



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Address by Audrey Azoulay,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of Peace and Prosperity Forum, Jeju Korea

Jeju, Korea, 28 June 2018

Honourable Mr Won, governor of the Jeju, special self-governing province,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

I am very pleased to be with you today to participate in the Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity.

I do so in the name of a very singular institution within the United Nations, one invented by men and women who understood that past conflicts would not be replicated if education, culture and the sciences preventatively built the defences of peace in the minds of men and women.

But the challenges of our century are not the same as those of 1945. The challenges of our world, whether they be demographic, due to climate change, deadly extremism or the preservation of diversity are challenges that no State can resolve alone and which cannot find a lasting response without, education, sciences and culture. We, therefore carry a great responsibility to implement this mandate in a spirit of cooperation and dialogue.

When the challenges are global, we must once again find the path of strong multilateralism. And multilateralism is not the sum of particular interests, the addition of bilateral relationships. It is instead a dialogue with several voices, a collective

intelligence in action, in which each voice should be heard and respected. And where compromises have to be made.

At this moment in time, abandoning or weakening what we have built would be a dangerous regression. Which is why we must defend institutions like UNESCO and not weaken them. Our collective responsibility is to reawaken the spirit of dialogue through a global conversation and to renew our commitment to cooperation so that we can find collective solutions for the seemingly insurmountable challenges we face.

Too often these past few years, UNESCO has suffered from divisions between Member states, which have weakened our credibility and slowed our actions at a time in which they never been more necessary.

We are, therefore, working towards strengthening Member states consensus through dialogue and by facilitating mediation if the parties concerned wish to do so. Whether it be questions regarding memory of conflicts - as this continent has known - or the smouldering questions of the Middle East, we believe that this is our responsibility, as an institution, to facilitate this dialogue, when the parties agree to it

This is what has allowed us to negotiate, for example, consensual texts on the Middle East in the past few months and weeks, adopted without a vote. The last two decisions were adopted on Jerusalem and Hebron this Tuesday during the World Heritage Committee. I think that this shows a willingness of the majority of our members to get back to a spirit of consensus. I particularly wish to thank the Korean President of UNESCO's Executive Board - who began his mandate at the same time as I began mine, last November - and who strongly contributes to restoring this spirit.

This means that we can concentrate our efforts on UNESCO's core mandate. In order to be relevant, we do not need to reinvent UNESCO's mandate but instead better serve it. We must address today's battles. And carrying UNESCO's mandate today means to sow all the necessary seeds to build a human world. Building the human dimension of globalization: this is the core of UNESCO's mandate. And I would like to highlight a few essential features, if we are to speak of our contemporary time.

One is the growing interconnectivity of our societies. To ignore it would be delusional, to vilify it dangerous. Public opinion is correct to recognise this phenomenon. Young people in particular think at a global level and are committed to tackling the

challenges, such as climate change because they know the limits of solely national action.

This interconnection produces shared challenges.

Firstly, **the technological challenge**, with the “fourth industrial revolution”: a new era in which a fusion of technologies - including artificial intelligence - will blur the lines between physical, digital and biological spheres. This technology will change the way in which we live, work, communicate, learn and even think. Some specialists have even said that artificial intelligence is more important to humanity than the invention of fire or electricity.

Big Data will help shape new public policy, but will also raise questions about our values, moral choices and ethical questions related to our private lives, individual freedoms, transparency and responsibility.

UNESCO will play its part in this reflection - which must be global - on the ethics of artificial intelligence, and attempt to define an essential ethical framework that could lead to the adoption of ethical principles.

As far as applying ethics to science is concerned, UNESCO has longstanding experience. It has addressed, in the past, ethical issues related to the human genome and genetic data.

The **second challenge is climate change** and the way in which we will adapt to this ecological transition resulting in drought, rising sea levels and a whole variety of extreme phenomenons.

The Paris Agreement of 2015 is a major - if rather late – step, which signals a political willingness but its consequences for public policy are huge and much remains to be done.

This will change the way in which we live. Highly populated costal zones will need to be designed in a more sustainable way and we will need new methods for managing natural resources. We will, therefore, need to cooperate to develop new competencies based on creativity and intelligence.

The **third challenge is demographic**. The global population will reach 9 billion by 2050, having increased three-fold in just one century. This population will be increasingly urban, with 6 out of ten people living in towns.

Demographics, coupled with climate change, will continue to prompt migration within and between countries.

These technological, climatic and demographic challenges threaten to increase the tensions that lead to violent extremism.

This version of globalization could prompt retreats into nationalistic sentiment and create deep divisions. To tackle these challenges, we must reinforce partnerships between governments, regional institutions and the private sectors, as these challenges call for a collective engagement.

We must build a better multilateral system in order to avoid the worst, and I would like to **outline some of UNESCO's concrete proposals** here.

Firstly, one of the essential pillars of our mission is **education**. Building appropriate, modern education systems for our time means lifelong learning that reaches the whole population. Women have been left behind, particularly in Africa, yet education is essential to tackle the challenges of our time in a sustainable way. It is necessary because the migration routes every day show that nobody can simply retreat behind their borders.

It is also through education that we can begin to find a long-term solution to climate change.

We also need to adapt education systems for the skills of the future. The pace of the technological revolution is so fast that it is impossible to predict precisely the evolution of jobs. Some will disappear, others will be created but all of them will be impacted.

It's why lifelong is crucial, and it also means that not only technical skills are required but also creativity and the humanities, to learn and think in evolving environments.

Too often, we only put emphasis on technical skills to provide solutions and put humanities in another silo. But as Fabiola Gianotti—Director of the CEN project, which

UNESCO helped create—points out, sciences and humanities, on the contrary to being diametrically opposed, both represent the highest expression of curiosity and creativity of humanity.

