

First plenary meeting of the 41st session of the General Conference

Tuesday 9 November 2021 at 10.15 a.m.

President: **Mr Altay Cengizer** (Turkey)

Item 1: ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

Item 1.1: Opening of the 41st session of the General Conference

1.1 **Mr Altay Cengizer** (Temporary President):

Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General of UNESCO, Excellencies, Ministers, Distinguished Ambassadors, friends and colleagues, representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, members of the media, ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to welcome you to UNESCO, to the 41st session of its General Conference. As President of the previous session, and in accordance with Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, I have the honour to preside over this inaugural meeting. I therefore declare open the 41st session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

1.2 Allow me to recall that the **Nominations Committee** is charged with determining and submitting to the Conference the list of nominations for the posts of President and of Vice-Presidents, as well as proposals for the composition of committees, commissions and other subsidiary organs of the Conference. According to Rule 32 of the Rules of Procedure, the Nominations Committee consists of the heads of all delegations entitled to vote in the General Conference. The head of a delegation may designate another member of his or her delegation to attend meetings and vote in his or her place.

but first and foremost, it is about our strength and perception that we really need each other and that we have to change the way we approach present day issues. The above challenges provide new opportunities for UNESCO. Our Organization can be the game changer if we are to move nearer to science-based decision making. UNESCO is about the creation of knowledge, about building sustainable knowledge societies. This is the real core of our mandate. We need big ideas, debates impacting discourses and initiatives. For instance, today UNESCO is the acknowledged world leader in changing why and how humanity imagines the future. Member States, sister organizations of the United Nations system, universities around the world, are all turning to UNESCO to build upon scientific advances in the discipline of anticipation, that enable new ways of using the future. And harnessing this capability is essential if we are to become better able to integrate novelty and change into what we see and do. I salute the decision of the Executive Board to support International Futures Day. We are turning our fear of change into a source of inspiration and creativity.

2.5 When I arrived at UNESCO five years ago as the Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Turkey, and during the last two years also as the President of the 40th session of the General Conference, I did not only learn much more about our Organization, but I have gained new insights, new ways to look at the world. I understood that we have to arrive at new ways of seeing the world and therefore this, the Western perspective, so to say, is essential. But it is not certainly enough. 6 (ns)13 (er)3.3.547 0 Td tcutthe lt(he ft)2 (h)13od tgh

original reasoning which led to the foundation of our Organization 75 years ago.

(The speaker continues in French)

2.11 Chers collègues, Excellences, il n'y eut jamais avant l'UNESCO une institution rassemblant des États du monde de manière structurée et régulière, à la seule fin d'établir une meilleure connaissance réciproque des cultures dans la perspective d'une paix mondiale. Donc, ce n'était pas une coïncidence que la première Conférence générale de l'UNESCO a eu lieu en Sorbonne. Je voudrais faire référence aux propos de mon compatriote turc Bedrettin Tuncel qui a présidé la

le Projet de programme et budget pour 2022-2023, le 41 C/5, tels que recommandés par consensus par le Conseil exécutif. Nous sommes convaincus que ces objectifs et cibles intersectoriels concrets permettront à l'UNESCO d'atteindre les objectifs de développement durable ODD d'ici 2030 et renforceront sa position de contributeurs précieux à la construction de la paix dans les esprits des hommes et des femmes. En vous souhaitant à nouveau la bienvenue, permettez-moi à ce stade de remercier les Membres du Conseil exécutif pour leur investissement et leur énergie qui nous ont permis d'atteindre nos objectifs importants et les soumettre à l'attention de cette Conférence générale.

4.10 Nous n'avons peut-être

14.1 **The Temporary President:**

Thank you for your presentation, Mr Chairperson. I now wish to submit this recommendation for the approval of the General Conference. As I see no objections, I will take it that this recommendation is adopted unanimously. Thank you very much.

14.2 *It is so **decided**.*

Item 15.1: Request for the admission of the Åland Islands as an Associate Member of UNESCO

15.1 **The Temporary President:**

We will now examine item 15.1 concerning the request for the admission of the Åland Islands as an Associate Member of UNESCO. The request for the admission of the Åland Islands as an Associate Member of UNESCO is presented in document 41 C/63 under item 15.1. The document includes a letter dated 23 July 2021 from Mr Pekka Haavisto, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, applying for Associate Membership on behalf of the Åland Islands whose international relations fall under the responsibility of this country. The letter is in compliance with Article 2, paragraph 3 of the Constitution, which states that territories which are not responsible for the conduct of their international relations may be admitted as Associate Members by the General Conference by a two-thirds majority of Members present and voting upon application made on behalf of such territory by the Member State having responsibility for their international relations. I now present to the General Conference the request for admission of the Åland Islands as an Associate Member of UNESCO. I see no objection to this request. I therefore declare that the Åland Islands has been admitted as a new Associate Member of the Organization.

15.2 *It is so **decided**.*

16. **Temporary President:**

This decision further enriches the cultural diversity of our Organization. I wish to extend my warmest congratulations to the Åland Islands, our new Associate Member. I am now pleased to give the floor to His Excellency, Mr Tuomas Tapio, Ambassador of Finland, to UNESCO.

