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HUNGARY'S STATEMENT (DRAFT)

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

at the Executive Board's 6th Special Session

on 08/06/2020

Dear Chairperson, dear Director-General, dear Colleagues,

When Hungary was elected a new Member of the Executive Board, I did not imagine that I will deliver Hungary's first statement in such extraordinary circumstances. I very much welcome the efforts of the Secretariat, the bureau, and your personal engagement, Chairman, to convene today's virtual Special Session of the Executive Board.

1. Hungary welcomes the UNESCO's strong and rapid action to address the manifold impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on all areas of UNESCO's mandate. It is indispensable to make an in-depth analysis on how the lockdown affected all the current programs of UNESCO and if necessary, make the appropriate steps to adjust these programs, with due regard to the possible financial implications. Key will be UNESCO's capacity for fundraising, both in the public and private sectors.

2. The education sector has encountered tremendous difficulties, making UNESCO's global leadership in education more important than ever. What we learned is that schools are not only the places to acquire knowledge, but are also essential to maintain social relations, or in many countries access to food or safe drinking water. Thus we welcome the efforts of UNESCO in the field of education, especially the Global Education Coalition, which combines the flexibility of the private sector with the expertise of UNESCO.

3. This critical period has also underlined the importance of sharing common scientific knowledge, and showed that science can inform evidence-based decision-making to achieve important progress. The measured impact of science on society should go beyond the purely economic gains. Strengthening collaborations, networking and exploitation of scientific results should be widely supported, thus UNESCO's initiative on Open Science is essential. We also welcome that the preparation of the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence has not been disrupted, and hopefully we can stick to the original roadmap.

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4. The COVID-19 epidemic has once again highlighted the essential role of water security in ensuring resilience of societies. For this, we consider UNESCO's role crucial in assisting member states in this area, by mutualizing their research capacity and sharing their water data.

5. Countries and institutions must come together and make culture and cultural heritage part of the solution for reviving economies. We believe that sustainable initiatives are needed to enhance the longer-term resilience of the heavily affected cultural sectors. UNESCO has a clear leading role in peer learning, and helping its Members to transform good practices into efficient local response, in order to protect heritage during complex emergencies. We look forward to follow discussions on the effects of COVID-19 under each of the six cultural conventions. We note in this sense the unfortunate but necessary postponement of most statutory meetings, and thank the Secretariat for facilitating the responsible decision making of the relevant bodies' regarding the organization of these meetings.

6. Finally, Hungary as a new Member of the Executive Board, would like to see continuity of work and smooth functioning of the Board, enabling it to fulfill its constitutional role. For this very reason, as an extraordinary measure, we welcomed the proposal of organizing a special session of the Board virtually, with all goodwill and as much flexibility as possible. We also highly appreciate the timeless efforts of the two facilitators, and regret to see that despite our own flexibility, no consensus seems to have emerged around their proposals for decisions. Notwithstanding, we look forward to exchange of views of the Board on these highly important issues.

Thank you, Chairperson.

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