

**President of the General Conference,
Director General,
Excellencies,**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you
on behalf of the Norway.

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As one of the founding members of UNESCO, this organisation
is important to Norway. It embodies many of our core values.

The first line in the UNESCO Constitution reads;

it is in the minds of men
that the defences of peace

This is not a hollow phrase. UNESCO means values, core
values for all of us.

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UNESCO values is,
The opportunity for all to learn,
to educate for inclusion,
to enforce critical thinking,
and to fight xenophobia, racism, suppression,
and discrimination of all sorts.

UNESCO values also mean;
That we must carefully safeguard
freedom of expression and free media.
That we must fight echo-chambers where hate thrives
and social stigma flourishes.
That we must stimulate independent and open research
that lets us make decisions
based on knowledge
not on alternative facts.

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UNESCO values states that it is worthwhile to safeguard our common culture and that it is vital we protect our planet from being destroyed.

This is what UNESCO means to me and to Norway.

And this is what we should never forget in our discussions. We must rise above the nitty gritty in endless negotiations.

We must keep our eyes on our common vision for a better future.

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Mr. President,

The *Sustainable Development Goals* work as our stars for navigation.

Norway has partnered with UNESCO to strengthen global education cooperation in order to more effectively reach the SDG 4. We fully support the new Global Education Cooperation Mechanism.

Education is a powerful weapon to fight social and economic inequalities - Leaving no one behind.

Norway is proud to co-host the second *Global Disability Summit* in February 2022,

*Recognition of
Higher Education Qualifications”.*

This Convention is important
and I urge all countries to ratify the Convention,
so it can enter into force.

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Norway has been member of
the World Heritage Committee
for the last four years.

The World Heritage sites
are unique masterpieces.
Created by nature or mankind,
we want to protect them.

Please accept a friendly reminder
from an outgoing member

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The international *decade of indigenous languages* is ahead of us.

It is a strong commitment to save and to strengthen

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Freedom of expression should be secured through free media.

Editors and journalists need special protection.

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Friends of UNESCO,

Norway is a strong supporter of multilateralism and of the UN-system.

We hold the values of UNESCO high.

We support UNESCO's strategic transformation and endorse the *transversal approach of the Medium-Term Strategy*, based on a human rights approach and with a focus on gender equality and Priority Africa.

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As part of a voluntary Nordic practice of rotation, Norway fully supports Iceland's candidature for *the Executive Board*.

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Let me end where I started, citing *the UNESCO Constitution* stating:

"...that peace must therefore be founded,

if it is not to fail,