The teaching of humanities is crucial-to foster creativity, critical thinking, learning to learn, learning to live together in peace. Education is not only about skills-it is also about passing on shared values, becoming global citizens.

UNESCO, as lead agency in the United Nations for education works to share best practices, to support public policies in the field to measure and track data to guide our path towards the Agenda 2030. We particularly prioritise education to support women and Africa.

The international community is not yet on track to invest sufficient funds to reach to goals of the agenda it has committed to.

Our latest figures show that after a worrying decline, international public aid to education is increasing but there is a shortfall of 39 billion dollars a year. Moreover, I call on all donors to consider contributing to this essential area, as education is the key to the success of the whole of the 2030 Agenda.

Across the globe where children are deprived of an education - particularly young girls - economic development, peace, the fight against terrorism and fanaticism are at stake.

As we speak, 263 million children, adolescents and youth are out of school, unable to reach their full potential. But even those in school are not necessarily gaining basic skills.

The shift to the green economy and the opportunities of the new Industrial Revolution call for a sharper focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics – especially for girls who are too often dissuaded from pursuing careers in these fields.

I am speaking to you today from a country, which has shown the world the power of education. The Republic of Korea understands the weight of history and knows how fragile peace is. Korea has managed a unique turnaround and has become a model of development and innovation in just a few decades.

The path, forged since the 1950s through massive investment in education was supported by the international community, through UNESCO.

The Organisation responded to the call of the United Nations to help to the civilian population that was, once again, thrown in the turmoil of war. This aid was primarily for schools and universities. The Republic of Korea has since become one of the most advanced countries in terms of education.

In turn, Korea now supports UNESCO in its mission, particularly in education. Today, the country finances several education programmes coordinated by UNESCO, not only in Asia but throughout the world. [For example, Korea has just signed an agreement, which will allow it to reinforce its aid to education for girls in the Punjab and Gilgit-Biltistan regions of Pakistan. Korea also supports professional training through the Better Education for Africa Rise project in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda as well as for Syrian refugees in Jordan.]

Its National Commission for UNESCO is one of the world's most active, with its 5 UNESCO Institute, its intangible heritage, UNESCO Korea Peace Centre, International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region, Korean Water Institute on Water Security and Sustainable Management placed under the auspices of UNESCO and, Korea UNESCO Peace Centre, International Centre of Martial Arts for Youth Development and Engagement.

I call on other countries and businesses to follow the Korean example and contribute to financing UNESCO in its missions.

I would also like to underline **the role of cultural heritage in building peace**. Cultural heritage is a wealth which is the legacy of centuries and which must be known and understood. Our heritage is also our identity and it is essential that each of us can appropriate this heritage and see ourselves in our history, locations, arts and traditions. Knowing our own past is being able to discover that of another. Being deprived of our past is to be vulnerable to false narratives and sometimes deadly extremism.

Heritage evolves, adapts, and reinvents itself. Young generations must be involved with it. Earlier this week, I opened the 42nd session of the world heritage committee in the Kingdom of Bahrain. We organized in parallel a young professional forum and

I cannot resist the pleasure of sharing with you the conclusion of their forum. They insisted on two key messages: first, the importance to consider the multiplicity of stories inherent in our heritage. They refuse over-simplification and the artificial opposition that is created by hate speech. Secondly, the necessity to protect natural heritage sites and to inscribe them on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

What these young people are saying is that culture is more than buildings, documents and traditions – it is how we see ourselves, see the world, present ourselves to the world and how we learn about ourselves and about each other.

It is the only long-term solution to fight extremism. When extremists seek to divide humanity between “us” and “them”, we need to highlight everything that unites us as a single community, through universal values.

That is why we believe that an efficient way to prevent violent extremism is through our mandate, be it education, culture, sciences, freedom of expression. To name a few examples, we publish manuals to help teachers and policy-makers prevent violent extremism. We work with youth at the regional level to promote their participation in policy-making. We launched at the beginning of the month a manual on the role of education to prevent antisemitism.

Last February, as part of the United Nations initiative to support the rebuilding of Iraq, UNESCO started a long-term project for Mosul, to revive the spirit of the Old City, to reanimate, through culture and education the unique spirit of diversity and education that made Mosul throb with life before the war.

The Republic of Korea not only supports UNESCO on these issues, helping education and culture. We are on this island that wonderfully symbolizes our message and has been honoured with nearly all UNESCO labels. Since 2007, it has been inscribed on the World Heritage List as an island of exceptional geological value, its lava tunnels and volcanic formations are unique in the world. This is why it has also been inscribed as a UNESCO Geopark and a Biosphere Reserve. A site whose volcanic, island environment has shaped the lives of its inhabitants, the island has developed as a habitat, with crafts and customs.

The age-old tradition of the Haenyeo, the female divers who dedicate their lives to underwater fishing, are a good example... it is a tradition that is recognized by

UNESCO as intangible heritage of humanity. Jeju is a wonderful example of sustainable development based on heritage.

To conclude, I would like to look from Jeju at the entire peninsula. It will be the task of an entire generation to renew the links that have been severed between the north and the south, if the out-stretched hand of President Moon is accepted. UNESCO will also have a role to play in building strong links through education, culture and the sciences, which are so essential for lasting peace. Both Koreas are UNESCO Member States, and we hope to further deepen the relationship of trust that has been going from strength to strength since the 1950s.

Building a more human world through education, culture, science and freedom of expression: this should be our common goal. This is UNESCO's *raison d'être*.

Thank you.