

Address by the Delegation of the Republic of Poland to UNESCO  
6<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the Executive Board

*Mr. Chairperson,  
Mr. President of the General Conference,  
Madam Director-General,  
Excellencies,*

We meet today in a special and new format, and in the special and new circumstances; in the middle of the global pandemic.

This is a new reality. Not because of some new threats but because we were forced to rethink our vision of the world, to contest what we took for granted, to reflect what really matters, and what we expect, also from international cooperation.

And once again it was proved how crucial is UNESCO's mandate. Poland appreciates efforts made by the Secretariat to fulfil the goal of this Organisation in this testing time - to continue to assist Member States and to facilitate their cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture, and broadly understood access to information.

Pope John Paul II, whose 100th birthday anniversary is one of UNESCO anniversaries this year, visited UNESCO in June 1980, and addressed the Executive Board during its 109. session.

He noticed, that this Organization is the work of nations, which after the horrible experience of war, were impelled by a spontaneous desire for peace, union, reconciliation, and the progress of humanity.

These words seem to be especially relevant today in the face of other difficult experience, that of course cannot be compared to the tragedy of the war, but similarly brings us to a crossroads, when the international community has to make a choice.

And here is a challenge for UNESCO and other international organisations, to encourage Member States to choose more optimistic direction, to make sure that this crises will not destroy what we have accomplished so far, but by contrast may strengthen our sense of community, advance international cooperation and base it on better understanding, true respect, solidarity and fairness.

Poland is fully committed to effective, rule-based multilateralism, and we highly value the role of UNESCO's mandate within the UN system. We hope that this Organisation will be able to fully use its potential in weakening the negative short-term and long-term consequences of COVID-19 pandemic.

We look forward to cooperating with Executive Board Members from all regions and the whole UNESCO Membership in this respect.

*Thank you.*