17. **Mr Tuomas Tapio (Finland):**

Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, dear colleagues, Finland wishes to warmly thank the General Conference for the decision to grant Associate Membership of UNESCO to the Åland Islands. The autonomy of Åland Islands is an example of a successful solution for regional governance and an integral part of Finland's democratic system. It is continuously developed in close cooperation with the Åland Islands. The Åland parliament has the right to pass legislation on, for instance, education, culture and the preservation of ancient monuments. The initiative taken by the government of Åland Islands for the request of Associate Membership is also testimony to the Åland Islands' commitment to UNESCO's important work in areas such as education and culture. It is a great pleasure for me to pass the floor, with your permission Mr Pre3.3 (d l)2 (s)132ent of.D4147 Td (on)13. ()14 (d l)2 istvshe (M)-3 (r)3.7 (16 (

19.7 I would like to end by thanking Finland for its excellent cooperation in connection with Åland's application for

26.1 **Mr Mba Mokuy** (Chairperson of the Executive Board):

Thank you, Mr President. Before congratulating the newly elected President, I would like to take this opportunity to express my most sincere thanks to the President of the 40th session of the General Conference, my dear friend, His Excellency Mr Altay Cenziger. Over the past two years, Ambassador Cenziger and I have worked closely, despite the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic kept us confined for long periods. It was a privilege for me to have created a relationship with him based on profound respect and understanding. I have always been and continue to be struck by his erudition and vision. His belief in the mandate of our Organization and what it can do for humanity is unwavering and unshakeable. We have indeed been privileged to have him lead us over the past two years. I wish you all the very best, dear President of the 40th General Conference, in your future endeavours. Know that you can always count on my support.

26.2 Now to my dear friend, His Excellency Santiago Irazabal Mourao, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Brazil to UNESCO, I extend, in my own name and on behalf of the Executive Board, my heartfelt congratulations on your election as the President of the 41st session of the General Conference of UNESCO. We have come to know each other very well over the past two years and I have always counted on your constructive insight and support in the work of the Executive Board. You are a career diplomat and one who is committed to the ideals of the Sustainable Development Goals, attested during your service representing your country at the United Nations and at UNESCO. Your country, Brazil, is in various ways an amazing country, full of diversity, with a multifarious culture, incredible nature and a forthcoming population. I am convinced that with your long and able experience in diplomacy and your knowledge, wisdom and engagement, you will preside over this body with flourish. I wish you every success in the coming weeks at this 41st session of the General Conference, and in the two coming years. Thank you.

27. **Temporary President:**

Thank you very much. I am grateful for your kind words. I now give the floor to the Director-General.

28.1 **La Directrice générale :**

Merci Monsieur le Président... Monsieur le président de la Conférence générale, Monsieur le président du Conseil exécutif. Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs, permettez-moi à mon tour de féliciter son Excellence Monsieur Santiago Irazabal Mourão, Ambassadeur du Brésil pour son élection à l'instant à la présidence de cette 41^e Conférence générale. Vous devenez ainsi le 41^e visage d'une série de personnalités prestigieuses. Le premier d'entre eux, l'ancien Président du Conseil français Léon Blum a très bien formulé, à la naissance de l'UNESCO, l'importance de notre organisation. Il disait devant notre première Conférence générale que l'UNESCO avait le rôle unique, je le cite, de « créer les conditions intellectuelles, morales dont dépend le jeu du système des Nations Unies tout entier ». Rien que cela. Et c'est dans cette histoire exceptionnelle que vous vous inscrivez, une histoire dont vous aurez désormais la garde. Cette élection est bien sûr une reconnaissance personnelle, celle de votre parcours au service de la diplomatie brésilienne, notamment dans ses dimensions multilatérales et de coopération culturelle. Mais c'est aussi une reconnaissance de l'engagement de votre pays et de votre groupe. Le groupe de l'Amérique latine et des Caraïbes, c'est surtout une excellente nouvelle pour les 193 États membres de l'UNESCO et pour toute cette maison. Nous allons pouvoir bénéficier de la richesse de votre expérience. De votre capacité à aider à fabriquer du consensus, sur les biens communs dont nous avons la garde.

(La Directrice générale poursuit en anglais)

28.2 Mr President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we will certainly need all these qualities. The General Conference that starts today marks the beginning of a particularly strategic period for UNESCO, a period during which the spirit of consensus and dialogue must continue to reign, as it has to date. And for this, let me add my voice to the gratitude expressed to the President of the 40th session of the General Conference who, like the Chairperson of the Executive Board, had to fulfil his mandate in unprecedented circumstances. And here we are. We need, as you know, an efficient governance, but we also need all the voices of UNESCO's Member States to be heard, even those not sitting on the Executive Board. Their diverse perspectives, their diverse experiences of the world, are a source of wealth and opportunity. I would therefore be delighted to work with you and the future Chairperson of the Executive Board if the General Conference does me the honour of renewing its confidence in me later today. Because, to borrow the words of the renowned Brazilian author, Clarice Lispector, "*O futuro está na esquina*": "The future is around the corner." *Muito obrigada*. Thank you.

Address by the President of the 41st session of the General Conference

29. **Temporary President:**

Thank you, Madam Director-General. I now invite the president of the 41st session of the General Conference to take his place at the podium.

30.1 **Sr. Santiago Irazabal Mourão** (Brasil) (Presidente de la Conferencia General):

Señor Presidente de la 40^a reunión de la Conferencia General, señor Presidente del Consejo Ejecutivo, señora Directora General, excelencias, señoras y señores: agradezco a mi buen amigo el embajador Altay Cenziger sus amables palabras y reconozco su serio y arduo trabajo de mantener la calidad y el alto nivel de los debates de la Conferencia General, incluso en las difíciles circunstancias provocadas por la pandemia de la COVID-19. Le aseguro, mi amigo, que el fútbol seguirá siendo una de mis prioridades en cuanto ciudadano del Brasil.

30.2

