa, Seychelles, Slovaquie, Slovénie, Suède, Suisse, Tchéquie, Tonga, Turquie, Tuvalu, Ukraine, Uruguay, Vanuatu.


**Droit de vote suspendu**: Antigua-et-Barbuda, Colombie, Dominique, Guinée Bissau, Philippines, République démocratique du Congo, Sao Tomé-et-Principe, Soudan du Sud, Timor-Leste, Trinité-et-Tobago.


143.1 **The President:**

Thank you. The vote is now finished and the Secretariat is already counting the votes. Ladies and gentlemen, the votes have now been counted. Number of members present and voting: 130; Votes in favour: 72; Votes against: 58; Abstentions: 34; Majority required: 66.

143.2 Distinguished delegates, the General Conference has thus voted to adjourn the debate on this item to the 41st session of the General Conference. Thank you. With regards to the other amendments, there will be a Bureau meeting at 9.00 a.m. tomorrow morning and then we can meet here at 10.00 a.m. and we can continue until 12.00 p.m. because there are other intervening matters. My inkling is that this has been emotionally a very difficult debate for all of us. So, maybe it is time not to continue this plenary meeting and to meet tomorrow at 10.00 a.m. I am sure that we will be able to reflect very wisely on the meaning of this vote. As with every vote, this has a meaning; as every vote, this has certain signposts. Certainly, we cannot come back here to the 41st session as if nothing has happened. That would be like living in a fool's paradise. In a fool's paradise, people assume that nothing will happen because nothing has happened. Something has happened today. We have had a very wide debate and I thank all the delegations. We have a clearer view of things now thanks to the debate.

143.3 As I always said, cross talking cannot be a substitute for genuine convergence and a genuine quest for new ways. So, I take it almost for granted that we will not be back two years later to where we are, but that there will be credible work to be done, very much nearer to the hearts of each other, very much nearer to the real needs both of the Members and the Organization, that everyone will be happy to stay on a firmer moral ground whatever the result will be. I think we have more reason to celebrate, rather than to think of this as a loss, because it really is not. Definitely, there had been a sea change last year if you look at the votes. Abstention means each école of thinking should be able to do a better job in persuading, in giving out their line of thought. The votes in favour and the votes against are too near. No big organization, let alone UNESCO, can be left in a lame duck position. I think that there were lots of abstentions, and some were not in the room as well. I am sure in earnest all of us will draw the necessary conclusions and lessons, if you like, and I am sure that there will be a much more productive debate and we will arrive at a higher altitude and a higher moral ground through this debate. Thank you all so very much. I propose that we meet at 10.00 a.m. tomorrow. Thank you. Those Bureau members, we expect to see them at 9.00 a.m. Thank you so very much.

*The meeting rose at 6.00 p.m.*